

**OUR ORAL HISTORIES ARE OUR IRON POSTS:  
SECWPEMC STORIES AND HISTORICAL  
CONSCIOUSNESS**

by

Ronald Eric Ignace (Stsmél'ecqen)  
M.A., University of British Columbia, 1979

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THE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE DEGREE OF  
Doctor of Philosophy

In the  
Department of Sociology and Anthropology

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## APPROVAL

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**Title of Dissertation:** Our Oral Histories are our Iron Posts: Secwepemc Stories and Historical Consciousness

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While the copyright of this dissertation rests with myself as the author, I declare that the Secwépemc people, as represented by the seventeen Secwépemc Communities of the Secwépemc Nation, have inherent cultural rights and ownership of all oral histories and cultural information on the Secwépemc contained in this volume, and further claim first rights to any intellectual property arising from the cultural knowledge as derived from Secwépemc elders and other Secwépemc cultural specialists.

I also respectfully acknowledge that the oral histories and cultural information from other Aboriginal nations that I cite in this thesis in the same manner represents the intellectual property of these respective Nations.

## ABSTRACT

This dissertation is about the history of my people, the Secwépemc. I treat the concept of history here as more than a chronological ordering of events in the lives of our people; my purpose is to construe the *sense* of history, or historical consciousness, of my people as it emerged during the last 10,000 years. Relying on multiple sources that include converging lines of evidence between geological, archaeological and oral history sources for the early period, and increasingly, written - explorers' and traders' - sources, and most importantly, my own ancestors' recorded narratives, I trace my people's motivations and interests in the unfolding of events, along with the meanings, from the vantage point of our culture, that we ought to employ to read such sources. Among the important stories that my people tell are the narratives that deal with our perception of the early newcomers, and of missionaries and the new religion they were imposing on us. In addition, it is worthwhile to listen to the ways that my people reflected on the relationship with the Crown as it emerged in the late 1800s, and early 1900s. As I argue, such "stories," ultimately, need to be connected to our sense of land, livelihood, title and autonomy as an Aboriginal Nation. Our people's stories, as I will show, defy the colonizers' attempts to separate us out into small portions of our land and livelihood, and bring back our sense of nationhood as a people, Secwépemc, connected to Secwépemcúlecw, our land.

**Keywords:** *Aboriginal history, Secwépemc, First Nations of the Plateau*

## DEDICATION

Yi7éne re súscwen le q'7es te stet'ex7ém, len kyé7e7úwi Julienne ell len xpe7e7úwi, Ettwa Eneas. Tikwemtús yiri7 re sxyemstúlmen.

Xwexwéyt re stet'ex7ém te spetékwlentsems, yiri7 re skukwstsétselp!

Yiri7 re súscwen ell xwexwéyt ren stsmémelt: Fara, Danielle, le Gabriel Ettwa, Jessica, Meghan, George T'exesq'et, Julienne Melmenetkwe, Lizzy Tselpits'e7, Joe-Thomas Stsmelecqen, ell re Katie Xyemétkwe,

... ell ren sem7é7em, Marianne Ignace

Kukwstsétselp wel me7 yews!

I dedicate this work to my elders, especially to my great-grandmother, Julienne Ignace, and to my great-grandfather, Ettwa Eneas. I will always honour you.

To all the elders who told me stories, I thank you all!

I also honour all my children. Like my ancestors, they have taught me much!

And I thank my wife, Marianne Ignace, for all her love and support!

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

This thesis had a long process of growth, of neglect, and of near failure as life dealt me some blows in the last several years. Writing about one's own people is a hard task, and it is even harder as time passes and many of those who gave their time and knowledge to this work are no longer with us. First of all, I wish to thank all the elders who shared their knowledge with me as I grew up, who taught me our language, the ways of our ancestors, and our history. These include my great-grandparents, Ettwa and Julienne Eneas; my grandparents Francis Ignace and Meléni Paul; and my parents, Lizzy Ignace and Francis Jules. I thank my aunts and uncles, especially my aunt Mona, who has been kyé7e to all my children. And I thank the other elders who raised me, among them Selina Jules, Katie Humphrey and old Alice Celesta. And I thank Nels Mitchell and Seymour Pitel – I knew them in my younger days, but I have only come to appreciate their great contributions to understanding our songs and stories as I carried out this research. These elders' words and thoughts are in these pages.

I thank the Secwepémc elders who agreed to be recorded and thus specifically contributed their knowledge and stories to my enquiry into Secwepemc history. They include the late Clothilde Thomas from Williams Lake; the late Laura Harry from Esk'et (Alkali Lake), the late Rose Phillip and Bill Porter from St'uxtéws, Sarah Deneault from Neskonlith, the late Mary Thomas from Salmon Arm, and



from my own community, Skeetchestn, the late Nellie Taylor, Theresa Jules, Sam Camille, and also Christine Simon and James Peters.

Throughout the production of this work, I have benefited from the discussion of Secwepemc stories with my former students in First Nations Studies classes at the Simon Fraser University Program in Kamloops, BC. I thank all of them for sharing their knowledge. I thank my senior supervisor, Dr. Noel Dyck, for indulging my long delays, and for not losing faith in me, and also Dr. Dara Culhane for her continued support. In addition, I am grateful to Dr. Jo-ann Archibald, who joined by examination committee, and to my external examiner, Dr. Andie Diane Palmer, from whose review of my thesis I greatly benefited. I also owe great debt to Penny Simpson, thesis assistant at the SFU library, for kindly assisting with the menial task of formatting this thesis, and to Margaret Gardiner, resource librarian at SFU Kamloops, for assisting me with accessing library materials.

Throughout the 1990s, and again, since 2006, some of the work that led to this thesis has been supported by research grants from the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada, whose support is hereby acknowledged (Nancy Turner Hari Sharma and Marianne Ignace, principal investigators).

Mona Jules was of great help not only as my aunt, but she also put her skills in Secwepemct in transcription to use by greatly helping with the transcriptions of elders' stories and narratives.

Finally, I thank my wife, Marianne Ignace, for her patience in seeing me through this long adventure of becoming a graduate student in mid-life, and

completing my dissertation at a time when some of my people are beginning to think of me as an elder. Marianne not only took care of our children while I took graduate courses, but also continually placed reading materials before me, nudged me on, engaged me in discussion, and eventually pushed me out the gate to finish writing and submitting this work. I will be forever grateful to her. I would like to dedicate this paper to the memory of my son Gabriel Ettwa Palmer. His senseless murder caused me to re-evaluate who we are and where came from as Secwepemc, and what our traditions of law, justice and good governance once were.

And I thank our children for tolerating the endless days and nights of stacks of books and papers on our kitchen table. I hope that in the future, this work will help you understand who you are, and how we came to be as a people, the Secwépemc.

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## PROLOGUE

“Oral history in numerous Aboriginal groups is conveyed through interwoven layers of culture that entwine to sustain national memories over the lifetime of many generations. The transmission of oral tradition in these societies is bound up with the configuration of language, political structures, economic systems, social relations, intellectual methodologies, morality, ideology and their physical world. These factors assist people in knitting historic memories more tightly in their minds” (John Borrows, 2001)

“Yiri7 re-m re7 xpé7e, le Etwal, le Lonso le xqwelténs yem.

E-m-quqw7éles yiri7 m tskelélnemsten:

“Don’t mark it on the ground.” E newt-ekwe yiri7 me7 súkwentem.

Me7 llgúpes, e me7 llgupéles ucw tke7 stamalt, tke7 ntse’sqéxe7.

Téke mé7e re sxexé7s re ol’ timers.

“Don’t mark it on the ground.” Me7 ptínesemenc Ronnie, mé7e

t’ri7 e neku7es:

“Don’t mark it on the ground.”

### ***Translation:***

Those were the words of your late grandfathers, Edward and Lonso. When they talked, I listened to them:

“Don’t mark it on the ground.”

They said if the wind blows, it gets blown away. And if it gets lost, you lose your goods, your cows, your horses. See how smart the old timers were.

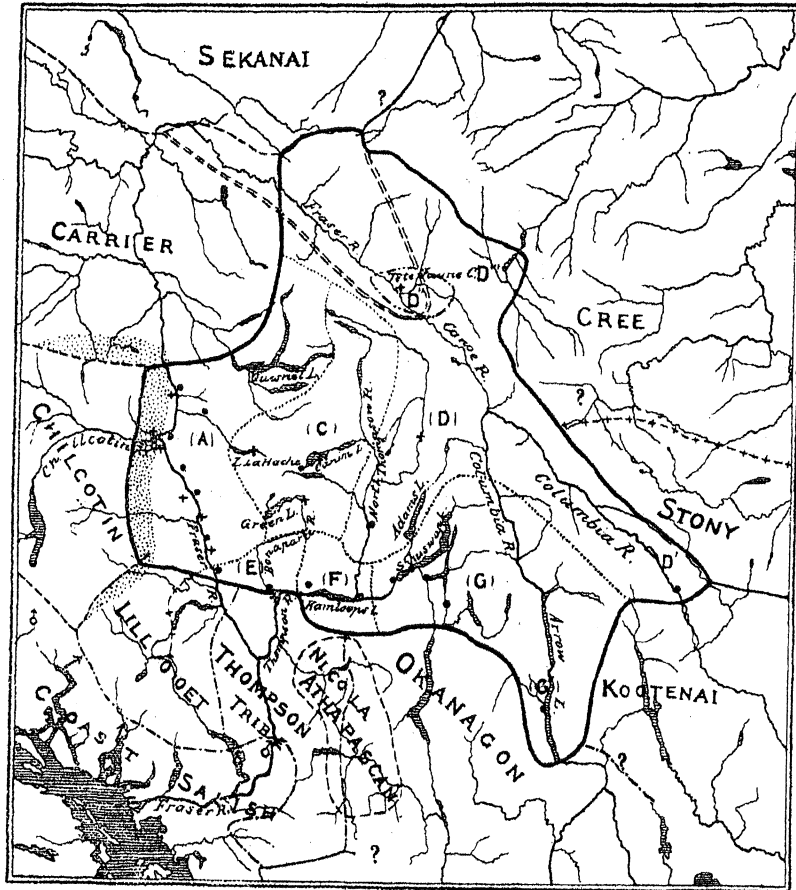
“Don’t mark it on the ground”

- think about that, Ronnie, it’s the first principle,

“don’t mark it on the ground.”

*Theresa Jules, Interview, 2 December, 1997*

Figure 1: Map of Secwepemcúlecw



Teit's map (1909: 450)

## CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

### A Story

In 1998, my community, the Skeetchestn Indian Band, one of 16, or perhaps 17,<sup>1</sup> indigenous communities in the Secwépemc Nation in the Interior of British Columbia, was carrying out a Traditional Use Study:<sup>2</sup> Several younger people had been hired to gather information about the past and ongoing land use and occupancy of our community and a neighbouring community, St'uxtéws (Bonaparte Indian Band). One of the researchers became deeply concerned with "discovering" iron posts that some elders had mentioned, which might provide evidence about past demarcations of larger or additional reserves proposed by the Crown during the 1860s, and subsequently cancelled. We had known for some time that in the early 1860s, under Governor James Douglas, the Colonial Crown had proposed a larger reserve than the 20,000 acres subsequently allocated in 1877, as well as an additional reserve near Cherry Creek, 25 kilometres to the east. Some correspondence about such reserve allocations existed in the *Papers Connected with*

---

<sup>1</sup> The seventeenth community is Ts'kw'aylécw, or Pavilion. But there are other "border communities," like Ceclep in the nineteenth century, and St'ells, or Ashcroft as it existed between the Nlakapmuxw and Secwépemc Nations in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries.

<sup>2</sup> During that time, i.e. that late 1990s, Traditional Use Studies (TUS) were widely practised Traditional Land Use and Occupancy Studies carried out by Indian Bands (First Nations), or Tribal Councils, and supported by funds from the British Columbia Ministry of Forests, around a set of "deliverables" that included bibliographies of ethnographic, archaeological and (ethno)historical studies of the Band (First Nation) in question, along with a database of "site-specific" uses of land, and funds for oral history research. As Markey (1999) showed, the objectives and outcomes of many of these studies were contested from the First Nations viewpoint, and were often at odds with First Nations' ideas and intents, to say the least.



*the Indian Land Question* (British Columbia 1875), but details in the written record available to us were sparse.

One morning, this young researcher summoned me, my wife and two of our elders to an area above Kamloops Lake. She told us that she had located an "old iron post" or reserve marker. The area of concern is about fifteen miles east of our present reserve at Skeetchestn, and overlooks a piece of land, Six Mile Ranch, about which we subsequently fought and negotiated an Aboriginal title settlement with the Province of British Columbia.

We all jumped into our vehicles and drove to the area concerned. The researcher led us up a slope and down into a gully, pointing to the post: Upon inspection, it turned out that the "iron post" was a surveyor's marker for a pipeline right-of-way, probably erected in the 1950s. Instead of being testimony to either our own people's use and occupation of the land, or to the boundaries of a once promised larger reserve, the surveyor's marker showed the extensive criss-crossing of our territory by European colonizers. As the two elders and I hiked through the sagebrush and bunchgrass beneath the ponderosa pines and saskatoon berry bushes, we shared memories about our past and recent hunting trips in this area, remembering stories about the ancestors and relatives whom we had accompanied, the routes we took, where we had camped, the deer we had killed, and berries and medicines our families had picked. We stepped through the terrain where our ancient forebears had also gathered balsamroot and wild onion, and through which they had established a trail during countless journeys on hunting trips and to visits

among relatives along the shores of Kamloops Lake and at Tk'emlúps (Kamloops).

By the time of my own childhood, this trail had become a narrow provincial highway. As I grew up, the roadbed was changed to become the current Highway #1 that connects Cache Creek and Kamloops, the old wagon road still visible.

It occurred to me then that the search for physical markers of promised reserves cannot possibly tell the story of *Secwepemcúíecw*, Shuswap land, and the way our ancestors lived on it, looked after it and collectively owned it. As stories among our elders have it, settlers, enabled by those in power, removed whatever iron posts there may have been. In other areas, iron posts as permanent survey markers may never have existed, because often the surveyors did not get around to setting up physical markers before Federal and Provincial Governments and policies changed, and proposed reserves were shrunk in size. Instead, our true "iron posts" are our stories and oral histories. They give meaning to our connection to the land and to the ways in which our people have continued to be attached to our land in the face of the history of white colonization and appropriation. This history reaches back 10,000 years, although with the unspeakable trauma of disease, displacement, and oppression; loss of language and associated transmission of knowledge that we have been exposed to since the late 1850s, it exists in pieces and fragments. In the aftermath of the cultural and physical genocide wreaked upon our people during the mid-nineteenth century, and throughout much of the twentieth century, it is up to the current generation of Secwépemc to fix the broken cup of knowledge about the past, and the laws that guided our activities and ways of giving meaning to the

world. We can do this by finding out from our own elders, by consulting the many scattered stories and bits of information recorded from past ancestors, and by engaging these in a dialogue with what outsiders wrote about us.

This thesis is about the ways in which my Secwépemc elders and ancestors conceived of the past, and commemorated past events and the consequences these had for our lives in *stories*, or what Robin Ridington (1990) called *storied discourses*. The stories of my people are inextricably linked to our land, Secwépemcúlecw, and to the ways in which successive generations marked the land with their deeds, named the land, showed us how to look after it, and thus deeded the land to us: we belong to it, and it belongs to us. Furthermore, I see the history of our connection to our homeland as inextricably linked to our language; thus, this thesis also deals with the way in which our people talked about our history that connected us to our land as a people *in our language*, *Secwepemctsin*.

The ancient history of Secwépemcúlecw gave us the laws, what we call “yirí7 re stsq’ey̓s-kucw,”<sup>3</sup> that defined us as Secwépemc, and that gave us, what I call “equipment for living” as a people: What is traditionally marked on the land through our own history and existence of the land is mirrored in our ways of dealing with things by giving counsel to one another when issues arise that need to be dealt with and solved. “Yirí7 re stsq’ey̓s kucw,” thus requires the tkw’enemíple7ten, the ongoing advisors, to implement the ways that were set forth by our ancestors. These were literally “written in stone” by way of the t’ált (“freeze into stone”) activities

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<sup>3</sup> For a translation and discussion of the term stsq’ey̓, see chapter 2.

these ancestors carried out. Save for the destruction wrought upon our land and its markings by the newcomers, many of these landmarks exist to this day. However, as I will show, the premises of these activities on the land are by no means “frozen”, in that my own ancestors continually did the work to interpret them and re-interpret them. Their long ago activities and how they related past activities to new issues, provide us with good food for thought for the future.

As European newcomers arrived in our land merely 200 years ago, the stories that Secwépemc people told one another also began to incorporate what they thought of these newcomers, and how they interacted with them. The newcomers were politically represented by the Crown, economically and socially represented by settlers eager to take our lands, and by missionaries eager to take our souls. While the history of European settlers and colonizers taking our land against the wishes and protests of our people unfolded, our people told stories about them to one another, reflecting on their actions and intentions. In addition, they told stories about continuing to live on our land, amidst the invasion of outsiders, curtailed in their activities by Indian Agents, game wardens and missionaries. These stories are about cultural resilience, and the persistence of their ways of life in defiance of attempts at “civilizing” us and assimilating us. These narratives of resistance and cultural persistence also show how the generations before me continued to make sense of events through the ways of thinking and acting that were passed on to them. They speak not only to the collective memories of our ancestors, but also to my ancestors’ and elders’ historical consciousness as a nation of people that had

emerged thousands of years ago in our land, developed our laws for living in our land, defended our boundaries, and then objected to the guests who came into our country taking what was not rightfully theirs.

## **Positioning myself**

The agenda of this dissertation, and its research, is closely connected to my own past and present personal history, and my lifelong reflection on the meaning of Secwépemc culture, historical events and the impact of colonialism on our people's life and destiny.

*I was born in 1946, my mother being Lizzy Ignace from Skeetchestn Band, and my father Francis Jules from Kamloops Band. Although both my parents were alive and married when I was born, my maternal great-grandmother, Julienne (Sulyén) Ignace, claimed me as hers and raised me according to Secwépemc tradition. I spent my first fifteen years living in a large extended household on Skeetchestn Reserve, run by my great-grandmother Julienne, my great-grandfather, Chief Edward Eneas, and also including my maternal grandparents, Francis Ignace ("Lonso") and Meléni, along with some of my mother's siblings, and later on a few cousins. My great-grandmother spoke only Secwepemctsin, our language, and did not tolerate us speaking English in the home. I was thus lucky and privileged being raised speaking our language.*

*When I was a child, our Elders stated that while the rest of the world was starving, they had fruits, vegetables, salmon and trout, both dried and salted, dried*

*and fresh meats from cows, deer and moose, wild birds and chickens, eggs, not to mention plants like root bulbs and berries from the mountains. From the time I was a young boy, I accompanied my great-grandfather on hunting trips into the mountain, hanging onto him behind his saddle. Throughout summer and early fall, we harpooned and speared salmon in Deadman Creek and at the mouth of the Thompson River. Our root cellars were filled with fruits and vegetables from large gardens, while rooftops and drying racks were heavy with drying fruits and berries.*

*I remember seeing my grandmothers gardening and canning fruits and vegetables, working with my aunts tanning hides from the community hunting trips for making coats, gloves and shoes for family wear and for sale. They were also very adept at using Singer sewing machines for making quilted blankets from Salvation Army clothes. These were used among our families, and they were even sold or traded for coffee, sugar or flour. Often, our clothes were made from bleached cotton flour sacks.*

*My great-grandfather was chief of our reserve for 14 years, appointed by the community according to custom, which, tolerated by the policies of the Department of Indian Affairs, had grown out of the indigenous ways of appointing chiefs (see chapter 5). Prior to my great-grandfather, my great-grandmother's uncle, Joe Thoma Pe'emits'e7, had been chief between 1894 and his death in 1918, and was one of the people who fought for our land rights and signed numerous petitions and memorials in the early part of the century. He, in turn, was appointed by Chief Hyacinth Sisyésq'et, his wife's uncle, who was also my father Frances Jules' great-*

*grandfather. Sisyésq'et, initially a war chief, was one of the Secwépemc chiefs who had opposed settlers taking our land in the 1860s, had vowed to join the Nez Perce and other tribes south of the border to go to war if the land question wasn't settled, and had eventually negotiated a large 20,000 acre reserve for my community. While I remember few details of stories from my childhood, I grew up with a deeply ingrained sense that we, the Secwépem, are a people, that we had rights never surrendered to the government, and that my ancestors had fought for our land and our rights.*

*I vaguely remember seeing my great-grand father's blacksmith shop filled with tools for repairing and making wood and metal instruments and tools such as fish hooks and harpoons or branding irons for branding their herds of cows and horses. My great grand-father, Edward Eneas, could build his own saddles, headstalls, packsaddles and harnesses for his teams of horses. He could repair his wagons or sleds, which were used in the winter for hauling wood and hay supplies etc.*

*I still can hear one of our old elders, Seymour Pitel, saying "I have cattle in the bank and money in the range."*

*My great-grandmother Julienne's mother was a well-known medicine woman or Indian doctor (t'kwilc), and so was Julienne herself. I also recall a time when my great-grandmother took me into her sqilye (sweat lodge) and prayed for me. I was about six years old, and this was apparently the only time a young boy could be in a sweat with a female. The sq'ilye was a direct gift to our people from Old One, the*

*Creator. He had given instructions to the sq'ilye spirit, the spirit of the qwéltsen (fir bows) and the water (séwillkwe) spirit to answer the prayers of our people. This blessing was in keeping with her earlier blessings where my great-grandmother had buried my umbilical cord in our land, so that I would not or could not be separated from our homeland. My great-grandmother and my grandmother also doctored me with powers derived from the strength of skeñcis, the grizzly bear, and the power of the tiny woodworm (st'ekwyénst) to persevere. Her final instructions to me were to leave the reserve and to go and find out what the Seme7 (White people) were up to, and then to come home to help my people.*

*After I ran away from the Kamloops Indian Residential School before completing grade 8, and after several years that I spent on skid row in Vancouver, I took upgrading courses, which eventually got me into the University of British Columbia, where I completed a Bachelor's and then a Master's degree. It was during my research for my Master's thesis on the McKenna-McBride Commission (the grossly unjust 1913-16 Royal Commission on Indian Affairs) that I came upon archival documentation of the government's oppression of our land rights, the cut-off of many of our reserve lands, and our own people's resistance to this, most eloquently expressed in the 1910 Memorial to Sir Wilfrid Laurier. At the time, while I had a gut-level sense of my ancestors' stories of the past, it was the written documents that consumed me, and I could not yet make the connection, in research, to the stories of our elders about these times.*



*Soon after completing my Master's Degree, I was called by elders in Skeetchestn to become chief of our band, at a time when our community was in a deep deficit after years of financial mismanagement, and when five young children had just died in a devastating housefire. While pulling my community together, I traveled to communities throughout the Secwépemc Nation together with a few other like-minded peers, trying to re-organize our nation, and creating a renewed sense of nationhood among our people – a consciousness that had been all but torn apart by years of the government tearing us apart into different Indian Agencies, by nucleating our communities through Indian Act administration. I also became Chairman of the Shuswap Nation Tribal Council, and President of our Cultural Society - on a political level dealt with legitimating ourselves, our concerns and issues to the Canadian State, and through "Unity Meeting" among our own people.*

*As some of our bands and portions of the Nation entered into the British Columbia Treaty process,<sup>4</sup> different questions about our status as a Nation of people arose: "Who are we as a nation?" – "How can we shape who we will be in the future, guided by who we were in the past?" "What forces united us as a people in the past, and how can we remind ourselves of our nationhood, of being one people, rather than an aggregate of communities?" "How did our ancestors perceive what we call*

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<sup>4</sup> The British Columbia Treaty Process entails a way in which Indian Bands (First Nations), or Associations of Bands in the form of Tribal Councils or other groups that represent Bands, can file for claims and compensation to their traditional territories. This process has been wrought with difficulties, with "bands" having split from their Aboriginal Nations to negotiate settlements, among other things. Few settlements have resulted to date; indeed the only First Nations who have ratified treaties include Tsawassen First Nation and Ma-Nuulth First Nation on the West Coast of Vancouver Island.

*the Shuswap/Secwépemc Nation, and what happened during their lives to maintain or destroy this sense of nationhood?”*

*When I decided to resume finding out about these things through social research by entering the SFU doctoral program, these were the questions at the top of my agenda.*

*Throughout the mid to late 1990s, while I began my doctoral studies and then research towards this dissertation, I was fortunate to be involved in a number of research projects which brought me together with elders, and allowed me to record their stories about the past. During the past few years, as this thesis took further shape in my head, and very intermittently on paper, other events further contributed to the direction of my research and writing: In 1999-2000, my community was involved in a land dispute with the British Columbia government and a developer concerning the Six-Mile property. During this time, myself, my wife Marianne Ignace and some members from our community interviewed nearly 40 of our band members about their knowledge and use of that area. I myself have acted as a “lay witness” in Aboriginal rights litigation, and have thus become keenly aware of the de facto complications of the use of our oral histories in court, despite the Supreme Court of Canada’s Delgamuukw decision.<sup>5</sup>*

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<sup>5</sup> The Delgamuukw decision involved the Gitksan and Wets’uwet’en peoples of Northwestern British Columbia. It entailed a Supreme Court of Canada decision regarding the existence of Aboriginal Title in law, the ways it could be infringed upon by the Crown, and also included a legal decision on the use of oral history evidence in Aboriginal rights and title cases.

*When I set out to do this work, I envisioned that the focus of my research and writing was going to be on the early- to mid-twentieth century history of the Secwépemc, a time when the policies of the Indian Act confined the movement of our people, oppressed us economically, and when Residential schools became aggressive tools of forced assimilation. I wanted to find out from the peers of my own parents and grandparents - all of whom had since passed away - what their memories of the first half of the twentieth century were, how they resisted and opposed the oppression of their livelihood and ownership of our lands, and how they carried on the consciousness of who we are as a people. Having been raised among elders for whom the connection with our past traditions was unquestioned and matter-of-fact, I took my personal, and my people's connection to our past laws and practices - what anthropologists would call the "ethnographic record" of our people - for granted.*

*During the last few years, various events have shaped my thinking regarding our history, and the ways our people thought and told of our laws: In late 2002, my eldest son Gabriel was brutally and senselessly murdered. The quest, in my and my family's grief, for spiritual solace that comes from the ways of our ancestors, made me look at how we as Secwépemc, over thousands of years, came to experience and ponder the spiritual and social connection between who we are as a people, how we perceive what causes things to happen, and how we enact(ed) these relationships in our daily practice of living on the land. Although the final product of what I had set out to do, a doctoral thesis, became a dim goal, I nonetheless spent countless hours*

*re-reading in print, what had been recorded of our stories by ethnographers like James Teit and others in the late nineteenth and early twentieth century. I also listened again in a new light to the many hours of tape-recordings in Secwépemtsin I had made during the mid to late 1990s, and compared these to audio-recordings in the archives of my community and the Secwépemc Cultural Education Society which had been made between the late 1960s and 1980s, prior to this project taking shape.*

*While I progressed with this task, taking notes, transcribing and re-transcribing information, and cross-checking and comparing messages, I began to connect dots that I did not previously know existed between our land, the way our people used it, knew about it, and expressed their relations to one another in our language. My work entailed what Gary Nabhan (2004) has called “cross-pollinations” between experience and stories, between scientific information and poetry, and between history, culture and language. As I discovered new meanings in the spaces between the words of my elders and the practices I had been raised with, the bitter truth also set in by mid-2007 that nearly all the elders before me on whose knowledge advice I had relied, had passed on. They were the elders whom I had known as friends and relatives throughout my life, and had then interviewed. My elder relatives and mentors, Nellie Taylor and Selina Jules, left us in 1995 and 1997; Theresa Jules, Rose Phillip, Sam Camille and my aunts Cathy and Edith passed away not long after my son died. During the past eighteen months, other elders who were pillars of strength and knowledge sharing in our communities and who reminded us of the knowledge of our ancestors have passed on, including Mary*

*Thomas, Bill Porter, Clothilde Thomas and Laura Harry. I am thankful that I have a small number of elders to keep me company; however, as I write this, I am also keenly aware that, as those before me are passing on, I myself have become a story teller and oral historian among our people. The current generation of Secwépemc elders includes my peers; most of those in the current Secwépemc elders' generation, lost their language, some are trying to get it back. In my community, I am one of fewer than ten fluent speakers of our language, Secwépemctsin, and one of only half a dozen who WILL speak it. Having become re-elected Chief of my community in late 2006, I am just about the only one among our Secwépemc chiefs who fully speaks our language, who can make speeches in our language. As I am fast becoming an elder myself, I am aware of my responsibility to pass on the stories and history of the past, so that we can better understand the present, and to give us guidance for who we as Secwépemc want to be in the future.*

*Our stories of the past not only tell us of events that happened, but they contain prophecies, analogies, environmental, social and political teachings that can inspire us in the present, and help us heal in the future. The “cannibals” or “people-eaters” (w7ec re ts7ellenéllts’us te qelmucw), the powers and forces that our ancestors beat out, are again among us in the shape of a new set of afflictions brought in by the newcomers. In the days that I write this, afflictions of not only alcohol addiction, but increasingly, crack cocaine, heroin and other hard drugs are afflicting our communities. These are our new “cannibals:” People who eat people, but more appropriately, people and forces that eat away at our people.*

*Having re-entered the political arena in early 2007, I have also increasingly been reminded of the growing gap that exists between the ways our ancestors and many contemporary adults think about our people's connection to our land. Our ancestors thought of themselves as a nation of people with joint land tenure of Secwépemcúlecw, what they considered as their common "ranch" when they defended their rights against Canadian settlers, with common boundaries and common rights within Secwépemcúlecw. The last one hundred years of colonization featured our people being herded onto reserves and prohibited from even buying our own lands. As we are even re-conquering that knowledge among our own children, let alone non-Aboriginal Canadians, we continue to face the deep struggles that emanate from this past.*

*The history of Secwépemc and other Aboriginal peoples during the last few generations amounts to genocide, in both its cultural and physical dimensions: We have heard of the physical and individual harm that was wrought on our people by the Residential Schools and the agents of the State behind them. In addition, a huge, but to this date undervalued, part of the harm wrought upon our people lay in the very fact that my peers, and to a degree I myself, were deprived of understanding the words of our ancestors. We had the language that we were raised with beaten out of us, in more than one way: There was shame when we were told that our languages were not good enough; there was bed-wetting and loneliness when we tried to live the way forced upon us after no good-byes from our parents who were too sad to tell us that the Indian Agents made them send us to these schools, at no notice. There were*

*the cattle trucks that took us there, often in the crowded comfort of our cousins, sisters, brothers and relatives. This lingers on to this day. Why I managed to be lucky to survive, I don't know. But at some point in my existence in the Residential School routine at Kamloops Indian Residential School, I realized that they couldn't take my thoughts away from me, including how I spoke my language in my head. I survived all that, in more than one way, but my legacy is that due to the fates that my sisters, my brothers, my uncles, aunts, nieces, nephews and nearly all my relatives met, I face the fact that I'm lonely: There are few speakers of my language among my peers, even fewer in the generation above myself. My wife and I try to make our language last in the next generation, given all trials and tribulations, but it is hard. The normal legacy of what ought to be passed on from parent to child was taken away from us in a way that made it seem as though it was normal that our culture should cease to exist. This is testimony to the fact that we continue to think about it, and that, hopefully, future generations will continue to think about what are our ways.*

*Beyond the physical effects of colonization on our peoples, with all this, there has emerged what John and Jean Comaroff (1989), speaking to the results of colonization in southern Africa, called a "colonization of consciousness," where "...[the colonizers] set their sights on the total reformation of the of the heathen world; i.e. on the inculcation of the hegemonic forms, the taken for granted signs and practices, of the colonizing culture" (op.cit.:289). Implied in this is the ongoing*

*temptation to take for granted the boundaries imposed by our colonizers, to accept the cutting up of our nation into little chunks now called “First Nations.”*

*During my four-year hiatus from political office, I chaired the National Taskforce on Aboriginal Languages and Cultures<sup>6</sup> where, in awareness of the critical decline of most of our Aboriginal languages, we set the path for a national Aboriginal language revitalization strategy. Stepping beyond my own Aboriginal nation, and learning about the devastating decline of our languages from elders and community members across Canada, I was inspired by the passionate commitment and work that communities and individuals are carrying out to keep our languages alive. As we stated in our report,*

**...We believe that First Nation, Inuit and Metis languages are sacred and are gifts from the Creator.**

**We believe our languages are living languages to be used every day in our communities as expressions of our continuing nationhood. We believe First Nation, Inuit and Métis languages embody the past and the future. To enter into a relationship with our ancestors we must speak our languages and by doing so we honour their spirits. However, we also adapt our languages to new**

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<sup>6</sup> The Task Force on Aboriginal Languages and Cultures (TFALC) was established by the Canadian Government through its Department of Heritage in late 2003, in order to make far-reaching recommendations towards the revival and maintenance of Canada’s Aboriginal languages (the 60 or so First Nations languages, Inuktitut and Lemetsif). The Liberal Federal Government had allocated some \$160 million towards this purpose – an allocation that derived, in good part from a recommendation I had made while heading up the Assembly of First Nation’s Chiefs’ Committee on Languages in the late 1990s. Following two years of intense and far-reaching consultations with Aboriginal communities across the country, along with comprehensive research and legal and policy planning regarding suitable institutional frameworks for an Aboriginal languages foundation, we tabled our report with the Federal Government in mid-2005. In late 2006, without further consultation with National Aboriginal organizations, the new Conservative government rescinded the far reaching policy and recommendations of the task force, including the previous government’s funding allocation, and chose instead to continue the existing Aboriginal Languages Initiative, which purports to provide program-based support that amounts to a total of a few million dollars per year for all sixty of our languages.



environments, new situations and new technologies.

We believe that each generation of speakers carries the responsibility for preserving and revitalizing the unique and irreplaceable values, spiritual and traditional beliefs, and sacred ceremonies.

Our task is to ensure that the present generation of First Nation, Inuit and Métis peoples continue their traditions by recovering and strengthening their ability to speak and be understood in their own languages. Our task is also to ensure that the seventh and future generations of our young people will be fluent in their languages and will be able to articulate the traditional knowledge and spiritual beliefs embodied in them.

We believe that Canada must truly make itself whole by recognizing and acknowledging our First Nation, Inuit and Métis languages as the original languages of Canada.

This recognition must be through legislation and must also provide for enduring institutional supports for First Languages in the same way that it has done for the French and English languages. We are confident our principles and values are ones that all Canadians will recognize, share and support (Canada, Department of Canadian Heritage 2005).<sup>7</sup>

*In the end, and in spite of the fate that the Task Force recommendations took at the hand of the Conservative Government, this thesis will contribute to keeping the words of our ancestors alive, not as “pickled” knowledge (Hinton and Hale*

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<sup>7</sup> *Towards a New Beginning: A Foundational Report for a Strategy to Revitalize First Nation, Inuit and Metis Languages and Cultures.* Ottawa: Department of Canadian Heritage, 2005. Sadly, in late 2006 the Conservative Federal Government, without consultation with First Nations, Inuit or Métis, quietly withdrew the \$160 million that the previous government had pledged to support our languages.

2001), but as food for thought for present and future generations of who we were and are as a people.

*As we say when we are among ourselves;*

***Xwexwéyt ren kw'séselkten*** - *All my relations.*

## **Indigenous Historiography, Oral Histories and the Courts**

Beyond merely documenting our storytellers' voices about our past, one of my objectives with this thesis is to contribute to the validation of our own stories or "oral histories"<sup>8</sup> as accurate and valid self-representations about the past, informed, however – as all historiography is – by our own people's hermeneutic: In both form and content, narratives of the past are deeply embedded in the way we read meaning into accounts of events. As Carlson (2005:1) suggested, meaning precedes experience; however, I maintain that meaning and experience are in a dialectic relationship, in that previous experience also shapes meaning, which in turn shapes the interpretation of new experience. Indigenous historical consciousness exists in the spaces where our people in the past and now reflected on the connection between experience and meaning, in making sense of the past as it relates to the present.<sup>9</sup>

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<sup>9</sup> My concept of indigenous historiography is closer to that of Sahlins (1995) than that of Obeyesekere (1992), who supposes the existence of a universal "indigenous" pragmatic and rational sense of history, removed from the particular ways of interpretation that come with cultural dispositions and understandings.

Although the last twenty-five years have seen a welcome surge of well-researched and well-written historical works that deal with the nineteenth and twentieth century history of contact, colonization and resistance of Canadian Aboriginal peoples (e.g. Carter 1990; Tennant 1990; Harris 1997; 2002; Kelm 1998; Furniss 1992; 1995; Pettipas 1994; see also Brown and Vibert 1996), they relied for the most part on the written documentation produced by the colonizers, rather than our own voices, in attempting to tell our side of the story of our encounters with Europeans. In recent years, indigenous historiography written in good part by non-indigenous historians has been increasingly informed by theoretical concerns with understanding social and economic meanings and context, interpreting the “contact zone” (Lutz 2007) as involving different understandings by indigenous and non-indigenous participants, and throwing light on many previously neglected aspects and events in newcomer – indigenous history (see also Binnema and Neylan 2007).

Since the 1997 Supreme Court Decision in *Delgamuukw v. R.*, the uses of oral histories have been debated by First Nations peoples, and among academics and legal scholars alike.<sup>10</sup> In *Delgamuukw*, the Supreme Court Judges ruled Courts must “come to terms with oral histories of aboriginal societies” [Delgamuukw 1996, note 1 at para 86] in its recognition that most Aboriginal societies “did not keep written records” [ibid., at para 87].

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<sup>10</sup> A special edition of *BC Studies* (1992) provides a number of different angles of a scholarly critique of McEachern’s 1992 decision, which denied the validity of Aboriginal oral histories in court - see Miller 1992.

The Supreme Court of Canada determined that Aboriginal rights and title may be established through the following evidence:

- (a) Oral histories, including ancient origin stories and recounted histories of ancestors' use of land; [at para. 86]
- (b) Aboriginal laws which shape the organized society whose prior occupation is the source of title to the land;[at para. 141]
- (c) Physical occupation both past and present;[at para. 100 and 101]
- (d) Post-contact practices directed at demonstrating which aspects of the aboriginal society have their origins pre-contact;[at para. 152]
- (e) Expert evidence, such as archaeological, historical and anthropological evidence. [at para. 87] <sup>11</sup>

In addition, the Supreme Court gave the following direction regarding how oral history evidence is to be treated by the courts:

- (a) A court must take into account the perspective of the aboriginal people claiming the right;[at para. 81]
- (b) Aboriginal rights demand a unique approach to the treatment of evidence which accords due weight to the perspective of Aboriginal peoples; [at para 82]
- (c) Trial courts must approach the rules of evidence in light of the evidentiary difficulties inherent in adjudicating aboriginal claims and must interpret that evidence in the same spirit; [ibid.]
- (d) This requires the court to come to terms with the oral histories of aboriginal societies;[at para. 84]

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<sup>11</sup> *Delgamuukw v. B.C.* [1997] 3 S.C.R. 1010 (Supreme Court of Canada).

(e) To adapt the laws of evidence in order that oral histories as proof of historical facts can be accommodated and placed on an equal footing with the types of historical evidence the courts are familiar with.[at para. 87] [above quoted from: Hanna 2000: 11-12].

Soon after the December 1997 *Delgamuukw* decision, Culhane stated,

Chief Justice Lamer and the Supreme Court of Canada panel is to be commended for respecting Aboriginal self-representation, and for finally acknowledging what First Nations have always known: that oral tradition is the preeminent, legitimate source of knowledge about Aboriginal culture and history, and must be understood and validated on its own terms. Rules for historical interpretation drawn from the mainstream, western, academic study of written history are not appropriate to the understanding of marginalized, non western, oral histories. Neither should the law require Aboriginal peoples' representations to be mediated by anthropologists" (Culhane 1998: 366).

As Aboriginal peoples, we celebrated the Supreme Court's validation of our oral histories<sup>12</sup> as something that the courts had previously denied, but that had been self-evident for a long time to us – namely the ability to rely on our own understandings of the past to represent our historical claims in court. However, with the court system being adversarial, the Supreme Court's decision has by no means translated into an immediate acceptance of our oral histories as proof of our title or our ownership of our lands by the "other side" representing the Provincial and/or Federal Crown, or by Judges themselves. Indeed, the Crown's expert witnesses in Aboriginal rights and title cases argued since *Delgamuukw* have concentrated on

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<sup>12</sup> Many experts use the distinction between handed-down "oral traditions" and oral histories as experienced memories, a dichotomy suggested by Jan Vansina (1985) and replicated by von Gernet (1996; 2000; 2004). In accordance with Borrows, I use the term "oral histories" for both – not only because of the language suggested by the supreme court justices in *Delgamuukw*, but also because of the inherently dialectic and mutually informing nature of oral traditions in their relationship to oral histories, explained by Borrows (2001), Cruikshank (1992, 1998, 2005) and others.

discrediting Aboriginal oral histories as unreliable and invalid, and as being not *on a par* with western written histories. Even prior to the 1997 Delgamuukw decision, the Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples Report (1996a) dichotomized Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal approaches to history as substantially different:

The non-Aboriginal historical tradition is rooted in western scientific methodology and emphasizes scholarly documentation and written records. It seeks objectivity and assumes that persons recording or interpreting events attempt to escape the limitations of their own philosophies, cultures and outlooks....

The Aboriginal tradition in the recording of history is neither linear nor steeped in the same notions of social progress and evolution. ...It is less focused on establishing objective truth and assumes that the teller of the story is so much a part of the event being described that it would be arrogant to classify or characterize the event exactly for all time (Canada, Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples 1996a: 33).

Within the adversarial modes of legal argument and evidence deeply steeped in western ontology and epistemology, judges will intuitively side with history that is “rooted in scientific methodology,” “scholarly documentation,” and “written records.” As Preston has argued, it establishes “an environment of structural violence whereby Native histories are silenced by the arms of the state” (Preston 2005:55).

Contemporary Crown expert witnesses deployed by arms of the state thus exploit the dichotomy of written history being “scientific and objective” vs. indigenous oral history being “subjective;” of one being verifiable and reliable, the other one not meeting these litmus tests of enquiry evidence.

Foremost among the Crown's expert witnesses deployed to discredit oral histories is Dr. Alexander von Gernet,<sup>13</sup> who has variously addressed the "problems" of indigenous oral histories. In a report prepared for the Department of Indian and Northern Affairs in 1996, von Gernet (1996:20) points to "overwhelming evidence that many oral traditions do not remain consistent over time." As reasons, he states that human memory is unreliable, especially so in that it is based on "recycled memories," all subject to error and omission as they are transmitted. Finally, von Gernet has argued that oral histories can also become "contaminated" by the contemporary interests of Aboriginal peoples, who may have read already recorded oral histories and worked information from written historical and ethnographic sources into their evidence about the past, rather than relying on uncontaminated, pure accounts.<sup>14</sup> As von Gernet recently summed up his position, "...the most retentive memory is paler than the weakest ink" (von Gernet 2004: 10).

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<sup>13</sup> Von Gernet is Adjunct Professor at the University of Toronto in Mississauga, although he has been retained by the Federal Department of Justice and other government agencies since 1992, acting as an anthropological expert witness for the Crown, or as "peer reviewer" for other Crown expert witnesses. According to von Gernet's own testimony in court, he had a hand in writing the section on history for the RCAP (see R. v. Augustine 1997); for a paper on von Gernet's work, see Robin Jarvis Brownlie (2006).

<sup>14</sup> See also von Gernet 2000 (a report for the Fraser Institute). As an expert witness in the recent William v. R. court case which involves the Xeni Gwit'in (Nemiah Valley) Tsilhqot'in people, von Gernet advanced the above arguments, pointing to instances where he thought Tsilhqot'in elder witnesses had read and interpreted ethnographic information about themselves and thus contaminated their evidence. In addition, he rebuked the validity of the Xeni Gwit'in Stories of how they came to live on their land, which in their representation presents the charter of their society, as simply consisting of myth episodes which occurred as themes in nearly 300 other North American indigenous societies, and thus not uniquely representing anything Tsilhqot'in (von Gernet 2006). In the end, it appears that Justice Vickers, the trial judge in the Xeni Gwit'in case, was not greatly influenced by von Gernet's opinion, given that he recognized the Tsilhqot'ins' Aboriginal title to 50% of their territory, and based some of his decision on oral history evidence that Tsilhqot'in elders presented during the trial.

John Borrows, a noted Anishinabek legal scholar, has rebuked von Gernet's arguments. Quoting historian Paul Williams, he reminds us of the advantages of memory:

The mind is still the most sophisticated recording and preserving device that humans have found. Its storage capabilities have not been fully tested. It is portable, does not need much temperature and humidity control, and is capable of complex storage, retrieval, and correlation tasks. Knowledge stored in the mind can be transmitted or transferred to other minds, and that knowledge invests those other minds with abilities to use and understand the information. Most important, a matter that is kept in mind is also *kept* in mind. Matters on paper are more easily stored and forgotten (Williams 1996: 3-31, note 39).

In their analyses of the construction of social memory as embodied in ritual processes and acts of commemoration, Wickress and Fentam (1992), as well as Connerton (1989) support this viewpoint. The institutionalized ways of commemorating, were furthermore coupled with the fact that many societies – including the Secwépemc - invested in training oral history specialists, who were individuals recognized at an early age for being gifted with good memory and verbal skills, and subsequently trained in memorizing historical events by their elders (Borrows, op.cit.).

Borrows (op.cit.) also refers to the inherently dialectic process involved in the transmission of oral histories: They blend historical incident and its interpretation by the narrator, often stamped by the narrator's personal situatedness and experience. In addition, they are culturally mediated, arising from within the conventions of speech, construction of meaning that exists among specific



peoples. On the other hand, as Cruikshank (1998), Borrows (2000), Preston (2005) and others have shown, it is not only the indigenous oral histories that are culturally mediated, but all histories, including written histories. In fact, the contemporary canon of western historiography celebrates political and social situatedness, and the “dialogic” nature of historical narrative, as opposed to the essentialist and positivist historiography valued by the courts.

Cruikshank’s (1992; 1998; 2005) analyses that contrast Yukon indigenous historical oral narratives and settler written narratives are a case in point for the multiple situatedness of oral indigenous and written western stories. Cruikshank (1998:xii) shows us how

narrative provides a framework for experiencing the material world and how local stories intersect with larger social, historical and political processes.... What is important is not just knowing the story but sharing the context for knowing when and why it is told so that conversations can build on that shared knowledge.” Stories are not only embedded in social and cultural contexts, but sustain social life, “interweaving information, moral content and philosophical guidance” (op.cit.:xvii).

Although I admire and support Cruikshank’s emphasis on the *social work* that all narrative, especially oral storytelling, does, I would like to also stress the factual information contained in stories/oral histories. They not only transpose the natural world into a social world, but in fact disseminate and transmit (as history) **factual** information and details about geographic and geological events and processes, ecological relations among fauna and flora in specific environments, the occurrence of species and minerals, and specific places that bear such resources. By

naming people (albeit sometimes people who have animal characteristics) as interacting in these environments, they also address human history as not removed and separate from environmental history, but as part of it. What throws the empirical, positivist-minded European observer, who has learned since the Enlightenment to separate nature from culture, human agency from the environment, and metaphysical powers from the physical world, is the meshing of different levels of experience in our stories. While these provide *additional* layers of experience, along with *additional* moral and social messages, we should not infer that the people and human relations mentioned in oral histories are fictive. Instead, what we need to be able to do as “insiders” (Aboriginal people),<sup>15</sup> is to learn to connect the dots to decipher and come to understand what the multiple messages are that stories give us. Given the rupture of many of our people with our traditions, language and stories, there is, in my mind, no such thing as an intuitive “Aboriginal” understanding. It requires hard work.

### **Cultural Embeddedness, Validation of Knowledge and “Converging Lines of Evidence”**

Those who have written about valuating Aboriginal oral histories have suggested the importance of recognizing them “on their own terms,” while at the same time noting the “cultural context” of the narrative. As Preston (2005),

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<sup>15</sup> Failing that, or better: complementing that, I have no objection to “outsiders” who are willing to work with us according to our needs and protocols, share in this research, as I previously explained (Ignace, Speck and Taylor 1993). Contemporary indigenous and collaborative research protocols (see Smith 1999; Canada, Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples 1996; Canada, Task Force on Aboriginal Languages and Cultures 2005) have further elaborated on this.

Culhane (1998) and many indigenous scholars have noted, Aboriginal people can and should do without Anthropologists or other “experts” as interlocutors. However, the problem is that oral histories cannot “stand alone,” removed from their historically and culturally constituted meanings and experiences. Their meaning is almost never self-evident. Their moral and social messages need to be carefully explained, and these messages may well vary with context, with the storyteller and with the audience. However, as I will show in the subsequent chapters, the connection of oral histories to “things that happened” is by no means self evident. Our ancestors did not speak this way; instead, they invited us to think about the messages of stories and find the facts in stories.

In the past, a fundamental aspect of validating knowledge among Secwépemc and other indigenous peoples was the process of ongoing communication in and between our communities, where people trained in various ways to obtain knowledge, tried out what they learned, and shared information that contained information about recent and long-ago events and people; they shared environmental knowledge, reminded each other of places, and shared genealogical knowledge. In the words of my elder, Nellie Taylor, this constituted a significant and important way of not only transmitting new information, but also of verifying past information, and of correcting or refuting information:

Long time ago, Secwépemc people looked after the land, and all the animals and plants, everything in it. That’s why they always had plenty to fish. They had deer to hunt and plants to gather for food and medicine. But they had to practice for it, and learn about

everything on the land first for a long time. Then they knew how to look after it. It was also important for the elders to share each others' knowledge. That was how they learned and built up their understanding. What knowledge they shared had to be exact. Not like today, you tell somebody something and they turn around and tell something else (personal communication, 1994).

Never mind Western social scientists' postmodernist pre-occupation with "deconstructing" the "authority" of texts (see Clifford and Marcus 1986; Clifford 1988), as particular indigenous peoples and communities, we also need some level of authority *within our nations and among our own peoples* over reliably and accurately transmitted information. One such way concerns how storytellers of the past and present will acknowledge, in their own narratives, who it is that provided them with the information, and who their teacher storytellers were. In trying to find a metaphor within Western academia for this indigenous way of acknowledging the sources of (oral hi)stories, and thus authorizing them, Wickwire (1994) has applied the term "oral footnoting" to this practice.

As a result of the the past oppression of all forms of our peoples' cultural transmission, and in some cases as a result of real or rumoured appropriation of our stories by outsiders, many of our people have refused to share their knowledge with younger generations, citing the fear that it will get into the wrong hands, that it will be distorted, exploited and misused. While the instances of past appropriation of intellectual property, and the theft by outsiders of our material cultural property give legitimate rise to such fears, its implications for the transmission of knowledge are sad and detrimental. On the one hand, holding on, rather than sharing,

knowledge of our critically endangered languages and cultural knowledge severely curtails its oral transmission; in addition, the refusing to communicate knowledge within and across our communities also curtails the ability to subject knowledge to the communicative indigenous “peer review” that Nellie Taylor refers to in her above statement.

Writing about the critically declining situation of indigenous language knowledge among Tlingit and Haida peoples in Southeastern Alaska, Nora and Richard Dauenhauer (1998) have alerted us to this issue:

There is a real and legitimate fear of traditional ethnic materials being appropriated, exploited, trivialized, or desecrated by outsiders, and this fear has led many elders and communities in the direction of secrecy. We respect the right of elders not to transmit oral materials ... *But ownership is only half of the traditional equation; the other half is stewardship and transmission to the next generation and to the grandchildren* (Dauenhauer and Dauenhauer 1998:91; emphasis mine)

Various ethnohistorians, anthropologists and historians have suggested and applied methodological tools towards externally validating and corroborating oral histories. Arguing from a positivist point of view, Jan Vansina (1985) established a typology of oral traditions (handed down narratives of past events) and oral histories (experienced past events). Distinguishing between types and genres of oral traditions, he accorded them various levels of reliability, thus establishing “rules of evidence” for their external validity and reliability as factual history. While suggesting that wherever possible, oral traditions should be cross-checked with other data to increase their reliability, he concluded that “wherever oral traditions are

extant they remain an indispensable source for reconstruction. They correct other perspectives just as much as other perspectives correct them” (op.cit.: 199). Vansina also stipulates that “recording traditions as well as collecting the necessary [contextual] information for their critical appraisal presumes a long stay in the area studied and a true familiarity with the language and culture involved” (op.cit.:200).<sup>16</sup> Vansina further suggests that the oral historian/field researcher should subject his/her work to the scrutiny of others, but also evaluate his/her recordings in light of previously recorded oral histories: “It is possible to reevaluate older recorded traditions when one has access to the linguistic, cultural and social information required for critical information” (ibid.). In what follows, I will utilize this approach by drawing on differing data, including those from the fields of archaeology, linguistics, geology and paleo-ecology, to cross-check and triangulate evidence that derives from oral history sources.

In his work on Ilongot Headhunting (1981a) and subsequent works (1981b; 1989) Renato Rosaldo used the concept of finding “converging lines of evidence”: These can be applied to test the patchwork of personally, socially and politically situated individual oral history narratives, in order to triangulate the occurrence of historical events, the movements of people, and temporary changes in cultural practices. In addition, Rosaldo showed, “converging lines of evidence” can come from external written historical sources, which allow the researcher to date events in

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<sup>16</sup> Alexander von Gernet, who otherwise champions Vansina’s “rules of evidence” and positivist approach at the exclusion of all anthropological and ethnohistorical approaches that stipulate cultural contextualization, omits this insight of Vansina’s. Von Gernet himself has never met this condition of prolonged field research in support of any of his crown expert witness work.

terms of a chronological order. Borrows (2001) likewise suggests this approach of corroboration and triangulation:

To judge oral tradition as proof of past events I looked for a certain degree of consistency within the accounts and stories I received. I talked to people from different families on the reserve (Jones, Johnston, Nadjiwon, Akiwenzie). I spoke to people of different generations (elders, older, cousins), and of different but closely associated communities (Saugeen, Wasauksing, Walpole, Manitoulin). I also compared these oral accounts with written materials that dealt with the same events. This was a way of scrutinizing both the oral and written sources: to show where one or the other may have gaps, errors or other deficiencies as proof of past events. In such comparisons it is not always the case that oral sources are corrected by written sources, at times oral tradition may prompt significant revisions to the written record which have falsely misconstrued a past occurrence. In order to test the traditions I received for this kind of proof, I searched family histories, published scholarly works, graduate theses, missionary journals, Indian agency correspondence, surveyors notes, band council minutes, newspaper articles, individual's private papers, "explorers" travel maps and books, and government census material. (op. cit.:22).

As both Borrows and, before him and in a different context, Rosaldo note, the end product of such multiple cross-checking and cross corroboration is not only to ensure greater external validity and reliability of historical facts disseminated in these accounts. In the process of his research on Anishinabe treaty making, Borrows also uncovered the "historical meaning *that our people applied* to the process of treaty making" (ibid.). In short, this form of research allowed him not only to find the Anishinabe account of treaty making, but the way history is told, and the meanings that past events and present people's connection to these events hold.

Likewise, in his introduction to *Rethinking History and Myth: Indigenous South American Perspectives on the Past*, Jonathan Hill (1988) refutes the Levi-

Straussian myth of South American societies being “cold societies” that resist historic changes and thus progress, as opposed to western societies “that thrive upon irreversible cumulative changes” (op.cit.:4). He postulates that myth and history are complementary and co-existing modes or aspects of indigenous narrative about the past through which people “construct shared interpretive frameworks.” They can be analytically distinguished as two different “modes of consciousness according to the different weightings each gives to the relations between structure and agency” (op.cit.:6). “Historical consciousness” gives greater weight to agency, and implies “a reflexive awareness on the part of social actors of their abilities to make situational and more lasting adjustments to social orderings” (op.cit.:7); “mythical consciousness,” on the other hand, gives greater weight to structure and “overriding, transformational principles and contradictions within the social order.” By doing so, its narratives (e.g. origin myths) ensure that “relations of contrast and difference of major social importance will not be forgotten or become mere objects that can be subjected to instrumental manipulation” (op.cit.:6). Rather than representing a timeless order, however, it presents a temporal one where the past differs from the present. The “mythic consciousness” of a society thus ensures the reflexive understanding of important “social metaphors,” or what I would call “yiri7 re stsq’eys,” the social laws of a society. I will return to this point in Chapter 3, where I discuss ancient stories of Secwépemc origins and transformations.

In the late nineteenth and early twentieth century, Franz Boas collected a vast amount of information from indigenous peoples of Northwestern North



America, including some information about Secwépemc society and oral histories at the very beginning of his career (see Boas 1891; Bouchard and Kennedy 2004). Among those he employed to record ethnographic information from the Interior Salish peoples, including the Secwépemc, was James Teit, a Scottish settler who lived among the Nlakapamx people, having married an Nlakapamux woman. Shaped as ethnographic texts under Boas' editorship, these recordings represent our stories as "myths", "folklore" and legends in order to turn them into examples of cultural beliefs and practices, and the diffusion of cultural elements (see Teit 1895; 1900; 1906; 1909; 1915; 1930). As Wickwire (1994) has shown, Boas

highlighted those that he believed to be the ancient ancestral stories and he downplayed stories about current events, personal experiences, and nineteenth century epidemics, explorers, technology and religious ideas. This bias in the early published ethnographic record is striking when one listens to Nlaka'pamux storytellers today and learns that stories about nineteenth century events are well known (1994:2).

In her more recent third compilation of stories by the late Okanagan elder Harry Robinson, *Living by Stories: A Journey of Landscape and Memory*, Wickwire further shows how Boas' and Teit's fieldnotes and journals indeed reveal turn of the century storytellers' concerns to address pressing issues of Crown relations, and grievances about land rights (2005:28). However, these did not enter the published record, which represents indigenous storytelling as a-historical and unconscious of the fundamental changes to Salish societies that were occurring in the late nineteenth and early twentieth century. Instead, as Wickwire shows, storytellers like Harry Robinson creatively used Coyote stories to make points about our peoples' relations

with the Crown, and set out the agenda to “live by stories”, interweaving ancient “mythical” events of powerful animal beings, what we Secwépemc call *stseptekwll*, with “historical” events that can be situated in the nineteenth or early twentieth century. As I will show in the following chapters, looking for “converging lines of evidence” among different narratives, and between our elders’ oral histories and the narratives produced by others, gives us fruitful insights into our past. In addition, it will show the ways in which our ancestors, long ago and more recently, interwove the laws of our society in their connection to our homeland with the telling and questioning of events that happened, thus showing how historical consciousness of the past took shape and was transmitted at different periods in our history.

### **My Methodology:**

The method I apply in the chapters that follow will interweave narratives from past Secwépemc people, recorded by reliable outside sources, with narratives of contemporary elders, and contextualize them with written records produced by colonizers and settlers, or at times, and very significantly, the words of my ancestors as they could lay their hands on the written word. In the final analysis, I hope to arrive at a historical account of the Secwépemc people from our own perspective. As I noted above, one aspect of the use of narrative contextualized by the colonizers’ written documents is to triangulate information, and to find converging lines of evidence between data that will validate our oral histories. In addition, my use of oral history narratives interspersed with written historical accounts is also intended to create a dialogue between these sources, and to show how the interpretations of

events by explorers, fur traders, missionaries and government agents were often different from the interpretations made by Secwépemc people. Meanings of events and of words that were interpreted by Europeans in light of their past experience and cultural dispositions or habitus (Bourdieu 1982) were interpreted by my ancestors in light of meanings that they attached to these experiences. In a dialectic sense, these meanings and interpretations have importance for the present and the future. The stories of past events as we interpreted them continue to guide our consciousness as a people, but they need to be told, contextualized and explained.

I am using the terms “narrative” and “stories” interchangeably in this thesis to refer to oral tellings that involve the past – whether the recent, remembered past, or the ancient past several thousand years ago. In Secwépemtsin usage, we make some distinction between *stseptékwle* as “mythical story” or “legend,” as opposed to *slexéyem* or “handed down story of experience.” Moreover, Secwépemtsin in its grammatical categories of evidential suffixes distinguishes between personally experienced information and handed down information. In the above sense, Coyote stories and other stories of the ancient time, when animals and humans could change shape and communicate, are often classified as *stseptékwle*, whereas remembered stories of events, some of which reach back several generations, are classified as *slexéyem*. However, my extensive reading of recent and ancient narratives has made me question the categorization of our narratives into “mythical stories” versus “handed down, experienced stories.” More correctly, as I will show in detail in Chapter 2, *stspetékwle* are the narratives that involve the *stspetékwll*, or creatures

of our very ancient past. The converging lines of evidence show that the narrative memory of this time reaches back some 10,000 years, with other narratives commemorating events that took place some 5,000 years ago. The magical or supernatural, thus “mythical” events that ostensibly characterize these ancient stories are not unique to them, but are shared with recent stories of experience. Behind both is our world view that reality comprises cause and effect of events in not only the European empirical sense, but also in the way we attribute cause and effect through extraordinary powers that human and non-human creatures have, and that exist in special qualities that individuals have and/or inherit. They can also be obtained by practising (étsxem) for such powers. In addition, such powers linger on in places where beings with powers left their mark. In other words, there is a flux between “mythical” and “real” elements of narrative, whether recent or ancient. Secwépemc historical consciousness transcends these categories.<sup>17</sup>

Of central importance among already existing Secwépemc narratives about past events are the ethnographic works of James Teit (op.cit.) about the Secwépemc and our Salish neighbouring peoples, the Nlakapamux, St’at’imc (Lillooet) and Nsile (Okanagan). Unfortunately, Teit’s recordings of Secwépemc oral histories, represent his English language re-phrasing of what turn-of-the-century storytellers told him. Even though they do not represent verbatim records in Secwépemctsin, Teit’s stories include much detail about place names, personal names, and a fair detail of plot.

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<sup>17</sup> See Carlson 2005 for a productive attempt a a “speculative interpretive history” surrounding the British Columbia chiefs’ ways of understanding events surrounding their visit to England to have an audience with King Edward VII to address their grievances around the land question.

Teit knew Nlakapamuxcin well, and could at least understand Secwépemetsin and other Interior Salish languages. At times, he may have resorted to Chinook Jargon in eliciting stories. His transcriptions of Secwépemc words are decipherable, but not entirely accurate. Where possible, in citing from his stories, I have corrected his spellings to reflect correct Secwépemetsin words and accurate spellings in our practical orthography. As mentioned above, the bulk of Teit's recorded narratives are historically de-contextualized myths, aside from a set of "war stories," most of which are also presented in an a-historical past.<sup>18</sup>

Even before Teit, geologist George M. Dawson recorded Secwépemc place names, cultural information and information about "beliefs," along with some oral histories, although he acknowledges that some of this information came from the local Indian Agent, W. MacKay (Dawson 1892). Franz Boas made a brief excursion through Kamloops in 1889 and recorded a series of "transformer stories" (see Chapter 2) in Chinook Jargon which he subsequently published in German. They were recently translated into English (Bouchard and Kennedy 2004). In the late 1960s and early 1970s, Randy Bouchard and Dorothy Kennedy recorded stories from Secwépemc elders in the Chase area and in my community, then "Deadman Creek" (Bouchard and Kennedy 1979). The stories were supposedly recorded in Secwépemetsin, then translated by Bouchard and Kennedy, but more than that, Bouchard and Kennedy actually re-wrote them in their own words, in English

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<sup>18</sup> It should be pointed out, though, that Teit attempted to triangulate some Secwépemc war excursion with precise historical periods, by comparing them to information in Alexander Mackenzie's 1793 journals of encounters with the northern Secwépemc.

language story prose. Listening to the taped originals gives us an idea of the transformation and distortion process inherent in their work, which I will discuss in various portions of chapters below.<sup>19</sup>

A further body of previously recorded narratives that comprises “myths,” especially coyote stories and other animal stories, along with some personal memories of Secwépemc people exists in the work of linguist Aert Kuipers. During his linguistic research in Secwépemc communities between the 1960s and 1980s, Kuipers recorded a body of more than 30 “texts” from speakers of Secwépemctsin in various communities (Kuipers 1974; 1989). Given his interest in technical linguistic analysis (grammar, dictionary), he treated them as linguistic examples of Secwépemc discourse, paying very little attention to the meanings of what people said, or to the cultural, social and historical context. Where Boas de-contextualized stories into atemporal “myths” by removing historical and political references, Kuipers de-contextualized both the cultural meaning and historical embeddedness of narratives by removing English explanations that the story-tellers gave from the transcriptions of texts. I will return to this point in my discussion of Peteség stories in Chapter 9. Nonetheless, since the stories recorded by Kuipers represent a significant body of narratives by now deceased Secwépemc elders whom my peers and I grew up with, they represent valuable sources. Their meaning is not self-evident, however,

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<sup>19</sup> Secwépemc people in my community and in Chase/Neskonlith area also took, and continue to take offense at the fact that Bouchard and Kennedy copyrighted the stories of our elders in their name, arguing that the translations were their work. However, in our communities this left the bitter impression, and legacy in memory, that outsiders had appropriated our stories, sold them and published them in their name.

and I see my thesis as a contribution to understanding, explaining and interpreting them, thus coming to understand them.

In researching Secwépemc narratives about the past, I was also able to draw on a number of oral history recordings in the archives of the Secwépemc Cultural Education Society and my own community. These include taped interviews and recordings made by my wife, Marianne Ignace, together with various Secwépemc research assistants, between 1985 and 1988, and earlier recordings of songs and stories made by an anonymous researcher with the late Secwépemc elder Nels Mitchell. Marianne, my aunt Mona Jules and I had worked intermittently since the late 1989 on producing and fine-tuning translations and transcriptions of these narratives, and have used the manuscript versions in teaching Secwépemtsin and Secwépemc oral literature.

Throughout the 1990s, as I was pursuing my doctoral studies, I also actively participated in interviewing elders in my community and other Secwépemc communities through an extended Secwépemc ethnobotany research project carried out with Dr. Nancy Turner from the University of Victoria, Marianne Ignace, and numerous Secwépemc elders and research assistants. During this time, I also participated in a research project on “polity and economy in the Secwépemc Nation” headed up by Dr. Hari Sharma from Simon Fraser University. Throughout these projects, we were fortunate to interview elders like the late Nellie Taylor and Selina Jules (the last monolingual speaker of Secwépemtsin) and, at times with Marianne Ignace and Secwépemc research assistants, Christine Simon from Skeetchestn, and

Lilly Harry, Harvey Jules, Leslie Narcisse, Amie August, Adeline Willard, Mary Thomas all of whom are now deceased.

Between late 1996 and 1998, specifically through my doctoral research, I carried out a number of oral history recordings in Secwépemctsin with elders from my own community and other Secwépemc communities. At that time, my main interest was the reconstruction of Secwépemc history and historical consciousness in the first few decades of the twentieth century.

To that effect, I interviewed, over a series of sessions, Theresa Jules, Sam Camille, James Peters and Greg Ignace from my own community, Rose Phillip and Bill Porter from St'uxtéws, Sarah Deneault from Sk'atsín (Neskonlith), Laura Harry and Cecilia DeRose from Esk'ét (Alkali Lake), Clothilde Thomas from T'exelc (Sugar Cane/Williams Lake), Antoinette and Elsie Archie from Tsq'éscen (Canim Lake). From a social research point of view, these interviews can be described as very loosely structured, open-ended interviews. They entailed lengthy conversations with individual elders, or in two of the cases, groups of two to three elders, where I asked questions about the life-style and remembrances of subsistence pursuits and community life. By and large, I let the elders steer the course of the discussion, indeed I look at my research methodology for the most part entailing the elders telling their stories, carried out in Secwépemctsin. We conducted these in our own language. From the point of view of my objectives, this was exactly what I aimed for. From the point of view of processing data, the rendition of these interviews into



accurate printed pages, presented challenges, and my writing of Secwépemtsin was lacking.

Finally, in 1999-2000, I conducted several oral history interviews with various members of my community towards establishing our traditional land use at Six Mile Ranch, a large area above Kamloops Lake that at that time had become the site of a land dispute between Skeetchestn and Kamloops on the one hand, and the British Columbia Provincial Government and a developer on the other. I will also cite from some of the information recorded during that time.

Following the completion of my own interviews, I made rough translations of what was said as I logged through the tapes. It was only during the past year (late 2006 and 2007) , as I returned to my research materials, that I was able to produce verbatim transcripts and translations of the taped recordings with the help of my aunt Mona Jules.

As Smith (1999:145) noted when she discussed the function of storytelling in indigenous, decolonizing methodology, “intrinsic in story telling is a focus on dialogue and conversations amongst ourselves as indigenous peoples, to ourselves and for ourselves.” I think I have met that litmus test.

Throughout the time of my primary research in the 1990s, I functioned in multiple, overlapping roles in my community and the Secwépemc Nation. During this time, I was the elected Chief of Skeetchestn Band, overseeing the political and administrative needs of my community. When, in 1993, I set out on this PhD project, I thought of it very much along the lines of combining my continuing

interests in finding out about the history of my people with continuing, collaborative and indigenous-driven research in our communities, the way I, my wife Marianne Ignace, and other leaders in our communities had envisioned ourselves taking “Indian control of Indian education” since the 1980s (see Smith 1999 for a detailed discussion of indigenous-driven, decolonized research).

During the various research projects I was involved in at that time, I also was *research subject*, being interviewed by academics, student researchers at SFU Kamloops, graduate research assistants and others, as I provided information about our traditional land use, the teachings of my own elders, and the ways in which our language organizes our practices and traditions – in short, contributing my own stories to the research record. On numerous occasions, I was the one being video-taped, audio-taped, or who provided information to the participant observation and note-taking efforts of others.

A way to integrate the knowledge and perspectives of Secwépemc storytellers with my own situatedness and experiences is to apply a technique advanced as “analytic autoethnography” (Anderson 2006; Denzin 2006), which entails research in which the researcher is a) a full member in the research group or setting, 2) has a visible, analytically reflexive narrative presence in the written text, and 3) engages in dialogue with informants beyond the self. As a member of the Secwépemc nation, I thus set my own experiences in perspective to the memories of the people who told me about Secwépemc history, either from what they remembered or what was handed down to them. In what follows, I will put my own personal experiences or

insights in italics; I see this as engaging in dialogue with the storytellers of the past and present, but also reaching across to Secwépemc people of present and future generations, to remember, intervene, indigenize, and revitalize (Smith 1999:142ff), among other things.

An additional approach in studying, presenting and analysing narrative, in particular those of the genre *stspetékwle* (e.g. Coyote stories) is my reconstruction of stories in our language, Secwepemctsin. As I mentioned, various ethnographers recorded stories of Coyote and other ancient Transformer stories from our elders more than one hundred years ago (e.g. Boas in Bouchard and Kennedy 2004; Teit 1909; Bouchard and Kennedy 1979). No collections of Secwepemc stories, unfortunately, were made in our language. Part of my methodology of representing such stories in writing, in this thesis, is to retell and “re-write” them, based on my research of existing versions and variants, and my knowledge of Secwepemctsin, including styles of Secwepemc storytelling and oratory, as I obtained it from previous elders and storytellers.

Throughout this work, I maintain the actual names of the elders and storytellers who shared their knowledge with me, rather than maintaining their anonymity by choosing pseudonyms. This practice conforms to my people’s protocols regarding the status of elders and bearers of knowledge, and was discussed with, and sanctioned by, the storytellers themselves: In Secwépemc convention, the people who are experts and bearers of knowledge are explicitly acknowledged and recognized by name, in the spirit of “oral footnoting,” to show the sources, and thus authority, of

information that is provided to an audience. Thus, providing the names of particular elders, who are in turn known among all contemporary Secwépemc people, validates and authorizes their information among our communities and networks of families. It provides a validity test on our terms. In addition, in the spirit of Secwépemc protocol, it is my intention to do honour to the elders who shared their stories, by recognizing them and acknowledging their contributions. In our Secwépemc ways, we honour (xyemstém) and recognize (sucwentwécwmentem) one another as we share information.

### **Situating My Research in Space and Time**

As I stated at the beginning of this chapter, this thesis deals with the history of the Secwépemc as a people, or nation of people, in the very sense that the Royal Commission on Aboriginal peoples defined the concept of *Aboriginal nation* as

a sizeable body of Aboriginal people with a shared sense of national identity that constitutes the predominant population in a certain territory or collection of territories. Aboriginal Nations usually contain numerous First Nation communities within the same nation (Canada, Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples, Vol. 1, 1996b :xiv).

The RCAP report (Canada 1996b: 88) further states that "an Aboriginal [or treaty] nation is an indigenous society, possessing its own political organization, economy, culture, language and territory" (op.cit.:88). I view the Secwépemc as an Aboriginal Nation in this sense. Like other Aboriginal nations in Canada and other parts of the indigenous world, we have suffered the effects of our people's homeland and system of decision-making over our own matters being broken up, divided and

nucleated. Of the approximately 150,000 square kilometers of our traditional homeland, only about 1% is Indian reserve land, consisting of a patch-work of small Indian reserve in our 17 communities. For more than 100 years, our people were divided into administrative units imposed by outsiders, initially as Indian agencies, then as regional Department of Indian Affairs offices, and finally as Bands, now euphemized as “First Nations” and different regional Tribal Councils.<sup>20</sup>

Throughout this thesis I will show how my ancestors and elders insisted on the Secwépemc being a nation of people, with our own laws of governing ourselves, a distinct joint territory which we defended against intrusions from outsiders, and joint rights to the resources of the land. In the chapters that follow, I will focus on the perspective of the Secwépemc as one people. Besides our language, our common history and common laws (stsq’ey̓) that guide how we do things as Secwépemc, what also unites us as a people are the common bonds of kinship and family relations within and between our communities, what we call kw’seltkten-éws, the way we are related to one another. What guided my ancestors in the insistence on their nationhood vis-a-vis the intents and action of the colonizers to establish fences among us, to break us up and oppress our rights, was also the consciousness of a

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<sup>20</sup> In the last 20 years, the 17 indigenous Secwépemc communities have affiliated themselves with regional tribal councils, although in shifting and different ways: The 10 communities in the southern and south-eastern part of the Nation have membership in the Shuswap Nation Tribal Council; four communities in the north comprise the Cariboo Tribal Council (now Northern Shuswap Tribal Council); the Shuswap (Kinbasket) Band in the Windermere area was aligned with the Ktunaxa (Kootenay) Tribal Council, but recently re-joined the Shuswap Nation Tribal Council; Esk’et (Alkali Lake) continues to be an independent band, as is High Bar, which itself is divided into two portions. Pavilion (Tskw’aylecw) has become mainly Lillooet in political affiliation, culture and language, and is aligned with the Lillooet (St’at’imc) Tribal Council. The northern communities are in the BC Treaty Process, we southern communities (through the Shuswap Nation Tribal Council) do not believe in its effectiveness.

common history and political destiny. During the 1980s, as we the Secwépemc began again to articulate our rights, title to land, and looked at ways we could govern ourselves, the people in our communities reminded one another of our joint nationhood.<sup>21</sup> Now, twenty years later, despite annual unity meetings and the continuing ideology of the Secwépemc as one people, the seduction to be separated into manageable First Nations/Bands is as great as ever. I hope that this thesis will inspire our people to remind ourselves of our common history, and help to reinvigorate the consciousness of unity among ourselves .

Throughout this thesis, I see my own positioning as a Secwépemc person mirroring the notion of Kw'seltkten-éws, or kinship, that we have among our communities. Family and kinship ties cut across the ways in which the Canadian Indian Act defines us as band members in particular Indian Bands, but gives us multiple connections with other Secwépemc communities, and in some cases outside of our communities. In my research, I make use of this connectedness: My "home base" or point of departure, is my own community, Skeetchestn, whose territory, resources and people I know best. Through my ancestors, I have distinct connections to other communities, and indeed, every one of the elders I interviewed are my kw'seltkten in the wider sense of people connected me through the blood ties and intermarriage of my ancestors and relatives.

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<sup>21</sup> See "The Sounds of Thunder" (1983), Report of the Shuswap Nation Task Force – Submission on Models for Self Government. Kamloops: Shuswap Nation Tribal Council

## **Overview of Chapters**

Following this introduction, in Chapter 2, I will discuss at length **Le q'7éses te stseptékwll** - our ancient history of how we came to be in our lands. Our ancient oral histories of Ske'lep, Coyote, and of “transformers” who were people from our own country that vanquished “cannibals,” and thus enabled our ancestor’s life in our homeland; these ancient stories also tell us of foreigners who came into our land and brought us language and new ways of making a living that melded with the ways of our own people. Much of the information in this chapter derives from a close reading and interpretation of previously recorded Secwépemc and Nlakapamux oral histories by James Teit (1898; 1900; 1906; 1909; 1915), Franz Boas (Bouchard and Kennedy 2004), George M. Dawson (1892), triangulated with data from the geological history of the Interior, as well as paleo-ecological, archaeological and linguistic information. Some fragments of transformer stories survived among elders in the last generation, aside from stories that I remember hearing when I was young. The final part of this chapter will discuss the moral, educational and ecological messages of stories, in particular coyote stories, in so far as they continue to guide Secwépemc historical and cultural consciousness by working in multiple ways to explain the present in light of past experience.

Chapter 3 – “Boundaries recognized by all,” deals with Secwépemc Land and Land Tenure. In this chapter I will discuss information about the external boundaries, of our homeland, Secwepemcúlecw, as they were maintained and changed over time through treaties among Secwepemc people and our neighbouring

nations, and through warfare and intermarriage. An important issue in this context are the underlying laws and protocols of access and ownership of resources in the nation. As I show, Secwepemc people throughout time maintained a sense of Secwepemcúlecw as the common “ranch” of our people, with equal access of all people connected to our nation through ties of kinship and marriage.

Chapter 4, “**Re tsuwet.s-kucw ne Secwepemcúlecw**, - Our Ways on the Land”<sup>22</sup> expands on the existence of Secwepemcúlecw over time by examining how our people, over the course of several thousand years, developed detailed ecological knowledge and wisdom about our land, as they harvested its resources. The knowledge of traditional seasonal rounds existed, and continued to exist in the Secwepemc calendar, as it is connected to memories of travels on the land, to practices and memories of ancestors who shared experiences on this land. Stories of Sk’elép and Transformers from the ancient past, in turn, connect our own ancestors’ practices to the landscape as having existed for many, many generations.

In Chapter 5, “**Secwépemcúlecw - Our Sense of Place**,” I will show how the ways in which our people communicated in our language about the landscape and places in our land, anchoring knowledge to landscape, and memories to places. Stories of Sk’elép, Coyote, moreover connect us morally to the landscape of our ancestors, but also represent ways of representing and commemorating ecological and geographic knowledge. Some 250 years ago, our ways of travelling on

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<sup>22</sup> The Secwépemc term tsuwet describes someone’s “activities,” or “the way people do something,” and hence has been used as an approximation to the anthropological concept of “culture.” Unlike the de-historicized late nineteenth century concept of culture, however, tsuwet has a time dimension and entails the idea of activities happening as process rather than a-temporal structure.



the land accommodated travel on horseback and by horse and buggy or sled. While travel routes were adapted to this means of transportation, our people profoundly adapted horse culture into the ways we thought and think about our land and our activities on the land.

In Chapter 6, “Yiri7 re sxyemstwécw-kt – How we honour one another,” I will focus on stories and memories of Secwépemc social and political relationships. The concepts xye<sup>m</sup>stwécw – “honouring [respecting] one another” and kw’seltktenéws embody how our social, political and spiritual connection with one another as Secwepemc, all of which, again, are anchored in our experiences on the land. The narratives of our ancestors show how the system of mutual respect worked to sustain us in the past.

Chapter 7 is titled, “Tskitsc re semséme7 – the Coming of the White People.” It deals with the history of contact throughout the nineteenth century, including the fur trade period, when our people remained in charge of our livelihood and institutions, and the devastating changes of the later part of the nineteenth century, which included, in a period of 20 years, the gold rush, the smallpox epidemic, missionaries settling among us, and the establishment of reserves and the Canadian government’s Indian Administration in our communities. The information presented in this chapter is based on ethnohistorical accounts and oral history information.

Chapter 8, “Hiding Religion in the Church,” deals with religious syncretism, resistance and accommodation during the late 19th to mid-twentieth

century. In this chapter I will present the Secwépemc perspective on missionaries, the teachings of Catholicism and the maintenance of our own spiritual values and beliefs, as commemorated in stories by our elders, and the meaning of prayer in Secwépemtsin.

In Chapter 9, “A Ranch of our Own,” I discuss our people’s struggle for the recognition of our rights to our homeland, and authority to make decisions over ourselves during the late nineteenth and early twentieth century, culminating in the political resistance movement that led to the Memorial to Sir Wilfrid Laurier and other memorials and petitions, and various Indian rights association. Besides telling this history through the documentation in the archival record, I will present and analyse Stories of Resistance from this period: These are Secwépemc stories about the resistance to colonization, about the King of England, stealing his daughter, and recovering our own land and its resources.

Chapter 10, “Yenke k stspelq’ilcs re sk’elép, or the second coming of Coyote,” is my concluding chapter. Here, I remind us of the dialectic connection between present and past, and pointing the way to the future where we need to continue to reflect on our past, and keep our memories alive, even in new and changing forms, as told by our youth. I will also briefly discuss the significance of my work on a political level, and what its implications are for revitalizing our consciousness as a Nation.

## CHAPTER 2: LE Q'7ES TE STSPTEKWL<sup>23</sup> – THE ANCIENT STORY-PEOPLE

“At the beginning, the earth was very small, but it gradually became larger, emerging more and more from the waters... The people who inhabited the earth during this period partook of the characteristics of both men and animals. They were called **stspetekwll**. Some were cannibals. At that period many kinds of animals, birds and fishes did not exist, nor many kinds of trees, plants, and berries. The earth was much troubled with great winds, fires and floods. In those days the Old-One... sent Coyote to travel over the world and put it to rights. He was gifted with magical power beyond that of all the other mythological beings, and had great knowledge and cunning; yet often he proved himself

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<sup>23</sup> This chapter was initially going to consume a few paragraphs in my thesis. It grew into much more due to what not only First Nations, but peoples in all parts of the earth are being told: that we live in an age of hugely advancing, unprecedented, human-made climate change. In addition, histories are never “neat” or linear, as my own ancestors’ meshing of language, culture and history with Coastal peoples show. What inspired me here, is two-fold: between 1997 and 2004, I taught courses on Secwépemc oral history at SFU Kamloops (previously SCES/SFU), which caused me to re-read the substantial body of work on Secwépemc and Interior Salish stories left behind by James Teit, and pondering and reconsidering the meanings of stories together with my indigenous students, most of whom had been deprived of hearing them as children. It caused me to reconsider the written legacies left not only by Teit, but also by Dawson, Boas, and in this century, Aert Kuipers and Bouchard and Kennedy. I was fortunate to be able to listen to original recordings that inspired often inaccurate translations. I was also fortunate to listen to, in other instances, excellent transcriptions, which nonetheless left out cultural context. In early 2007 my wife, Marianne Ignace, was asked by the Shuswap Nation Tribal Council to assemble a presentation of the last 10,000 years of Secwépemc history. Being a thorough and innovative researcher, she looked at the climate history, superimposing the archaeological record, her thorough knowledge of historical linguistic information, and my own ruminations about our stories. She also gave me to read Tim Johnsen’s Master’s thesis work on glacial lakes in the area, reminding me that he had shown up on our doorstep a decade ago. The enclosed is my next step in that analysis. I will hand it back to her to take it to the next phase. The next stage will be a synthesis, no doubt.

Stseptekwll is not easy to translate. The root word “ptekwll(em)” has often been translated as “story-telling”; however, given the information we have from Teit (1900; 1909) about the stspetekwll as the people who lived at a certain age long time ago, I don’t think “story telling” covers it. The Stspetekwll are certainly of a time a few thousand years ago. Some people have used the notion of “sacred stories” to refer to this. In the stories, as we will see, the sacred mixes with the profane, but of course they are sacred in the very sense that they convey what I call yiri7 rstsqey’s-kuew, the “marking” of our rights and traditions.

to be selfish, lazy and vain, doing many foolish and bad tricks. In fact, he was fond of amusing himself and playing tricks on other people. Nevertheless he did a great deal of work which benefited the people, and did away with many evil beings. Although Coyote was a long time on earth and traveled all over it, yet he left much of his work undone. Probably his greatest work was the introducing of salmon into the rivers, and the making of fishing-places...The Old-one was the chief of the ancient world, and finished the work of Coyote and other transformers, leaving the earth in the way we see it at present” (from: Teit 1909: 595-596 ).

The beginnings of our history are connected to events precipitated by climate change that shaped our land more than 10,000 years ago. In the confines of academic disciplines that set out to find out about our past, our ancient history has become separated from us as a people, and from our own activities, let alone our consciousness of our past. The epistemology of our past has become compartmentalized into scattered pieces removed from our own lives: archaeologists have relied on their methodologies, sometimes supplemented by geological and paleo-ecological data. Linguists have examined the existence and divergence of languages, usually in isolation from the findings of archaeologists, and most of all have left us legacies of technical grammars, at best dictionaries. Turn of the century anthropological discourses of our past cast the stories of our ancestors into the mold of a static, timeless “ethnographic present.” In these anthropologists’ stories, our Secwépemc and Interior Salish storytellers’ handed down narratives of past events was put into the boxes of “myths,” “conceptions of the world,” and “religion.”<sup>24</sup> Our ancestors’ stories reflecting any kind of conception and consciousness of history

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<sup>24</sup> These are the categories into which Franz Boas edited Teit’s and others’ oral histories recorded among Interior Salish peoples.

were edited into purportedly timeless narratives dealing with “cultural traditions,” “myth,” “legend” and “folklore.”

Ethnographer James Teit came upon fragments of memory of recent or ancient events, but his editor (Franz Boas) eliminated these from the ethnographic account that tried to emphasize a timeless, pristine past without showing our people’s words, let alone consciousness, of how times had changed, especially under the onslaught of Europeans in the previous century (see Wickwire 1994).

Even among our own people, the small and scattered fragments that remain of the very ancient stories of the past have been disregarded – just as the colonizers suggested, they have become our “religion”, our “myths or legends” and thus NOT our history. By contrast, the narratives that are usually cited as evidence of our existence in our territories are archaeological data that disconnect us, the present Secwépemc, from our past, and decipher the ancient past as “cultural sequences” or “traditions” as supported by types of artifacts. By and large, our own words about our ancient past have been treated as irrelevant.

Yet, among archaeologists, often in teamwork with historians and First Nations people, the past decade or so has brought a welcome change in the way that Aboriginal peoples’ own ancient histories have been taken seriously, and have been incorporated into the reconstruction of not only the recent past, but also the long ago past. Knut Fladmark had a visionary insight in the mid-nineteen eighties, when he drew attention to the ways in which coyote stories provide similarities to archaeological information

...In effect, both native oral histories and archaeology agree that Indians have lived in British Columbia for a very long time, indeed a time so vast in comparison to the brief European presence that it is 'eternal.' The two viewpoints also concur that the first Indian inhabitants of western Canada coped with a natural world very different from the one we know today (Fladmark 1986:11).

Using the example of Interior Salish Coyote stories of breaking the dam to guide the salmon up our rivers, Fladmark noted,

Indeed, in the early post-glacial period, some streams may have been completely blocked to ocean-run fish, just as an Interior Salish legend tells of a time when salmon could not ascend past the canyon of the Fraser River until the great supernatural hero Coyote broke the dam and freed the fish to swim upstream (op.cit.:26)

More recently, there have been various fruitful efforts to combine archaeological information with oral history information to throw light on the ancient past in Northwestern North America (Martindale and Marsden 2003; Standen and McNab 1996; Fedjie and Matthews, eds. 2005). They all remind us that our ancient oral histories should not be shrugged off, that they do indeed provide information that at times corroborates the archaeological, paleo-environmental, linguistic and geological record; beyond that, it grounds the lessons learned from the above sciences in our homelands, and the lessons of our ancestors.

This chapter continues the above kind of work: My method here is to assemble a composite picture of the ancient past of Secwépemc people between 11,000 years ago and 3,500 years ago, not based on archaeological information alone, but also drawing on "converging lines of evidence" from other disciplines, like paleo-ecology and linguistics, and importantly, putting them into perspective with

the fragments of our own elders' knowledge of the past that were recorded. Sadly, our elders and historians of the late nineteenth and early twentieth century were rarely asked what they knew about our ancient past, save for the few words recorded our ethnographer, James Teit, as he had set out to record information about myth, religion and worldview.

Earth science can reveal important information about our past, if we examine it in context with the knowledge handed down by our ancestors. Paleo-ecological and paleo-climatological studies<sup>25</sup> of the Southern Interior (Hebda 1983; Matthews) have shown the profound environmental changes that have occurred in the last 12,000 years, thus reminding us that climate change is nothing new to our environment. Generations of our ancestors were faced with climate change and its consequences thousands of years ago, and successfully adapted to changing environments.

By about 12,000 years ago, the Cordilleran ice sheet had largely collapsed (Walker and Pellatt 2001:41).<sup>26</sup> The period that precipitated and followed the melting of the ice sheet and which lasted until about 8,200-7,800 years ago, was marked by hot, dry summers with frequent fires, referred to as the **xerothermic** period (Walker and Pellatt 2001). The study of micro-organisms in lake sediment from this time shows that peak summer temperatures were about 3°C warmer than

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<sup>25</sup> See above; these studies are based on paleo-liminology (sediments at lake bottoms), paleobotany (study of pollen); dendochronology (tree rings); chironomid analysis (small biological water organisms); and geological glacial history.

<sup>26</sup> Carlson and Klein (1992) report finds of fossilized kokanee salmon - a land-locked form of sockeye salmon - on the shores of Kamloops Lake radio-carbon dated at 18,000 to 15,500 B.P. They speculated that areas of the Interior in the heartland of Secwépemc territory may have formed a warm, ice-free corridor, but no further evidence exists in support of this. Fulton (pers. comm.) suggests that the radio-carbon dates may have been contaminated, and the consensus among paleo-ecologists and geologists is that de-glaciation started in the high plateau, instead.

present, although winters were likely slightly cooler than at present. A “strong Pacific high” prevailed during the summer months. This period peaked around 9,000 to 8,000 years ago (Walker and Pellatt op. cit.). In other words, the xerothermic period matches, at least in broad strokes, the time of heat, of “great winds and fires” referred to as the time of Coyote in our *stspetékwlé* or ancient stories.

Around 8,000 years ago, the warm dry weather began to change to a still warm but wetter period, which lasted until about 4,500 years ago. During this period, dry grasslands with abundant sage and few trees gave way to moister grasslands with expanding populations of trees such as Douglas-fir and ponderosa pine.

Another major change occurred between 4,800 and 3,200, when the climate got colder, and Engelmann spruce/subalpine fir forests established themselves (op. cit.). As we will see, the landscape that emerged at that time, which we call **t7iweltk** (the high, forested plateau; also the area that is high upriver),<sup>27</sup> is a key element in our seasonal round.

From geological studies of the Southern Interior, we know that between 13,000 and 10,000 years ago, as the ice had melted in the higher plateaus, there existed a network of ribbon lakes throughout the river basins of the Interior (Fulton 1969; Johnsen and Brennand 2006; Johnsen and Brennand 2004)) which were held

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<sup>27</sup> **T7iweltk** or “upriver,” but also up the mountain in altitude, is the opposite of **wutemtk**, the downriver areas (see Kuipers 2002). **Wutemtk** (downriver), of course, is also the direction the Salish immigrants came from. **T7iweltk** thus identifies the ancient country of the Coyote people.



in place by ice dams. The glacial lake system covering the Thompson River, Deadman Creek and Shuswap Lakes basins drained into the Columbia River system rather than the Fraser, thus draining *eastward*. According to these studies, the South Thompson drainage east of what is now Kamloops became ice-free first. A large ice dam just south of what is now the town of Spence's Bridge held up the lake that covered much of the Thompson River system, "Glacial Lake Thompson," which at its peak was 200m above the current level of the valley bottom. As the water dug its trench into the sediment east of Kamloops and thus lowered the water levels, a second stage of the glacial lake formed, known as Glacial Lake Deadman, named after the Deadman Creek Valley in my community. This lake stretched from east of what is now Kamloops, comprising the current Kamloops lake basin, down to Spence's Bridge. It was some 80 m above the valley bottom, and carried more than 20 cubic kilometers of water (Johnsen and Brennand 2004).

The marks of Glacial Lake Thompson and Deadman are still visible throughout the hills that frame the Deadman Creek and Thompson River valleys. Where the landscape has not been disturbed by urban sprawl, mines or the plough, the varve (wave) lines of the lake are clearly visible in the hills that frame the Thompson River and Deadman Creek valleys, nowadays often criss-crossed by cattle trails and dirt roads. Nonetheless, they provide us with an ongoing reminder of, and connection with, that time so long ago. Our ancestors knew that the varve lines connected to Coyote's time and an ancient "flood," as they said to ethnographer

James Teit that “the water-marks of this flood may be seen on some parts of the mountains” (Teit 1917b:13).

About 9,750 years ago, in a single cataclysmic event, the ice dam near Spence’s Bridge gave way, chuting 20 cubic kilometres of water down the Fraser River in a short span of a few days, and thus reversing the flow of the Thompson River system. The rupture of the ice dam caused the Thompson River system to drain southwest into the Fraser River system (Johnsen and Brennand 2004). The reversal of the drainage, and the subsequent stabilizing of the Fraser/Thompson River system, in turn, enabled salmon to establish themselves in the river system.

I remember from my own grandparents the story about the rupture of the ice dam. Here is how I have told it:

Le q’7éses ta7 k st’éxelcs re swewll.  
M-yews re stiteyts re Sk’elép ell re kw’selktens.  
M-tsutes-ekwe,  
“kénmes-enke ks ta7es re st’exelcs re swewll?  
M-nésés te setétkwe es xpqenweñs k skénems.  
M-cllgwelcetkwus-ekwe,  
ell re m-nék’entsutes, wel re m-xenwéllens es kwewts.  
Kw’incwes-enke tek sitq’t re skwewts wel re m-xléqes-enke nek  
swétes-enke tek ctáلكwetens.  
Neri7 re xléqes-ekwe.  
Sten-ekwe neri7 wel re m-kitsc yi7ene te tek’sele te tekt’kwilc es  
piqwens re ctáلكwetens.  
Wikt.s-ekwe yi7éne te sexts’éý, m-tsutes,  
“me7 kwéntem yi7éne te stektsúsem.”  
M-kwénses-ekwe, m-tsqw’mnúsenses,  
m-pelq’ílwes te s7elkst.s.  
M-nek’entsutes-ekwe re sk’elép te kw’oyi7se te tuwiwt.  
M-ts’7umes, m-qnimmentmes te nuxwnúxwenxw.  
M-tskwentémes te t7ikw es ta7es es qw’lleps.  
M-tsutes, “t’henes-enke k st’7ékwes yi7ene te skw’imeñelt.”

Mesésq't-ekwe neri7 re sw7ecs re sk'elép,  
 m-xpçenweñs-ekwe stemi k tsuwet.s yi7ene te tekt'kwilc.  
 Le cwéñwen-uýes ne mesésqt, m-qilltes-ekwe.  
 M-neses ne setetkwe,  
 m-kellkíllenses re nuxwnúxwenxw re ctáلكwetens,  
 m-qw'cit.ses re txexeténs,  
 es ta7es-ekwe cu7tsem es tcístés re sqlelten re text'éxelcs.  
 Pyin te sitq't e qwelmintmes es kwemtuses k st'exelcs re sqelqlelten,  
 es  
 ta7wes k stem cu7tsem es tcístém,  
 yewske ri7 k sxwts'ilc-kt es yucwmenstwecw-kt ell  
 es knucwentwecw-kt.  
 Pyin te sitq't yiri7 re sxexeteñ-kt.  
 E ta7wes ks xenwellen-kt es xilem-kt, me7 qwenqwentwilc-kt ell me7  
 kw'iyusem-kt.

#### Translation

Long time ago, Coyote was living in Secwépemc country, and he and his relatives were hungry, as usual. He had heard that there were salmon running way down in the river, but they never made it up the Thompson and Fraser Rivers into Secwépemc country. So he figured he'd go down and check it out.

To get down the river, he changed himself into a leaf, but it blew away. Then he tried to get downstream by changing himself into a rock....but he sank. Then he tried changing into a reed, but it got stuck in a back eddy. Finally, he changed himself into a wooden stick, and he floated down the Thompson River, past the mouth of the Bonaparte, and all the way above Lytton, where a big fish weir was built across the river, preventing the salmon from running upstream. Two big women T'kwilc (Indian doctors) were guarding the fish weir. When they saw the stick that had become snagged in the fish weir, they pulled it out, thinking it would make a good piece of firewood. When they threw it on the fire, however, the stick changed into a young boy, a baby. The women thought, "what a cute baby!" and one of them said right away, "pull him out, quick!" They took the boy in, feeding him and sleeping with him in their tent. During the next four nights, Coyote changed himself into his own self, and had sex with the women, making them each a baby. Early in the morning after the fourth night,

when the two women were still asleep, he snuck out, ran to the fishing weir and broke it. All the salmon started running up the river, and made their way into Secwépemc country where they spawned in the creeks running into the river, including right here in the Thompson, by the mouth of Deadman Creek, where it is written on the rocks. And Coyote said, "From now on, every year this time, the salmon will run up the rivers, and the people will catch them." And because he had made children with those two women, the Secwépemc and Wutemtkemc had become in-laws who kept marrying among one another and shared one another's fish, deer, roots and berries.

The Nlakapamux have a similar story (Teit 1898; 1915: 301ff). Other ice dams which ruptured existed in the Interior, also connected to Coyote's work. It is said that after he led the salmon up the Thompson River, "he continued his journey, and led the salmon to the head waters of the North Thompson River, then, returning to Kamloops Lake, he conducted them up the South Thompson to Shuswap Lake. From the latter place he went south through the Spallumcheen and Okanagan to take the salmon up Columbia River."<sup>28</sup> The Okanagan also have a similar story about Coyote breaking a fish weir on the Lower Okanagan River, thus guiding the salmon upriver into the Columbia system (see Teit 1915:301), clearing obstructions in the river and creating fishing places. The story also gives an explanation why there are no salmon in the Similkameen River.

Archaeologists have advanced various theories about early stone tools found in the Interior; some have noted similarities with early Plains culture and by the Old Cordilleran tradition reaching as far as the California coast (Pokotylo 1998:82-83;

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<sup>28</sup> The passage he must have chosen would have taken him along the Salmon River, to Mara lake and then

Rousseau and Stryd 1996). The human archaeology of the south-central Interior begins with **Gore Creek Man**, the headless skeleton of a young man that was found in an embankment about 20 km east of Kamloops in the 1960s, presumably killed in a “flash flood,” and dated at 8,360 years old (Cybulski et al. 1981). After being stored in the Royal British Columbia Museum in Victoria for two decades, Gore Creek man was repatriated to Secwépemcúlecw in the late 1980s at the initiative of myself and others working at the time for the Secwépeme Cultural Education Society. Nonetheless, Gore Creek man served the interests of science: Stable carbon isotope analysis, a method developed by Brian Chisholm (Chisholm and Nelson 1983; Chisholm et al. 1986) showed that he ate little marine protein, and probably lived on a diet of meat rather than salmon.

Subsequent phases identified by tool resemblances are the early Nesikep tradition (7,550- 6,050 B.P.) identified as a “distinctive interior ungulate hunting culture, and the distinctly different artifacts of the **Lehman phase** (6,050-4,450 B.P.). Archaeologists associate Lehman phase archaeological sites with upland hunting, as well as valley bottom dwelling, including some reliance on salmon: Lehman phase remains from the Clinton area show that these people derived about 37% (+/- 10%) of their diet from marine protein, i.e. salmon (Lovell et al., op.cit).

A third phase noted by archaeologists is the **Lochnore Phase** (5,550 – 4,000/3,500 B.P.), a “dry forest and river-oriented adaptive pattern which, according to Pokotylo (1998:84)

“developed from the movement of Salishan-speaking peoples from the coast up the Fraser River system into the Northern Plateau around 3,350 B.C. (5,550 B.P) to exploit increasing salmon resources near the onset of cooler and wetter climatic conditions.”

The Lochnore phase, in turn, overlaps with the later Lehman phase of the Nesikep tradition for about 1,000 years. Archaeologists interpreted this to show that for about a thousand years, the new tradition introduced from the Coast and the pre-existing tradition existed side by side. This caused archaeologists to stipulate that “the Nesikep tradition and Lochnore phase ... represent separate ethnic groups with different linguistic affiliations, the Nesikep tradition represents non-Salishan groups while the Lochnore phase and Plateau Pit house tradition are Salishan” (Stryd and Rousseau 1996). They may be wrong about the pithouses.

Archaeologists further point out that around 4,500 years ago, these overlapping cultural phases gave way to the Plateau Pithouse Tradition, associated with underground pithouses (c7istkteñ), extensive reliance on root vegetables processed in underground pit-ovens, hunting for ungulates other animals in the high plateaus and subalpine areas of snow-covered mountains, and, importantly, intensive salmon production: The study of human remains associated with less than 4,500 years has shown that people relied on salmon for 40-60% of the protein in their diets (Lovell et. al. 1986).

Information from historical linguistics provides some interesting points of convergence with the above archaeological data. Despite earlier stipulation that the

Salish language family had interior origins, linguists since the 1950s have made convincing arguments for coastal origins of the Salish language family (Swadesh 1950; Elmendorf 1965; Kinkade et al. 1998:68): Kinkade (1991) researched lexical evidence for a coastal origin, and showed that words for several plants and shellfish that occur only on the coast can be reconstructed for Proto-Salishan only, but not for Proto-Interior Salish; he therefore suggests that the homeland (or point of dispersal) for Salishan languages was the Lower Fraser River (Kinkade et al. 1998: 68).

Swadesh (cited in Kinkade et al. 1998:op.cit.) dated the depth of linguistic divergence between Coast and Interior Salish at 55 centuries (5,500 years ago), with internal divergence among Interior Salish languages dated at 45 centuries (4,500 years ago),<sup>29</sup> William Elmendorf (1965) stipulated that Coast Salish and Interior Salish diverged some 5,500 to 6,900 years ago; the northern (Lillooet, Shuswap, Nlakapamux) or earlier branch of the Interior Salish languages, in turn, split from the southern branch (Okanagan, Columbian, Flathead, Kalispel, Coeur d'Alene) around about 3,500 to 4,500 years ago, resulting in a further south-east migration of Salish speaking peoples into the Columbia Plateau. The last split in the Northern Interior Branch was between Nlakapamuxcin (Thompson) and Secwépemtsin (Shuswap), and occurred some 2,000 years ago (ibid.). Remarkably, this points to Secwépemtsin/Nlakapamuxcin, being at the last node of language divergence within

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<sup>29</sup> glottochronology has since been discredited, mainly due to the fact that linguistic change is not steady, like the half-life of radioactive chemical elements, but involves human agency, social changes, and environmental and social impacts. However, it strikes me that Swadesh's and Elmendorf's data quite closely match the other records.

the family, being older than the English language by several hundred years. Elmendorf (op.cit.), who did not examine Interior Salish oral histories, also suggested that the heartland or cradle of Interior Salish languages was in the Thompson Lake (Glacial Lake Thompson) area. As we will see below, this is exactly the area where the ancient stories of “transformers” or immigrants are situated – groups of people who brought the Coast Salish language into the Interior and mixed it with a language that was already spoken by our earlier ancestors who had lived here for 3,000 or more years.

Our language, then, appears to have been created out of Coast Salish, introduced by immigrants from the Coast, and the language(s) that our ancestors, the “Coyote people,” who already lived here at the time of the Salish immigrations. What was this language, we may never know. Over a period of a thousand years or so, it merged with the new Salish language, becoming what linguists call Proto-Interior Salish. The Interior Salish languages may well still have residue from what



we spoke before,<sup>30</sup> although by the early twentieth century, our ancestors had developed different accounts of the origins and dispersal of our languages.<sup>31</sup>

What do other oral histories tell us about the ancient past? James Teit wrote down scant fragments of information, like scattered flakes of arrowheads, that Secwépemc, Nlakapamux and St'at'imc elders told him around the turn of the century. In the information provided to Teit by his consultants from all Interior Nations – the Nlakapamux (Teit 1900), St'at'imc (Teit 1906), Secwépemc (Teit 1909) and Okanagan (Teit 1930), - Coyote or “Old Coyote” is consistently mentioned as the most ancient of “transformers.”<sup>32</sup> Throughout the stories, Coyote’s association is consistently with glaciers and mountain-tops: The Coyote’s house is said to be in a glacier; according to others, it is in the “upper world.” The latter is described as a

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<sup>30</sup> In his ethnography of the Flathead, Turney-High (1937:5) mentions peoples whom “the Kalispel and the Flathead claim to have inhabited the country before their arrival” (cited in Kinkade et al.:68).

<sup>31</sup> Secwépemc and other Interior Salish oral tradition fragments about the origin of the different languages give us few clues, perhaps for lack of ethnographers having asked the right questions. According to Secwépemc information, Old One, the “Chief of the Ancient world” who had sent Coyote, then came back to finish off some of his work, “led the different tribes into the countries which they now inhabit, and gave them the languages they were to speak.” (Teit 1909:596) Other short accounts about the “dispersion of tribes and origin of languages” recorded by Teit from Nlakapmx people (Teit 1915:400-401) transpose the dispersal of languages onto a plot that appears to be in part inspired by Old Testament stories, in part by nineteenth century prophet narratives: people from the Lytton area get scattered over the land and develop different languages after failing to find the trail to the spirit world.

<sup>32</sup> The Interior Salish languages, but not Coast Salish, all share cognates of the term for Coyote. The Secwépemc term is sk'elép or alternately sek'lép; the Nlakapmx term is snk'yep; St'at'imcets (Lillooet) uses snk'yap; Nsilx (Okanagan) is snk'lip. Closely related to that are terms for Coyote in Southern Interior Salish languages (see Kuipers 2002:40). In his *Salish Etymological Dictionary* (2002), Aert Kuipers reconstructs \*sk'lep as the Proto Interior Salish form. Interestingly, Kuipers (op.cit.:70) lists smǵaw (he uses the “gamma” rather than my font, ġ, to stand for the throat or pharyngeal sound) as the Proto Coast Salish word for “big canine or big feline.” In Interior Salish, including Secwépemtsin, the transcribed form semrew means lynx, and does not refer to big canines, but a certain feline, i.e. a lynx. Okanagan storyteller Harry Robinson calls Shimiyew (obviously a derivative of semrew) the ancient name of Coyote before he received his powers from Old One, the Creator. But he might have got it backwards....

“prairie occupying the top of a plateau with steep sides” (Teit 1898:23; 1900:341). As the excerpt from Teit’s monographs on the Nlakapamux and Secwépemc (Teit 1900: 1909) at the onset of this chapter shows, the Interior Peoples said that Coyote’s work took place at a time of “great winds, heat and fires.” As I showed above, the xerothermic period described by paleo-ecologists featured these characteristics.

In another piece of information recorded by Teit from Nlakapamux elders, the word is that “in the beginning there were no lakes and rivers. They were said to have originated after a deluge, which also carried fish into the ponds.” Only the Coyote and three men escaped the deluge (Teit 1898: 20), being left high and dry, and having to take trees for wives.

The country inhabited by the “Coyote people” is described as “the country along the Thompson River east of Lytton” (Teit 1898:20). In a footnote (n. 34) he adds, “The country referred to includes all the present territory of the Nkamtcinemux (Nlakapamux near the mouth of Nicola river area), and down the Thompson near Lytton, the Nicola, Similkameen, Okanagon and southern Shuswap regions.” According to the information he obtained from local people, this country is also associated with coyote (*canis latrans*) habitat. Teit was also told that [Coyote] principally talked in the Shuswap language, and in a peculiar tone of voice: “It is not known whether the Coyote talked in Shuswap just for sake of imitation, or whether that was his natural language” (Teit 1898:103, n.36). Indeed, among the Nlakapamux, Coyote’s association with Secwépemtsin, the Shuswap language,

appears to have been transmitted through time, having persisted among twentieth century Nlakapamux storytellers: As Teit (1917a:12) wrote,

Old Coyote (he is called 'Uncle Coyote' by some)<sup>33</sup> was the ancestor of all Indians. He had many wives. From some are descended the Thompson, from others the Okanagan, from still others the Shuswap... At one time they all spoke the same language. It was like Shuswap.

In his discussion of "foreign speech" as one variation of "character speech in Thompson [Nlakapamux] Salish narrative", Egesdal (1992:56) further commented on Coyote speaking Secwépemctsin in Nlakapamux stories. He notes that linguistically, Secwépemctsin (Shuswap) "retains certain Proto-Salish segments", i.e. represents a more ancient form of Interior Salish (op.cit.:57), and thus lends itself to providing "authenticity" to stories as ancient: "The mythic language, then, was "like Shuswap", and to have Coyote speak Shuswap probably lent a tone of authenticity to the performance of the traditional narrative." He fails to take into account, however, that the Nlakapamux Coyote stories, closely shared with Secwépemc Coyote stories, perhaps go back to a time when Nlakapamuxcin had not diverged as a separate language; the "Secwépemc" language in these stories represents the language that the common ancestors of the Nlakapamux and Secwépemc would have spoken more than 2000 years ago.

Of further interest in this context is the fact that the Upper Thompson (Upper Nlakapamux in the area between Lytton and Ashcroft) used the endearment

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<sup>33</sup> See Teit, unpublished Salish fieldnotes, regarding "uncle coyote."

term **sisi sk'elép** or “Uncle Coyote” (Egesdal, op.cit.) to refer to Coyote, who is otherwise called **nk'yep** in their language. Both **sisi** and **sk'elép** are words that derive from Secwépemctsin and do not occur in Nlakapamuxcin: **Sisi** derives from the Secwépemc term for “mother’s brother,” **sise**<sup>34</sup> (see Chapter 3 below), and **sk'elép**, as I mentioned above, is the Secwépemc word for *coyote*. It is highly possible that in the nineteenth century, the term **sisi**, in a pun, became used to describe Jesus Christ, who became **sisi kri**: This term derived ostensibly from French “Jésus Christ,” but the “sisi” could also mean “brother”! I will return to this point in Chapter 4.

### **Travelling Transformers**<sup>35</sup>

At the time when Coyote was still doing his work, other “transformers” appeared in the country. The first of these, according to Nlakapamux traditions (Teit 1898; 1915; Hill-Tout 1915), are the **Qoa'qLqaL** (**Qwiqwt'qwet't**, from “**qwit'**=smile)<sup>36</sup>, a group of “brothers” who came up into Nlakapamux country from the Fraser Canyon, that is, Coast Salish country. Throughout Nlakapamux country, the brothers had encounters with powerful beings, whom they defeat. At various points along the way, they also come across Coyote:

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<sup>34</sup> Nlakapmxcin tends to have –i at the end instead of e.

<sup>35</sup> Teit’s descriptions of the time of **Stspetekwll**, the time of the ancient story beings, derives from the information he initially recorded for his “Traditions of the Thompson River Indians of British Columbia” (1898); as his passages on Coyote and Transformers in his Nlakapamux (1900) and Shuswap monographs (1909) show, they are paraphrases from this earlier collection of stories. Additional, more detailed versions of Nlakapamux stories are in Teit (1915). Further episodes and fragments of the transformer stories were recorded by Franz Boas (1895, see Bouchard and Kennedy 2004) and Charles Hill-Tout (see Maud 1978).

<sup>36</sup> See Bouchard and Kennedy 2004:84; Teit 1915. Teit mentions that they were named after the youngest brother, who was carried on the back by the second youngest.

When the Qwo'qtqwaL reached Nkamtei'n (the mouth of Nicola River], they turned up the Nicola River and traveled until they came to a place near Kwenca'rtEn [20 miles up from Spence's Bridge]. Here they met Coyote, who was sitting on a stone watching them as they approached. They tried to transform him, but were able only to change his tracks into stone. Therefore the marks of the coyote's feet may be seen on this stone at the present day. Coyote sat with his chin resting on his hand, and stared at them while they were trying to metamorphose him. When they had failed, he cried out to them, 'you are making the world right: so am I. Why try to punish me when I have done you no harm? This is my country. Why do you come here and interfere with my work? If I wished, I could turn you into stone; but as you have likely been sent into the world, like myself, to do good, I will allow you to pass, but you must leave this country as quickly as you can. We should be friends, but must not interfere with each others' work (Teit 1915:316).

A series of other encounters with Coyote at his underground house (sk'elép re c7istkteñs) takes place along the Thompson River. At a place further up the Nicola River "near Jesus Garcia's Ranch," the Qoa'qLqaL subsequently present Coyote, who is by himself and has to use a tree knot-hole for a wife, with real wives, thus doing him good. According to this story, Coyote, along with three men that accompanied him after the "flood" had been left "high and dry" (Teit 1898:20) in the mountains, having to take trees for wives.

A number of other episodes in the Qoa'qLqaL epic involve the Qoa'qLqaLbrothers killing "cannibals," – evil minded powerful beings who killed and devoured people at certain localities. In addition, as they travel up the Fraser River into Interior country, they teach the local people how to **fish for salmon**:

The brothers, on the way up the Fraser, came to Yale, where, on the opposite side of the river, they saw a man trying to catch salmon with a sharpened pole. He had a wife and two children. They went to him, and found that he pulled the pole out of the water after it had rubbed against a salmon, and, drawing his finger over it, he scraped off the fish-slime which was on it. This he ate, and he gave some to his family. They told him this was bad, *and showed him how to make a dip-net and catch salmon, also the methods of cooking and drying fish...* (op.cit.:318, emphasis mine).

They also teach the people about **childbirth**: rather than cutting the belly of women open to get out a child, and thus killing the woman, they show the people how to extract children from the womb through the vagina with various kinds of string and twine.

Following their adventures on the Fraser and Thompson Rivers, the Qoa'qLqaL are said to have traveled through the Buonaparte Valley [sic]<sup>37</sup> above Cache Creek, then turned [back downriver] to the Similkameen River, where "they again met Coyote who objected to their invasion of the country, and threatened to destroy them." (op.cit.:317). They decide to leave the Interior, and pass across the Cascade Mountains back to the Lower Fraser River.<sup>38</sup>

Another transformer epic shared among Secwépemc and Nlaka'pamux peoples is the story of Kokwela (**Qweqw'ile**) or "Hogfennel." This one involves a young girl in Shuswap country, who, according to one source (Dawson 1892: 31)

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<sup>37</sup> Teit reports a power contest at Hat Creek, following encounters at Np'etkwe7ten, Pavilion Lake, and then their being frozen into stone at Pavilion. All of these also turn up in the Secwépemc version of the Tlli7sa story, below.

<sup>38</sup> Besides foreigners coming up the Fraser River into the Interior, there were also "transformers" who traveled from the Interior down the Fraser River to Coast Salish country below Hope and to Chehalis, causing landmarks to be shaped by transforming people along the way. (see Teit, Tales from the Lower Fraser River).

lived at a place called “Kwikooi” [qwiqw’ile?] <sup>39</sup>“at the Lower end of Adams Lake.

Being too proud to want to marry anyone, the girl

refused all offers of marriage, telling her numerous suitors that none of them were good enough for her. Thus she remained unmarried, whilst all the young girls of her own age soon found husbands. Afterwards, when she became anxious to get married, no one would have her, the young men treating her in the same way that she had treated them. Therefore she married the root Kokwe’la (Qweqw’ile) and soon afterwards was delivered of a son. The boy, who did not know who his father was, soon grew up, and used to play with the other boys of the place. One day he treated some of his playmates roughly, and in consequence they grew angry with him, calling him names, and styling him ‘bastard,’ saying that he was the offspring of the Kokwe’la. The boy felt ashamed at this treatment.” (Teit 1898: 21)

Upon his questioning her, his mother admits that the son, who is named qw’ile7ilt (“offspring of Qweqw’ile) , indeed, is the son of Qweqw’ile. Ashamed, the boy goes and trains (see the notion of *étsxem*, p. 220 below) in the mountains, and develops great powers. After he returns home, “he began to travel over the country, transforming bad people, and others who offended him, and curtailing the powers of those who did injury to their neighbours” (ibid.). Qweqw’ile root or *Lomatium macrocarpum*, also known as biscuit-root, hogfennel or “Indian carrot” (Turner 1990; Teit 1909) was one of the important and staple roots of the Secwépemc and other Interior peoples. The associations of the story with sexual intercourse, fertility and reproduction are not accidental: The root looks distinctly phallic. In addition, our elder Nellie Taylor described its use as a “prenatal vitamin” (Marianne Ignace, pers. comm.) to ensure a healthy baby, and Secwépemc and other Interior Salish

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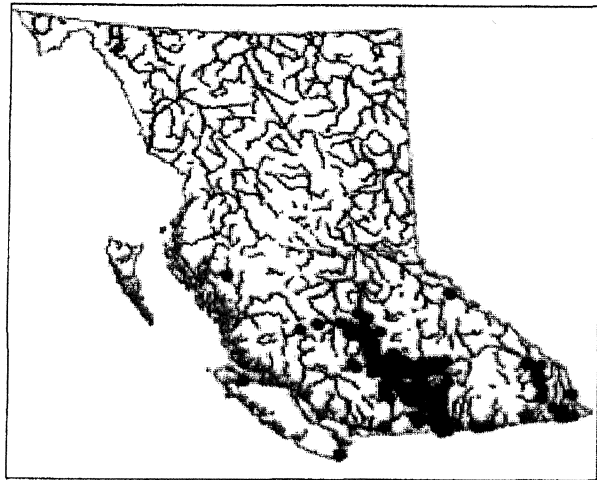
<sup>39</sup> Dawson’s transcriptions of Secwépemc words and places are inaccurate, filtered through his English-speaking ears and mind. However, we can by and large make them out.

people also used it as a fertility drug (Turner and Ignace ms., Turner et al 1990). Indeed, these “storied” social, moral associations, layered with ecological and medicinal knowledge, are part of the layering of stories (M. Ignace and Turner in press).

Qweqw'ile's journeys take him from his home east of the confluence of North and South Thompson River down the Thompson to below the confluence with the Fraser, where he meets the Qoa'qLqaL coming upriver. Power contests show that Qweqw'ile's power exceeds the power of the Qoa'qLqaL, but they peacefully “lay side by side,” as is evidenced by side-by-side rock imprints near the river of the two teams. They subsequently separate ways: the Qoa'qLqaL travel up the Thompson, Qweqw'ile traveling south down the Fraser to NLaqLaqeten (Nt'aq't'aq'ten = the crossing) near Kanaka Bar, a place said to mark the boundary of Nlakapamux and Uta'mqt (=Wutemkt, here meaning Sto:lo) territory. As Teit was told, “below this place, in the Uta'mqt (**Wutémkt**) country, no kokwela grows; but above this place it grows, and gets more and more plentiful eastward towards the Shuswap country” (Teit 1898:109). A contemporary map which plots the distribution of *Lomatium macrocarpum* in British Columbia corroborates Qweqw'ile's findings; with a few exceptions of very sparse occurrences, its habitat closely fits the perimeter of his travels.



**Figure 2: Distribution of *Lomatium macrocarpum***



source: <http://linnet.geog.ubc.ca/Atlas>

After reaching this point, Qweqw'ile turns back and travels back up the Fraser River to its headwaters, coming back full circle by way of "North Thompson or Columbia River."<sup>40</sup> In other words, Qweqw'ile's travels circumscribe the boundaries of what became Interior Salish territory, with Secwépemc territory at its core.

The final group of transformers, connected in genealogy to Qweqw'ile are "**Tlli7sa and his brothers.**" In the narrative recorded by Teit (1909:644ff), Tlee'sa (**Tlli7sa**) was "the eldest of four brothers." Another brother was

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<sup>40</sup> The northern boundary of Secwépemcúlecw, at the time when Europeans came into the country (see ch. 7), were the upper reaches of the Fraser River in the McBride to Teit Jaune Cache area, and the Upper North Thompson watershed, leading over into the Upper Columbia watershed through trails and canoe portages. In all likelihood, Teit's consultants described the passage from the Upper Fraser and Upper North Thompson watershed into the Columbia. Teit did not visit this area when he conducted his research.

Tq'emnést (Bouchard and Kennedy 1979:3; Dawson 1892:32). With the brothers also lived a young boy named Kw'll7élst, who was named by one source as the son of Qweqw'ile (ibid.).<sup>41</sup> In Dawson's (ibid.) account, Qw'ile7ilt (a.k.a. Qweqw'ile) joined them after they met up "not far below Kamloops Lake" [i.e. near Skeetchestn]. After trying four times to kill him by throwing a boulder on him, but failing to hurt him on account of Qw'ile7ilt's powers, they make a pact and decide to travel together. They lived with their aunt or grandmother "near Kamloops." The late Secwépemc elder Ike Willard (see Bouchard and Kennedy 1979) placed their origin on the South Thompson River, east of Kamloops, as did Franz Boas' unknown consultant in 1888 (Bouchard and Kennedy 2004). In Dawson's account, The brothers make their way down the South Thompson River. First, being unarmed, they get arrow stones, subsequently made into knives from the four Grizzly Bear Sisters who own arrow stone.<sup>42</sup> They change the Grizzly Bear Sisters from being "cannibals" into "mere animals." At Cherry Creek (20 km west of Kamloops), Tli7sa, the most powerful of the brothers, defeats a mean, powerful

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<sup>41</sup> This could be a transcription mistake of Teit's, or perhaps a conflation (telescoping) of different accounts and periods: He may have meant Qw'ile7ilt "offspring of Qweqw'ile" rather than (Qwe)qw'il7élst ("Qweqw'ile Rock"). In Dawson's (1892:31) version, Tli7sa and his brothers meet Qw'ile7ilt below Kamloops Lake. In Teit's version, the person indicated is the one who warns his brothers. Ike Willard (tape) pronounces his name as Kw'ellést ("under the rock"). In Teit's, Dawson's and Boas' accounts, there are various versions of stories where the main set of transformers (Qweqw'ile, Tli7sa, the Qweqwolt) have a contest with another person of power, trying to throw rocks on him. In each case the one they try to bury wins out. When they realize his strength, they "become friends," and they concede to his powers, asking him to join along on their journeys. In either case, the story makes a genealogical connection between Qweqw'ile and Tli7sa and his brothers, which probably should be understood as a temporal sequence: the Tli7se events take place **after** Qweqw'ile's travels.

<sup>42</sup> One account places this episode on the South Thompson, another one in the Arrowstone Mountains above Cache Creek.

rabbit, who has razor-sharp hind-legs with which he kills opponents.<sup>43</sup> After crossing Kamloops Lake from there, the brothers then travel up the Deadman Creek Valley to **Pesmémenc** (“has tobacco” place),<sup>44</sup> where the poisonous tobacco tree grew:

It was a large, very leafy tree, and all around it lay the bones of its victims; for any one who touched the leaves, or rested in its shade, invariably died. Tli7sa said, “I will smoke tobacco.” His brothers tried to dissuade him, but he insisted, and, going up to the tree, he cut it down with his arrow-flaker. Taking the leaves, he smoked them himself, and gave his brothers the stalks to smoke. Then he said, ‘tobacco will never again kill people. It will be a good plant, and people shall gather and smoke it without harm.

They head back south to Sk’emqin, near the outlet of Kamloops Lake, where Tli7sa defeats a powerful elk who blocks the river.

Subsequent travels take them to the Bonaparte Valley. At a place called Sxwexwt’éqs.<sup>45</sup> From there, they travel north to Skelawa’ulux (Sqléwúlecw=“beaver place”) the Chasm north of Clinton, a deep hollow surrounded by cliffs. Tli7sa made the hollows and shapes in the cliffs during his search for a powerful beaver, whom he subsequently kills and turns into sqléw7uwi, or the beaver, the animal who serves people with its skin and its meat. The brothers travel further up the

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<sup>43</sup> One of the accounts of the Tli7sa story at Cherry Creek says that Tli7sa uses a shield of mica to defend himself. In the many thousand years they lived on our land, our people obviously learned about minerals, and their properties. Mica shows up as a shield in various transformer stories. The science of mica tells us that it, indeed, is a shield element that can keep different kinds of conductors apart.

<sup>44</sup> The four “hoodoos” on the east slope of Deadman Creek Valley near the base of Sk’enpélecqen, which in turn are the steep cliffs that mark the way to Pesmémenc, continue to bear witness to the brothers’ presence in the valley. They represent 4 brothers. But my people in the valley have largely forgotten the story and its connection which I reconstruct here.

<sup>45</sup> According to Teit near “Doc English’s ranch” in the Bonaparte Valley. The rock formation represents a big horn ram with a dog barking at it.

Bonaparte River valley, where at a place called Nxa'nExtem (Scncéñctem "Stony hollow") they defeat a powerful marmot, transforming it into the common marmot, valued for its flesh and skin. They then return south, descending the Bonaparte River to the mouth of Hat Creek, where they have a contest trying to imprint their heads in a smooth rock on a rock face at Lower Hat Creek.

It is as though the stories about our country coming into being were overtly and literally silenced, or forgotten, during the second part of the twentieth century. Among the very few elders in Secwépemc country, the late Rose Phillips from St'uxtéws remembered being told about the travels of Tli7sa and his brothers: she called the place where they had a power contest Cuwíwescen. The latter was a rock cliff that showed impressions in the rock-face on the trail that subsequently became the Lillooet wagon road. When the current Highway 99 was built, the rock-face was destroyed with dynamite, and the physical mark of the brothers' power and travels disappeared.

As Tli7sa and his brothers continued on their trip, they came to Pavilion Lake. Here, a powerful skunk (splont) lived, which habitually killed people. Killing the skunk by emptying its scent-bag into the lake, the brothers cause the deep blue colour of Pavilion Lake, thus named Np'étkwe7ten ("farting lake").

In the words of Louisa Basil from St'uxtéws:

**Tsuns re qelmúcw Np'etkwe7ten.**  
The Indians call it "Farting Lake"

**Neri7 m-p'umes re splont ell lu7 ctené7e nu7 stsiqs re tsitcws re**

**splont nu7.**

That's where the skunk farted, and that's where his house was.

**Nu7 pumes wel qwempép re spu7s....**

And there he farted until his fart was exhausted.

**Yiri7 re m-spums tri7 wel re m-qwempép re spu7s.**

And he farted on until his fart was exhausted.

**Ta7 tri7 k sxwayt.s nu7 k w7ec.**

Those people that were there didn't die.

**Lucky es ta7es k sxwayt.s re qelmúcw.**

It was lucky that the people didn't die.

**W7ec-ske pyin k sti7qwt.ses re qelmúcw.**

If that had happened, it would still be killing people today.

**Nobody can see splont now. – Nexéll-ske k spentém me7**

**qwtséqes.**

They would be afraid to be farted on (i.e. sprayed) and die.

Along the steep rock walls of Marble Canyon (Speptpútemten), they meet a powerful people-eating golden eagle who lived on the steep cliffs; it was in the habit of killing people by swooping down on them, picking them up and smashing them against the steep rock-face. Tlli7sa kills the eagle and thus enables future people to use eagle feathers to “ornament the heads, clothes and weapons of men” (Teit 1909:649). Continuing on, Tlli7sa and his brothers encounter Tsakelsxenelxa (Tsqelemcxenélts'e? – “one who devours men with her teeth”, literally, “hates-men”?) on the opposite side of Pavilion Creek. She is a woman who kills men with her *vagina dentata* (“toothed vagina”), as the sparse Latin record has it. Tlli7sa has “connection” with her, placing his arrow-flaker across the inside of her vagina, then

invites his brothers to join in. “Henceforth, you shall be an ordinary woman, and hereafter men will have connection, and women’s vaginae will not bite or kill them” (Teit 1909: 650).

Finally, the brothers pass over to the west of Pavilion Mountain, where on a cliff at Qwiyqwiyqwiyt (“blue all over” – near Leon Creek on the Fraser River)<sup>46</sup> they see Chipmunk (qets’weŵye), a pubescent girl who dances for them, inviting them. She is the only one who has powers they can’t transform, and their mother had forgotten to warn them about her. Along their travels, Qw’ile7ilt, their nephew, had briefly caught up to them to try to warn them about her, but they had ignored him. The brothers become frozen into stone formations, along with Qets’weŵye herself, who, as we learn, was painted red, the stripe on her back showing. The place where she was transformed is called Lullit, (=t’ult or “frozen” in place) the place where Tlli7sa, standing behind, and his brothers were transformed, is not far away, and is called S Lemmi’x. (St’emixtsk?) (Teit 1909:650-51). Louisa Basil told it this way,

Way far in the start, way far, right through, three guys.  
Long ago, long, long ago, there were three guys altogether.

That’s the one make the rocks (Cuwiŵescen – see above).

The first ones to go all over, I guess.

One....nek’u7 t’ucw llépens re ki7ces.

One of them forget about their mother.

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<sup>46</sup> As we see below, Qwiyqwiyqwiyt, situated 12 miles below Big Bar Creek, represents the boundary between the Secwépemc and St’at’imc.

**Ta7 k slexéyetem te cécu7tem.**  
He wasn't told about the young maiden.

**Nune me7e ri7 ne Qwiqwiyywiyt, t'ri7 t'he7n.**  
Over at a place called "Blue all over" somewhere.

**Sts7emét.stem ucw Qwiqwiyywiyt.**  
It's called "Blue all over."

**Stemí cwem ri7 re skewst.s ne séme7? T'kllune Kikste7 le tmicws  
tselxemstéc?**  
What do they call that again in English, over there (invisible) in Kikste7's country?

**Ctenú7-enke mé7e ri7 k w7écwes yiri7 nunxwenxw étsxemes.**  
It was apparently over there (on the other side of the river) where a girl was  
training.

**Ell yi7ene... yi7ene tkellés te tutuwiwt, cten7élye w7ecwes, yiri7  
re slléqelcs.**  
And these three young men, they sat down on this side of the river.

**Yiri7 ri7 the last one re slexéyems, ptekwlentem.**  
That's the last story, the last legend they tell about them.

**Yiri7 re spiqwens re nuxwenxw te w7ec.**  
They were watching the woman,

**Yiri7 re stsyems , yiri7 re sqwetséts.s es t'ulentem ts'ilem yem.**  
They sat there, then they started to be frozen into stone, you know.

**Yiri7 re s.... ell well yi7éne tseqw'gugwi, xéxe7enke yem.**  
And then,.... The youngest one of the boys must have been powerful

**Yiri7 re stqwlútmens ell yerine7.**  
He told about the others.

**Yiri7 re m-sk'ult.s re núnxwenxw te scenc.**  
And the young woman was turned into stone.

**Yiri7 ell well newí7s m-k'ult te scenc.**  
And they were also turned to stone.

**Re m-tsyem-ekwe ri7 tek tkellélem.**  
They say that there they sat, all three of them.

**Re núnxwenxw w7ec re nekw'estsútes te ts'eléwt.**  
The girl is standing by herself.

**W7ec-enke k t'éyes yem ri7.**  
She was apparently Indian -dancing.

**Yiri7 wel xwexwéyt pyin w7ec re t'éyet.**  
That's why we all Indian-dance nowadays.  
(Louisa Basil, 1986)

Louisa Basil's version places this episode on the Fraser River at Qwiqwiyyqwiyt, also known as "Bob's Village", situated on the East side of the Fraser River nine miles below Big Bar Creek. The girl was on the opposite side of the river, Tlli7se and his brothers were on this side [of the river]. It appears from Louisa Basil's account that Qw'ile7elt survived to tell about it, with only three of the brothers being turned into stone.

It is significant that this place is regarded as the boundary mark between the Secwépemc and St'at'imc (Dawson 1892:5). Among the "transformers," Tlli7se and his brothers are thus the group that can be characterized as being most closely associated with the boundaries and places of the Secwépemc people.

In one episode (Teit op.cit.:319), of the Qoa'qLqaL epic, the latter transformers, traveling upriver on the Fraser into Interior country, are met at Lytton by Qweqw'ile, "whom they tried to overcome with their magic, thinking that they could easily get the best of him, and have some fun at his expense; but he



defeated them in everything.” In other versions of this episode, the person they meet is “Kokwelahe’it.” (Qweqw’ile7iłt<sup>47</sup>), “offspring or child of Qweqw’ile.”

Finally, another group of Transformers, the A’tse’mEł appear in Lillooet (St’at’imc) stories. They represent a group of people who came up through the Squamish area on the one hand, and on the other up Harrison Lake into the Interior.

The A’tse’mEł are said to have come up from the mouth of the Fraser River. They were 4 brothers, accompanied by their sister, who was gifted with magic, and another transformer called Sqaix (fn. 4 = “some say this was mink. Qaix denotes the mink in the coast dialects.”)

They traveled from the Fraser River near Chehalis up Harrison River. They went up Harrison Lake, entered the Lower Lillooet River, then halfway up Lillooet Lake. There they met a man who was awkwardly trying to catch fish with 2 sticks (“some say with the handle of a dipnet”, p. 294). They pulled hair “our of their legs from below the knee, which they threw on the ground.” – Spets’em bushes grew from this at once. They showed the man and his wife how to prepare the spets’en, twist it into twine and weave it into nets. They made a dipnet for him and showed him how to fish with it. One brother changes himself into a salmon, entered the man’s net. When the man lands it, the brothers show him how to cut it up. They also show them how to boil salmon with hot rocks in baskets, and to save the salmon bones and return them into the water. (when they show this, the brother returned to his former shape and joined them). They said, “future generations shall do as we have shown.” They also show these people how to give birth without the man having to cut the baby out of his wife.

At the head of Lillooet Lake, the brother come to Upper Lillooet River. There, a man is making a spear aimed at catching the “transformers” about whom he has heard. They threw him into the water and he becomes mamelt, whitefish. It has a small mouth, because he was whistling when he encountered them.

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<sup>47</sup> Since Nlakapmxcin replaces the Secwépemc l with a y, the Nlakapmxcin equivalent of this word is Qweqw’ile7iyłt

The Transformers go on to near Pemberton and then up the Pole River, to a place near Salmon House 3 miles from Pemberton Indian Village (= Mount Currie).

There, they meet a man who catches salmon with his hand, eating them raw. They transform him into fish-hawk (yoxala') and said, "henceforth people shall not catch fish with their hands, nor eat them raw."

They come to the source of Lillooet River near a lake called Tseka'lenal at the source of the stream that empties into the head of Anderson Lake.

One brother goes, then returns from the south, dressed in cedar bark painted red, carrying a bundle of cedar bark.

A second brother goes away, returns from the east, dressed only in breech clout, and carrying a bundle of spets'en bark.

The one from the south is hailed as Lil'wet by the remaining transformers, the second one as St'at'imc. They say, "henceforth the Lil'wet shall go to the Fraser in the St'a'timc country to buy salmon and spets'en bark, and the St'at'imc shall visit the Lil'wet to trade with them. An imprint on a rock marks this spot as the tribal boundary between the Upper and Lower Lillooet.

It is said that after this, the transformers returned to their own country, by way of Pemberton and Green Lake, to the Squamish (Teit 1912b).

The origin of the people at Fountain (Cáclep) is similar to the story of the Qwaqlkwał, where the local people are shown by foreigners how to give vaginal birth with the help of various kinds of strings ( ibid. p. 368): A man named Coyote lived at Cáclep, who had to cut babies out of his wife's stomach. He was visited by the Black Bear Brothers, Nspatse'tceit (Nlakapamuxcin for "black bear children"), who, after they beat out Grizzly Bear mother and her cubs, are said to have become the Qwa'qLkwaL. They showed Coyote how to pull the baby out with a string (first of bird-cherry bark, then deer thong).

Coyote had a numerous family, half of whom married Shuswap from up the Fraser, and the other half married Lilloet from across the Fraser. Their descendants settled in and occupied the country to a point up the river beyond Kala'ut , and near to the mouth of Pavilion Creek, and as far down as opposite the mouth of Bridge River. There one of them, by name Keaxu's made an underground house; and his descendants increased, and occupied several houses at that place. They always intermarried with both the Lilloet and Shuswap, and from the first have been a mixed people, as they are at the present day. They are neither Lilloet nor Shuswap, but part of both, and speak both languages. Their ancestor, Coyote is supposed to have been a Shuswap, or at least spoke that language. They are nicknamed "Coyote people" by other Lilloet and used to impersonate their ancestors at dances.

The Fountain people are called X'a'xalEpamux, (=Cacl'epemc) or Laxo'xoamux, the more ancient name.

In short, the above story connects the Upper St'at'imc (Fraser River Lilloet People) to the Secwépemc and Nlakapamux. This story starts at Peteni Valley (Botany Valley near Lytton), moves on past Spence's Bridge, and some distance past Spence's Bridge, the brothers first begin to encounter "Coyote" and his family, or the Coyote people, thus joining Secwépemcúlecw.

### **M-Kénem? - What happened?**

What do we make of these Transformer stories? Juxtaposing the story plots onto timelines and events proposed by postglacial geology, paleo-ecology, archaeology and linguistics, we find some striking convergence of evidence:

- (1) Ancient Coyote stories, although in scattered fragments, suggest a climate and environment also stipulated by natural science. Furthermore, the periods suggested by archaeological data and the timelines of linguistic split associated with the influx of Salish speaking strangers roughly match periods of historic climate change.
- (2) Archaeological study suggests multiple influxes of strangers from the coast, verified by the different transformer stories of the Interior Salish, and provides a timeline of a "Salish immigration" of some 5,550 years B.P., with a co-existence of Salish and non-Salish people for a time span of about 1,000 years. More than a decade ago, Arnoud Stryd and Mike Rousseau noted these convergences, without, however, drawing on Interior Salish ancient oral histories:

The Salishan movement into the British Columbia interior from the coast would have taken place early in the post Hypsithermal at a time of increasingly cooler and wetter conditions and expanding pine and Douglas fir forests. Such a scenario is generally consistent with Elmendorf's models of Interior Salish origins and migrations based on linguistic considerations... We posit that Salish peoples began venturing up the Fraser and Thompson river drainages around 5,500 years ago on a seasonal basis to hunt and collect plants, and secondarily to fish.... Such a pattern of regular seasonal use of the interior by coastal and Fraser Canyon Salish groups may have persisted for a millenia [sic] until ca. 4500 BP, and is represented archaeologically by the first half of the Lochnore Phase. After ca. 4500 BP, salmon populations were sufficient in upper drainages to allow these Salish groups to establish permanent residence and to engage in the logistically organized subsistence and settlement strategy that characterizes the Plateau Pithouse Tradition (Stryd and Rousseau 1996).

As the oral stories tell us, one group of people from the mouth of the Fraser and from the upriver area near Mission appears to have come into Lillooet territory along lake, river and mountain pass routes. Another group came up the Fraser canyon. The QoqLoLt, the group which came from the Coast Salish area up the

Fraser River, encountered Coyote people *who were already there, living in pithouses*. In addition, Qweqw'ile, as well as Tlli7sa and his brothers, appear to represent successive groups of indigenous peoples from the Interior traveling beyond the initial "heartland" along the Thompson and South Thompson River, meeting the Salish-speaking newcomers who introduced skills like salmon fishing, and increased the population. In addition, the transformers from the Interior expanded the boundaries of their territories northward and northeastward, to circumscribe the present boundaries of the Secwépemc and Northern Interior Salish peoples.<sup>48</sup>

(3) The rough timelines of divisions in the Salish language family (see Kinkade et al. 1998) also match the chronological dates of archaeology and climate change, suggesting that the "Salish immigrations" occurred at some point around 5,500 to 6,900 years ago, and that the expansion and diversification of the Interior Salish languages happened around 4,500 to 3,500 years ago, at the time when our ancestors, the tellqelmucw, established what archaeologists call the Plateau pithouse tradition. The latter included relatively stable ways of subsistence supported by a complex sense of resource sharing which penetrated political and social organization. This came to be the ways of our ancestors, and their way of life until at least the mid-nineteenth century, and despite the oppression of our livelihood and laws in all possible ways that followed, they are still the ways of our people.

As we have seen, the stories of the many different encounters among peoples in the Interior homeland, and between Salish speaking peoples immigrating among the Coyote peoples resulted in foreigners teaching them skills thus enabling the

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<sup>48</sup> In addition to the transformers discussed above, Teit (1909: 651 ) adds a story about yet another transformer, Cawa, who did his work originating on the Fraser River "near Churn Creek," and travels east as far as Cree country. His story also includes a prophesy of white people – see below, p.222ff.

population to grow and our people to expand and flourish. The events of this period not only match historical timelines corroborated through disciplines that allow for chronological dating; they also speak to what Aert Kuipers called the “multiple events of linguistic borrowing,” caused “interpenetration of languages resulting from bi- and even trilingualism in contact areas,” (2002:2). Kuipers, however, restricting himself to linguistic analysis alone, was obviously wrong in stating in the same breath that “of prehistoric migrations and fusions of Salish (and possibly non-Salish) groups we know nothing beyond what the languages themselves can tell us” (ibid.).

Beyond demonstrating historical events, the plots of the stories have **meaning** in the shaping of our connection to our land, and our social, spiritual and political connections as peoples, local groups and individuals; they “connect the dots” in our landscape by weaving together places, environments and different people’s actions as a meaningful and morally significant sequence of events that is at the root of what exists now. The stories connect historical events and people who caused them to places in turn commemorated in place-names; they connect these places with resources, ecological knowledge, and emerging or already existing social laws and norms of conduct.

In his preface to Teit’s *Traditions of the Thompson River Indians* (1898:15), Franz Boas wrote that the distribution of various parts of the Coyote legend was “conclusive proof of its complex origin,” connected to the West and Southwest of the North American continent, the Northwest Coast and other parts of the continent. While briefly considering universal psychological motifs of the Trickster tales, and

admitting to ways in which the plot of specific stories was influenced by environment and social organization (p. 15), Boas noted that

It appears that a considerable number of tales were borrowed bodily from the coast tribes, and were incorporated ready-made in the tales of the Thompson River tribe. It is, therefore, certain that these importations when interwoven with mythical tales never have had any symbolic significance among the people whose property they are now. They are not nature myths, in the generally adopted sense of the term. While dealing with phenomena of nature and with the peculiarities of animals, they are not the result of tribal thought; they are at best adaptations of foreign thought, but much more frequently importations that have undergone little if any change.

As he usually did, Boas admitted that more “comparative study” and “historical studies regarding their origin” was needed to once and for all illuminate our pasts. Never mind that they did not know other sciences’ methods to throw light at our people’s past history, this way of dealing with our stories took for granted that our own people had no historical consciousness of their own; it relegated the stories of the past to the area of “myth” and “folklore;” historical study thus entailed the folklorist painstakingly comparing motifs and plots, and versions of myths to arrive at possible conclusions of how plots of myths diffused from one people to another.

Stith Thompson’s ‘Motif-Index of Folk Literature’ (1955-58), although intended as a cross-cultural effort of isolating and comparing “myth-themes” epitomized this effort, representing a cross-cultural index of themes that occur in folktales, and demonstrating that the material of which they are built up is of heterogeneous origin, and that our stories in the end can be reduced to shreds and

patches of diffused plots and motifs that occur throughout North America and beyond. In von Gernet (2006) this was indeed used against our people (in this case our neighbouring Tsilqot'in, who were too close for comfort to the Tli7sa story).<sup>49</sup>

### **Yiri7 re Stsq'eys-kucw: The Moral, Spiritual, Social and Political Lessons of Stories, or Laying Down the Law**

The historical dimension, of course, is but one small aspect of our stspetékwl. In fact, what compelled me to piece together the connection of ancient stspetpetekwl (plural) to a chronological frame of telling history is the fact that our own people rarely think of stories in this way. Stories allow us, in a connection to land, environment, language and events, to reach back thousands of years, throughout our ancestors' existence on this land that we now call **Secwépemcúlecw**. However, that connection goes beyond the social, the emotional, the affectionate connection to Coyote as animal and trickster: Our people left us a legacy of information that, if we connect the dots meticulously, allows us to chart our societies, and changes to our societies, back in time.

In addition to conveying information about the past in a “**historical**” mode, to speak with Hill (1988 op.cit.) they also entail a “**mythic**” mode of consciousness, as I discussed in the introduction. In the “mythic” mode of consciousness, our stspetékwl lay out what I will call “re stsq'eys re Secwépemc”: They have always given us “equipment for living;” they show us by example how to behave, and how

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<sup>49</sup> The recent BC Supreme court rulings by Justice D. Vickers in *William v. R.* [2004 BCSC 148] and *Tsilhqot'in Nation v. B.C.* 2007 [BCSC 1700] dealt with this issue. I thank my former student Marion William for showing me the Tsilhqot'in origin story; although in plot closely resembling the Tli7sa story, the Tsilhqot'in most definitely think of it as providing the charter for their society.



not to behave. In that sense, they have connected us as a people to the essential social norms and values that have guided our people. They have provided the charter for our social institutions.<sup>50</sup> They continue to do this by reminding us in places throughout our land, through rock-paintings, rock formations where past people were “frozen” into stone (t’ult), of the deeds of the stspetékwll, anchored to the land to the stories that tell us what happened.

*I heard my elders talk about the word stsq’eý in my youth. As I understand it, re7 stsq’eý-emp means “your (plural) rights.” I heard the way they phrased sentences, talking about stsq’eý in relation to our rights – stsq’eý ne7elye te sw7ec. – “the right you have to be here (in a place);” restsq’eý yiri7 re swestéc – “your right to own that.” Stsq’eyúlecw re Secwépemcúlecw - “the land is marked where your rights are, where your boundaries are.” I heard these phrases when I was young. As my elders said, and I paraphrase, “The trouble is that most younger people today don’t understand, let alone speak our language, so they do not know the origins and meaning of this word.*

*When paper came along, your rights were put on paper, so nowadays people think the word stsq’eý just means “paper.” That’s how, in Secwépemc dictionaries, you find the meanings of stsq’eý as “paper:.” Our ancestors knew that marking things commemorates events as what is handed down, as the law. Then they saw white people being fixated on papers as guaranteeing their rights – as papers that showed someone’s [fee simple] right to land; as the rights guaranteed by written-*

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<sup>50</sup> Speaking anthropologically, I believe it was with Malinowski that anthropologists seized on the idea that myths are “social charters.” I agree, although as I maintain throughout, they are much more.

*down legal codes. Yiri7 re stsq'eýs-kucw, "our markings/writings/what is stated/what are our rights" took on a new, both reflective of old ways, and adapted new meaning: It encompasses what is marked, what is written, and thus what is the collective **right** of our people, hence it signifies the our **law**.*

In the connection between ancient stories and our rights as Aboriginal peoples, this notion plays an important role. My ancestors called rock-paintings or pictographs stsq'eý – saying, "yiri7 re stsq'eýs" – "it's written." "Yiri7 re stsq'eýems le q'7es te kw'selktens." "this is the writing/how it was marked by our long ago relatives." Thus, "tsq'iyúlecw means to "mark the land" in the way our ancestors marked the landscape with their deeds, gave names to places, and thus claimed the land as Secwepemcúlecw. In a modern sense, tsq'iyúlecw can be translated as the boundaries of our land: It refers to our Aboriginal title and rights to land – the rights to our land that we have by way of the deeds and markings of our ancestors – These deeds entail the place names, the physical markings in rock formations, the rock paintings harking back to such times, and most of all the stories that bear testimony to this. Thus, the notion of "Yiri7 re stsq'eýs-kucw" entails a historical sequence and multiple dimensions: The long ago attesting to things that happened were in the rock formations as yiri7 re stsq'eýys – "it's written", as laid down by Sk'elép, Qwewqw'ile, Tlli7sa and others, as they "fixed our land." Louisa Basil referred to the rock-paintings or rock formations, where either picographs or ancient rock formations were the legacy of what had happened long time ago, as "yiri7 re stsq'eýctels le q'7es te qelmúcw" ("this is what the people long time ago

marked/wrote for us”) but saying at the same time, “yiri7 re stsq’eys – That [means] it’s our law.” In short, our ancestors thought of the ancient markings, supported by living and acting on the land, in so far as these were remembered as stories, as our “law.”<sup>51</sup>

In the landscape, at least in the undisturbed places visible to this day, we can see and read the signs of our ancestors taking possession of this land, vanquishing the “cannibals” or people-eaters that existed, and making our land accessible to the generations after them. We have seen above how the places that are named in the transformer stories of Tlli7sa, Qw’le7i7lt and others gave names to the land, and made the lands ours.

As we have seen, besides the transformers, another kind of naming, marking and giving laws involved the actions of **sk’elép**, Coyote.<sup>52</sup> *Coyote as the Trickster* or *Old Man Coyote* has been described in the ethnographic literature throughout the Western part of the North American continent (Bright 1989, 1993; Radin 1955). Sk’elép stories, as I stipulate above, are historically situated in the very ancient past; however, their attraction is their timelessness. In our ancestors’ minds they connected the past to the present and future: It was Old-one, the Creator, whose stories were all but forgotten even in 1900 (Teit 1909:623), who had sent Sk’elép to finish his work. Old One himself had presented people with a few gifts that separated

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<sup>51</sup> Kuipers’ Salish etymological dictionary lists q’iy as “to make marks, to write, draw” as a proto-Interior Salish Root.

<sup>52</sup> Among the North Thompson people (Simpwemc) and Eastern Secwépemc, Sk’elép is also called senxwéxwlecw (from a reduplicated root, nuxw-to run like an animal + lecw = land, ground - hence “ground-runner”)

humans from animals, among them being the **sq'ilye** or sweat, our ancient institution that bestowed us humanity, separating us from animals and all other creatures. After his deeds in our landscape, **sk'elép** then disappeared toward the East, although people waited for his return. More than once, as the first White explorers came into our land, they at least contemplated the thought that he had arrived again (see ch. 3).

**Sk'elép** stories also link the past with the present in the way that they continue to engage our emotions, notions of contradictions and ambiguities of life through multiple layers of reality and experience. Last not least, they play with the transcending of social and moral boundaries, like life and death, sex and incest, male and female, good and bad, and many others. Coyote, **sk'elép**, shows us the consequences of behaviour that makes people a nuisance to our community, what we call **yéwyut**: Someone who defies the norms of acceptable social behaviour, but chooses to act against it. Someone who is ignorant, in the very sense of not recognizing boundaries, although he/she knows them.

Teit's 1909 book provides, in his own summarized English words, two cycles of Coyote stories: One, as he notes, was recorded from "Sixwilexken," [Secwílecqen?] an elder at the time from Dog Creek. The second one was recorded from "Sisyulex" of the North Thompson Secwépemc (Simpwemc).<sup>53</sup> Genealogically, we know little of Sixwilixken, but we know details of Sisyulex. His Secwépemc name was **Sisyúlecw** (from "seyse"-play and -ulécw=land); his English baptismal name was

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<sup>53</sup> The current Simpcw First Nation has adopted its ancestral term, in Secwépemtsin, that comprises the mid-North Thompson Valley and adjacent plateaus and mountains.

George. He was the father of Mathilde Fortier, Ida William's mother's father.<sup>54</sup> In addition to the above, our memory of Sk'elép stories survives in what appear as isolated fragments that the linguist Aert Kuipers recorded from David Johnson of Esk'et, Lilly Harry of Xget'tem (Dog Creek) and Mike Paul of Athalmer (Kinbasket). Bouchard and Kennedy (1979) recorded several episodes from Ike Willard in the early 1970s. In the 1980s, Marianne Ignace and Mona Jules recorded in Secwépemtsin what appears as the same cycle of Sk'elép stories that had been told by Sisyulecw to Teit, from Sisyúlecw's grand-daughter Ida William. Additional stories were recorded by them from Chris Donald, another Simpcw elder. The episodes of Sk'elép stories between the Símpcwemc (North Thompson), Tk'emlúpsemc (Kamloops/Skeetchestn people), Sxqéltkemc (Chase people) and Xgat'temc (Dog Creek people) match closely: They involve:

- Sk'elép and his son, Kellélst (Three-stones),
- Sk'elép and his cousin, Fox (xgwélemc) – about the hazards of vanity and envy
- Sk'elép and his Hosts – about the hazards of trying to mess with other people's powers
- Sk'elép guides the salmon up the Thompson River (see above), followed by Coyote and the salmon – again, a bungled host story, but it deals with disrespect to a living resource, and the consequences of offending a living resource.
- Sk'elép and the Girls – In the NlakaPamux and Okanagan version, these provide the reason why there is no salmon in the Similkameen River, due to a misunderstanding between Sk'elép and some young girls he encounters by the

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<sup>54</sup> Marianne Ignace pers. communication

river (he addresses them in Nlakapamuxcin, asking if they want some of his penis; across the river, and only knowing Okanagan, they misunderstand this to mean sheep/ram, and decline).

- Sk'elép and the four species of grouse; and Sk'elép “juggles his eyes” – Both are stories of ecological relations and the characteristics of biological species.
- In addition, various stories, like Sk'elép and Skeñcis – Coyote and Grizzly Bear, involve Coyote tricking other creatures to get food, sex or both.<sup>55</sup>

In his discussion of “The Natural History of Old Man Coyote,” William Bright has shown examples of the multi-faceted character of Coyote as “the Wanderer,” the “Bricoleur,” the “Glutton,” the “Cheater,” the “Loser,” and the “Pragmatist,” and “survivor”(Bright 1993), citing examples from indigenous coyote stories throughout Western North America. Referring to trickster tales in general, Ramsey (1983) and Radin (1956) have alerted audiences to the dynamic role of Coyote and other tricksters in mediating, questioning, interpreting human qualities, values and laws of society.

The symbol which Trickster embodies is not a static one. It contains within itself the promise of differentiation, the promise of god and man. For this reason every generation occupies itself with interpreting Trickster anew. No generation understands him fully but no generation can do without him.... And so he became and remained everything to every man – god, animal, human being, hero, buffoon, he who was before good and evil, denier, affirmer, destroyer and creator. If we laugh at him, he grins at us. Whatever happens to him happens to us (Radin 1956:158-159).

With their moral messages, irreverent humour, and questioning of social order, Coyote stories were adapted by our ancestors to deal with concerns in a

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<sup>55</sup> Turn of the century ethnographers (including Boas, who in turn edited Teit's work) expurged sexual episodes from stories, resorting to Latin where there were graphic descriptions in the stories of sexual acts.

changing world. As noted in Chapter 1, Teit was charged with recording “myths” rather than contemporary discourses of Interior Salish peoples. Some stories he recorded in the 1910s (likely during his work in the political movement among our Aboriginal leaders), in fact show the way in which Coyote stories were adapted to provide commentary on changing times.

Coyote once met Old One or Great Chief. Old One said, ‘You have used your excrements as a counselor for a very long time. However, this method is very inconvenient. Each time you desire advice, you have to defecate. Also there is danger of your excrements getting cold. I will give you a paper. Carry it with you. When you need advice, consult it.’ Coyote carried it in his hands for several days, but he did not like to carry anything in his hands. One day when he was defecating, or otherwise engaged, he laid it down and forgot about it. Several days later he wanted advice about something and found he did not have the paper. He went back a long way and searched for it, but could not find it. Perhaps the wind had blown it into some hidden place. Coyote had to resort to consulting his excrements again for advice.

This is how Coyote lost the paper. If Coyote had not lost it, the Indians would now know writing, and the whites would not have had the opportunity to obtain written language. It was because of the foolishness of Coyote (Teit 1937: 173)

Likewise, Okanagan Storyteller Harry Robinson told a story of Coyote traveling to England to meet the King (Robinson 2005), thus transposing Coyote’s satirical deeds into the concerns of Aboriginal rights and the Aboriginal rights movement of the early twentieth century (see ch. 4).

Each story of Coyote and other animals teaches us lessons about important values in our society: respecting one another; the reciprocal relations among relatives; knowledge of our land and the environment, and ecological relations

among species; respect for our natural resources. In the chapters that follow, I will cite from our stspetékwll to explain the workings of our society, deriving from the ways in which the ancient stseptékwll set things in motion.



## CHAPTER 3 - "BOUNDARIES RECOGNIZED BY ALL"- SECWÉPEMC LAND AND LAND TENURE

[The first white people] found the people of each tribe supreme in their own territory, and having tribal boundaries known and recognized by all. The country of each tribe was just the same as a very large farm or ranch (belonging to all the people of the tribe) from which they gathered their food and clothing, etc., fish which they got in plenty for food, grass and vegetation on which their horses grazed and the game lived, and much of which furnished materials for pipes, utensils and tools, etc., trees which furnished firewood, materials for houses and utensils, plants, roots, seeds, nuts and berries which grew abundantly and were gathered in their season just the same as the crops on a ranch, and used for food; minerals and shells, etc., which were used for ornaments and for plants, etc., water which was free to all. Thus, fire, water, food, clothing, and all the necessities of life were obtained in abundance from the lands of each tribe, and all the people had equal rights of access to everything they required. You will see the ranch of each tribe was the same as its life, and without it the people could not have lived (Memorial to Sir Wilfrid Laurier, 1910).

In this chapter, I will discuss how, throughout different times in history, our people defined their common sense of Secwepemc<sup>1</sup>élcw for themselves, and in defence of our homeland to outsiders. I will discuss the information that, according to ethnohistoric sources from the early eighteenth century, and according to ethnographic sources (e.g. Teit 1909; Dawson 1892; Boas 1892) and the oral history sources from our elders during the twentieth century, allows us to assess how we identified and maintained the boundaries of our homeland, and how we maintained laws that provided Secwepemc people, and those related to us, with access to the land and its resources at the exclusion of outsiders. I will also discuss how we

maintained our boundaries through warfare. The information and discussion in this chapter is of obvious significance for our people's proof of our title and rights to land. In addition, it reminds us how our ancestors maintained laws, and ways to enforce these laws, that regulated how we lived on our land. I also hope that, after well over a century of our homeland having been split into "Indian Bands" or, in today's euphemism, "First Nations" through calculated ways of dividing and conquering us, the historical data, supported by the narrative of our own elders, will inspire our people to remind us of the strength of our nationhood as a joint people, rather than surrendering to the ways in which our nation was split up.

### **The Boundaries of our Nation**

The seme7uwi, "real whites" or first Europeans who came among us in the early nineteenth century provide us with incomplete but instructive pieces of information on Secwépemc and surrounding nations' territories and their boundaries. The first European map of Secwépemc territory, although only showing the southern and southwestern boundary of our territory, was provided by Thompson River Post trader, Archibald McDonald, in 1827 (see Carstens 1990 for a reproduction).<sup>56</sup> Although it appears that McDonald slightly confounded some

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<sup>56</sup> McDonald's map should be read in conjunction with his predecessor John McLeod's 1822-23 report of the "Seven Tribes" in the vicinity of Thompson's River Post, including the Secwepemc (Shew-shapps"), although he only counted the Secwepemc of the Kamloops area and the Shuswap Lakes Secwepemc into this tribe; the Nlakapmamux (whom he termed Coutumin), the Si-mi-ha-ca-meachs (Similkameen-Nicola), the Okanagan, and upper and lower St'at'imc ("Stst-lam-chu"), and the Simpcw ("Chinpoo") or North Thompson Secwepemc. As to maps, our people must have had a sense of representing the three-dimensional landscape on a two-dimensional plain: When Simon Fraser sought directions from the Secwépemc people at Xats'ull in 1808, they drew him a map in the sand. Needless to say, Fraser did not copy it into his journal, and found it hard to make sense of it. See chapter 4, below, pp. 223ff.

internal divisions among Secwepemc people (see below), his map clearly shows a dividing line between the Secwepemc, Okanagan and Nlaka-pamux in the south, and a border with the St'at'imc in the West. Later, in 1867, Alexander C. Anderson, who was Hudson's Bay Company factor (subsequently Indian Reserve Commissioner, then Fisheries commissioner) at Fort Alexandria on the northern boundary of Secwépemc territory, provided a map based on his residence at Fort Alexandria, which shows in good detail the eastern, northern and western extent of Secwépemc or "Atnah" territory.<sup>57</sup> During the 1880s, George M. Dawson plotted Secwépemc territory onto a map, which only includes what he interpreted as the core of exclusively Secwépemc-occupied territory, rather than areas contested, shared or jointly occupied with surrounding nations (M. Ignace 1992). Dawson also provides a written account of the extent of Secwépemc territory: Dawson's term "Shuswap people" not only denotes the Shuswap/Secwépemc people proper, but also the Nlaka-pamux, Northern Okanagan, (Arrow) Lakes Okanagan and St'at'imc (Lillooet). Among these five "divisions" of the Interior Salish people, he calls the Secwépemc the "Shoo-wha-pa-moo" (=Secwépemc) or "Shuswaps proper, from whom the name here applied to the group of related tribes is derived" (Dawson 1891:5). Of the Secwépemc, he wrote,

The people of this tribe and speaking an identical dialect, possess the largest territory, which includes the Shuswap Lakes and Adams Lake, the valleys of the South and North Thompson Rivers, and nominally extends northward to Quesnel Lake, though so few Indians inhabit or hunt in that region that it is difficult there to fix the limit exactly. The furthest northern point on the Fraser reached by the Shoo-wha-pa-

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<sup>57</sup> "Atnah" literally meaning "foreign people," is the Carrier term for the Secwépemc.

mooh, is the vicinity of Soda Creek; but to the south of the Chilcotin River their country extends to the west of the Fraser, of which river they claim both sides as far down as, and including the village of Kwe-kwe-a-kwet (Bob's Village [=Qwiqwiqwyit]), situated nine miles below Big Bar Creek. They thus spread westward to the north of the Lillooets, and are the only people of the Shuswap tribes whose boundary matches with that of the Tinneh [Dene]. The country about Clinton and the valley of Hat Creek is part of their territory, including the village of Skwai-luh [=Tskwaylucw], on Pavilion Creek. To the south they are bounded by the Thompsons and Okanagans. They extend nearly to Ashcroft, on the Thompson River, but do not include the Stlahl [=St'ells] village there, which is Thompson. Eastwards, the boundary runs thence nearly along the watershed between the Nicola and Thompson, but Trout Lake, at the head of one branch of Guichon Creek, is claimed by the Shoo-wha-pa-mooh. Grande Prairie belongs to the Okanagans, but all the lower part of the Salmon River, with the Spallumcheen valley nearly as far south as the head of Okanagan Lake, is Shoo-wha-pa-mooh country... (op.cit.:5).

The most detailed description of Secwépemc territory and its external boundaries was provided in Teit's 1909 monograph, also plotted onto a map at the front of his thesis. The area outlined on Teit's map (1909: 450), comprises about 180,000 square kilometres (55,000 square miles) of land.<sup>58</sup> The map, based on descriptions of Secwépemc people who were elders in 1900, and thus pertaining to the early to mid-nineteenth century, encompasses the area from Ashcroft on the Thompson River, across to Pavilion on the Fraser River, north of there to Quesnel, including an area west of the Fraser around the Chilcotin River, then East across the Quesnel Highlands, over to Tete Jaune Cache and Jasper, and along the continental divide and Columbia Reach to Windermere, along the northern part of Arrow Lakes to the Salmon River and Enderby, and then across Grand Prairie and

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<sup>58</sup> Gary Palmer (1975a), an anthropologist who carried out some ethnographic and ethnobotanical research in the Eastern Shuswap area in the mid 1970s, calculated the area (in square miles) according to Teit's 1909 map.

the Logan Lake Plateau, south of Kamloops Lake back to Ashcroft. Teit described the Secwépemc boundaries with respect to seven named “*divisions*,”<sup>59</sup> each of which is comprised of a number of indigenous “bands,” each occupying a number of ancestral villages (tsemtsyem̓ten) with one of these villages as its “headquarters” (ibid.).<sup>60</sup> Teit’s list of indigenous bands and villages in about 1850 (1909:457-62) shows 20 indigenous bands, each with a “headquarter” village. Following the severe impact of mid-nineteenth century epidemics, especially the smallpox epidemic of 1862-64, seventeen of these bands survived, and in the late 1870s and early 1880s became the bands that still exist as Indian Bands under the Canadian Indian Act. The Secwépemc divisions named by Teit (re-transcribed from Teit’s orthography into the Secwépemc practical alphabet) include:

**Tk’emlúlepsemc**<sup>61</sup> or “Kamloops Division,” including the people of my community, Skeetchestn, and Tk’emlups, the people near the confluence of North and South Thompson Rivers constituted this division. Main villages are Tk’emlúps and Skitsesten (Skeetchestn)

**Sexqéltkemc** or Shuswap Lakes/Enderby Division, including the people of Stelen, Sk’atsin and Qw’ewt on both shores of Little

<sup>59</sup> The term “division” is Teit’s own. In Secwépemtsin, the names of the divisions all include a root word for a geographic area or location, combined with the suffix –emc, “people.” From work that Marianne Ignace and myself carried out previously, the names of the divisions are transcribed into the Secwépemc practical orthography (see Ignace and Ignace 2004; M. Ignace 1998).

<sup>60</sup> Pre-historic settlement patterns apparently included larger winter villages occupied by hundreds of pit-houses, along with small villages consisting of anywhere from two or three to a dozen homes. It is still unclear whether large village sites, as opposed to smaller ones, existed at certain periods in Secwépemc history, as Brian Hayden argues (Hayden 1992), with a later period dispersal of the Secwépemc population into small villages, or whether large and small villages existed simultaneously. During the early 1800s, it appears that large villages like Tk’emlups and Ck’emtsin at the mouth of Deadman Creek existed along with small villages like K’ecse7ten, and numerous sites along Kamloops Lake and the Thompson River.

<sup>61</sup> Teit uses the reduplicated form Tk’emlúlepsemc, rather than Tk’emlúpsemc. It appears that consonant reduplication, otherwise used to make a diminutive and in the “I” form (1<sup>st</sup> person singular) to designate humble and respectful speech, is used in geographic terms to show that the term is a proper name, rather than designating a general landform.

Shuswap Lake and the people of Splatsin near Enderby, and other villages near Salmon Arm, as well as the Kinbaskets or K'enesq'et made up this division. Its main villages are Celéwt (Squilax), Qw7éwt (Neskonlith), Spelemtsín (Splatsin near Enderby).

**Tqéqeltkémc**, “people of the Upper Reaches” of the North Thompson river to Tete Jaune Cache and Jasper, and the people of the mid-North Thompson or Simpcw. The main villages were Tseqwtseqwéłq (part of the present reserve at Chu Chua near Barriere) and Pesqelqlélten on the Upper North Thompson.<sup>62</sup>

The St'emcúlecwemc (“people of the cleared land or grasslands” – describing the Caribou area) are the people of the Fraser River area between Clinton and Soda Creek, comprising the villages of Pelltéq't (Clinton), Llenllenéyten (High Bar), and Steq'éws (Big Bar), whose members merged with the High Bar people, Xgat'tem (Dog Creek), Tswecehc (Canoe Creek), Xats'ull (Soda Creek), and Esk'et (Alkali Lake).

The Styétemc – people of the Lake Plateaus, between the North Thompson and Fraser, and those including the villages at Tsq'escen (Canim Lake) and formerly at Text'inten (Lac La Hache) and Pelltseqwmús (“has suckers”-which was named after a lake on the Upper Bonaparte River) whose survivors settled at Tsq'escen, following the smallpox epidemics.

The **Sextsinemc** are the “people of the lower shores,” and include the St'uxtéws (Bonaparte Band) and St'ells (Ashcroft Band) on the Main Thompson and the “now extinct “Main Thompson Band” or Nkw'é7etkwemc (“People of the one river) between Rocky Point and Ashcroft, as well as Ts'kw'aylecw (Pavilion).<sup>63</sup>

The **Sét'emc** or Canyon people included several indigenous communities – “Bands” in Teit's terms - at the Mouth of the Chilcotin Canyon. Being more sedentary than all other communities and divisions, they suffered the greatest impact of the smallpox epidemic,

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<sup>62</sup> According to Simpcw elders, Pesqlélten (“has salmon”) describes the area at Finn Creek, a tributary to the North Thompson north of Avola. This area was an important place for harvesting spring salmon (M. Ignace, pers. comm.). A story where sk'elep learns a lesson after he pays disrespect to the salmon also takes place here (see Teit 1909:573)

<sup>63</sup> It is somewhat surprising, geographically and historically, that Teit included the Tskw'waylecwemc in this division, since they have, for all we know, counted themselves as oriented towards the Fraser River with its fishing grounds and resources.

becoming "extinct," with the survivors settling among their relatives in neighboring villages among the St'emcúlecwemc.

Regarding the external boundaries of the Secwépemc, Teit indicates the "hunting grounds" described by the members of the different divisions, on the basis of which he produced the map of Secwépemc territory (1909: 450; 453-456). Thus, the St'emcúlecwemc, besides hunting on the East of the Fraser River between Xats'ull and below High Bar, "claim as hunting grounds the country west of the Fraser for over thirty miles back, including some of the feeders of the Bridge River, all of Big Creek and other creeks emptying into the Fraser, north to Churn Creek" also including Empire Valley and the Ground Hog Mountains, and further land opposite Xats'ull and Williams Lake on the West Bank of the Fraser.

Teit also was told that the "country of the Upper Fraser River was part of the Secwépemc hunting grounds, and abounded in game and fur-bearing animals" (op.cit.:546). In his map, he charted the area on the Upper Fraser between roughly the Big Bend and Tete Jaune Cache as "temporarily occupied by the Sekani"(1909:450). This "temporary occupation", according to the oral histories on warfare he recorded (ibid.), happened as a result of the intrusion into Secwépemcúlecw by parties of Sekani during the latter part of the 18th century. A large party of Shuswap warriors eventually drove the Sekani from the Northern Secwépemc communities, the Simpcwemc (North Thompson) people and the Tk'emlúpsemc (op.cit.:547-48).

In the North and Northeast, the “upper reaches” of Secwépemcúlecw, Teit described the boundary of the Tqéqeltkemoc (North Thompson people) extending to the upper reaches of the Fraser River, Robson Pass and beyond, to what is now Jasper. He also gave a detailed description of how far the Sexqéltkemoc (people of the Shuswap Lakes, Enderby area) traveled and hunted, bordering on the land used by the Okanagan and “Lakes” people.<sup>64</sup>

In the West, the Sét’emc “claimed the country back to within a short distance of Hanceville, some say to a place called Pestat [= Pestéwt, “across the river”] near the junction of Deer Creek and the Chilcotin River, sharing the northern extent of their hunting grounds with the St’emcúlecwemc. Near the Hanceville trail a landmark rock called “Coyote’s Sweat House” (xq’ilyeteñs re sk’élép)<sup>65</sup> marked the Eastern boundary with the Pesxixlemc (Tsilhqot’in).

Teit wrote that the southwestern boundary of the Sextsinemc with the Nlakapamux and St’at’imc, was “near Ashcroft on the Main Thompson...the lower part of Hat Creek, through Marble Canyon, to Pavilion and both sides of the Fraser near there” (op.cit.456). Finally, the southern boundary of the Secwépemc with the Head-of-the-Lake Okanagan (Ts’wenemc) and Nlakapamux ran through the Plateau near Stump Lake, south of the Thompson River and Kamloops Lake.

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<sup>64</sup> Teit himself noted later (Bouchard and Kennedy 1986) that he made a mistake by suggesting the “Lakes” (=Arrow Lakes) people were Secwépemc. They are a branch of the Colville-Colville people who call themselves Sinkixt (ibid.). There is evidence, however, that at least the Upper Arrow Lakes area was used by both Secwépemc and Sinkixt (Teit 1930).

<sup>65</sup> Teit (1898; 1915) mentions the Qoqotolal coming across another Coyote’s sweathouse on the Thompson River as well, as a marker of the Coyote [people] already living there.



In some places, Teit was told about specific boundary markers with neighboring Aboriginal nations:

A little hill or mound with a lake or swamp near it, in a locality called Cwalcesteen ("plenty of roots"), on a tributary of Bridge River, is looked upon as a perpetual boundary mark showing the junction of the hunting grounds of the Stemculecwemc, Lillooet and Chilcotin (Teit 1909:453)."

In sum, during the first part of the 1800s – the time that Teit’s and Dawson’s data pertain to, in that they are memories of elders that were alive in ca. 1900 – there was thus a sense of distinct boundaries that we as Secwépemc people had with our neighbouring nations. Such boundaries were marked by watersheds and mountain ranges. In many cases, however, they involved arbitrarily established boundary markers. As we will see below, these markers, usually accompanied by distinct place names, often commemorated events of past conflict or peace treaties where our ancestors had settled disputes. In addition, as we will see below, boundaries often included overlapping areas of land use, especially in “border town” areas which featured intermarriage between neighbouring groups.

### **Secwepemc Laws of Land Tenure and Access**

Besides mentioning “boundaries recognized by all,” in the quote from the 1910 Memorial to Sir Wilfred Laurier above, the chiefs of the Interior invoked important principles of land tenure they shared. They spoke to their vital connection to their/our homelands as sustaining our peoples. By referring to the land as a “ranch belonging to all the people of the tribe” they also insisted on the

principle of *collective land tenure* at the level of the “tribe,” or nation, rather than village group, or land ownership resting with individuals. In fact, as I maintain, in referring to distinct territories of tribes with recognized external boundaries, along with a system of “tribal” or common land tenure, the chiefs of the Interior strongly invoke the concept of Aboriginal nationhood, thinking of the Secwépemc, Nlaka-pamux, St’at’imc, Ts’wenemc (Okanagan), Pesixlemc (Tsilhqot’in) and others as distinct *nations*, and refusing to surrender to the nucleation of our nation into “bands” imposed by the government during that time.

Teit explains the Secwépemc concept of land tenure – in fact shared with the other Interior Nations – as follows:

All the land and hunting grounds were looked upon as tribal property all parts of which were open to every member of the tribe. Of course, every band had its common recognized hunting, trapping and fishing places, but members of other bands were allowed to use them whenever they desired ...Fishing places were also tribal property, including salmon-stations.... At the lakes every one had the privilege of trapping trout and erecting weirs (op.cit.:572).

Teit also added "berry patches were tribal property, but picking was under tribal control. All the large and valuable berry spots were *looked after* by the chief of the band in whose district they were situated" (op.cit.:573, emphasis mine). Of root digging grounds, Teit noted that they were also "common tribal property. Some people of the Northern Fraser River bands laid a claim on the root-digging grounds of Quesnel Lake, where very large lily-roots grow, but these claims were not recognized by the rest of the tribe" (op.cit.:582). In other words, like the chiefs of 1910 themselves, Teit argues for a tribal or nation-wide system of land tenure and

access to resources, with the chiefs of local bands, on behalf of their communities, acting as resource stewards or caretakers for the benefit of all people of the nation. Thus, it was NOT the indigenous communities or “bands,” that had exclusive rights over resources, but, by descent or blood, of all the members of a nation.<sup>66</sup> Local communities, headed by their chiefs and specifically appointed resource stewards called yucwmiñmen, were considered to be the caretakers, over resources and tracts of lands where their people lived.

Teit’s discussion of Nlakapamux land tenure, which he regarded as identical to Secwépemc land tenure, provided further details:

Of course each [Nlakapamux] band had their usual hunting-places, naturally those parts of the country nearest to their respective homes; but Indians from other villages, or other divisions of the tribe, frequently hunted in each other’s hunting-grounds without being considered intruders; and sometimes hunting-parties representing two or three tribal divisions would hunt over the summer hunting-grounds of another division without rousing any feelings of resentment (Teit 1900:293).

After citing an instance of such resource use, he concludes,

The hunting-territory seems to have been common property of the whole tribe. Among the Spence's Bridge and Nicola Bands any member of the Shuswap and Okanogan tribes who was related to them by blood was allowed full access to their hunting-grounds, the same as one of themselves; ...If, however, a person who was not related to a Thompson Indian were caught hunting trapping or gathering bark or

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<sup>66</sup> Franz Boas (1890:638), whose own Secwépemc research consisted of a few days of quizzing unknown informants while traveling through the Interior in 1888 (Bouchard and Kennedy 2002) and again in 1894, thought that there were “family owned” hunting grounds, but he gave no details that substantiate this. Likewise, Dawson (1892) wrote of “family owned” hunting grounds, but it appears that he received this information from J. W. MacKay, the local Indian agent, and it is not supported by examples. Given Teit’s decades of residence in our territories, his knowledge of the language and general quality of his work, I deem him to be the more accurate and reliable source.

roots, within the recognized limits of the tribal territory, he was liable to forfeit his life (Teit 1900: 293).

In fact, to substantiate his argument for common or Secwépemc-wide ownership of, and access to resources, Teit (1909:572) cites a case of the Northern Secwépemc trying to assert exclusive control of their hunting areas at some point in the past, likely during the early 1800s. The southern Secwépemc challenged them on this, causing the Northern Secwépemc to abandon their claim to exclusive ownership of a part of Secwépemcúlecw. From what Teit tells us, this insistence on exclusive control over hunting grounds by a smaller group within the nation coexisted with the Northern Secwépemc's adoption of a clan and crest system imported from the coastal tribe, apparently not long before the arrival of Europeans in our country (Teit op.cit.:575; see also Furness 2004)

Access to fishing resources was no different: All individuals who were born into a Nation, or who had ancestors from that Nation, were allowed to fish for salmon and other fish on the fishing grounds of that nation. This extended to access on the basis of intermarriage. As the late elder Sam Mitchell from Fountain explained to Steven Romanoff about Bonaparte Shuswap access to the productive Caclep (Fountain) Fishery on the Fraser River, "If the head guy has daughters who marry out, the sons-in-law live there because that's how they fish and gather. That's

how they get grouped up...That's how Shuswap came here. They came down and saw lots of fish and girls." (Romanoff 1992:251).<sup>67</sup>

The Secwépemc and Nlakapamux system of land tenure and access to resources that extended to the entire Interior Plateau thus involved *joint access* to the common territory of a Nation, based on blood and kinship ties, which then extended to the territories of other nations, in a secondary sense, by way of having relatives in those Nations (see Hudson and Ignace 2004; M. Ignace 1998). Anastasio (1972) recognized how this system of resource use and access among Nations functioned to accommodate seasonal variations in game, plants and fish by providing individuals and thus their extended families with a network of access to resources both within their own Aboriginal nation of birth, but also other nations where they had ancestors and relatives, as long as these ties were kept alive, in order to be recognized.

James Brow, who carried out research with Northern Secwépemc people for the Human Relations Area File project during the same time, although apparently lacking any concept of Secwépemc nationhood in a political, social or economic sense, asked elders from the northern Secwepemc area, "before the Europeans came, where was the boundary between Kamloops Shuswap and Shuswap territory?" He was told, "they didn't really have any boundary. The land belonged

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<sup>67</sup> Among the Stat'émc/St'at'imc, there is documented "family" ownership of fishing rocks (Romanoff 1992; Bouchard and Kennedy 1992). However, this individualized system of ownership could well be related to the high-maintenance of fishing rocks, requiring the building and maintenance of platforms, white rocks in the river, and the clean-up of the site. Sam Mitchell's testimony (ibid.) implies that the "owner" of a fishing rock was also its main caretaker, and allowed others the use of the fishing site after his family had harvested fish.

to all the Shuswap and a man could hunt wherever he wanted. But each band had its own fishing places and villages where it stayed in the winter.” (Brow 1972).<sup>68</sup>

Among Eastern Secwépemc elders, the same concept of common Secwépemc land tenure prevailed: At a nation unity meeting in 1983 where members of all parts of the nation explored ways of working together as a nation, the late Chief Harvey Jules of Sexstéllen (Adams Lake) reminded everyone that Secwépemc territory was jointly owned and shared by all Secwépemc.

Likewise, Secwépemc elder Dr. Mary Thomas of Neskonlith also unequivocally referred to the same idea when she stated,

We traveled a lot. There was no such thing as private property. All the Secwépemc dialect people shared the whole territory of the Secwépemc Nation. Nothing was private property: we always shared (Turner 2001).

Elders in my own lifetime, but for the most part deceased now, reiterated the common and collective notion of land tenure:

*The collective and joint sense of ownership of Secwépemc territory and the resources within it continued to exist throughout the twentieth century. In 1985, when I was Chief of the Skeetchestn Band, as Chief and Council we were developing a fishing by-law for our community, in order to regulate salmon fishing in the*

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<sup>68</sup> Brow’s consultants were Esk’et (Alkali Lake) elders David Johnson, Alice Belleau, Pierre Squinahan, all born before 1900, and well known among present Secwépemc elders as their own elders. Contrary to Brow’s assertion, their first language was not English but most definitely Secwépemtsin. David Johnson and Pierre Squinahan were well-known Secwépemc storytellers. My sense is that what they meant by “each band had its own fishing places and villages where it stayed in the winter” are the habitual (but not exclusively owned) fishing places and ancestral villages of the indigenous bands.

*Thompson River and Deadman Creek, adjacent to our community. Our fisheries department and younger community members had recommended that all persons except members of the Skeetchestn Band had to get a permit from the Band to fish in Skeetchestn waters. However, our elders would not approve the fishing by-law unless it recognized that all Secwépemc had the right to fish in Skeetchestn without a fishing permit. The elders maintained that according to our tradition, all Secwépemc people had the right to fish anywhere in Secwépemc territory, using traditional methods and means. However, non-Secwépemc Aboriginals with kinship ties had to get a permit, but it must be free of charge. Non-Secwépemc are allowed to assist their Secwépemc spouses or families in fishing, or to provide for them if their Secwépemc spouse or children are unable to do so. Should they abuse their privilege to fish, it could be revoked. On the other hand, non-Aboriginal people were required to buy a permit and were restricted to fly fishing. The by-law also requires all users of the fishing grounds keep the fishing grounds clean and to treat the fish and the place with respect. Once amended in this fashion, the band members passed the fishing by-law. I heard a similar story where Alkali elders disavowed a permitting system requiring any shuswap, other than the ones from Alkali, being required to get a fishing permit. This story was told at the recent Inter-Tribal Fisheries treaty conference in Kamloops on January 30, 2008. This story was told by fisheries personnel from Alkali Lake (Esk'et). Apparently, one Elder who spoke out was 90 years old.*

In recent years, our elders, many of them deceased now, continued to state that the use of resources in Secwépemc territory was “wide open” to all people of Secwépemc ancestry, that no band or community exclusively owned resource producing areas at the exclusion of other Secwepemc people. Neskonlith elder Sarah Deneault also commented on the Secwépemc as one people, who were, however, split up into separate governing units, or bands, by the Department of Indian Affairs:

**Kellklláw̓sis re qelmúcw m-amátntlsas ʔe k...ʔe k Band.**

Disbanding the people and labeling them by Bands.

**Yirí7 westám ʔe k tsqwatstn:**

Nowadays, those are the groups of people we have:

**Yirí7 Kamloops Band rí7 nekú7 ʔe tsqatstn.**

The Kamloops Band are one group of people.

**Neskonlith ri7 nakú7 ʔe tsqwatstn.**

Neskonlith are one group of people.

**Adams Lake rí7 nakú7 cú7tsa.**

Adams Lake are yet another group.

**Yirí7 kellklláw̓sis re Indian Agent, Indian Affairs tsa7mát.sta...**

Those were separated by what is called the Indian Agent, Indian Affairs.

**K'all le q'7ásas...e ʔhánas ri7 e tsqwatstn ri7 nerí7.**

But long ago, wherever they were, they were one group of people.

**Nekúsa ri7 ʔe tsyam ʔlu7 wa7 ʔhánas...**

They were one group of people wherever they lived,

**yerí7 ʔe tsqwátstn ri7.**

they were one group of people.



Overwhelmingly, thus, the evidence of Secwepemc traditional land tenure suggests, just as the chiefs in 1910 noted, that we collectively owned and managed our land as a nation.<sup>69</sup>

## **Boundary Maintenance: Treaties, Wars and Intermarriage**

“...Our tribal territories, which we have held from time immemorial, often at the cost of blood”(Memorial to Frank Oliver, p.1).

We have oral history evidence of the ways in which boundary disputes between our neighbouring nations and ourselves were settled long before the arrival of Europeans. In numerous instances, our ancestors made treaties with outside nations to put an end to a dispute and to settle disputed boundaries. Teit’s posthumous 1930 Monograph on the Okanagan, Flathead and Coeur d’Alene provides details of a pre-confederation treaty to re-allocate the boundaries between Secwépemc and Douglas Lake Okanagan territory, describing how Pelkémúlcw (Pelkamulox II),<sup>70</sup> the Chief of the Head of Douglas Lake area, and Chief “Kwolila” of Kamloops negotiated a peace treaty after several generations of warfare and raids:

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<sup>69</sup> To further underscore this point, if our people had had a sense of exclusive indigenous band ownership in 1910, there was no reason that the chiefs could not have stated the nature of nations having protocols of land use patterns under the control of individual communities.

<sup>70</sup> “Pelkamulox’s father was also named Pelkamulox. As was the tradition (see p. below), he passed his name and chiefship to his son. According to the oral histories Teit recorded, the first Pelkamulox lived around 1660s.; his son lived about 1700

Pelkamulox [=Pelk'múlecw, "he rolls over the earth"], the son of a Chief of the same name who had moved from Spokane territory north among the Okanagan], became a noted chief and was known far and wide. During his early life he was much engaged in war. These wars commenced in his father's time or before and continued for many years - many Okanagan as well as people of other tribes being killed. Salixw, where he made his headquarters was considered the chief seat of the Okanagan tribe (or at least of the northern division). The old name of the place is said to have been Okanaqen. Pelkamulox built a fort here of stone and afterwards the place became generally known as Salixw, "heaped-up [stone] house", with reference to the fortifications of stone... This place is said to have been impregnable and war parties of Thompson, Shuswap, Kutenai and others who assaulted it were easily beaten off. Kwolila, the Kamloops chief, had heard of the many attacks by enemy war parties on Pelkamulox and determined to go and see him. His people tried to dissuade him, telling him it was very dangerous for any one to visit him, for his people had been attacked so often that they trusted no one and attacked all strangers on sight who approached their place. Seeing that Kwolila was determined to go, the Shuswap and the people of Nkamapeleks who were at the time a mixture of Shuswap and Okanagan, offered to accompany him in an armed body, but he refused their offer, saying he would go alone. As he was leaving, his people told him, 'Pelkamulox's people will kill you before they know whom you are, and even if they know, they may kill you'. Kwolila answered, 'I am Pelkamulox's brother, and I will go and see him alone.' Arriving on the open ground before Pelkamulox's house, the people ran out to meet him in battle array. Pelkamulox recognized him and was glad to see him. He took him to his house and kept him as his guest for a long time. Kwolila advised Pelkamulox to forsake Salixw and go north with him. He told him, 'Salixw is a bad place to live in. You will always have trouble as long as you stay there'. Pelkamulox was persuaded. It was early summer, and he and his people traveled north with Kwolila to Komkenatke, (=K'emqenétkwe "headwaters"), now called Fish Lake, in the Nicola country. This place was at that time in Shuswap territory, for the Shuswap claimed the country south of Kamloops around the head of the Nicola River. Stump Lake, Douglas Lake, Fish Lake, and Chaperon Lake were all in Shuswap country. This country at that time was full of elk and deer, and there were also many sheep, bear and other game. Prairie chicken, grouse of all kinds, and waterfowl were plentiful, and the lakes teemed with fish. Here at Fish Lake Kwolila made a lasting agreement with Pelkamulox, giving him the perpetual use over all the Shuswap territory of the upper Nicola Valley, south, east and west of Chaperon Lake, comprising Douglas Lake and Fish Lake... Kwolila said, 'you will have the country for yourself and your people as your

own. I will live as your neighbor at Toxoxitcen (Chaperon Lake) and will retain all the country from there north. You will make Fish Lake your headquarters in the summer and I will summer at Chaperon Lake so that we may be close neighbors part of the year. You will give me your daughter, Kokoimalks, to be my foster child, and she will always live with me, but your son you will keep with yourself." (op.cit.265ff).

This treaty is remembered to this day by the people of Sp'axmen (Douglas Lake) and the Secwépemc people of the Tk'emlups Division as the "Fish Lake Accord." It tells us important things about the very existence of indigenous, pre-contact treaty-making among our Nations, and of the mechanisms by which our peoples' approached, negotiated and maintained such treaties: Pelk'amulox and Kwolila reminded each other that they were brothers, in that both were the sons of the first Pelkamulox; the Douglas Lake chief was his son by a Spokane Okanagan mother, and the Kamloops chief was his son by a Tk'emlúpsemc (Kamloops Secwépemc) mother. Reminding each other of their close blood ties as **uqw'iyéws** ("brothers to each other") is what allowed them to reconnect and to establish a relationship on the basis of blood relationship; As one of the terms of the treaty, Kwolila surrendered part of the area his people had advanced into, but at the same time established an area of overlapping boundaries and land use with his half-brother. Living side by side during the summer season allowed them to implement the shared boundaries and land use, and to maintain peaceful relations in the spirit of relatives. In exchange for giving up part of the land that the Secwépemc had advanced into, he asked Pelkamulox to surrender his daughter, but not his son, to him, to be adopted and raised by him. Having been raised among the Tk'emlups

Secwépemc, Kokoimalks (Qwiqwíymelq̓s?) would marry into the Secwépemc Nation, thus further consolidating the kinship alliance between the two groups.

Other treaties existed between the Stony and Kenpesq'et's group of Secwépemc in the Windermere area. The oral history account provided by the late Ike Willard of Tk'emlups and Sk'atsin of warfare between the Ts'weñemc and Secwépemc in the Adams Lake, Kamloops and Simpcw area is another case in point: After an era of feuds that involved two young Secwépemc men from the Adams Lake area as "spies" among the Okanogan, the Okanogan and Secwépemc met on Shuswap Lake to affirm peace, and to acknowledge one another's boundaries.<sup>71</sup>

Teit's 1909 work on the Secwépemc includes a detailed section on "warfare" of the Secwépemc with surrounding nations.<sup>72</sup> He notes that "wars" were carried out until 1860 or 1862 (op.cit.:540). According to him, the most "war-like" divisions were the Tk'emlúpsemc and the Fraser River divisions. The "wars" of which he recorded oral histories involved raiding parties of outsiders, including Stet'emc and Lilwat (Lower Lillooet), Sekewemc (Cree), Sekani, in each case entering Secwépemc country, trying to occupy fishing locations or hunting areas, and in other cases raiding for women. At various times in history, our Secwépemc ancestors themselves expanded into neighboring nations' territories, including southward into the

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<sup>71</sup> The published account of this, titled "Atahm and Wulpahan" (in: Bouchard and Kennedy 1979, Shuswap Stories) omits the peace making and reduces the narrative to a generic, historically de-contextualized "story" of two bad boys. A close listening to Ike Willard's narration in Secwépemetsin reveals the political and historical significant of the set of events he narrates.

<sup>72</sup> Verne Ray's main thesis in his 1939 work on Cultural Relations in the Plateau of Western America dealt with the "pacifism" of Plateau peoples, which has since been rebutted by authors like Kenyon (1982) and Aubrey Cannon (1992). In my opinion, our Secwépemc ancestors, like our neighbors' ancestors, simply defended their territory, people and resources against intrusions by outsiders, and occasionally intruded into others' territories for the same reasons.

Okanogan (Teit 1930), in the 1300s to 1600s, and northward into the McBride area, driving out the Sekani who had previously penetrated into our territory. "War parties," as Teit (op.cit.:542) notes, included anywhere from 2-3 warriors – in this case representing a raid rather than organized war, up to 200-300. War Chiefs were the leaders in strategy and tactic, "versed in the science of war" (ibid.); often, a t'kwilc or medicine man also accompanied the war party: A place called **Snine7ellcw** "owl's nest", on the North Thompson River east of Vavenby commemorates a battle with the Cree: a party of Cree here attacked some Simpcw, and one Cree warrior hid in a tree hooting like an owl to communicate with his friends. However, he was detected by a t'ekwilc (Indian doctor) accompanying the Simpcw and was shot down. Subsequently the rest of the Cree party was killed as well (Marianne Ignace and Mona Jules, ms).

While war parties involved members of single communities, sometimes soliciting support from neighboring communities, it is notable that all instances of Secwépemc warfare involve Secwépemc against, or in defence against, non-Secwépemc.<sup>73</sup>

In addition to Teit's stories, Elders in my own life-time remembered handed-down oral histories of warring expeditions that had taken place several generations before them, or in other instances included people of their own grandparent

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<sup>73</sup> Teit's oral histories of warfare include three instances of what appear to be "wars" or feuds of Secwépemc against other Secwépemc. On close inspection, however, they represent instances of criminal justice, where an individual from one Secwépemc community or extended family had engaged in continuous serious criminal behavior deemed beyond rehabilitation. In each case, the perpetrator's relatives gave license to the victims to kill the perpetrator.

generation (see Bouchard and Kennedy 1979; M. Ignace and Mona Jules, ms., M. Ignace, field-notes), thus involving events that would have occurred in the 1830s to 1850s.

Through some of my Simpcw relatives' stories I listened to, I was vaguely aware of one of their ancestors named Tessie. She came to life in stories recorded from her and her sister Josephine Wenlock in 1986 by Marianne Ignace and my aunt Mona Jules.

**“Le q'7ésés re qelmúcw w7ec re cwesétes t'he7n t'e  
kekéw, pexpíxem.**

Long time ago, people were traveling far away, they were hunting.

**Yisyist t'he7n.**

They were camping out there, wherever.

**Kítsentmes t'e k'ist t'e qelmúcw.**

They were caught up by bad people.

**Stqw'iycenmec. T'iqwectmes t'e kw'selktens.**

They were Blackfoot Indians. They killed their relatives.

**Kwentmes t'e tutwiwt t'e nuxwnúxwenxw, m-  
qwetssetsstmes.**

They brought them back to the land of the bad people.

**T'íqwentem t'ri7 re s7i7llcw.**

Some of them were killed.

**T'he7n t'e ri7 xwistés k nuxwnúxwenxw, t'e ri7 m-kwens.**

There, they took the girls they liked.

**Kekéw t'e tmiw m-kwéntmes.**

They took them to a far away land.

**Yiri7 kyé7es-kuc kwéntem. Twíwtes 7ey.**

Our grandmother was taken there. She was young yet.

**Skwest.s Tessie. Yiri7 m-westém nek'u7 t'e swucwt.**  
Her name was Tessie. She was kept there for one year.

**St'7ek7ílç. K'úlçtmes t'e túmes cw7it t'e sillts'u7..**  
She ran away. Her aunt made her lots of mocassins.

**T'7ek7ílç t'e k'ist re qelmúcw.**  
She ran away from the bad people.

**Stspelq'ílçwes.**  
She returned.

**Tselltéks t'e Secwépemç t'e tmicws.**  
She made it back to Shuswap country.

**Pelmíntmes t'e kw'séltçtens, tspelq'entémes.**  
She was found by her relatives, and brought back.

**M-tskítscstem ne7éne t'e tmicws,**  
she was brought back to this land,

**ne7éne Tseqwtseqwélçw,yiri7 re stsemtúlecws.**  
Here, to Tseqwtseqwelç, that's what they call the place.

**Neri7 tskítscstmes m-séwentmes t'e kw'séltçtens,**  
relative+poss.  
When she was taken there, her relatives asked,

**T'he7n k xílmes k tspelq'ílçs?**  
What did she do to come back?

**Lexéýens xwexwéyt.**  
She told them everything.

**Yiri7 ta7 me7 scwuytsem k swet ks kwentem pent'lu7s**  
And that was it, since then no one has ever been taken by them,

**ks kwentem t'e k'ist t'e qelmucw ks xilltem t'e ri7.**  
taken by the bad people, and no one was ever treated like that again.

Above, I referred to the time of war during the 13<sup>th</sup> to 17<sup>th</sup> century that involved the Secwépemc from the Tk'emlúps area. In referring to the Okanogan, Teit notes, "Most of the Shuswap war parties came from Savona and Kamloops..."

Long ago, about 1700, the Shuswap had wars with the Okanogan. Once a large Shuswap war party from Savona and neighborhood was defeated at Namtusten ("place of ambush") and nearly all of them were killed. (19 :257). Another Shuswap war party had many men killed by falling over a cliff below Penticton. It seems that this war party came over the plateau to the bluffs above the valley, which they reached in the evening. Here they halted to observe some camps in the valley below. They were noticed by some Okanogan scouts, and in the night time were surrounded by a strong party of Okanogan, who shortly before daybreak attacked them suddenly. Many of the Shuswap, not knowing the locality, fell over the precipice in the dark. Some of the others escaped to isolated rocks, where steep cliffs cut off their retreat, and they were shot there after daylight. A number of others escaped through the Okanogan in the dark, and reached home. Their war chief was killed." (ibid.).

The late Theresa Jules from Skeetchestn connected the outcome of Okanogan – Secwépemc warfare to a landmark called “Balancing Rock” on the south shore of Kamloops Lake, about 1 Mile to the west of Six Mile Point.<sup>74</sup> Her grandfather K'estmícw (b. ca. 1840, d. about 1940) told her the oral history of a war between the Ts'wen'emc or Okanogan and the Secwépemc. The Secwépemc beat the Okanogan. One of the Okanogan men then challenged the Secwépemc to pick up a rock and throw it on top of a pillar. The Okanogan person tried and failed. The Secwépemc man picked up the rock and threw it on top of a pillar. Adding her “oral footnoting”

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<sup>74</sup> Theresa told me a more elaborate version of this story when she was very ill in January 2000 at Royal Inland Hospital and was not expected to live. At that time, I had no tape-recorder with me, although she would have liked me to tape her. She subsequently re-told it in February 2000, but in a shorter version.



(Wickwire 2003), she noted that this was a true story, told to her “by my grandfather K'estmicw, and also by Kw'etmem'elcken and Annie P'axa7, as well as Julienne and Edward Eneas,” my own great-grandparents. All of these elders, she said, knew this story.

The area here (in this part of Kamloops Lake) was an old battleground, I was told by grandfather, K'estmic, and other elders. It was here that a party of Okanogan attacked the Secwépemc. The Secwépemc used to have to be watchful when passing through this area. Secwépemc people had powers, which helped them to know when their enemy was coming. T'kwilc or Indian Doctors were known for such powers, she stated. They had the power to sense things before they happened. The Secwépemc t'kwilc thus dreamed the coming of the Okanogan, and thus prepared for war, getting their weapons ready, and told their people to hide their children. In those days the women would stay in hidden places and wait until more weapons [i.e. arrows] were needed, and then prepare them and take them to the men. The Secwépemc went and met the Okanogan at the place now called Balancing Rock, at the place where there is a little mound with a rock balancing on top. After driving out the Okanogan, the Secwépemc men imitated the sound of wolves – which indeed in my youth could be heard in that area - and thus signalled to the women and children to come out of their hiding places and return to their homes [pit houses and tents].

Theresa Jules noted that the Secwépemc name for Balancing Rock is **Stseq.qín** or **Stseq.qíqen**. She added that “our t'kwilc [medicine men] froze the rock so that nothing will happen to it, so it won't fall.”

After their defeat, the Okanogan and Nlakapamux moved out of this country further away. The Shuswap and Okanogan fought as far south as Keremeos.

(Theresa Jules, Interview, 16 February 2000)

My grandfather, Francis Ignace, remembered a war between people from our community, Skeetchestn, and Tsilhqot'in people who came to seize fish from our fishing grounds at the mouth of Deadman Creek:

At Lemonade flats, there's the mouth of the creek, the other side, that's where the Indians camp in the fall time. And the Indians from way somewhere come over to fight. They were sitting around in there, and the scout saw them.... They seen them, they come way over... The boy went around, tell them people [the Shuswap], 'There's a bunch of different Indians up there. ...There was still hundreds and thousands. They all fight. And that's where they killed them all. My granny was telling me that. But I seen that, too. All the arrows, arrows, knives, broken." According to FE, there were further battle grounds at Criss Creek bluffs, the Thompson River, and at Walhachin..."Even up Deadman's Creek, they had a big war once in a while (Francis Ignace, Interview with Marianne Ignace, October 1987).

Another battle site is near the mouth of Copper Creek:

Copper Creek, there's lots of fight at that one. There's lots of Indians at Copper Creek, yeah...there's some Indian camps there. And there's, there's some Cree coming in, from Calgary. And they start fighting them. They killed [many of them]. They shot one in the leg, [he] fell down, clubbed him in the head. And they put rocks over the head, put rocks there, how tall [he] is. I seen it...I know just where it is ...my granny [Cecile Melmenetkwe] showed me how tall that was." (Francis Ignace, taped by Ron Ignace, Gerald Etienne and Marianne Boelscher Sept. 1987) This incident is also related by Teit (op.cit.:550f), who identifies the place where the Cree warrior was killed as **Sekewmectétus**. In 1988, shortly before he passed away, Francis Ignace showed us the location of Sekewmectétus as being at what is now called Indian Point on the north shore of Kamloops Lake (ibid.).

During his travels with James Teit during the Indian Rights movement in 1920, Chief Basil Dick (a.k.a. Basil David) of St'uxtéws told Teit a detailed incident "perhaps about 80 years ago" (i.e. ca. 1840) of an invasion by a Cree war party into the Xats'ull (Soda Creek) area. It tells us something of the extent of territory that our ancestors traveled, and the ways in which they moved: This incident happened in June, and the Cree kidnapped two women and took them across Yellowhead Pass into their country East of Jasper. Although the Secwépemc pursued them, and the women had left signs for their relatives to find them, the Secwépemc lost their tracks and returned home. After the salmon season was over, and the Secwépemc had provisions of dried salmon that they could take and cache along the way, they organized a party to bring the women back, and traveled beyond Yellowhead Pass, where they found the infant that one of the women, who had been pregnant, had given birth to, killed and impaled on a sharp stick. Again, they eventually lost the tracks of the Cree and their Secwépemc captives. They set out one more time, with a larger war party "bent on revenge" in the fall of the following year. As they reached the Rockies beyond where they had previously ventured, heavy snow fell. While they made large numbers of snowshoes, they killed large amounts of game, butchered, dried and cached it, thus ensuring provisions for the trip home and snowshoes for travel in the deep snow. As they systematically fanned out and canvassed the vast country for Cree, they eventually came upon a Cree camp, where the Cree group and their Secwépemc captives, who had previously split for a year, had aggregated. One of the Secwépemc women, as she sings a song while fetching water,

communicates with a Secwépemc warrior, telling him of the Crees' intentions to break up camp the next morning. The Secwépemc men then instruct the woman to "enjoy themselves" during the night. When the Cree men eventually fall soundly asleep, the women shift around their snowshoes, and flee from the camp, which allows the Secwépemc to ambush them and kill the Cree. (James Teit 1898-1910).

Similarly, Chief Louis of Kamloops told a story of Blackfoot attacking the Kenpesq'et Secwépemc, also taking women. Among the Kenpesq'et Secwépemc was a warrior named "Kwistá," who had obtained a metal star from the missionary who had come amongst them. When he reached the Blackfoot camp, so Chief Louis told Teit, Kwista "pointed to the star on his breast and told [the Blackfoot] to look at it. They kept looking at it and their power of attacking him seemed to disappear. They were the same as hypnotized by the star and by his audacity. He took the women home and delivered them to their friends (Teit, op.cit.).<sup>75</sup>

Our people thus viewed the stories of warfare, the places that commemorate and the people commemorated in them as the evidence for our people's defence of our homeland, and our continuing rights to that land, by having defended it with our own blood. This is what the Chiefs referred to in 1911, when they talked of the land that had been stolen from us, and which our ancestors defended with their blood. In only a few cases do we have boundary markers that physically

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<sup>75</sup> This narrative is in the same set of notes as the above story from Basil Dick, filed with miscellaneous hand-written field notes from the period 1915-20, when Teit accompanied Interior Chiefs to various meetings to present the Aboriginal title issue to the Federal government in Ottawa. Chief Louis died in 1915, and this story may have been recorded in 1912, when he traveled to Ottawa with Teit as part of an Indian Rights delegation.

commemorate the events where we defended our land against intruders, and maintained our boundaries. Most such knowledge survives in our stories, and as long as we can tell these stories, we will remember what the defence of our lands meant to our ancestors. Undoubtedly, it was in this spirit that Chief Louis and Chief Basil Dick remembered and told to James Teit the stories of past wars.

Another mechanism for the peaceful maintenance of our Nations' boundaries was intermarriage across borders at the periphery or boundary of the Nation. We have evidence of this for all directions of Secwépemc boundaries and nations bordering on us: In the Northeast, especially in the Tete Jaune Cache to Jasper House area, the Secwépemc intermarried with the Cree, to the extent that the population of that area was of mixed Cree-Secwépemc ancestry, which is still acknowledged by the descendants of these people who live at Chu Chua on the North Thompson River. At the Northwestern boundary of our territory, the Fraser River Secwépemc intermarried frequently with the Tsilhqot'in and Carrier, resulting in many people of mixed Secwépemc and Carrier/Tsilhqot'in ancestry especially in the Xats'ull area.

*About fifteen years ago, when I was Chairman of the Shuswap Nation Tribal Council, I travelled to Xats'ull (Soda Creek Band) to address the local community on issues of our political unity as Secwépemc. At the front of the audience were a good number of elders. As I usually do, I addressed the elders in Secwépemctsin, which, to my surprise, did not immediately stir reaction among them. I was subsequently told that most of the elders spoke Tsilhqot'in or Dakelh (Carrier) rather than Secwépemctsin, although the community has one speaker of our language remaining.*

At the southwestern boundary, Splantsin, but also among the people of the Tk'emlups Division (Kamloops and Skeetchestn), the Secwépemc intermarried with the Okanagan and Nlakapamux, resulting in many people with ancestry, at least in the extended family, from different nations. Teit's 1930 genealogy shows three hundred years of continuous intermarriage among these nations, including also the Nicola-Similkameen people, a Dene-speaking group in the Similkameen Valley who, as their language became extinct by the 1850s, were absorbed by the Okanagan and Nlakapamux peoples in the area. Among my own ancestors, my great-great grandfather Hyacinth Sisyesq'et, Chief of my community during the 1860s until his death in 1894, arranged for the marriage one of his daughters, Pauline, among the Douglas Lake Okanagan. To this day, we recognize the descendants of her family at Douglas Lake as our relatives.

At the western boundary, the Secwépemc from Llenlleneýten (High Bar) and St'uxtéws intermarried with the St'at'imc, especially the people of Caclep (Fountain) and Ts'kw'aylecw (Pavilion). In fact, for some time until the early 1900s, Tsk'waylecw and Caclep were considered as part Secwepemc, and because of the high frequency of intermarriage, all St'uxtewsemc had access to the fisheries at Bridge River and Fountain (Romanoff 1992).

Finally, at our southern boundary on the main Thompson River in the Stells (Ashcroft) area, our people intermarried with the Nlakapamux of Ashcroft and Oregon Jack. , Bonaparte) intermarried with the Nlakapmx. We will see below how, within the laws and protocols of access to resources, including salmon fishing, marriage with members of the Secwepemc nation gave a person access to the resources of the nation, including the harvesting of resources, like salmon fishing. Intermarriage, thus, constituted a peaceful way of maintaining good relations in boundary areas, and, through its continued practice over what were likely long periods of time, resulted in mixed populations in these areas. Over time, however,

practices of intermarriage resulted in changes in ethnic affiliation in these areas: While Ts'kw'aylecw was in good part Secwepemc during the late nineteenth century and into the early twentieth century, at present its population is more St'at'imcets speaking rather than Secwepemc, and appears to consider its political and ethnic affiliation as primarily St'at'imc. The same holds for Fountain, and for the people of Ashcroft, St'ells, who, it appears, at one time considered themselves more Secwepemc than they do now.

While this chapter has discussed our laws and protocols maintaining Secwepemc nationhood by way of a defined and recognized territory at the time when Europeans first arrived, along with the ways we had to maintain these boundaries, in the next chapter I will explore our activities on that land, namely, how we made a living in our homeland.

## **CHAPTER 4: RE TSUWET.S-KUCW NE SECWÉPEMCÚÍEC W: OUR WAYS ON THE LAND**

For the time period of 3,500 years ago until the arrival of Europeans a mere two hundred years ago, our ancestors' way of life, along with the environment that sustained our use of resources, remained fairly stable (see, e.g. Stryd and Rousseau 1996). As the stspetékwll or "transformers" who came from Coast Salish country some 5,000 years ago settled among our ancestors, the language of the latter merged with the Salish language introduced by the immigrants from the coast, becoming what linguists call Proto-Interior Salish.

In subsequent millennia, these ancestors developed more and more refined adaptive technologies to exploit the resources of the land. As they moved into the southern Interior of what are now southern British Columbia, northeastern Washington, Idaho and western Montana, people continued to spread out and mingle with people who already lived there. New Interior Salish languages of the Southern Branch of Interior Salish differentiated (Elmendorf 1965; Kinkade et al. 1998) likely mixing with previously existing languages.

As I noted above, some 2,000 years ago, after St'at'imcets, the Lillooet language, had already separated from the ancestral Northern Interior Salish language, Secwépemetsin and Nlakapamuxcin grew into separate languages in the



respective territories occupied by our peoples.<sup>76</sup> Our shared stories of the past, however, continue to connect us, as did the shared ways of doing things, and the shared ways of resource access and sense of kinship.

Further changes and adaptations very likely occurred during the period of the “Little Ice Age” (ca. 1300 – 1850 A.D.): Brian Hayden’s analysis of the Keatley Creek site between Fountain (Cacel̓p) and Pavilion (Ts’kw’ay̓lecw) shows a period of increasing complexity and size in pit-houses, which, as he stipulates, also included a more complex form of “corporate group” social and political organization between 1300 and 1600, but vanishing after that time (Hayden 1992).

Indeed, as we, the Secwépemc, became a people, we spread out on the land. The word Secwépemc (from s=nominalizer + cwep= “spread out” + emc/mec=people (M. Ignace 1998; Kuipers 2002), in fact means, “**spread out people.**” At some point, Secwépemc people spread out north along the valleys and upriver areas of the Fraser River to the area beyond Xats’ull (Soda Creek), wintering on both sides of the river (Teit 1909), and to the Quesnel Highlands and beyond; they moved up Simpcwétkwe, the North Thompson River, across Yellowhead Pass and to the Jasper area; across the upper reaches of the Canoe and Columbia Rivers, along the

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<sup>76</sup> According to the figures presented by Elmendorf (1965), Nlakapamuxcin (Thompson) and Secwépemtsin share about 75% of cognates, whereas St’at’imcets and Secwépemtsin share 50% cognates and Secwépemtsin and Nsilxcen (Okanogan) share 49% cognates, although different ones in part. As Secwépemtsin speakers, we can understand a fair bit of Nlakapamuxcin speech, and in fact, can communicate across languages. As an episode of communication between a St’at’imc chief from the Lillooet area and the Secwépemc chief from Soda Creek shows, in the early 1800s, and in the absence of trade languages like Chinook Jargon, speakers of diverse Interior Salish communicated across language boundaries by taking advantage of shared languages, vocabulary, or what linguists call cognates. In addition, bilingualism or even multilingualism of neighbouring indigenous languages was the norm rather than the exception until the generation of my grandparents.

continental divide. Maybe there were people living in these areas already, but their languages became ours, and, at least in words, some of ours became theirs, although what we spoke, in the end was a new Salish language.

By the eighteenth century, a group of Secwépemc people from the North Thompson, led by their Chief Kenpesq'et ("Kinbasket") had moved from the upper reaches of the Columbia, and across the mountain passes east of Revelstoke down the Columbia River into the area around what is now Windermere, settling near and among Ktunaxa people, and making a peace treaty with the Snépwen (Stony). In the Arrow Lakes area, Secwépemc people hunted along with Ts'weñemc (Okanagan people). In the south, between 1500 or earlier and 1700 A.D. (Teit 1930), the boundary between the Secwépemc and Ts'weñemc was disputed. Through continuous raiding and warfare, both the Kamloops/Skeetchestn Secwépemc and the Ts'weñemc tried to expand their territorial base, eventually settling the boundaries dispute with a treaty among nations (see below, p. ).

### **Secwépemc Resource Use**

With the onset of cooler conditions more than 4,000 years ago, salmon runs established themselves in all of the tributaries of the Fraser River, Main Thompson, North and South Thompson, resulting in abundant runs of four species of salmon in our homeland. These include kekésu7, (Chinook salmon, *Oncorhynchus*

*tshawytscha*), *sqlelten7uwi* (sockeye salmon, *onchorynchus nerka*),<sup>77</sup> *sheni7* (humpback or pink salmon, *Onchorynchus gorbusha*) and *sxéyeqs* (Coho salmon, *Oncorhynchus kisutch*). In addition, *sqwigwle* (steelhead, *Onchorynchus mykiss*) established themselves in a number of tributaries, and *kokanee*, *keknécw*, (a landlocked, small variety of sockeye salmon) runs began to exist in a number of tributaries of the Fraser and Thompson River system, some with large cyclical fluctuations in cycles (see Kew 1992). In addition, various other species of trout, suckers and even hingcod and squawfish were fished in mid-elevation lakes throughout our territory.

Helped on by the methods taught by the Salish immigrants into our country, our ancestors learned to catch salmon with a variety of different methods. In the fast, muddy waters of the Fraser River, they used dip-nets (*stúkwtsen*), made of the hard wood of juniper or yew. In the clear and relatively shallow waters of the main Thompson and tributaries of the North Thompson, gaffs (*uþs*) and three-pronged spears (*wewtsk*) supported by long poles was the most efficient fishing method. For catching large and heavy fish like spring salmon, single- or double-pronged harpoon spears (*meníp*) were the chosen method. In order to spot and then spear the approaching salmon in the river, fishers built platforms on the banks, and dropped white stones into the river, thus making the fish more visible in the water. Besides

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<sup>77</sup> *Sqlelten7uwi* means "real or ordinary salmon." Sockeye is and was the staple among salmon species, especially for drying and winter storage, although ethnohistorical and ethnographic records show that, until the 1913 Hells Gate slide severely diminished the Fraser/Thompson runs of Spring salmon, the latter was perhaps as important as a fresh staple throughout the spring to late summer months (Romanoff 1992; Bouchard and Kennedy 1992; Ware 1983)

natural conditions produced by back eddies, fishing grounds thus involved an aspect of human labour and maintenance, and it was the individuals or families who built up and maintained such fishing areas or fishing rocks who were the first to harvest fish there.

In the relatively still waters of the South Thompson and Main Thompson Rivers, our ancestors also developed the method of lighting pitch-wood fires on canoes in order to attract the salmon, and then spearing them from their canoes. Steelhead were also caught by this method called tsétskw'em.

In addition, with the help of the strong fibers of spéts'en (Indian hemp, *Apocynum cannabinum*) they learned to make gill nets, held up by floats made from animal bladders, and anchored by round rocks as sinkers. They also made conical fish traps and conical weirs (mu7) that were efficient in the relatively slow waters of the South Thompson and at the mouth of tributaries to the main stem rivers. Finally, in different locations, like the mouth of Deadman's Creek, the mouth of the Barriere River, they annually set up fish dams (ts'elmín) made of a lattice of sticks in order to contain and then selectively harvest salmon as they migrated up the creek. Chisholm's analysis of prehistoric marine protein in human remains from the Interior shows that 40-60% of the diet of our ancestors consisted of salmon (Lovell, Chisholm et al. 1986). Throughout the Interior, dried salmon also became a staple of trade. Teit (1900) provides a list of the "currency value" of salmon in relationship to various other kinds of only manufactured, only locally available, or specialized goods like Indian hemp, tanned hides, hazelnuts and other items (see also Turner et

al., 1998). Thus, three “sticks”<sup>78</sup> of wind-dried salmon were worth one large dressed buckskin; a dressed (tanned) elk skin could be had for 4-5 sticks of salmon.

At the time of the Joint Reserve Commission in the late 1870s, Commissioner Gilbert Malcolm Sproat remarked on the importance of salmon fishing to our people:

The salmon is the Indians' chief food, for the winter, and indeed at all times. No part of the fish is wasted. They prefer the salmon to beef, mutton, pork or to the vegetables which many of them now produce. At this season when the weekly coach leaves newspapers at my camp and the whites ask about politics and war the Indians crowd round to hear news of the salmon. Nothing will restrain them when the fish at last arrive. 'The salmon first and God next', an old Indian said to me last year.' (G.M. Sproat to superintendent general, 27 Aug. 1877, RG 10, vol. 3653, folio 8,705)

Only a few years ago, one of our elders, Laura Harry from Esk'et (Interview Oct. 31, 1998), simply but eloquently stated to me, *Re sqlélten, yiri7 re sxtéqst.s te stsmémelt-kt* – salmon are our first children. It is like our children that we need to look after them.

As they had done before the introduction of salmon runs and salmon harvesting techniques, our ancestors, what we call the *téllqelmucw*<sup>79</sup> engaged in hunting. Archaeological sites attest to our ancestors consuming a variety of large ungulates, including elk, deer, mountain goat and sheep, and caribou, along with

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<sup>78</sup> 100 fish, although this probably means 100 filleted sides, each side being ½ fish) of salmon

<sup>79</sup> *téllqelmucw* is the Secwépemc term for “ancestors.” The late Mary Thomas referred to *téllqelmucw* as all the people before us, the people of long time ago.

small game like rabbit, marmot, ground hog, gophers and others.<sup>80</sup> Deer and elk were hunted in the **t7iweltk**, the montane parklands of the Interior Plateau, usually 4,000 – 5,000 feet above the river levels, often tracked with hunting dogs, but also driven into built deer fences, which, as man-made contraptions, were considered to be the property of the builder. Caribou were hunted in the high mountain ranges throughout the higher coastal mountain and Rockies (Teit 1909; Alexander 1992; M. Ignace 1998). Caribou, along with marmots were hunted in the higher sub alpine and alpine areas of the snow covered mountains.

A group of hunters, accompanied by their families, would stay out on hunting expeditions for two to three weeks at a time, establish a base camp, where their wives and families would camp, snare small game and gather plants. The men would travel into the montane parklands and sub alpine areas to track game and make kills, then bring it down to the base camp, where the meat would be partially dried by women. Thus, throughout two thirds of the year, people were “on the go.” In Secwépemctsin, the very concept of “living” in a place, **mut** (singular) or **tsyem** (plural), entails the idea of not only living in a fixed abode, but wherever people stay is where they “live,” including the periods of time they “camp” at stable resource-producing locations throughout the seasonal round. This is in contrast to the concept of *yist*, “camping overnight” *en route* to a location. Lily Harry’s narrative about the Secwépemc seasonal round, along with the stories about land use by

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<sup>80</sup> Moose did not arrive in the south-central Interior until the early part of the twentieth century, and since that time have become an important resource to our people.

Theresa Jules, Ida Matthew and others, show the use of these concepts, as these elders tell about their travelling, camping, hunting, gathering and fishing activities.

As the archaeological record shows (Pokotylo 1998, Peacock 1998; Peacock and Turner 1995), around 4,500 years ago, underground pit cooking ovens that entail a method we call *tsq'elstém*, entered the picture, revolutionizing the ways in which carbohydrates from various root plants could be utilized.

At different elevations, the environments of the Secwépemcúlecw sustains a variety of plants of different plant families whose starchy tubers, rhizomes and bulbs in their raw state contain either inulin or other undigestible starches (Kuehnlein and Turner 1991; Loewen 1998). The most prominent among these were *tséts'elq* (*Balsamorhiza sagittata* or Balsamroot), *scwicw* (*Erythronium grandiflorum* or Glacier Lily), *qwléwe* (*Allium cernuum* or Nodding Onion), *qéq'me* (*Fritillaria lanceolata* or Chocolate Lily) and *qweqw'íle* (*Lomatium macrocarpum* or hogfennel/biscuit root, see ch. 2), the plant associated with the “transformer” who explored the boundaries of Secwépemc and Salish territory. Although *tsets'elq*, *scwicw*, *qwléwe*, *qéq'me* and *qweqw'íle* are members of different plant families, they have in common that their main starch requires human intervention of sun drying, and, more importantly, underground pressurized steam cooking to make the plant nutritionally useful and palatable.

Secwépemc and Stat'emc (St'at'imc/Lillooet) elders report that long time ago, Grizzly Bears taught people how to harvest and prepare *scwicw* to make the bulbs digestible and sweet-tasting: Given that archaeological evidence points to pit-

cooking having existed for at least 4,500 years, at some point in that long-ago past, hunters in the sub alpine areas of the Plateau observed how Grizzly Bears would dig up scwicw, but instead of eating them immediately, they would leave them to dry in the sun for a few days, then return to eat them. As Mary Thomas showed Dawn Loewen, who then chemically measured starch and sugar composition, Scwicw get the optimal combination of sweetness and high edible starch content through a complex process that involves time of harvest, then sun-curing, followed by slow pressure steaming in underground pit-ovens (Loewen 1998, Ignace and Ignace 2004).

Likewise, the taproots of *tséts'elq* or Balsamroot (*Balsamorhiza sagittata*) only become digestible and palatable in the process of pitcooking, as the chemistry of the pit oven converts the root's inulin (a starch not digestible by the human body) into edible starch, fructose, sucrose and glucose, and destroys the turpentine-like pitch that oozes from its surface. Other important root plants included skwenkwínem or "Indian potatoes" (*Claytonia lanceolata*), which grows at higher elevations (4,500-5,000 feet) and llekw'pín or bitter-root (*Lewisia redeviva*), which grows in select areas in the dry, bunchgrass habitat just above the river valleys, and was a coveted trade item for one of the "national dishes" of the Secwépemc and surrounding peoples, a pudding made of Saskatoon's, bitter-root, fish-eggs and other roots and berries called scpet'ám (Ignace and Ignace 2004; Turner and Ignace, ms.).

In order to ensure a good enough supply of starchy foods for the winter, families would harvest and process several hundred pounds of root vegetables for



the winter months,<sup>81</sup> while they were camped at central root-processing areas in low/mid elevations, such as Petpút'men (Upper Hat Creek, west of Cache Creek), Ck'emqenétkwe (Scheidam Flats above Kamloops), or K'écse7ten (Back Valley above Skeetchestn).

Plant harvesting techniques furthermore involved detailed *management regimes*, such as landscape burning to create nutrients for new growth, the replanting of immature bulbs and loosening of soil during harvests with the replanting of the corms of bulbs.

In addition to roots, a large variety of fruits and vegetables were harvested throughout the spring to fall months. The green shoots of various plants, including Indian Rhubarb, fireweed and Balsamroot, provided minerals and vitamins in early spring. The cambium of lodge pole pine and ponderosa pine (st7iqw'elqw) was and is valued for its aromatic sweet taste, but also provided vitamins, minerals and acts as a laxative detoxifier, enabling our bodies' "spring cleansing."<sup>82</sup> Hazelnuts, pine nuts, and numerous species of berries harvested at different elevations throughout the summer rounded off the diet. Important fruit plants included several species of *vaccinium* (huckleberries, highbush and low bush blueberries, dwarf blueberries);

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<sup>81</sup> In the mid 1970s, Ike Willard estimated that when he was young, a household would harvest 500 lbs. of scwicw to last for the winter months (Palmer 1975a). Since during his youth, families already grew potatoes and other vegetables in gardens, the harvest of edible roots before the arrival of market starch foods would have been much higher. Eugene Hunn (1992) estimates that in the Southern Plateau where camas was the most important root plant, up to 50% of the diet derived from root plants.

<sup>82</sup> See below, ch. 8, the story of Coyote and His Hosts, where Beaver serves Coyote cambium to feast him. In this case the cambium is that of Ponderosa Pine, although at least in my generation, lodgepole cambium is the preferred kind. The recent Mountain Pine Beetle infestation in the forests of the Interior has wreaked havoc with our supply of cambium.

Saskatoon berries, *speqpeq7úwi*, recognized by our people as the “berry par excellence, or “real/ordinary berries.” Additional important fruits were strawberries, raspberries, gooseberries, red and black currants, black caps, high bush cranberries, chokecherries, black hawthorn, and even Oregon grapes and kinnikinnik berries, which were fried with bear grease. Of particular significance was, and continues to be, *sxúsem* or soapberry (*Shepherdia Canadensis*), a bitter fruit high in vitamin C and iron, which is beaten off the bush (“sp’em”) rather than picked (*qw’léwem*) and made into a thirst-quenching beverage, or whipped into Indian ice cream.

Another integral part of the diet of Secwépemc and other Interior peoples was **wile** or black tree lichen (*Bryoria freemontii*), which our people raked off Douglas fir, lodge pole pine or sub alpine fir trees at mid to higher elevations in early fall. After being washed to remove its outer layer of sulphuric acid, it was pit-cooked, shaped into loaves or cakes, and then dried for future use (Turner 1974; Turner and M. Ignace ms.).

The dietary importance of **wile** was long considered to lie in its capacity to be an always available “starvation food.” However, we are only just beginning to uncover the culinary chemical knowledge of our ancestors: Recent experimental graduate research by Crawford and Yip (2007) have shown that in pit-cooking ovens, wile acted as a catalyst to enhance the nutritional composition of root plants during the slow-cooking process.

More than a hundred plants were used medicinally, most of them gathered in the t7iwelk (high plateau) or sub alpine meadow areas nearest to village communities, or while people were on hunting trips. Medicinal plants included tonics and cleansing teas, such as those made from sxúsem (soapberry sticks), melénllp (subalpine fir bark) and secwsqéqxe7ten (Labrador tea)<sup>83</sup> but also highly potent and toxic medicinal plants like tnilmen (Indian hellabore), kets'e7éllp (devil's club) and others (Turner and Ignace n.d.). Our elders accompanied the harvesting of plant and animal resources with detailed regimes of plant management strategies. These included landscape burning to enhance the growth of animal forage, and berry and root plant growth, but also to maintain trails, and reduce pests and insects (Turner 1991; Turner and Ignace, nd.).<sup>84</sup> Other plant management regimes included the replanting of immature bulbs and corms to propagate root plant species; the pruning of berry bushes, in the process of harvesting (especially sxusem); the loosening of the soil with the digging stick to provide better habitat; and the re-planting of young bulbs and tubers in such prepared soil to propagate root-plant species. Our elder Mary Thomas, in fact, referred to Secwépemc plant management and harvesting as "just like a garden," (Peacock and Turner 2000; see also Turner, Ignace and Ignace 2000), defying the separation between "cultivators"

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<sup>83</sup> The term secwsqéqxe7ten literally means "dog's mouth wash", or "stuff one bathes dogs with." Long time ago, hunters used to wash the mouths and nozzles of their hunting dogs with this fragrant tea, so the deer could not pick up the dogs' scent.

<sup>84</sup> Until the large "wildfires" in the Interior of BC in 2003, the British Columbia Ministry of Forests had for decades denounced and criminalized our ancient fire management regimes, to the extent that young people have not been raised in the intricate science of landscape burning. I was fortunate to have learned some of these techniques from my great-grandfather and other elders who raised me.

and “foragers” so often expounded by settler society since the late nineteenth century, in order to denounce our use of the land as “primitive” and thus illegitimate.

## **The Traditional Seasonal Round**

The months in the Secwépemc Calendar (Teit 1909; Dawson 1892; M. Ignace and Jules 1997)<sup>85</sup> reflect the seasonal activities shared by Secwépemc people. Our ancestors measured the years in the numbers of “snows” (swucwt) or winters.

A seasonal round consisted of 13 lunar months and started with the late fall “entering” into winter-homes and a stay-at-home period (Teit 1909:517-18; Dawson 1892: 40), when, nonetheless, men hunted for game on snowshoes, and helped by hunting dogs, and trapped for different fur-bearing animals. They also went ice fishing in the lakes or by the tsétskw’em method (see above) from canoes. In mid to late spring, our people harvested different root plants at increasingly higher elevations, as the snow melted at higher and higher elevations between March and late May. During this time, they pursued large cutthroat trout and rainbow trout runs at lakes in the middle to high plateaus, including Xixyúm (Hi-hium Lake), Green Lake, Tsp’éten (Gustafson Lake), Q’ése7ten (Loon Lake), Bonaparte Lake (Sp’estwécwemstem), and many other lakes. The time of the late spring freshet in

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<sup>85</sup> The names of Secwépemc months expressing the seasonal round were re-elicited by Marianne Ignace and myself with various elders between 1992 and 1997, cross-checked with versions of the Secwépemc calendar recorded a century earlier by George M. Dawson (Dawson 1892) and James Teit (1909); after that, this reconstructed Secwépemc calendar was included in various editions of annual print calendars issued by the Secwépemc Cultural Education Society Language Department during the late 1990s, and has been included in school and university course curricula.

the rivers marked the beginning of salmon fishing, which began with Spring salmon, followed by sockeye until early fall; Coho was fished mainly in the tributaries, in mid to late fall. Besides yielding fresh protein between March and October, significant portions of the catch from high-yield salmon and trout were dried for winter use. Throughout early to late summer, berries were picked as they ripened at higher and higher places on the plateaus. Sxúsem, for example, ripen in the lower part of their range (3,500 feet) in early July, but are ripe in the highest parts of their range (5,500 feet) as late as the end of August. During the same time, people used to get marmots in the snowy mountains. The late summer to early fall period was the time for large-scale hunting of large ungulates, much of which was dried for winter use.

Table 1 on p. 101 shows the association between Secwépemc months and resources associated with that time of the year throughout the annual seasonal round. It involves the places most often habitually traveled by people in my area, including the valley and shores of the Thompson River and Kamloops Lake, the plateaus on the south side of Kamloops Lake and Thompson River, the Deadman Creek Valley; they traveled the valleys, plateaus and the mid-elevation mountains that frame it, along with the high plateaus (t7iwelk) of the highest areas around Hihium Lake (at 5,000 ft. elevation), and Battle Mountain. As part of the seasonal round, our people also hunt(ed) in the watershed of the upper Bonaparte River and Bonaparte Lake (Sp'estwécwemstem). For travel into the higher mountains, our people would travel further afield to the north, east and west. In addition, travels of

hunting and camping with relatives would take our people to other areas of Secwépemcúlecw, although not as frequently.

*I remember Old Edward and Julienne and other elders, not only, traveled in and around Deadman Creek and its tributaries as described above, but they also traveled to other parts of Secwépemculucw for social and cultural purposes. For example, Old Edward used to travel to Williams Lake for gatherings where people played games while the Chiefs met. Julienne would not only travel to visit relatives in Williams Lake and other communities, but also to attend to people as a medicine woman. Julienne was in her mid-seventies when she was paralyzed from the waist down as a result of falling off her horse. This occurred as she was riding down a steep mountain trail just above the village. Her latigo strap broke under the weight of the sacks of pinecones she had harvested. Before this, Julienne could be found picking saskatoons, or choke cherries in the valley or riding up into the mountains, in the spring, to harvest lodge pole cambium or st7iqw'elq, or to pick strawberries, to gather rotten fur, yuqw'i for tanning hides; she and Edward could be found down on the river catching fish. Edward was not allowed to ride after he lost his eyesight around the same time that Julienne got paralysed.*

*Another elder of our community, Alice Celesta, was into her seventies and still riding her horse into the distant mountains for days on end to pick or dig the berries or bulbs that were in season. She would travel up to Clearwater or Blue River to pick berries and, upon return, would come home laden with berries and stories of her exploits. Upon being asked if she was scared of grizzly bears she would*

*say that she would talk to them and tell them she had to eat and feed her family, and they should go somewhere else to feed and would leave her alone.*

**Table 1: Secwépemc Calendar and Seasonal Round**

<b>Secwépemc name</b>	<b>English translation</b>	<b>Month (approximate)</b>	<b>Subsistence activities</b>
Pellc7ell7ullewten	“Entering month”	November	People enter into their winter homes; animals enter their dens.
Pelltetéq'em	“Cross-over month”	December	Winter solstice; people live on stored provisions; trapping
Pell7émtmin; Pellkw'ellemtmin	“Stay at home month;” “stay underneath month”	January	People live on stored provisions; some ice fishing; trapping
Pelltsípwenten	“Cache pit month”	February	People live on stored provisions; ice fishing; fishing for steelhead with torch lights; trapping
Pellsqeps	“Chinook wind month”	March	Fishing at Loon Lake; spring hunting; first plants come out.
Pesll7éwten	“Melting month”	April	Snow melts in the higher mountains. The first fresh shoots of plants are ripe, digging for wild onion, yellow bells and mariposa lily; spring hunting
Pell7é7llqten	“Root-digging month”	May	Gathering of avalanche lily, spring sunflower, and other roots; spring salmon run; fishing at Hi-Hium Lake
Pellspantsk	“Mid-summer	June	First berries ripe at end of month; root digging;

Secwépemc name	English translation	Month (approximate)	Subsistence activities
	month”		cambium of jack-pine ready; spring salmon run
Pelltqwelqwéltemc	“Getting-ripe month”	July	Many species of berries ripe, root and medicinal plant gathering. Salmon fishing in Fraser River
Pesqelqlélten	“Many salmon month”	August	Salmon fishing in Thompson River; berries harvested at higher elevations; chocolate lily, and plants. Hunting
Pelltemlikt	“Spawned out month”	September	Hunting season and drying of meat for winter months. Black tree lichen harvested. Some salmon fishing.
Pesllwélsten	“Abandoning month”	October	Peak hunting season and drying of meat for winter months; tanning hides. Coho salmon run

The following narrative from the late Lily Harry of Xgaitem̓ (Dog Creek)<sup>86</sup> about her ancestors’ resource harvesting shows a seasonal round in a different part of Secwépemcúlcw, but with very similar principles of travel and harvesting patterns: While she does not describe salmon fishing here, which people from that area of Secwépemcúlcw carried out in traditional fishing areas on the Fraser, it amply illustrates our people’s use of the high elevation lakes, hunting in montane

<sup>86</sup> In summer 1991, Lily Harry and her niece Mary Palmantier showed the hunting, berrypicking and medicine gathering areas around Blackdome Mountain to myself, Marianne Ignace and Nancy Turner. Much of what she told us is similar to the narrative recorded with her a few years earlier by Aert Kuipers, although we did not tape-record her during our trip, but took notes instead. Lily Harry, who was one of the Secwépemc elder authorities on plants and medicines, passed away in 1995, Mary Palmantier died not long after.



parklands and sub alpine areas, and shows the extent of territory that people traveled. Last not least, Lily Harry consistently employs the concepts of “dwell” and “camp” I explained above:

... **Re Ts'péten yiri7 re cwéwlemtens le q'7es te qelmucw.**  
Gustafson Lake was [also] the fishing place of the people long ago.

**Re m-cyucwtes re pisell, nu7 m-lleqelcwes es wéwlems.**  
When the rainbow trout ran, the people camped (lived) there.

**Te Txe7inten 7lu7 re m-wéwlemes te pisell, swlle7u7I ell xwéqs.**  
At Lac La Hache, they fished for rainbow trout, ling and squawfish.

**Te sllwélsten re keknécw 7lu7 me7 tcwesétmenses.**  
In fall, they would travel there for kokanee.

**Re ts7emetúlecwstem tek Cp'estnétkwe, re Cteqwtiqw', yiri7  
t'ucw ri7 re cwelwéwlemtens.**  
The places that are called “Flat Lake” and “Muddy Water,” these were also their fishing grounds.

**T'lén te Tsxq'elxétkwe neri7 le- Legwpé7qs w7ecwes re wéwlemes  
mete Tsepé7.**  
Over at Round Lake, Legwpé7qs and Tsepé7 used to fish.

**Kw'elltkwékweltkw-enke me7e ri7 re xqw'eléwten,**  
It must be below the berry-picking ground,

**Pyin re sts7emét.stem Tektqweqw'qín.**  
What they now call Timothy Mountain.

**T'lu7 yúmell ri7 le stext'ex7ém w7ecwes re w7ecwes-enke.**  
Over there is where all the old people (“elders”) were apparently.<sup>87</sup>

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<sup>87</sup> The verb form that Lily Harry uses to refer to her ancestors' hunting, berry-picking and fishing activity includes the evidential suffix -enke, which designates information the narrator knows from physical evidence left behind (rather than by hear-say, expressed through the evidential suffix -ekwe. Throughout their travels, our elders were certainly aware of the scant physical remains of hunting camps and lithic scatter left behind by their elders and by previous generations. However, I think what she conveys here entails, in addition, the physical evidence of the resources that exist in these places, connected to the permanence of the mental map of the seasonal round its association with generic and specific toponyms (place names).

**Teke me7e re skekéws w7ec re sxwesétes-enke e nésmes k stem es  
penmíns.**

See, they traveled far out, when they went looking for things [resources]

**E nésmes k stem, me7 penmíns eytsell me7 tspelq'ilcwes.**  
When they went out, they found things and then came back.

**Ta7 me7 scwesét.s tek nekw'7ésq't me7 tskitscwes re m-cwesétes.**  
They wouldn't go off and return the same day,

**Re m-cwesétes lu7 w7ec re styémwswes ell me7  
pellcteckeńsqéxe7ten.**  
When they traveled, they traveled on horseback and with packhorses.

**Me7 kw'incwes ri7 k syist.s eytsell me7 me7 tspelq'ilcwes.**  
They would camp overnight for several nights before they returned home.

**Xexé7 lu7 te sw7ec. Xexé7 ri7 re sllekw'minem t'ri7 te stemi.**  
They were smart, the way they were. They had to remember lots of things.

**Me7 tslexemstéc t'he7n w7ecwes k w7ecwes ke7 stet'ex7ém,**  
You had to know where your ancestors used to go and stay.

**T'he7n w7ecwes k kénmes t'ri7.**  
Where they went and what they did.

**Teke, len méme7 tl'une te pestéwt tl'u7 xwexwyulecwem, w7ecwes  
k w7ecwes-enke.**  
My mom went all over the country on the other side [of the Fraser River]

**W7ec ne pexpíxmes.**  
With the hunters.

**T'lune ne ts7emetúlecwstem tek Hawkeye, tl'u7 -ekwe w7ecwes k  
w7ecwes.**  
Over there at the place called "Hawkeye" that's where she used to go.

**Kekéw ri7 t'len te skwelkw'élt.**  
Far away in the snowy mountains.

**E m-nésmenses re sqwi7qwe, yiri7 tl'u7 re m-qwetsétses.**  
When they went after marmots, that's where they went.

**Ne August m-kwemtus tl'7élye re qelmucw, tel ri7 m-yews ri7 re  
st'7eks.**

In August is when the people [from here] always used to cross over,

**T'lu7 re m-tsyémes wel m-ullecw re sqwi7qwe eytsell m-tsyet'xwes,  
And they lived [camped] there until the marmots used start hibernating, then they  
came down [the mountain].**

**t'len te tsqwemqwum, re Pelltsets'aý, re Pellswéýlecw, yiri7 re  
spíxtens le q'7éses.**  
Off the hills, at Blackdome Mountain and Red Mountain, those were their hunting  
grounds long ago.

**Re ts'i7, re yegélecken, yiri7 t'lu7 re m pixens.  
They hunted deer and mountain sheep over there.**

**Tekenu7s re Pelltsets'aý ne7élye re stslexéýectsen.  
The place I'm telling you about is on the other side of Blackdome.**

**Tsqwum ne7éne tsqwum, ne stsetéwsts m-pésellkwe.  
There is a hill, another hill from there, and in between there is a lake.**

**Neri7 mé7e re w7ecwes re swewll.  
There are fish in there.**

**Neri7 me7e w7ecwes re q'itmes re qelmucw. ....  
People used to fish there with hook and line.**

**Te skwelkw'élt w7ecwes re tsyémes w7ec re pexpixmes,  
The hunting parties lived [camped] in the snowy mountains.**

**Ell w7ec re tkwenkwinmes.  
And that's where they got Indian potatoes.**

**Tsplúkw'st.s re scwicw t'lu7, re skwenkwinem, re scwicw ell re  
sqwi7qwe w7ec re tsnésemst.ses te kekewúlecw....  
They used to gather glacier lilies, Indian potatoes; it's the glacier lilies and the  
marmots that they used to get in the far away places.**

The above text was re-transcribed and translation edited from a previous  
transcription/translation of her taped narrative published by Aert Kuipers in  
Kuipers (1989: 41-44).

The elders whom I interviewed continued this sense of seasonal round throughout their life time, travelling between and among resource harvesting locations in the mountains, the high plateaus, the highland lakes, valleys, creeks and rivers. Our people continued to go on long camping trips to pick berries, riding on horseback up the mountains to the higher elevations, several thousand feet high. While women went on horseback picking huckleberries and blueberries, as well as sxusem, often snacking on raspberries, strawberries along the way, the men accompanied them and then traveled further to go hunting. But from the elders I remember and was told about, the division of labour was not as clear-cut: Each community had one or more women who were expert hunters. In Skeetchestn, Alice Celesta, who was my great-grandmother's uqw'i ("sister", but actually first cousin), filled this role. In Chu Chua, my aunt Mona's mother-in-law Emma Abel was an expert hunter.

An essential part of traditional resource use was the sharing of the resources that people harvested. Theresa Jules explains the cooperation and equal sharing as they traveled together.

**Re m-yews mé7e m-cketscemnúcwes cú7tsem re sǫwǫléwem te  
wenáx...**

When the time came again to pick huckleberries

**yirí7 cú7tsem tl7élye nuxwnúxwenxw í7en xílem... tektékle m ri7.**

Again the women did the same thing, they made their lunches.

**.....Tlu7 m-w7ec m-qwelǫwǫléwem... qwelǫwǫléwem.**

They would be out there picking berries, picking berries.

**Telri7 re s7i7llew m-xwentés re sǫwlewems e cw7ítes.**  
Some of them dried their berries, if they picked lots.

**Ell yi7éne m-c7í7elcmens ri7.**  
And this they shared with others.

**Yi7éne í7en ts'íleñ m-c7í7elcmens lu7...m-ciláp.**  
With the whole works they did the same, each with an equal share all around.

**Ec cú7tsem íri7 m- í7en s7i7llew cú7tsem íkllu7 m-tcúsem**  
Again they would go about, some would go looking for more

**tcúsem íri7 íhé7en te speqpéq.**  
looking here and there for berries.

**Swéti7 k xexé7 m-penstsíllen...m-cwiye7entwécw.**  
Who ever was smart enough to find food, they invited one another along

**Yiri7 ucw m-sqwetséts.s ucw.**  
So then off they'd go.

**Re sxelxélwes ílu7 m-w7ec, m-pexpíxem ell ri7.**  
Their husbands were there, they also went hunting.

**Ta7 ri7 k tlííltés.**  
They never stayed in one place.

The ethic of “knucwentwécw”, helping one another, existed not only during hunting and berrypicking trips, but also in domestic tasks, like tanning hides, which, throughout this time was a time-consuming activity that required great skill. It produced not only the raw material for shoes, shirts and gloves we wore on a daily basis, but buckskin moccasins and gloves were also sold to generate some cash income for households. Although tanning was in essence a female task, it required team-work between men and women: Expert tanning starts with the hunter stripping off the hide in the right way, by working it off the deer as it is hung by its feet, rather than cutting it off: Cutting the hide will result in fat and membrane staying on the

skin, resulting in more work for the woman who has to scrape it. While by and large women did the hard work of scraping and then stretching the hide, men and boys were often called upon to work on the thick neck, which required hard work.

Again, Theresa Jules explained,

**Yiri7 mé7e...xwexweyt ten tri7 well e kyé7e...**  
So then, all of your grandmothers there

**le Sulyén...Terutí yi7 m-kwelkúlem xwexweyt te stem...**  
Sulyén, Tegrutí they made everything,

**knucwentwécw.**  
They helped one another.

**Ta7 yiri7 łucw k stnkwe7s me7 íqem tri7 tek scwetmíh.**  
They didn't work alone at tanning hides.

**Re m-patne7éws ri7.**  
They would work together in pairs.

**Re m-kwelkúlens yi7éne...íqens yi7éne.**  
They would make things, tanning this.

The trapping (q'um) of fur-bearing animals like marten and beaver, but also coyote, wolf and otter, pre-dated the arrival of the commercial fur trade in the 1810s, in that our ancestors relied on furs for clothing, in their ceremonial regalia and for mats and blankets. Throughout the nineteenth century, fur bearing animals were trapped with traded metal traps. During the 1920s, as the provincial government instituted the registration and licensing of trap-lines, family heads in our communities registered the traplines in areas where they had habitually trapped in previous years. In my community, like in other surrounding Secwépemc

communities, nearly every male household head held a trap-line within the watersheds and mountains in the area where most of our hunting and gathering took place. Traplines were plotted on maps, and annually, the Indian agent ensured that new tags for fur-bearing animals were issued and trap-lines were kept active.

**Oh!...m-yews mé7e ri7...cú7tsem m-yews tlri7... cú7tsem**  
Oh, so then, and again from there, again

**m-squqúms íkllu7 ílun te Xixyum.**  
they trapped up at HiHyum.

**Pell xwq̄wemín yi7 le Johnny lu7 ell le7 xpé7e le Lonso....**  
Johnny had a trap line and your grandfather Lonso.

**Yi7éne le7 xpé7e re Lonso...éne le Johnny yi7 pll xwq̄wemín.**  
Your grandfather Lonso, Johnny there they had trap lines.

**Te nstsutst ell le Eddy Jules pll xwq̄wemín.**  
And I think that Eddy Jules had a trap line,

**ell m-yews le Sklep.**  
And also Hyacinth Jules.

**Tnstsutst lu7 Walter Humphrey.**  
I think, Walter Humphrey.

**Tsukw cum lu7 re núxwenxw ec tsq̄westéses.(laughter)**  
But back then he trapped only women.

**Ah yem qílqelt í7 nekú7es stem.**  
Ah but sometimes things happen that are so funny.

**Yi7 éne yi xwq̄wemín yem ri7.**  
This here was his trap line.

**Ell re Johnny te n...te n... tl7éne ten te James pyin re mutes.**  
And Johnny, I, from James's now where he lives.

**TJ - Tlri7 le Jonny re xwq̄wemín...**  
From there was Johnny's trap line,

**wel kék7ell e skitscs łlun te cķemtsín...m-ǵúmes yem łri7.**  
As far as, almost to Cķemtsín, he set animal traps out there.

**Nekú7es yem cw7it re skwenwélleńs...**  
Sometimes he caught lots,

**ell nekú7es m-tá7a ri7 k m-s.**  
and sometimes none.

**Ec yem ri7 te7éllqes nekú7es łri7 stémi.**  
You know that some years there are few if any of some things.

**Nekú7es m-cw7it ri7.**  
Some times they are plentiful.

**Re sqlew ri7 m-cw7it ri7 ł7éne te m-wew7éc.**  
There would be lots of beavers out there.

**E yews e swiktc ri7 sqlew es łucw ren k September n k  
(August) ...e swiktcwes ri7...te tswec łkllun ti łhé7en.**  
If you see the beavers in September

August, when you see them at the creeks out there somewhere.

**E yews e starts e skwelkúlens re tsitcws...**  
When they start to make their houses,

**łhe7 k ts'ílmes yi7.**  
However they make them.

During the 1960s, as Indian agencies became disbanded, every single trap-line of our people was lost, because at the time, the Department of Indian Affairs omitted to inform our people that they would henceforth have to apply for their own tags and licence renewals. While, during low years of fur-bearing animals our people did not trap in order not to deplete the resource, settlers were allowed to take possession of traplines after five years.



Throughout this time period, the traditional resource economy and seasonal round was integrated into men getting employment in ranching, haying and clearing land. The account below from an elder from the North Thompson (c.f. Ignace and Ignace 2004:392) shows how, while the men were clearing land for settlers, the family would camp in the area, which, as mentioned in the place name, Tsqeltqeqen, for a long time before had held strategic and recurring importance within the seasonal round. As the family camped, the women and children would gather different kinds of berries, and the men would provide meat by flooding out gopher holes, and catching various kinds of bottom fish and white fish:

**Le q'7eses well ren pepe7, Se7 met re Marianne w7ec-kucw re  
tsyemes-kucw ne Tsqeltqíqen.**

Long time ago, my father, Se7 and Marianne were all camping, together  
at Tsqeltqeqen.

**Well ren pepe7 ell le Se7 w7ec re t'imlucwes ne Geniers.'**

My Dad, Se7 and them were clearing land at Geniers.'

**W7écwes well ren meme7 ell le Marianne qwelqw'léwmes te  
stcwelcucwel tri7 ne scencenc, ell m-qw'léwens stemi te  
tqwelqw'elt te speqpéq.**

My mother and Marianne were picking gooseberries  
around the rocks, and they picked any other kind of berries.

**Ell re m-wi7s re s7el7elkst.s, well ren pepe7 ell well Se7 m-  
ctektek'ensre sisk' re ctsetsitcws wel m-qwets't te sewllkwe.**

And when they finished work, my father and them and Se7 and them  
filled the gopher holes until they were full of water.

**M-tscwuytes re sisk', m-sepsp7elesqenses,  
m-yews yiri7 re skwens, m-c7illentmes-kucw.**

When the gophers came out, they clubbed them, then they took them out,  
and we ate them.

**Ell heqen re s7i7llcw t'ri7 xwentés well ren meme7**  
And maybe some of them, my mother would dry.

**Ell xwexweyt te stem re sqw'lewems m-xuwentés.**  
And all the things they gathered, they dried.

**Ell ren meme7 w7ec re qw'7umes te semtsets'.**  
And my Mom was trapping groundhogs.

**W7ec-kucw re tsknucwstmes ren meme7 te sqw'lewms,**  
**stemi te speqpéq tsqw'lewst.s**  
We were helping my mother pick whatever berries there were.

**Tselxemstéten w7ec-kucw t'ucw re siseysus tekwmíte7.**  
I remember we were just playing all the time.

**W7ec-kucw t'ri7 re tspelpelk'stmes q'7e7s te tsreprép.**  
We were knocking over old trees.

**M-tsuns-kucw ren meme7, "ta7-ews t'ri7 ks xillentp,"**  
My mom told us, "don't do that!"

**Esteqyé e stsiqenweñtpes re wutscén!**  
In case they dug up lizards.

**Me7 kelkélents.s r7ales, e wikemucw tek wutscen r7ales,**  
they'll chase you at night, if you see a lizard at night,

**me7 llgwilcucw ne t7ikw, me7 ta7-es es c7ullcwments.s re**  
**wutscen."**  
you jump over a fire so they won't go inside you, the lizards.

**Tselxemstéten cw7it-kucw re sc7illens lu7,**  
I remember we had a lot to eat,

**well ren meme7 qwelqw'lewmes ell m-pexpixmes, ell m-qw'7umes te  
sisk'.**

when my mom and them picked and when they hunted, and they trapped gophers.

**Tekwmíte7kucw re sc7illens-kucw te ts'i7.**

We always ate meat.

**Well ren pepe7 w7ec re ctalkwemes, w7ec le el7elkstes ne  
Geniers'.**

And my Dad, he put a net in the river, while he worked at Genier's.

**Ctalkwemes ne setetkwe, llumins we7stemes.**  
He had his net our in the river, and he would spear whatever [fish] he could.

**Ta7 ks tselxemcicten stemi xwexweyt te skwests re swewll.**  
I don't know what names all those fish have,

**Tselxemstéten t'ucw le7 te s7illen.**  
I only know that they were good to eat.

**Yiri7 re stsukws.**  
That's all

Other families were encamped on the outskirts of the large ranches in Secwépemc territory that had been established as a result of pre-emptions, and often by carving additional pieces of land out of our reserve in the decades after the initial allocation, before legal surveys took place. A famous ranch in the Interior is Hat Creek Ranch, originally pre-empted by Charles O'Hare. Generations of Secwépemc people from Ashcroft, St'uxtews and other surrounding communities worked here, and in fact ensured the profit of the ranch through their participation in "cowboying" and ranch hand activities. As Bill Porter (video-taped interview, July

1995) explained, throughout his youth, many families from the surrounding indigenous communities were encamped near the ranch, working together, and socializing after work, while the women gathered berries at the same time.

The way of life of people during this time, and until the 1950s, continued to be mobile, with animal husbandry being connected to traveling and camping, rather than leading to a sedentary lifestyle. Sometimes, hunting and gathering trips that lasted days or weeks were carried out by horse and buggy, and since our families in the 1940s and 50s (and likely before) often had chickens, my great-grandmother would tie them up in a sack and take them along on hunting and gathering expeditions. Other families from Skeetchestn would take their milk cow along with them when they went to visit relatives at Tk'emlups (Hilda Jules and Elsie Hewitt interview, 16 November 2000)

Just like long time ago, our people often had habitual camping spots along well-travelled routes, although settlers lived in these places by now. Speaking of travel between Skeetchestn and Kamloops in the 1940s, James Peters remembered that Skeetchestn people used to camp at Sleepy Hollows near Cherry Creek: "They used to have a little camp ground, and Francis Haller used to own [the property] and let the people camp there all the time. It was their stopping spot, like Six-Mile. ...Just like a resting spot, people gone driving so far on the wagon and stop for a day or two and visit some people there" (James Peters Interview, 2000).

Two other elders from Skeetchestn talked about their memories of hunting, berrypicking and camping in the Six-Mile area:

"We used to camp on the road, we used to camp by that big ranch at Cherry Creek. Well just on the other side of that little trailer, there is a spot in there, the road never used to go through that way, it used to go through up a steep little grade and down at the bottom there. That's where everybody used to camp, we used to camp there maybe stay there a day, or couple of days and dad would go hunting.

And from there we would move on and maybe we go as far as ah....., ah..... anyhow it took us about two days to get there by wagon. On the way dad, dad and mum would go off and .....and it was a lot of fun. But we did fishing though, cause there was no fences, and there was no homes the only home that was there use, ah, was the Cherry Creek Ranch and there was nothing from there. Even the place we called, what do you call..... then we used to camp at, what do you call it, we used to call it "Cornwall" I don't know what they, that little place before you get to Kamloops there. Around in there [Sleepy Hollow] we used to camp there too. It was sorta like, well they said in them days it belonged to Kamloops....., cause we used to fish from there.....trout, used to catch fish, a lot of them would camp around there and they'd go hunting. We used to smoke [the deer] and dry it there.

In the summer time we used to pick saskatoons, but there's no wild strawberries that grow around, and then our parents wouldn't let us go to much out in the field because of the snakes. (Hilda Jules and Elsie Hewitt, interview 16 November 2000)

While the initial wave of land pre-emptions by settlers had occurred between the 1860s and early 1900s, it was in subsequent decades that more and more fences and "no trespassing signs" went up and impeded our people's travels, hunting and food gathering; as more and more of our traditional land areas became fenced in, the greater restrictions were felt by our people; such that she noted that they really restricted people's movement. If you ever go into any fields, they say, its not like it used to be, it used to be wide open.

The same two elders noted of Six Mile,

Them seme7s, they used to kick us out of there. [Long before that] they kicked us out from Savona, where we used to camp, lots of people used to camp. You know the thing was, we used the place until they fenced all along in there [during the Trans Canada Highway construction in the 1950s]. We used to go down by M.'s there. Dad would par the old wagon. We'd walk down the rest of the way....We'd go down there, maybe camp the night, and then from there, dad would hobble the horses, and we'd camp....They'd always ask us, 'why did we give up our rights?' We had no choice, we were chased out. We were told we were trespassing.

Her sister remembered one specific instance of getting "fenced out":

..."I'd take my brother and my dad, take them out there to go hunt, and we were already had to open gates to get to hunt. So we had to open farmers' gates. So I told my dad, 'why should we not use our land to hunt in?' I said, 'I'll go knock on [the farmer's] door and let him know that we are hunting on our land there. So I go down there and knock on his door, and [he said], Go ahead, let your brother and dad hunt.' He calls it his field now, but that was all our hunting areas. So there, we are slowly getting fenced out.

Fences are really getting us."

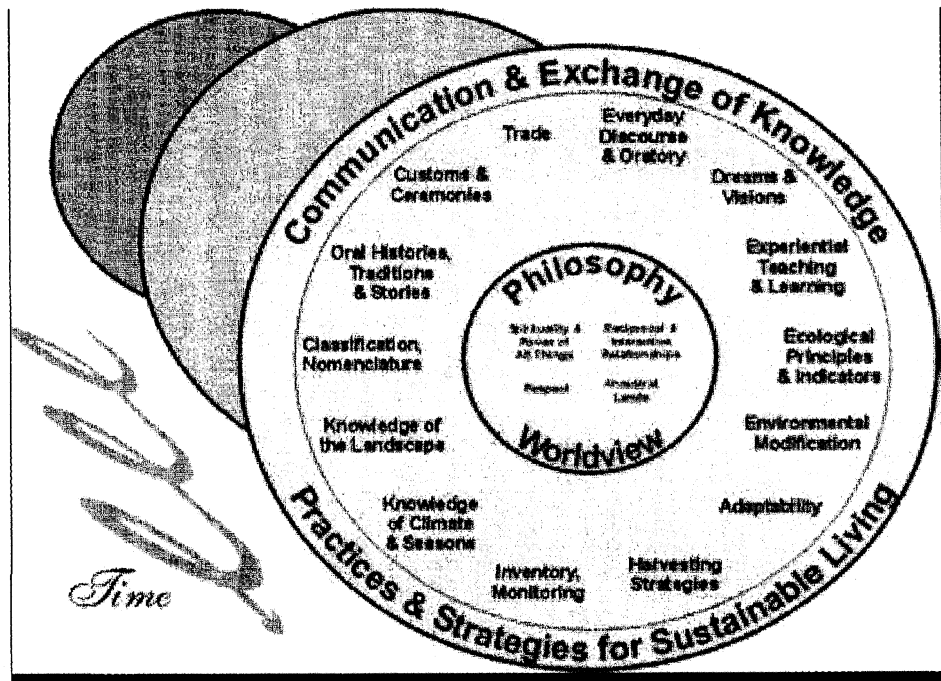
(Elsie Hewitt and Hilda Jules interview, 16 November 2000)

Thus, the memories of our people sustain the way in which we continued to use its resources. Their travels on the land followed ancient patterns of seasonal rounds, which had been established some 4,500 years previous. The memories of camping, hunting, gathering and fishing entail the knowledge of the laws of access to resources, of sharing, often in ways that Skelép marked out for us. In addition, the stories of traditional resource use point to the detailed traditional ecological knowledge and wisdom (TEKW) of our ancestors, as they experimented with fishing

and hunting techniques, and with the chemistry of pitcooking many generations ago. Together with Nancy Turner and Marianne Ignace, I have pointed to the multiple underpinnings of the traditional ecological knowledge and wisdom of our people (Turner, Ignace and Ignace 2000). We appropriately named it not only TEK but TEKW, since it is the accumulated *wisdom* over many generations that that informs our practices. Entailed in such knowledge and wisdom is a time dimension, and a consciousness of history. While seasonal rounds and resource harvesting are cyclical, the accumulated knowledge allowed our people to adapt to changing conditions throughout time, and allowed our people to integrate previously existing practices into new ones, like farming and gardening. In our article (*ibid.*), we expressed the time dimension of indigenous TEKW in northwestern North America as a spiral. Our intent is to show the dialectic dimension between spiritual practices and worldview, practices for sustainable living on the land, and the forms of communication and exchanges of knowledge that perpetuate them, along with continued practice. Our ability to exert our rights to our land rests on continued practice – even if in light of the obstruction of our resource use by settler activity. Continued practice, in turn also rests on the stories that disseminate knowledge and memories, which anchor us to the land (Palmer 2005) and connect us with our ancestors. In addition, the narratives of this chapter have shown how our people’s concept of land use and resource harvesting is connected to the memory of place. Like the stories of Coyote and the transformers in chapter 2, the elders’ stories of hunting, gathering and fishing throughout our homeland mention place names,

landscape and travels between known places laden with memories. In the next chapter, I will further explore the Secwepemc “sense of place,” by discussing the ways our languages, and the discourses of our language, conceptually map out the land, and associate memories with land forms and travels.

Figure 3: Secwépemc Traditional Ecological Knowledge and Wisdom



Source: Adapted from Turner, Ignace and Ignace 2000. Drawn by Nola Markey.



## CHAPTER 5: SECWÉPEMCÚIECW - OUR SENSE OF PLACE

**Oh, re seksekéwt, re pespésellkwe,**  
Oh, the gullies, the lakes,

**K'elélmentiye re iswell.**  
Listen to the loon

**Oh, cmump-ken nukw.**  
I am lonesome (homesick).

**Yirí7 re spút'em-kt ne sek'éwt,**  
Here we come out of the gully.

**Yirí7 re skitsc-kt ne setétkwe.**  
Here we arrive at the lake.

**Ne7élye me7 yístet.**  
This is where we camp.

The above are the spoken words by Nels Mitchell<sup>88</sup> to accompany the four verses of the song I call the “Secwépemc National Anthem,” which reminds those that know and remember the landscape and traditional seasonal round that speak to our connection to our land, our resources, our experience of the landscape and its places, and, as we maintain, our *deed* to that land. Away from the mountains, gullies, lake and village that form the recurrent parts of our land while he performed this song to be recorded on tape, Nels Mitchell also expressed his loneliness or homesickness, connecting it at the same time to the memory of the haunting call of

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<sup>88</sup> Nels Mitchell (b. ca. 1900, d. ca 1975) was a celebrated Secwépemc singer and storyteller from Tk'emlúps. I am indebted to Christine Simon, Garlene Dodson and my Secwépemc students in the Skeetchestn Secwépemctsin (Shuswap language) course for bringing to my attention the significance of these lyrics for conveying the essence of Secwépemc sense of place.

loons. Like the sparse language of stspetékwill that are aimed at an audience that knows the land, Nels Mitchell's lines have an economy of language: He mentions and thereby evokes memories and images of the most salient features of the Plateau landscape - the gullies (seksekéwt), the small lakes (péspésellkwe) are prominent landscape features of the higher plateaus. They also are the habitat of loons. As the lines proceed, he mentally rides down the mountain, along further gullies, eventually descending to the river, where the village is, where home is.

*For me and others of my generation who rode and continue to ride our mountains, Nels Mitchell's words bring back memories of riding on horseback close to the edge of steep gullies, traversing ravines from one set of gullies to the next; climbing, and then ascending from river level (1,000 feet) to the t7iweltk Plateaus (5,000 feet) on horseback. At times these rides are challenging, precipitously close to the steep cliffs and rock faces, especially on a green horse! I remember many trips of riding the gullies sitting behind my great-grandfather on the way to or from gathering berries and hunting as a child. At times our descent to the village was in the darkness, having to trust the horse to find its way home. As my elder Christine Simon remembered, "Long time ago, whenever people came back on horseback off the mountain after a hunting trip, they would all start singing. It sounded so beautiful, a dozen people or more on horseback breaking into song, coming down the mountain, coming home." Away from the travels, the drumbeat emulates the rhythmic sound of the horse-hoofs through the ravines, the voice the joy of coming home after a long day, or days of riding and camping.*

## **Sk'elép and the Advantage of Knowing our Biogeoclimatic Zones**

Ecologists and ethnobotanists express the richness and diversity of Secwépemcúlecw in terms of biogeoclimatic zones (Krajina 1976): The river valleys at the core of Secwépemcúlecw in the Thompson and Mid-Fraser regions are shaped by the dry ponderosa pine, sagebrush and bunchgrass zone, in turn the very northern extension of the Great Sonoran Desert that begins in the Southwest of the continent. Along the mid-Fraser river, the rolling, grass-covered hills of the Caribou, with their slightly cooler temperatures, continue this habitat. Away from the main rivers, however, the valleys give way to rolling plateaus covered by a succession of fir forests and lodge pole pine forests. In the highest areas of the wooded Interior Plateaus, at around 5,000 feet, the lodge pole pine belt eventually gives way to Engelmann Spruce-Sub alpine Fir forests. Around the outer margins of Secwépemcúlecw in the North and East are the snow-capped high mountains of the Rockies and Coastal Mountains with their sub alpine meadows, and alpine areas. The wetter and cooler slopes and richer soils of the Shuswap and Adams Lake highlands sustain a belt of cedar-hemlock forests, stands of yew wood and an array of herbaceous plants that thrive in these climates. While Secwépemcúlecw thus includes at least nine different biogeoclimatic zones, with minor variations, it represented, and still represents, a shared habitat. What makes us a people is the common knowledge of living in it, knowing and using its landforms and resources, and talking about it in our language. Sk'elép's adventures tell us about the advantages of knowing one's biogeoclimatic zones:

**M-nes ne scpluǫkw re skelép.**<sup>89</sup>  
Coyote went to a gathering

**M-séysus.**  
He gambled.

**Xwexwéyt te stem m-tecwentésés re qelmúcw.**  
and he beat the people at everything.

**Ṭcwum xwexwéyt.**  
He won everything.

**M-kúcsentem yirí7 te qelmúcw.**  
The people there envied him.

**M-tsúnctem es neqáctem te spipyúy7e, es kwéctem te ckwíústens.**  
The [bird]people wanted to steal his eyes and take them from him.

**Yiri7 re setsé7.**  
And there was Raven.

**M-tsuns-ekwe es kwéctems te ckwíústens re setsé7,**  
Raven, they say, wanted to take his eyes away from him.

**M-tsuns-ekwe, "Xelxlíp, xelxléq'!"**  
He told the Coyote, "Throw them up high and stick them back in."

**Kwéctem te ckwetkwíústens.**  
[Coyote] had his eyes taken from him.

**Kllékstmentmes es pelqílcs.**  
They let him go to return home.

**M-plépes re senxwéxcwlcw.**  
And Coyote was lost.

**Ṭ7ek telrí7,**  
He went along the way from there,

**mesmúsens stémi es pepéns es kúlems te ckwetkwíústens.**  
and he felt around [on the ground] for something he could find to use as eyes.

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<sup>89</sup> This stspetékwll, told by myself, and in relation to the biogeoclimatic zones in the plateaus near Skeetchestn, was inspired by versions of the same story told by my xpe7e (grand-father) Ike Willard, another one recorded by Teit (1909) and one told by Ida William (Ignace and Turner, ms).

**Pelmíns re elk, re elkéllp te speqqéq,**  
He found some kinnikinnick, some kinnikinnick berries.

**m-kwénses, xelxílgenses ne ckwíústens.**  
and he took them and stuck them in his eyes.

**M-wíkmes, kémell petéws put ks le7s ks wíkems**  
He could see, but he couldn't see too well.

**M-sesúxwenstes t'e m-sí7ek,**  
And he went down along the way,

**m-séwenses re tsreprép,**  
and he asked the trees,

**"Stémi yi7éne te tsrep?"**  
What kind of tree is this?

**Emétctmes te skwest.s re tsrep: "Melénllp."**  
The tree told him its name: "subalpine fir."

**T7ek t'ri7 re skélép,**  
Coyote went along the way again,

**T'ri7 m-séwenses nerí7 nekú7 te tsrep,**  
He asked this other tree,

**"Stémi tek tsrep-k?"**  
"What kind of tree are you?"

**"qwli7t ren s7emetentsútst."**  
"Lodge pole pine is what I call myself."

**Tsut re skélép, "yiri7, yiri7 ren sesúsxwenst!"**  
Coyote said, "that's it, I am going down!"

**M-séwens cwúýtsem,**  
He asked someone again,

**"Stémi yi7éne te tsrep-k?"**  
"What kind of tree are you?"

**"Tsq'ellp".**  
"Douglas Fir."

**T7ek te m-sesúxwenst, m-séwenses re tsreprep,**  
He went on down, and he asked [another] tree,

**"Stémi te tsrep-k?"**  
"What kind of tree are you?"

**"S7estqwllp".**  
"Ponderosa Pine."

**"Yirí7, yirí7 ren sme7é7y," tsut-ekwe re sk'elép.**  
That's it, I'm getting close!" said Coyote.

**Yirí7 re m-sí7ek, séwens neku7 le tsrep,**  
Here he came, and he asked another tree.

**M-tsúntem, "mulc".**  
He was told, "cottonwood."

**M-sesúxwenst cwúýtsem,**  
He went down again,

**M-sulltímcwes, "stémi le tsrep?"**  
and asked around, "What kind of trees [are there]?"

**Qwetséts telrí7 re sk'elép.**  
Coyote, the one they call the "groundrunner", left from there again,

**Tlí7 m-sulltímcwes,**  
and he asked around again,

**"Stémi ri7 te tsrep?"**  
"What kind of trees are there?"

**M-lexéyéctem, tsúntmes, "speqpeqéllp".**  
And he was told, they told him, "saskatoon bushes."

**"Yirí7 ren skíktsc."**  
"I have arrived," [he said].

**Le-kítscwes, re spipyú7e m-tsúnses, "Xelxlíp xelxléq."**  
When he had arrived, the birds told him, "Throw them up high and stick them back  
in!"

**Must.s-ekwe.**  
Four times, they said, he did that.

**Yirí7 re spelqílcs re ckwetkwítstens.**  
And his eyes came back.

**M-wíkmes cwúýtsem.**  
And he could see again.

**M-yews ri7 re sle7s re skelép.**  
And Coyote was all right again.

**M-w7écwes telrí7.**  
And on he went.

In the above story, Skelép gets into trouble when he becomes a nuisance, what we call yéwyut, because of the bragging way in which he gambles. What saves him, however, after he loses his eyesight and is abandoned in the high plateau, is his knowledge of biogeoclimatic zones and indicator tree species, as a forest biologist would say. The story itself, told in different versions by past elders who lived in different ecological zones and thus named different indicator tree species that helped Sk'elép find his way back down the mountain.<sup>90</sup>

### **Generic Toponyms**

In addition to biogeoclimatic zone knowledge, an important way in which our people oriented themselves to the landscape includes the numerous terms for landscape forms, or generic toponyms, that our language has to refer to places at different elevations, in different ecological areas and geographic formations. For our

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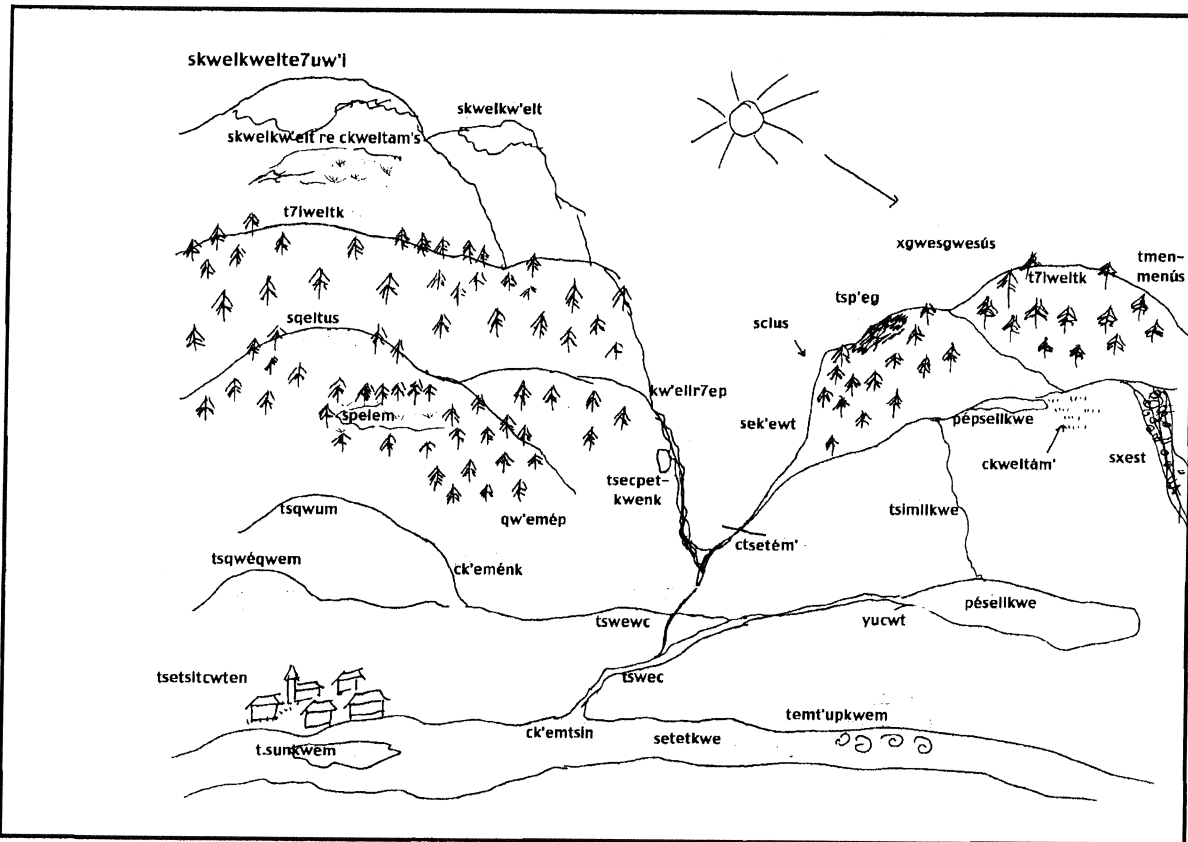
<sup>90</sup> In Ike Willard's version, more detailed in the original than in Bouchard and Kennedy's English version (1979) the narrator also connects the four species of grouse that occur in the interior to different parts of the ecology and landscape. Grouse also play a role in numerous Coyote stories (see Teit 1909).

ancestors, who learned to live in this changing, but intimately known landscape for hundreds of generations, the generic teknonyms are more than speech labels for geographic locations: One term invokes the other, and people can predict what kinds of landforms they will encounter throughout their travels, and what kinds of sources of animal and plant foods, sources of water and shelter, and ecological indicators for all of these they will encounter. For example, as elders explained to us in mapping out these generic landscape terms, you know that a plateau lake will have an outflow, where you usually find trout after break-up in spring. As forest ecologists know, you will find certain plants on the sunny (south-west) side of mountains, others on the moister north-east side. Forested areas in the Plateau will include moist meadows (ckweltan̓), that will, in turn, provide pasture for horses, a nearby creek and a good overnight camping location. Along the rivers, back-eddies exist in predictable locations near out-croppings and, as we have seen, are the locations for salmon fishing. Figure 3, below, presents a sketch of the generic Secwepemc landscape as people in the Skeetchestn and Kamloops area would find it. The generic landscape of the wetter Eastern Secwepemc territory in the Selkirk range, or of the more mountainous North Thompson is slightly different, but still recognizable in this sketch.

Furthermore as Table 3 on the next page will show, generic toponyms, along with specific toponyms or place names, not only consist of a series of lexemes that refer to different kinds of landforms, but by way of lexical suffixes that refer to shapes of the human (or animate) body, toponyms inscribe the shapes of living



things into the landscape. Rounded hills resemble the shapes of bellies, the bottom of hills are their buttocks, the mouth of rivers is like the opening of a mouth, a pointed land form is a nose, and a ridge is like the back of an animal.



**Figure 4: Generic Secwépemc Toponyms**  
(adapted from M. Ignace 2000)

Some of the geographic terms, or generic toponyms, exist as independent root-words, often with various grammatical features incorporated, that add to, and refine meaning, including consonant and syllable reduplication; others exist as

lexical suffixes (see Table 2, p.172), most of which inscribe the shape of animate things (humans and animals) into the landscape.<sup>91</sup>

### **Specific Toponyms**

Our specific place names<sup>92</sup> identify specific locations within our land, and connect geographic locations with memories of past events, with knowledge of environment and landscape. They anchor our history in the land, including its landscape, in ways that connect us to the history of long ago (see previous chapter), providing oral maps for the land, as Sk'elép, Qweqw'ile, and Tli7sa and his brothers shaped it. Place names like Pesmémenc, Cuwíwesqen, Sk'emqin, Sk'atsin, Sqlewúlecw (see ch. 2), still remind us of what happened there long time ago during the travels of Sk'elép and the transformers. Other place names, such as Sek'ewmectétus, Tsq'elentwécwten, Kélentem, Snine7ellcw, or Tseq.qin commemorate more recent events of warfare and altercations between Secwépemc and outsiders, often through mere allusion to what happened, thus inviting the stories to be retold again and again, to keep the events in memory.

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<sup>91</sup> See Kuipers 1974, Hinkson 1999 and M. Ignace 2000 for a discussion of Secwépemc lexical suffixes

<sup>92</sup> In the 1880s, George M. Dawson (1892) recorded some 220 Interior Salish place names during his geological survey of the area, many of which he subsequently entered onto his topographic maps of the BC Interior. During various research projects through Secwépemc communities and the Shuswap Nation Tribal Council, further place names were recorded during the late 1980s. Dawson's 220 names represent but a very small portion (probably less than 10%) of the names our elders had for places in Secwépemcúlecw.

<b>Table 2:</b>	<b>Generic Secwépemc Toponyms<sup>93</sup></b>
<i>Landscape terms</i>	
<b>skwelkw'elte7úwi</b>	alpine
<b>skwelkwelt re ckweltám</b>	alpine meadow
<b>t7íweltk</b>	on the high plateau, in the mountains
<b>sqeltús</b>	mountain
<b>tsqwum</b>	hill – a mound, domed shape – ts=perpetual+qwm=mound shape+activity
<b>tsqwéqwum</b>	little hill; a knoll – ts=perpetual+mound+reduplication for diminutive+activity
<b>spélem</b>	prairie, clearing – s=nominalizer+pel (root) + activity
<b>ckweltám</b>	meadow; green+ bottom of valley – c=inside + kwel=green=tám=bottom, valley
<b>kwellr7ép</b>	waterfall; underneath of where it stands up - kwell= underneath, among+r7ep = stand up vertically
<b>tsecpetkwénk</b>	cave tsec-perpetual + petkw=hole+enk=belly-shaped
<b>ckmenk</b>	sidehill – c=inside of + kem=two things coming together at an angle + -enk=belly/curved shape
<b>sekéwt</b>	gully, canyon – sek / + animal back (i.e. not upright ridge but horizontal ridge)
<b>tspeg</b>	ts=perpetual + peg=burnt off area on the mountain-side (through landscape burning)
<b>sxest</b>	rock-slide – s-nominalizer + xes ?
<b>xgwegwesús</b>	sunny side/ south side (of a mountain) gwes= sun shines on a place
<b>tmenmenús</b>	shady side/north side of mountain – men = shadow; -us = face of
<b>ctsetém</b>	valley – c = inside of; tset=? + tem = at the bottom of
<b>pésellkwe</b>	lake – this seems to come from sewllkwe = water + pes/pell = “has”

<sup>93</sup> The terms in this table, matched by the representation of land-forms in Figure 4 have been a work in progress. In 1997, we systematically recorded terms for Secwépemc landforms through a curriculum development project. The group developed a diagram charted on a white-board, which, once copied became part of the curriculum. In subsequent years, as I have taught adult Secwépemc courses, I have had the opportunity to check and re-check the Secwépemc terms and meanings, along with contextual information with elders, including Christine and Florence Simon, the late Bill Porter, the late Theresa Jules and the late Nellie Taylor. Kukwstep-kucw.

<b>Table 2:</b>	<b>Generic Secwépemc Toponyms</b> <sup>93</sup>
<b>pépsellkwe</b>	little lake – consonant reduplicated form of pesellkwe
<b>yucwt</b>	out-flow, drainage creek of lake – the root yucw- indicates the flushing out of something from above. The Northern Secwépemc also use the term yucwt to talk about giving birth (otherwise kúlt in Secwépemetsin), thus indicating the flushing out movement of a child out of the womb.
<b>ctsímlkwe</b>	melt-water run-off – c=inside, tsim=melt+ll=perpetual? + kwe=water
<b>ck'emtsín</b>	mouth of river – c=inside + kem=two things come together at an angle + tsin = mouth
<b>setétkwe</b>	river – this probably derives from an “unduplication” of set', the word for the mid-Fraser River in Salish languages. <sup>94</sup>
<b>t.súnkwem</b>	island
<b>tswec</b>	creek (root)
<b>q'wemtsín</b>	shore – q'wem + tsin=mouthlexical suffixes (Kuipers 1974).
<i>Lexical Suffixes:</i>	<i>Several lexical suffixes that occur in place names and names for geographic features derive from lexical suffixes that denote parts of the human or animal body:</i>
-qin	head, at the top of; dome-shape at the top
-ekst	shape of hand with fingers
-tsin	mouth (of a creek into a river)
-eqs	nose (nose-shape)
-us	face; a steep edge or side of a mountain
-éles	shoulder
-íken/-iken'	back (ridge of a mountain)
-éws	middle, waist, side, elevated surface
-enk	belly shaped, vertically curved, like a round hill-side
-ep	at the bottom of
-upe7	tail, bottom end

<sup>94</sup> Secwépemetsin, in contrast with St'at'imcets and Nlakapamuxtsin, only allows for one instance of glottalization in compound words. Setétkwe thus probably derives from setkwe, which is nonetheless interesting, in that the reference is to the Fraser River, not the Thompson River, which appears to be our original homeland. Or was it perhaps that the area from Ck'emtsin (Lytton/the confluence of Fraser and Thompson Rivers) northwards fully encompassed our t'petekwll (ancient ancestors') territory?

<b>Table 2:</b>	<b>Generic Secwépemc Toponyms<sup>93</sup></b>
-ups	pointed buttock shape; confluence
<i>Other lexical suffixes</i>	<i>These prominently occur in place names and generic toponyms:</i>
-ellile	bushy area
-éscen	rock
-etkwe/kwe	water
-ewt	place, position
-min/miñ	instrumental: place where you do something <i>with</i> something
-tañ/teñ	valley bottom; inside underneath (as in a pithouse)
-ten	instrumental: place where you do something; place for x

(for a listing of Secwépemtsin lexical suffixes, see Kuipers 1983:118-119)

Keith Basso reminded us that the connection between places, naming, stories, remembering and imagining is not only about the past, but about the present and future:

It is clear [however] that remembering often provides a basis for imagining. What is remembered about a particular place - including, prominently, verbal and visual accounts of what has transpired there - guides and constrains how it will be imagined by delimiting a field of workable possibilities. These possibilities are then exploited by acts of conjecture and speculation which build upon them and go beyond them to create possibilities of a new and original sort, thus producing a fresh and expanded picture of how things might have been. Essentially then, instances of place-making consist in the adventitious fleshing out of historical material that culminated in a posited state of affairs, a particular universe of objects and events - in short, a *place world* - wherein portions of the past are brought into being (Basso 1996:6).

As our people lived and traveled throughout our lands, they made history not only by naming places of heroic events; in addition, they named places after the resources, including game, fish and plants, they knew they could harvest there:

Pellcílcel (“has silverweed”) reminds us of the occurrence of an important indigenous root plant, *Potentilla anserina*. Pellskwenkwinem reminds us of the Indian potatoes (*Claytonia lanceolata*) associated with this place; Ts’otinétkwe, “rattlesnake lake” Pestsets’úye, “has porcupines,” Pelltnilmen, “has Indian hellabore,” are further example of place names that give clues to past animals and plants found there, although, with logging, mining, urban development and other changes to the land, these resources have disappeared from many of the areas.

Yet other place names give hints about what we *DO* there, referring to the plants and animals we harvested in strategic, ecologically suitable locations: Cllumimén (“stabbing place”) is our harpooning place across from the mouth of Deadman’s Creek; C7emtsín̄ten on the North Thompson near Clearwater is the place where people “sat at the shore” catching spring salmon. C7emtústen is a cliff where people did their étsxem or guardian spirit questing. K’écse7ten, “drying meat place” is a place at the northern boundary of Skeetchestn reserve where, on a southern exposure, our people dried the meat from their fall hunting. It was also a village site, as several depressions still show us, and a tool-making area, as the evidence of large amounts of lithic flakes on the flat at K’ecse7ten shows. It is in the shorthand of the mere allusion to activities, that we remember among ourselves what our ancestors did there, and what we should continue to do there.

The names of these places connects the past with the present, not only pointing to resources, but reminding us of our history of dispossession. As the resources have disappeared, giving way to logging, mining and urban development,

we continue to remember what we did there, as long as we keep telling those stories. The effects of colonization and dispossession, and the struggle to overcome them by fighting for our rights get flesh from the memories of what we did on our land. As our chiefs told the Minister of the Interior, Frank Oliver, in 1911, asking him to settle the land question,

if a person takes possession of something belonging to you, surely you know it, and he knows it, and land is a thing which cannot be taken away, and hidden. We see it constantly, and everything done with it must be more or less in view (Memorial to Frank Oliver 1911).

Finally, in conjunction with terms for geographic features, many place names give visual and relational clues to the shapes of geographical features and serve as a way in which, for countless generations, our ancestors oriented themselves in a landscape that had similar and predictable ecological and geological features throughout. There is history in this: As our people, over thousands of years, learned to use, know, and find their way in the environment during their seasonal rounds, the names for landscape features evoke memories, evoke sentiment for the contours, the smells, the activities associated with the land, and of course the previous generations who experienced that landscape.<sup>95</sup>

Finally, certain place names that name not generic features but precise spots on the land are ways to commemorate distinct and particular places in the

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<sup>95</sup> In her recent excellent work *Maps of Experience* (2005), based on her PhD dissertation researched among Esk'etemc (Alkali Lake people), Andie Diane Palmer discusses how the Northern Secwépemc sense of place is articulated in discourse, as she traveled with elders and friends to and between berry picking locations and remembered places. While Palmer does not include a detailed discussion of the way we speak about the landscape, I see my discussion here as adding to her work.

landscape, according to things that happened in this place, or the resources harvested at this location. Many, if not the majority of, Secwépemc place names employ the opportunities offered by roots, prefixes and suffixes to indicate particular places in Secwépemc territory by their geological shapes, the habitat of plants and animals, and in the end the memories of ancestors traveling this land that they evoke among those of us who can relate to that, or learn it. In short, our sense of Secwépemcúlecw as organized in place-names and land-forms, is tied up in our aesthetic experience of shapes, and in the memories of living and traveling in a landscape of aesthetically organized shapes, and thus in our sense of history. Here are some examples:

The Secwépemc word for Tk'emplúps, usually translated as “confluence” or “meeting of the waters” has a visually vivid and interesting meaning, and gives us clues about our ancestors’ perception of shape and space: t=on top of; k'em= two things coming together at an angle; +ll=perpetual + ups= pointed buttocks. The word invokes the kind of young girl buttocks shape that our ancestors saw in the very shape of the confluence of the North and South Thompson Rivers, still visible from either a bird’s eye, or an air plane, or, staying on land, from the vantage point of what is now the Panorama Hotel in Kamloops. Tk'emplups, the village at the confluence, more recently the “rez”, in turn, has been the “meeting place” where Secwépemc from different communities congregated, traded, camped among relatives and friends, and later met white people.



My favorites among place names in my community's surroundings are the terms that evoke travel, landscape and the very intricacies of our language. We have Peimémnus (pet'=to come out into the open+men=instrumental/something you use to do something with+-us=the face of) – it marks the place near the northeast boundary of the Skeetchestn reserve, where our ancestors “came out into the open” – where the valley opened beyond the spaces that marked pithouses long ago, and community, where they began to travel ‘up the valley’. As I noted above, there was joy in coming home off the mountains: The valley of my community is a long, narrow, north-south valley framed by two mid-elevation mountain ridges. My elder Christine Simon has called the Deadman Creek valley and its east and west ridges the “arms that stretch out to us when we come home into our valley from travels.” Those ridges draw us home, the memories we have of traveling there. Every side-hill reminds us of traveling there in the company of people who told us their stories of the land.

Another place name that bears this deeply embedded, complex connection with the past is Ck'emqenétkwe, in English referred to as Scheidam Flats, after its initial preemptor. It is a place above Tk'emlúps on my father's side of my family whose name evokes its geographic features: the flat, head shape at the top, where two things (bodies of water) come together at an angle (c=inside of+k'em= where two things come together at an angle +qen=head +etkwe=water). There is no better way, including in many subordinate sentences in English, to describe what Ck'emqenétkwe portrays: A place, and once you are there, you are on the inside of it as it extends

before you, and it features the coming together of waters (creeks) at an angle, and it is on top, above other places. In tightly compressed visual images, it marks the coming together of creeks (Coal Creek and Paul Creek) to form the “water tap” of the Tk’emlupsemc. Beyond the tight-knit image of its strategic geography that is commemorated in the place name, Ck’emqenétkwe also commemorates our people’s connection to land and our people’s history of resisting settlers’ appropriation. Like so many European settler names in our lands, its English name Scheidam Flats bears the mark of the settler, the European pre-emptor who quickly left his mark on the landscape – but left to sell his interests for profit in the 1860s, as our people struggled to have lands allocated that would sustain us, let alone never wavering about not having surrendered the rest of our lands. Chief Louis Clexlexqen, Chief of the Tk’emlupsemc between the late 1850s and until his death in 1915, continually alerted provincial and federal governments to the fact that Ck’emqenétkwe represented the “hole in the table” of the Tk’emlupsemc. Based on his unwavering raising of this issue, and Kamloops Indian Band’s pursuit of its title to this land, the Band was eventually able to re-incorporate Ck’emqenétkwe into its reserve. A good part of the land dispute surrounding it did not involve the few acres which Kamloops Indian Band members successfully argued they had continued to occupy, graze their animals on, and live, camp and exist there. Indeed, it involved the Kamloops people insisting on their water rights, and the integrity of their watershed.

Place names, thus, are inextricably linked to the geography but also history of specific places. More than thus, they are connected to travel on the land.

Marianne Ignace (2000) has mentioned how the late Chris Donald from Simpcw (North Thompson) approached the topic of place names in the North Thompson valleys and mountains by going on a mental journey (later followed by physical journeys where he reiterated the names for places, and remembering new ones. His sense of naming the land consisted of identifying a chain of place names throughout his familiar territory, accompanied by the stories of resources, wars, hunting and trapping expeditions, mishaps that had happened to past individuals, shapes of the landscapes that give meaning to the names. Likewise, Andie Diane Palmer (2005) has shown how the Secwépemc elders at Esk'et used narratives of personal and historical experience on the land to provide oral and mental maps corresponding to the landscape.

Toponymy, in its connection to geographic and ecological knowledge and experience, and memories of past generations' experiences on the land, represents an indigenous concept of *deeds* to land: Place names, not as isolated spots but in the chain of "connected dots" they represent, confirm not only our emotional and historical connection to land, but are our evidence of *owning* the land we call Secwépemcúlecw, and having *title* to our land, as our ancestors continued to claim once they were shut out of our own lands in the latter half of the nineteenth century.<sup>96</sup>

Coming back full circle, the words of the Nels Mitchell song (above) appeal to our emotions as Secwépemc through the way they invoke the images of our

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<sup>96</sup> See Martindale and Marsden (1997) for a discussion of the concept of deed in Gitksan and Tsimshian *adawx* or oral histories.

landscape, and the memories of travel, riding, experiencing and sharing experience on the land, accompanied by song. They allude to our ancestors' spiritual connection with land through the names that signify powerful events from the past – in the place-names left by the ‘transformers’ - that reverberate to the present. For the past 200 years, travel has involved my people incorporating horses and riding, eventually horse-drawn buggies, and now pick-up trucks to travel throughout that landscape. As long as we maintain the connection between our landscape and experience by way of the stories we remember, the places we remind each other of, we will know where we come from and who we are as Secwépemc.

### **Horses, Travel and Transportation**

According to information supplied by James Teit, horses arrived in the Northern Plateau from the South, originally traded from the Nez Perce and Shoshone, to the Kalispel, Coeur d'Alene and Flathead, then Okanagan and Shuswap since the mid 1700s. As Simon Fraser's account of his 1808 journey down the river named after him shows (Lamb 1960), they had spread to the Northern Secwépemc area by this time, although it appears they were relatively rare and valued: Xlósem and the Xats'ull people were reluctant to lend horses to Simon Fraser's party (see also Teit 1909: 533; 1930:213).

In Crown Council evidence for Interior Aboriginal rights cases, much has been made of the fact that horses “revolutionized” and changed modes of transportation and mobility among Secwépemc and other Interior Salish peoples, and thus irrevocably altered the “pre-contact” fabric of our societies (see, e.g.

Lovisek 2005) and provided for mobility that did not exist before. However, as I noted in Chapter 3, the “highways” provided by the network of lakes and rivers that extended throughout our territories and connected us with the lands of our neighbors provided for routine travel of hundreds of miles. Teit noted,

Before [the advent of horses] trade went north via Okanogan River and Okanogan Lake to the Shuswap. From the head of Okanogan Lake the Shuswap had only a short distance to carry their goods to the navigable waters of Spellumcheen River, Shuswap Lake, and South Thompson River, to Kamloops, which was a central point. Trade followed navigable waters from here west to Savona, and north by the North Thompson, at least 100 miles. (Teit 1930:214)

In addition, our people walked along an established network of well-traveled and maintained trails throughout our territories and covered large distances during the annual seasonal round, or during expeditions in war or punitive acts as a result of transgressions of Secwépemc law. The war story recorded from Chief Basil David (=Basil Dick) of Bonaparte by James Teit in 1920 illustrates the extent of travel and the pattern of travel and transportation: where people went far afield, they took their time over one or more seasons, caching foods, staying in places.

As Ken Favrholt (Favrholt 1997; 1999) has shown on the basis of a detailed study of historical fur trade maps, during the nineteenth century, the trading companies’ brigade trails to move goods among posts were established on an existing network of “Indian trails,” which our own people traveled by horse. During the twentieth century, these, in turn, became British Columbia’s provincial highways. While some travel routes, naturally, changed in favour of over land traffic by horse, horses were a natural extension and addition to pre-existing patterns of

communication and travel. The very way in which horse transportation, by my grandparents' time, had become an integral part of Secwépemc livelihood, illustrates this. From the Shuswap and Adams Lakes down to Kamloops Lake and onto the main Thompson River over to the Fraser, and up the North Thompson, facilitated travel by dugout or birch bark canoe. (Teit 1909; 1930:214). Other travel routes led from the Three Valley Pass and Revelstoke area down Upper and Lower Arrow Lakes, where Secwépemc people met Ts'weñemc (Okanogan or Nsilx). In other words, through many subsequent generations, our people established and maintained their routes of travel, adapting the mode of travel throughout history from well-trodden and established trails where people traveled on foot, which eventually became horse trails used by our own people, subsequently appropriated by settlers into wagon trails and eventually the modern highway system. In disavowing the B.C. government's claim to Secwépemc territory, our Chiefs in the Memorial to the Honorable Frank Oliver, the Minister of the Interior for Canada, stated:

(If) it were actually the property of the whites to destroy or do with as they pleased, then the British Columbia government might speak of our sharing in the benefits of roads to which they infer we are on no way entitled. Good trails we had in plenty before the Whites came. The whites are indebted to us for having them ready made when they came and allowing them to use them without charge. The wagon roads benefit us but little.... (We have hardly any produce to haul over them) Railroads have not helped us much. They cut up our little farms and give us no adequate compensation.... (Memorial to the Hon. Frank Oliver, Minister of the Interior, Ottawa, May 10, 1911)

Our memories of place, in combination with embodied practices (Connerton 1992) on the land, are thus a significant aspect of the way we anchor knowledge and

memories to place, in short, these support our sense of history. In the chapter that follows, I will round off my discussion of the laws of living in our land with a description and analysis of the ways in which our reckoning of social relationships, kw'seltktenéws, bears upon our laws and existence as a people, along with the ways that we maintained political order within and among the communities that comprise our nation.

## CHAPTER 6: YIRI7 RE SXYEMSTWÉC W-KT – HOW WE HONOUR ONE ANOTHER

**“Tsecwmintlmen ren kw’séltkten**  
I greet all my relatives,

**te kekéw re st’7ék-ep!**  
You came from far away!

**Penhénes-enke ne setétkwe k st’7ek-ep**  
Whenever you came to the river,

**Te stsqwemqwúm, te seksek’éwt**  
From the mountains, from the valleys

**Le7 re swíktelmen ey xwexwéyt-ep!**  
It is good to see you all!

**Yiri7 me7 sucwentwécw-kt!”**  
Let us recognize each other  
(Nels Mitchell, Secwépemc Welcome Song)

As I showed above, the core idea behind the Secwépemc concept of land tenure is the common use of, and access to, Secwépemcúlecw for all people of Secwépemc ancestry, and the ways in which ties of affinity (in-laws) and subsequent descent created alliances that allowed access to other nations’ resources. Particular communities or indigenous “bands” were the caretakers (yucwmiñmen) of lands and resources in their surroundings, and defended their area against outside intruders, as the oral histories of Secwépemc warfare show us. In this chapter, I will discuss the social, political and spiritual aspects of how we honoured one another through our laws and protocols of living on our land. I start with a description of the social fabric



of our communities and networks of families in our nation. What gives a person rights to live in our land and reap its resources is the connection through blood to other Secwépemc, what we call kw'seltktenéws, "being relatives to one another." Sk'elép's way of guiding the salmon into the rivers of Secwépemc country reminds us of the powers of kinship: he not only procured salmon as an economic resource, but also fixed the mutual bonds between the Wutémkeme ("downriver people" – as we exist now, the Nlakapamux) and Secwépemc by way of impregnating the two ikwile women who guarded the fishing weir at Spence's Bridge, and thus making them in-laws and having children in the other nation. Moreover, he incorporated the spiritual power of these women, their way to dream, predict and had powers to cause things into the ways of his children and offspring.

### **Kw'seltktenews-kucw: Our Social Organization and Kinship**

In the oral histories surrounding wars and treaties, we have already seen two important principles that existed among Secwépemc people, at least according to genealogies that extend to the 1670s (Teit 1930). Firstly, the chiefs of communities, especially important "hub" communities at Tk'emlups, Douglas Lake, Yucwt (Williams Lake), had multiple wives from their own and surrounding nations, thus ensuring ways to maintain political and territorial alliances. Secondly, the children of important political chiefs were adopted out to cement political alliances, or were married back into the nations.

Kw'seltkten – "being relatives" denotes a network of kin-based relationships, whereby each Secwépemc person has ties of kinship and/or in-lawship that, if we can

remember enough generations and individuals' kinship ties, literally extends throughout Secwépemc territory. Ultimately, the "glue" of Secwépemc kinship is a significant factor of us existing as a people: It binds us all to others within the nation. At the heart of our sense of family and relationship is our way of organizing members of extended family, the "system of kinship" we use to refer to one another as relatives:<sup>97</sup>

A male or female person's siblings are organized according to junior/senior *in one way of talking about them* (qetsk=older brother, kic= older sister; síntse=younger brother, tsétse=younger sister, male or female speaking).

In another mode, they are distinguished as siblings of same sex (uqw'i) or siblings of opposite sex (smé7stem). All of the sibling terms are extended to all knowingly related individuals in one's own generation. Thus, anyone who is of my generation, traceable by ways of kinship, is my brother or sister in the Secwépemc way.

In the parent generation, a more complex pattern exists:

- The term for mother is ki7ce, and the term for father is qe7tse.
- A female's mother's sister is tur̄ne, whereas a male's mother's sister is k'uýe;

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<sup>97</sup> Franz Boas recorded Secwépemc kinship terms in the late 1880s during his brief visit to the Kamloops area (Boas 1889). Marianne Ignace, between 1984 and 1999, reviewed and verified the terminology with elders from most Secwépemc communities (except the Kinbaskets in the Kootenays). We have done this work together since 1997 throughout Secwépemc language classes and interviews with elders. Aert Kuipers elicited Secwépemc kinship terms, but he got some of them wrong (see Kuipers 1983).

- A female's father's brother is meqse7, but a male's father's brother is lew̓e.<sup>98</sup> For both male and female, the mother's brother is sintse and the father's sister is tikwe7.

The terms for parents' parents' generations are simple: Mother's mother and father's mother, and indeed extended to relatives two generations up from oneself are kye7e. People of the "grandparent" generation (father's father, mother's father, and all male relatives two generations up are xpe7e.<sup>99</sup> Both of them are extended to all known related people of the grandparent generation.

In the children's children's generation, a single term defines all individuals related to self: all grandchildren, male or female, are called **imts**, and the term is extended to all known relations two generations younger than oneself.

Teit (1909) noted the flexible nature of community membership between Secwépemc and other Interior Salish peoples, in that many people moved between communities, rather than being continually and perpetually associated with a particular community of birth. I think this seemingly flexible or erratic nature of Secwépemc kinship and village organization can be explained by the protocols of resource ownership, sharing and family obligation which emerged over time in Plateau society, also shown in the kinship terms for affines or in-laws. When a young man married, he was expected to move in with his parents-in-law for a few years as a kind of "bride service." The very term for "son in law", snek'llcw ("the

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<sup>98</sup> It is worth noting that the term túme derives from the Okanogan word tum, to suckle, thus indicating that a girl's mother's sister would often share in nursing or rearing a baby; the term for father's brother, lew̓e, derives from the Okanogan term for father, again suggesting a close connection for a boy to his father's brother.

<sup>99</sup> In the eastern dialect of Secwépemetsin, the father's father/mother's father term is sle7e

changing of abode/dwelling”) makes reference to this: the son-in-law, upon marriage, is expected to reside in the community of his wife’s family, learning to hunt, fish, gather there, and get to know his new relatives. Eventually, after some years, he and his wife move back to his family of origin. Nonetheless, in times of cyclical fluctuation of salmon, in times of hardship, and in times of mourning (when a close relative dies), they are expected to return throughout their life.

As we have seen, marriage of the children of Chiefs between different nations served the purpose of political alliance building. As marriage records from the mid-nineteenth century show, marriages were also frequently contracted between communities, although the majority of individuals appear to have found spouses from nearby.<sup>100</sup> Marriages were - and continue to be - prohibited between individuals who were/are known to be related. Teit noted that the incest taboo encompassed first and second cousins. However, the way I myself learned it, given the fact that terms for cousins of the opposite sex, smé7stem, were extended to all individuals that a person is related to, the taboo of marrying a relative is/was extended to all people that a person (or more aptly, his/her elders!) is remembered to be related to. Thus, the rules or prohibitions involving marriage are intrinsically connected to the “remembering” work that elders carry out, which entails the

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<sup>100</sup> A detailed, statistical analysis of marriage practices is not my objective here. My statements are based on a gleaning of marriage records from the mid- to late nineteenth hundreds, which list a relatively small portion of village-exogamous marriages. Along with this, oral histories on kinship and marriage recorded by M. Ignace from North Thompson, Skeetchestn and Bonaparte elders during the mid to late 1980s also show that especially the children of chiefs married out of the community, and a larger portion of marriages was contracted between spouses from different Secwépemc communities. The majority of marriages were from people of the same community. M. Ignace, pers. comm..

memories of past marriages and relationships, the children produced by them, and so forth. As shared and collective memories, both kinship and marriage practices thus were and are connected to our sense of history. Another custom of Interior Plateau society was the levirate and sororate, whereby a widow or widower married the sibling of same sex (úqw'i) of the deceased spouse (see Teit 1909:571), thus being guaranteed to have a hunter/provider, given the division of labour. This caretakership through levirate and sororate extended not only to the actual sibling of a deceased spouse, but also to cousins of the same sex. Upon marriage, and following the "bride service" of the snek'llcw or son in law, a couple's main dominant place of residence, in most cases, was in the husband's village, and hence it was in their father's indigenous band where most children were predominantly raised and socialized, and thus get to know the land and its resources. Throughout life, however, by way of maintaining ties with their mother's relatives and other relatives from previous generations who had married out, they would continually visit these places, and harvest resources with these relatives. In the narrative below, Sarah Deneault from Neskonlith (recorded by myself on September 23, 1997) remembers how marriages were arranged in her youth, during the 1930s and 40s.

**Ma7 tqwalmíns re staxtax7áms yi7ána...**

The elders/parents of those involved talked it over,

**re tuwíwt e cacácu7tmas ec xílmas tri7 ec k negwílcwas.**

The boy or young girl doing that sneaking around.

**Tqwelmíns staxtax7ám:**

The elders held a meeting to discuss it:

**Yirí7 cwi7! Yi7 yi7ána...Cwi7 má7a!**  
Let's do that! Yes this one...Let's carry it out!

**Wall newí7-amp pyin ma7 ma7 yecwmantwácw.**  
"From this day forth you will care for one another".

**Put-em together, they're married!**

**Meryí ri7.**  
They're married.

**Kectám te staxíax7ám e stámas.**  
Their parents/grandparents gave them something.

**(Sknam)...E snectám e sknúcwata núna tuwíwt**  
To give to the boy to help him

**e sknúcwata yi7ána núxwuxw.**  
to help this woman.

**Yi7 yi7ána ec nsápnas.**  
This is my daughter-in-law.

**Nekú7 íe nts'a7sqáxa7...e stámáltas e stámas.**  
One horse, a cow or something.

**RI – Re snectém te stetex7éms?**  
Given to them by their parents/elders.

**SD – Mhm...horse, one family, one side family give-em a horse.**  
A horse and a horse and a colt, and same a cow or a calf from the other side.

**All íi7 stam...cllúqwmáñ all le n...**  
And other things, a cup and...

**RI – hm**

**SD – They didn't,**

**Tá7tri7 k pañlu7 ts'elcwílap...ma7 stsunt.s:**  
In those days there were no chairs, for them to say:

**Yi7ána letáp...yi7ána ts'elcwílap...yi7ána spuñtn noh noh!**  
Here's a table, here's a chair, here's a bed, no, no.

**Well newí7s ri7 ma7 pamíns thá7a ma7 atícwás**  
They themselves would find a place where they would sleep

**tha7 ma7 xílmás tha7a ma7...**  
what they would do, what...

**RI - hm!**

**SD - Re tuwíwt tsúnta te staxtax7áms: Cwi7 má7a!**  
The boy was told by his parents: Go on!

**Re tuwíwt yerí7 mall ri7 llqam! tlúna...**  
The boy was already educated out there.

**Te staxtax7áms tsúnmacta te spíxa... te swáwla te stam  
xwexwáyť.**  
He was taught by his parents: to hunt to fish everything.

**Tselxastás mell ri7.**  
He knows those things already.

**Yi7ána cecácu7ta tselxastas ri7 xwexwáyť:**  
This young girl knows how to do everything:

**Ma7 kweltsentsút...ma7 qwíts'am...**  
She cooks, washes clothes,

**ma7 ma7 stam xwexwáyť ma7 kúlans ne tsitcw.**  
She would do everything around the house.

**RI - hm**

**SD - All tucw tucw ri7 kwelkúkwalt le q7ásas le**  
And as soon as they were born long ago

**staxtax7áms re stsmált.s...tucw kwalkúkwalt mall ri7 m-**  
the parents their children, as soon as they're born they already are...

**(put-em together) mall ri7 m-tqwelmíns yi7ána**  
put-em together, they have already been betrothed (sp)

**staxtax7ám...(both parents):**  
by the parents, both parents:

**Yi7ána ri7 e tutwítas ri7...**  
This one when he grows up,

**Tselxastás mall yi7.**  
They already know.

**E tutwít!**  
When they both grow up!

**K'ult te núxwaxw yi7ána cecácu7ta...yirí7...**  
A woman now this young woman, that one,

**Yirí7 kwánt-iyá má7a.**  
The time has come, you people take her now.

**Yi7 tkwam7ípla7tns le q7ásas.**  
Those were the laws long ago.

**RI - hm!**

**SD - K'ámall pyin!**  
But now!

**Ílu7 waw7ác ílu7 cucecácu7ta ílu7 m-pe skúya...**  
Young girls are out there and have a child,

**ílu7 w7ac m-nas ntnka7 m-pe skúya...**  
they are out there and go to someone else and have a child,

**ílu7 m-nas ne swat ílúna...tli7.(inaudible)**  
they go to someone else out there somewhere. (inaudible)

**RI - So you didn't, in them days you didn't marry for love?**

**SD - You didn't marry for love. You love, you loved him when  
you were told, Go with him.**

**(I behave).**

**Tá7íri7 ntsáwa7 k skácmatsla nek swat.**  
I myself wasn't given to anyone.

**I was twenty one when I left home. They were gonna....**

**Tsúntsas lu7 nstaxíax7ám e skácmatslas ne (one) nekwa7.**  
My grandparents were going to give me to one person.

**Staxíax7ám put sqálacw. (He lost his wife).**  
He was an older man. He lost his wife.

**(So I let and then, they ask me):**

**Ma7 lá7an ni7 ta7 snas?**  
Will it be okay for you to go there?



**I was seventeen or eighteen or whatever so.**  
**All lu7 má7a...yi7ána sqálacw (had three kids).**  
And he had, this man had three kids.

**Stsmalt.s tekallás.**  
Three children.

**Ac lu7 tsyacwamnílastnas.**  
I used to care for them.

**Yi7ána twíteñtsas (my) slá7a sa7á7as...**  
The one who raised me, my grandfather's wife,

**stakált.s...stakált.s...re pll-sxálwa.**  
her daughter, her daughter's husband.

**Qwtsaq má7a le stakált.s...**  
Her daughter had died,

**m-pe stsmáltas ya te tekallás.**  
she had three children.

**Yi7 ma7 stsúntsas lu7 le ntwítentsas ðe nmáma7:**  
So then my foster mother said to me:

**Kána ma7 sla7s ka7 púsma ða7 snas?**  
Will you be happy to go there?

**Ma7 la7 téke tsut...**  
Look it would be good, she said

**e yecwamíncwas well ra 7qwsa7...well ra 7sínsta.**  
If you took care of your nephews, your little brothers.  
Two boys and a girl,

**Put lu7 tsetsítsma7t.**  
They were quite small.

**Oh, oh! put e syacs ntsáwa7,**  
Oh, oh! as if it had to be me.

**Ptínasma... "No! tá7tri7 ta7."**  
I thought about it. No! never, no.

**Ra úqwi yam.**  
You see, she was my sister.

While in this case Sarah decided not to follow the suggestion to sk'élpem (i.e. follow the custom of levirate), many marriages that occurred until the late 1940s in Secwépemc country were in some way arranged, or at least suggested. As Theresa Jules' statement below shows, elders encouraged their children and grandchildren not to marry white men, fearing that they would be "thrown away."

(Theresa Jules, Dec.2, 1997)

**Mé7e...tsúntsems lu7 nxpé7e le K'estmíc:**  
Yes, my grandfather K'estmíc said to me:

**Imts! e íxewílc-ucw...e ketsnúcwes te7 síxewílc...**  
Grandchild, when you grow up,

**e yews te7 síx7em...e yews te7 stqwlútemt.s íi7 k sqélemcw e smeryís íri7.**  
when you become an adult, when a man comes to speak about marriage.

**Ta7penhén k stínúcwenc k séme7...tá7a!**  
Don't ever wish to be with a white man, no!

**Me7 sesésu7tst.s ri7!**  
They will make you a slave.

**E wi7 e sesésu7t.s ri7 k sesésu7t.s...me7 tseqmínt.s.**  
When the master is through with his slave, he will throw you away.

**Me7 ts'ílem tsut fey e...**  
It will be like that,

**e tslékes tsut k síllts'u tsut ul me7 tseqmínc.**  
He said: Like a worn out shoe that you throw away.

**Me7 xillt.s tsut íri7.**  
He said: That is what he will do to you.

The system of name giving accompanied the sense of kinship: Children were given hereditary names from a “remote ancestor,” (Teit op.cit.:570), in my experience usually a person of the grandparent or great-grandparent generation. The belief, as I have heard it stated, is that the child who receives a name from a grandparent makes his/her xpe7e or kye7e come alive. As I heard it, “yiri7 re swumecst.s re xpe7es.” He or she is believed to be a re-birth of that ancestor in a spiritual sense, and in a social sense, maintains continuity with the past. Teit (ibid.) noted that in a given band or community, even within the same division, no two people bear the same name, although across divisions the same names will commonly recur.<sup>101</sup> Male and female names are recognized by their ending or lexical suffix: Male names typically end in -esq’et (day), -escen (rock), and -em̄t/īm̄t (outer layer, skin, dress), whereas female names typically end in -étkwe (water) and -īnek (bow, but the latter derives from the bow-shape of a pregnant belly).

*In naming my own children, I took care to “bring my kye7es and xpe7es back” as I have often said, naming them after my ancestors and relatives. Thus, my deceased son was Gabriel Ettwa, after the great-grandfather who raised me; my*

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<sup>101</sup> In fact, Teit (ibid.) Noticed that many names were common to the Secwépemc and Upper Nlakapamux. “Either they were one people originally, or they have intermarried often. Even in bands that, so far as the tradition goes, have never lived close together nor had any direct intercourse, - like the Lytton band of the Thompson tribe, and the Shuswap bands of High Bar and Big Bar.” Given that these Secwépemc and Nlakapamux names, as Teit himself noticed, were ancient and have existed for many generations, it appears that at least some of them may date back more than 2,000 years, when the two languages were still one!

*daughter is Julienne Melmenétkwe after my great-grandmother Julienne and her own mother, Melmenétkwe; my next daughter is Lizzy, after my own mother, and Ts'elpits'e7 after Lizzy's great-great grandmother. My son George is named after my great-uncle, my xpe7e, George Ignace, who was deaf and dumb, but a smart and powerful hunter and provider, and Llecwesq'et after old Julienne's father Antoine Llecesq'et. My son Joe is named after Chief Joe-Thoma, old Julienne's uncle, who was our community's chief during the time of the memorial, and he is named Stsmelecqen after another one of Julienne's ancestors. My youngest daughter Katie was named after Katie Humphrey, one of my now deceased elders, who adopted me as a child, and Xyemétkwe, after another kyé7e from long ago. My own middle name is Eric after my mother's brother, who passed away when he was a baby not long before I was born. The names keep the memories of our ancestors alive, and the stories that go with their lives.*

The Secwépemc and Interior Salish system of naming embodies both a cyclical and chronological sense of history: Throughout our people's history, the particular names of ancestors were and are recycled every two to three generations. In that the practice of naming also embodied the particular appearance and personal characteristics of an ancestor, and with the name went the knowledge of the life history of that ancestor, names kept track of particulars of chronological time.

As opposed to the ego-centric, rather than socio-centric, and inherently flexible nature of what describes a person's kw'séltkten, Lillian Ackerman (1998, 1995) has stipulated the existence of "ambilateral descent groups" (socio-centric

rather than ego-centric, well defined kin groups, but whose membership could derive through either the father's or the mother's side) in the Interior Plateau, although her actual data for such groups are sparse, based only on anecdotal statements by various informants from the recent past. Furniss (1998) further discusses the existence of, and "inherent tensions" between the economic autonomy of "extended families," - or perhaps "am bilateral descent groups" as she acknowledges - and the larger collective of the indigenous band.<sup>102</sup>

The extended family, what we call a person's kw'selkten7úwi or "real relatives" is the core unit of Secwépemc economic production and social interaction. Although, as I will show in chapter 7, a pervasive ethic of sharing between and across families, and throughout the whole community, exists in Secwépemc society, it is the extended family situated around a group of interrelated households that was the core productive unit: people procured food for all the members of the extended family who lived together. Furthermore, the extended family functions as a flexible, inclusive rather than exclusive, group which had, and continues to act in social and political solidarity, as Furniss (op.cit.) shows, using various examples from the late

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<sup>102</sup> I cannot speak for the Southern Plateau where Ackerman carried out her research. However, the very fact that the Northern Interior Salish languages have no socio-centric term for a "group of relatives" or "descent group," but instead have the relational and egocentric term kw'selkten in various cognates, seems to speak against the existence of am bilateral descent groups in the northern plateau. In a few incidences in my community that occurred since the 1990s, when "families" organized reunions of a family, all sort of married-in, married-out members were embraced, along with our spouses. In an incidence of a "family meeting" of my extended family, all individuals considered to be related as having a voice to contribute were welcomed. Thus, I think that a flexible, both socio-centric and egocentric and embracing sense of purpose defines the notion of who is part of the group.

nineteenth through the late twentieth century, at various times resulting in factions and competing interests among groups within a community or band.

A significant aspect of Secwepemc life was the importance of sharing and “helping one another” (knucwentwecw) on the one hand, and the importance of self-sufficiency and autonomy on the other. While elders, throughout their narratives talked about the many ways in which our ancestors helped one another by sharing in food gathering tasks, sharing the fish that were caught, the game that was bagged, and the berries that were picked, they also emphasized the fine line of sharing versus individual “freeloading” (q'en7élt), of helping out and being helped versus lacking self sufficiency and thus being a burden to others, or a nuisance (yéwyut).

Self sufficiency was another important theme for these elders: having little cash to buy fabric for clothes, women made cotton clothing from old flour sacks

(Theresa Jules, Dec. 2, 1997):

**Yiri7 len méme7 tselxéxýectsems le tuwíwtwen.**  
When I was a young girl my mother told me about it.

**Ṭri7 ta7 k stem...ṭri7 tek k séme7...ṭri7 k stémi ṭri7 k s.. k s..**  
There was nothing, from the white man, nothing,

**skúlems nméme7 ṭri7 e stémi e skúlems te kelkélcs es es**  
my mother made things by hand to,

**styéýxentsems.**  
to put clothes on me.

**Ṭri7 tá7wes yem yi7 ṭri7 k s- k s- 7eyenwéns yi7 yem yi7 ṭri7 le**  
**q7éses le**  
The people around long ago, couldn't afford

**m-w7ec re liyén.**  
cotton material.

**Yiri7 súten tri7 tri7...kúlem t7éne te cpeqpiqteñ.**  
Those things, they made things from flour sacks.

**Yiri7 téwens...qwítsens t7éne.**  
They bought it, washed it there.

**Re m-kúlmes mé7e te ts'ewsten...mule yiri7  
yéqwens...yéqwens...**  
They made soap, they built a fire with cottonwood, they built a fire, built a fire

**t7éne k ts'ilmes...wel ts'ilem te peqpiq mé7e.**  
for as long as needed, until it looked like flour.

**Re m-clémenses ne7éne ne cyéwmen.**  
They put them into buckets.

**Re m-tntésés mé7e neri7 te nxixyétkwe ell ni7 qwtell.**  
They would put it into hot water and then put lard into it.

**Ncíkwens mé7e t7éne m-xílem mé7e te t7éne te te te ...(jelly) yem.**  
They stirred it until it formed like jelly you know.

**Yi7 mé7e m-xílemes ti7 te m-qwetséts e spelléllt.s t7éne.**  
So then it started to become thickened like.

**Yi7 sctektékens t7éne ne lepwél.**  
Then they poured it into frying pans.

**Ne7én nlepwél yem wes ne lekelétmes...kúlmes te lekelét.**  
You know, into baking pans that they used for making bread.

**Ctektékens yi7 nerí7.**  
They poured it into that.

**Sult mé7e...yi7 mé7e m-nekníkenses t7éne.**  
When it hardened, then they cut them.

**Yerí7 mé7e..yi7 mé7e ec yi...ec e stenstésés mé7e nsqwíts'em**  
So then, so then, that was what was used to do the laundry

**Ts'ilmes t7en...ts'ilmes mé7e yem te bleach.**  
It was like this, it was just like bleach.

**Re m-kíllemtes mé7e nu7 ncpeqpiqteñ yi tsqéy.**  
So then the print on the flour sacks came off.

**Tsqiqéy yem lu7 le q7es le cpcqpiqteñ...**  
You know that the flour sacks long ago used to have print on them,

**m-yews yi7 le csukwsúkwe7tn.**  
then there were sugar sacks.

**Tsqiqéy yiri7 t7en...**  
They had writings on them,

**Ta7 mé7e yem me7 yiri7 e st7eks tucw me7 kllépes e**  
It wouldn't come off very easily when you

**cyétskwemencwes.**  
scrub them together in wash water.

**Yiri7 téke le q7éses le le... well kyé7e-kt yiri7 stse7mét.st.s tek**  
**tek (bleach)**

You see long ago, that was what our grandmothers called bleach.

**Mé7e káll pyin téke t7ey...ucw semsémé7-kt t7i7 (bleach) t7ri7 stem.**  
Yes but now you see, we are white people with bleach and other things.

**Tsukw e spiqs t7i7 k stektíts'e7-kt t7ri7 k stémi-kt....**  
Just so that our shirts and other things are white,

**cencnélep-kt e spiqs-ekwe.**  
they say: So that our bedding can be white.

**Yiri7 mé7e yi7 ec yi ec re ec re st7elkstenmínst.ses.**  
So that was what they, what they used.

**Yiri7 mé7e cpeqpiqteñ t7i7 me7 kúkwelctselmes e nlléllúllcw t7ri7**  
So then from those flour sacks, dresses were made for me,

**tlúne ntkwelteképe7 t7ri7...m-kúkwelctslém t7ri7 nsxétemcen**  
my petty coats there, my pants were made also.

**Tá7t7ri7 t7en k k k(sewing machine) tucw t7en kelc t7en**  
There were no sewing machines, just hand sewing

**stqw7um7úwi... tsukw ri7.**  
hand sewing that's all.



**Yi7 stselxemstéten...le lexéxpwen yem.**  
That was what I know from the time I began to recall things you know.

**Lexéxp-ken mell nméme7 ec yi yi íqmes.**  
From the time I began to remember things my mother was already tanning buckskin.

**Séswen.**  
I asked her.

**Tsut: Yi7éne í7qemwen yiri7 tsut stemkélt.**  
She said: Daughter, she said, I am tanning raw-hide.

**Tlyi7 tsut me7 kúltsnes tsut te7 síllts'u.**  
From this, she said, I will make shoes for you.

**Me7...me7 kúklen ri7 tsut tek le7.**  
I will, I will make it very nice.

**Me7 q7éses tsut ke7 síllts'u íri7 e séys-ucw.**  
They will last you a long time when you are playing.

**Yiri7 cú7tsem nun...ne7éne ckménks yi7éne yi mocassin...**  
And again over there, here on the soles of the moccasin,

**yi7éne re tsenmenéqstceñ...**  
this here denim material,

**yiri7 m-níkens ílúne m-íqwentésés ne7éne.**  
that, she cut it out there and sewed it here.

**Tsellts'íllens yem ne7éne.**  
She measured it here you know.

**Re m-yews cú7tsem ne7éne re scwetmín.**  
And then there was the buckskin.

**Yeri7 m íwentés m-xillt.s í7éne**  
She sewed it doing this

**Re m-tegwíégwtes mé7e yem.**  
So that it was hard you know.

**spéke7...mocassins í7 lluxwpéxen...yerí7 skúlems.**  
gloves, moccasins, those vests was what she made.

**Yirí7 téwkes.**  
Those were her sales.

**Stémi mé7e íi7 e stícúmses k sqlew...**  
What she earned in money,

**ta7 yem k scw7i7t.s pentlú7 íi7 k stem k sts7éystem...**  
things were worth that much those days,

**te ts'ílmes yem pyin.**  
not like now a days.

**Pyin key e éyenc...te7!...íklúne k skwincs k stscemtéps ke7**  
Now if you pay for something, my goodness, the prices are up there for your

**moccasin ke7 spéke7 yem**  
moccasin, and you know the gloves.

**E cemtépsct.ses íey k swéti7 k kúlmes k moccasin...**  
When the ones making moccasin price it for you,

**íri7 tek spéke7.**  
or those gloves.

**K'ell pentlú7 lu7 tskweg lu7...kellélls te kwáte7**  
But those days it was cheap, three quarters.

**yi yi spéke stscemtéps...téke mé7e.**  
was the price for gloves, (how absurd).

**Re m-yews ni7 tskerkerní...í7éne t.susú7t.**  
Then there were those with embroidery, those beaded

**Yerí7 m-kélles te sqlew m-stu7kwemíst.ses nméme7.**  
Those were three dollars when my mother sold them.

**K'wencéke-uce te stem skwelkúlems...llucwllucwpéxen.**  
She would make several of those vests.

**Cw7it mé7e yi7 íi7. Re m-kwemtús re s7elkst.s**  
There were lots of things. She worked all the time.

**Yiri7 mé7e ucw len pépe7 m-temtéws**  
So then my father would ride a horse

**Re m-cllémctem ucw nqw7ep í7éne.**  
Those things were put into a sack.

**Yi7 ren pépe7 m-sqwetséts.s ílun í7 thé7en.**  
So then my father went here and there.

**Skémqín ílu7 m-tu7tukwemínem.**  
To Savona over there and he would sell them.

**Téke íey qwetsétses te Cherry Creek...temtéws.**  
See he went by horse back to Cherry Creek.

**Í7ek...m-pe stékle ri7...tutu7kwemíns ri7 ílu7.**  
He went along, he would have a packed lunch, and made sales over there.

The theme of self-sufficiency, not being a nuisance (yéwyut) and working hard is also embodied in Nellie Taylor's favorite story, the story of the Ant and Grasshopper (recorded July 1995):

### **Story about Ant and Grasshopper**

by Nellie Taylor, Skeetchestn Indian Reserve -1987  
as told by her great-grandmother Agathe (Llecpusétkwe), also from Skeetchestn.

**Re Scwicwéye ell re Skelkléts**  
ant and grasshopper

**Le q'7éses ren kyéy7e re slexéyems ucw**  
Long time ago, my grandmother used to tell me:

**W7ec re scwicéye élkstes**  
(The) ants were busy working.

**Kw'iyusmes all summer welem sllwélsten**  
They were suffering all summer until fall.

**Kell w7ec re skelkeléts tigáynekmes**  
but the grasshoppers were playing guitar.

**Xqw'iyellts'em t'ri7 te sqweqw'yilc.**  
They had fun dancing.

**T'ri7 stem re tsúwets.**  
They had all kinds of activities.

**S7istk**  
It was winter.

**Yiri7 re stektsillens**  
There, they starved.

**Yiri7 re stekt'éxelcmens-ekwe re scwicweye.**  
They charged over to the ants.

**Yiri7 re sxpupéwtsens-ekwe.**  
There, they knocked on their door.

**W7ec-ekwe re ckelltsictem te scwicweye.**  
they opened the door for them, the ants.

**Ts7ullcw-ekwe.**  
They entered.

**Qwenqwent-ekwe yewses re s7ucw7ucwtes t'ucw.**  
They were very pitiful when they were freezing.

**Ta7-ekwe pell-stseksusems re skelkelets.**  
They didn't have wood, the grasshoppers.

**Kitsentmes re scwicweye te skelkelets, q'en7elt.**  
when they got to the ants, the grasshoppers, they begged for food.

**Tsuntem-ekwe t'7ene,**  
they were asked this,

**Kénem-k?**  
What's the matter with you?

**"Yiri7 t'ucw well re7 qwse7 re stektsillens.**  
There, your nephews are starving.

**Kenem ke7 pell-stsillen es metéc-kuc?"**  
do you have any food to feed us?

**"Ah, t'ri7 tiraynekcte!**  
ah, there, play guitar for them!

**Tiraynecte t'ri7 me7 letwilc,**  
play guitar for them, then they will feel better,

**Me7 meqmeq'-kp.**  
They'll get full."

**Qwenqwent t'ri7, yiri7enke kem sxwayts re skelkelets.**  
The poor things, the grasshoppers must have all died.

### **Re kukukwpi7s-kucw - "our chiefs:" Principles of Political Organization**

Political organization deals with the process of collective decision-making and the carrying out of such decisions. In Secwépemtsín, the term kúkwpi7 describes leadership of the community or indigenous band, without any paramount leadership at the level of our nation. We can learn about principles of Secwépemc chiefship, but also about processual history of chiefship from oral histories told by elders, and from Teit's (op.cit), Boas' (1891), and Dawson's (1891) observations, along with ethnohistorical information about the comings and goings of chiefs throughout the nineteenth century and early twentieth century. According to all converging lines of evidence, there was no paramount chiefship at the level of the nation; instead, Shuswap society throughout the nineteenth, and well into the 20<sup>th</sup> century, existed as a segmental or confederated political entity, composed of equal parts, i.e. the traditional communities – "bands" in Teit's sense. There existed different types of chiefs for different roles and situations: Teit noted that the Shuswaps "had war chiefs, hunting chiefs, and chiefs of dances, who were men elected as the best qualified to fill these positions" (Teit 1909:569; Ignace 1998). I believe that what Teit

calls "hunting chiefs"; were actually what I referred to as yucwimíñmen ("caretakers") of fish, of game, plant resources and trails. The roles performed by the yucwimíñmen were based on a person's experience and knowledge, and involved an assigned and recognized role within the community:

The expertise of my great-grandfather, Edward Eneas, besides being political chief, was to manage the various ecosystems using fire as a management tool. On the other hand, another community member, Walter Humphrey, who succeeded Edward Enease as chief, could be found in the high mountains or valley bottoms clearing the trails or repairing wash outs on the trails.

In addition to these resource caretakers, there were the "hereditary" chiefs: "the Shuswap had one hereditary chief for each band, the office descending in the male line" (Teit 1909:569). The role of the chiefs was as follows:

Chiefs had no special privileges, and their only duties were to look after the general welfare of the band, regulating, when necessary the gathering of the food-supply, so that all could have an equal chance, and admonishing the lazy and quarrelsome. They also gave their advice on all-important matters, and were the agents of the band in dealing with strangers. The chief was looked upon as a kind of father and leader of the people, and was expected to set a good example, and to act fairly in all matters" (op.cit.:570).

On the one hand, thus, within the context of the egalitarian society that we were,<sup>103</sup> chiefs were equal among their advisors and community members. Yet, they were expected to lead not only by example, but also As Teit himself acknowledged, despite the ideal of patrilineal succession, this was not always the case:

Sometimes all the immediate male relatives of the deceased [chief] held a meeting and elected the son considered best fitted to occupy the position, and he was announced by them to the band as chief. Soon afterward he gave a small feast to all the members of the band, to which visiting strangers were invited. At this feast the people addressed him as chief, and henceforth recognized him as such until his death (Teit 1909:569).

Chiefly succession, thus, was not automatic, but the successor was established on the basis of descent from, or kinship ties with, the previous chief. We know very little of actual chiefs during the centuries preceding first contact. However, by tracing the succession of chiefs who interacted with explorers and fur traders in the early 1800s, and subsequently with colonial and government agents, we see that in many instances, chiefship was NOT in the paternal line:

As Teit (1930) notes, Kwolila, who was chief of the Tk'emlupsemc at the time of the 18<sup>th</sup> century Fish Lake Accord and until the early 1800s, was not succeeded by

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<sup>103</sup> Again, there is the issue of the hierarchical clan and crest system adapted by the Northern Secwépemc from the St'at'imc, Carrier and Chilcotin in the early 1800s, and having spread to all the St'emculewemc and Set'emc communities by 1850. It included ranked "class of nobility" as "clan chiefs," and hereditary clan crests, along with ornaments, dances and ceremonies. Without this system having long-lasting tradition, according to Teit, "these customs soon dropped out of use" following the decimation of the Northern and Western Secwépemc by smallpox in the early 1860s.

his son. Neither was Chief Louis,<sup>104</sup> who was Chief of the Tk'emlupsemc between the early 1850 and his death in 1915.<sup>105</sup>

Leslie Jules, my father's brother, remembered hearing that Chief Hyacinth Sisyesq'et,<sup>106</sup> chief of Skeetchestn between the early 1860s and his death in 1894, rose to the rank of political chief from being a war chief (Leslie Jules, pers. comm.. 1987). Sisyesq'et himself apparently succeeded "Nowelsghut" as chief of "Boute du Lac" – the area at the west end of Kamloops Lake - (see Balf 1980). Before his death, Hyacinth Sisyesq'et designated not his son, Jules Sisyesq'et, as his heir, but his niece Clemás' husband, Joe Thomá. As our elder Nellie Taylor explained, Hyacinth Sisyesq'et considered his son-in-law more fit for office than his own son (Nellie Taylor, interview, 1995). It is significant that Sisyesq'et's appointment of a successor came at a time when our people were beginning to notice the growing impacts of White settlement in our lands, and felt increasingly betrayed by the Federal and provincial governments with regards to the land question.

In St'uxtéws, Basil Dick, who was also not a relative, succeeded Adam Seynsut, chief during the late 1860s and at the time of Peter O'Reilly's designation of reserves in the early 1880s. Basil Dick, along with his community, however,

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<sup>104</sup> Different sources (HBC records, his tombstone, government documents) show different dates for when he became chief. See M. Ignace 1995: 53).

<sup>105</sup> Surprisingly, Teit's 1930 work asserts that Jean-Baptiste "Lolo" St. Paul, an Iroquois/Metis who worked for the Hudson's Bay Company and had married a Tk'emlups woman, was chief of the band prior to [the late 1850s], a claim vehemently denied by Kamloops elders (see M. Ignace 1995).

<sup>106</sup> Hyacinth Sisyesq'et was my father Francis Jules' father's father's father. Francis' father (my paternal grandfather) Joe Jules married into the Kamloops band, and thus is the "patriarch" of all the Kamloops Jules. Two of Joe Jules' children married back into the Skeetchestn band in the nineteen twenties.



appointed his son Tony Basil to become his successor in the 1930s, when he passed away.

Chief Andre Tinemesq'et of the Simpcwemc (Chief from 1864 until 1918), had apparently succeeded his father Peter Tinemesq'et, who had died in 1864 during the smallpox epidemic (Thompson's River Post, Manson Journal 1864) having had no male heir, he thus appointed his son-in-law Cucwell (David Casimir), thus enticing him to move up to Simpcw country and stay there.

At least throughout the nineteenth and twentieth century, chiefship often was not hereditary. It is difficult to gauge the role that epidemics and the serious and devastating changes brought about, initially by the fur trade and subsequently by white settlement, missionaries and colonization brought.

### **Tkw'enm7íple7 – Authority and Decision-making**

As Teit (op.cit. 569) noted, within Secwépemc communities there existed a *council*, or group of advisors to the chief, what we call tkw'enm7íple7ten, who were instrumental in selecting and/or verifying a chief. By consensus among the heads of extended families, these tkw'enm7íple7ten “appointed” or put forward a person as chief, and thus verified and legitimated his appointment.

This council also took an important function in all other matters regarding the making of decisions. Composed of elder males from the extended families, it acted as an "advisory group" to the chief. As such it was the decision-making agency in all matters involving collective welfare and collective action of the band. Within

the egalitarian nature of Secwépemc society, chiefly authority was accompanied by the consensus of extended families. The chief's authority did not flow vertically, was one of building and maintaining consensus and listening to community members. Robert Manuel, son of the late Chief George Manuel, explained this important aspect of traditional chiefship as creating consensus, noting that from what his father had told him, the kukwpi7 or chief was expected to appear as though he "rubberstamps" decisions. He must carefully control and steer decision-making towards consensus, and be such a skilled intervener that to the outside it appears as though he merely "rubberstamps" or agrees with everyone else.<sup>107</sup> Unanimous consensus thus had to be skillfully and carefully created and managed. Decision-making was (and continues to be) a process of negotiation and listening. In addition, while the overt acts of decision-making were the realm of men only, it is my understanding that women played a significant role behind the scenes. While even into the middle of the twentieth century women were absent from political meetings (Christine Simon, pers. comm.; Nellie Taylor), they had a voice to their husbands, sons, and nephews who were kukwpi7 or tkw'enm7iple7ten within the domestic domain which found its way into decision making among the leaders in the public domain.

There are numerous modes of action and communication which play/played a part in traditional political decision-making; they include the lobbying of support

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<sup>107</sup> For literature on political processes in hunter-gatherer societies underlying similar principles see Silberbauer 1982; Leacock and Lee 1982, Miller 1955; see also Furniss 2004 for a discussion.

through unofficial consultation; testing the wind by mentioning a matter in public or semi-public. A chief was/is expected to be in consultation with his people at all times.

While the goal of traditional Secwépemc political behavior, as I understand it, is to strive towards political and social unanimity, there were numerous ways in which discontent and dissent were voiced, often implicitly. One of these is absence. By being absent from a meeting, kukwpi7 or tkw'nm7iple7ten voice their dissent, and their absence is understood in this manner by others.

Another principle of political action involves letting people “do it to themselves.” Rather than removing a person from office who made decisions that community members felt were unjust and not in their interest, the community would wait for the leader to eventually expose his behaviour as unacceptable, and leave or resign. In other cases, as Nellie Taylor explained to me, people, especially in small communities, would leave, and the chief had no one to be chief over. Again, authority only extends as far as the will of the people to be guided, and the ability of the kukwpi7 to take advice from his people.

### **Paramount Chiefs and Chiefs as Spokespeople for other communities**

While each community had its kukwpi7, there were nonetheless Chiefs who, at least since the time when the first Europeans came among us, exerted influence and acted beyond their communities: We will see in chapter 4 below, how Chief Xlosem from Xats'ull (Soda Creek) accompanied Simon Fraser through all Secwépemc communities along the Fraser, apparently recognized, or at least

tolerated, by the Chiefs of other bands and villages along the way. Throughout the fur trade, some Chiefs by degrees tried to exert their influence beyond their communities. Thus, the fur traders appointed Chief N'kwala of Douglas Lake as the caretaker of Fort Kamloops, for which the Tk'emlups chiefs challenged him (see Thomson and Ignace 2005: 14 for a discussion). Although certain chiefs were able to exert a more dominating role than others; Chief Louis of Kamloops was noted to be influential, and so was Chief Sisyesq'et of Skeetchestn (see Fa. Grandidier correspondence). I have above described the traditional political apparatus of the Secwépemc as confederate or segmental, i.e. composed of equal parts which consulted with one another regarding decisions for the mutual benefit of a number of bands or the entire nation, and also acted as a joint political body towards the outside. From the ethno historical record, we have numerous references to the consultation, which went on among the Secwépemc chiefs and to joint political meetings and action:

Teit mentioned that Green Lake, situated in a central location within Secwépemcúlcw, in the plateau between the North Thompson and Fraser Rivers, was a place where "great numbers from all divisions of the tribe congregated once a year to have sports and to trap trout, etc."(Teit 1909:536). Such meetings not only involved strictly economic activity and athletic competition, but also political consultation among the chiefs of the bands, which gathered here. Father Grandidier's (the Oblate missionary at Kamloops during the 1870s and 80s) correspondence gives us numerous clues as to the often implicitly and clandestinely

political nature of social gatherings: In 1873, he reports that "The Chief of the Bonaparte has assembled all the Sauvages from Lytton to Clinton and all the Secwépemcs, under pretext of giving them a holiday (festival). I don't know what it is but I fear that there is more to it than meets the eye..." (Grandidier to d'Herbomez, Kamloops, November 16, 1873.) A year later, in further correspondence with his bishop, Grandidier also voiced his opposition to the give-aways among the Bonaparte, Clinton and upper Nl'akapmx people, which signified the witnessing and sanctioning of political decisions. He wrote, "They conduct their business under the guise of festivals, horse races etc., but in the meetings the chiefs alone gather to discuss subjects which the people do not hear" (Grandidier to d'Herbomez, 6 Sept. 1874)

Joint meetings among Secwépemc Chiefs were also reported during the early period of the fur trade. John McLeod, the first trader at Thompson River's Post in 1822-23 voiced his concern at the Secwépemc and their Okanogan allies taking over the Fort to hold their meetings and war council to avenge Chief Pelk'amulox's death.

Archibald McDonald witnessed and described a major gathering at Kamloops attended by more than 300 people. Although he admits he basically had no clue to what was going on because he or his company men spoke or understood no Secwépemc, he reports the details of Secwépemc eating etiquette and foods consumed at this large gathering. Moreover, he observed that..."during this rendezvous it is also an object with them to pledge their friendship with each other"

(Cole 1971:126) - doubtlessly an expression of social and political alliance, and chief meetings.

## **Secwépemc Spirituality**

In order to understand our people's actions and reactions to traders, missionaries and colonizers, as these increasingly shaped our existence since the latter part of the nineteenth century, it is important to briefly explain some central concepts of Secwépemc spiritual beliefs.

In chapter 2, I discussed the role of Sk'elép in its historical and social-moral dimension. Within the Secwépemc belief system, it was Old One, tsk'éwelc, who was the "chief of the ancient world" (Teit, op.cit.:596). Often equated with tqelk kukwpi7, the chief above or "Creator," Old-One, who was "all powerful", put the sun, moon, weather and seasons in place, introduced many of the animals into our land, and taught the people how to harvest and preserve them. He introduced the sq'ilye or sweat bathing as a custom that set us apart from animals. Behind the Salish people's movements into different parts of the Interior was Old One's guiding hand or power. It was Old One who sent sk'elép to "travel over the world and put it to rights" during that period when the earth "was much troubled with great winds, fires and floods" (see above, ch. 2).

Old One was the one who reminded us to be respectful to all living things.

This notion of respect is at the core of our beliefs about our interaction with the land and all things in it: Xyemstém/me7

xyemstec (“be respectful”) entails the management and careful harvesting of all plant and animal resources, lest they disappear on us in disgust, and we become pitiful (qwenqwént)

Coyote built an underground house on the Upper North Thompson River, at a place now called Coyote’s House. It was afterwards turned into rock, and may be seen there at the present day. He spent several winters at this place. One fall, salmon came up the river in great numbers, and he made up his mind to catch a large supply, saying, ‘I will dry very many, and then will invite all the people to a great feast.’ By the time the salmon ceased running, he had filled many sticks, and was delighted when he viewed the large amount of fish he had on hand. One day as he was passing underneath the sticks where salmon was hanging, his hair caught in one of them, and this made him angry. Four times this happened, and each time he became angrier. The last time he became very angry, saying, ‘Why can’t I pass underneath these fish without their catching in my hair?’ He tore down the offending salmon and threw it into the river. At once it came to life and swam away. Then all the salmon came down from the sticks and plunged into the river. In vain Coyote tried to stop them by catching them and clubbing them. In a short time they had all disappeared, and he was left without supplies for the winter, and had to give up the project of giving a feast. Now he gathered up all the slabs of wood which he had used for splitting salmon on, and all the poles on which they had been hanging. He took them up to his house, and said, ‘I will boil them in the winter-time and have fish soup.’ (Teit 1909:743; story told by George Sisuyulecw from Simpcw)

Central to the relationship between an animal and the fisher or hunter who “bags” the animal is the concept that the animal gives itself to the fisher or hunter, what we call *kecmetsút*. The hunter thus has to approach the animal with a clean mind and body, which includes having a *sq’ilye* (sweat) before the hunt, and ensuring spiritual cleanliness, but also physical cleanliness by getting rid of one’s human scent. Animals will often give themselves up to the hunter because they take

pity on humans, especially during times of bereavement, or in times of need. In our communities, we have many stories of events when deer and moose gave themselves up to take pity on the mourners by not fleeing, being found in unusual places.

In both a practical and spiritual sense, the careful and respectful management of resources involves numerous aspects: These include: not over-harvesting animals; not wasting any part of an animal; treating animals with respect means to carefully dispose of their bones, and on the fishing-grounds, it means not spitting in the water, not leaving fish guts lying around.

The harvesting of all things in nature also presupposes prayer that thanks Tqeltk kukwpi<sup>7</sup> for providing the animal or plants that feed people, and that thanks the resources for giving themselves to people. By communicating with the spiritual world through tobacco that is scattered on the ground, the prayer also involves a gift to both the animal and plant, and to the creator. Besides tobacco, our people nowadays leave behind coins, or they will leave other tokens, like some grains to the squirrels, which gave humans some hazelnuts or pine nuts from its cache.

The sanctions for disrespectful behavior extend beyond the animal or game resource into the social realm. When fishers or hunters “get skunked,” the ultimate source is in human behavior. However, the reasons for “getting skunked” can also be situated in disrespectful social behavior to other humans:

“Nellie Taylor often told of how she and her partner, Cecilia Peters, went to Hi-hium Lake (Xixyum) to fish for rainbow trout. [On one occasion] two young men had set up camp and were



roasting the fish they had caught without offering any to the Elders. 'After that, the fish just quit running for them.' They never caught any more,' she remarked wryly. By violating the norm of sharing [especially with Elders] they had acted inappropriately and had brought about supernatural sanction of their behavior in that the fish stopped running for them." (Ignace and Ignace 2004:386)

Beyond what zoologists and botanists would consider living things, the notion of powers that rest in nature also extends to places in the landscape. Especially the places visited by the stspetékwll are imbued with powers. They continue to be medicines that can act on us. They can harm us if we show disrespect or carelessness. They will benefit us when we treat them with respect. All parts of our environment are thus what Cruikshank (2004) has described as a "sentient landscape." We communicate with its powers, and it communicates with us.

The powers in our universe also include past ancestors, i.e. the deceased who can act on us and influence the course of events. Hence we Secwépemc pray to deceased loved ones to help us in times of hardship.

Another important concept in Secwépemc spirituality is the concept of personal power, or the suméc, "spirit power" which humans can find in nature, and which protects and guides them for life. In the early part of a person's life – at least in the past – a child was blessed or "doctored" (melamentem) with the spirit power of an animal. As I noted in my introduction, when I was a young child, my great-grandmother Julienne doctored me with two powers that were to guide me throughout life: On the one hand, she doctored me with the grease and paw of skemcis, the grizzly bear, so I would have that animal's physical strength and power to guard the land. To complement the awesome power of grizzly bear, she doctored

me with the power of Tsecwuyáñst, the “wood-worm,” which, although small in stature, persistently, patiently and steadily drills its way through the trunk of a tree. Ten years ago, Clothilde Thomas and Laura Harry from the Northern Secwépemc area confirmed the practice of people being doctored with the powers of the Tsecwuyáñst in their area (Interview, Clothilde Thomas and Laura Harry, October 1998). Laura Harry herself remembered that her brother was doctored up “with the beak and feet of a hummingbird-he could run and whistle real well.”

The concept of a person’s suméc or spirit power also involves a set of taboos, that entail violations of a person’s aura of spirit power. Thus, in our traditions, a person, especially a young person must not pass in front of someone’s face (“Ta7 me7 re spetkúsenc!”), lest he harms that person’s wuméc, and he/she must not pass behind a person unannounced for the same reasons, “ta7 me7 re spetkíkeñc.” Stepping over a person lying down (twéxem) has the same implications, that it can implicate the suméc of the person over whom one steps.<sup>108</sup> Such behaviour not only harms the spirit power of the person in front or behind one passes; it can also do harm to the trespasser, because the person thus treated carelessly can cast a powerful spell on the trespasser. Our elders thus learned to announce their passing in front of, or behind someone by saying, “i7e7k-ken”, here I come.

In a person’s adolescence, our people acquired further spirit powers derived from things in nature by going on their “spirit guardian quest” or étsxem. By going “up in the mountains” a young person had to live in solitude for days, potentially

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<sup>108</sup> Twéxem is a way in which we release the power of something to give it life. It is what I did to this document upon release.

weeks and months, often in more than one stay. Etsxem had different functions: through fasting and prayer in solitude, individuals found their personal spirit guardian power or súdec. In addition, etsxem combined social functions, in that it removed young people from the community, making them subsist on their own, and becoming economically and emotionally self sufficient, rather than becoming a burden on people, what we call yéwyut or “being a nuisance.” Returning home to the community, young people who had completed their etsxem also had more of a sense of appreciation for their elders, their family and the social life of the community (see M. Ignace 1999).

Those who, upon their repeated étsxem, displayed special and extraordinary powers of communicating with forces in nature, of predicting events, of being able to heal disease, became what we call t’kwilc or “Indian doctors.” Men or women could become Indian doctors, and as our oral histories tell, t’kwilc and their work was an important aspect of the fabric of our communities until several decades after missionaries arrived in our communities.

The previous three chapters have dealt with the protocols and ways in which we existed in our land, defined by the knowledge and maintenance of the borders of our nation, the ways we provided access to its resources, and the ways we made a living from our land, Secwepemcúlecw. I have also shown how the laws of living in community among relatives, the balance between sharing and the ethic to be self-sufficient rather than being a nuisance, informed the actions of our ancestors, as told in their stories. In the remaining three chapters, I will discuss the ways our

people specifically accommodated to, resisted, and continued to tell their stories, amidst devastating changes to our livelihood caused by the process of colonization and dispossession as it began in the mid-nineteenth century.

## CHAPTER 7: TSKITSC RE SEMSÉME7 – THE COMING OF THE WHITE PEOPLE

We speak to you more freely because you are a member of the white race with whom we first became acquainted, and which we call in our tongue "real whites" to the latter (viz., the fur-traders of the Northwest and Hudson's Bay companies. As the great majority of the companies employees were French speaking, the term latterly became applied by us as a designation for the whole French race.) The "real whites" we found were good people. We could depend on their word, and we trusted and respected them. They did not interfere with us nor attempt to break up our tribal organizations, laws, and customs. They did not try to force their ideas of things to us to our harm. Nor did they stop us from catching fish, hunting and so on. They never tried to steal or appropriate our country and treated our chiefs as men. They were the first to find us in this country. We never asked them to come here, nevertheless we treated them kindly and hospitably and helped them all we could. They had made themselves (as it were) our guests. We treated them as such, and then waited to see what they would do. (Memorial to Sir Wilfrid Laurier, 1910)

For all we know, the first white person who set foot into Secwépemcúlcw was Alexander Mackenzie. On his journey to find the Pacific Ocean, he came down the Fraser River from the land of the Carrier in 1793, briefly crossing through the very northern part of St'emcúlcwemec, the area near Xats'ull or Soda Creek. Using the Carrier term for "foreigner," Mackenzie described us as the "Athna," and noted that the Athna lived in "subterraneous recesses" (pithouses), and had in their possession "iron, arms and utensils" which they had traded from their neighbours to the Westward" (Lamb 1970:314). This shows the then-existing trade networks along the grease trail and trade routes involving the Tsilqot'in, Ulgatcho Carrier and

Coastal Nuxalk, who had already had contact with Europeans through the Maritime fur trade since the late 1770s. The Secwépemc and other Interior peoples had begun to own horses since about the 1750s, which they had traded from the Nez Perce and other Nations of the southern Plateau.

Mackenzie's journey left little impact on the Secwépemc. The already existing influx of iron, arms and utensils suggests that, along with the material objects, our ancestors must have received some stories of outsiders who had come into the continent.

Indeed, Teit (1900; see also Wickwire 1994) reported prophecies of t'kwilc (Indian doctors) having visions of white people; some of our people thought that the first white people were the Coyote people who had returned. In fact, the term **séme7** itself seems to derive from the Salish root "sem-" which means "to tell stories." It verifies the initial perception, supported by dreams and visions held at the time, that the white people were "storied beings" from the past, although dubbed by a different name than the stspetékwl.

Before even seeing the first séme7, some of our relatives experienced the devastating negative fall-out from the new strangers. When Chief Pelk'amulox (Pelk'múlecw) of Douglas Lake, who had made the Fish Lake Accord with his half brother Kwolila of Kamloops, traveled among his Salish relatives in what is now Montana around 1800, he encountered two Europeans among them: Finan McDonald and Charles Legace, traders of the Northwest Company who were exploring the area. On his return to his home country, Pelkamulox began traveling

to the communities of his Secwépemc relatives with news and stories of the white men, their appearance and utensils. He traveled to Splatsin, then Tk'emlups, eventually venturing as far west as the Fraser River, where a St'at'imc chief from Cacl'ep (Fountain) killed him in an argument about the truthfulness of these marvelous events. This led to revenge more than 20 years later, when Pelk'amulox's son N'kwala revenged his father's death, helped by his Secwépemc relatives, killing and capturing some three hundred Lillooet (see Dawson 1892; Teit 1930: ).

In 1807-1808, David Thompson's journey across the Rocky Mountains to the Columbia River took him to the eastern boundaries of Secwépemc country (Thompson 1994), along the Upper Columbia and Canoe Rivers. A year later, in late May 1808, Simon Fraser met Secwépemc people on the mid-Fraser River, communicating with them through Dakelh (Carrier), and with the help of a young boy whose mother was Dakelh (Lamb 1960). It was the "Old Chief" from Xats'úll who first received him and then guided his party from Secwépemc community to community along the Fraser River, as Fraser and his men, who were trying to descend the river at the worst possible time, i.e. spring freshet, portaged their canoes and belongings, nearly perishing on several occasions. Fraser's party traveled down the River through rapids, nearly drowning several times; as they portaged their canoes and provisions up steep embankments, the chief rode ahead, notifying the next village of the party's impending arrival. Fraser noted the hospitality shown by the Secwépemc: "They brought us dried Salmon and three different kinds of roots with which they regaled us all. The old chief accompanied

them for two weeks into "Askettih" (=St'at'imc/Lillooet) territory, on one occasion being observed by Fraser to converse in St'at'imcets with a chief from the Bridge River area: "Our Chief harangued them in his language; they answered him in theirs; and we were obliged to employ three different interpreters, on the occasion to settle the business"(Lamb 1960:80). At what is now Lillooet, the St'at'imc community of T'it'q'et, the Old Chief left them, returning home and leaving Fraser and his party among St'at'imc guides.

As Wendy Wickwire (1994) showed, memories of Fraser's encounters with the Nlakapamux not only survived in Fraser's written journals, but also in oral histories recorded nearly one hundred years later by James Teit, and continued to be told among Nlakapamux people in the 1970s. They show points of convergence with Fraser's own narrative, but also add detail omitted in the explorer's record. Less survives of the Secwépemc oral histories. Teit mentions that an old man he met at Dog Creek in 1903/04 remembered Simon Fraser coming down the river:

[Simon Fraser's] visit is remembered by a very old man, Setsél by name, who was born in the village Peq on Riskie Creek, and was still living at Alkali Lake in 1900. He was a small boy when Simon Fraser's party came down Fraser River with canoes. Xlosem, the Soda Creek chief, accompanied the party as guide, and interpreted for them. Kolpapatci'nexen was at the time the chief of the Canoe Creek band, and Haxkwe'st was a noted war chief and a wealthy man. He had three wives, and was tall, and wore only a breech clout, excepting in the winter-time. Some of the Soda Creek Indians were the only Shuswap who had seen white men prior to Fraser's party. In many places the people thought the strangers were transformers, mythological beings, or cannibals, and consequently were very distrustful of them. Fraser gave presents of tobacco, beads and knives, to almost all the Indians he met. The tobacco was black twist,



and much stronger than the native tobacco. And many men who smoked it became sick" (Teit 12909: 449).

As with the indigenous oral histories of Fraser's visit among the Nlakapamux (Wickwire 1994), Setsel's account provides converging lines of evidence, and additional detail, together with Fraser's journal, verifying that it was the Chief of Soda Creek who accompanied Fraser. Fraser's journal entries of giving out gifts of knives, tobacco and beads, is corroborated by Setsel's account. However, in the fashion of indigenous oral histories among our people, we are provided with names of chiefs at the time, which genealogically anchor the storyteller and the communities of Xats'ull and Xget'tem (Dog Creek) to this account, thus make a connection between the then-past and the memories, and of course connecting the current people to the account.

In 1807-1808, David Thompson's journey across the Rocky Mountains to the Columbia River took him to the eastern boundaries of Secwépemc country, where he met some of the Kenpesq'et Secwépemc. The first interactions with séme7 for our ancestors in the Tk'wmlups (Kamloops) area occurred in 1811-1812, when Alexander Ross and David Stuart of the Pacific Fur Company, an American enterprise based at Astoria on the mouth of the Columbia, came to Kamloops after having founded Fort Okanagan. In the fall of 1811, Stuart and three companions "explored "up the Oakinacken -- till we reached its source, then crossing a height of land fell upon Thompson's River after travelling for some time among a powerful nation called the She-waps (Ross 1849: 200ff). They remained with the Shuswap during the winter and traded beaver skins, promising to set up a permanent post.

Alexander Ross visited the Kamloops Shuswap people in the spring of 1812 and "encamped at a place called by the Indians Cumcloups<sup>109</sup> near the entrance of the North branch...The number of Indians collected on that occasion could not have been less than 2,000" (ibid.).

In 1812, the Northwest Company also built a post near the confluence, and in the following year the Pacific Fur Company sold out their interest to the Northwest Company. The first factor of the Northwest Company was Joseph LaRocque, who reputedly married an Indian woman of the area, Chief N'kwala's sister Sukwmeiqs (Teit 1930). In 1821, the Hudson's Bay Company merged with the Northwest Company and continued under the HBC name. However, it retained most of the Northwest Company personnel, mainly French-speaking white people and Métis, as well as Mohawk people who had come west following the War of 1812. Dealings and interaction with the Hudson's Bay Company marked the relationship between the Shuswap people and whites until the late 1850's.

Early on in the fur trade, as Governor Simpson traveled to the posts of the newly merged company, carrying out a feasibility study of HBC posts, it became clear that the principal purpose of Thompson's River Post or Fort Kamloops was not the trade in fur-bearing animals. Instead, it was the salmon bought *from* the Interior Aboriginal peoples at Tk'emlúps that ensured the livelihood of Hudson's Bay Company personnel. Between the 1822 and the 1850s, the company annual traded between 12,000 and 20,000 fresh and dried salmon from the Secwépemc and

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<sup>109</sup> probably Cumeloups in the original; without doubt, this refers to K'emlups, ("meeting of the waters", "confluence"), which came to be anglicized as Kamloops later.

surrounding nations. About half to two-thirds of this amount was obtained from the large-scale fisheries at Fountain and Thompson Landing in Nlakapamux country; the remainder was obtained fresh or dried from local Secwépemc communities on the North Thompson, at the Head of Kamloops Lake, Tk'emlups itself, and the Upper Lake (Adams and Shuswap Lakes). Dried salmon became the staple food for HBC personnel throughout the northwest. Rationed at the rate of three dried salmon per day per man, two per woman, and one per child,<sup>110</sup> it was re-distributed among posts in the whole district, including Fort Okanagan, Fort St. James, Fort George and so on. In ways that converge with the assessment of our chiefs in the 1910 memorial to Laurier (above), the overwhelming evidence from HBC trading post journals in Interior Salish country shows that the company abided by our resource ownership regime. As Duane Thomson and Marianne Ignace (2005: 16-25) have shown, "With the HBC operating 'by sufferance' - as Alexander Ross had termed it - among the Salish, company personnel necessarily either submitted to local resource tenure regimes or negotiated exceptions to local regulations" (op.cit.:16). As I showed in chapter 3, our laws and protocols of resource ownership and access excluded all people not related to Secwépemc, and hence the traders, except those who would marry Secwépemc women.<sup>111</sup> It is significant that the HBC in all cases

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<sup>110</sup> See Archibald McDonald 1827, and his Journal (McDonald 1826-1827).

<sup>111</sup> There is some indication that this was practiced: Lolo St. Paul, the Iroquois/Metis who worked for the HBC as packer and interpreter, married a Tk'emlups woman, and thus, through his wife, gained residence rights at Indian Point by the confluence. There is further evidence from many communities, including Savona and Williams Lake, that traders and settlers who married women from our Nation gained rights to land and resources in terms of our laws and protocols. By way of our people subsequently being excluded from the lands occupied from these guests, there was, without doubt, a sense of betrayal.

*bought* salmon rather than fishing for it themselves. This practice could be explained by the expertise in fishing and processing fish that our people had, as compared with the traders, who not only lacked fishing experience but also had few women to slice and dry the salmon. The small number of instances from Fort Alexandria on the northern boundary of Secwépemcúlecw where the HBC tried to set their own weirs further show that the Secwépemc asserted their ownership of the river and the fish, confronting the traders on the river. It was only after the HBC personnel agreed to pay for the salmon that they were allowed to keep their weir in the river: On October 5, 1827, after the HBC men had finished moving the weir to a better and unoccupied position in the Fraser River,

nearly all the Indians opposed our departure. The Capot Blue on this occasion distinguished himself in the eyes of his countrymen and Canadians by remarking our Weir should not be set below, and raising the skin from one of his hands said the Chief, meaning me, was not invulnerable but flesh and Blood like themselves. Giving a war hoop he got himself under arms, and this appeared to be the signal for Mischief. The most insignificant scoundrels showed a temper to second their Leader. I sent for the old Chief, Chin-las-ket and represented the absurdity of his countrymen in opposing us, in a cause where certainly there was no ground for open hostilities. The place was unoccupied (and not likely to be occupied this season) and I thought there could be no insuperable objections. Salmon we must have as the Indians would give us none. The noise was quieted, the chief returned after having consulted with his friends and said we might set our weir below. Who-las-ket, being the proprietor of the spot would not come when I sent for him but returned a message we might have the place. (quoted in Thomson and Ignace op.cit.:19)

Subsequently it becomes clear that Who-las-ket's permission comes with the price of ammunition from the traders, a request that the HBC trader McGillivray

complies with (ibid.), although members of Who-las-ket's group eventually cut a fifteen foot hole into the company's weir.

As the company's presence continued at the Thompson River Post throughout the 1830s to 50s, the company continued to rely on foods bought from our people. Besides the array of Secwépemc foods that trader Archibald McDonald listed in 1827, including not only salmon but also deer-meat, beaver meat, bear grease, hazelnuts, ducks, geese and a number of galleons of unspecified roots (McDonald op.cit.), our people began to grow potatoes by the 1830s, and in the 1830s and 1840s traded significant amounts of garden potatoes grown in our own gardens at Ck'emqenetkwe and in the Adams Lake area to the company (see J. Tod, HBC Journal, 1842). What held for salmon fishing, namely that "the surviving Thompson's River journals from 1822 to 1858 contain not one reference to an HBC employee fishing" (Thomson and Ignace, op.cit.:21) also holds for hunting: aside from a few instances of HBC employees shooting a few ducks near the fort, there are no instances of the HBC personnel engaging in their own hunting. At HBC posts that were in the territory of peoples with different resource tenure regimes, the company routinely had a "hunter" who provided meat for the fort's employees, and in fact, the Jasper House post on the margins of Secwépemc, Stony and Cree territory had its own hunter. But the HBC records for Thompson River Post show no hunters, and no significant hunting activity, which provides further evidence of our people's continuing enforcement of our ownership and control of our resources. It was only

in the early 1860s that the HBC was finally successful in providing for itself by operating a dairy farm and growing larger gardens (Balf 1980).

In addition to control over resources, our peoples' laws also prevailed in matters regarding criminal justice. As I noted in Chapter 3, our people's way of dealing with a serious crime was to hold a council presided over by the kukwpi7 and tkw'enm7iple7ten, often called "Indian court," where evidence was heard from both sides, a sentence made, and retribution ordered, often in the form of compensation. As A.C. Anderson, HBC officer at Fort Alexandria during the 1840s reported,

In case of individual acts of aggression or outrage, and especially in the case of murder, retribution was inflexibly exacted. But punishment was visited not only on the guilty; and then usually through the medium of the tribe, or with their approval and cooperation (quoted in Thomson and Ignace, op.cit.: 27)

The victim's extended family had a role in achieving retribution, giving its cooperation and advice. The perpetrator's family also gave its consent to the sentence, especially in cases of serious crimes that involved the death sentence of the perpetrator, as the Secwépemc-internal war stories mentioned in Chapter 3 show, or what J.P. Reid refers to as "privileged killing" to revenge murder (Reid 1993: 21-43).

For the perpetrator's social group to not follow this principle of consent and surrendering the criminal offender in their ranks was to *eyemstsút*: to neglect to meet one's obligations as the family of an offender would come to haunt the guilty

person as well as his kin. The responsibility to deal with crime fell not only on the offender, but involved the social responsibility of his group.<sup>112</sup>

The evidence from the fur trade journals, again, shows that in cases of theft and murder, our own people's justice system prevailed. When an Aboriginal person murdered a white fur trader, the HBC officials understood that it was their responsibility to respond in terms acceptable to our people as their "hosts." Although "Europeans were loath to accept compensation in payment for the murder of one of their own," and the rhetoric of fur trade journalists was to "pursue judicious, firm and conciliatory measures" (Thomson and Ignace op.cit.:29), actual instances of criminal justice show that the HBC invariably followed indigenous legal protocols (ibid.), where from our peoples' perspective the traders were the guests (sexlitemc) in our country, and our peoples were the hosts. The murder of HBC officer-in-charge Samuel Black at Thompson's River post in Kamloops by a Secwépemc from the Tranquille area in 1841 shows how Secwépemc principles of criminal justice, retribution and consent from the perpetrators family to deal with the culprit were involved (Thomson and Ignace op.cit.:30-32), as was payment made to the Secwépemc to surrender the perpetrator, arranged by Black's successor, trader John Tod.

In Secwépemc culture, a guest, Sexlitemc, is distinguished from all or any people who are our kw'séltkten (relatives). Sexlitemc are strangers without resource

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<sup>112</sup> For a previous explanation of these Secwépemc criminal justice concepts, and how they were upheld during the fur trade, see Thomson and Ignace 2005: 26ff. My description of the Secwépemc system of criminal justice owes to my family's own experiences in the aftermath of our son's murder, where the convicted murderers were Secwépemc men from Tk'emlups.

rights who come into our country. They are at the mercy of their hosts to feed them, provide them with shelter. As my elder Nellie Taylor, stated, guests, by having to rely on their hosts and thus being yéwyut (“a nuisance”) rather than self-sufficient, she said, “qwenqwént yiri7 re sexlitemc,” – “guests are pitiful.” The tacit law in our nations, however, is that in order to acknowledge the pity their hosts take on them, guests reciprocate the favours and help extended by their hosts. From this perspective, our ancestors looked at the trade goods that Europeans offered not only as commercial trade goods, but also as tokens of the guests’ reciprocity. When the new wave of settlers came into our country following the gold rush, the guest – host relationship was severed.

### **T’icwell te Séme7 – The Other White People**

In the Memorial to Sir Wilfrid Laurier, our people told of their memories of the coming of the “other whites” after the initial period of the fur trade, where our lands, resources and laws continued to be respected. They stated,

Just 52 years ago the other whites came to this country. They found us the same as the first or "real whites" had found us, only we had larger bands of horses, some cattle and in many places we cultivated the land. They found us happy, healthy, strong and numerous. Each tribe was still living in its own "house" or in other words on its own "ranch". No one interfered with our rights or disputed our possession of our own "houses" and "ranches", vis., our homes and lives.

We were friendly and helped these whites also, for had we not learned the first whites had done us no harm? Only when some of them killed us we revenged on them. Then we thought there are



some bad ones among them, but surely on the whole they must be good. Besides they are the queen's people. And we had already heard great things about the queen from the "real whites." We expected her subjects would do us no harm, but rather improve us by giving us knowledge, and enabling us to do some of the wonderful things they could do.

At first they looked only for gold. We knew the latter was our property, but as we did not use it much, not need to live by, we did not object to their searching for it. They told us, "your country is rich and you will be made wealthy by our coming. We wish just to pass over your lands in quest of gold."

Soon they saw the country was good and some made up their mind to settle it. They took up pieces of land here and there. They told us they wanted only the use of these pieces land for a few years and then would hand them back to us in an improved condition; meanwhile they would give us some of the products they raised for the loan of our land.

Thus they commenced to enter our "houses," or live on our "ranches". With us when a person enters our house he becomes our guest and we must treat him hospitably as long as he shows no hostile intentions. At the same time we expect him to return to us equal treatment for what he receives.

Some of our Chiefs said, "These people wish to be partners with us in our country. We must, therefore, be the same as brothers to them and live as one family. We will share equally in everything-half and half-in land, water and timber, and so on. What is ours will be theirs and what is theirs will be ours. We will help each other to be great and good.

The whites made a government in Victoria - or maybe the queen made it. We heard it stated both ways. Their chiefs dwelt there. At this time they did not deny the Indian tribes owned the whole country and everything in it. They told us we did. We were hopeful.

We trusted the whites and waited patiently for their chiefs to declare their intentions toward us and our lands. We knew what had been done in the neighboring states, and we remembered what we heard about the queen being so good to the Indians and that her laws carried out by her chiefs were always just and better than the American laws.

Presently chiefs (government officials) commenced to visit us and had talks with some of our chiefs. They told us to have no fear, the queen's laws would prevail in this country, and everything would be well for the Indians.

They said a very large reservation would be staked off for us (southern interior tribes) and the tribal lands outside of this reservation the government would buy from us for white settlement. They let us think this would be done soon. Until this reserve was set apart and our lands settled for they assured us we would have perfect freedom of traveling and camping and the same liberties as from time immemorial to hunt, fish, graze and gather our food supplies where we desired; also that all trails, land, water, timber and so on would be as free to access as formerly.

Our chiefs were agreeable to these propositions, so we waited for treaties to be made, and everything settled

(Chiefs' Memorial to Sir Wilfrid Laurier, 1910)

During the 1850s, as Vancouver Island had been established as a British Crown colony, Governor James Douglas, in recognizing the Royal Proclamation of 1763, engaged in a series of Treaties with Aboriginal groups on Vancouver Island. The purpose of these treaties was in line with the Royal Proclamation of 1763, in that they aimed at protecting Aboriginal territory from encroachment by incoming European traders and settlers until extinguishment of Aboriginal title had been negotiated and compensated. Under the terms of the fourteen "Douglas Treaties"

the Crown entered into during the early 1850s, Douglas bought land for white settlement in exchange for blankets and other trade goods, while guaranteeing the Aboriginal Nations' continuing right to hunt and fish on unoccupied crown lands.

During the time of Douglas' treaties, the mainland was not yet a colony, and after the initial treaties, the British Crown purported to run out of money to settle further treaties. However events of the latter part of the 1850s precipitated change the economic, social and political fabric of our people, and literally all but killed us. They also precipitated the occupation of our lands by incoming gold seekers and land hungry immigrants against our people's will.

In 1857, gold was discovered along some tributaries to the Thompson Rivers. Governor Douglas himself, who supported gold exploration and would subsequently cause the influx of 30,000 Californian gold seekers into our lands by sending samples of gold to San Francisco. Fisher (1977) along with Thomson and Ignace (op.cit.), noted the assertive role that Secwépemc and Nlakapamux people took against the gold seekers:

A new element of difficulty in exploring the gold country has been interposed through the opposition of the native Indian tribes of Thompson's River, who have lately taken the high-handed, though probably not unwise, course of expelling all the parties of gold diggers, composed chiefly of personnel from the American territories, who had forced an entrance into their country. They have also openly expressed the determination to resist all attempts at working gold in any of the streams flowing into the Thompson's River, both from a desire to monopolize the precious metal for their own benefit and from a well-founded impression that shoals of salmon which usually ascend those rivers and furnish the principal food of the inhabitants, will be driven off and prevented from making their annual migration to the

sea.” (James Douglas to Henry Labouchere, 15 July 1857, HBCA AII/76 fol. 655; quoted in Thomson and Ignace 2005:22)

In 1858, gold was discovered on the Fraser River, with Douglas himself having passed word on to California about the discovery of gold. Throughout the spring and summer of 1858, several thousand miners poured into the Fraser River, coming up from the Okanagan, up the Fraser River, and through the Lillooet way. As Robin Fisher (1977:97) wrote, “hundreds of bustling miners came to get rich, and to do so quickly. They were intolerant of anything that stood in their way.” By late 1858, the numbers of miners invading the Fraser River had increased to between 20,000 and 30,000. In what historian Dan Marshall has called the “Fraser River War,” Nlakapamux villages were plundered, and a number of Aboriginal people killed. Mining operations on the Fraser River interfered with Aboriginal salmon fishing. Eventually, Nlakapamux people in the Fraser canyon killed several miners, throwing their bodies in the river (Marshall 2007). It was after a war council at Ck’emtsin (Lytton) that included Secwépemc chiefs from our area that eventually the Nlakapamux Chief Spintlum urged peaceful relations with the gold seekers, and advocated to refrained from going to war against them.

As a result of the influx of miners into the Interior, the Mainland became a colony in 1858. Within a year or two, gold miners became eager to pre-empt land, realizing the potential for farm and ranch land that our homeland, specifically the Fraser and Thompson River valleys held. Additional settlers came on the heels of gold seekers. The Aboriginal trails East of the Fraser River and along the Thompson River became the new wagon “super highways” of the Interior. With the British

Crown refusing to allocate further funds towards treaties, and the new joint colony of Vancouver Island and the Mainland being devoid of funds, Douglas did not enter into additional treaties, but instead opted to establish reserves on the Mainland to protect Aboriginal interests in land, instructing his surveyors, Cox and Walter Moberly, to lay out reserves “as severally pointed out by the Indians themselves,” and specifically protecting Indian settlements, fishing stations and graveyards. While Douglas’ “pro-Indian” attitude in the negotiation of treaties and subsequent intent to establish “Douglas Reserves” has been hailed as well intended, the downfall for us as Aboriginal people was Douglas’ neglect to codify his intents into laws that protected Aboriginal title (see Tenannt 1990; Indian Claims Commission 2001). The first colonial land ordinance of 1861 did not exclude Aboriginal people from pre-empting land, but instead stipulated that

from and after the date hereof, British subjects and aliens who shall take the oath of allegiance to Her Majesty and Her successors, may acquire the right to hold and purchase in fee simple unoccupied, and unsurveyed, and unreserved Crown Lands in British Columbia, *not being* the site of an existent or proposed town, or auriferous land available for mining purposes, or *an Indian Reserve or Settlement....* (*Pre-emption Consolidation Act, 1861, August 27, 1861, s. 3, as reprinted in RSBC 1871, App., 80.*)

Significantly, this acquisition of land or “pre-emption” permitted settlers to get land for free by simply living on the land and making “improvements” like tilling the soil, erecting fences and buildings or planting crops. A settler could claim or “pre-empt” up to 160 acres of unsurveyed Crown land on the Mainland, with additional portions of 50 acres for his wife and ten acres for each child under 18 (Indian Reserve Commission 2001), as long as the land was not an “Indian Reserve

or settlement.” Despite Douglas’ proposal to set aside reserves for Aboriginal people, the tragic and racist omission of the Colonial government was the fact that land that had never been ceded by Aboriginal people was given away to settlers without treaties, without so much as a prior survey of lands that Douglas proposed to set aside for us. As strangers invaded our lands, the chiefs of our communities took whatever measures they could to protect our lands. When Governor Douglas himself was traveling to the Kamloops region in October 1862, he was intercepted by people from Skeetchestn at the Savona ferry “who complained that their lands were being encroached upon by white settlers. In response, Assistant commissioner of Land & Works, W.G. Cox was sent to the area to investigate matters, to set aside any lands claimed by the Indians and to inform the settlers not to interfere in native land (Young to Cox, Oct. 6, 1862. BCA, C/AB/30.IJ/4, Reel B-2651, p. 316-170).

Just before Douglas’ retirement in 1862, his surveyors traveled to the interior to lay out various reserves in Secwépemc territory, the “Douglas reserves.” Some of them, like the reserve for the Sexqeltkemc along Adams Lake and Shuswap Lake, and the Reserve of the Tk’emlúpsemc at the confluence, were at least demarcated on sketch maps, with emblazoned trees functioning as temporary boundary markers.<sup>113</sup> Others, like the reserves he proposed for the Skeetchestn people at the head of Kamloops Lake, were unaccompanied by maps and only briefly mentioned

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<sup>113</sup> Despite the existing map and other documentation being submitted by the bands, the Federal government rejected the specific claim by the Neskonlith, Adams Lake and Little Shuswap Bands to their Douglas reserve. At the time of this writing, it is being appealed to the Indian Claims Commission. (see website at [www.indianclaims.ca](http://www.indianclaims.ca)). The Kamloops Band is continuing to pursue its claim to its Douglas Reserve, which, the band asserts, is much larger than the reserve subsequently set aside by the Joint Reserve Commission.

in correspondence, and to consist of “about 9 miles on both sides of the Thompson River, commencing at the foot of Kamloops Lake,” a claim that was ignored by colonial reserve commissioner O’Reilly when he visited the Skeetchestn Band in 1868, and was reminded by Chief Sisyesq’et of Cox’s promise (O’Reilly 1868). An additional reserve at Cherry Creek was promised to the Skeetchestn band in 1862 by Cox, supported by a sketch map.

In the crucial period between 1861 and late 1864, which marked Douglas’ retirement, in all areas of our territory, settlers began pre-empting lands in defiance of supposedly set aside reserve lands. For example, the Esk’etemc (people of Alkali Lake) had been promised a 40-acre parcel situated at their traditional village at Esk’et. However, in 1861, two settlers, H.O. Bowie and Philip Grinder had already registered a pre-emption claim “for land at the head of Alkali Lake ‘running north-west from the creek.’” With Bowie subsequently buying out Grinder, and acquiring a further pre-emption in 1867, the settler’s pre-emption land increased to several hundred acres; the Esk’etemc, numbering around 150 people, were supposed to make do with 40 acres in total! (Indian Claims Commission 2002: 24-25).

Similarly, the Williams Lake (Sugar Cane) band lost a large part of the land it occupied on and around the present city of Williams Lake to the pre-emption of another settler, Walter Pinchbeck (Indian Claims Commission 2006).<sup>114</sup> The same

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<sup>114</sup> In my mind it is no accident that many of the pre-emptors in the areas in question, including Grinder, Bowie, McIver, and Pinchbeck had Secwépehc wives, and thus married into the Secwépehc community in their neighbourhood. However, they did not integrate into the Aboriginal community, and their fee simple land, along with their offspring, became forever alienated from the community.

fate befell proposed reserves among other Secwépemc communities on the Fraser River and at Bonaparte. In all cases the areas in question were pre-empted by settlers after being vaguely promised by Douglas's envoys.

I explained above, in Chapters 3-5, our people's connection with our land as a practical and spiritual one. As our Chiefs expressed it in 1910 in the Memorial to Sir Wilfrid Laurier (Chiefs 1910), "our land is the same as our life." Reserve Commissioner Gilbert Malcolm Sproat came to the same conclusion, writing in a letter to the superintendant of Indian Affairs in Ottawa, "I do not exaggerate in saying that some of these Indians die if they lose their land: they take it so much to heart" (Sproat to Superintendent of Indian Affairs, quoted in Fisher 1977: 103)

Another devastating impact of the gold rush and land pre-emption period was the smallpox epidemic that struck the Interior in 1862-64, and wiped out at least a third of our population. Before continuing my description of the land situation our ancestors faced in the 1860s through the early part of the twentieth century, I will describe the impact of diseases on our people throughout that time.

### **Smallpox and other diseases**

The idea of disease-introduced depopulation runs counter to the long-held conviction that Europeans brought enlightenment and civilization to savage peoples. It turns the story of the contact process away from the rhetorics of progress and salvation and towards the numbing recognition of catastrophe. Progress wrestled from the wilderness by hard, manly work is suddenly qualified by population losses. The rhetoric of development begins to pale. The Western idea of property, coupled with an expanding world economy, appears as an agent of destruction as much as creation..." (Harris 1997:29).



As Cole Harris (1997) Robert Boyd (1994; 1998) and Robert Galois (1992) have suggested, the depopulation of our homelands began before Europeans physically arrived. The earliest recorded smallpox epidemic to affect the indigenous peoples of the Interior Plateau struck in 1782.<sup>115</sup> It entered the Columbia and Fraser River plateaus after it had devastated the indigenous populations of Central America, the American Southwest, reaching the Upper Missouri, the Great Lakes and Northern Plains in the previous two years. In 1808, Simon Fraser reported seeing a man with smallpox marks during his trip down the river (Lamb 1960). The disease this man had contracted and survived was likely the 1782 smallpox epidemic that affect indigenous peoples on the Columbia River and portions of the Northwest Coast, but also in at least parts of the Interior. Teit noted in 1900 (Teit 1900: )that “small-pox has appeared but once among the Upper Thompson Indians; but the Lower Thompsons state that it has broken out three or four times in their tribe. Its first appearance was near the beginning of the [nineteenth] century.” Of the Secwépemc he reported that “this disease has visited portions of the tribe twice” (op.cit.:463).

The Hudson's Bay Company Journals of the 1830s and 1840s report occurrences of typhoid fever and other infectious diseases at or near the Kamloops Post. Boyd has characterized a 1847-48 measles epidemic as the first modern pandemic to strike Western North America (Boyd 1998).

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<sup>115</sup> These figures are from Cole (1997). Boyd suggests the earliest epidemic struck in the 1770s, with a second one in 1801. Campbell (1989) makes a case that earlier smallpox epidemics struck throughout North America as early as the 1500s.

The most deadly epidemic to reach our people during the nineteenth century, however, was the 1862 smallpox epidemic which started in Victoria harbour, and soon spread up the Coast and into the Interior, where it ravaged until 1864. Teit (1900: ) reported,

It was brought into the [Interior] country in 1863, and thousands of Indians throughout the interior of British Columbia succumbed to it. If the evidence of the old people can be relied on, it must have carried off from one-fourth to one-third of the tribe. In many cases the Indians became panic-stricken, and fled to the mountains for safety. Numbers of them dropped dead along the trail; and their bodies were buried, or their bones gathered up, a considerable time afterwards. Some took refuge in their sweat-houses, expecting to cure the disease by sweating, and died there. It was early in spring when the epidemic was raging, and most of the Indians were living in their winter houses, under such conditions that all the inhabitants were constantly exposed to the contagion."

Teit was told how near Spence's Bridge, all the occupants of a group of winter-houses died, and their friends or relatives buried the deceased by collapsing the roof of the houses on them, eventually removing their bones and burying them in the local graveyard. Of the 1862-64 epidemic among the Secwépemc, Teit (1909:463) remarked,

The population of the [Shuswap] tribe .... is now probably less than one-third of what it was fifty years ago. Small-pox epidemics have been the prime cause of this decrease. This disease has visited portions of the tribe twice; and in 1862-63 it was especially severe, wiping out whole villages.

He describes how nearly the whole population of the Chilcotin Canyon Division, where the disease had first been contacted from the Tsilhqot'in, perished in the epidemic, the few survivors moving in among their relatives at Esk'et (Alkali

Lake). Other communities that were severely affected by the epidemic include the Tseckecwénk or Buckskin Creek Band on the west side of the Fraser River a few miles south of Soda Creek (Xats'ull), the Tsecwéptemc or people of Empire Valley, the people of High Bar (Llenlénéyten) and Big Bar, and the people of the Snekw'e7ekwemc, or people of the main Thompson River from near Walhachin to Ashcroft (Teit op.cit.:457-462).<sup>116</sup>

Fur traders and visitors to Secwépemcúlecw also reported on the 1862-64 epidemic:

Coming down the North Thompson River near Mad River, the Overlanders passed "a large potato patch from which the Indians had been driven off by small pox and which afforded an agreeable variety to the monotony of jerked beef" (Wade 1931:114)

Although Trader William Manson reported that he had vaccinated Indians against small-pox at Thompson's River Post (Manson, Journal - June 26, 1862), he also reported the death of numerous Secwépemc from the area: "It is reported that Sill-pah-han (from the North River) and some other of his band have died of small-pox. He is a loss to us as a hunter as well as an influential and well disposed Indian towards whites." Likewise, in 1864, Chief Peter [Tinemesq'et] of the Simpcw (North Thompson) died of smallpox, as did the Secwépemc wife and children of Antoine

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<sup>116</sup> In addition, the Secwépemc people who inhabited the valley at Kelly Creek (west of Clinton) were exterminated at some point, although this may have happened before the 1862-64 smallpox epidemic

Lamprant, a metis HBC employee. (Manson, HBC Journal, 1860-65; Kamloops Museum and Archives).

The Overlanders, and a year later Cheadle (Cheadle 1865), noted an entire village in the vicinity of Clearwater<sup>117</sup> exterminated by the disease, dead bodies lying among the abandoned pithouses. The memory of the smallpox devastation was passed on orally to the next generations. Among our people, few specific oral histories survive of the smallpox, although somewhere, the collective memory of a wave of death is there, unspoken. A few specific stories remain. Augusta Evans (1888-1977) remembered,

It must have been about 1860, that smallpox time. My grandmother told me. She lived through it. Not many did.

She said that lots of Indians lived on this high bench and that's where they are all buried. They died like flies, yes.

And for years after, a flag used to wave above the graveyard, but that's gone now. But no one goes near it anyhow. No one wants to go near it. How they got it she says was from a man on foot coming through the country. A shite man. A miner, maybe, in those days. He camped near the Indians and they gave him food and were good to him. And I guess he thanked them by giving them this nice blanket – a Hudson's Bay blanket, my grandmother says.

Well, that man didn't have smallpox – no, he didn't have it. But they figured out later that he must have carried it with him in that blanket. They all got it anyway after he left. It cleaned them out.

Well, my grandmother's younger brother got this smallpox. They were young in those days. She didn't get it because she stayed away

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<sup>117</sup> This must be the large pithouse village at North Thompson River Park, a few kilometres south of Clearwater. See Hall 1969.

from the others. She was living in an underground house. ...”  
(Speare, ed., 1973:30)

Ida William from Simpcw told Marianne Ignace,

Long ago, supposed to be lots of people, Indians. My mom used to say ,both sides of the river, lots of people got places like that. Right from here across, right up to Little Fort, right from Kamloops. And these people give those Indians some kind of diseased blanket, small-pox. Lots of people died from that...Yeah, suppose lots died, no doctor or nothing to help them. So many in one big place like that died from that sickness. Must be lots of bones buried all over the country.  
(M. Ignace, interview with Ida William, 1986)

Throughout these stories, as among many different indigenous peoples in North America, we hear the story of the diseased blankets. Augusta Evans believed they were not purposely passed on to Indians, while Ida William told of them being knowingly and purposefully given to Indians to spread the disease.<sup>118</sup> Although smallpox vaccine had been in existence for some three decades, in only a few places, and to only small groups of people was it made available. In the end, with at least a third of our people dead from the disease at a crucial time when white people, enabled by the new colony, were coming into our land, pre-empting our most valuable areas to our exclusion, smallpox had a deadly impact.

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<sup>118</sup> According to medical studies on smallpox contagion, the virus can stay alive for about 1 ½ years in blankets and fabrics. The issue of diseased blankets either purposefully passed on to Indians, or left behind by settlers affected by the disease, is thus a plausible one (see also Palmer 2005:37ff).

## **Reserve Allocation and the Land Question in Secwépemcúlecw – 1866-1882**

During the second half of the 1860s, the Colonial government was headed up by Governor Frederick Seymour. Its land policy was facilitated by the overtly racist land policies of Joseph Trutch, the Commissioner of Lands and Works, struck or hugely reduced the reserves previously proposed by Douglas. Trutch denied that Indians had ever had title, and in fact were not USING their land: He stated that “the Indians really have no rights to the land they claim, nor are they of any actual value or utility to them” (British Columbia 1875: 42), Trutch epitomized the settler ideology that true ownership of land could be acquired only by agricultural pursuits, and set out on a policy to systematically reduce previously proposed or allocated reserve lands (Fisher 1977; Indian Claims Commission 2002; 2006; Tennant 1990),<sup>119</sup> employing his brother-in-law Peter O’Reilly as Colonial reserve commissioner to reduce or simply ignore the previously proposed reserves. He did this by callously misinterpreting Douglas’s instructions. The revised 1866 land ordinance legislated during Trutch’s tenure as Commissioner of Lands and Works and Seymour’s tenure as governor, specifically excluded “any of the Aborigines of this Colony or the Territories neighbouring thereto” from pre-empting or buying lands (*Pre-emption Ordinance, 1866, March 31, 1866, s. 1, as reprinted in RSBC 1871, App., 93–94*)

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<sup>119</sup> While Robin Fisher has been credited with exposing the racist land policies pursued by Joseph Trutch, nearly 70 years earlier, Tom McInnes, who wrote a legal opinion on the Indian land question in British Columbia for Prime Minister Sir Wilfrid Laurier, seized on Trutch’s role in the oppression of land rights and inadequate reserve allocation in BC (see Hammar Foster 1997).

Seymour himself, while endorsing Trutch's policy regarding reserves, sought to demonstrate the Crown's supreme authority through "pageants," inviting Aboriginal chiefs from throughout British Columbia to come to Government House in New Westminster to celebrate Queen Victoria's birthday. In 1865, he ordered from London "one hundred small cheap canes with silver gilt tops of an inexpensive kind, also one hundred small cheap English flags suitable to canoes 20 to 30 feet long", and then presenting a staff of office and the other regalia "to each friendly tribe" (Fisher 1977:158). Among others, a number of chiefs from the Secwépemc Nation and the neighbouring Interior nations were presented with these regalia. They included a staff or cane, a hatchet pipe, a picture of Queen Victoria, and a Union Jack. Seymour organized these theatrical events, including the regalia that were distributed, to symbolize the submission of Aboriginal groups to British sovereignty and authority.

Among Aboriginal peoples of the Interior, however, a different interpretation emerged, and was passed on to contemporary generations: The regalia have been interpreted as symbols of the Crown's *recognition* of Indian sovereignty, as symbolizing and affirming the rights to land, resources and to self-governance by Aboriginal groups, including the Secwépemc. As such they are displayed in the Secwépemc Museum, and as such they are guarded and kept by the descendants of the original recipients. In Skeetchestn, the late Nellie Taylor had inherited the regalia from her husband, Jimmy Taylor. The meanings and discourse associated with them are significant. They reflect the "symbolic capital" (Bourdieu 1982)

invested in them and actualized in them. They also reflect changing meanings in the course of time:

Jimmy Taylor was the son of Esther (Stér) Sisyesq'et, herself the daughter of Hyacinth Sisyesq'et, whom I have described as chief of the Skeetchestn people since the early 1860s. As I explained, Sisyesq'et did not follow the model of patrilineal succession of chiefship by appointing his son-in-law (niece's husband) as his successor. However, old Sisyesq'et willed the staff of office he had received to his daughter, Ster, who was a medicine woman (t'kwilc), rather than to his political successor. The staff thus remained among Ster's descendants, removed from the political office of chiefship during the twentieth century.

As Fisher shows (1977:159), the Chiefs who attended Seymour's pageants in New Westminster used the occasion to voice their complaints regarding settlers taking up their lands, but received evasive replies. At home, in our communities, they tried to take matters in hand to keep land hungry settlers off our land. As A.G. Pemberton wrote to Trutch without avail, however, given Trutch's intents,

Dear Sir, - would you be good enough to tell me in what time the Government intend fixing upon the Indian Reserves in this District, and also when we may expect to see some one up to settle the Indians and make them understand which land they are to have, and which they are to give up, as under the present circumstances they will not allow anyone to do anything on the land they claim, which is most inconvenient to the settlers. They prevented us from even cutting down trees, and say they don't want anything to be done until they see you.... The same inconvenience is felt down at Savona's Ferry. The Indians have there driven off the cattle. They are also burning off the grass in every direction, which will make feed very scarce for hundreds of cattle which winter upon the Thompson.... (Pemberton, Letter to Trutch, July 26, 1866. BCA, GR 1372, f. 375/3A)



Following British Columbia's entry into Confederation in 1871, when, under Article 13 of the Terms of Union, at Trutch's instigation a "policy as liberal as hitherto"<sup>120</sup> was to be pursued by the Federal government with regards to Indian lands, the Provincial and Federal governments argued over the size of Federal Reserves in BC. As settlers continue to pour into the Interior and pre-empted most of the available agricultural land, several years passed without any reserves being set aside. The Secwépemc and other Aboriginal peoples of the Interior continued to find ways to let their points be known. Missionaries were allies in this plan. In 1874, Father Grandin, then at the Okanagan Mission, wrote in the *Victoria Daily Standard* (August 28, 1874 – cited in *British Columbia*, 1875),

The whites came, took land, fenced it in, and little by little hemmed the Indians in their small reservations.... Many of these reservations have been surveyed without their consent, and sometimes without having received any notice of it, so they could not expose their needs and their wishes. Their reserves have been repeatedly cut off smaller for the benefit of the whites, and the best and most useful part of them taken away till some tribes are coralled [sic] on a small piece of land, as at Canoe Creek or elsewhere, or even have not an inch of ground, as at Williams Lake. The natives have protested against these spoils, from the beginning. They have complained bitterly of that treatment, but they have not obtained any redress...."

In 1876, Father J.M. McGuckin of the St Joseph's Mission at Williams Lake wrote to the Intendant of Indian Affairs,

The Indians in this section are becoming very discontented and using threatening language on account of the delay in settling their reserves. I have used all my

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<sup>120</sup> As the Indian Claims Commission (2002) has shown, it appears that the Dominion government during this period remained largely ignorant of British Columbia's modus operandi in dealing with, or rather, refusing to deal with, the indigenous title issue preceding BC's joining the union (see also Fisher 1977; Tennant 1990). During Governor General Lord Dufferin's visit to BC in 1876, however, Dufferin himself raised the issue.

endeavours to keep them quiet up to the present, but it is evident that they will not heed me much longer in this matter. If something is not done for them immediately it is thought that they will even take possession of the land of some of the settlers together with the crops thereon this season. An attempt of this kind would be disastrous to all concerned, but on account of the small number of settlers, these would be the first and greatest sufferers (J.M. McGuckin, OMS, St Joseph's Mission, to James Lenihan, Superintendent of Indian Affairs, April 15, 1878, NA, RG 10, vol. 3663, file 9803).

It was also Father Grandidier who during this period mentioned the Secwépemc and Okanagan plotting to go to war against the settlers. More than individual communities protesting the insufficiency of their reserves, the threat to go to war as Secwépemc, and in alliance with the Okanagan, is significant, in that it shows the political will and motivation of our people as a Nation. Thus, Father Grandidier, wrote to Bishop d'Herbomez in September 1874,

From two sources I have received the same intelligence,<sup>121</sup> that the Indians are thinking of war. One of them is Chief Nskanthin (Neskonhith?) who disclosed to Ross, a neighbouring farmer, that the Chief of Kamloops had promised to join him in making war and recovering their land. Ross told another farmer who repeated it to me. The other source was Mme. L. Campbell who told me that Cissiesket [=Sisyesq'et], Chief of the Lake Head (Skeetchestn/Deadman's Creek) himself had acknowledged that Louis, the Kamloops chief, wanted to unite all Indians to make war and retake their lands. I give it to you as it was given to me. It is this trend in my opinion gives more force to the manner in which these trips are incessantly made by the different chiefs to other chiefs homes. Lastly there was a huge meeting at Osooyoos Lake which the chief of Kamloops and of Nicola Lake attended, arriving there they learned that the meeting had been dissolved and they returned home. They conduct their business under

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<sup>121</sup> Grandidier, although on various occasions writing letters on behalf of Interior Aboriginal people to advocate for adequate reserves and access to resources, also acted as a "spy:" Throughout the 1870s, he employed two "half-breeds" from the Adams Lake area to provide him with "intelligence" about political intentions and actions by the Chiefs in the Secwépemc nation (see Grandidier correspondence in: Oblate Missions of British Columbia, M 707, Reel 3, Grandidier letters and Papers, Microfilm copies selected from Oblate historical archives, St. Peter's Province, Holy Rosary Scholastic, Ottawa, 1971, University of British Columbia Library)

the guise of festivals, horse races, etc. but in the meetings the chiefs alone gather to discuss subjects which the people don't hear.<sup>122</sup>

Grandidier's and other Oblate Missionaries' correspondence make numerous references to political gatherings "under the guise of festivals, " and also throw some light on the Church's efforts to impose its own structure and control over the political system by way of the Durieu system which distributed religious and secular offices (Chief, Captain, Watchmen) within the community..<sup>123</sup> We know that Louis and Sisyeshq'et – Kamloops and Skeetchestn being closely related and allied communities in the Tk'emlups "Division" - were allies, and were furthermore linked to the Okanagan at Douglas Lake through the Fish Lake Treaty.

With the newly appointed Regional Superintendent of Indian Affairs, Israel Powell, obviously disturbed by such rumours, the Joint Reserve Commission was formed in 1877, and began to carry out its work of allocating reserves in the southern part of the Secwépemc Nation and in the Okanagan in 1877.

Again, at the onset of the commission's work, commissioners Sproat and Anderson mention the danger of an Indian war: "Indian situation very grave from Kamloops to the American border – general dissatisfaction – outbreak possible (Sproat and Anderson to Minister of Interior, 27 Aug. 1877, RG 10, vol. 3653).

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<sup>122</sup> Grandidier to d'Herbomez, Sept. 15, 1874. See fn 121. See also p. below for Grandidier's observation that chiefs conduct political meetings under the guise of "festivals."

<sup>123</sup> The church's efforts at undermining chiefly authority and imposing its form of social control during this period were followed and accompanied by the Indian Agents' attempts at manipulating leadership and chiefly office. See Carstens 1992; Furniss 1995. Kamloops Indian Agency records show numerous other instances and examples.

There was talk that the Indians were contemplating linking up with Nez Perce insurgents in the United States. Indians among the Shuswap claimed to have recently come from Chief Joseph's camp, and they gave accounts of the battles that the Nez Percés had fought... There was a meeting of Indians to discuss problems and tactics at the head of Okanagan Lake in late June or early July... (cited in Fisher 1977:192)

As they met the reserve commissioners, the Secwépemc chiefs from the southern communities sought to display their unity as a nation: As a group, riding in formation, they met the commissioners on horseback, with flying banners – likely the union jack, the flag that they interpreted as symbolizing the bilateral relationship as equals with the Crown (Sproat and Anderson Joint Reserve Commission Correspondence, RG10 series, BCPA, 1877, f. 8497). As the late elder Nellie Taylor from Skeetchestn maintained, each of the chiefs who had received the staffs from Governor Seymour had also received a union jack.

The reserve commission correspondence (RG10, BCPA, 1877, f. 8497) gives us some clues about the way the commissioners proceeded, and how they played out Chiefs against each other: Knowing that Chief Louis and Sisyesq'et as allies were opposed to the allocation of reserves without treaties, let alone of the size envisioned by the commission, they settled with “some small tribes up the North Thompson, Adams Lake and Little Shuswap” at first. They settled with Andre on the North Thompson, then with the chiefs in the Chase area. Commissioner A.C. Anderson explained the concern about the “confederation” among the “several tribes,” i.e. the sense of national unity, furthermore blaming the indigenous groups from the south for stirring up trouble:

...a confederation has, we have reason to know, been entered into the heads of the several tribes, the object of which is, apparently, to urge their land claims the more forcibly through union. Whatever the nature of this combination, however, there can be no question that the counsels of the envoys from the insurgent septs south of the Line, have served to intensify previously existing discontents. Our object has been by prudent and cautious action to break up, if possible the union, and to deal in detail severally with the various questions in issue. In this we have already partially succeeded; our proceedings up the North River having served to detach the Chief Andre from the rest, leaving as we believe, him and his people well satisfied with their appropriations. (Anderson, Commissioner's Journal, July 16, 1877, RG 10, f9500)

After the Commission's dissolution in 1878-79, Sproat continued to allocate further reserves. Eventually, Commissioner Peter O'Reilly completed reserve allocations in the early 1880s, although the continuing delays of reserve allocation in the face of continuing land pre-emptions propelled the Secwépemc in the Williams Lake area to seek the help of their local justice of the peace, W. Mason-Laing,

The Indians in this vicinity have requested me to address you in their names, and to explain to you how much [they] are in need of more agricultural land.... At Canoe Creek – The Indian Reserve does not contain more than 1/2 an acre to each [adult]. At Dog Creek – The Tribe is small but the reserve is too small in proportion. At Alkali Lake – The land is nearly as small in proportion to the number of Indians as that of Canoe Creek. At Williams Lake – There is no Indian Reserve, and the Indians do not own a single [acre] of land. They are living on land belonging to the Catholic Mission of that place.... All the above Indians are very discontented on account of the Commission not having visited them before this time.

I have tried to explain to them that the Commission had not time to come here last year, and that they would certainly not be neglected, but it is impossible to make them understand such reasons. If it is in your power to send the above tribes some assurance that you will visit

them this season it would, I feel sure, help much to remove the great discontent which at present exists among them.<sup>124</sup>

Writing again to Sproat on behalf of the Williams Lake area Secwépemc, Maison-Laing stated that the Secwépemc of the area were in such a desperate state that they were considering destroying the crops of settlers. With Sproat's subsequent resignation as reserve commissioner, it took until 1882 until Joseph Trutch's brother-in-law, Peter O'Reilly, set up reserves in the area, only to find that virtually all of the fertile land had been pre-empted, and that irrigated fields were impossible to get for the Indians amidst the pre-emptions surrounding them.

The reserve commission census data from the southern Secwépemc communities show the degree to which our people were engaged in the ranching and cattle industry. The Tk'emlúpsemc (Kamloops Band), with a population of 234 at the time of the Commissioner's visit, had 979 horses, 278 head of cattle, 153 pigs, 2 work oxen and 775 fowls, along with a good range of farming implements.

The people in Skeetchestn, numbering 88, had 437 horses, 235 head of cattle, 13 pigs and 215 fowls. On the North Thompson, the people numbered 144, and had 121 horses and 47 head of cattle. At Neskonlith, where Douglas' surveyors had noted as early as the early 1860s that Neskonlith had large numbers of cattle and horses, the population was 140, with 228 horses, 33 head of cattle, 20 pigs and 14 fowls. Other communities had similar numbers of horses and cattle.

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<sup>124</sup> William Laing-Meason, Justice of the Peace, to Gilbert Malcolm Sproat, Indian Reserve Commissioner, March 7, 1879, NA, RG 10, vol. 3663, file 9803.

In the Secwépemc Nation, reserves were established in all of the 17 communities surveyed. By the late 1880s, following the smallpox epidemic and further epidemics of measles, TB, and other diseases, coupled with the continuing influx of settlers, the non-Aboriginal population in the Province had outgrown the Aboriginal population. Chiefs of the Interior continued to use every occasion to raise the land question, although they had few. Despite Lord Dufferin's statement that he thought the Aboriginal people of BC had land title and that this issue should be solved, the public discourses of the Federal and Provincial government of the time refuse to address the title question, and continually sought to transform the issue of our Nation's collective title and rights to Secwépemcúlecw into a question of individual band's reserve size. None of our people were able to read and write, very few of them spoke any English. Thus, our people had to rely on the help of missionaries, their local Indian Agent and other possible advocates as they continued to protest restrictions in fishing rights (see Ware 1983), the ongoing cut-offs of reserve lands and other injustices. Aside from the scant written documents, little by way of the Aboriginal side exists in the written record. In the creation of Interior Aboriginal people's collective consciousness about the colonizing efforts, storied discourses existed and were told by word of mouth. Without doubt, they circulated in our communities. Occasionally, they were told to White officials who wrote them down. Thus, Chief John Chilahetsa, during his delegation's meeting with Prime Minister Borden in 1912 noted,

I wish to tell you a little of what the Government officials spoke to my father and the fathers of the other Chiefs of the old days. They told the Chiefs that they came there as the Spokesmen and the mouthpieces of the Queen, and they told my father that they wished to talk to him regarding the lands and other matters...There were four of them, and the last was a Mr. Sproat.

So my father and the other Chiefs there said they would speak to these commissioners who said that what was said would be taken to the Queen. They said they proposed to give the Indian tribes reserves, large pieces of land, and that they would be set apart and posts set in the ground and these posts would be the same as a high fence around them. And they said the Chiefs would be set down there as heads of these places and everything upon these lands which would be posted would be the real property of the Indians - the gold and silver and everything. They explained to the Indians that it would all be done for the safety of the Indians, as many whites would come to that country and wish lands, and they wanted the Indians to have a certain amount of their own country kept for them and saved from settlement by these whites. My father and the other Chiefs asked them what about these lands outside of the reserves, and the commissioners said, "We will discuss these lands later."<sup>125</sup>

Beginning in the late 1870s and with the establishment of the Kamloops Agency, Indian Agents began to assert their control over individual communities, and continued the nucleation of our nation into bands and reserves. As the annual reports by the Department of Indian Affairs, along with Indian Agents' correspondence in the 1880s through 1910s attest, Indian agents were beginning to meddle with the political authority vested in chiefs.

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<sup>125</sup> (Deputation from the Indian Rights Association of British Columbia upon the Prime Minister of Canada. Ottawa, January 8<sup>th</sup>, 1912. Union of BC Indian Chiefs manuscript source)



This practice had already begun during the Joint Reserve Commission, when the commissioners suggested to refuse to acknowledge Sisyesq'et as chief, and threatened to deal instead with Pierre Te7iken, one of the tkwenm7íple7ten, who may possibly have vied for chiefly power. Further examples from the late nineteenth and early century are the dismissals under the Indian Act of Chief Francois Selpaxan at Little Shuswap, of Chief Eli Larue at Kamloops.

Citing Berkhofer, Robin Fisher (1977:173-74) has referred to the loss of indigenous political authority during this time as "probably the most significant turning point in the acculturative history [of Indian tribes]. While it is clear that through the Indian Act and whatever means available, White authorities undermined the authority of chiefs in their own communities, it should be pointed out that the generation of chiefs who continued to lead in our communities were experienced leaders who were born at or before the mid-eighteen hundreds. The temporary force of the Indian land rights movement of the early part of the twentieth century shows that it was in good part the courage and persistence of these chiefs that sustained our people's efforts in addressing the land title issue with the Federal government. As Paul Tennant has noted, it was during the mid to late 1910's that this generation of leaders passed away, and that a new group of "neotraditional" leaders emerged (Tennant 1990).

Throughout this period, further diseases continued to take their toll on our people: Frequent outbreaks of often fatal measles, as well as influenza are mentioned in the Indian Agency Reports of the 1880's and 1890's. The report for

1882 states that there had been an outbreak of measles in the Kamloops agency during the winter months which "carried off a great many, especially children". In 1888 "an epidemic of measles of a virulent type was very prevalent in quite a number of Indian Bands of this province, and in many instances fatal results followed an attack of the disease" (Canada, Department of Indian Affairs, Annual Report, Kamloops Agency 1888). In 1892, "La grippe', that virulent type of influenza was very prevalent among these Indians [of Kamloops and Okanagan Agency] as was also an epidemic of measles. A considerable number of them fell victims to these diseases." (Department of Indian Affairs, Annual Reports 1892:xxii). In approximately 1910, a measles epidemic exacerbated by pneumonia killed more than 15 children of the North Thompson band (Ida William, pers. comm. to M. Ignace). Finally, the 1918-19 Spanish influenza pandemic killed nearly one-third of the population in many of our villages. Elders in my grandparent generation, who as children or young adults survived the flu' epidemic, vividly remembered the trauma of losing loved ones, parents, children, elders, nieces and grandchildren. Josephine Wenlock described its consequences in her community, Chu Chua: "When everything was over, no old ladies, no, and all the old men is gone. That was 59 people got killed".<sup>126</sup> Fifty-nine victims represented a third of the community's population. The dozens of small and large graves in our graveyard are reminders of the loss of thirty or more people of all ages during the epidemic: My great-grandmother, Julienne (Sulyen) lost three of her siblings; her uncle, Joe Thoma, who was chief of

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<sup>126</sup> This figure can be verified by the number of crosses from the epidemic (they were all buried in one section) on the Chu Chua graveyard. There are 50 crosses. As some days more than one person died and those who died the same day were buried together, 59 seems a very accurate figure.

our community, died. Virtually all families lost parents, grandparents and children during the influenza epidemic. The loss of parents and grandparents, as well as aunts and uncles had a serious effect on the transmission of culture: there were few elders left to pass on cultural knowledge and skills. From a more personal perspective, the loss of so many family members and relatives was a devastating and traumatic event for those who survived. Many contemporary elders lost several siblings and at least one parent during the epidemic. Many others were completely orphaned, and lost one or both grandparents during this time.

During the 1920s to 1940s, tuberculosis and pneumonia contributed to the much higher death-rate and life-expectancy of native people in Canada in general and among the Secwépemc.

This chapter has described the historical events and processes that our people faced before and after 1858, beginning with the *seméwúwI* or first whites, who left our institutions and control over our lands intact. As our chiefs acknowledged in 1910, it was the influx of the “other whites”, throughout the gold rush, the deadly smallpox epidemic, followed by twenty years of frustration as racist land ordinances and government policies disabled our access to our own lands, and as the government procrastinated the establishment of reserves, while more settlers pre-empted our lands.

Throughout the last decade of the nineteenth century, our people’s frustration continued to grow, as settlers that surrounded our reserve continued to ask for the best arable tracts of land to be “cut off” from our reserves because we

Indians “were not using them.” While the B.C. provincial government continued to claim its “reversionary interest” in any lands that were deleted from reserve lands - a question that was not settled until 1938, the federal government failed in its trust obligation to Aboriginal peoples by not legally surveying reserve lands for two decades following the 1878 allocations. In more cases than not, despite initial meek protests that surrenders could not take place without the consent of the members of the band, cut-offs from reserves in favour of settlers were enabled by the Department, resulting in a number of specific claims having been filed by our people, although others have been refused, yet others are still dormant.

My community, Skeetchestn, experienced such a cut-off, when a settler named Mr. Chris Pumpmaker took over a portion of the best arable land on the North-East boundary of our reserve. Following Pumpmaker’s assertion, our people, led by Chief Sisyesq’et, insisted on the boundary which the Reserve Commission had established, and indeed showed surveyor Jemmet that Pumpmaker had moved the reserve boundary post that had been established in 1877. As Jemmet notes, when he reversed this, “I made the alteration, as directed, on the West boundary line, along the stream which seemed to please the chief very much. These extra bits I marked out clearly on the ground. ...”

Despite this, Pumpmaker subsequently received his land, which our people never surrendered. In the absence of legal land surveys until 1906, it is these temporary markings “on the ground” (or as blazed trees that could be felled, heaps of stones that could be moved) that were the sources of grief in our communities. It is

this distrust of marking things “on the ground” that my elder Theresa Jules referred to when she reminded me in 1998 that all the elders before us had warned one another not to trust transactions that are merely “marked on the ground” rather than settled with legal paperwork. This is what she meant by “don’t mark it on the ground” (see quote, Prologue). The incidence of Pumpmaker’s claim - which our community settled as a specific claim in the early 1990s - is but one small instance of reserves being struck off the map, as was the case in Cherry Creek, Bonaparte, Esk’et and other places, or severely diminished by settlers’ encroachments and the Federal government yielding to these.

In the next chapter, we will examine how our people resisted to, but also accommodated to the new Catholic religion and the missionaries who brought the religion among us.

## CHAPTER 8: HIDING RELIGION IN THE CHURCH

Concepts of spirituality which Christianity attempted to destroy, then to appropriate, and then to claim, are critical sites of resistance for indigenous peoples. The values, attitudes, concepts and language embedded in beliefs about spirituality represent, in many cases, the clearest contrast and mark of difference between indigenous peoples and the West. It is one of the few parts of ourselves which the West cannot decipher, cannot understand and cannot control...yet? (L. Tuhiwai Smith 1999: 74)

Close on the heels of the invasion of strangers during the gold rush and Fraser River War, and the devastating smallpox of 1862-64, missionaries of the Catholic order Oblates of Mary Immaculate (O.M.I.) established themselves in Secwépemc territory. To our people, European priests were not an entirely unknown entity. As with the prophecies of the coming of the séme7uwi and infectious diseases (see ch. 3), there had been predictions about the coming of “black robes” - hence the name qw’iyleqs, “black-robe” for priests and missionaries - by both our own ancestors and by Métis of the fur trade who predicted hard times ahead:

Long before the arrival of the first white miners, a Hudson Bay half-breed told the Shuswap that after a time strange men would come among them, wearing black robes (the priests). He advised them not to listen to these men, for although they were possessed of much magic, and did some good, still they did more evil. They were descendants of the Coyote, and like him, although very powerful, they were also very foolish, and told many lies. They were simply the Coyote returning to the earth in another form. If the Indians paid attention to and followed the directions of these ‘black-robos,’ they would become poor, foolish and helpless; and disease of all kinds would cut them off. If they avoided them, they would remain contented, happy and

numerous. Some Indians believed what was told them, and for this reason called the first priest whom they saw 'Coyote.' At the present time some Indians wonder whether, if they had taken the half-breed's advice, it would have turned out as he said, and whether it is really the priests and their religion that are the cause of the people dying so much, and not being so well off as they might be (Teit 1909:621-622).

Itinerant missionaries had traveled through Secwépemc country in the 1830s and 40s. Thus, Jesuit Priest Father Nobili briefly visited the southern Interior in 1843-44s. In 1842, the Oblate priest Father Modeste Démers also traveled through the Interior, eventually arriving at the HBC's Thompson's River Post in Kamloops to explore the setting up of missions in the Interior (Gurney 1948; Whitehead 1981). It is either Nobili or, more likely, Demers whom most Secwépemc experienced as the first missionary.

Concomitant with Sk'elép being believed to have *gone East*, perhaps to return one day, and the missionaries *arriving from the East* – although in the Northern Plateau, technically, this was the South - there were some associations between the promise of sk'elép's return and the arrival of missionaries. As we know, sk'elép could show up in ever new shapes. James Teit found out that "when the Indians saw the first priests, they believed them to be Coyote and his assistants, presaging this important event" (1909: 612)

In the late 1850s, and preceding the setting up of the mission in Kamloops and Williams Lake, the Oblates set up a mission at Okanagan Lake, and as the baptism records from the Okanagan mission show, a few Secwépemc people from the Kamloops region came to get baptized. In addition, between 1859 and 1866, the

Okanagan O.M.I Missionary Father Pandosy also traveled to “Fort Thompson” on occasion to baptize people there. The list of his and his associates’ baptisms includes H.B.C Métis and Scottish employees of Thompson River Post at the time, such as Antoine Lamprant, the various children of trader Donald McLean by his part Secwépemc wife, the children of “Corbeau”, and a few “sauvages”, brought by their Secwépemc parents to be baptized.<sup>127</sup> One of these must have been Chief Sisyesq’et’s father and mother, who are listed in the 1866 OMI baptism book as “Louis” and “Louise”, i.e. with French baptismal names, obviously having obtained baptismal names elsewhere, likely at Okanagan.<sup>128</sup>

In 1867, the first missionary, Father Gendre, set up headquarters in Kamloops. Followed by Father Grandidier, who had previously been at Okanagan mission, in 1871, and by father LeJacq in 1880.<sup>129</sup> Besides the Superior priest, two to three assessors (junior priests) usually were at the mission, some of whom only stayed for a short time. Within a short time after Father Gendre’s arrival, the Tk’emlupsemc built St. Joseph’s church at their main village north-east of the confluence, ultimately a small log-cabin church. Within months, each of the southern Secwépemc communities had its church. In Skeetchestn, the church was named St. Mary’s (Ste. Marie). Bonaparte’s church became St. Louis, the Simpcw

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<sup>127</sup> Excerpts of O.M.I, Baptismal Records, Okanagan Mission, kept at Diocese of Nelson, BC.

<sup>128</sup> Hyacinthi Sisyesq’et’s parents’ names, according to the 1866 OMI Baptism book, are listed as “Louis” and “Louise”. A “Louis Sisiasket” is also listed in the 1862-1864 HBC account book, although it is unclear if the latter is the brother or father of Hyacinth,

<sup>129</sup> Gurney 1948; Kamloops and District, Baptisms 1867 – 1882, Marriages 1873-1874. Copy obtained from Kamloops Museum and Archives.



church became St. Jean-Baptiste. Adams Lake became known as St. Croix, while the church at Sk'atsin (Neskonlith) became St. Pierre et Paul.

At the same time, the Oblates also set up headquarters at the foot of Williams Lake, establishing another mission (Whitehead 1981) that served the northern Secwépemc, Southern Carrier, Chilcotin and Northern Lilloet communities. As in the southern Secwépemc area, local churches soon were reported to exist.

It is all too easily assumed that with the arrival of the first missionaries in Secwépemc country during the 1860s, our people “converted” and uncritically endorsed this new way of thinking without so much as reflecting on it. As we know, these early days of missionaries’ teachings led to the collective and individual trauma our people suffered in the Indian Residential Schools. Missionaries endorsed and eventually financed by the Canadian State, engaged in an effort to eradicate the collective knowledge of our past, and the ability to tell of it in our own language and on our own terms.<sup>130</sup>

Although in 1909 James Teit, in comparing Secwépemc spiritual or religious continuity with that of the Nlakapamux, commented, “The Shuswap seem to be less conservative than the Thompson Indians, and have been quicker to accept the teachings of the missionaries, and to discard their old ways of life” (Teit 1909:469), it is not clear whether Teit merely compared the elaborate displays in the Tk'emlups stagings of passion plays in the early 1990s to what he saw near his home, among the

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<sup>130</sup> For literature on the historical development, structure and impact of Indian Residential Schools in Canada, see Miller 1996; Canada (RCAP) 1996.

Nlakapamux. The question, in the end, is one of spiritual syncretism vs. readily adopting an outside religion.

In order to understand this, we need to find out more about the Oblates on the one hand, about their version of Catholicism – and indeed, the eschatological principles of Catholicism altogether. We need to find out how this was received by our people, how it “meshed,” in ways that both co-incided with our own world view and spirituality, and that were in a knowing or calculated way employed to communicate for purposes by either and both sides.

Numerous accounts of the clashing and mutual accommodation of Catholicism and Protestant religions and indigenous peoples have been written, showing that rather than “converting” to a new religion, indigenous people often creatively syncretized their own beliefs with those introduced by missionaries. For Western North America, they are, for the most part, based on a deciphering of the written documents left by the missionaries themselves, at best compared against ethnographic information about the people in question (see e.g. Whitehead 1982; 1996; Furniss 1995; Blake 1995). In the end, most of what the world knows about the encounter between Secwépemc people and European missionaries, between Secwépemc religion and Catholicism, comes from the writings of the very missionaries who set out to conquer the souls of our ancestors. Much important information about missionary purpose and activity, along with written statements of what indigenous people did, and how we purportedly reacted, has been put forward

through these sources. But such sources do not give due credit to the meanings, intents, actions and voices of our own people.

The baptism records in both the Kamloops area (which would become the Kamloops Diocese) and the Williams Lake area give interesting insights into missionary procedure: They show the baptism of adults throughout our communities beginning in fall of 1866, and continuing after that date. Initially, there were a few adult and child baptisms. From 1867 onwards, baptisms in our community seem to have become systematic efforts by the priests: for example, on October 20, 1867, Father Gendre arrived at "Ste. Marie" (St. Mary's), the newly built small log church at Skeetchestn, and baptized eleven adults aged between 18 and 50, including Sisyesq'et, the chief of the community, his tkw'enm7iple7ten and adult relatives. Following the baptism of men, the adult women of the community were baptized, starting with Sisyesq'et's wife Necúskwe, who took the European/French name Agathe. Within the conventions of naming and name-giving, receiving these new names from new guests, the missionaries, must have been received in a positive way. The missionary wrote down each person's indigenous name, and the new names were apparently perceived as being received *in addition to* the hereditary Secwépemc names.<sup>131</sup> While some of the Indian names have still been passed down to younger generations, the baptismal European names are also remembered as handed-down

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<sup>131</sup> In subsequent years, as written correspondence was more and more carried out by Indian agents who neither learned our language, and indeed were part of the efforts to oppress our languages, the first names given by the missionaries became the last names of these people's children. The indigenous names eventually ceased being part of the public, written record. Hence the existence of names like Ignace, Jules, Pitel (from French Fidele), Simon, Abel, Manuel, Antoine, etc. in our communities. They all derive from the inventory of French baptismal names given out by the missionaries.

names. Given the role that name-giving has in our society, our ancestors who received names from the priests would have perceived the receipt of new and exotic names as an honour, a gift from the black robe visitors. I cannot help but think that missionaries realized the advantage of bestowing names as gifts, in the spirit of gift-giving, especially since they had little (by way of their vows of poverty) to offer by way of material gifts. After all, our ancestors had waited for their kindness as hosts to the visiting some7 guests to be returned for some time, but in vain.

The Oblates were formed as a Catholic order in France soon after of the French Revolution. Their philosophy was not dissimilar to Jesuit philosophy; they regarded themselves as “soliders of the Pope,” and their objective was to “stir up the faith which is dying among the poor” (see Whitehead 1982) in the form of “*missions*.” The latter were set formulae of prayers and preaching on a pre-determined set of days, to convey the basic tenets of the Catholic faith (Gurnery 1948; Whitehead 1989). Oblate statutes included rigid daily activity and scripture study, meditative prayer, the recitation of the rosary, and the examination of “conscience” to conquer one’s sins, which were regarded not as social digressions, but as personal offences against God. By the mid-nineteenth century, as Oblates had arrived in Northwestern North America, they had developed a “strict, rigid plan for both conversion and control of Indian spiritual development.” (Whitehead, *op.cit.*) Different from the Protestant churches, Whitehead noted, “Catholic missionary efforts aimed at producing not so much pseudo-Europeans as devoted Roman Catholics, and permanent missionary control was an important component of this

plan” (ibid.) To achieve this, the Oblates apparently drew comparison of the self-supporting agricultural missions established by the Spanish in Paraguay during the 18<sup>th</sup> century (ibid).

Among the procedures practiced by the missionaries, the first act was baptism, as the continuing practice of adult baptisms throughout the 1860s and 70s shows. Baptism occurred with only minimal indoctrination into the Catholic belief system, which followed later, in “missions,” the sets of concentrated teachings or retreats offered to the indigenous village community, the missionaries staying in one place for a few days at a time. The dioceses covered, respectively, by the Oblates stationed at Kamloops and Williams Lake covered a huge terrain. Parts of their travels along the South and Main Thompson and Fraser River could be made by CP Rail train, but since many Indian villages were off the beaten track, they additionally had to travel by horse, horse and buggy, sleigh, and occasionally on foot. The Kamloops Diocese extending from the North Thompson down to Kamloops, east to the Shuswap Lakes area, even occasionally to Windermere, along the Thompson to Bonaparte, occasionally north to Clinton and High Bar, south to Spence’s Bridge, and also comprising the Nicola Valley. As the baptism books reveal, a missionary would visit each village perhaps three times per year for a few days. For the rest of the year, our people were left to their own devices.<sup>132</sup>

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<sup>132</sup> Gurney (1948:68) shows Father Jean-Marie Le Jeune’s travel itinerary over a period of three months in January to March 1893. It covers an itinerary that comprises Kamloops, Quilchena, Coldwater, Spence’s Bridge, back to Kamloops, Spuzzum and North Bend, back to Kamloops, Lytton, back to Kamloops, North Thompson,, back to Kamloops, Savona/Deadman Creek, Kamloops, and then Shuswap Lake.

Throughout these trips, the missionaries carried out baptisms, initially with adults, and by the 1870s also among young children; in addition, they taught the catechism, prayers, held confessions and communion. Father Le Jeune's letter to his bishop, dated April 1, 1892, reiterating a visit to the Chu Chua (Simpew or North Thompson) reserve, gives insights into this practice:

Having arrived here Saturday, March 27, I will be staying here until Thursday, April 4. During my visit, the schedule is as follows: At 6 am., I rise, Mass at 6:30 am, followed by a sermon about the Stations of the Cross. At 7:30 a.m. free time for breakfast until 10:30 a.m. Meeting of the natives ("sauvages") at the house of the chief to talk with them about the sermon of morning mass, and to go through their catechism prayers with them, etc. and at the same time to teach them to read and write. ... After having spent two and a half hours with these exercises, everyone retires to the Church at 1 pm, to recite the rosary, followed by instruction in Confession and Communion. Following this, there is free time until five o'clock, so they can gather their firewood and attend to other domestic chores. At five o'clock, we go through the Stations of the Cross, instruction of the Stations of the Cross, Celebration of the Holy Sacrament, and evening prayers. From 7 pm until 8:30, free time for supper. At 8:30 pm., meeting at the chief's house for Catechism, etc., until 11 p.m.<sup>133</sup>

Throughout the late 1860s until the mid-1920s, following this frenzied and concentrated speed of missionary indoctrination over several days, people in the communities were without religious instruction for the next several months, save for occasional visits to Kamloops.

In their missionary practices, initially, the Oblates tried to put to use existing indigenous practices and institutions. Thus, they advocated the use of hand-shakes in meeting and greeting priests and people (Dionne 1947). A second indigenous

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<sup>133</sup> Letter, Le Jeune to d'Herbomez, 1 April 1892. Archives of Oblates of Mary Immaculate, Vancouver. Translated from French by M. Ignace.

institution they tried to put to practice were the existing “Indian courts”, interpreted by them as “public confessions” that led to the “punishment of sinners.” As they thought, these represented an existing institution on which to build private confessions. Between 1858 and 1875, public confessions were commonly advocated and used as part of the “missionary method.” “The public confessions and public penitence could become an excellent means to root Catholicism among the Indians near the Pacific,” Bishop Durieu stated (Dionne 1947:91), adding, “Le premier acte du missionnaire est de mettre le vice a sa place.” (The first act of the missionary is to put vice in its place). It was of central importance to deal with “sin” and “sinners” by instituting “fear” of the holy sacraments of confession and communion.

As Father Grandidier and his associates in Tk’emlups and other Secwépemc communities began to realize by the mid-eighteen seventies, however, the institution of “Indian courts” was a far cry from private confession and the idea of sin as a personal offence against God. Within a few years, they realized that the “sauvages” have “no fear of the Holy sacrament”, and that “Indian courts” were social tribunals involving criminal justice matters, rather than confessions of conscience. One priest lamented, that during “Indian courts”, the accused “only say what they absolutely can’t deny.” (Dionne 1947:98).<sup>134</sup> Initially, they had thought that the Indigenous institutions were not that dissimilar from European criminal courts.

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<sup>134</sup> This particular statement pertains to Indians in Puget Sound, but, supported by data from numerous oblate missions, Dionne (1947:91-101) maintains that the custom of “Kaltash bilalam” or “penitences publiques” was practiced throughout the Coastal and Mainland Pacific Northwest, and amounted to an indigenous legal institution that the Oblates were trying to mobilize to introduce the practice of confession – in vain, as Dionne shows.

However, after a few years they realized that the indigenous “Indian courts” dealt with the taking of admissible and provable evidence, as opposed to confession on the basis of conscience! After the mid-1870s, public confessions took a diminished role, with the Oblates realizing their social rather than religious functions (Dionne 1947).<sup>135</sup> As “Indian Courts” which dealt with criminal offences within the community, they continued to exist. Theresa Jules remembered about them:

**Ta7 k slegwtsínem...tá7tri7.**

There was no gossip, no.

**Ta7 e slegwtsínment.s ilun k swéti7.**

No one out there gossiped about anyone.

**E legwtsínem ti7 k swet...m-kwéntem ne7én**

If someone did gossip, he/she was taken there to

**nxwqwentsínnten...m-cítlcstem.**

the church and made to kneel down.

**Re m-séwentmes: Kénem mé7e ti7 wel xílem yi7éne ti7:**

He/she was asked: Why did this one behave that way:

**stulilmenc e úqwi...késtsinmenc?**

make fun of your sister/brother, swear at them?

**Ta7 k sts'kénemst.s.**

They did nothing to you.

**Me7 eyentsút-k me7 nerí7.**

You make amends now right there.

**Re m-kúlentem yi7 e s7elkst.s ti7 thé7en tri7.**

They were made to do work out there somewhere.

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<sup>135</sup> There seems to be a widespread assumptions among historians and some of our own people that these “Indian courts” were introduced by the Oblates. Our elders have always talked of them as indigenous institutions, although one could have assumed that they internalized practices introduced by the Oblates. However, the correspondence that Dionne (1947) presents, shows that the Oblates found Indian courts in existence and tried to rely on them to convey the idea of sin and penitence.



**Ye-enke k tsuns pyin í7en re séme7 the “law”.**  
Now a days I guess that’s what the white man calls law.

**Stémi lu7 stse7mét.stem?**

What was it called?

RI – Gossip?

**TJ – Mé7e**

Yes

**RI – Cw7iten lu7 k stkwenem7ípleñtsut.s ne7élye qelmúcw?**

Did the people here have lots of laws?

**TJ – Mé7e cw7it...tkwenem7ípleñtem.**

Yes lots, the laws were laid down for them.

**Xexé7 lu7 le q7ésés le kupkúkwi7.**

The chiefs long ago were strict.

**E tsútes e seplulkw.s...me7...**

If there was going to be a meeting, it,

**me7 nekwésqt ts’ílem k sxetáqs...**

it would be one week before,

**me7 temtéws yihé7en k kwelmétentem.**

the one asked to tell others would carry the message by horse back.

**Me7 tsqwetséts yi7 te wetémtk...**

The started from down stream,

**me7 lexéyem... lexéyem... lexéyem.**

He would relay the message from house to house.

**Nu7 m-í7ek te Ckécse7ten.**

All the way to Back Valley.

(Theresa Jules, Interview, 2 Dec. 1997)

In addition, Nellie Taylor (Interview July 1994, April 1995) remembered various instances from the 1920s and 30s where the Chief of the community held “Indian Court” to deal with theft, insults, and other disputes.

Elders that I interviewed, remembering the way of life of the 1920s to 1950s, elders also talked of the social order, the continuing existence of independence (to some degree) of the institutions of the dominant society, including the seemingly rigid social sanctions that were the old "Indian courts" influenced by the Durieu method. Sarah Deneault, like other elders, interpreted these as a sign of an era when Secwépemc people were united rather than split up into nucleated bands, when chiefs had authority in their communities, and when our people were relatively autonomous.

Until changes were made to the Indian Act which imposed a bi-annual election system, throughout our Nation, community chiefs continued to be appointed and affirmed by consensus among the members of a community. In some cases fathers followed sons, as was the case in St'uxtews with the succession from Basil Dick to his son Tony Basil in the mid-nineteen thirties. In other cases, there was no patrilineal succession, but still, successors were appointed on the basis of some kind of notion throughout this era, at least throughout the 1930s and 40s, according to elders' testimony, "Indian Courts" continued to be held by the Chief. Following the Durieu system, but interpreted as "traditions" by elders (which, as we saw, the Indian Courts in all likelihood were) the community chief, his tkw'enem7iple7ten or advisor, and remnants of the Durieu system of Chief, captain (the tkw'enem7iple7ten), watchmen and bellringer continued to exist. The chief himself would act as judge. Nellie Taylor from Skeetchestn remembered instances from her childhood, when the Chief adjudicated cases where one person accused another

person of having stolen her buckskin out of the creek, ordering that person to make restitution. Sarah Deneault also remembered “whipmen” in communities, who would discipline children who did not obey their elders:

**Pałú7! le q7ásas pałú7:**  
Back then, long ago back then:

**Xwexáy7t re stsmámelt xwexáy7t re tutuwíwt...**  
All the children the young boys,

**cucácu7ta łucw tsatsítsmá7t**  
young girls still small

**yi7 ma7 llaqmatámas łek staxtax7áms.**  
That was when they were disciplined by their elders.

**E kÍ7casas e qá7tsasas e swátas...e yecwamínmasas.**  
By their mothers, fathers or someone, their caregivers,

**E ta7 k staxtax7áms háqen slá7as nkyá7as...**  
If it wasn't their parents maybe by their grandfather, grandmother

**e stsmámeltas e skwimámeltas e twítas...**  
if they're children or infants or grown up,

**yi7 xwexay7t ri7 ma7 stámi k sqwłentám.**  
they would all be disciplined with words.

**Ri7 ma7 kálenmas xwexwáy7t.**  
They would listen to all of it.

**Yerí7 re ts'ílmas le stwítentls...re stsmámelt le q7ásas.**  
That is how we were raised, the children long ago.

**All yi7 má7a ri7 pll-tkwam7ípla7tnas.**  
And they had rules that were specific to that too.

**Wíkten-lu7.**  
I saw that.

**Tá7ti7 k sq7ast.s k swiktn...ta7 k scw7it.s yáxmell.**  
I didn't see it over a long period of time, and not a lot of it but, all in all.

**Yáxmáll...xaxá7!..e kúkwpyu7s k swat...**  
All in all, it was powerful, if one was chief,

**tákwenam7íplu7s k swat...e wátsasness...pll-wátsma.**  
If one was a councillor, a policeman - they had policemen.

**Pll-s7alkst ri7 tnkwa7 ri7 re ac re skwánas re**  
It's the job of one person chosen by

**tákwam7ípla7...meta kúkwpi7 swáti7 ri7.**  
the councillors, along with the chief, who ever he was.

**Ma7 nástmes re stsmámelt e tá7us wes e kálenmas...**  
The children were taken if they were not listening,

**e tá7us wes e wes e tskulst.sas stámi k sqwlentám...**  
if they were not doing what they were asked to do,

**e sctsu7wetnmíns k sqwlentám.**  
if they didn't do as they were told.

**Ri7 m-násta nerí7 tek qelmúcw nerí7 m-llaqmatámas.**  
They were taken to that person and were scolded.

**Ne tsímáll te llaqmatám ri7 tá7íri7 k syecs patrí7 ma7**  
The first time being disciplined, wasn't when

**ma7 spátámes re stsmámelt.**  
the children would be strapped.

**Re re tkítscu7s ptak ne s7upaklltyáncu.**  
When they reached then passed their tenth year.

**Yerí7 re tsa7mát.sta yerí7 tek qelmúcw ew san**  
The person was called the "whipman" that

**tsnástmas e tá7us e kálnmas re stsmámalt...**  
the children were taken to when they did not listen,

**"nek sepmín".**  
Whipman,

**Yerí7 re qelmúcw...ac tek qelmúcw ec te sepmílamas**  
He was the person who was to strap children.

**Yerí7 re tsa7mát.sta 7e se7mín**  
He was called the "whipman".

**RI - hm!**

**SD - Re m-násta nu7 ri7 stsmámelt:**  
The children were taken to him:

**E tá7us skálnmas e stax7ax7ámsas ...**  
If they didn't listen to their elders,

**e kyá7asas...e stámas...e láwasas...e tíkwa7sas ne k**  
maybe their grandmother or whatever, their uncle, their aunt

**mútas yi7ána skwimámalt 7i7 wel ma7 ta7 wes e kálnmas.**  
that they lived with, a child who didn't want to listen to behave themselves.

**Ri7 ma7 násta ne sa7mín.**  
They would be taken to the whipman.

**Ne tsímallas 7e pll-tsúwat.s yi7án skwimámalt**  
On a child's first offense

**7ucw ri7 ma7 qwlntam 7e sa7mín.**  
He would be spoken to only, by the whipman.

**Ne sesálas 7e sxílas cú7tsi yi7án 7e skwimámelt...**  
On the second offense of the same child,

**nerí7 áytsall ri7 ma7 s7patámes.**  
that was when he would be whipped.

**Yerí7 re tkwam7ípla7tns re senkúkwpi7...**  
Those were the rules made by the top chief,

**méta tkwakwam7ípla7...méta stax7ax7ám...**  
along with his council, along with elders.

**K swat k stam e tsúwat.s...pll-tsúwatas tek stam.**  
If anyone did something wrong, anything wrongful.

**E stax7ax7ámas...e núxwaxwes...e sxálwasas...**  
Even if they were elders, women, their husbands,

**e sa7á7asas e swátes...stax7ax7ám ell e tutuwíwtas all e**  
their wives whoever, grown ups or young people or

**cucécutmas e stámas e e skánas k kíst tek stam k sw7acs...**  
little girls whatever, if they did something real bad,

**íucw wa7 stámas...ri7 ma7 násta ne tsukáwalc**  
just whatever, they would be taken to the Old Ones

**me7a wátsma.**  
along with the policeman.

**Re m-kwánta yi7ána yi stsmámeltas**  
They were taken even if they were children

**e íhánas íucw wa7 tcw7ítas e tnkwa7.**  
however many of them there were, many of them or one.

**Ma nasta ntsukáwalc yi7 nu7...ma7 citlc...**  
They would be taken to the Old people there and they knelt down.

**swáti7 e kístas k tsúwat.s e stámas.**  
If anyone did bad things or whatever.

**Ni7 m-tkwam7íplántmas...**  
They would be sentenced,

**te tsukáwalc all te kúkwi7 all tkwekwam7ípla7.**  
by the Elders and the Chief along and the Judge.

**Yi7 ni7 wátsma...ni7 ma7 w7ac.**  
The police would be present.

**Wátsma yerí7 re s7alkst.s...xwexwáytag re wetswátsma...**  
That's the police work, all of the policemen,

**e syecwamíns xwexwáytag lu7 ac k kánmas k w7ac...**  
to look after everything and to know what people were doing,

**nerí7 ne7án te k tsqwátstn.**  
for the whole group of people.

Sarah Deneault also remembered how the "watchmen," or policemen would put offenders in a small jail behind the church, who were elected within the community, would keep order in the community.

**E kístas all m- wes e qyáxas wes e kánmes.**  
If someone behaved badly, when they were drunk or doing something wrong.

**Ni7 m-cka7á7tas wel e cwánwa.**  
They would be put in jail there until morning.

**All ma7 késta7úyas k tsúwat...**  
And if the offense was really bad,

**re wátsma ma7 xwqwtákwact.s re sáma7 te wátsma**  
the policeman would phone the white man's police

**m- tsnásmatmas m-kwántmas, te Tkalúps...flu7 m-**  
**xwqwalállewmas e pahánas.**  
they would come and take the person away, To Kamloops, they would go to court  
over there some time later.

**Yerí7 má7a pyin t7álya re stselxastán...paílú7.**  
So then that's what I know today, about those days.

Forgetting the language:

**ne school, Indian Residential School ne Tkalúps.**  
At the Indian residential School in Kamloops.

**RI – Penhé7e lu7?**  
When was that?

**SD – Ne 1934-33-32, 1932 (my first year 1932.**  
In 1934-33-32, 1932 my first year 1932.  
And then I only went three years).

**Ṭucw kelltyánacu.**  
Only three years.

**Nekwalltyánacu tsukw tucw tri7 w7ac re tsúhmacstla te**  
**sáma7tsnám.**  
For one year, all they did was teach me to speak the whiteman's language.

**E stá7s e sama7...squqwlút ne xwquqwlútn.**  
Not to be a white person, speaking in my language.

**E xqa7wán-akwe sama7tsín.**  
They wanted me to learn the English language.

**Ŧi7 ts'íla k yi7 swi7s re school...(three) kálltyánacu.**  
I did that until I left school, three years.

**Yi7s llápa ra xwquqwlútn.**  
I forgot my language.

**RI – hm!**

**SD – Yi7 tl7álya ac re (school-(as))...**  
Those from here who went to school,

**Ŧlu7 yegráp Ŧucw m-w7ácwas re sama7tsnámás.**  
as soon as they got over there they spoke only English.

**Nu7 má7a Ŧucw m-sama7tsnámwa.**  
So then over there, I spoke English.

**Yáxmáll nstaxŦax7ám tikutús re sqwłantsáms Ŧe**  
But my grandparents/elders always spoke to me in

**qelmúcw...qelmucwtsín...m-qwłentán Ŧe k qelmúcw.**  
Indian, Indian language, I spoke to them in the Indian language.

**K'all Ŧri7 e tá7us e staxŦax7ám k sw7acs**  
But if there were no elders around

**yi7 m-sama7tsnám-ka.**  
I would speak English.

**Yi7 Ŧlúna s7i7llcw Ŧe w7ac Ŧe stsmámalt**  
So then some of the children around there

**tá7Ŧi7 cú7tsa k sqweltnmíns re xwquqwlútns.**  
never again spoke their language.

**E quqwlút...e qwłentán Ŧe k Secwápmctsin**  
If they talked, if I spoke the Secwépemc language to them

**m- txwimínsas (they laugh at me).**  
they laughed at me.

**Mell m-sama7wílcwas re stsmámalt.**  
The children were already becoming like white people.

**(They turned! you know).**  
RI – Already in the 1930's I guess.



**SD – As soon as they got outta school went home, they speak  
English.**

They hear you talk your language they laugh at you.

**They sáma7.**

They got ashamed of their own language.

**An...Tlri7 cw7it te llápa ín-xwquqwlútn yáxmall.**

And, From there I forgot much of my language though.

**Ma7 xqawáwwa ri7.**

I will learn what that was.

**E yugwyúgwt k sptínasma ri7...**

I will think hard about it,

**ma7 xqawáwwa stámi k llapllápa.**

I will find out about what I forgot.

During this time, as the missionaries learned our language from our people, core religious concepts were translated into our language. Early missionaries like Fathers Gendre, Grandidier and LeJacq had, for the most part relied on Chinook Jargon to preach and teach the new religion. Their Chinook Jargon sermons, in turn were re-translated into the Aboriginal language by a local interpreter bi-lingual in jargon and the local language. In his reminiscences (Kamloops Wawa 1915, see Gurney 1948). Father Le Jeune himself remembered several anecdotes of mistranslations (op.cit.:63), where the interpreter mistook the word “chapelet” for “prayer beads” for “saplel” meaning “sack of flour,” or translating the word for “year” in good fashion as “snow.” There was much room for knowledge, let alone meanings, to get lost in translation.

Among the Interior missionaries, Father Jean-Marie Le Jeune stands out as having learned as many as eight indigenous languages of the Interior, and being able to preach in the language. By all counts, among our elders he was remembered as fluent in our language. After having learned Secwépemtsin with the help of local Secwépemc who knew Chinook Jargon, Le Jeune set out to translate prayers, hymns, parts of the catechism and liturgy, and portions of the bible into Secwépemtsin and neighbouring languages.

The translations of spiritual concepts are revealing. A number of Catholic religious concepts were borrowed from Chinook Wawa (Jargon), although originally deriving from French. These included such terms as *le kres* (grace); *la sakristie* (the sacristy), *les anges* (angels), *lepik* (bishop), *la karisti* (the Holy Eucharist). However, with Le Jeune's growing reliance on Secwépemtsin, many crucial words of prayer and religion were Secwépemc words. Inevitably, these words carried the "baggage" of our people's existing world-view, spirituality and spiritual practices. The word for "bless" or "baptize" became *melámen-*. Its semantic field was already taken, in that it was the word for "to doctor someone", what *t'kwilc* did. The word for "to pray" became *qweqwentsín*, the pre-existing word for prayer in our language. Literally, it means "to express one's pitiful state with words," indicating our concept of praying with humility, showing, in a social and spiritual sense, that one is pitiful and needs help. On close scrutiny, many of the Secwépemc words that entered the Catholic prayers in our language reflected our values of spiritual and social relationships working together, and our own pre-existing spiritual, connections as

much as the theological concepts of the church. The very term *k'estentsút*, chosen as the word for “sin,” maintains the flavour of our fundamental belief in the social responsibilities we have to one another, as opposed to private, religious “fear” of god. Although the Catholic Catechism defines “sin” as a “personal offence against god,” the word *k'estentsút* indeed means “to do something bad to yourself” - it entails the issue of social reciprocity, and the concept that by harming others, in the end you “do it to yourself” and lose face, as the community loses faith in you. Implicitly, it goes with terms like *yéwyut*, “to make a nuisance of oneself,” in that the sinner is a *social* burden to the community.

### **Prayers in Secwepemtsin**

As not only words but whole prayers became translated, they also maintained the connection with *our* way of thinking and *our* spiritual and social laws. The Secwépemc translation of the Catholic *Act of Contrition* shows this.

**Oh tqeltk kukwpi7kt,**  
Oh, all of our chief above,<sup>136</sup>

**Necwéymentsutstmen ren sk'estentsut,**  
Showing remorse and I am telling on myself that I did bad to myself,

**Ta7 ks xillts es nestmens ne tqeltk te tmicw.**  
It won't happen that I go to heaven.

**Yiri7 re sk'istentsut, me7 nestsems ne xyum te t7ikw.**  
When I do bad to myself, it will take me to the big fire (purgatory)

**Tuxwt necwéymentsutstmen cuýtsem le7 p'usmen.**  
I am also feeling remorse, telling on myself, to your heart

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<sup>136</sup> Secwépemtsin has an inclusive we (that includes the addressee) and an exclusive we (that excludes the addressee). “our god” is invariably inclusive.

**Re newi7 xexé7 te tqeltk kukwpi7,**  
You, the Chief above,

**necwéymentsutstmen ren sk'estentsutst,**  
I truly feel remorse, telling on myself, for doing bad to myself

**neri7 me7 yegwentén ren p'usmen,**  
I will strengthen my heart,

**Es ta7ews cuýtsem ens k'ulem te k'ist.**  
So that I will not do bad any more.

**Le7 re sqweqwenstsnémcwes.**  
May you take pity on me.

Likewise, the Secwépemc version of the Lord's prayer invokes specific social notions:

**Llépencte-kucw re sk'istentsút-kt,**  
Forgive us for us doing bad to ourselves,

**Ts'ilem te sllepenctem-kucw re kw'ellqelmucws.**  
As we forgive our neighbours

**Ta7 ews ks necwentéc es t'ecwentés-kucw te k'ist,**  
Don't allow that the bad wins over us.

**Tseclegentéke kucw te k'ist.**  
Drag us away from the bad.

Aside from the concept k'estentsut, we find here terms like t'ecwentés, "win", which invokes gambling and thus the supreme spiritual power associated with gambling contests. Rather than being "delivered from evil", we much more graphically beg the Chief above or Creator to "drag us away" from bad things.

The first line of the Secwépemc Lord's prayer makes reference to rather different eschatological entities than the English one:

**Qe7tse-kt, ne kllén mutucw,**  
All our father, who lives (is camped) in a place that's invisible,

**Xwexweytes re qelmucw xexecit.s te7 skwest....**  
All the people/Indians imbue your name with power.

Here we have the Secwépemc concept of living and camping in place discussed in chapter 3, along with, not an entity like “heaven”, but a space that's invisible. Rather than “hallowed be thy name,” our people do honour to the Creator, our father, by imbuing, his name, in its genealogical and spiritual essence, with power. Again, the concepts xexé7 (power, smart) and skwest (name), were not neutral for our people but were already filled with meaning that connected humans, living things, the land and potential supernatural powers. As these words, already imbued with meaning, became part of Catholic prayers, the old meanings continued to live in these prayers. This is why, as long as our people prayed in our language, the meanings that our ancestors had known continued to survive. In the generation of my great-grandparents and grandparents, continuing on among the few of us that continue to pray in Secwépemtsin, prayers derived and translated from Catholic prayers are not signs and evidence that we gave up our world-view. Instead, we continue to uphold it within the churches that our people built to welcome and accommodate the new religion.

Likewise, our people interpreted the receiving of holy communion within the terms of reciprocity between hosts and guests. As one missionary lamented,

“they look at communion as a good thing, it's an honour to the person who receives it... they would gladly receive it every day, if one gave it to them, as they live a life-style of fishing, of negligence and laziness.”  
(translated from French; Dionne 1947)

As we look through the lists of individuals baptized between 1866 and the 1870s, when adolescent and child baptisms replaced adult baptisms, what stuck out was the fact that here were individuals ( in my great-grandparent and great-great-grandparent generation) whom I had heard about and been told stories about, who had been baptized. Yet, twenty or thirty years after their baptism, the stories that circulated among our peoples told of their deeds as t'kwilc. While they supposedly bowed their heads to the new religion, succumbing to the theology of Catholicism, I knew from the stories told by our people that they also continued to know and practise the powers and spiritual ways of our people before them. We continued to pray in our own language, and as I understood from my own great-grandparents, the ways in which they “embraced” or took part in Catholic rituals did, in their minds, not manifest either surrendering our lands or our souls to the colonizers.

In fact, many of my ancestors who continued to be immersed in the ways of expression, the metaphors and the rituals of the Catholic religion also readily embraced our continuing ownership and title to our lands, our way spirituality as it had existed before – but they didn't necessarily think that worldview and knowledge had to remain “pure”. They picked what they chose, they adapted, they chose religious discourse for political purposes, and, as I argue here, in the end hid our own religion, the most precious of all parts of our existence, in the church. This was to protect it. The meaning of prayer and religion was closely connected to the social fabric of the community. In the words of Theresa Jules (Interview, 7 October 1997),

**K'wenctsin me7 s- e me s- e me sxwqweléllcwems?**  
What time will, will the meeting take place?

**Stémi e tqwelmins.**  
What will they discuss?

**Nhé7 tek sitqt.**  
What day?

**kwenctsin k skewkw7es?**  
What time?

**Nhé7e me7 yigépes.**  
Where will they meet?

**Ts'ilem mé7e íri7.**  
That was how it was.

**Swéti7 m-tsúntem te kúkwi7:**  
The chief would say to anyone:

**E p-squqwlútep tek stémi...quqwlút-cwiye nxwqweléllcw.**  
If you have something to say, say it in the meeting hall.

**Tá7us ke7 scwelpílc me7 legwtsínm-ucw.**  
Don't turn around and spread gossip.

**Tá7us k slegwtsínmenc kupkúkwi7 méte tkwenem7íplem.**  
Don't gossip about the Chiefs and the Counsellors

**Stémi k ts'ucwlém ne7élye ne7 púsmen...pútemste ri7.**  
Whatever is not right in your heart, get it out.

**E pútemstc k stémi k sten ne7 púsmen... me7 m7ell-k.**  
If you talk about what's in your heart, you'll feel better.

**Tá7us k stexéllts'emenc íi7 ke7 smé7stem íi7 ke7  
úqwi...íuxwqúte7.**  
Don't hate your brother or your sister

**E ts'ucwlémes k stem...qwel7úsente nskwíst.s.**  
If there is something wrong, talk about it face to face.

**Ta7 yi7 k sle7s slegwtsínem.**  
Gossip is not good.

**Ta7 yi7 k sle7s e skestsínmenç ke7 úqwi ke7 smé7stem tuxwqúte7.**  
It's not good to swear at your sisters, your brothers for nothing.

**Yi Tqeltkúkwpí7 me7 éyemst.s yi7 tlrí7.**  
The Creator will punish you for that.

**Me7 éyenc yi7 k stémi ke tsúwet.**  
You will pay for all the things that you do.

**Héqen e yews te7 swi7 tl7éye te tmicw...**  
Maybe when your time here on earth is over

**me7 keçtsís te7 skwyúsem.**  
He will have you suffer.

**Me7 lenc te sts'7al e ts'i7...me7 lenc te s- stémi k kékkept.**  
You will feel your skin as it stings, you will sense something painful.

**Tqelkúkwpí7 e tsúnt.ses yi7éne t7en me7 xílem.**  
When the Creator says: This will happen.

**Me7 xílem-k me7 t7rí7.**  
That is what will happen to you

**Ta7 t7hen te7 sxílem.**  
There will be nothing you can do about it.

**Put me7 pensménst-k ne qwéyelqs...me7 lexentsút-k**  
You must put your trust in a priest, tell your sins

**Lexentsútmenc stémi k sten ne7én ne çptíñestn.**  
Telling about what is in your thoughts.

**Me7 keçtsít tek kwinc t7í7 te7 splég-em.(sp)**  
You will be given some prayers to say on a rosary.

**e qeçelçsínmenç Tqeltkúkwpí7 e s- e s-**  
if you ask the Creator for forgiveness to, to

**squqwençtsís cú7tsem...e sta7s e s7éyemst.s.**  
to once again have pity on you, not to punish.

**Kékkept yi7 s7eyentsút.**  
Paying for your sins is very painful.



**Képkept Ronnie.**  
Very painful Ronnie.

**RI – hm**

**TJ – Wenécwem.**  
That's the truth.

**Ell e k7ep-ucw...stémi-enke n7éye ntmicw ke7**  
And if you get sick, whatever it is that you know here on earth.

Of note is the fact that many of the people who were baptized (i.e. melamentem or doctored) by the priests between the late 1860s and 1880s were a number of individuals who were still known to be practicing tk'wilc in our communities by the 1920s and 1930s. In my community, among these was my great-grandmother Julienne's mother Melmenétkwe, who took the baptismal name Cecile. Among them was also Hyacinth Sisyesq'et's daughter, who came to be known as Ster (from Esther). Theresa Jules' grandfather K'estmicw received baptism and became Abil (Abel). Likewise, other communities had their baptized t'kwilc: in the North Thompson, Pilsa was a known t'kwilc who could make trains stop, had powers to foresee things. As Ida William reported, he would tell Father Le Jeune that he "was his own priest" rather than attend church.

As I mentioned, Hyacinth Sisyesq'et's daughter Ster was a tkwilc, although she took baptism and acted as godmother to many throughout this period (see Kamloops Diocese, Baptisms and Marriages, 1866-1882, ms.). Ster continued to act as tkwilc despite her "conversion" to Catholicism. Blind on one eye after she had been shot in the eye with an arrow by her brother Jules as a child, she used her

powers when her son, Hyacinth Taylor, got caught midstream in the current of Thompson River while trying to cross it (Nellie Taylor, interview, July 1994).

During this period, symbols of the Catholic church became freely incorporated into our own rituals. Thus, Ida William reported that one of her relatives, when she was sent on her étsxem, took along her prayer beads and rosary. However, although her elders had planned for her to become t'kwilc, she "didn't last" in her étsxem. Theresa Jules' narrative, below, that explains ways in which Cecile Melmenetkwe and Abil K'estmicw prophesized hard times, also shows the integration of Secwépemc and Catholic concepts around her beliefs in prophesy, the integration of holy water into the acts of t'kwilc.

**Mé7e yem xexé7-enke le q7éses yerí7.**

Well I guess that it must have been hard times long ago.

**Kítsentmes-enke w7ec e stektsíllens yem.**

I guess the people were experiencing a time of starvation.

**Qwempépes-ík7e...**

When it was all gone,

**Swéti7 me7 lu7 lexéxye7ctsems ílúne le w7é7cwen te Chase?**

Who was it that told me about it, when I was over there in Chase?

**Tá7a pyin k ts'i7.**

Today there are no deer.

**Le q7éses tsut: ts'i7 íri7 moose íri7 í7en.**

Long ago she said: the deer, the moose were all around.

**Íi7 stkelyál...íi7 íhé7en me7 wíktém-kucw tsut.**

There were herds of them, we saw them here and there she said.

**Yi7 pyin tsut ts'ílem re skéys.**

But now it seems there aren't many around.

**M-yews tken7éne.**  
And again over that way.

**Yi7 stsut: S7ek tsut te kenkín tsut.**  
She said: That's creeping along slowly our way, she said,

**me7 sléntem tsut k stektsíllen-kt-ekwe ri7.**  
we'll notice she said, times of starvation.

**Stektsíllen me7 kwenwéñtm-ekwe.**  
They say that, the times of starvation are coming.

**E ta7 e syecs re stektsíllen me7 íqwentls...**  
If it isn't starvation that kills us,

**ye7éne xyum te t7ikw...e tsrépes re tmicw.**  
there will be a big fire, when the world begins to burn.

**Yi Tqeltkúkwi7 e yews e stkwenem7ípleñs...**  
When the Creator lays down the law,

**re t7ikw me7 íqwentls...tqupt xweyt yi7élye.**  
the fires will kill us, everything here will explode.

**Ta7 me7 then me7 pe sxílem-kt.**  
There will be nothing we'll be able to do about it.

**E ta7-ekwe ri7...me7 yec yi7éne cúýtsem nekú7:**  
If that doesn't happen, it will be this other thing:

**Me7 lleptnúcw-kt ne7én ne tsékwscen.**  
All of the lights will go out on us.

**Tá7 tri7...t7éne coal-oil nukwll tá7tri7 me7 sts7ekws.**  
Not even the coal-oil will make light.

**Me7 ípep re tmicw...ta7 then te7 swíkem.**  
The earth will be in darkness, you won't be able to see a thing.

**Ta7 me7 swiktc k stem me7 teptépt.**  
You won't see anything there will be darkness.

**Tsukw-ekwe yi7éne yi...yi7éne yiri7 te tsekwsen7úwi...**  
They say that only the, this the candle,

**í7éne (candle)...yi (blessed candle).**  
that candle, blessed candle.

**Ta7-ekwe penhén yiri7 e stá7es te7 swecém ne7 tsitcw.**  
They say that you should never be without this in your house.

**Tsukw-ekwe yi7 me7 knúcwentls Ronnie.**  
Ronnie they say, that will be our only help.

**Tá7ews llé penc...me7 tselxemstéc.**  
Don't forget that, remember that.

**Me7 kwnem-k...nes-k ne Bishop...me7 tschtsis.**  
You take some, go to the Bishop, he will give it to you.

**Me7 xlitc-k tek tsekúwscen7úwI, blessed candle.**  
You ask for candles, blessed candles.

**Me7 yews yi7 ec sténes...me7 tskwíles íri7.**  
So you can have some all the time, have it ready.

**Xexé7-ekwe ri7 élye me7 skénems re tmicw.**  
They say that great disasters will happen here on earth.

**Wenécwem ri7 íri7 me7 sxílems.**  
Those things will really happen.

**E tá7wes snecwentsétsemc...**  
If you don't believe me,

**e tá7wes es necwentéc...me7 wiktc yi7.**  
If you don't believe it, you are going to see it.

**Xwexwéyt me7 ts'ílem me7 qeqitsínem íi7 stémi...**  
Everthing will make strange noises like,

**me7 egwmúp...me7 cucwestsín.**  
It will, it will be frightening noises.

**Ell me7 yews k sxillt-kt:**  
And then these things will happen to us:

**Ni7 me7 wéyelcwes le q7es te m-llwélentls tl7élye.**  
Those who have passed on before us, will appear before us.

**E ts7ékwes-ekwe nehé7 tek sitqt...nri7 k stsqéys...**  
They say that someday when the world once again becomes day, when it is supposed  
to be that way,

**Me7 ts7ekw cú7tsem yi7élye.**  
There will be light again all over.

**Me7 íqwentelt me7 xweyt-kt.**  
We will be killed, we will all perish.

**Cú7tsem tlri7 me7 tswemc-wíl-kt.**  
And again we will become alive again.

**Me7 ktelt cúýtsem e súpem-kt.**  
We will be given another chance to breathe again.

**E ptékes mé7e tlyi7 Ronnie...ta7 cú7tsem e skénems k stem.**  
So then, Ronnie, when all that has passed, nothing more will happen.

**Xweyt me7 pelqílcwes te ts'ílmes le q7éses-enke...**  
Everything will go back to the way it must have been long ago,

**e sle7s yi7élye tmicw.**  
So that the world will be good again.

**Me7 ts'ílem-ekwe íri7.**  
They say that is how it's going to be.

**Yerí7 yi7 slexéye7ctslem.**  
That was what I was told.

**Ta7 lu7 le xpé7e-kt le K'estmíc ell le Cecile lu7 wes k school-es  
tá7a...ne7éne.**  
Our grandfather K'estmíc and Cecile never went to school, no (right here).

**E lexéyenses lu7 k stem...tuxwtúxwt re sts'ílems íri7.**  
If they predicted something, it would be exactly that way.

**Tá7ti7 k stslegws k stem.**  
None of the facts were held back from anyone.

**Xexé7 lu7 te tsqwétsten.**  
They were a powerful relations.

Throughout this period of syncretic world-views, at times, I believe, they had compliance from missionaries, at other times they did not.

Among the missionaries themselves, some, like Father LeJeune or “persén” (Pere Saint) were highly respected among our people. Father LeJeune not only supported the use of Secwépemctsin in liturgy, translating hymns and prayers into our language; in addition, he taught us to read and write our language by means of the shorthand writing system of the time, Duployé shorthand (LeJeune 1896). After he arrived in Kamloops in 1889, he had initially taught it to Interior Aboriginal people to write the Chinook Jargon. Eventually a young Nlakapamux from the Merritt area discovered that it could be used to write Nlakapamuxcin. Soon, with the help of Le Jeune, our people seized on this writing system. Between 1891 and 1917, with the help of Secwépemc assistants at Tk’emlups, LeJeune published the Kamloops Wawa, a newsletter at times subscribed to by 2,000 Interior Aboriginal people. In 1904, Le Jeune accompanied Chief Louis of Kamloops on a trip to France and Rome, which resulted in an audience with the pope, and where Chief Louis and a few others demonstrated their shorthand writing skills, winning a medal. Throughout this period of the late 1800s to early 1900s, thus, there was a brief and flourishing period of literacy among our people.<sup>137</sup> It was during Le Jeune’s tenure in Kamloops during the late 1890s, that the Tk’emlupsemc staged elaborately acted Passion Plays.

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<sup>137</sup> In the Wawa and other sources of writing, our own people left a legacy of their literacy, writing letters to one another, advertisements, short narratives (Dave Robertson, pers. comm..)

On various occasions, LeJeune also wrote letters to support our chiefs in the pursuit of the title question and more adequate reserves. It was also LeJeune, who, in James Teit's absence, read the English version of the Memorial to Sir Wilfrid Laurier, after Chief Louis of Kamloops had presented it in a speech in Secwépemctsin (Kamloops Sentinel Aug. 26, 1910).

Other priests more sternly pursued the missionizing regime and methods of the Oblates (see Furniss 1995), communicating in the language, but trying to actively instill the strict methods of the "methode missionaire" that included kneeling before the church-condoned chief, and various methods of chastisement and corporal punishment. In at least one instance in Nlakapamux country, a local priest was eventually removed as a result of supporting corporal punishment (see Furniss 1995).

At least one of the priests, Father Grandidier, operated in an ambivalent role. On the one hand he variously wrote letters to government officials to help our ancestors in their pursuit of getting adequate reserves. On the other hand, as his correspondence with his own Bishop d'Herbomez and with government officials shows, he divulged intelligence to these officials about political meetings, intentions, political alliances and actions, having secured the help of two "half-breeds" as informers. It was also during Grandidier's tenure in Kamloops, during the mid-1870s, where he reported the Secwépemc reverting to "gambling, dancing and feasts." (Grandidier to d'Herbomez 22 February 1875). Grandidier was trying to use the Durieu system to maintain political order, to maintain a check on the chief

and his councilors, but on various occasions noted the “hypocrisy” of chiefs in accepting the religion, and the fact that “their motives are nothing more than some caprice, and most of the time they are like a bunch of sheep.”(Grandidier to d’Herbomez, June 28, 1873).<sup>138</sup> It is interesting that Furniss (1995) noted a similar resurgence, or at least hesitance to fully embrace Catholic religion, reported by Williams Lake priests. It is quite possible that this was attributable to the grave concerns regarding the land question that were surfacing at the time. Given Father Grandidier’s advocacy of reserve allocation, it is also possible that he chose to report these things to alert his Bishop and the Federal and Provincial authorities to whom the Bishop reported, to the urgency of dealing with the issue.

Among Teit’s fieldnotes is an interesting short typescript regarding the ‘Attitudes of the Indians towards the missionaries’. Although largely based on Nlakapamux attitudes, it is instructive. Teit divides the Aboriginal people into different “types” regarding their attitude to Catholic religion and missionaries.

The “type 1” Indian “says he sees no contradiction between the stories of his forefathers and those of the missionary. They both may be true.” The “Type 2” Indian is suspicious of the new religion and adheres very strongly to old customs and traditions. “Type 3”, “generally a young man” is different. He has a desire to talk English, have his children education, .. “he is not as sincere nor does he lead as moral a life as the Type 1 or Type 2. “Type 4” is “changeable and hypocritical, often very immoral, especially in a qite way, and is generally fond of whiskey and altogether rather a dangerous character” (Teit 1898-1910).

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<sup>138</sup> I thank Dr. Duane Thomson, formerly of Okanagan University College, for providing us with copies of Father Grandidier’s correspondence.



Last but not least, a significant aspect of Catholic eschatology was the dual world-view of good vs. bad, exemplified in a set of further oppositions, most notably God and the Devil. The concept of God as a benevolent, spiritually omnipresent but physically absent “creator” was one which reasonably integrated with our idea of Old One as Tqeltk Kukwpi<sup>7</sup>, the “chief above.” One could speculate that the idea of Jesus as Sisi Kri, where Sisi reputedly was one of the ways of referring to Sk’elép (see above, ch. 2) makes tacit connections between the messiah and the trickster. As the biblical story of the New Testament goes moreover, and as our people would have interpreted it, Sisi Kri departed, but will come back one day. Thus, in more than one way there are resemblances between Jesus and Sk’elép, who, however, does not personify everything that is good, but acts as a trickster. The association of the first missionaries with Sk’elép further speaks to this. Of central importance in the conveyance of the new religion and worldview, of course, was the very idea that where there is a God, there is a Devil as his opposite. Moreover, the Devil is the very personification of “evil” in opposition to “good.” The term for Devil that made its way into our language is tseq’minten, “the cast-away”, obviously after Lucifer. However, there remained the issue of whether a devil as the dualist antithesis to God exists in the Secwépemc world-view. Among one another, and in our own language, our people reflected on this issue.

Among the narratives by Secwépemc elders from our community was a story about a certain priest that raises not only the issue of the character of priests and their role among us; it also invites us to re-think the dialectic of religions and world

views. Below is a story Ida William from Chu Chua told (see R. Ignace and M. Ignace 1999 for a previously published version and commentary).

### **Re Qw'iyleqs ell re Sintse7 – The Priest and the Altarboy**

**Re qw'iyleqs tsúntem-ekwe te qelmúcw,**  
The priest was asked by the Indians,

**'Stémi ri7 w7ec k sts7illenstses núne re tswiwéy ne tswiwéyten,**  
what do the dead corpses eat over there in the graveyard,

**w7ec k illenes t'ek stem?**  
when they eat things?"

**Qeqnímens-ekwe re qelmúcw**  
The Indians heard it,

**Le t'ekwes t'ri7**  
when they go by there,

**w7ec-enke k illenes t'ek stem ne tswiweyten**  
There was something eating in the graveyard.

**Neri7enke k qelmucw, heqen, k illentem t'ek stem**  
It was people, maybe, that were eaten by something,

**Ne tqliq'**  
among the buried.

**Re qw'iyleqs tsuns re sintse7,**  
The priest told the altarboy,

**'Me7 kwékwentsemc t'u7 e r7áles pexyéwt!'**  
'Take me there tomorrow night.'

**Qwetséts.stem t'e sántse7 e r7áles,**  
When it was night, the altarboy set out with him.

**M-tsut-ekwe, 'Héqen yenke re sts'eq'mínnten w7ec k  
sts7illenst.ses re qelmúcw!'**  
He (the priest) said, 'Maybe it is the devil that is eating the people.'

**P'éntmes t'e sintse7 m-qwetséts.stmes te tswiwéyten.**  
He was piggybacked by the altarboy, and was taken to the graveyard.

**Le kitsc-ekwe t'u7,m-kóso-ekwe neri7 w7ec re sts7illenst.ses re  
xelxlelcw**  
When they arrived there, there was a pig there, so they say, they were eating corn.

**Nexell-ekwe re q'wileqs, ye-ekwe re koso neri7 k w7ec.**  
The priest was scared, because there was a pig in there [in the graveyard].

**Re koso m-t'ek7ilc t'ri7, m-kwt'ep.**  
The pig ran from there, and got away.

**T'7ek t'em tseq'elqwmentem re sintse7**  
As they were going along, he was bumped into [by a pig], the altarboy.

**Re qw'ileqs m-temtéwses ne koso**  
The priest [slid off and] rode on the back of the pig.

**T'ek7ilcmentmes-ekwe te koso**  
The pig took off with him,

**m-kekéw-ekwe wel re m-xwiyúcwtes re qw'ileqs**  
it was a long ways before the priest fell off.

**Tuxwtúxwt welílem-enke re sántse7.**  
The altarboy must have laughed really hard.

**'Kwéntem t'e stseq'mínten re qw'ileqs!'**  
'He was taken by the devil, that priest!'

**M-kitsc ne xqweqwentsínten.**  
He arrived at the church

**M-séwentmes t'e qelmúcw, 'kénem?'**  
He was asked by the people, 'What happened?'

**Tsut re sántse7, 'Ta7 ri7 ks stseq'mínten',**  
The altarboy said, 'It wasn't the devil, [also: "there is/was no devil"]

**Re kóso m-ullcw-enke ne tswiwéyten, íllenes re stem.**  
A pig must have gone in there, and was in there eating things.

**Yiri7 re stemtéwsmens re qw'ileqs m-t'ek7ílcstmes**  
The priest rode on its back and it took off with him.

**Kekéw-ekwe wel re m-xwiyúcwtes re qw'íleqs.'**  
They went far before the priest fell off!

**Ta7 k skwens re sántse7 cúýtsem es p'én̄tem!**  
He didn't take the altarboy again to piggyback him!"

(Told by the late Ida William from Chu Chua, 1987.

Translated and transcribed by Marianne Ignace, Ron Ignace and Mona Jules)

*The Altarboy and the Priest*, which Ida William in 1987 emphatically told as a *true story* – something that was told to her second hand as having happened in a previous generation's memory, although apparently not in her home community Chu Chua - is an interesting narrative that tells us of the Secwépemc side of the encounter with missionaries and Western religion. It refutes the image that Aboriginal peoples were passive recipients of this new religion. It shows instead that our ancestors consciously reflected on the content and purpose of Catholicism as embodied by the missionary. They maintained their own ways of experiencing and explaining the world in the face of the new religion; in doing this, they resisted missionaries' ways of explaining the world, and, as this story shows, our ancestors kept their sense of humour as they engaged in all those things. Like other good stories, "The Priest and the Altarboy" has different layers. First, it deals with the concept of the Devil itself. The missionary seizing on an opportunity to prove the existence of the Devil is put in his place: The Devil turns out to be a pig! The very sentence, 'Ta7 ri7 ks stseq'mín̄ten' carries an ambiguous message: It means, "it wasn't the devil" referring to the fact that what the missionary and he encountered in the graveyard was a pig, rather than the devil. Beyond that, the sentence can

mean “there is no devil,” and thus the episode is taken as theological proof of the non-existence of the Devil.

There is an additional important message in the story: The word for “altarboy” is *sintse7*, derived from the word for “little brother.” However, the “little brother” has to piggyback the priest. This very image evokes the notion of our burden as colonized people, bearing the burden of the church on our back. By exposing the priest’s false intentions, the indigenous “little brother” sheds the burden of the priest.

Other stories could be told about the priests, our altarboys, our prayers, t’kwilcs and the period in which we accommodated to, but also reflected on, and at times resisted the new religion. During the 1920s, the situation changed. With the changes to the Indian Act imposed under Duncan Campbell Scott in 1920 and 1930, Residential School attendance became compulsory. A new generation of priests replaced the old ones, priests who burned the books that had taught our people to read (Les Williams and Louis Matthews, pers. comm. 1998). More and more, under the increasingly oppressive collaboration of church and state, our people lost the physical and mental spaces to reflect on our own and the missionaries world-view.

**Stselxmém ne k stuxwtúxwt nek stícwts’e...yirí7 put.**

And the truth, a killing, especially that.

**E tselxmém-ucw ni7 tek stémi...**

If you should know about anything,

**me7 lexentsútmenc ni7 ne qwéyelqs**

confess that to the priest.

**E tá7a ri7 Ronnie te7 sxílem...me7 éyentsút-k ri7 nerí7.**  
Ronnie if you don't do that, you will pay for it.

**Me7 xlítmenc Tqeltkúkwi7 e squqwenstsís cú7tsem tli7**  
You ask for the Creator to have pity on you again from that.

**Le7 Mari...e squqwenstsís e sqwentsíct.s cú7tsem e**  
The Holy Mary, to have pity on you again to...

**M7ell-ucw tlyi7 te7 skllep.**  
You will be released from that.

**Oh Ronnie...xexé7 ri7...xexé7 ri7 sqwentsín.**  
Oh Ronnie, it's powerful, prayer is powerful.

**E í7ekstécwes íucw e squqwentsínes kwemtús...**  
When you pray all the time,

**Ta7 yi7 wes me7 kllépes tl7éne...nscwéhwen...nseg7ál.**  
It never leaves here, in the morning in the night.

**Then íi7 e w7ec-ucw.**  
Where ever you are.

**We7 tá7us put e sqwentsíntens íi7 e s-...**  
It doesn't have to be a church...

**Mé7e yem ta7 k stsx7énstmes k swet.**  
Well no one seems to be scolded for their actions.

**Me7 nes-k...qwentsín-k...cítlc-k neréy ne7 tsitcw.**  
You go, you pray, kneel down there in your house.

**Me7 llqmentéc e stsmelt wes e qwentsínes.**  
Teach your children to pray all the time.

**Me7 tsúñemctc te sqweqwentsín.**  
Show them prayer.

**Yi squqwentsín...yerí7 ne7élye ntmicw re xytum.**  
The prayers, here on earth is of great importance.

**Re xyum te tsúwet.**  
It's a big part of activities.

**E tá7us yi7 e s7eyemstéc...me7 qweqwentwíl-c-k.**  
If you don't honour that, you will become pitiful.

**Me7 llgwup íri7 stem...íri7 e stem.**  
Things will fall away, your belongings.

In this chapter, I have shown the ways in which our people perceived, interpreted and reacted to the new religion, Catholicism, as it was represented, enacted and disseminated by priests who came into our country during the 1840s, and established permanent missions in our midst during the late 1860s, at a time that coincided with the devastating impact of the smallpox epidemic, and the beginning of our people's dispossession from our lands. In the next chapter that follows, I will present and discuss the voices of our people regarding the land question, and our Aboriginal rights and title, as these rose to importance in the first decade of the twentieth century. In addition, I will discuss stories of satirical opposition to the Crown that represents the colonization of our lands.

## CHAPTER 9: A RANCH OF OUR OWN: THE INDIAN RIGHTS MOVEMENT, PETITIONS AND MEMORIALS

Early in the twentieth century, Chiefs of the Interior began a concerted effort to address their grievances about land and rights, resulting in various delegations that traveled to Europe and to Ottawa to press our Nations' Aboriginal title and rights issue as Aboriginal Nations, not as nucleated bands as the Department of Indian Affairs would have it.

In 1904, Chief Louis of Kamloops accompanied Father Jean-Marie LeJeune to Rome and France, eventually meeting the pope and winning a medal for his accomplishments in writing Chinook shorthand. On this occasion, Chief Louis accompanied Father Le Jeune to his home-land in Bretony, France, meeting Le Jeune's sister and relatives.

In 1906, three chiefs, Chillaheetza, an Okanagan from Douglas Lake, Basil David (locally known as Basil Dick) from Bonaparte, and Chief Capilano from Squamish, went to England to see King Edward. As Keith Carlson (2005) noted,

The delegates who traveled to London in 1906 seeking promises from King Edward VII were not asking for new protections. Rather, they wanted confirmation that existing Royal promises would be honored. They believed that during the colonial period Governor James Douglas had both verbally and in writing entered a "covenant that all land from the Indians should be paid for (Carlson op.cit.:6).



The delegates managed an audience with the king, but their visit was tightly controlled by the Canadian embassy, preventing them from submitting a written petition about land title. Nonetheless, their own impression was that they had communicated some level of grievance to the king (*ibid.*). Several years later, Chief Chillaheetza would say,

It is now seven years since I was asked by the people of my country to come in search of the Great Chief of the Whites, and my people gathered money together, and with two other chiefs I went to England to see the King. As we laid before the King over there all the disadvantages which the Indians in British Columbia were suffering from and Lord Strathcona told us that we must return and come to Ottawa and there lay our grievances before the Chief at Ottawa [the Prime Minister].

Kamloops Elder Tessie Dillabough, then 91 years old, remembered in 1989,

I was in school when that was going on. But I remember when they used to all gather and talk about this land claims. And then they would all chip in so much money, and they would pick out whoever was the smartest, could speak English, and they'd send them to Ottawa. And then there was times, too, one year Old Chief Louis went along with them, they went to England, and they wanted to see the Queen, and they told them that they can't see the Queen, but they insisted, but they never even did see the Queen. They just went so far and they came back. They didn't get no results anywhere at all from England. And very little from Ottawa.  
(pers. comm. Tessie Dillabough to M. Ignace, 1989)

The notion of the "Queen" representing the Crown - as opposed to the "King", her son Edward who had succeeded her in 1901 - is interesting, reflecting the nineteenth century discourse around the Queen as the representative of the Crown.

In 1908, the same delegation went to Ottawa and met with the Government, subsequently aligning themselves with the Nisga'a and the Coastal Indian Rights Association. In 1988, Bonaparte elder Louisa Basil remembered the circumstances of the Ottawa visit, noting the political meetings prior to the departure of the delegation, the meetings "in the guise of festivals" as the missionaries had described them:

All I know is that it was ten days those people were in Ottawa. I guess there were sure a lot of Indians. All the Indians had cows a long time ago. They are not like we are nowadays and have hard times. Every day someone would kill a cow. The next day when that was gone they would kill another. They must have killed about ten cows before the people left, maybe more, because there were so many people. You could see tents way down the other way and way back this way. Gee, sure was a lot of people. Gee, the drums all night and all day. Stick game. All the chiefs were having meetings and all the rest of the people doing different things  
(op.cit.)

In July 1910, the Chiefs of the Interior Nations gathered at Spence's Bridge north of the confluence of Thompson and Fraser River, and, assisted by James Teit, wrote a Declaration of Interior Chiefs at Spences Bridge, obviously aware of Laurier's impending visit to the Interior, and presented the Memorial to Sir Wilfrid Laurier on August 25, 1910.<sup>139</sup> According to coverage in the local Kamloops Sentinel (August 26, 1910), Laurier met with a large number of chiefs, "among them

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<sup>139</sup> In terms of the particular course of action to follow, Laurier, who "seemed sympathetic to their cause", appears to have advised the Indians to take their grievance to the Judicial Committee of the Privy Council of the Crown in London, whose authority at this time superseded that of the Supreme Court of Canada (see Tennant 1990:88)

the 102-year-old chief of the Fountain Indians" at the Oddfellows Hall in Kamloops "where one of the Chiefs on behalf of the delegation made an oral presentation [of the Memorial], with Father LeJeune [the resident missionary at St. Joseph's Mission], serving as interpreter.<sup>140</sup> Following Laurier's election defeat that fall, the Chiefs of the Interior presented a Memorial to the Hon. Frank Oliver, Minister of the Interior on May 10<sup>th</sup>, 1911 [at that time in charge of Indian Affairs]. Earlier the Indian chiefs had met with BC Premier McBride on March 3, 1911, who flatly refused to address their issues with the written submission, "The position taken by the local administration is, I trust, made clear to you and your colleagues that the Government has decided there is no question to submit to the Courts."

In January 1912, the Indian Rights Association, along with several Interior Chiefs (including Chief Louis, by then 82 years old, Basil Dick, Francois Selpaxen, Baptiste William and James Retasket), went to Ottawa and presented a Petition to Prime Minister Borden, reminding him of their previous attempts, and asking, "If you have neither power nor inclination to help us in the obtaining of our rights, then please recommend to England that they settle the case for us."

After the BC and Federal Governments established the Joint Reserve Commission (McKenna-McBride Commission), which, however, refused to address the overall question of lands, the Interior Tribes sent a statement in protest to Borden, asking again for their claim to be referred to the Judicial Committee of the Privy Council. During the Commission's hearings in the reserve communities of the

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<sup>140</sup> Teit himself was not present at the meeting but, at Edward Sapir's request, had left for the Northern Interior of BC to begin ethnological work among the Kaska and Tahltan.

Interior, chiefs tried to address their concern about the land question in their opening address to the commission; however, the Joint Reserve Commission, instead, made its recommendation to approve 87,000 acres of new reserve land and cut off 47,000 acres of existing reserve lands. The Chiefs of the Allied Tribes - the joint association of Coastal and Interior chiefs which had formed in 1915 - submitted the "Statement of Allied Tribes", protesting the findings of the McKenna-McBride Commission on two principal grounds:

1) "that the additional lands set aside are to a large extent of inferior quality and their total value is much smaller than that of the lands which the Commissioners recommend shall be cut off.", and

2) "In recommending that reserves confirmed and additional lands set aside be held for the benefit of bands, the Commissioners proceeded upon a principle which we consider erroneous, as all reserved lands should be held for the benefit of the Tribes" (Statement of Allied Tribes, 1917:7). The statement then set out the issues to address (i.e. settlement of Aboriginal title issue), and proposed a resolution process. In 1924, the changes to BC Indian Reserves proposed by the McKenna-McBride Commission were legislated by Parliament. Finally, upon continuing pressure by the Allied Tribes, Parliament established a special Joint Senate - House of Commons Committee to "enquire into the claims of the Allied Indian Tribes of British Columbia as set forth in their petition" (quoted in Tennant 1990: ). The Allied Tribes, represented by their lawyer, O'Meara, made their representation to the Commons Committee, although both the provincial legal team and the federal

representative refused the Allied Tribe chiefs and their legal counsel access to the Papers Connected to the Indian Land Question, a seminal document of evidence for their submission (Tennant 1990). The Senate Committee subsequently rejected the Allied Tribes' claim, and legislated Section 141 of the Indian Act, which made the raising of funds by Indian groups for purposes of advancing land claims, filing of court cases or retaining lawyers a criminal offence.<sup>141</sup>

### **The "Secretary": James Teit**

James Alexander Teit, a Scotch settler who had immigrated from the Shetland Islands to the Spence's Bridge area in the early 1870s, played a crucial role during the Interior peoples' movement. He had married an Nlakapamux woman, who died of Tuberculosis; Teit, having lived and worked in close proximity to the Aboriginal people of the Interior, was recruited to carry out ethnological work in the Interior under the auspices of the Jesup North Pacific Expedition by Franz Boas (see Teit 1900, 1906, 1909); he was subsequently recruited by Edward Sapir. Aside from his ethnographic work in the BC Interior, Teit assisted the chiefs of the Interior in their political struggles since the early part of the century, and continued to do so throughout the formation of the Interior alliance of chiefs and their subsequent alignment with the coastal Nations as the Allied Tribes of BC,

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<sup>141</sup> Tennant (1990:96-113) provides a detailed account and analysis of the Allied Tribes and their submission to the Joint Parliamentary Committee, where submissions were made by Peter Kelly (Haida), Andrew Paull (Squamish), and, on behalf of the Interior Tribes, by John Chillihetza and Basil David. On the basis of the Minutes of the Hearing by the Joint Committee, he also shows how the committee blatantly and arrogantly withheld evidence from the Allied Tribes, in particular the Papers Connected with the Indian Land Question. This act flies in the face of the principle of the Honour of the Crown.

where he sat on the executive committee until near his premature death in 1922 (see Wickwire 1998; Campbell 1994);

Teit acted as "secretary" or scribe in the writing and presentation, or as "witness" either explicitly or implicitly, in all of the memorials, declarations and presentations of the Interior chiefs. He moreover acted as "interpreter" when, subsequent to the Memorial to Laurier, a delegation of chiefs appeared before BC Premier McBride in 1911,<sup>142</sup> and before Prime Minister Borden in 1912.<sup>143</sup>

Teit's prominent role in ethnographic writing and in the aboriginal political movement of the BC begs the question of the authorship of the Memorials and petitions. A reading of the political texts in comparison with Teit's ethnographic writings - the latter edited by Franz Boas - reveals a striking difference: Teit's ethnographic monographs, including his summaries and renditions of Shuswap myths and oral histories (Teit 1909: 571ff) are written in the style of turn of the century Victorian prose, rather than within the conventions of speech of either Interior Salish language discourse or the Aboriginal peoples' conventions of English speech. The Memorials, however, reveal a different style. They easily translate into the aboriginal languages, and make use of English terms, meanings and

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<sup>142</sup> The notations of Teit as interpreter on these occasions throw some light on Teit's linguistic skills in Salish languages: He interpreted for John Chilheetsa who spoke Okanagan, but likely, also spoke Nlakapmxcin (Thompson). Teit also interpreted for Shuswap chief Basil David (aka Basil Dick), who likely spoke Shuswap, and for Nlakapmx Chief John Tedlenitsa. St'at'imc chief James Raitasket from Lillooet, however, spoke to Chief Thomas Adolph from Fountain, whose speech, either Shuswap or Thompson, was in turn interpreted by Teit.

<sup>143</sup> As perhaps a footnote to history, it appears that Edward Sapir, in whose employ Teit was through the National Museum in Ottawa, recruited the members of the chiefs' delegations to serve as linguistic and ethnographic informants in between their political meetings. They also posed for photographs as physical anthropology "specimen" as arranged by Sapir and Teit, and likely helped finance their trips in this way.

concepts familiar and common in the Aboriginal languages (see also Wickwire 1994).

While the Laurier Memorial and the other documents of the time were composed in English, they nonetheless reflect the way of speaking of the Interior Aboriginal peoples. This is clear from the simple but eloquent style of speech, the expressions and metaphors used, and of course from the concerns which are addressed.<sup>144</sup>

Wendy Wickwire has commented on the issue of Teit's authorship of the memorial, and cautions that

Just because the words appear in English, a language foreign to the chiefs, they do not represent the views of an outsider. Quite the contrary: in addition to all we can distil from the political history of the period and the commentaries on that history, the style and content of the surviving documentation has strong links to its Native signatories (1994:17).

Wickwire also shows that Teit's use of metaphor (the land as the "life" of a people, the "house" that represents the Aboriginal nation) matches the language use of Interior chiefs at the time who made speeches during their delegations' visits to government. In addition, at least the Memorial to Oliver shows a long list of actual signatories who would have read the document, and signed as part of a large group of political leaders who felt they were represented in the document. In sum, Teit did not compose the documents as an agitator, but functioned as the scribe for the chiefs during the land rights movement.

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<sup>144</sup> See below, on the issue of language itself.

## **The Chiefs**

Although the Memorial to Laurier itself bears no individual signatures, the Memorial to Frank Oliver written 10 months later has a list of 68 signatory chiefs attached. Beyond the Nlakapamux, Secwépemc, St'at'imc and Okanagan chiefs, this list also includes chiefs from the Sto:lo Nation, Ktunaxa and Carrier Nation. Tennant (op.cit: 84) ascribes the rise of the inter-nation BC Aboriginal groups' political movement during the early 1900s to the rise of "neo-traditional" chiefs. The lists, however, show that during the early 1910s, the chiefs representing the various bands as portions of indigenous "tribes" were by and large elderly chiefs born during the 1830s and 1840s : Chief Louis of Kamloops had been chief of Kamloops since 1859s; Andre Tinemesq'et from North Thompson, Baptiste William ("Will-yum") from Williams Lake, James Capel (Gabriel) from Clinton, Antoine Chelhautken (Ts'elewtqen), and Samson Soghomigh (Sxuxumic) of Esk'et, likewise, were from this generation which had personally experienced the gold rush, smallpox, the arrival of missionaries, the Reserve Commission and the usurpation of their lands by settlers. Others, like Joe Thomas Petlamitsa ("Joe Toma") and Basil David (Basil Dick, Ratskola) were in their fifties but had experienced much of the latter part of the nineteenth century firsthand. The narrative of events during much of the nineteenth contact as told in the Memorial embodies their first hand experiences, their witnessed and life lived knowledge.



In all cases, according to contemporary memories of past chiefs, and according to written documentation of the era<sup>145</sup> the chiefs who supported the Memorials and Declaration were the representatives arising out of indigenous modes of succession and selection.<sup>146</sup> Significantly, the elder I interviewed in the late 1990s either remembered them, or were told about them, and were/are aware of the genealogical connections to present people.

### **Themes of the Memorial**

In light of Sir Wilfrid Laurier's own francophone background, the chiefs refer to the first Europeans who came amongst them as the "real whites." Without doubt, this term is the English translation of the term for the First white people still employed by Secwépemc and other Interior Salish people in their languages, called **seme7 uwi** in Secwépemtsin.

"We speak to you the more freely because you are a member of the white race with whom we first became acquainted, and which we call in our tongue "real whites". As we saw in Chapter 4, the first whites credited with "first contacts" among the Interior Aboriginal people, of course were Scottish Northwest Company employees Alexander McKenzie and Simon Fraser on the Fraser River, David Thompson on the Columbia, and David Stuart and Alexander Ross, also of Scotch

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<sup>145</sup> See Teit 1930; Department of Indian Affairs Correspondence and Reports (RG 10 Series); Thompson River Fort Account Books; Oblate of Mary Immaculate records; Sproat census 1877)

<sup>146</sup> Teit (1909) notes that Secwépemc and Plateau chiefship in general often involved patrilineal succession, although he notes that the person best suited for office was invariably selected. Instances of chiefly succession in the Secwépemc Nation during the 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> century reveal the prominence of the latter.

origin, for the Pacific Fur Company. Possibly, there was a sense that the former were sent by the (French) Canadian Northwest Company. More significantly, perhaps, the subsequent fur trade as carried out through the HBC employed mainly French Metis and Iroquois/Metis workers, who were often the ones to interact with the native people. Thus, there was the association between the first séme7úwi, who had respected our boundaries, resources and laws, and Laurier himself as being one of those people, and thus reminding him to carry on the traditions established by his forebears.

#### "A Ranch of our Own"

On the ownership of lands and resources as they perceived it, the chiefs themselves refer to our homelands as a ranch:

"When they first came amongst us there were only Indians here. They found the people of each tribe supreme in their own territory, and having tribal boundaries known and recognized by all. The country of each tribe was just the same as a very large farm or **ranch** (belonging to all the people of the tribe) from which they gathered their food and clothing, etc., fish which they got in plenty for food, grass and vegetation on which their horses grazed and the game lived, and much of which furnished materials for pipes, utensils and tools, etc.,....

You will see the **ranch** of each tribe was the same as its life, and without it the people could not have lived."

There is significance in the very metaphor the chiefs use, the **ranch**. Since **the** 1870s, the Department of Indian Affairs had tried to impose the policy and

ideology of agriculture as the only viable livelihood (see Carter 1990), while at the same time refusing to grant reserves sizable and arable to support agriculture. As the Chiefs noted themselves, and as the 19<sup>th</sup> century documentary record reveals, Interior Aboriginal peoples had indeed practiced ranching and horticulture to supplement their livelihood since at least the mid-nineteenth century (see above, ch.4); By referring to our homelands or Aboriginal territories as our "Ranch", the chiefs thus use the metaphor that makes their lands compatible with the settler ideology, and that seeks to equate the significance they derived from their lands through hunting, fishing gathering as on par in both economic value and spiritual/emotional attachment with the ranches of the settlers.

The chiefs of 1910 unequivocally note the collective ownership of "tribes" – in modern usage Aboriginal Nations (see Canada1996a, 1996b) - over lands and resources.

As I showed in Chapter 3, the collective and joint sense of ownership of the "ranch" of Secwpehc territory expressed in the memorial matches the converging lines of evidence of the ethnographic literature, and matches the sense of territorial and resource ownership expressed by elders throughout the latter part of the twentieth century.

### **Opposition or Acquiescence?**

On the circumstances surrounding the alienation of Indian lands, the Chiefs

note:

"At this time [when the Whites made a government in Victoria], they did not deny the Indian tribes owned the whole country and everything in it. They told us we did. We Indians were hopeful. We trusted the whites and waited patiently for their chiefs to declare their intentions toward us and our lands ..... Gradually, as the whites of this country became more and more powerful, and we less and less powerful, they little by little changed their policy towards us, and commenced to put restrictions on us. Their government or chiefs have taken every advantage of our friendliness, weakness and ignorance to impose on us in every way. They treat us as subjects without any agreement to that effect, and force their laws on us without our consent...They have broken down our old laws and customs (no matter how good) by which we regulated ourselves. They laugh at our chiefs and brush them aside.... They have knocked down (the same as) the posts of all the Indian tribes. They say there are no lines, except what they make. They have taken possession of all the Indian country and claim it as their own.... They have never consulted us in any of these matters, nor made any agreement, nor signed any papers with us. They have stolen our lands and everything on them and continue to use same for their own purpose."

The Memorial to Hon. Frank Oliver expresses the same firm stance on the diverse nations' or "tribes" unsundered ownership and title of their entire respective lands;

They staunchly maintained that they never surrendered to either governments :

"If a person takes possession of something belonging to you, surely you know it, and he knows it, and land is a thing which cannot be taken away, and hidden. We see it constantly, and everything done with it must be more or less in view."

Written a year after the Laurier Memorial, the tone of the Memorial to Oliver is more urgent. The chiefs refer to their ranches and homelands as the land on which their own blood was spilled:

"Our tribal territories which we have held from time immemorial, often at the cost of blood, are ours no longer" – The association of blood was also used by Chief Basil Dick in his presentation to Borden. This, of course invokes the Aboriginal peoples' emotional and historic ties with Secwépemcúlecw, its landscape, resources and the memories of living in the land. It moreover invokes the past sacrifices that our people made for this land. For Secwépemc people, this notion also evokes the history of warfare and raids with surrounding groups (above, ch.3). Stories of ancestors captured in warfare during the mid 1800s, and of the defence and defeat of invading war parties were a vivid and important part of Secwépemc oral traditions and collective memories. Places where people long time ago gave their lives in battle continue to have special spiritual and symbolic meaning, connecting present people to the land via the ancestors who fought for that land and died on the land. The blood spilled on this land symbolizes the continuing ownership of the Secwépemc of their "ranch" or homeland.

Premier McBride, in response to the Chiefs' 1910 Spence's Bridge Declaration, had stated that the Indians "shared in the advantages arising from building of railroads, wagon roads, trails and other government utilities." To this, they answer in the Oliver Memorial,

"Perhaps we do, but have we not assisted in building them, and have they not been built up from the direct robbery of ourselves and our country? We claim that these things are rightfully ours, and yet we are made to pay for using them. Had we never assisted in the making of these railways and roads; had this Government paid us for all our timber that was used, and all our fifty millions of gold taken out of this country, and all our salmon that has been caught, and destroyed, and many other things which might be mentioned that went into the making of these roads.

On the curtailing of hunting, fishing and gathering, the chiefs note to Oliver:

"We pointed out [in a petition signed by fourteen of our chiefs and sent to your Indian department July 1908, ... the severe restrictions put on us lately by the government re hunting and fishing; the depletion of salmon by over fishing of the whites, and other matters affecting us. In many places we are debarred from camping, traveling, gathering roots and obtaining wood and water as heretofore. Our people are fined and imprisoned for breaking the game and fish laws and using the same game and fish which we were told would always be ours for food. Gradually, we are becoming regarded as trespasser over a large portion of this our country."

Five years later, during the McKenna-McBride Commission hearings in the communities of the Interior Nations, the chiefs in their opening statements referred to how they and their "children", i.e. their community members, had become poor,

how the seasonal rounds of the resource economy had become restricted: Chief Andre from North Thompson (statement to McKenna-McBride commission, October 15, 1915, Louis Creek) noted,

"You know how poor I am, just like as if I was tied up - therefore I am kind of poor. It seems as though I cannot help myself to better myself, like as if I were afraid all the time. Everything seems to be locked up now, different from what it used to be a long time ago. It used to be that everything was open to me, a long time ago. That is what I want. I want to be more free, so that I can get along better. I want to know who ever is the Chief that is going to help me on that point, to help me on what is good."

Joe Tomma, Chief of Skeetchestn (Deadman's Creek), 29 Oct. 1913:

"The grievance of all the Indians in British Columbia, that the white man has kind of spoilt us and locked us in. The white men have taken all the land and claimed all the water rights, and stopped us from hunting, fishing, etc. "

Chief Francois Silpahan, Little Shuswap Band, Oct. 25, 1915:

..."It is not on our reserve only that our hard feelings commence; it is for lands outside the reserves where the whitemen have stopped us. They stopped us from getting deer and birds, stopped us fishing. That is what we have told the Government in Ottawa....When the Indians were here a very long time ago, and able to look for their own food all over, the Indians used to increase, and they used to have good living." (McKenna-McBride Commission, Transcripts of Testimony. Union of BC Indian Chiefs.)

In these statements, the chiefs clearly express their concern of the lands beyond the reserves, of the curtailment of the harvesting of traditional resources they had experienced. In each case of the McKenna-McBride commission hearings, the commissioners immediately steer the topic back to the "use" of reserve lands.

### **Borrowed land**

In the Laurier Memorial, the chiefs note that the first white settlers who stayed on after the 1858 gold rush told them that they only wanted the use of the land for a few years:

"Soon they saw the country was good, and some of them made up their minds to settle in it. They commenced to take up pieces of land here and there. They told us they wanted only the use of these pieces of land for a few years, and then would hand them back to us in improved condition, meanwhile they would give us some of the produce they raised for the loan of our land"  
(Memorial to Sir Wilfred Laurier, August 25, 1910).

The notion that the tribal land owned by the Aboriginal people was *loaned* to settlers was in the collective memories of various elders during the 1980s and 90s. Christine Simon from Skeetchestn remembered her father, uncles and other elders of the community using 6-Mile Ranch - by then fee simple land pre-empted by a rancher - used to make hay at Six Mile and bring the hay back to the reserve [Skeetchestn] to feed their cows and horses. Mrs. Simon remembered being told by her elders that the understanding at the time with the white rancher was that he was just "borrowing" (kwlén) the land from the Indians at Skeetchestn:



He was just borrowing the land, 'cause why would my Dad, Louis  
Deneault, Buckskin Louie get a load out of there, Hyacinth Taylor.  
They all had wagons. They put their hay on and brought it back.  
That's what I know [translated from Secwépemtsin].

### **The Memorial as Oratory: Style and Meanings**

A common practice of ethnohistorians has been to reduce extremely complex and culture-specific discourses to a residual of "historical fact", or to mine them for "nuggets" of historical truth. Oral historians, in the meantime, have alerted us to the importance of understanding the social practices and cultural meanings underlying discursive practices. Ridington (1990) has called such knowledge embedded in discursive practices "storied speech." Tonkin (1992) and others have alerted us to the social conventions and structure of narratives about the past.

Compared to the literature on Northwest Coast oratory, predominantly a feature of potlatching (Dauenhauer and Dauenhauer 1990; Ignace 1992), relatively little has been published about the style, content and conventions of oratory on the Interior Plateau. We know at the same time from early accounts that oratory or "palaver" was a significant facet of public feasts or gatherings, as observed by early traders, such as Simon Fraser, Archibald MacDonald and David Stuart. The Hudson's Bay Company Records for Thompson's River Fort or Kamloops make numerous references to formal speeches being made by chiefs from the Secwépemc Nation or other Nations who visited the post.

In its oratorical and discursive dimensions, the Memorial follows the conventions of speechmaking common in western North America: The establishment

of connections with the audience. In this case Sir Wilfrid Laurier's<sup>147</sup> French background is emphasized, as thus connected to the "seme7uwwi, who respected the Aboriginal peoples' land tenure, culture and political organization. Thus symbolically linked to the seme7uw'i, the chiefs ask Laurier to come "full circle" by entering into treaties to settle the land rights and political rights of the peoples.

The discursive and symbolic meanings expressed by the Interior Salish chiefs also emphasize the aboriginal cultural meanings attached to the relationship between guests and hosts, that I have briefly explained in chapter 3: The chiefs note:

With us, when a person enters our house he becomes our guest, and we must treat him hospitably as long as he shows no hostile intentions. At the same time we expect him to return to us equal treatment for what he receives. Some of our our chiefs said, 'These people wish to be partners with us in our country. We must, therefore, be the same as brothers with them, and live as one family. We will share equally in everything - half and half - in land, water, timber, etc. What is ours will be theirs and what is theirs will be ours to help each other to be great and good  
(Memorial to Sir Wilfrid Laurier, 1910)

We must understand the meaning associated with these statements connection of guests and hosts in light of the Interior Salish understanding of the relationship between guests and hosts. Given the "pitiful" position of guests as *saxliteme*, expected to show acts of reciprocity towards the kindness of their hosts, the phrase,

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<sup>147</sup> The memorial spells Laurier's first name as Wilfred rather than Wilfrid, his actual name – probably Teit's oversight.

"We treated them as [guests] and then waited to see what they would do" implies the Interior Aboriginal people's notion of reciprocity. Within Aboriginal society, when a person invites someone or a group of people as a guest, it is tacitly understood that they will at a later date return the favours they received. Hospitality is expected to be reciprocated without needing reminders. This is at the crux of the relationship between the Interior peoples' white guests and hosts: From the perspective of the former, the fact that they allowed the white guests into their land and treated them as hosts created a tacit but binding obligation on part of the guests which, however, the whites did not honour in subsequent years. The chiefs themselves note this expectation:

With us when a person enters our house he becomes our guest, and we must treat him hospitably as long as he shows no hostile intentions. At the same time we expect him to return to us equal treatment for what he receives (instead they say the Indians know nothing and own nothing)-this is how our guests have treated us - the brothers we received hospitably in our house (ibid).

The history of political control by Federal and provincial governments is thus perceived of as based on failed reciprocity, and the neglect and denial of the obligations incurred by guests vis-a-vis their hosts.

### **The Legacy of the Memorial: The Past in the Future**

More than ninety years have passed since the Interior chiefs wrote and presented the Laurier Memorial. Subsequent decades saw the entrenchment of Indian Administration as set out in the Indian Act, and the carving up of the

Aboriginal Nations of the Interior through Indian Agencies and Band administration. For the past two decades, the Memorial has given a voice to re-unifying the Secwépemc Nation. Told in the very words of our elders, it has provided the ideological underpinnings of Aboriginal nationhood, the collective sense of the ownership and use of the resources of the nation, of the need for treaties, and of the injustices of the nineteenth and twentieth century. The Secwépemc Museum in Kamloops now prominently houses a museum display on the Memorial, alongside a replica and explanatory plaques of the staff of office, hatchet pipe and image of Queen Victoria. The Memorials as signed by all the chiefs in the Nation provided an ideological basis for the re-establishment of Shuswap gatherings during the mid-1980s: annual gatherings of members of the whole nation, who, like the "festivals" described and undermined by Grandidier, bring the Nation together renew the sense of joint culture, language and kinship, and bring the chiefs together to engage in dialogue.

The memorial is powerful in the sense that it is spoken by the ancestors, reminds us of the history of the nineteenth century, but, like any good ideological tool, it also lays out solutions to the present struggle around lands, resources and governance that the Secwépemc Nation and other Interior Nations are facing. While the Memorial has become a cornerstone at public unity meetings, in presentations to governments and in land and resource agreements, we will see if its words are prophecy or voices from the past that will come to haunt our future.

## **Other Voices from the Early Twentieth Century: Stories of the Crown**

While the discourse of the Memorial to Laurier, the Memorial to Oliver and other petitions of the time represents our people's way to convey our claims to our inherent rights to the land, our sense of Aboriginal nationhood, and our deplorable social and economic conditions to government, there were other voices questioning historical injustices, the behaviour of the representatives of the Crown, and the fate of our people. These voices existed within our community, rather than to the outside, and they existed in satirical stories involving characters from the past and present. They existed as voices of opposition in our community. Interestingly, the few that happened to be recorded were hardly understood as such for the longest time.

During the 1960s, linguist Aert Kuipers recorded a short story about a man named "Peteseg" from Seymour Pitel of Deadman Creek as one of his examples of texts that could serve as a reference for linguistic analysis of Secwépemtsin. This story was subsequently circulated in Secwépemc communities as part of a Western Shuswap Reader (Dixon, Palmantier and Kuipers 1982) and then published in a linguistic publication of Secwépemc narratives (Kuipers 1989). Kuipers mentioned that "only minor editorial changes were made as suggested by Mary Palmantier and Cindy Belknap, these include a few cases where an English word on the tape was replaced by a Shuswap one." However, when eventually listening to the original tape recording with Seymour Pitel - who was one of the Skeetchestn elders during my childhood - it became clear that, in his eagerness to delete English words from

the text, either Kuipers himself or his editors had changed the entire meaning of the story. As it was published, the story, without the interjected sentence, reads like any funny anecdote about a person (chief) who is duped by another person. With the interjected sentence, “that’s the king he met from the Old Country, Peteség,” that Seymour Pitel made after the first sentence, we suddenly know that this is a story that involves not a local chief, but **the King of England**. Told among our people in our communities, the story of Peteség (pronounced “Petesá”) outwitting the King of England is a story of protest, apparently composed by people in the middle of the land right movement.

**W7ec re Peteség, t7éyentmes te xyum te kúkwpi7. That’s the king  
he met from the old country, Peteseg.**

There was a man named Peteseg, he was met by the big chief.

**Yiri7 re stsúntem re Peteség, “t’he7e k tskwencwes xwexweyt te7  
nts’e7sqexe7, xwexweyt te7 tspenpintu te nts’e7sqexe7, cw7it re7  
st’amalt, cw7it re7 koso?”**

Peteseg was told, ‘where did you get all those horses, all those pinto horses and your many cattle and pigs?’

**Tsútes re Peteség: “ctseq’menétkwentsems ren uqw’i ne  
ctsetikens re pésellkwe, tntsems...,” tsut, “ne qw7ep, m-  
ctseq’menétkwentsemses.**

Peteseg said, ‘My brother threw me in the water in the middle of the lake, he put me, he said, in a sack and threw me in the water.’

**Yiri,” tsuns, “w7ec..., w7ec neri7, tskwékwen yi7ene tspenpintu  
te nts’e7sqexe7 te ck’emúlecws yiri7 sewllkwe, re pésellkwe.**

There, he said, there were, there were... I took these pinto horses from the bottom of the water, the lake.

**tqéyen re koso, st'amalt, xwexweyt yiri7 pyin re tswiktc ne7ene,  
kukwpi7, tl'u7 ri7 re tsqéyenes te séwllkwe, te ck'múlecws re  
séwllkwe."**

I rounded up the pigs, cows, everything that you here see now, Chief, I drove them  
this way out of the water, from the bottom of the lake.

**Yiri7 m-re stsuntem te kukwpi7, "cwecuý, ts'kénem me7 re  
sctseq'menétkwentsemc, me7 tskweném-wen tek tspenpintu tek  
nts'e7sqéxe7, tek st'amalt ell koso ts'ilem me7 scw7it.s , scw7it.s  
te7 stskwném.**

Then the Chief said to him, Come on, how about you throw me into the water, [that  
way] I'll get pinto horses, cows and pigs, just as many, as many as you got.'

**Tsuntem te Peteség, "Extek, cwecuý!  
He was told by Peteség, 'That's right-ok, let's go!'**

**Qwetsétstem re xyum te kukwpi7 ne7ene put ne suten te  
nexlewsten, ne stsetéwst.s.**

He took the chief right to the middle of the bridge.

**Yiri7 tsuntem yiri7 xyum te kukwpi7, "cuý, ullcwe ne7ene te  
qw7ep, me7 yegimtsentsnes, me7 ctseq'emnetkwentsnes!"**  
Then he told the big Chief, 'Come on, get into this sack here, I'll tie it up and throw  
you in the water!'

**Yiri7 m-re sqwetséts es tseq'menetkwentem.**  
Then they left to throw him in the water.

**Yiri7 re snecwmi7s le kúkwpí7.**  
And that was the end of the Chief.

Seymour Pitel continues in English at the end of the story, "That's a short  
one. And the big chief he couldn't come out, he couldn't come out of that sack. You  
know, Peteseg told him a good one. That's a good little story, though."

*Seymour Pitel or "Simú" (born ca. 18s, died mid 1960s) was one of the elders  
in our community during my childhood. I remember, he walked with a severe limp,  
having got shot in the hip after he got caught in bed with another lady. He was well  
known as a lady's man. I remember a funny story about him that was told by my*

*elders: One of the ladies he was having an affair with was the lady who led the Secwépemc prayers in our church. One Easter time, as she was leading the prayer of the stations of the cross, in a Freudian slip, her mind must have been on other things. Instead of beginning her prayer with “O sisi kri,....”, she began, “O Simú, ....” thus giving herself away. As in the stories of Sk’elép, the sacred and the profane were closely connected, even in our church!*

Stories aside, Seymour Pitel had a connection to the Indian Rights movement of the Secwepemc chiefs during the early part of the century. As Tessie Dillabough (interview, 1988) told Marianne Ignace, his mother Annie, who died during the 1870s or 80s, was the daughter of Chief Louis of Kamloops. According to Tessie, Seymour’s grandfather Chief Louis raised Seymour after his mother’s death. Seymour Pitel thus would have lived in Chief Louis’ household during his youth, and would have heard about, and witnessed, our people’s Aboriginal rights and title concerns as a member of the household. In all likelihood, Chief Louis himself would have told him about the issues, and the land title movement was part of Seymour Pitel’s historical consciousness.

It is possible that Louis himself told him the story, although it appears that this story circulated among our communities. In 1900, James Teit recorded the “Story of Butcetsa’ and White-Chief, as told by Sixwilexken of Dog Creek (Teit 1909:733-735). In summary, the story goes as follows:

Butcetsa’ (“he is said to have been an Indian. The meaning of his name is unknown”) was a lad who lived in a certain village. Far



away in another country lived many people whose chief was noted for his wisdom and magic. One day Butcetsa', who had great magical powers, told his friends that he intended to go and steal the wife of White-Chief (said to be a seme7 who "possessed great wisdom and magical powers"). Asking the wind for help, Butcetsa asks the wind for help, transforms himself into a pinto tom cat (!), which White-chief's wife takes in. When White-Chief leaves for a great feast and his wife refuses to go, saying she has to look after her cat, Butcetsa changes back to a human and induces the woman to run away with him. After White-Chief finds his wife gone, he pursues her, but Butcetsa changes her appearance, so her husband does not recognize her.

White Chief subsequently marries again, and Butcetsa decides to steal his second wife, changing himself into a rooster. When White Chief's wife is in her separate house while menstruating, he reveals his human form and induces her to flee. As in the first episode, White-Chief pursues them, but does not recognize his wife when he sees her, because Butcetsa has changed her appearance. Following that, "Butcetsa took his woman to his own country also, and now he had two wives. He said, 'The noted White-Chief has neither wisdom nor magic.'

Butcetsa then contrives to steal the chief's horses. One night, he rounds them up and drives them away. When White-Chief pursues him, Butcetsa conjures up a European house along the trail, and changes the colour of the horses to white. Again, White-Chief does not recognize his horses when he sees them. Butcetsa then steals a second herd, this time transforming them into pintos. Again, the Chief does not recognize his horses. Butcetsa takes a third herd, changing them into black horses, and a fourth herd, changing them into buckskin colour horses.

White-Chief, who "could not be a great chief without having plenty of horses" (p. 734) decides to buy new horses. Butcetsa drives the stolen horses, still in changed colours, back to White-Chief's country and sells them to him. When White-Chief asks him how he obtained so many horses, Butcetsa tells him that he found them on the bottom of the lake. – Here continues the final episode, as told by Seymour Pitel, where Butcetsa dupes White-Chief into jumping into a sack, being thrown in the lake and subsequently drowns.

...”Now Butcetsa drove away the horses he had sold, and joined his two wives. White-Chief’s people said they were glad that he had disappeared, for he was foolish; and they elected another chief, who had more sense (op.cit.:735).<sup>148</sup>

Yet another such story is what Aert Kuipers titled “The Gambler’s Son and Red Cap”, also told by Seymour Pitel (Kuipers 1974:110-16). In translation:

There was a rich man here at Deadman’s Creek [Skeetchestn]. His land was large, a big plain, it was filled with his cattle, many hundred heads of cattle. He had many race-horses, much money, much cattle, many young men were working for him. There came to him, having heard of him, a great chief from across the great lake, whose name was Red-Cap.<sup>149</sup> He came to race against him, to make bets. The old man lost, he lost his land, he lost all his money, he lost his cattle, he was cleaned out. The old man and his wife were left with nothing at all. Rich as he was, the old man had lost all his possessions. They lived there, having lost all their belongings. So he was living there, trapping squirrels and rabbits, he was trapping them to keep alive. Well, he had a son Tli7se.

With the help of a pitiful colt, “a pitiful colt so hairy, with a dragging tail, pot-bellied,” he challenges Red-Cap to a horse raise, where Red-Cap bets the possessions he gained from Tli7se’s parents. Tli7se wins the race, and wins back his parents’ possessions.

“Then Red-Cap told Tli7se, ‘Go way over the big lake, beyond the edge of this country, there you will cross the big lake (ocean), and visit me in my house there.’

Tli7sa sets out across the land, coming to a great prairie with tipis [the Plains], where “his grandmother” warns him, “you are on a risky errand, (going) to the big chief, risky, risky! If he defeats

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<sup>148</sup> Nels Mitchell (unidentified tape from Secwépemc Cultural Education Society oral history collection) tells another story of Peteség, similar to the one told above.

<sup>149</sup> I interpret “Red-Cap”, tektsiq re qmuts, to refer to the red velvet fabric on the crown of the British king, thus indicating, that Red-Cap represents the Crown, or King of England.

you, you'll die!"

Tli7sa gets to the "big lake" [the ocean], and crosses the water on the back of a golden eagle, our most sacred animal. The eagle warns him, "I'll tell you, you are on a dangerous errand; if you can't win against chief Red-Cap, he'll kill you. I'll tell you: He has two daughters. If you can catch the younger one and take her yellow garter (tq'elsxét'emcen), then you'll win."

Upon arriving on land [Europe/England], he sees two women who bathe in a lake. Tli7sa steals the younger girl's garter, apparently her power. She begs him to return it, but eventually says, "alright, I'll help you in all the tasks my father gives you to perform. However difficult the task, I shall finish for you, if you think of me and do not forget me. If you forget me, you will suffer greatly.

Tli7se then goes to see her father, who puts him to tests. He first tells him to move the lake to another place, and in its old place plant grain, including oats. Tli7se does this with the help of the girl. Next, he is asked to clear a mountainside of trees and stones to plant crops. He again does this with the help of the girl. His third test is to sleep in a pigsty, apparently the hardest feat. Again, the girl helps him and he succeeds. Red-Cap then says, "Alright, take my youngest daughter as your wife." During a great feast, where all sorts of guests "came and looked at the clever Indian named Tli7se who had won against the great chief" the girl suggests they flee to his country. With the father, as a thunderous noise behind them pursuing them to kill them, they flee on Red-Cap's white horse, which is "his power." As they flee with Red-Cap in pursuit, the girl took hair from her head that she throws on the ground, and it becomes a thorn bush that entangles her father. As he pursues them again, she takes more hair from her head which becomes ice. Almost making it to land [the American continent], Red-Cap drowns in the ice. While they still hear him in pursuit, they change into loons, as Red-Cap shouts, "oh, now you have defeated me, Tli7sa. Return home from here.

What do we make of these stories? They imagine resistance to the powers of the Crown, here presented as land hungry and out to get Secwépemc people's

possessions. Beyond that, the above story presents the powers of the Crown not so much as political and economic powers, but ultimately resting on spiritual powers: The land is won from the Aboriginal people in a bet, the outcome of which our people see as resting on the spiritual powers of the bettors. Tli7se is warned about the supreme spiritual power of Red-Cap. In the end, though, it is Tli7se's power, helped by Red-Cap's daughter, that prevails. Tli7se, the Aboriginal person, wins over the Crown by way of his spiritual power.

There is a prophetic side to this story: Not coincidentally, the hero of the story is Tli7sa, who in the ancient world had beaten the cannibals and dangerous powers in our country, ridding it of the monsters and powers that harm us as humans. In the above stories, Tli7sa is brought back in name, but also in persona, to deal with new "cannibal powers", namely the Crown leading and enabling European settlers to take our land.

As I noted above, in Teit's 1909 monograph, Butcetsa's/Peteség's story is included among de-historicized "mythologies." Wendy Wickwire (2004) has shown how Boas' editorship of Teit's work during the early part of the twentieth century in general involved the removal of references to Interior Salish people's political and historical concerns. Teit, on the other hand, throughout his activity in the Indian rights movement, was keenly aware of the political concerns and struggles of our peoples. In various stories recorded from Nlakapamux and Okanagan storytellers during the very time he accompanied the Chiefs as "secretary" of the Interior Tribes

and then the Allied Tribes, we see further reflections and satirical comments on political changes and events. One such narrative involves Coyote losing the "Paper."

Coyote once met Old or Great Chief. Old One said, "You have used your excrements as a counselor for a very long time. However, this method is inconvenient. Each time you desire advice, you have to defecate. Also, there is danger of your excrements getting cold. I will give you a paper. Carry it with you. When you need advice, consult it." Coyote carried it in his hands for several days, but he did not like to carry anything in his hands. One day when he was defecating, or otherwise engaged, he laid it down and forgot about it. Several days later he wanted advice about something and found he did not have the paper. He went back a long way and searched for it, but could not find it. Perhaps the wind had blown it into some hidden place. Coyote had to resort to consulting his excrements again for advice.

This is how Coyote lost the paper. If Coyote had not lost it, the Indians would now know writing, and the whites would not have had the opportunity to obtain written language. It was because of the foolishness of Coyote " (Teit 1937:173)

This short story represents a reflection on the worth and value of paper, the written word, as providing "advice," what we would call tkw'enem7iple7 - the input and information that a judge and advisor to the chief would give, by understanding circumstances, knowing evidence, seeing, even predicting. Teit comments, "Coyote's use of his excrements for advice occurs frequently in tales of the Salishan tribes. It was one of the magical powers given to Coyote by Chief, according to the Okanagan tale "Coyote," perhaps our way of saying he used his own b.s. The paper, what we call stsq'ey, which also signifies our right, that Coyote loses, comes from Old One. At least in this version of events, it's all Sk'elép's fault. However, there is another

layer to Coyote as scatologist. As much as in the modern context of trickster stories we might be compelled to think of the connection between excrement and paper as a connection that involves “bullshit”, we need to look at the message implicit in the use of excrement in the act of counselling (tkw'em7iple), which in turn guides decisions. In our hunting past - and still among us who are contemporary hunters on our land - it was extremely useful to be able to have a detailed understanding of excrement can tell us: From the excrement of game (and humans!) we can detect what the animal ate, where they last were, what state of health they are in, and in what direction they were travelling. Far from bullshit, Coyote's scatology involves a detailed reading of nature. It could be questioned whether record keeping on paper improves on schatology in all aspects.

In storyteller Harry Robinson's long story “Coyote Makes a Deal with the King of England, Coyote intervenes with the King of England to persuade him to make a deal, but the king, “they do some, just a little, and he leave it alone,” - perhaps the Royal Proclamation of 1763. Later on, many monarchs later, the Crown brings over a book, the padlocked “Black and White.” Although Harry Robinson's story appears like a yarn, I see connecting dots of historical events in it. I interpret the “Black and White” to be the *Papers Connected to the Indian Land Question*. On the other hand, Harry Robinson adds symbolism: The “Black,” he says, are Indians. The “white,” then, are the White settlers. On written pages, black is where the messages are, the information and knowledge. “White,” of course,

in a book, are the “empty” spaces. Our side is knowledge, information. Theirs is blank....

Last but not least, Harry’s story leads to some Indians knowing about the “Black and White” book, which exists in four copies only. By hiding the book, the powers that be keep Indians from successfully settling the land question. - As research tells us (see above, p. ), this is precisely what happened, when the Federal and Provincial representatives on the Senate Committee established in 1927 to determine the land question refused the Allied Tribes access to the Papers Connected to the Indian Land Question, thus refusing them access to their evidence.

In summary, what appears as “mere stories” contains historical references, represents reflection on, and consciousness on past events. In Peteseg’s case, our cultural heroes of the past get back at the colonizers. In Harry Robinson’s case, Coyote is connected to the unfolding history of the Land Question. Finally, Sk’elép makes a re-appearance, reminding us of the limited uses of paper, as opposed to the detailed reading of nature, which leads to arguably more accurate truths than writing on paper.

## **CHAPTER 10: YENKE K STSPELQ'ILCS RE SK'ELÉP – COYOTE'S SECOND COMING**

In the preceding chapters, I have presented and analysed narratives from my people's past collective memories that present the collective historical consciousness of our people. They have included the memories from the time of Sk'elép and the time of the Transformers several thousand years ago; the many stories that provide us with our elders knowledge to look after the land, and the reminiscences of past resource gathering activities on the land, in the familiar named landscape of our ancestors. In addition, I have presented stories that show our people questioning the authority of the newcomers, and of missionaries. In narratives of living on the land, our elders not only detail the travels on our land and the use of our resources; their stories also defy the "no trespassing" fences that were set up by settlers. As shared are memories, they are the collective historical consciousness among Secwépemc elders from such diverse communities as Skeetchestn, Neskonlith, Esk'et, Williams Lake, Canim Lake and Bonaparte that connects our present with our past.

The memories of this generation of people, told in our language, connects us to the concerns raised by our chiefs in 1910, and in general since the late nineteen hundreds. Their stories give meaning to our connection to the land, allow us to throw light on the meanings, and thus on our past history. Last not least, they warn



us to stay true to ourself in our own ways, rather than copying the ways of the immigrants, lest we lose our power.

To conclude my own narrative, I end with a stspetékwle, a parable of Coyote and his Hosts, but one that concerns us as Secwépemc.

### **Coyote and his Hosts - Txlítentem re Sk'elép**

**W7ec-ekwe re cwesétes re sk'elép, ne7élye ne tmicw-kt.**  
Coyote was traveling here in our land,

**T'7ek-ekwe, m-yews-ekwe re st7éyens re skeñcis.**  
As he was walking along, they say, he met Grizzly Bear

**Sklíkenstemt, yiri7 re skwest.s.**  
Back-Fat-Man was his [Grizzly Bear's] name.

**M-ts7ecwes re skeñcis, es wikt.s yi7ene xéxe7 te sqélemcw, xexé7 yem re sk'elép.**  
Grizzly Bear was happy to see this smart man, this powerful Coyote.

**M- yews re txliténs es ullews ne tsitcws es metés.**  
So he invited Coyote to his house to feed him.

**M-tsuns re sk'elép, "yi7éne me7 wikt ri7, ne7éne ren tsútswet.**  
And he told Coyote, "this, what you will see, is my way.

**Ta7 ews ri7 k stet'ipentsemc, me7 xéne-k e xwts'ilcucw te7s tet'ipentsemc!"**  
Don't copy me, you will get hurt by copying me, when you try it out.

**M-yews re spúsens ne7ene re ck'mikeñs re sem7é7ms yem re skeñcis.**  
And then Grizzly rubbed his wife's back,

**M-nik'mes neri te sp'elléllc, oh! Le7 te tsiqw te ts'i7, le7 te  
sklliken yem.**

And he cut off a slice of it, oh, it was nice red meat, nice back fat.

**M-yews re sqw'lsentés ne7ene ne syéqwilltems, m-metcits ri7 re  
sk'elép.**

Then he roasted this in his fire, and he fed this to Coyote.

**M-pestúsenses re ck'míkeñs cuýtsem, yiri7 re skeñcis re  
sem7é7ms re ck'míkeñs.**

Then he rubbed her back again, his wife's back.

**M-yews yiri7 re sta7es ts'ilems ks kénems neri7.**

And it was as good as ever.

**Oh! m-yews re sptinesems yem re sk'elép,**

Oh, and then Coyote thought,

**"Ah! Xexéx7e-ken yiri7! Xwent ri7 ken sxixlem!**

Ah, I am smarter, I can do that, too!

**M-yews ri7 re tsxlítens re Skllikeñstemt es tsnest.s re newi7s re  
tsitcws es metés.**

And then he invited Skllikeñstemt to come to his house so he could feed him.

**T'ri7 m-yéqwillmes, xyum re syeqwilltems,**

He made fire, he made a big fire.

**M-tsut es qw'lsentés yem re ck'míkeñs es metés re skeñcís.**

He wanted to roast his back to feed the Grizzly.

**K'emell tsukw t'ucw m-c7etscikeñem!**

But instead, he scorched his back.

**Oh! K'ist re stcweñs yem, m-welépes yi7éne re t'emens.**

Oh, what a bad smell, he scorched his fur.

**Teke, wel ta7ks le7s re sts'exténs pyin re t'emen ne ck'míkeñs re  
Sk'elép.**

That's why the fur on Coyote's back does not look nice.

**Oh, m-tsuntmes te skeñcis, teke, xentéke me7e.**

And he was told by Grizzly, "see, I told you.

**M-tsuntsen, ta7ews ks tet'ipentsemc, me7 xéne-k, teke, xenstsut-**  
**k.**

I told you, 'don't copy me, or you will get hurt, you will hurt yourself.'

**M-yews ri7 re scwesét.s cuýtsem re sk'elép.**

And then Coyote travelled again.

**M-tskitsenses re sqélemcw, ne7ene te sqlélten te sqélemcw.**

And he met a man, a salmon person.

**Styu7qenstímt ri7 re skwest.s.**

His name was Fish-Oil-Man

**Oh, m-téytes, m-tsútes, "tsxwénte, tsxwénte, yiri7 re**  
**sts7ecwmentsen.**

And being hungry, he was told, "come here, come here, I'll welcome you.

**Tsxwénte e metsin!"**

Come here, I'll feed you!"

**M-kwens re Styu7qenstímt yi7éne te tseck'púpcw,**

Fish-Oil-Man took a bowl,

**Neri7 ne tqeltks ne7éne re syeqwlltems m-tentés yem.**

And he put it on top of his fire.

**M-tntésés re kelcs neri7 yem, re stextétxmen, ...oh!**

And he put his hands, his fins on top of it, ....oh!

**M-tsimtes yi7ene re styu7qíns yem re sqlélten, m-ct7ék'es re**

**tseck'pupcw.**

The salmon's oil was melting, and it filled the bowl.

**M-yews re tsut.s es kectés re sk'elép: "Tsxwente, illente yi7éne!"**

And he wanted to give this to Coyote. "Come here, eat this."

**Oh, xetéqs re stsk'émsens re sk'elép, k'émell m- tsúntem**

**"illente! Le7 yiri7!"**

Oh, at first Coyote didn't want it, but he was told again, "eat it, it's good!"

**M-xwts'ilcmens es illens, m-yews re s7illens. Oh! Le7 yiri7!**

He started to eat it, and he ate it. Oh, it was good!

**Oh, m-tsuntem re sk'elép, "Me7 wiktc ne7ene ri7 ren tsutswet.**

Coyote was told [by Fish-Oil-Man], "You see, this here is my power.

**Ta7 ews ks tét'ipentsemc, me7 xenstsút tri7 e xilmucw!"**  
Don't copy me, you will hurt yourself if you do this."

**K'emell re sk'elép m-ptinesem, "me7 tsútsenmecten ri7 xexéx7e-  
ken yiri7!"**  
But Coyote thought, "I will show him that I am more powerful."

**M-yews re stsxlítens yem re Styu7qenstiñt es tsnes ne tsitcws yem  
es metés,**  
He then invited Fish-Oil-Man to come to his house to feed him.

**Oh! M-yeqwilltem, xyum re syeqwilltems re sk'elép.**  
He made fire, Coyote made a big fire.

**M-tntés re xyum te tseck'púpcw ne tqeltks re t7ikw,**  
He put a big bowl on top of the fire.

**M-yews re stntés neri7 re kelcs, es tsimens re styu7qin.**  
And then he put his hands on there, to melt some fat.

**Oh t'ucw e m-welpékstes, t'ri7 yem re sk'elép pyin m-qusq'uses**  
And all he did was burn his hands, that's why Coyote now has burnt

**ell re-m-qwiqw'iytes re kelkelcs pyin e m-wiktcwes.**  
And black paws, as you can see nowadays.

**M-yews re leqw'épems re sk'elép, "kékkept yem re sxenstsut."**  
And Coyote hollered, "I'm sore, I hurt myself!"

**M-yews re stsúntem, "xentéke me7e, kénem me7e re  
stet'ipentsemc?"**  
And he was told, "see, I told you, why did you copy me?"

**Teke, wel re7 m-xenstsút, m-xéne-k!**  
See, you hurt yourself, you're hurt.

**Huu yem, qwetséts re sk'elép ne7éne m-t7éyentmes cuýtsem te  
Sglewstímt,**  
And Coyote left, and then he met Beaver-Man.

**Yi7ene te sglew te xéxe7 te sqélemcw.**  
This wise man who is a beaver.

Oh, m-ts7ecwes re Sqlewstimt es wikems, m-tsunes,  
And Beaver was happy to see him, he told him,

“tsxwente, ts7ullcw-ce nen tsitstcw, me7 metsín, yiri7 re  
sxyemstsín.”

Come here, come into my house, I'll feed you, I will honour you.”

M-yews re s7ullcws ne7éne re Sk'elép.  
And Sk'elép, he entered here

M-kwénses re ct7iqw'elqwtens yem re sqlew,  
And Beaver took the scraper,

m-yews re snest.s ne7éne ne tsrep, ne s7eytsqwllp te tsrep,  
and he went to that tree, the Ponderosa Pine

m-yews re sk'úlems te st7iqw'elqw.  
And he made some cambium.

Cw7it re m-tsclems ne tseck'úpaw, wel re m-tskwénses.  
There was lots that he got in his bowl,

M-yews re skectés re sk'elép es íllens.  
And he gave it to Coyote to eat.

Oh! Tskems ne sxe7éqs re sk'elép: “Ta7 ri7 k sxwexwistéten es  
i7llen re sextsets'i!”

At first Coyote, refusing it, said, “I don't like to eat sticks!”

“Ta7 ri7 k sexts'éys, le7 ri7 te stsillen, illente!” tsuntem te  
sqlew.

“It's not sticks, it's good food, eat it,” is what Beaver said to him.

Oh, m-illenses, wenécwem yenke k sle7s! Oh, qw'empstés re  
sk'elép.

Oh, and he ate it, and it was really good. Coyote ate it all up.

M-tsuns, “le7 ri7 re smetsétsemc! Me7 metsin ell es xye7mstsín!  
He told him, “It's good that you fed me. I'll feed you, too, to honour you!

M-yews ri7 re skítsentmes yi7éne te tsk'éwelc te sqélemcw.  
And this is how that old fellow [Beaver] arrived at his place.

**M-kwéctses te ct7iqw'elqwtens, m-néses ne7éne, m-  
t7iqw'elqwctmes.**

He took his sap-scraper, and he went on, he went scraping.

**Ta7 ks k'úlems cwem te st7iqw'elqw,**  
But he didn't make any cambium,

**k'é mell tskwens, t7iqw'elqwens re p'eléns re mulc.**  
All he got was the [outer bark] of cotton wood.

**M-tsútes es metes yi7éne re sqlew!**  
That's what he wanted to feast Beaver!

**M-tspiqwenses yi7éne re sqlew, "stemi k stsútsentsemc es  
metsétsemc?"**

Beaver looked at this stuff and asked, "what are you trying to feast me?"

**Ta7 ri7 wes k sts7illentsnes!**  
I can't eat that stuff!"

**Ah! Tsuntsen, 'ta7ews ks tét'ipentsemc, ta7 ri7 ks tselxemstéc  
stemi ke7 sw7ec."**

Ah, I told you, 'don't copy me,' you don't know what you are doing!"

**Huuu... M-qwetsétses re Sqlewstimt, m-llwélenses re sk'elép.**  
Beaver-Man took off, he left Coyote behind.

**M-í7ek-ekwe cuýtsem re sk'elép.**  
Then Coyote went along his way again.

**M-yews yiri7 re s7istks;**  
And then it became wintertime;

**m-t7éyetmes te ts'lostímt,**  
he was met by Kingfisher-Man,

**ts'los-ekwe yi7éne te tsk'éwelc te sqélemcw.**  
This old man who was a Kingfisher, they say.

**Oh, ts7ecw re Ts'lostímt es t7éyens yi7éne te xexé7 te sqélemcw.**  
Oh, Kingfisher-Man was glad to meet this powerful man.

**M-tsuns, "tsxwénte, me7 metsín, me7 xyemstsin! Ts7ullcwe nen  
c7istkteñ."**

He told him, "come here, I'll feed you, I'll honour you! Come into my underground  
house!

**Re Ts'lostímt, yiri7 re smut.s ne c7istkteñs ne qw'emtsíns re  
tswec.**

Kingfisher-Man lived in his underground house on the shore of the creek.

**M-yews neri7 re s7ullcws re sk'elép.**  
And Coyote went inside there.

**M-tsúntmes te ts'lostímt, "ne7élye, me7 wiktc ri7, yi7éne ren  
tsutswet.**

He was told by Kingfisher-Man, "This, what you will see, is my way.

**Ta7ews tét'ipentsemc, me7 xéne-k, me7 xenstsút-k!"**  
Don't copy me, you'll get hurt, you'll hurt yourself!

**Tq'mutes ne7éne ne txelcenténs, ne tqeltks re c7istkteñs, nune re  
tq'mútes.**

He climbed to the top of his ladder, on top of his underground home, that's where  
he climbed.

**M-ústes ne séwllkwe, oh, m-kwnémes te ts'olleníwt, mmm, le7 re  
sts'exténs.**

He dove into the water, oh, and he brought back a rainbow trout. Mm, it looked  
nice.

**W7ec re weliktes ne segwsés yem yi7éne swewll te m-kwenwéñses.**  
It glistened in the sun, this fish that he took.

**M-qw'lsentésés, m-metéses re sk'elép.**  
He roasted it, and fed it to Coyote.

**M-yews re stsuns cuýtsem, "teke, yi7ene ri7 ren tsutswet, ta7ews  
tet'ipentsemc.**

And he told him again, "look, this is my way, don't copy me.

**Me7 xéne-k yem e xwts'ílcucw t'ucw te7s xílem."**  
You'll get hurt if you do that."

**K'emell re sk'elép, m-ptinesem, "Ah! Xexéx7e-ken, me7 wikt.s  
ri7!"**

But Coyote, he thought, "Ah, I'm smarter, he'll see!"

**M-yews re sxlítens re Ts'lostímt es tsnes ne tsitcws es metés yem.**  
And he invited Kingfisher-Man to come to his house, so he could feed him.

**Oh, m-kitscwes re Ts'lostímt ne tsitcws re sk'elép, ne  
ck'elpéllcws.**

And Kingfisher-Man arrived here at Coyote's house, at his coyote den.

**Pupéwtsnmes. "Ts7úllcwe!" m-tsuntmes.**  
He knocked on the door, "Come in!" he was told.

**M-yews re sts7ullcws nerí7, ts7ullcw-ekwe neri7 es metéms te  
sk'elép.**

And he entered, they say that Kingfisher-Man entered to be fed by Coyote.

**M'tsuntem te sk'elép, "me7 metsin."**  
He was told by Coyote, "I'll feed you!"

**Téke, re sk'elép m-tq'emtqiñem, m-teq'mútes ne stxelqíñs re  
tsitcw.**

And Coyote climbed up to the roof of his house.

**M-ústes ne tswec, m-ustes ne tspetúkws re scúyent.**  
And he dove into the creek, he dove through a hole in the ice.

**Re Ts'lostímt, m-tsk'elém, m-tsk'elmins yem es metéms te  
sk'elép.**

Kingfisher-Man, he waited, he waited for Coyote to feed him

**Oh, m-estk'ey wel re m-tsut, "Héqen me7 tcucsmen."**  
He waited, until he said, "Maybe I'll go look for him."

**M-néses t'kllu7 es tcusmenses re sk'elép, m-kénmes-enke yem re  
sk'elép.**

And he went to look for Coyote, to see what had happened to Coyote.

**M-tcúsmens, ..... oh, stp'enllexwes ne7éne re Sk'elép re tsitcws,**  
He went looking for him, oh, he stepped out of Coyote's house,

**Re sk'lepéllcws yem..... M-tcúsmens re úqw'is.**  
out of his coyote den, and he went looking for his brother.



**Oh! Wikt.s ne7éne tsxleq, xleq-enke ne7ene ne tšpetúkw te**  
**scuyent,**

Oh, he saw that he was stuck, he was apparently stuck in the ice-hole.

**m-xqwetsqpétkus!**

He had drowned!

**Re Ts'lostímt m-nes neri7, m-tsuns, "Tsútsen yi7éne, 'ta7ews ks**  
**t'éypentsemc,**

Kingfisher-Man went there, he told him, "I told you, 'don't copy me,

**me7 xenstsút-k!' Téke, pyin me7 xqwetsqpétkwe-k!"**  
you'll get hurt!' See, now you drowned."

**Xetéqs yiri7 re spetínesmens re Ts'lostímt es melcúpsens ne**  
**tšpetúkw te scúyent.**

At first Kingfisher-Man thought he'd kick him into the ice-hole.

**K'é mell ta7wes yem, m-tskumst.ses re sk'elép,**

But he didn't, he pulled Coyote out.

**Yiri7 re skectéses cuýtsem te swuméc.**

And he gave him back his life.

**"Téke yem, me7 kectsin cuýtsem te7 swuméc. M-tsuntsen,**  
**'Ta7ews k stet'ipentsemc.'**

See, I'll give you back your life. I told you, "don't copy me.

**"teke, wel xqwetsqpétkucw, k'é mell me7 kectsin cúýtsem te7**  
**swuméc.**

See, you drowned, but I'm giving you your life back.

**Ta7ews ks t'éypenc k swet re tsúwet.s.**

Don't copy other people's ways.

**Tšukw re newí7 re7 tsúwet yewske ri7 re swestéc.**

It's your own ways that you must hang onto.

**E ta7wes t'ri7, me7 xéne-k, me7 xenstsút-k."**

If you don't do it that way, you'll get hurt, you will hurt yourself."

**Téke, pyin re qelmúcw w7ec re t'éypenst.ses re semséme7,**

See, nowadays our [Aboriginal] people are copying the White people,

**íri7 re m-xéne-kt, m-xenstsút-kt, m-xenstwécw-kt yem.**  
That way, we have got hurt, we have hurt ourselves, and we have hurt one another  
even.

**Llépentem re xqweltén-kt, llépentem re stsptékwle-kt,**  
We have forgotten our language, we have forgotten our stories,

**íri7 xwexwéyt te stem re tkw'nem7íple-kt.**  
All the ways of governing ourselves.

**Téke, wel qwenqwént-kt pyin.**  
See, we have become pitiful.

**M-kwéctels te tmicws re semsése7,**  
The White people have taken our land from us,

**ye-ekwe ri7 k spelq'ílcmentem yi7éne le q'7es te qelmúcw te**  
**tsuwet.s,**  
That's why we must return to our own ancestors' ways,

**es cúýtsem es letwílc-kt, es cwetwílc-kt,**  
So that we can heal ourselves, and once again become numerous.

**Ne7élye es xenwéntem es k'úlentem re semsése7 es súcwentels ne**  
**tmicw-kt.**  
And so that we can get the White people to recognize our existence on our land.<sup>150</sup>

In overcoming the need to copy others instead of being true to our own traditions and our own ways, I maintain that the solution to poverty is to build a nation in which business and human resources can flourish. The Nation building approach sees the development as first and foremost a political problem. It focuses attention on laying a sound institutional foundation, on strategic thinking and on informed action.

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<sup>150</sup> The above is my own re-telling of this story, which I heard long ago from my xpé7e lke Willard, subsequently found in an English, retold version in Teit's Shuswap book (1909: ), and then reconstructed in Secwepemctsin.

In my view, and as our elders nearly 100 years ago prophesized, nation building along with sovereignty, the “Supreme Authority”- of our people stipulated in their Memorial of 1910, is the key to economic development. All external constraints must be displaced with our aboriginal right to self government ably to govern effectively but without blind imitation of external institutions at the expense of our own traditions, customs and laws. I believe that this is what our recent elders mean when they remind us “yiri7 re stsq’ey-kt” – these are our ancient laws. As Secwépemc people of the early 21<sup>st</sup> century, it is imperative that we understand our history, and study it through the words of those before us, our recent and long ago ancestors. In so doing we must remind ourselves of the Story of Coyote and his Hosts, where Coyote is admonished not to copy the ways of his hosts because only harm would come to him. Our ways of understanding the past must include knowing not only how others saw us and described us, but how we, as a nation of people experienced history and thought about it.

We must have the Freedom to govern our own affairs as envisioned by the United Nations Declaration on The Rights of Indigenous Peoples to control our own resources,<sup>151</sup> and determine our own future. This is the foundation for success everything else is doomed to failure especially if external powers exercise de facto power over us. Sovereignty (Supreme Authority) is one of the primary development resources that any of our Nations can have, have had and must reassert.

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<sup>151</sup> UN Declaration-Articles 8b, 25,26-1,27,28-1&2,29, Res.61/295

In this fashion we will not only enrich and improve our peoples but also non-aboriginal society around us. As our chiefs noted in the Memorial, “ what is our will be yours and what is yours will be ours and we will help each other to be great and good.” Mutual respect thus becomes a win – win situation.

It is time we shape our own future rather than have it shaped for us.

One hundred fifty years ago, the colonizers split us up into bands, small units that were easy to control. It is time to end the provincial and federal governments’ claim to own and control us because it has only brought us sorrow and in the words of our Chiefs ‘driven us to the wall’ as attested in their statement of how the Province has treated us:

They (Provincial government) say they have authority over us.  
They have broken down our old laws and customs by which we regulated ourselves....

They knocked down (the same as) the posts of all the Indian tribes.  
They say there are no lines except what they make. They took possession of all the Indian country and claim it as their own. Just the same as taking the “house” or “ranch” and, therefore the life of every Indian tribe into their possession.

.... They set aside many small reservations for us here and there over the country. *This was their proposal, not ours. We never accepted these reservations as settlement for anything* nor did we sign any papers or make any treaties about the same. They thought we would be satisfied with this, *but we have never been satisfied and never will be until we get our rights .*

Our chiefs candidly outlined what our rights consist of, they stated that we, each nation, had (their own) tribal organizations, laws, and customs.

Our Chiefs' solution was equality on a Nation to Nation basis, where there is trust and honour and where our laws and customs are respected and where our Tribal organizations would not be broken up (into a system of reservations). To this end they made an offer to Canada that-"We will share equally in everything-half-and half-in land, water and timber, and so on. What is ours will be yours and what is yours will be ours. We will help each other to be great and good."(Memorial, 1910)

In essence, Nation building is and can be the only game in town as Cornell and Kalt (1998) from Harvard University concluded in their lengthy study on how to address the issues of poverty, echoing what chiefs advocated, no less, nearly a hundred years ago. If we are to be once again, in the words of our chiefs in 1910, to be "happy, healthy, strong and numerous," we must rebuild our nations.

The British Columbia Treaty Process is doomed to failure because it defines and strives to redefine who are by calling reserves-Bands as "First Nations" with whom the Provincial government negotiates treaties. Indian bands have no legitimate standing in our history, laws and customs. They remain a government construct to divide and assimilate Indigenous peoples. Reserve bands cannot claim to be the collective authority over Secwépemculucw. Nor must we allow this to happen if we are to build a Canada that is "great and good." Only in our collectivity as Nations will we achieve this goal.

By insisting to Sk'elép that he must use his own ways rather than copying others, the story of Coyote and His Hosts also reminds us of our cultural autonomy, and the importance of being true to our own ways. Cultural persistence and cultural authenticity, however, should not be viewed as frozen in time, removed from the concerns with the present and our reflection on the contemporary world. In the end, although this thesis may lead the reader to think that I nostalgically long for the past which, however, is far removed because of changed circumstances, I have to turn to our youth to guide us the way to find ever new ways and guises to interpret our past and reflect on our history. I thus conclude with the words from my son's hip hop song, which questions the history and consciousness of our people, but gives me hope that, as long as our youth reflect on the relationship between now and our past, they will care to know. I hope this work helps them by answering some questions about our past.

*Why is my People Sleeping?*

*This part goes out to all my people out there, everybody,*

*This one goes out to the Nation, the Nation,*

*I ask why is my people sleepin,*

*Why is we quiet, why is my people crazy, why aren't we trying,*

*Why ain't my people thinkin'*

*I hear a crime,*

*So why is a woman weepin'*

*Not colliding*

*Why do we keep on drinking,*

*Fuck with ....*

*It is the day I'm finally speaking,*

*Listen up.  
It's the way my change of thinking  
I ain't gonna lie,  
We're divided, not united, so we're weak.  
There's a system, and we've got to fight it,  
United, re-united, the force is like lightning bolts that strike the  
ground....*

Excerpt from Geo Ignace, 2006, "Why is My People Sleeping?" – used  
with permission of author.<sup>152</sup>

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<sup>152</sup> For a discussion of this hip hop poem, along with other contemporary First Nations youth expressions of cultural identity in graffiti and hip hop (rap) music, see Ignace, Marianne, in press, "Why is my People Sleeping – First Nations Hip Hop between the Rez and the City." In: Heather Howard-Bobiwash and Craig Proulx, eds., *Aboriginal Peoples in Cities, Identity and Human Nature*, Wilfrid Laurier University Press.





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