In presenting this thesis in partial fulfilment of the requirements for an advanced degree at the University of British Columbia, I agree that the Library shall make it freely available for reference and study. I further agree that permission for extensive copying of this thesis for scholarly purposes may be granted by the head of my department or by his or her representatives. It is understood that copying or publication of this thesis for financial gain shall not be allowed without my written permission.

Department of History

The University of British Columbia
Vancouver, Canada

Date 23 April 03
ABSTRACT

This dissertation historicizes and explains the tensions that arose between localized and regionally dispersed expressions of group affiliation and political authority among the indigenous people of the Lower Fraser River watershed after European contact. It accomplishes this by directly engaging indigenous historiography and epistemology. The period examined covers the late eighteenth century, just prior to the first smallpox epidemic, through to 1906 when a delegation of Salish men met with King Edward in London on behalf of all the Native people of British Columbia. I argue that Aboriginal collective identity and political authority are and were situationally constructed products of complicated negotiations among indigenous people and between Natives and newcomers. Multiple options were always available and the various expressions that shared identity assumed never were the only ones possible. Consequently, among the local indigenous population, history has always been regarded as an important arbitrator of identity and disagreements over competing historical interpretations highly contentious.

To a greater extent than has been appreciated, changes in the way Native collective affiliations have been constituted have been informed by reference to ancient sacred stories and an ongoing process of interpreting past precedence. They are also intimately linked to migrations. Over time and across geography, different indigenous people have used these stories to different ends. Gendered and class-based distinctions in the way these narratives have been applied to either the creation of innovative collective identities or to the defense of older expressions reveal the tensions within Aboriginal
society and between Natives and newcomers that arose as indigenous people struggled to make sense of a rapidly changing colonial world. The uncertainty following pivotal historical events allowed these submerged tensions to assume more public forms. Examined here are the important identity shaping historical events and migrations that indigenous historiography has emphasized: Creation, the Great Flood, the 1780 smallpox epidemic, the establishment of local Hudson’s Bay trading posts in 1827 and 1846, the 1858 goldrush, the imposition of colonial reserves, the banning of the potlatch, the 1884 hostile incursions into Canadian Native communities of an American lynch mob, and the government policy to transform Salish fishermen into western-style farmers. Ultimately, Western ideologies, colonial authority and global economic forces are considered as forces acting within indigenous society, and not merely as exogenous powers acting upon it.
# TABLE OF CONTENTS

Abstract .................................................................................................................. ii  
Table of Contents.................................................................................................... iv  
List of Figures......................................................................................................... v  
Acknowledgment..................................................................................................... vii  
Dedication............................................................................................................... xi

## CHAPTER

### INTRODUCTION

I. History and Historiography ............................................................................. 1  

## PART I: INDIGENOUS CULTURE

II. The Underpinnings of Stó:lō Collective Identity ........................................... 50  

## PART II: MOVEMENTS AND IDENTITIES ACROSS TIME AND SPACE

III. From the Great Flood to the Smallpox Epidemics ......................................... 105  
IV. Displacement, Dispute Resolution, Status, and Coercion .............................. 147  

## PART III. CONSTRICTED MOVEMENT AND FRACTURED IDENTITY

V. The Emerging Colonial Order ......................................................................... 196  
VI. Missionaries and the Anti-potlatch Law ......................................................... 228  

## PART IV: EXPANDED MOVEMENT AND THE EMERGENCE OF MODERN “STÓ:LŌ” COLLECTIVE IDENTITY

VII. Reservations for the Queen’s Birthday, 1864-1876 ..................................... 267  
VIII. Collective Governance and the Lynching of Louie Sam ............................ 291  

## PART VI: CONCLUSION

IX. Entering the Twentieth Century .................................................................... 328  

Figures ................................................................................................................... 344  
Bibliography ........................................................................................................... 373
LIST OF FIGURES

Figure 1.1 Stó:lō Territory ..............................................................344

Figure 2.1 Relationship Between Resource Availability and Collective
Identity Accounting for Regional Variation in Salmon
Processing Technology .............................................................345

Figure 2.2 The Halq'emeylem Language Reveals the Connections
Between Past Present and Future Generations .........................346

Figure 2.3 Decedence Relations.....................................................347

Figure 2.4 Coast Salish Territory is best Conceived as a Four Pointed Star
Consisting of Four Major Open Waterways ...............................348

Figure 2.5 A Stó:lō View of the Journey of Xexá:ls .........................349

Figure 3.1 Flood Story Migrations and Their Relations to Tribal Identities......350

Figure 3.2 Events, Movements and Community Genesis ..................351

Figure 3.3 One Tribe’s Core was Another’s Periphery .....................352

Figure 4.1 The Migration of Chilliwack Tribal “Headquarters” and the
Establishment of Tribal Borders..................................................353

Figure 4.2 The Abandonment of Alaméx .......................................354

Figure 4.3 Pilalt Territory as Defined by the Cheam Band, 1999 ..........355

Figure 4.4 Ste’xem Settlements Created by Thelhatsstan ..................356

Figure 4.5 Freedom Village Migration ..........................................357

Figure 4.6 Lower Fraser Population, 1830 ....................................358

Figure 4.7 From the Ts’okwam to the Teit ....................................359

Figure 5.1 Summer Temperature, Humidity and Wind in the Lower Fraser
Canyon as Relates to Salmon Processing ......................................360

Figure 5.2 Details of McCoIl’s 1864 Map of Lower Fraser River Indian
Reserves ........................................................................................361
Figure 5.3 Trutch's Chart Showing Demographics and Indicators of "Civilization" used to justify Stó:lō Reserve Reduction

Figure 6.1 Captain John Of Soowahlie

Figure 6.2 The Pope Falls Headlong into the Tortuous Flames of Hell in a "Protestant Ladder"

Figure 6.3 Detail of Official Map of Soowahlie Reserve, Showing Name of Government Appointed (Recognized?) Chief, Captain John

Figure 6.4 Artist's Depiction of Suxyel's Naming Potlatch

Figure 7.1 Queen's Birthday Celebration, New Westminster, 1867

Figure 7.2 Queen's Birthday Celebration, New Westminster, 1874

Figure 7.3 Indians Racing in Front of Government House on Queen's Birthday, 1867

Figure 8.1 Map of British Columbia—Being a Geographical Division of the Indians of the Province According to their Nationality or Dialect

Figure 8.2 Gathering to Address Lord Dufferin, New Westminster, 1876

Figure 8.3 Site of the Lynching of Stó:lō Boy Louie Sam by American Vigilantes on Canadian Soil
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I am indebted to the many people who have assisted and supported me during the writing of this dissertation, but the person who has most profoundly influenced my understanding of Coast Salish culture and history, and who has left an indelible intellectual imprint on me is my friend, colleague, and sometime collaborator, Albert McHalsie (better known as “Sonny”). Sonny’s mandate as the Stó:lō Nation’s official Cultural Advisor has been to ensure that Stó:lō culture and history are interpreted accurately and respectfully. In this case, Sonny has attended to this task by formally reviewing my original application to access the Stó:lō Nation archives, and then by reviewing and approving specific requests to use records in the archive’s oral history collections. As Cultural Advisor he also provided feedback on my original thesis prospectus, and ultimately read and provided critical comments on each chapter as it was written.

Informally, Sonny has spent countless hours with me discussing, theorizing and sometimes debating aspects of Coast Salish cultural history and the history of Coast Salish-newcomer relations. These conversations, more than anything else, inform the analysis presented in this dissertation. My understanding of Coast Salish cultural history is largely a product of the many long conversations we have shared since the spring of 1992 when I came to work as historian for the Stó:lō Tribal Council. One could not ask for a more honest and thoughtful companion with whom to travel down the path of cross-cultural understanding.

The second intellectual tradition informing my analysis is the western scholar model, in many ways epitomized by my advisor Arthur J. Ray (better known as Skip). Skip is one of those rare individuals who is able to genuinely nurture and mentor without deeply involving himself in the details of his students’ project. In so doing he has earned a well deserved reputation as someone who gently guides his protégés while permitting them the broadest scope of intellectual freedom, so essential to academic growth. He is a true role model, both as teacher and scholar. The discussion of the significance of indigenous movement and migration found in his 1974 classic, *Indians in the Fur Trade*, directly inspired the analysis presented here. Perhaps it is Skip’s career-long examination of the economic motivations behind Aboriginal behaviour that has been his biggest contribution to this dissertation. Like many other people I have appreciated and benefited from his demonstrating that indigenous people have a full range of motivations.

For similar reasons I owe a deep debt of gratitude to the other members of my advisory committee. Dianne Newell was largely responsible for introducing me to the literature on gender analysis. Her writings on the history of technology have also inspired the way I have come to think about the role of salmon processing technology in Aboriginal collective identity. She has also acted as a keen and nurturing reviewer.

Bruce Miller has for a decade been a source of encouragement and my primary non-Native anchor for ethnographic information and interpretation on the Coast Salish people. He has helped to refine my understanding on numerous occasions, and, of course, my argument about the situational nature of Coast Salish identity builds directly upon his scholarship. The personal relationships he has built and maintains with indigenous people on both sides of the international border are indicative of his
commitment to ensuring that scholarship be informed by real world concerns. He is a genuine role model.


In addition, while they may not be old enough to be called Elders (or at least were not when I first met them) the following Stó:lo people are among the most influential of the various “cultural leaders” and/or “spiritual people” I have met, befriended and learned from: Gwen Point, Steven Point, Helen Joe, Herb Joe, Patricia Charlie, Tunny Charlie, Frank Malloway, and Danny Charlie.

I am also deeply indebted to certain Stó:lo people whom I never had a chance to meet in person but who shared aspects of their knowledge with others in a form that was either preserved on paper or audio cassette, or, on certain occasions, transmitted through dreams and other metaphysical medium to members of the current generation for people like myself to learn from later. In particular, Robert “Bob” Joe, Dan Milo, Hank Pennier, George Chehalis, Jason Allard, Amy Cooper, John Wallace, Old Pierre, Simon Pierre, and all the other indigenous people who decided to share aspects of their knowledge with Franz Boas, Wilson Duff, Marian Smith, Charles Hill-Tout, Diamond Jenness and Oliver Wells.

Friends have generously given up time to read and provided critical feedback on drafts of earlier of chapters that they could have better spent with their families. Ken Coates, John Lutz, Jim Miller, David Smith, David Schaepe, David DeBrou, and Rob Algrove all brought their varying expertise to bear, and the final product is richer for it.

Designer and graphic artist, Jan Perrier, patiently transformed my sketches and doodles into the maps and images which not only accompany my analysis but indeed, form a significant part of the presentation and interpretation of Stó:lo social and geographical history found on the following pages. Julie da Silva, a talented translator, has reviewed and improved my translations of the French Oblate records found in chapters six and seven.

People who have made special contributions to my education and learning, and who therefore deserve credit for any positive appraisal this work receives, include Jean Barman, Michael Blake, David Breen, Ernie Crey, Julie Cruikshank, Ron Denman, Brian Dippie, Sam Douglas, Hamar Foster, Melinda Jette, Michelle Julian, Doug Kelly, Michael Kew, Dana Lapofsky, Robert McDonald, Ken Malloway, Dan Marshall, Gordon Mohs, Kathy Parslow, Clarence “Kat” Pennier, John Porter, Eric Sager, Brian Thom, Wendy Wickwire, Jody Woods, and W.T. Wooley.

I am appreciative of the support and encouragement of the faculty in the University of Saskatchewan History Department who saw fit to take a chance and hire me prior to this project being completed. I hope that faith has not been unfounded.
I would like to acknowledge a doctoral fellowship from the Social Science and Humanities Research Council, without which I would not have been able to undertake this project. I am also deeply appreciative of the scholarship I was awarded from the British Columbia Heritage Trust, and the various fellowships from the University of British Columbia: the Li Tze Fong Memorial Fellowship, a University Graduate Fellowship (which I had to turn down in order to receive SSHRC funding) and the History Department's Chinese Railroad Workers Commemorative Scholarship.

I am also grateful to the archivists and curators of the various archives and museums who assisted me in my research and especially to those who allowed me to reproduce images from their collections. In particular those working for the Stó:lo Nation Archives, the Provincial Archives of British Columbia, the Chilliwack Archives, the Royal British Columbia Museum, the Oregon Historical Society, the Vancouver Museum, The National Archives of Canada, the British Public Records Office, the British Newspaper Library, UBC Special Collections, and the Center for Northwest Studies at the University of Western Washington.

To the members of my own family I own a tremendous debt of gratitude. My loving wife and soul mate, Teresa, not only supported me in all my undertakings, but more importantly did so at significant personal sacrifice. Clio is a jealous mistress who too often stole moments that were rightly my spouse's. For this I apologize. More than anyone else, Teresa taught me that though identities are ephemerally cast in history they are also anchored in geography, and that big events can lead to important changes. As an immigrant and visible minority she knows too well the power of place and the problems time brings to identities, assigned by others and ascribed by self. In addition, as someone who has herself spent a number of years working for and with Coast Salish people as a museum curator, exhibit designer, and artifact collections manager, Teresa has shared insights she has gained about Stó:lo history and culture that have refined and corrected many of my own understandings. This dissertation could not have been written without her support and assistance.

I have also benefit greatly from my sons William (Liam) and Benjamin. Liam was conceived the year I started my Ph.D program. By the time I wrote my comprehensive exams he was calling me “Papa.” When I submitted my prospectus I had become “Dadio,” or sometimes “Pop.” As I slogged through the research and writing I was generally referred to as Daddy. Now, at the end of the process he has started calling me “Dad.” These changes have been precious and have constantly reminded me of the mutable and ascribed nature of my own identity. Not only did Liam generously allowed me on certain occasions to do “more homework” but more importantly on other occasions he stopped me from doing more homework. My youngest son Benjamin, (now two) has reminded me of things that I had almost forgotten, namely, that playtime is the most important time, and that people do not really need seven hours of sleep a night.

My father John and mother Elizabeth have been unflinching in their support, and to them I am grateful for so many things. Integrity and honour are very important to my parents, and these values, I hope, are reflected in this academic endeavour. My sister Stormy has been inspirational throughout this project as she was throughout the wonderful years we spent growing up together. While my little brother Kerry is no
longer with us he has often been in my thoughts. His Aboriginal ancestry and the questions he asked of himself and his adopted family as he grew up have helped focus my research interests. Of all my family I am perhaps most grateful to my late grandfather Ernest Wilfred Carlson. Despite having only seven years of formal education he developed a love for learning, and for history in particular, that in turn inspired me to chose Clio as my muse.
To my siyá:ye
SONNY MCHALSIE

Yálh yuxw kw'as hó:y
CHAPTER ONE

Introduction

The son now turned back to his father [Sma’k’wec, "the ruler at Point Roberts"]. "When the Lord Above created you," he said, "He gave you power over all the underground channels that lead from Point Roberts to Sechelt, Pitt Lake, and other places."


Special tunnels link various sites on the indigenous landscape of the lower Fraser River watershed in southwestern British Columbia. Although they cannot be found on government-produced maps, and are not readily visible to casual travelers, for those who know the history and know where to look, the tunnels are very real. Local Native Elders explain that you do not need to be Aboriginal to find them, nor do you even need to believe in their reality to be affected by them. People occasionally travel through these mystical underground portals, but the journey is inevitably dangerous. Stories are told of corpses being found near tunnel exit points many kilometers from the site where the living person was last known to be, proof that the sojourner died before reaching a tunnel’s end. Others are more fortunate. Those who survive the journey inevitably receive enhanced powers and ultimately prestige. Travel through these mystical portals is instantaneous, and as such the tunnels' existence shape Aboriginal views of the physical landscape by bending time and making places that otherwise appear distant from one another immediately adjacent. In addition, the tunnels affect and inform indigenous views of collective identity, the subject of this dissertation. Because of the tunnels, settlements that might otherwise seem far apart are actually very close together, much
closer than they appear on western maps. The social affiliations of the people living at either end of such tunnels are, therefore, also much closer than someone unaware of the tunnels’ existence, might assume.

Special tunnels link indigenous places and indigenous people, but they do not appear to link Indian reserves and Indian Bands. Indian reserves are creations of the British and Canadian governments. They constitute property held in trust for Aboriginal people by the Crown. Indian reserves are associated with Indian Bands (local indigenous governing bodies), which are also creations of non-Native colonial authority. While Indian Bands and Indian reserves are associated with particular Aboriginal communities, most of which are products of ancient social and geographical affiliations, they privilege a decidedly European notion of what constitutes the proper and legitimate collective social and political unit. That is, they reflect an assumption that the most meaningful collective identity is the one derived from residence proximity, and that proximity of residence equates with local and exclusionary propriety over nearby natural resources.

Although Indian Bands and Indian reserves cannot be found in ancient indigenous oral traditions, and are not readily visible to casual travelers, for those who know how government works and know where to look, the Bands and reserves are very real. As with the tunnels, you do not need to be Aboriginal to find them, nor do you even need to believe in their reality and legitimacy to be affected by them. The existence of the reserves and Bands shapes Aboriginal views of the physical landscape by making places that otherwise appear immediately adjacent, distant from one another. Thus, the reserves and Bands affect and inform indigenous views of collective identity, and as such, these views are often hotly contested.
Ethnohistorical scholars are gradually learning how to engage indigenous history on terms that are meaningful and recognizable to indigenous people. Indigenous epistemology needs to be taken seriously if researchers are to benefit from the knowledge that indigenous people are willing to share. Indigenous views of the past have been informed not only by past experiences but also by the meanings people bring to those experiences. Indigenous views of history are, like historical knowledge in the western tradition, not stagnant, but recast in ongoing debate and evaluation between people and across generations. There exists an indigenous historiography that is distinct from the one found in academia. This rich and complex Aboriginal historiography must inform historical analysis.

The western intellectual tradition, and the disciplinary focus of academics in the humanities and social sciences, has been shaped by paradigms their practitioners found difficult to escape. Ten years ago, American historian George Miles noted that most pre-WWII writing depicted the Native present as disorganized, the past as glorious and the future as assimilated. Subsequently, ethnohistorians envisioned the Aboriginal present as a resistance movement, the past as exploitation and the future as ethnic resurgence. Such depictions portray Native and newcomer culture in antithetical terms. Consequently, Miles maintained, it was virtually impossible to imagine an approach in which Aboriginal people could be anything more than interesting foils for western history, rather than significant participants in it. Recently, however, scholars have begun constructing historical metaphors and models of understanding that better take into account indigenous perspectives.
The integration of Aboriginal epistemology and historiography into academic historical analysis results in a historical narrative that challenges the interpretations portrayed in standard accounts of Native-newcomer relations. Colonialism, Christianity, market capitalism, Enlightenment ideology, and now even postmodern theory all need to be interpreted as forces acting within indigenous society and history, and not simply as external forces acting upon them. Viewed through such a cultural lens, the indigenous responses to western society, and indeed the effects of western ideology and economics generally, inevitably assume new expressions, sometimes contrasting sharply with those previously ascribed by cultural outsiders.

Difficult as it may be for western historians to accept, the most important feature of Aboriginal history has not always been indigenous people’s relationship with newcomers. Moreover, even during periods when this relationship has been of pivotal significance, its nature has assumed expressions more complex than one shifting from either contact to conflict, or from resistance to renewal. In the case of the Northwest Coast, smallpox, the fur trade, the 1858 gold rush, Christian missionization, colonial reserve creation, the banning of the potlatch, and the introduction of Indian Act Band governments all assume new meaning when Aboriginal people cease to be conceived as minor, and generally reactive, players on the stage of Native-newcomer relations. Instead they must be cast as leading characters in dramas of cross-cultural encounter that they themselves effectively co-produce.

An examination of the history of collective identity among the Coast Salish people of the lower Fraser River watershed in southwestern British Columbia provides an excellent opportunity to bridge the epistemological and disciplinary divides, and to
thoroughly explore both western and indigenous historiographies. The region encompasses 3,323 square kilometers (3,292,297 acres), including Canada’s third largest city, Vancouver. Prior to European contact it is estimated to have been home to as many as 62,000 indigenous people. Today, slightly more than 7,000 Aboriginal people are registered as members of twenty-nine Indian Bands (First Nations) whose land base is a mere 79 square kilometers (19,551 acres) spread over 107 Indian reserves. (See Figure 1.1)

Within the broader Coast Salish territory, the lower Fraser has special geographical and cultural features that have resulted in accentuated expressions of group affiliation that facilitate the study of collective identity. The area is also one of the earliest and most extensively documented by ethnographers and government officials. Additionally, as a result of its massive salmon runs and a natural geography that made catching and processing salmon especially easy, the lower Fraser was the site of one of North America’s largest Aboriginal trading centres. The first European trading post on the coastal mainland of British Columbia, Fort Langley, was established in the region in 1827, and the principal activities of the Fraser River gold rush occurred within its borders in 1858. The lower Fraser River was the region where the details of British Columbia Indian Reserve policy were essentially worked out in the mid-1860s, and it is also the location where British Columbia’s first permanent Christian mission and residential school were established in 1862 at what is now Mission City. It is among the first places the father of North American anthropology, Franz Boas, conducted field work in the 1880s, and is also the location where prominent early Canadian ethnographer Charles Hill-Tout chose to make his home. In sum, the area was one of the earliest, most active,
and sustained areas of both intertribal and inter-racial identity negotiations in western Canada.

Today, the indigenous people living in the lower Fraser watershed are generally known collectively as the "Stó:lō," or "River People." Whether the term Stó:lō implies simple cultural similarity, social affiliation, or some degree of underlying political unity, however, is hotly debated. Some Aboriginal people regard the meaning behind the term "Stó:lō" as a construct of the western intellectual tradition. Others go so far as to dismiss the notion of a Stó:lō collective identity as a duplicitous fiction created by nefarious academics and Canadian politicians to facilitate the erasure of more traditional tribal- and settlement-based forms of identification and political authority. On the other hand, still others regard Stó:lō identity as an ancient and meaningful affiliation with particular relevance to the contemporary racially charged political situation.

Ultimately, local conflicts over indigenous identity are perhaps best regarded as history wars. Among the Stó:lō, history is regarded as the arbitrator of identity. Within a Coast Salish cultural context "knowing one’s history" is directly associated with being high status (smelá:lh or "worthy"). Lower class people (s’itéxem or "worthless") are considered to have "lost or forgotten their history." All claims to a given expression of identity being "more traditional" than another, therefore, are tantamount to saying that ‘my historical knowledge is better than yours. I am, therefore, higher status and more worthy than you.’ Additionally, within Canadian jurisprudence Aboriginal title and rights, and even being "Indian," are all historically defined as resulting from contemporary Native peoples’ connection to those who occupied and governed the continent prior to European arrival. Conceived in these contexts it becomes clear how
complicated Aboriginal identity is—and how important history is not only to understanding the past, but also to making sense of the present.

R. G. Collingwood pointed out half a century ago that change can be interpreted in at least two, opposite, ways: as negative by those who oppose it and as positive by those who promote or embrace it. Aletta Biersack, historical anthropologist of Oceania, argues that to the degree that indigenous societies are not static, analysis of tensions and conflict within and between native groups (and between these same communities and European colonizers) provides forums for determining which aspects of society promoted identity stasis and which were open to innovation. The complexity and lack of consensus among the Stó:lō as to how best define their own shared identity makes fascinating a historical examination of the methods and mechanisms by which the proponents of various expressions of Coast Salish collective identity have advanced their sometimes competing objectives throughout the first century of contact and colonial disruption.

Regarding history as the arbitrator of identity and authority is, of course, neither an exclusively Stó:lō, nor even Aboriginal, phenomenon. As Patrick Geary demonstrates in *The Myth of Nations: The Medieval Origins of Europe* (2002), competing assertions over the historical legitimacy of ethnic communities to land and resources lay at the heart of many of the contemporary world’s more violent and contentious conflicts. As such, determining how and why certain expressions of collective identity took situational precedence over others among the lower Fraser River indigenous population engages and builds upon a large and diverse body of scholarly literature in both the social sciences and the humanities. Indeed, the implications of this local ethnohistorical study may well
generate insights that prove useful for understanding the context of various global phenomena.

As with the European disputes examined by Geary, the debate over the antiquity of shared “Stó:lō” identity revolves around the tensions that exist between various geographic signifiers of identity and the strains the passage of time brings to those relationships. Disputes over the historical significance of various human migrations, in particular, feature prominently in the popular renditions of ethnogenesis studied by Geary and others. Generations of anthropologists have documented how on the indigenous west coast certain places on the landscape act as identity hubs around which networks or webs of collective identity are nested. People’s relationships to such places change, however. As a result, so do the human relationships that are constructed around them. Place, therefore, is a powerful force defining and shaping indigenous collective identities, but time (history) creates problems of legitimizing identity, hence *The Power of Place, The Problem of Time*.

The geographical signifiers informing the Aboriginal collective identities examined in this study have a number of recognized and well-documented expressions. For the extended family, they include regionally dispersed hereditary property sites such as wild potato bogs, sub-alpine blueberry patches, and the extremely prominent lower Fraser Canyon salmon summer fishing “spots.” For village- or settlement-based communities, shared identity is often regarded as deriving from the special “transformer rocks” that dot the landscape and which are believed to contain the spirits or life force of heroic ancestors transformed by the powerful sibling deities (Xexá:ls) at the beginning of the modern-human era after the chaotic world of creation had been “made right.” For
tribal groups, the most meaningful geographies are the tributary river systems that flow into the Fraser River.

Ultimately, collective identity is like a mask; a person puts it on or takes it off depending on the changing circumstances. For members of the sacred Stó:lō sxwō:oxwey fraternity, for example, it is literally a mask that signifies the spiritual brotherhood connecting each person privileged to wear it. Examined here are the various historical forces that have brought pressure to bear on one or more of these types of shared identity from roughly 1780, just prior to the first smallpox epidemic, through to 1906, the year a delegation of Coast Salish politicians traveled to London and met with King Edward VII. These two temporal bookends represent historical events that have individually received considerable academic attention. However, here they will be considered in their very distinct indigenous context. It was in the wake of the demographic disaster following the first smallpox epidemic that the Coast Salish people began renegotiating regional collective identities. This process, continually revised and tempered by the effects of subsequent British and then Canadian colonial initiatives, culminated in the emergence of an explicitly political supra-tribal identity after 1906. It was in the first decade of the twentieth century that the Stó:lō people collectively secured shared fishing reserves in the Fraser Canyon, and that on the provincial level, Aboriginal communities pooled their energy and talent to form the “Allied Tribes.” The place of Coast Salish individuals in the human universe was decidedly different in 1906 than it had been in 1780. But past precedent and understandings of how the world functioned informed all changes. Certain older social networks that had previously been relatively inactive rose to the fore of indigenous political life, while other once more formally
political expressions of identity either subtly shifted to accommodate changed colonial circumstances, or conversely slipped into the background of Aboriginal political consciousness. This study explores the process through which indigenous people negotiated these changes.

**Historiography**

One of the key dilemmas confronting ethnohistorians is how to describe colonial era changes in indigenous social structures without presenting pre-contact society in reified primordial terms. This struggle confounds easy rectification. Over the past three decades, literature on Aboriginal identity has focused on Native-newcomer relationships and reflects an interest in examining what the anthropologist Fredrik Barth once called "boundary maintenance," or the process of emphasizing and maintaining discriminatory markers of distinction between identifiable groups. As historian Sarah Carter demonstrates in *Capturing Women: The Manipulation of Cultural Imagery in Canada's Prairie West* (1997), boundary maintenance is largely a process of exerting control. Carter deftly explores the way representatives of western societies erected social and spatial boundaries to define people as members of separate and distinct communities. Emphasizing gender divisions, she demonstrates how in the prairie west "white femininity" became a racial category. Ideas about the vulnerability of white women helped to create and sustain concepts of racial and cultural difference, which convey messages about the necessity of policing boundaries between peoples. Images of white women, projected as "civilizing agents," in particular, became central to the creation and reproduction of the new settler community. Aboriginal women on the plains were
portrayed as sexually dangerous and sinister. Carter argues that together these polarized hegemonic images tragically isolated women within two racial identities that were without historical basis and beyond their ability to change or shape.\textsuperscript{17}

Early west coast historiography from Hubert Howe Bancroft (1887),\textsuperscript{18} to E.O.S. Scholefield and F.W. Howay (1914),\textsuperscript{19} and through to Margaret Ormsby (1967),\textsuperscript{20} failed to account for the constructed nature of Native identity. Indeed, to be fair, historians of past generations did not consider the question. Instead, these writers depicted Aboriginal identity in terms that have subsequently come to be criticized as "essentialist," that is, in a fashion that portrayed Native identity in primordial terms rather than as cast in historical relationships. Mid-to-late twentieth century anthropologists and historians, such as Joyce Wike (1951),\textsuperscript{21} Wilson Duff (1963),\textsuperscript{22} and Robin Fisher (1977),\textsuperscript{23} brought a new level of sophistication to the study of Aboriginal people. Collectively, each of these scholars regarded Native people as active historical players who took advantage of opportunities presented by foreign encounters, especially during the early years of contact, without losing their sense of unique indigenous identity. Yet, the assumptions they brought to their analysis resulted in depictions of a privileged pre-contact expression of identity that differed little from the preceding scholarship. While the most recent generation of post-colonial scholarship, exemplified in Cole Harris' \textit{The Resettlement of British Columbia} (1996),\textsuperscript{24} and \textit{Making Native Space} (2002),\textsuperscript{25} recognizes and explores the idea of Aboriginal identity as a social construct, they too, nonetheless, portray the local winter village community as the traditional, and therefore privileged, collective grouping, and consequently the one with political authority and land rights.\textsuperscript{26}
Studies of boundary maintenance, or the constructed divisions informing how one community views another, can shed great light on the way identity has been shaped. However, the interpretive paradigm does not necessarily allow for indigenous views and perspectives to rise to the fore. The primary concern of this study is to trace the historical expressions of Stó:lô people's own perceptions of their identity. It is, therefore, less concerned with European constructions of Aboriginal identity, except as they influence indigenous concepts of self, than the syncretic processes by which Aboriginal people forged new identities within the theatre of colonial encounters. Regarded in this way, indigenous understandings and motivations become just as important analytical concepts for interpreting the antecedents of contemporary Aboriginal identity as boundary maintenance.

This fact was first vividly demonstrated in the western Canadian context in the writings of historians Ken Coates and Kerry Able, who described cross-cultural religious encounters and syncretic integration of spiritual ideas among the indigenous Christians of the Yukon and northern British Columbia respectively. More recently, a number of publications pertaining to the Aboriginal people of the north coast of British Columbia and the Alaskan panhandle have advanced this scholarship further. Though their approaches and methods differed, the anthropologists Michael Harkin, Sergei Kan and Kirk Dombrowski, along with historian Susan Neylan, have come to very similar conclusions as concerns the historical nature of indigenous identity. Harkin with the Heiltsuk, Kan and Dombrowski with the Tlingit, and Neylan with the Tsimshian all recognized the way indigenous people directed the development of their own religious tradition within European Christianity. Aboriginal epistemology selectively embraced
certain Christian symbols, beliefs and rituals, the result being new, yet still indigenous cultural expressions. While influenced by the colonial forces of Christian missionaries, the expressions of each of these Aboriginal groups remained firmly rooted in Native antiquity—although as Dombrowski in particular reveals, Christianity can also be used by members of disadvantaged segments of Native society to work “against culture” by rejecting those traditional class, race and gender distinctions that had been used to control or suppress them. Thus, collectively, these studies make vividly clear that earlier academic distinctions between a genuine pristine pre-European contact Aboriginal identity and a false, tainted, or contaminated post-European contact Aboriginal identity hold little meaning in light of a living cultural history.

In the Coast Salish context, University of Washington historian Alexandra Harmon’s monograph *Indians in the Making: Ethnic Relations and Indian Identities around Puget Sound* (1999), reveals the benefits of both boundary maintenance and syncretism as analytical concepts. Inspired by Richard White’s recounting of the way Great Lakes region indigenous tribes and nations dissolved and then reconstituted themselves in the wake of European disease and exchange and colonial conquest, Harmon demonstrates that Coast Salish people played an active role (albeit as increasingly marginalized partners in a cross-ethnic relationship) in shaping their own colonial era identities.

Currently, as with their Stó:lō neighbours to the north, Aboriginal identity among Puget Sound Coast Salish is intimately tied to conflicts over aquatic and land resource ownership. In this regard, Harmon is primarily concerned with the identities that emerged with changes in the relationship between Coast Salish people and members of
the increasingly powerful immigrant settler society. Harmon underlines that world views are historically situated and derive largely from interpretations people have of themselves based upon the way they conceive of others.

For Harmon the “others” are largely Indians for whites, and whites for Indians. Pointing out that “Indian” identity has relevance only in relationship to non-Native identity (and it is ‘Indian’ identity that interests her), she spends little time exploring the category of “others” within Aboriginal society: “Indian’s relations with non-Indians have long been the inescapable context for all relations between Indians.” Just as the terms that people use to describe Native identities must be understood historically, so too, she argues, must the people and communities these words represent. Thus, as Harmon demonstrates, racial boundary maintenance has done more than simply create fictitious categories in western minds. It has also altered the very way in which Aboriginal people themselves have come to understand who they are.

Interpretations such as Harmon’s fall into a long scholarly tradition of historical enquiry that highlights how an interpretation or construction of Indian identity might be used to manipulate and control Aboriginal people. In his classic 1982 study, The Vanishing American: White Attitudes and U.S. Indian Policy, intellectual historian Brian Dippie demonstrates that the long and cherished concept of the “Vanishing American” not so much shaped American Indian policy as served to justify policies that were derived from non-Native greed for Aboriginal land and resources. Cumulatively, investigations such as theses demonstrate the way in which colonial projections of expected (or desired) Aboriginal identity can inform government actions and policies,
which in turn justify the initial projection. Together, these factors ultimately make the stereotype sacrosanct in popular non-Native, if not Aboriginal, eyes.

Much has been written on colonial constructions of various identities for the purpose of advancing social, political and economic agendas, or bolstering national resolve. Although it was not a major part of his analysis, one of the most insightful and important contributions of political scientist Paul Tennant’s influential work *Aboriginal People and Politics: The Land Question in British Columbia, 1849-1989* (1990) to this study is his discussion of how the state sometimes played a pivotal role in constructing meaningful pan-tribal identities despite its contrary intentions. Tennant’s example is the shared identity forged in residential schools. In 1894 Ottawa amended the *Indian Act* to provide for mandatory school attendance by Order in Council. While no such Orders in Council were ever passed, the government had, and used, its power to compel attendance. As a result, regionally-dispersed, racially-segregated church-run residential schools became common features in Canada. Whatever the personal and cultural costs for the pupils, these schools provided Aboriginal people from diverse tribal communities with unprecedented opportunities for interaction and communication; they facilitated a sense of shared, collective experience with colonial exploitation. As Tennant documents, several male leaders of the mid-to-late-twentieth century political organizations, such as the Allied Tribes of British Columbia, the Native Brotherhood, and the Union of British Columbia Indian Chiefs, attribute these factors to having helped foster among the males an “Indian identity” that enabled them to more successfully break down older tribal rivalries—a necessary prerequisite to focusing sufficient collective energy to advance the “land question.”
If we invert Tennant’s proposition, it could be said that no one has yet explored the ways in which Aboriginally “constructed” identities may have been used to bolster certain indigenous aspirations at the expense of either colonial society or competing interests groups within Native society. By the 1870s, for example, Stó:lō communities were largely Catholic with a significant Methodist and smaller Anglican presence. As early as the 1860s, Catholic and Protestant missionaries described and bemoaned Stó:lō communities that were seriously fractured along denominational lines. However, as Susan Neylan’s *The Heavens are Changing* demonstrates in the Tsimshian context, interpreting such tension as simply derived from colonially-imposed confusion denies any indigenous import such happenings had. That is to say, Reformation ideological divisions were not the only causes of what otherwise appeared to be interdenominational rifts within Native society. Often, sectarian differences obscured tensions with deeper and older indigenous significance. To reveal what lies at the heart of the indigenous conflicts over competing historical interpretations of identity necessarily involves turning to the Aboriginal significance these tensions hold.

The effects of contact and colonialism on indigenous people have been the focus of most academic writings on Northwest Coast Native-Newcomer relations. The first serious studies of the impact of newcomers on Northwest Coast Natives were written by F.W. Howay in the 1920s and 30s. Howay regarded contact and the fur trade as destructive forces that undermined traditional Aboriginal economic independence by ushering in an era of European exploitation which continued to the present. By the 1950s, however, anthropologists like Joyce Wike and Wilson Duff had begun challenging
the degeneration thesis. Duff's 1964 monograph, *The Indian History of British Columbia: Volume 1, The Impact of the White Man*, demonstrated that despite the introduction of such harmful contaminants as disease, alcohol and fire arms, the fur-trade era actually stimulated a "growth" in indigenous culture: "The arts and crafts, trade and technology, social and ceremonial life were all brought to new peaks of developments. The climax of Indian culture was reached well after the arrival of the white man on the scene." For Duff, it was not until the "disruptive encroachment of white settlers, the imposition of outside laws and suppression of Native customs, and the persuasion of missionaries advocating a new way of life," that "change came on too strongly and the Indian cultures ceased to function as effective integrated systems of living."

The revisionist interpretation that Duff and other anthropologists propounded ultimately came to be known as the "enrichment thesis." While some proponents took the model to extremes (arguing that totem poles, clan social structures, and crests were post-contact enrichment phenomenon) scholars from other disciplines generally embraced the more moderate insights Duff's anthropology provided. As a graduate student, the historian Robin Fisher was profoundly influenced by Wilson Duff. Fisher's 1977 publication, *Contact and Conflict: Indian-European Relations in British Columbia, 1774-1890*, dedicated to Duff, provided the enrichment thesis a degree of legitimacy it still had not received from historians. Fisher advanced the literature by demonstrating more clearly when and why fur-trade era "contact" turned into settlement era "conflict."

The enrichment thesis, while still generally accepted, has had its detractors. In 1984 Barry Gough published *Gunboat Frontier*, in which he argued that the later part of the fur trade era had actually been distinguished by the aggressive imposition of British
hegemony, backed by naval power. In 1992, the historical geographer James Gibson published *Otter Skins, Boston Ships, and China Goods: The Maritime Fur Trade of the Northwest Coast, 1785-1841* in which he went even further by positing that extreme violence had in fact been a defining aspect of the fur trade relationship from the very first. The strongest and most theoretically informed challenge to the enrichment thesis, however, has come from Geographer Cole Harris, who places the cross-ethnic conflict described by Gough and Gibson firmly within the context of massive disease-induced depopulation to argue that the earliest Native-newcomer relations were actually conducted within a "culture of violence."

While the current revisionist model shares many features of Howay's early investigations, it is based upon a much richer ethnographic foundation. The first to assess the cultural and social consequences of disease and violence among the Coast Salish were George M. Guilmet and Robert Boyd, et al. Their study of the "legacy" of contact concludes that smallpox resulted in "a general breakdown of the [Coast Salish] sociocultural system." That is to say, at least a decade before the first European traders arrived smallpox had already caused the collapse of spiritual/moral authority in the Coast Salish world. Subsequent exposure to European traders and western technology, they argued, placed the indigenous inhabitants of Puget Sound in "a metaphysical liminality, a bicultural twilight zone between the traditional and the new."

In their quest to explain contemporary marginalization, however, Guilmet and Boyd dismissed the enrichment thesis without addressing the fact that contact had indeed enriched rather than replaced aspects of Aboriginal culture. Recently, a more balanced perspective has begun to emerge. In their study of the single community of Spuzzum in
the Fraser Canyon, Andrea LaForet and her indigenous collaborator Annie York reveal just how complicated the process of post-contact cultural change was for Salish people. Europeans and western ideology did not simply place indigenous people in a state of crisis by undermining and challenging traditions. Rather, indigenous people selectively embraced aspects of the newcomer’s worldview as appropriate supplements to ancient traditions while they rejected others as out of step with their needs as locally defined. The ability of Spuzzum prophets or clairvoyants to accurately predict and meaningfully interpret aspects of newcomer society, for example, served to reinforce ancient belief structures at least as much as the changes the clairvoyants described worked to undercut traditional belief systems.  

Alexandra Harmon, who examined the effects of contact on the Coast Salish people of Puget Sound, corroborates the findings of LaForet’s case study. Harmon too found that the culture of terror and disease induced depopulation coupled with new economic opportunities of the fur trade did not necessarily result in a rejection of shamanic traditions and hereditary leadership. While the grief Guimet described was a real response to horrendous shock and loss, as was amazement to new technologies, neither of these reactions were necessarily world-view altering or permanent. Coast Salish people had multiple options at their disposal and chose to react to sudden challenges in a host of ways, some innovative and some more traditional. Seldom was one option exercised to the complete exclusion of others.  

Today it is increasingly accepted that indigenous people responded to introduced change in different ways at different times. This is especially true as pertains to the effects of contact on Aboriginal concepts of their collective self. Evidence from some
parts of North America shows that contact and colonialism caused Aboriginal people to emphasize their collective interests in uniting against a foreign identity (or to take advantage of new economic opportunities provided by the opening of western markets). In other circumstances, Native people’s sense of group solidarity was undermined by foreign influences. Adherents of the later model maintain that pre-contact formal political confederacies and regional chiefly authority were fractured by colonial forces and replaced by relatively weak localized village identities. Ultimately, however, as Charles Bishop has shown in his examinations of Ojibway clan structures, it is difficult to determine the extent to which contact with Europeans precipitated entirely new changes in collective identity, accentuated already existing trends, or, conversely, acted to reverse the direction of change that had been set in motion earlier.

The Coast Salish people’s Nuu-chal-nulth neighbours on the west coast of Vancouver Island provide a good example of just how complex this question can be. Despite the fact that the archival evidence for the late eighteenth century Nuu-chal-nulth region is much richer than it is for Coast Salish territory, it is still a matter of debate whether the regional and highly centralized political confederacies observed by maritime traders and explorers in the late 1700s existed prehistorically. It is known that the renowned Clayoquot Chief, Wickaninnish, took full advantage of the opportunities the western trade offered to bolster and consolidate his political authority. On at least two occasions he tried to secure large western ships to augment his vast and growing armoury of muskets and canons. Whether the military apparatus would be used to expand the geographic bounds of his already considerable confederacy, or ultimately put to the task of driving away Europeans who failed to treat him and his people with due respect, may
never be known. It suffices to say that Wickaninnish, like other Native leaders, had a keen eye for the main chance. Probably the best example is Wickaninnish's contemporary, Kamahamaha, of the Hawaiian Islands, who successfully deployed his own small western-supplied armada to extend his "Kingdom" throughout the Polynesian archipelago.  

Both the atomizing and the centralizing interpretive models tend to regard contact induced change, whatever its expression, as being a unidirectional process. Additionally, adherents of both schools have tended to regard the resulting identity expressions as 'un-Indian' inasmuch as they stem from foreign non-Native influences. This study challenges both these assumptions and argues that post-contact identity reformations, even explicitly colonially induced ones, need also be conceived within the context of earlier pre-contact shifts in identity. Moreover, the direction of cultural change—even colonially orchestrated change—is not always unidirectional. Among the Aboriginal population of the lower Fraser River, changes in expressions of collective identity and political authority often took forms contrary to colonial intentions. What is more, these trends, whether towards greater regional identification or toward localized identity expressions, always had various indigenous supporters and detractors who often worked simultaneously at what might be considered cross-purposes.

Significantly, when indigenous people speak of the formation of their own identity it is often in terms that are outside of the context of Native-newcomer relations. Among those studying the Coast Salish cultural group, much energy has been directed toward determining which expression of shared identity resonates the strongest with
Coast Salish people themselves. Certain fundamental tensions can be identified in this scholarship. One of these is over the relative merit of a model that emphasizes the economic and material/ecological basis of nascent nineteenth century political affiliation vis-à-vis an interpretation where the most meaningful linkages cutting across anchored settlement identities are spiritual and associated with the psychic space of shamanic odysseys.

The former position is most closely associated with the still highly regarded 1960s publications by prominent anthropologists Wayne Suttles and William Elmendorf. For them, the extended family was the most important group affiliation, and among the family's crucial connections were those forged between affines that enabled people to access distant food resources. Suttles' and Elmendorf's ecological/materialist model was subsequently corroborated and refined by UBC anthropologist Bruce Miller, who brought statistical analysis to bear on what had largely been metaphorical studies of his predecessors.

The revisionist spiritual model was advanced by, and remains principally associated with, Jay Miller. In his highly contextualized, but largely atemporal, anthropological study, *Lushootseed Culture and the Shamanic Odyssey: An Anchored Radiance*, Miller argued that the most important cross-tribal affiliations were those associated with the spiritual energy of shamans. According to Miller, shamanic energy radiated from anchored tribal homelands, thereby connecting people from diverse residential groups in a web of spiritual affiliation. He argued "that from a native perspective" the ecological/materialist model as well as other recent interpretations emphasizing formal political unity was "'invented' because they reflect Eurocentric
stereotypes about individuality. Overall... [these interpretations] have been unsituated, overly democratic, and woefully irreligious."^{57}

However, if those emphasizing the materialist/ecological basis of intertribal group affiliation had downplayed spirituality, they had at least recognized the importance of accounting for change over time in Aboriginal identity. Bruce Miller's 1989 study, relying on communication theory, identified features of Coast Salish social networks as themselves political in that they controlled of the flow of information. In subsequent co-authored works he and Daniel Boxberger provided a historical context to illustrate the way social networks could function as a form of political organization. The key to understanding more formal Coast Salish political affiliations, such as emerged in certain parts of Puget Sound in the mid-to-late nineteenth century, was to recognize that they were built upon social networks which at certain times, and under certain circumstances, could be operationalized into a formal political unity. Taken together, these two scholars demonstrated that colonialism itself was a principal catalyst of such operationalization.

Clearly, the two interpretations need not be irreconcilable. While within contemporary Coast Salish discourse there is a pressure to foreground the spiritual underpinning of shared identity, the economic, ecological and materialistic basis of broader regional networks of identity are readily apparent and highly valued. This study employs and embraces both viewpoints in different ways. The most recent theorizing by Bruce Miller and Daniel Boxberger persuasively argues that the most consistently important expression of Coast Salish collective identity has been, and remains, the extended family (as described by Suttles and Elmendorf), but that situationally, other latent identities have come to the fore in response to specific historical circumstances.^{58}
Added here to the list of latent affiliations building toward nascent political identity are those associated with the special geography of the lower Fraser River, which, among other things, facilitated the development of a unique salmon processing technology. Equally important is the indigenous precedent for cross-tribal affiliations found in ancient Stó:lō “myth-age” stories describing how the world came to assume its current form. These stories, previously interpreted chiefly for what they contributed to local settlement-based expressions of collective identity, also contain important messages about the interconnectedness and mutual dependence of various communities. This aspect of these stories provided the Coast Salish people of the lower Fraser River with ancient metaphysical precedence for supra-tribal affiliation. The overlapping features of the stories served as powerful historiographical tools that enabled Coast Salish people to respond to nineteenth century colonial induced change on a regional level (or levels) that, though innovative, was based on precedence. Such “lessons” as they are often described by Stó:lō Elders, proved particularly important to people as they sought to regroup and reconstitute meaningful identities in the face of European disease induced depopulation, economic adjustments associated with the fur trade, and the crisis created by the 1858 gold rush and subsequent colonial Indian policy.

While the nature of Coast Salish private knowledge and interfamily political negotiations make it impossible to provide the equivalent of a literature review of indigenous Coast Salish historiography, the local Aboriginal discourse makes clear that divisions in Coast Salish identity revolve around fundamental tensions, certain aspects of which western scholars have generally overlooked. For example, it is generally accepted
that a fundamental tension remains that between geographically nested identities and more regionally dispersed affiliations. What has not been adequately highlighted is the degree to which the tension between geographical stasis and movement has gender and class dimensions. High status men typically derive much of their authority and status through their genealogical ties to heroic ancestors who were transformed into large stones located near their ancestral settlement. These stones serve as identity anchors around which prominent men build settlement- and tribal-based affiliations among their followers. High status women, on the other hand, typically relocated to live in their husbands' settlements after marriage. Important signifiers of women's status and identity remain located in the immediate vicinity of their parents' homes or travel with their sisters to their husbands' locales. Throughout the colonial period, new opportunities emerged for people to take advantage of older gender- and status-based divisions to promote change that was set in stark opposition to particular expressions of identity and authority. Thus, within Stó:lō history and society, identities, like movements, flow from fluid, predictable processes (which might be thought of in terms of social structures), but they also emerge from unexpected, punctuating historical events and personalities.

The insights gained from the literature on the situational nature of indigenous collective identity have significant implications for our understanding of the role of colonialism in Aboriginal society. The picture currently emerging depicts Aboriginal populations and identities as having been far more fluid than previously believed throughout the late nineteenth century. Government assumptions that villages were the only legitimate units from which political authority emanated, or should be concentrated into, had profound and often unanticipated and unappreciated effects on other less
geographically nested expressions of collective authority. In fact, as I demonstrate in chapters seven and eight, the profound problem for Stó:lō people was not necessarily how much communal reserve land should be secured for each Indian Band, but whether the notion of a local settlement-based governing body of any kind was an appropriate way to regulate property that was often regarded as the private domain of geographically scattered families.

The point that prominent University of Chicago anthropologist Marshal Sahlins champions is that one of the hurdles confronting ethnohistorians is the exaggerated opposition in the disciplines of history and anthropology between structure and event. Sahlins contends that for too many anthropologists and historians “it seemed that ‘event’ and ‘structure’ could not occupy the same epistemological space. The event was conceived as antistructural, the structure as nullifying the event....” Too often, Sahlins maintains, structure is conceived as being to event “as the social is to the individual, the essential to the accidental, the recurrent to the idiosyncratic, the invisible to the visible, the lawful to the aleatory, the quotidian to the extraordinary, the silent to the audible, the comparable to the unique and so on.” Sahlins, in *Historical Metaphors and Mythical Realities: Structure in the Early History of the Sandwich Islands Kingdom,* challenges scholars to invert their theoretical praxis and recognize that historical events can become ethnographically intelligible through the study of change rather than stasis. Instead of looking for continuity in change he challenges us to seek change in continuity.

The potential benefits of reconciling the historian’s old propensity for event-centred analysis with the anthropologist’s penchant for processual examinations of social
structures are great. Indeed, there is a growing awareness of the value of contrasting and combining analysis of the “rules of society” with examinations of certain important “happenings.” This is serendipitous, for historical events also figure prominently in Stó:lō people’s understanding and recounting of their own history.

Stó:lō identity needs to be conceived not only as situationally created through relationships, but also as emerging from unexpected historical events which alter or affect social structures. Certainly, this is an important aspect of the way Stó:lō people themselves describe and define their identity. In this regard, this study employs Sahlin’s approach to event-centred analysis and accepts his definition of a genuine ‘historical’ event as being a complex happening with specific significance in terms of both its meaning and importance. Interpreted this way, “Not every action is an historical event… [only] those which change the order of things.” An historical event is not a common activity acted out within a culture, but an unanticipated action or happening that stands out against a backdrop of known predictability: “It is a difference and it makes a difference.” It is important, therefore, to document carefully the earliest structures of lower Fraser River Aboriginal culture as they relate to identity, and to then identify stress points within those structures to better perceive the connection between historical event and subsequent altered expressions of identity. For, as Sahlins points out, while “structures and events cannot be reduced to the other, …yet each is somehow determining the other.”

By conceiving of events as informing and shaping identity, it is possible to begin interpreting relationships from differing perspectives and within different frameworks. One class of historical event that has had a profound influence on Aboriginal identity is
that of population movement and migration. Migrations have had significant consequences for the way Coast Salish people view themselves. And yet, Aboriginal movement and migration has only recently received attention from historians and geographers of British Columbia. Indeed, the still prevalent interpretation found in standard historical studies and early classic ethnographies is that with the exception of seasonal migrations Aboriginal populations were geographically fixed, and had been for a long period of time. The creation of small isolated reserves at the location of ancient winter villages and select resource sites further froze this static pattern. In fact, this view helped to justify the land alienation and reserve policies of colonial administrators. And yet, the early observations of Europeans, as well as the Native oral historical record, speak unequivocally of large-scale permanent migrations and the amalgamation of formerly distinct village and tribal communities, many of which were responses to sudden smallpox induced depopulation.

Prior to the 1970s, historians of Native-newcomer relations generally applied cultural areas and cultural ecology models developed in the early twentieth century that identified the physical environment as the determining factor in creating primordial Aboriginal identities. Subsequent analysis has largely historicized the role of environment in Aboriginal identity building. In 1974, Arthur Ray, in Indians in the Fur Trade: Their Role as Hunters, Trappers and Middlemen in the Lands Southwest of Hudson’s Bay, documented shifting cultural expressions within three distinct sub-Arctic Aboriginal communities that seasonally migrated across three ecological niches and participated in an increasingly important European fur trade. By studying more than one cultural group as they migrated between ecological niches, Ray established a model
for appreciating the central aspects of Aboriginal identity that goes beyond the limited
cultural group analysis popular in previous decades. Ray's analysis demonstrates that
Native people, though influenced by their local ecology, were also able to act
independently and that economics could be as great a motivator as culture or
ceremonialism. The important issue, he argued, was determining the nature of Native
economic behavior, including the way that post-contact economic exchange with
Europeans was understood and acted upon—an issue that has since become a focus of
significant intellectual analysis.68

The implications of Ray's economic analysis for an examination of the history of
Coast Salish collective identity are profound. Within what is generally accepted as Stó:lō
territory there once existed between seventeen and thirty tribal communities (depending
upon one's definition of "tribe") that migrated seasonally throughout four distinct
ecological niches: marine/estuary, valley/river, arid canyon and sub-alpine. Over the past
two centuries a series of permanent migrations, distinct from seasonal rounds and
separate from the early smallpox migrations, occurred that were associated with new
economic opportunities. Stó:lō people from near the Fraser River delta were motivated
early on to relocate near Fort Langley, where they attempted to assume the prominent
role of middle men in the fur and salmon trade. Later, on the cusp of the twentieth
century, Stó:lō people looking (and coerced and deceived) to take advantage of the
agricultural opportunities of the fertile valley below abandoned as winter residences
seven settlements in the canyon. Both these movements, and especially the latter,
resulted in increased pan-tribal identification among those communities who received the
relocated populations, and enhanced local identification among the villages that were
outside of this process. The descendants of the Stó:lō people who left their canyon villages now live year round within only one ecological niche and sometimes make short seasonal visits to just one other niche, where they are not infrequently classified as “intruders” or even “invaders” by those who did not share their migration experience. Over time, as Stó:lō movements came increasingly to be restricted, so have localized expressions of identity increasingly come to compete with the larger regional ones derived from more fluid movements.

John Milloy, in an insightful essay entitled “‘Our Country’: The Significance of the Buffalo Resource for a Plains Cree Sense of Territory,” documents the way historical forces facilitated the permanent migration of Cree people from wooded parklands to the open prairies, and how with this migration the principal expression of Cree identity shifted from the extended family to the larger tribal unit. Once established in their new environs Cree people required and subsequently created new relationships among themselves, and between themselves and the land, the spirit world and other Aboriginal communities. Before the 1780s, Cree people, heavily involved themselves in the Hudson’s Bay Company fur trade, possessed a woodlands’ theology where a belief in a supreme being existed but was less important than the spiritual bonds between people and the animals. The Woodland Cree also considered families the most important social units. In contrast, the Cree of the post-1780s prairie environment had an economy that was north-south orientated and facilitated by horse transportation. The overriding woodland influence of the spirit-animal-human relationship diminished, to be replaced by increased monotheism and reliance on the abundant and easily procured buffalo. As a result, the “tribe” came to overshadow the family as the primary identifier of political
authority and territorial ownership. Milloy concludes that as a result of the buffalo’s demise and the emergence of widespread indigenous dependency on the federal state plains Cree identity subsequently underwent a third change in the late 1800s to become more focused on the local village unit.

Within Stó:lō culture, as will be discussed in detail in chapter two, an increased theological emphasis on a single supreme being also emerged during the mid-nineteenth century. This was less a new concept introduced by missionaries (as some have maintained) than an accentuation of a hitherto existing but less prominent religious belief. Moreover, increased “Stó:lō” regional group affiliation vis-à-vis local village and tribal identity accompanied the increased identification with a single supreme being. As with the Cree, increased Stó:lō monotheism also appears to have been linked to migration and movement. Many smallpox survivors left their scattered home villages located up the various tributary river systems to cluster with relatives on or nearer the Fraser River proper. Here, they were disconnected from the location of their original transformed immortal ancestor whose spirit forces were central to their identity. In the wake of inexplicable smallpox deaths, they turned to an omniscient, non-site-specific, Creator for assistance and spiritual sustenance. Thus, to appreciate the history of Stó:lō identity it is necessary to examine the movements of people between regions as well as movements of individuals between nested communities.

Until recently, little serious attention had been devoted to West Coast Native migrations outside the context of either traditional seasonal rounds, or late-nineteenth century seasonal migrations associated with the new labour opportunities of the emerging capitalist market. In Kwakwakawakw Settlements, 1775-1920 (1994), however, Robert
Galois demonstrated the effects of early contact era movement on the way Aboriginal people collectively perceived themselves. According to Galois, contact events, such as the introduction of guns to the northern Kwakwakawakw in the late eighteenth century, had dramatic effects on more southern Salish speakers, who were literally overrun and their territory permanently occupied. Subsequent studies, such as Robert Boyd's, have shown that similar, though less predatory, identity shaping migratory processes were also at work among the Haida of Queen Charlotte Islands.

Ethnohistorical investigations generally require distinguishing the exogenous (external) from the endogenous (internal) as a prerequisite to assessing the nature and degree of cultural borrowing and merging—an approach with roots in older salvage ethnology and acculturation studies. To assess the cause and role of significant migratory events in the shaping of Stó:lō identity, determining what is endogenous and what is foreign can be a useful exercise, but not necessarily one that is meaningful to Aboriginal ways of viewing historical progression. Such a proposition assumes a division, which though obvious and therefore seemingly important to western observers, might not have an equivalent among nineteenth century indigenous populations.

Within Stó:lō society, for example, as the anthropologist Crisca Bierwert documents in *Brushed by Cedar, Living by the River*, a prominent belief is that most things (events) happen not as a result of human agency, but because they are fated or “meant to be.” My own field work over the past decade corroborates this. Many Stó:lō consider it pointless, and potentially dangerous, to try to thwart the obscure dictates of the spirit world. There is a tendency, therefore, to accept things rather than challenge them. Colonialism itself is at certain times and within certain circumstances regarded as
something that happened “for a reason” according to an agency that was not necessarily the colonizer’s. Omniscient spirit forces are not concerned with distinctions between exogenous and endogenous; the dichotomy that matters most to the Sto:lō, therefore, is not that between external and internal, but that between human and spiritual.

As Sahlins points out, the way an event will be interpreted, what significance will be ascribed to it, “cannot be predicated simply from the objective properties of the happening. The specific historical effects turn on the way those properties are taken up in the culture in question, a way that is never the only one possible.”75 Thus, while often the result of what an outsider might consider external events, the Sto:lō generally interpret movements as the product of endogenous forces: They are simultaneously (and consequently) interpreted often not as human or physical events but as processes of metaphysical orchestration. Thus, the Sto:lō do not see only one process at work; rather they consider agency to stem from sources other than those taken into account by western non-Natives. Conceived in this light, certain colonial actions (and colonial-era happenings) must be regarded as events within Sto:lō society rather than omnipotent processes exerting foreign changes while operating essentially outside of Native comprehension. Colonial events, therefore, inform Aboriginal identity by challenging and potentially altering patterns of thought which in turn are observable in innovative expressions of community social structures such as identity.

Ultimately, what emerges is a picture of a remarkably adaptive society struggling not only with colonial incursions, but also with internal class, gender, and geographically anchored economic interests. The result was an indigenous society that in the wake of European-contact and later colonial policies was torn between a number of competing
forces, some conservative and reactionary, and some liberal and adaptive, that resulted in unresolved tension between those advocating for greater supra-tribal collective identity and political authority and those advancing the cause of localized settlement-based identity and authority.

Methodology

While epistemological gulfs can be formidable obstacles to cross-cultural understanding, and therefore ethnohistorical analysis, they need not be insurmountable.

The method used to inform the historical analysis presented here might best be described as sustained reflective dialogue. That is to say, the present study is the product of a prolonged and relatively informal process of sustained historical conversations with a host of indigenous people over the period of a decade. This process began when I accepted a position as staff historian for the Stó:lō Tribal Council (later called the Stó:lō Nation) in 1992. I continued to hold this position, though not always on a full-time basis, until the summer of 2001. During my tenure at the Stó:lō office I became increasingly interested in learning how indigenous people regarded their own history, and how they felt about various non-Native efforts to define and interpret their history. To accomplish this, I began by listening to the way Stó:lō people spoke about the past during formal ceremonial gatherings such as potlatches, at naming ceremonies, and at winter dances. I also observed the way historical discourse was integrated into children’s birthday parties, family card games and fishing trips.
Gradually, as I was invited, I began to participate in these discussions. I made it clear that I was trying to learn about Stó:lō ways of understanding the past, and that I wanted to try and appreciate indigenous history from an indigenous perspective. With those who seemed most interested, I began describing the contents of various historical manuscripts, government records and ethnographic descriptions pertaining to their ancestors. I also shared with these people the interpretations different historians and anthropologists had brought to these records.

Such visits inevitably led to discussions that simply could not be concluded at a single sitting. Conversations on particular historical topics, therefore, were sustained between myself and various Stó:lō friends and consultants over prolonged periods, often many years. That is to say, when I returned to play the next card game, or help celebrate the next child's birthday, or witness a Sxwó:xwey dance naming ceremony, or simply visit over coffee, opportunities often arose for people to discuss subsequent thoughts they had had on whatever historical or cultural topic we had earlier discussed. People regularly approached me saying such things as “I was thinking about what you said my grandmother is recorded as saying to the anthropologist Marian Smith in 1945, and I think her words need to be considered within the context of....” Or, “When you said that political scientist Paul Tennant described Governor Douglas policies as having been not too different from those applied later by Joseph Trutch, I thought that sounded quite different from what my father said his grandfather said about Douglas, so I spoke with my older brother, and he said he remembers hearing that....”

Thus, while no formal interviews were conducted specifically for the purpose of writing this dissertation, the analysis presented here relies heavily upon oral traditions
and indigenous historiography. That is to say that while this dissertation is built upon a foundation of archival-based information, participant observation, and what in the anthropological literature is typically referred to as “memory ethnography,” it is ultimately and most profoundly the product of more than a decade of sustained and reflective conversations with a host of Stó:lō-Coast Salish people about their past. In particular, it has been shaped by countless hours of conversation with Wesley Sam and Andy Commodore of Soowahlie, Robert Thomas of Kwantlen, Jimmie Charlie and Nancy Phillips of Chehalis, Bill and Sophie Pat-Charlie, and Matilda and Alan Gutierrez, of Chawathil, Aggie Victor of Cheam, Henry and Tiny Pettis of Seabird Island, Roasleen George of Skwah, Frank Malloway of Yakweakwioose, and Hugh Kelly of Sumas. Additionally, and most significantly, this dissertation reflects the insights gained through literally thousands of hours of conversations with Albert “Sonny” McHalsie, the Stó:lō Nation’s Cultural Advisor. Sonny quickly became one of my closest friends, and therefore someone who spoke in very frank terms about those of my interpretations he considered ill conceived.

In addition to conversing with Stó:lō people directly, I have also sought to engage in dialogic listenings and readings of taped and transcribed oral histories collected by earlier researchers. That is to say, in the words of Dominick La Capra, I have attempted to engage my source material in a manner that recognizes “that projection is to some extent unavoidable insofar as objects of inquiry are of intense concern to us because they pose questions that address significant values or assumptions.” In effect, I here have been able to distill from the large body of collected oral histories the indigenous interpretations and understandings that were largely buried or obscured beneath the more
explicit research objectives of the various earlier interviewers (myself included). Many Coast Salish consultants over the past century shared information that was beyond the specific research interests of their interviewers. As a result, much valuable information by Coast Salish informants remains obscured in unpublished fieldnotes or marginalized in publications that focus on other matters. While recognizing that these sources have been filtered and translated, the present study seeks, among other objectives, to provide those buried voices with a public forum.78

My research also relies heavily on a large body of more traditional archival manuscript and government record collections, some of which, such as the British Columbia Attorney General’s records, and the letters and reports of the Oblate Missionaries working among the Coast Salish during the mid-to-late nineteenth century, have been overlooked by ethnohistorians.79 The latter body of evidence is printed in the obscure and difficult to locate annual series *Missions de la Congrégation des Missionnaires Oblats de Marie Immaculée*, which published primary documents pertaining to Oblate missionary activities from around the world for over 100 years beginning in 1860. These records are in French, and their ethnographic content has been largely ignored because most of the anthropologists and historians who have focused on the Stó:lō have been English speakers.80 Like so much of the evidence generated by non-Natives in the 1800s, the Oblate records are problematic. In addition to being circumspect in their discussion of the strength of Native beliefs and traditions in the face of Christianity, they are polemical in their advocacy of the power of Catholicism to effect real cultural change. Nonetheless, the Oblate Missionaries’ intimate and sustained dealings with Aboriginal people, and the advocacy work they engaged in on behalf of
Native people vis-à-vis state authorities, make these records invaluable ethnohistorical sources.

My approach to using primary sources has been directed toward creating a richer and “thicker” context for historical cross-cultural understanding. When possible I have tried to bring both Native and non-Native sources to my discussions of any given topic or discussion. This was not always possible, as there are matters on which one or the other body of evidence is silent. This is the result not only of biases inherent in the selection process used by the archivists and anthropologists who originally collected much of the information, but also of the different priorities and perspectives of the actual historical characters and what they saw fit to record or transmit orally to subsequent generations. Where the extant records did not permit me to conduct direct comparisons with the Stó:lô I have attempted to provide the counter perspective by drawing on the larger historical or cultural context.

I have also attempted to be critical in my use of oral evidence despite the intimate nature of my relations with Stó:lô people. While I prefer to think of the indigenous people I have worked with as teachers or consultants rather than informants, I am in agreement with Leland Donald, a University of Victoria anthropology professor, who declared, “Informants’ statements are what one analyzes, not the results of analysis.” The key task is to differentiate between what people say they do and what they actually do—or more specifically, between what people say their ancestors did and what they actually did. This is not to say that what happened is more important than what people think or say happened, but rather that the distinction remains important in the study of ethnohistory.
What Follows

What follows is a journey through indigenous history and historiography.

Chapter two examines some of the key forces that shaped local, and competing regional, expressions of collective Aboriginal identity immediately prior to the disruption caused by contact and colonialism. It includes a relatively detailed review of the local ethnohistorical literature relating to collective identity and seeks to situate the Stó:lō within a broader ethnographic context. In particular, it explores the geographic, technological, spiritual and economic underpinnings of Stó:lō collective identity as they existed immediately prior to contact, and argues that together these factors worked to emphasize the linkages between settlement and tribal-based communities. In this chapter, I also introduce the idea that differences in perspective over the expression and importance of collective identity have gendered and class-based roots.

Chapters three and four together examine the themes of movement and migration and their dual role in the formation of collective identity in the early European-contact era through to the late nineteenth century. The analysis in chapter three deals specifically with such matters as the hitherto ignored effects of the smallpox epidemic of 1782 that resulted in mass migrations and community amalgamations (such as occurred among the upper and lower Chehalis). Additionally, this chapter investigates a category of migrations that resulted in community fractures along class lines, as when the slaves from a village near Hope left their masters and established their own “tribal” identity farther down river. It also examines the significance and consequences of population migrations that resulted in entire village communities migrating to be nearer opportunities for
economic advancements, as in the Kwantlen movement to Fort Langley. Finally, also explored are the mid-to-late nineteenth century migrations that resulted in the dissolving of certain up-river tribal identities and the amalgamation of others. Some of the analysis reveals that the very fact that movement occurred is often more important than the expression it took, for movement within Stó:lō society is fundamentally both an act and a process charged with power.

The process of identity fracture and contraction, that is, the emphasis of localized and segmented expressions of collective identity through colonial relations is the subject of chapters five and six. Commencing with the international 1858 gold rush to the Fraser Canyon, relations with representatives of western society and, increasingly, official representatives of state and ecclesiastic authorities, resulted in renewed tensions between village (primarily male) and pan-tribal (predominantly female) expressions of collective identity. Occurring initially within Stó:lō territory and then spreading rapidly up the Fraser and into the BC interior, the gold rush also tipped the scales of power in terms of Aboriginal and non-Native populations.

These two chapters investigate the effect of reserve creation and the imposition of municipal-style elected band offices, which acted to reinforce settlement and tribal-based identities at the expense of more regional expressions, on indigenous collective identity. The role of the Catholic Church in creating a centralized residential school for all Stó:lō tribes, and in sponsoring petitions and other collective actions is also studied. The Church's interaction with the Stó:lō illuminates the role of syncretism (the blending of previously separate ideologies and beliefs) as a counterpoint to the forces of boundary maintenance as reflected in such acts as the banning of the potlatch and the sales
prohibition placed on non-tidal (riverine) caught salmon. Both the ban of the potlatch and salmon fishing regulations led directly to escalations in the tensions over conflicting historical interpretations of identity while eliminating one of the key regulatory mechanisms for resolving conflict.

Much has been made of the value of bringing Native history “out of the background,” and of emphasizing the indigenous significance of events that to contemporary western observers often appeared small or insignificant. However, we need not look in the historical shadows to catch a glimpse of the rise of supra-tribal Stó:lo identity in the late nineteenth century. The Stó:lo and their Salish neighbours orchestrated and conducted some of the largest and best documented political rallies in western Canada, not because they had necessarily always acted in a politically coordinated fashion, but because circumstances required it. Stó:lo people sought a collective response to the systematic alienation of their land and resources. This experience set a precedent for the quasi-military response to the lynching of a young Stó:lo boy by American vigilantes in 1884, as described in chapter eight. The fact that these events and their indigenous political significance have not become part of the non-Native historical consciousness says more about the way history has been written than about Aboriginal participation in history’s creation.

The process by which colonial efforts to craft constricted Aboriginal identities were simultaneously countered by a subversive rise in supra-tribal political identification constitutes chapters seven and eight. The Aboriginal response to colonial injustice and haphazard Indian administration was to make efforts to become genuinely self-governing
and to have their relations with provincial and federal authorities governed by predictable rules of law.

The concluding chapter is introduced with an account of the 1906 Coast Salish delegation to London. This epic political journey to the most important non-Native urban centre in the world is placed within the context of the previous 130 years of identity formation. The sojourn's implications for the emergence of the more formal supra-tribal affiliations and political authority, so much a focus of indigenous politics later in the twentieth century, are thereby made explicit.

Popular perceptions to the contrary, the history of Aboriginal collective identity is the story of a complicated process of change, shaped as much by internal divisions as external forces. The historical conflicts and tensions within Aboriginal society are every bit as revealing as those between Natives and newcomers. Their study makes apparent the inadequacy of historical interpretations that fail to account for Aboriginal actions that occur beyond the realm of Native relations with non-Native newcomers. To the extent that Aboriginal people have not only survived the homogenizing forces of corporate globalization and the assimilative policies of Canadian Indian policy, but actually found new ways to be different, reveals the significance of local studies to our understanding of national and international issues. By adapting the expressions of their collective identity the Aboriginal people along the coveted lands of the lower Fraser River watershed have successfully ensured their role as major players in a drama of cross-cultural relations who continue to make decisions that shape the way distant manifestations of political and corporate power operate. The recounting of Aboriginal history needs to reflect these
realities. Ultimately, the onus is on western historians to try and understand the indigenous past in a manner that will allow the construction of historical narratives and analyses that are recognizable to indigenous people themselves.

6 In relation to neighbouring non-Native cities and towns (with a combined population of over 2,000,000), none of the indigenous settlements are large. Musqueam, near Vancouver, is the largest of the lower Fraser settlements with 1,029 members as of 2000. New Westminster Band and Popkum, by way of contrast, each have less than ten members. Taken as a whole, roughly one half of the region’s total registered Native population lives on reserve, while the other half live off reserve in predominantly non-Native communities. I am indebted to Leona George for providing me with contemporary population statistics from Department of Indian Affairs records.
7 As of the autumn of 2002 nineteen of the twenty-nine Indian Bands were officially registered as members of the Stó:lō Nation although twenty-four received services of one kind or another from the Stó:lō Nation. Those Bands not formally politically affiliated tend to be located on the geographic periphery of the lower Fraser watershed namely Tsesawasen, Musqueam, Tslewatuth, Coquitlam, and Katzie in the east, Chehalis in the north, and Yale and Union Bar in the west.
8 Wilson Duff has been especially singled out for blame for “inventing” the idea of Stó:lō identity. His tragic suicide in the early 1970s is cited by some as evidence that the ancestral spirits got even with Duff for his illegitimate anthropology. Most local Aboriginal people reject this interpretation and hold Duff’s memory, as well as his work, in high regard, yet these negative views do represent the opinions of a significant minority.
9 This idea is developed by Wayne Suttles in his 1958 article, “Private Knowledge, Morality, and Social Classes among the Coast Salish,” reproduced in Suttles’ edited collection of essays, Coast Salish Essays (Vancouver: Talonbooks, 1989), 3-25. My own field experience among the Coast Salish confirms Suttles’ findings for the more recent era.
10 Aboriginal rights are legally defined as collective rights based on contemporary indigenous peoples’ descent from people who occupied the land prior to European contact.

15 Fredrik Barth, Ethnic Groups and Boundaries (Boston: Little Brown, 1969).
17 Other studies, such as that by Elizabeth Vibert, Traders’ Tales: Narratives of Cultural Encounters in the Columbia Plateau, 1807-1846 (Norman and London: University of Oklahoma Press, 1997), demonstrate that the process of defining boundaries has led to categorization and subsequent prejudicial treatment of Aboriginal people throughout the history of colonial relations.
19 E. O. S. Scholfield and F. W. Howay, British Columbia from Earliest Time to the Present, 4 Volumes (Vancouver: S. J. Clark Publication Co., 1914), especially Volumes 1 and 2. It is important to note, however, that most of these ethnographic discussion in these volumes is the product of Charles Hill-Tout’s pen.
23 Robin Fisher, Contact and Conflict.
24 Cole Harris, The Resettlement of British Columbia.
26 The process of Indian Reserve making is the subject of Harris’ latest contribution to the historiography of BC native-newcomer relations. In it, Aboriginal identity is effectively deconstructed, as is the political nature of the popular discourse on Native rights. The settlement-based or “tribal” community, however, remains treated as a privileged Native affiliation throughout the work, despite Harris’ own efforts to demonstrate the extent to which Indian Bands (based on older local groups) were largely the product of state initiatives to recreate indigenous people on a European model.
29 Sergei Kan, Memory Eternal: Tlingit Culture and Russian Orthodox Christianity Through Two Centuries (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1999); Kirk Dombrowski, Against Culture: Development, Politics and Religion in Indian Alaska (Lincoln, Nebraska: University of Nebraska Press, 2001).


33 Harmon, Indians in the Making, 5.


36 Tennant, Aboriginal Peoples and Politics, 71, 81.

37 See Chapter Five of this Dissertation.

38 Susan Lynn Neylan, The Heavens are Changing.


40 Although never published, Joyce Wike’s doctoral dissertation, “The Effects of the Maritime Fur Trade on Northwest Coast Indian Society,” had a great and lasting impact on Duff and others who would refine and publish ideas first presented by her. As a historical researcher for the Federal Government in the early 1990’s, I found that the ideas first put forth by Wike are still hotly debated within the theatre of comprehensive land claims litigation.

41 Duff, Indian History of British Columbia, 53.

42 Ibid.


47 Ibid., 23.


49 Harmon, Indians in the Making, 38-42.


51 Charles Bishop tackled the question of whether contact had an atomizing effect on Canadian Ojibwa clan structures, or whether contact caused increased clan solidarity and a new sense of shared collective identity, and concluded that, while there was clear evidence of increased centralization, the inherent biases of both oral and written records could be used to support either position. See Charles A. Bishop, The Northern Ojibwa and the Fur Trade: An Historical and Ecological Study (Toronto: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1974).

52 James Haggarty and Richard Inglis have argued that the both archaeological and ethnohistorical evidence suggests the indigenous people of the West Coast of Vancouver Island prior to contact lived in small independent permanent villages within relatively constrained social and spatial territories. See Richard I. Inglis and James C. Haggarty, “Cook to Jewit: Three Decades of Change in Nootka Sound,” in
There is an instance related in Bernard McGee's journal where Wickaninish's desire for sails led him to strike an agreement with Cpt. Roberts of the Jefferson. The proposed deal entailed Wickaninish purchasing the Jefferson's consort, the Adventure, for fifty prime sea otter pelts at the end of the season. However, due to the Adventure being wrecked off the mouth of the Columbia River the transaction fell through. See the unpublished "Log of Bernard Magee While On Board the Jefferson, 1793-1794" (Victoria, British Columbia: British Columbia Archives [BCA]). Captain James Colnett reported in 1790 that Wickaninish had as many muskets as his own ship the Argoaut, as well as four or five thousand warriors at his disposal; see, F.W. Howay, The Journal of Captain James Colnett Aboard the "Argonaut" from April 16, 1789 to November 3, 1791, (Toronto: The Champlain Society, 1940). In January 1794 Wickaninish purchased two brass swivel guns from the Jefferson; see Magee, “Log of the Jefferson,” BCARS, January 1791. Ramon Saavedra at the Spanish garrison at Nootka reports in 1794 that Guiquisnanis (Wickaninish) purchased “two mortars with ten cartridges and a number of mortar-balls of the proper caliber” from Captain Joseph Rover (Josiah Roberts) of the ship Efans (Jefferson); see, Ramon Saavedra, Informe de lo ocurrido en Noutka del 7 de Junio de 93 al 15 de Julio de 94, translated by Mary Daylton, copy in BCARS. Edward Bell, sailing with Captain Vancouver in 1792 wrote that he heard Wickaninish had 400 muskets; see, Edmond S. Meany, “A New Vancouver Journal,” Historical Quarterly, (Seattle, Washington, 5(1915)).

Perhaps this is because of the scale of migration. On the prairies migrations occurred across literally thousands of kilometers, while on the coast the distances are better measured in the hundreds of kilometers. And yet, the geographic variation within the more confined coastal environment renders the effects of the migrations comparable.

This is not to deny that even Boas recognized that complex cultures develop techniques that enable them to modify or retain identities despite environmental pressures (the very pressures which originally contributed to the creation of the culture). A useful discussion on the development of Boasian thought related to environmental determinism is found in Regna Darnell, “The Pivotal Role of the Northwest Coast in the History of American Anthropology,” BC Studies, No. 125/126, (Spring/Summer 2000): 33-52.

Arthur J. Ray, Indians in the Fur Trade: Their Role as Hunters, Trappers and Middlemen in the Lands Southwest of Hudson's Bay, 1660-1870 (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1974).

Bruce Trigger is correct to assert that in disallowing Aboriginal people a full range of motivations we promote static culture images that deny Native people rationality. See Bruce G. Trigger, Natives and Newcomers: Canadas' Heroic Age Reconsidered (Kingston, Montreal: McGill-Queen's University Press,
Frank Tough recommends looking at Aboriginal society during the contact era as a blended culture that accounts for participation in European markets while still remaining sensitive to non-material forces. See Frank Tough, 'As Their Natural Resources Fail': Native People and The Economic History of Northern Manitoba, 1870-1930 (Vancouver: UBC Press, 1996).

The Yale Band (First Nation) in particular has, throughout the 1990's repeatedly characterized the Stó:lō living downriver of Yale as "intruders." Recently, Chief Hope has been quoted in the media referring to down-river Aboriginal use of the canyon fishery an "invasion" of Yale's First Nation's traditional territory, (See "Yale Territory Defended from Stó:lō Invasion," The Chilliwack Progress, 7 April 1998, as well as an article of the same title a few days later in The Chilliwack Progress. See also, "Yale Territory Defended from Stó:lō Invasion," The Chilliwack Progress, 12 April 1998; and “Family Feud: Stó:lō Say Fight Over Fishing Rights With Yale Band Comes Down to Respect for Traditional Fishing Rights," Chilliwack Progress, 17 April 1998; also see the paid advertisement by the Yale First Nation entitled, “Yale First Nation shares in the Responsibility for Salmon Management,” The Chilliwack Progress, 3 July 1999.


This is a major theme throughout Bierwerts' work. See Crisca Bierwert, Brushed By Cedar, Living by the River: Coast Salish Figures of Power (Tucson: University of Arizona Press, 1999).


Participant observation, usually associated with the field work of Bronislaw Malinowski, essentially involves learning about a culture by engaging with members of that society, and to the extent that is acceptable, integrating oneself into a community so as to be able to participate in aspects of community activities while observing, documenting and ultimately interpreting those matters which are distinct to that culture. Memory ethnology, simply put, is the process of interviewing knowledgeable community members (Elders and cultural experts) in order to recover or reconstruct past cultural practices and beliefs.

Dialogic reading is a process that "refers in a dual fashion both to the mutually challenging or contestatory interplay of forces in language and to the comparable interaction between social agents in various specific historical contexts... [It has] a power of provocation or exchange that has the effect of testing assumptions, legitimating those that stand its critical test and preparing others for change. Dominick LaCapra, “History, Language, and Reading: Waiting for Crillon,” American Historical Review, June 1995: 824-825.

In particular, I rely on the unpublished fieldnotes left by: Diamond Jenness, National Archives of Canada (NAC); Homer Barnet, UBC Special Collections (UBC); Marian Smith (Royal Anthropological Institute in London (RAI)—microfilm copy at the BCARS; Wilson Duff, Royal BC Museum (RBCM); Oliver Wells, Stó:lō Nation Archives (SNA); Brent Galloway, SNA; Imbert Orchard, BCARS; and the general Stó:lō Nation Archives Oral History Collection, SNA.

In particular, accounts of early maritime explorers to the Strait of Georgia region, such as those associated with the voyages of George Vancouver and the early years of operation of Hudson’s Bay Company (HBC) establishments at Fort Langley, Fort Hope, and Fort Yale. The HBC censuses of 1830...
and 1839 proved integral to my analysis not only of demographic trends, but also population migrations. Colonial correspondence pertaining to the 1858 gold rush as well as the period of colonial Indian reserve creation were especially useful, as were the British newspaper accounts describing not only the gold rush but the much later delegation to King Edward VII in 1906. I am indebted to Daniel P. Marshall for the recent analysis he has conducted on the 1858 Fraser River gold rush, and in particular, his bringing to the attention of Canadian scholars the existence and significance of certain American-based archival collections. Among the vast manuscript and record collections at the National Archives in Ottawa (NAC) I made extensive use of Governor General Lord Dufferin’s papers relating to his 1876 visit to British Columbia. Likewise, the government’s Department of Indian Affairs records (R.G. 10 Black Series) and in particular the files relating to the New Westminster, Yale and Lytton Districts, were used extensively, as were the correspondence of Gilbert Malcolm Sproat during his tenure as Indian Reserve Commissioner in the late 1870s. In the British Columbia Archives in Victoria (BCARS) I relied principally on the private papers of James Douglas and the correspondence of the Land and Works Department. For the later chapters I also made extensive use of the BC Attorney General’s papers (which have been largely overlooked by ethnohistorians). Also examined were the papers of J. R. Jeffcot in the Bellingham regional branch of the American National Archives.

80 I am currently working with Julie da Silva, a talented translator, to make available in English the most ethnographically rich and informative sections of the Oblate records.


82 There has been a long academic tradition of relying on ethnographic information from neighbouring groups to supplement holes or weakness in one’s evidence base. Jay Miller’s Lushootseed Culture and the Shamanic Odyssey: An Anchored Radiance (Lincoln, Nebraska: University of Nebraska Press, 1999), and Crisca Bierwert’s Brushed By Cedar are among the most recent and perhaps most successful examples. Both of these authors alternate the use of Stó:lō and Skagit information to inform one another wherever specific and accessible evidence on one of these communities is absent or thin.

83 Leland Donald, Aboriginal Slavery on the Northwest Coast of North America (Berkley, California: University of California Press, 1997), 61-63, 65. As Donald explains, memory ethnography, nor matter how it is gathered, is often better at recording the ideal rules of a society than the actual practices of its members. Moreover, the assumptions behind this method of ethnographic enquiry often assumes that great change has occurred in indigenous technology and economic life since the arrival of Europeans, but that the central features of indigenous ideology have remained essentially unchanged.

PART I

INDIGENOUS CULTURE
CHAPTER TWO

The Underpinnings Of Stó:lo Collective Identities

Over the past half-century scholars have endeavoured to better understand the traditional linkages and affiliations between Coast Salish people. Some of the most exciting developments and profound insights have emerged from studies where disciplinary boundaries and methodologies have been broken down. Anthropologists Wayne Suttles, Bruce Miller and Daniel Boxberger, along with historian Alexandra Harmon, have been at the forefront of the interdisciplinary approach. In Miller's and Boxberger's most recent co-authored publication on the subject they pointed to the "valuable contribution that ethnohistorians and historians can make to the debate." Interpreting this as an invitation, this chapter seeks to enrich the discussion in three ways: by focusing attention on the unique geographic context of the Lower Fraser watershed to enhance a discussion of river system-based tribal identity that has principally focused on the Puget Sound region; by adding Fraser Canyon salmon processing technology to the growing list of situationally operational foundations for meaningful inter-group association and affiliation; and finally, by illustrating the manner in which spiritual connections, and in particular those revealed through ancient sacred narratives describing how the world assumed its present form have contributed to supra-tribal political associations.

The watershed based model advanced by Marian Smith in the 1940s, the material/ecological views that are most closely associated with the 1960s and early 1970s writings of Wayne Suttles and William Elmendorf, and the 1980s statistical analysis
conducted by Bruce Miller, need not be regarded as irreconcilable with the descriptions
of formal political systems identified in the writings of Kenneth Tollefson in the late
1980s and early 1990s, or with the system of spiritual-based, shamanic anchored radiance
subsequently advanced by Jay Miller (1997, 1999). Certainly, all of the participants in
these debates have to varying degrees acknowledged this fundamental reality. Moreover,
within local indigenous discourse the economic, political and spiritual domains are not
regarded as separate. Taken collectively, with special attention being given to previously
overlooked economic forces of cohesion emerging from Fraser Canyon salmon
processing technology and the inter-tribal dependence of ancient creation and
transformation stories, these factors reveal the overarching significance of the extended
family to Coast Salish people’s sense of collective identity. They also provide the
context for understanding the profoundly situational nature of the more formal
expressions of group affiliation that periodically arose from that foundation to meet a
variety of pressing and historically contingent circumstances.

The Continuum

The Stó:lō of the lower Fraser River are part of a broader cultural/linguistic
group known as the Coast Salish. Historically, these people occupied the lands draining
into the Strait of Georgia, Puget Sound and the Strait of Juan de Fuca.² Coast Salish
territory is remarkable for its physical and environmental diversity. Vertically, it ranges
from tidal salt waters to glacial capped mountains. A healthy adult can hike from sea
level to the sub-alpine in less than a day from almost any point in Coast Salish territory.³
The region’s vegetation was dense, however, and prior to non-Native urban and industrial
development, travel by foot was largely restricted to a system of well-worn trails. As a result, the canoe was the predominant means of transportation.

In addition to marine and alpine resources, Coast Salish territory, more than any area farther north on the Northwest Coast, also had an abundance of lowland meadows built on the rich alluvial soils of the Fraser Valley and the east coast of Puget Sound and southwestern Vancouver Island. Thus, while salmon was the principal food source, large and small game were also abundantly available, as were a host of vegetables and fruits, in particular wild potatoes and blueberries which, like salmon could be preserved when harvested in the summer and stored for winter consumption.

As Wayne Suttles, the leading scholar of Coast Salish anthropology, points out, at the “time of white settlement” the various marital, economic and ceremonial ties linking the villages of central Coast Salish territory “made the whole region a social and biological continuum.” Contemporary Halkomelem language speakers living on the mainland of south western British Columbia and south east Vancouver Island refer to the people of this continuum as Xwélmexw, (human beings or literally “people of life”). To be Xwélmexw it was not necessary to live in a settlement on the banks of the Fraser River, or necessarily even speak Halkomelem. Rather, it was only necessary to be a part of the broader lower Fraser River-orientated community. As such, Squamish, Nooksack and Saanich-speaking people were just as Xwélmexw as the Halkomelem-speaking Cowichan on Vancouver Island—if they had social connections to Fraser River families and resources.

Farther away from the Fraser, people were increasingly “different” (lats’umexw) in terms of culture, language and economic orientation—a characterization which has
grown less meaningful as the greater strangeness of European newcomers has eclipsed what once seemed to be such pronounced and important differences between indigenous communities. Nevertheless, it is clear that local and regional Salish people had ways of identifying “others” long before Europeans arrived.

The earliest professional ethnographic observers, however, failed to appreciate the social interconnectedness of the region and instead regarded autonomous Coast Salish winter villages as the only truly significant collective affiliation. Reflective of the settlement-based focus then current in anthropology, and undoubtedly influenced by the prominent writings of Lewis Henry Morgan, who in 1877 insisted that all North American Aboriginal people were essentially “barbarian” at the time of contact (that is, disorganized or in a state somewhere between “savagery” and “civilization”), anthropologists such as Franz Boas and Thomas T. Waterman each subsequently contributed to this view of the Coast Salish. Although at least one ethnographer, Charles Hill-Tout, was sensitive to the significance of multi-village tribal clusters, and even claimed to have research demonstrating the existence of pre-contact “tribal confederacies” in the central Fraser Valley, his work was largely ignored and eclipsed by Boas’ monumental studies. Hill-Tout’s highly speculative theories about tribal origins and evolutionary development kept his keen ethnographic observations on the periphery of North America’s rapidly developing field of professional anthropology.

Watershed Affiliations

The first academic to appreciate the significance of the connections linking certain Coast Salish settlements was Columbia University anthropologist Marian Smith.
In 1940 Smith devised a spatial model to assess concepts of social unity among the Coast Salish of southern Puget Sound. Her statistical analysis illustrated the significance of river-based tribal associations. In this way, Smith’s methods not only revised earlier ethnographic interpretations, but they corroborated the hitherto ignored observations of the earliest European chroniclers such as Hudson’s Bay Company (HBC) Chief Factor James Douglas. Smith concluded that it was from the “geographical concept of the drainage system that the Coast Salish derived their major concept of social unity. Thus, peoples living near a single drainage system were considered to be knit together by that fact if by no other.” Based on quantified interviews with 178 informants, Smith determined that “Lacking the formal paraphernalia of political organization, the tie which... [Puget Sound Salish] recognized as most binding, as most closely paralleling with what we know as political allegiance, was based upon this geography of the drainage system.”

Smith’s research demonstrates that each of the major rivers or inlets within the Coast Salish region was the domain of at least one tribe (a cluster of associated settlements). Moreover, some of the larger river systems, like the Puyallup in present day Washington State, had significant tributaries of their own, and were therefore home to more than one tribal group. She learned that the Puget Sound Salish considered the Puyallup River from its mouth to the point where it divides into roughly two equal parts at Carbon Washington as distinct rivers from each of its forks above that point. Thus, broader groups, essentially clustered associations of drainage systems such as those based on the rivers flowing into Puget Sound, although not formally organized, were, in her informants’ words, as in those of James Douglas a century earlier, “held to be one
people." As such, Smith’s research hinted at the existence of supra-tribal networks of collective identity, but did not conduct the research necessary to verify their existence or to describe their expressions.

The implications of Smith’s watershed-based identity thesis have not been adequately explored within the more northern Canadian-Fraser River context. This dissertation examines the implications of the fact that within Coast Salish territory the massive lower Fraser River drainage system stands apart, acting as connector to no less than twenty-four sub-watersheds. Most of these smaller tributary rivers individually rival in scale and significance those around which are anchored other Coast Salish tribal communities in the Puget Sound and Strait of Georgia regions. Indeed, each of the rivers running into the lower Fraser was home to a separate and distinct tribal community. Thus, Stó:lō (literally “river”) is the umbrella term that most of the many interconnected lower Fraser River tribal groups use to collectively distinguish themselves as what an Elder in the early years of the twentieth century termed the “river of rivers.” It will be argued here that when conceived within a social, rather than geographical, context, Stó:lō can also be regarded as meaning ‘tribe of tribes.’

**Extended Family and Economic Relations**

The concept of Stó:lō meaning tribe of tribes takes on special meaning when read in light of Wayne Suttles’ insight that the people whose lives orientated around the Fraser River constituted a social continuum. Whereas Smith had studied settlements and tribes and inferred broader regional connections, twenty years later Suttles made the regional networks linking settlement/tribal-based communities the focus of his research.
His analysis revealed a series of overlapping collective identities based on kinship and marriage that were at their heart economic relationships. According to Suttles, neither the village nor the tribe have necessarily ever been the most important collective units. Indeed, Suttles argues that villages were not “communities” in any meaningful sense of the word.

Approaching collective identity from the perspective of family rather than winter residence Suttles identified the non-discrete, non-localized kin group as the most important collective affiliation. “It was this group, or its head, rather than any of the residential groups,” Suttles maintains, “that owned the most important ceremonial rights and the most productive natural resources.” Conceived in this light, the potlatch and other well-documented Coast Salish regional ceremonial activities were really responses to temporal and geographic fluctuations in food supplies. Put another way, what collective identity existed beyond the local house group and village settlement was inherently informal and based upon strategies designed to secure access to relatively scarce resources while building stores of what today would be referred to as social capital that could be cashed in during times of need. Thus, it was the extended family, and in particular in-laws—or affines—through which such resources were accessed and shared, that constituted the most meaningful network of inter-group affiliation within Coast Salish society.

To explain this thesis, Suttles draws people’s attention to the fact that the environment of the people whose lives revolved around the lower Fraser River in the generation before contact “was characterized by a variety of types of natural resources, local diversity and seasonal variations in their occurrence, and year to year fluctuation in
their abundance." Significantly, as Suttles notes, a wide range of vegetables, shellfish, fish, birds, and land and sea mammals were available throughout the region, but the occurrence and abundance of these resources varied within ecological locales, and even within the localized areas there were seasonal variations as well as larger year-to-year fluctuations:

All things were not available everywhere at all times so that they could simply be had for the taking. On the contrary, everything useful was available more at one place than another, and more in one season than another, and often more in one year than another." Coast Salish social structures and ceremonialism, Suttles posited, were only "intelligible in the light of these variations.

Suttles sees this as the basis of an economy "coping with abundance" with the alternating gluts and scarcities of individual resources in seasons and specific locals.

Thus, the importance of resource variation in terms of identity is found in the indigenous mechanisms for securing periodic access to resources across tribal and village boundaries—mechanisms not unlike those which permitted people of different tribal groups to practice the sacred rites of another tribe, if they had the proper family connections. The accompanying chart and schematic illustrate more comprehensively the relationship between resource availability and collective identity, along lines Suttles discussed, but also taking into account the regional variation in salmon resource processing technology (See Figure 2.1). Within this framework, resource procurement and processing are explored in terms of four distinct geographical/biological and "food processing" niches. The first niche includes all tributary river systems flowing directly into salt water, and the second, those sub-watershed river systems entering directly into the Fraser River within the Fraser Valley. The third niche encompasses the lower Fraser
Canyon where the main river narrows sufficiently to become, symbolically, a tributary watershed itself, not unlike those in niches 1 and 2. The fourth incorporates all sub-alpine parkland mountainous regions. Each of the four niches contains special resources that would appeal to people living outside its boundaries. Thus, to ensure access to a diversity of resources, people living in the lowland niches were motivated to forge various cross-niche alliances with those residing in niche 3.

Pre-contact technologies allowed the Stó:lō to catch and process migrating salmon (in particular sockeye) in all but niche 4, but nowhere as easily and in such abundance as in the lower canyon (niche 3). Likewise, prior to the adoption in the nineteenth and twentieth century of first salting, then glass jar canning, and eventually artificial refrigeration technology, only in the canyon did climactic conditions make wind drying consistently possible. Wind drying was also dependent upon biological changes within the bodies of migrating salmon. As salmon ascend the river toward their spawning grounds they burn fat. Wind drying is simply impossible when salmon retain too high a fat content. Only when sockeye salmon—the fattest species—reach the canyon do they have the appropriate reduced, or diminished, fat content for effective wind drying. In the other lowland niche, salmon processing in pre-contact times depended upon smoking or sun drying—neither of which was as rapid, efficient or reliable as wind drying.

Niches 1 and 2 also have distinctive biological characteristics. Unique to niche 1 are ocean resources such as marine mammals, shellfish and molluscs. Likewise (prior to widespread habitat destruction during in the colonial era) cranberries and wild potatoes were plentiful and easily accessible only in the ponds and sloughs of niche 2. Cross-
niche relationships, and especially those linking niches 1 and 2 with niche 3 were essential to prosperity.

Ethnographic evidence indicates that most of the resource sites that were subject to geographic, seasonal or yearly variations and fluctuations were owned or controlled. Not all sites, but certainly the best, were the collective property of families, settlements or tribes, their access and regulation controlled by specific individuals recognised as having a degree of authority over the collective unit. Resources that were readily available without regard to fluctuations over time or regional diversity were generally held to be open to all, or as Gibbs characterized it more than a century ago, "Land and Sea appear to be open to all with whom they are not at war." As Stó:lō Elders explained to the anthropologist Wilson Duff in 1950, "Exclusive tribal or village ownership of resource areas was practically unknown among the Upper Stalo.... Such patterns of apparent ownership as did develop grew out of customary use rather than claims of exclusive right." Thus, people accessed and acquired plentiful resources from sites near their home settlements—there was no need to travel into other tribal areas to gather what was easily available at home.

Extended families owned the best and most productive berry patches, camas beds, fern beds, wapato ponds, clam beds, duck net sites and salmon fishing sites (individual dip net sites in the canyon, and entire streams or sloughs in the lower valley). Within the families, certain individuals exercised regulatory controls. Fixed fish weirs or fences such as the sturgeon weir at Musqueam, and reef nets found along the shores of the Gulf Islands were also regulated in this fashion. Typically, the individual who exercised control over the site (that is, regulated access) lived in a nearby or adjacent
settlement. The smokehouses used to preserve the salmon, which were located near the
weirs and traps, were the property of the families who built them, as were the drying
racks used for similar purposes in the lower Fraser canyon.\textsuperscript{26} The Chilliwack tribe
similarly asserted the exclusive right to hunt in the forests within their claimed territory.

Certain types of resources belonged not to specific families, but to entire
settlement or tribal communities.\textsuperscript{27} For example, the cranberry bog immediately south
of Allouette Lake belonged to the entire Katzie tribe, while those north of Sturgeon
Slough and on Widgeon Creek belonged only to the people of the single Katzie
settlement on Pitt Lake.\textsuperscript{28} Similarly, people recognized that the giant sturgeon weir
across the Sumas River was the collective property of all members of the Sumas Tribe\textsuperscript{29}
as were most salmon weirs if they were large enough to traverse an entire river as
opposed to simply smaller family-owned streams.

Resource ownership and access were directly linked to the issue of collective
leadership, and by extension, collective identities. The families who owned lower
Fraser Valley property sites (for example, salmon streams, cranberry bogs, and camas
patches) referred to these locations as sxwisiyá:m and the man who carried the original
tribal leader’s hereditary name as hi’weqw siyá:m (head chief) or “master of the whole
country.”\textsuperscript{30} By way of comparison, Rosaleen George recently explained that siateluq
was the term for the family leader who regulated and controlled family-owned canyon
fishing sites.\textsuperscript{31} A century ago, Charles Hill-Tout recorded that the Chiliiwack called
their tribal head chief Yewal Siyá:m, or “First Chief.”\textsuperscript{32} Such varieties in titles may
reflect subtle differences in roles and functions. Notably, the leaders of the variously
constituted families, settlements and tribes did not necessarily acquire their rights
through direct inheritance. Sutlles records that men from other tribes who had married Katzie women headed two of the eighteen property-holding families in Katzie territory. Hill-Tout reported that “as a rule [a bride] confers her fathers’ status and privileges upon her husband.... The chieftaincy of the tribe may be acquired by marriage of a chief’s daughter... as are the rights and privileges of the sxwóy̓xwey.” Likewise, while Duff speculated that prior to contact most of the owners of canyon fishing sites probably lived in the adjacent settlements, at the time of his investigations at least one owner lived as far away as Musqueam.

Unless a state of war existed, families were obliged to allow visitors access to their property, but preferential access was the privilege of those with either blood or in-law connections to the site’s owners. In a world where food resources were so unevenly distributed on the landscape and so subject to periods of seasonal abundance and absence, and where processing and storing foods demanded short intense bursts of labour activity, being able to demonstrate family connections to a variety of property owners was of vital importance. Family ties, therefore, formed the economic base of people’s most important collective identities. As a result, families with valuable canyon (niche 3) fishing/processing sites sought marriage alliances with families who owned complementary valley or ocean (niche 1 and 2) resources, and so on. To emphasize closeness within the current generation relatives up to fourth cousins were regarded as siblings. To make similar connections explicit across multiple generations identical terms were used to describe the relationships between the living and people who were between four and seven generations removed in either temporal direction. That is to say, the word for great-grandchild/niece/nephew was the same as the term for great-grand
parent/aunt/uncle and so on to the point of great-great-great-great
grandchild/neice/nephew being the same as that for great-great-great-great
grandparent/aunt/uncle. (See Figure 2.2) Likewise, the distinct terms used to describe
relations with in-laws with whom the connecting individual had died illustrate the
cultural imperative of keeping affinal groups together even after a death had ruptured the
connecting link between families. Once newly forged ties of marriage reconnected in-
laws the special descendant terms were replaced with the original terms for affines.\(^{35}\)
(See Figure 2.3)

High status families, referred to as smelá:lh (worthy people), were those who
knew their genealogical history and, therefore, knew who were their relatives and
ancestors and could demonstrate their right to access important resource sites. The low
status s’téxem (literally “worthless people”), were considered to have “lost or forgotten
their history,” and with it their rights to important resources. Polygamy functioned to
make residence patterns among high status families patrilocal. This situation worked to
prevent insults from being perceived as would happen if a husband appeared to value
one wife’s family’s resources over another’s by choosing to live with a particular wife’s
parents. However, a man (especially a man with only one spouse, it would seem) who
chose to live in his wife’s home community suffered no loss of status, and indeed, as the
example cited above illustrates, men often assumed ownership of property within their
wives’ families’ home territories as part of their dowry. As Suttles explains:

In bilateral societies like the Coast Salish... affinal ties in one generation lead to consanguineal [blood] ties in the next.... Marriage between two families in one generation reduces the number of potential mates in the next. To maintain affinal bonds between two communities for several generations requires that each [settlement or tribal]
community be composed of several family lines alternating with each other in their marriages. Since each community contained several ‘owners’ of productive resources, there was no special advantage in marrying one rather than another among the good families of a neighbouring community.\textsuperscript{36}

From a functional perspective, therefore, collective identity and regional political authority could be regarded as being principally outgrowths of the need to secure access to regionally dispersed food resources and food processing technology opportunities.

Thus, within the realm of economics, a system of constant movement existed between tribal communities in the three ecological niches where winter settlements were located. Women, through marriage, typically moved to live permanently with their husbands, but women’s parents’ families moved seasonally to visit their daughters-in-law and to access the resources that the marriage secured. Likewise, the woman’s parents’ families acted as hosts to visits from their son-in-law’s family and provided them with access to their resources. Occasionally these visits among affines lengthened into permanent reallocations of entire families.\textsuperscript{37}

While different families moved to visit and access their in-laws’ resources, they also generally participated in at least two other seasonal visits to important resource sites regardless of whether they had family connections. These journeys were to the wild potato patches near the mouth of the Pitt River, and to an even greater extent to the dry rack fishing sites in the lower Fraser canyon within the territory of the now dispersed Tsó:kw’em tribe. As a result, the lower Fraser Canyon represented a special place in Stó:lô society and geography. Each year, as the early Hudson’s Bay Company records demonstrate, literally thousands of people from as far afield as Vancouver Island travelled to the canyon to procure wind dried salmon.\textsuperscript{38} If they had in-law connections
they arrived to take their turns at the fishing stations and to exchange gifts; without such connections they still came, only their goal was to barter for what their lack of marriage alliances prevented them from acquiring more cheaply. Due to the size and scope of this migration, the lower canyon assumed the role of a regional trade centre where a plethora of other resources collected from other regions were also traded. That is to say, people arrived at the canyon with canoe loads of dried and smoked molluscs and other such regionally specific resources with the intention of trading them to people who may not have been permanent winter residents of the canyon district, but rather visitors from other far off places. The canyon provided an opportunity for the exchange of a diverse collection of goods that would have been impossible had people been forced to travel widely to a host of different sites to exchange and acquire the variety of goods needed for winter sustenance and subsequent potlatch exchange.

While Smith's drainage system analysis hinted at the existence of sophisticated cross-tribal networks, and Suttles' economic and ecological studies provided a structural basis upon which they functioned, it was not until Bruce Miller (1989) applied communication theory to his analysis of Coast Salish social networks that the significance of inter-community networks were statistically demonstrated. Miller examined five modes of social exchange through measures of graph centrality and determined that the Puget Sound Salish region was indeed far more heavily integrated than the earliest anthropological literature implied. As such, Miller's work serves as a mathematical confirmation of Suttles' metaphorical analysis, and shows conclusively that meaningful collective identities and expressions of authority exist in forms other
than the heretofore notably absent formal expressions of supra-tribal Chiefly political power. Moreover, Millers’ findings helped resolve the problem of determining if a particular social institution existed in response to a particular problem or issue. In this case, Miller was able to demonstrate that intercommunity networks, as Suttles had hypothesized, did indeed serve to alleviate the geographical problem associated with periodic shortages of food supplies.

In addition to corroborating earlier theories, however, Miller’s mathematical study also provided new insights into the way collective affiliations were constituted within Coast Salish society, which have important implications for this dissertation. For example, one of the surprising results of his study was Miller’s discovery of a correlation between certain expressions of exchange and social relationships. Trade, ritual and coalition ties were not dependent upon close kinship, as had been supposed. Rather, they served to strengthen network affiliation between people who were not related. Indeed, as my own subsequent research into Stó:lō exchange dynamics (1997), which was modeled on Miller’s study, confirmed, close kinship ties with distant people could also work to a family’s disadvantage, especially if a kin group held ownership rights over a particularly valuable resource with a unique geographical expression, such as Fraser Canyon fishing sites. Exchange with close kith and kin was reciprocal, but trade with strangers was designed to turn a profit. That is to say, both Miller and Carlson demonstrate that if a family possessed resources that could not be had anywhere else, they could expect to derive greater benefits by exchanging their wealth with strangers than in sharing it through reciprocal exchange with visiting family.
Thus, regarded from a perspective that better takes into account both indigenous rules of behaviour as well as practice, the geography of the lower Fraser River assumes new significance. For eighteenth and nineteenth century Coast Salish people who measured distance in terms of “a day’s canoe ride,” the Fraser provided unparalleled opportunities for those living along its tributaries to visit in-laws and attend potlatch ceremonies to reinforce and support the sort of non-political networks Suttles identified as well beyond those available to other Coast Salish groups. The opportunities for supra-tribal identification, such as might derive from opportunities for inter-tribal visits, were consequently also without parallel vis-à-vis the rest of Coast Salish territory. Whereas a Coast Salish canoe traveller on Puget Sound or the Strait of Georgia might realistically hope to pass the mouths of two to five watersheds (and therefore two to five tribes) in a single day, a person travelling down the Fraser could easily visit the entrances to well over a dozen tribal watersheds in the same time span. In travelling up river, swirling back eddies (used to rocket a canoe upstream by taking advantage of centrifugal force) and side channels enabled a skilfully manoeuvred canoe to traverse the mouths of roughly ten tribal drainage systems in a day.43

Coast Salish people generally regard ocean waters as free and open passageways for transportation and communication (although families own specific fishing sites44). In contrast, rivers are considered more restricted avenues controlled by the local watershed’s occupants. In this capacity rivers represent the core of potentially larger tribally-claimed watershed-based territories. One of the earliest ethnographic observers of Coast Salish life was the Pacific Railroad surveyor-turned-settler George Gibbs, who arrived among the Coast Salish of Puget Sound in 1854. In 1877 he reported that, “Tribes are...
somewhat tenacious of territorial right, and well understand their respective limits; but this seems to be merely as regards their title, and they never, it is believed, exclude from them other friendly tribes. It would appear also that these lands are considered to survive to the last remnant of a tribe, after its existence as such has in fact ceased.... Land and sea appear to be open to all with whom they are not at war."\textsuperscript{45}

The lower Fraser River below the Fraser canyon is distinct from all other Coast Salish river systems in that, symbolically, it generally represents for Aboriginal people an extension of the ocean—or perhaps it is more accurate to say that the ocean represents an extension of the lower Fraser River. This fact, unappreciated in the earlier literature, is of vital importance because, when accounted for, it causes us to reassess the social geography of the region. For example, discussions which categorize the lower Fraser simply as a single Coast Salish river system have failed to recognise it as a parallel social geography to the open salt waters of Puget Sound to the south, Strait of Georgia to the north and the Strait of Juan de Fuca to the west. As Smith explained, for the Puget Sound Salish as a whole the concept of broad pan-tribal identity, that is, of being "one people," stemmed from the fact that "their country [the Sound drainage] all flowed in the same direction."\textsuperscript{46} Similarly, Wayne Suttles learned that among the Coast Salish of the Strait of Georgia "the cardinal directions are not named." Such directional indicators were important to Europeans interested in traveling across ocean systems, or to plains indigenous people moving over vast tracts of prairie land, but they were clearly less significant to the coastal people of the protected waterways of Puget Sound and the Strait of Georgia. Thus, as Suttles records, Coast Salish direction is determined in relation to
the axis of water travel routes: "[T]he northwestern end of Georgia Strait seems to be equated with ‘upstream’ and the south eastern end with ‘downstream.’" [47]

If, as Smith demonstrated, the people living along the shores of Puget Sound and the Strait of Georgia consider these ocean channels as cohesive river-like waterways around which a loose collective supra-tribal identity is based, it is easy to imagine how much more this feeling informs the thinking of the lower Fraser Stó:lō communities whose country all literally flows together through their common river from mountains to ocean. While various Stó:lō tribal communities claim tributary side channels and even certain stretches of the shore line of the mighty lower Fraser as their exclusive tribal territories, the ever flowing central body of water is generally conceived of as belonging to all, or perhaps more accurately, to none. This collective riverine transportation route serves as the geographical nexus for collective Stó:lō identity.

The hegemony of western concepts of geography have prevented scholars from appreciating that, for the Stó:lō, the banks of the Fraser River below the canyon are more properly regarded as continuations of the ocean shores—or, once again, given the linguistic evidence already discussed above, perhaps a more apt metaphor is to say that the north-running expanse of the Strait of Georgia, the easterly channel of the Strait of Juan de Fuca, and southern waters of Puget Sound are extensions of the lower Fraser River. Members of the various regional tribes travelled from the Fraser estuary upriver without feeling that they were trespassing. Indeed, this occurred on a large scale every summer during the salmon fishing season, when literally thousands of people headed upriver and then back down from the canyon drying racks. Even non-local communities with hostile intentions, often referred to by twentieth century Elders as “Coastal Raiders”,
frequently passed up the Fraser en route to attack or exact revenge on particular Stó:lō tribal or village or family communities without being challenged or stopped by those farther downstream. Occasionally, collective efforts were made to repel intruders, but more frequently, as is reported in contemporary oral histories as well as ones collected at the beginning of the twentieth century, members of lower Stó:lō tribes often simply watched the raiders as they made their way upriver to their chosen destination.\(^{48}\) Often, Elders explain, the raiders’ beautiful and powerful hypnotic war songs rendered the bystanders powerless to act in any case.\(^{49}\)

Thus, from an Aboriginal perspective, Coast Salish territory is best conceived of as a four-pointed star with each of the four major open water systems—Strait of Georgia, Puget Sound, the Strait of Juan de Fuca and the Fraser River—constituting one of its points. (See Figure 2.4) Within the boundaries created by the star’s coastlines relatively fluid movements of people, and therefore ideas and goods, occurred. Individual tribal communities naturally felt greater affinity and identified more closely with those with whom they interacted most frequently. Distance, as Suttles records, consequently played a key role in shaping a sense of shared identity. As it was often easier to travel across the star’s points than through the star’s centre and into another point, each of the clustered set of tribal communities in the points felt to varying degrees a sense of being “one people”—a conception made stronger by the kin and other non-residence ties fostered across and between the various tribes. In terms of the opportunities they offered for developing common identities, however, the star’s points were not equal. Hence, on the eve of European contact the social and political cohesion of the Fraser tribes exceeded that of the star’s other points.
Chiefdoms and Spirits

The trend toward identifying meaningful expressions of intercommunity collective affiliation took an extreme turn in the writings of Kenneth Tollefson (1987, 1989). Applying outdated and largely discredited evolutionary models to interpret historical evidence, Tollefson argued that prior to contact the Puget Sound Salish had been organized into regional “Chiefdoms” and formal political confederacies. Suttles and others, in Tollefson’s view, had over-emphasized social networks at the expense of real political bonds, and as such were just as incorrect as the earlier generation of ethnographers who had failed to see any meaningful connections between geographically isolated settlements. According to Tollefson, the problem stemmed from the ethnographers’ excessive reliance on twentieth century informants. The society Suttles and others were describing was not traditional, Tollefson posited, but rather the culture remaining after contact induced “defeat and forced removal.” Nineteenth century historical evidence, on the other hand, allegedly documented strong centralized leadership from the era “before [Native] defeat and depopulation.”

Ultimately, however, Tollefson’s revisionist thesis failed to stand up to rigorous evaluation. Even Tollefson eventually acknowledged that his conclusions were really only applicable to one Coast Salish tribal community (the Snoqualmi near Seattle), and even then, only at a particular historical moment (during the chieftainship of Pat Kanim in the 1850s), which was at least seventy years after first European contact. As Miller and Boxberger point out, however, the 1850s is sufficiently early for the Snoqualmie to meet the criteria established by the United States Government in order to qualify for
federal recognition as a “tribe” and therefore receive funding and political recognition. Moreover, as they also point out, pressure should be brought to bear on western authorities to adjust their definitions of meaningful collective association to accommodate indigenous realities, rather than expecting indigenous people to prove they can meet European standards of political affiliation. This contemporary political context, arguably the real motivation behind Tollefson’s conclusions, demonstrates vividly the highly politicized nature of discussions over historical expressions of collective identity.

While scholars now generally accept the idea that Coast Salish people forged and maintained meaningful cross-tribal regional social networks prior to contact, not everyone has accepted the idea that these networks were principally material and ecological in nature. Jay Miller, in particular, argues that all of the previous economic and political models were fundamentally “flawed by misconceptions that wrongly emphasize Eurocentric stereotypes about personal individuality instead of situating a family within their anchoring landscape.” He sought to bring a more indigenous epistemology to his writing by rejecting what he regarded as a tendency within the established literature toward “overly democratizing a strong elite” through approaches that were “woefully irreligious.”

In truth, while many of Miller’s insights have brought a renewed sense of Aboriginal priority and epistemology to academic writing, his dismissal of the interpretive models found in the earlier literature was unjust. Certainly Suttles recognized and acknowledged the significance of non-material-based collective units based on “participation in the yearly round of subsistence activities and periodic
ceremonial activities.” In particular he had identified the inter-village communities of winter dancers, which, at the time of Suttles’ writing in the early 1960s, was experiencing a renaissance that has been sustained to the present. Presumably, the fraternity of masked sxwó:oxwey dancers, and even the community of distinct spirit entities that exists within every Coast Salish individual, also fell within this category, for as Suttles notes, none of these metaphysical communities were “necessarily identical with the residential units or the kin groups, some of them necessarily differing from them.”

Bruce Miller and Boxberger likewise acknowledged that at certain times spiritual communities took situational precedence over the affinal ties forged through materialistic concerns. For Jay Miller, however, the spiritual networks, and in particular the radiating shamanic identification, were the most meaningful and consistently operationalized collective identities cutting across anchored watershed-based tribal communities.

“Keeping the Stories Straight’: Toward an Indigenous Historiography

Within local indigenous discourse there is a pressure to foreground spiritual approaches to defining community. Perhaps this is in part a response to the contemporary economic marginalization of indigenous people, and the pervasiveness of popular western discourse that has consistently portrayed Aboriginal people as essentially spiritual, non-economic beings. Consequently, while foregrounding spirituality risks reinforcing the image of indigenous people as exclusively ‘otherworldly,’ Jay Miller’s emphasis on the importance of spirituality to Coast Salish concepts of group affiliation has definitely contributed to the process of making the literature more recognizable to indigenous people themselves.
While the formal ritualized shamanic odyssey to the land of the dead, so central to Jay Miller's discussion of the Lushootseed, was never a part of Stó:lō cultural practice, certainly many of the most important indicators of Stó:lō collective identity transcend time and place. One of the most important is a concept of connection through the unifying power of a supreme spiritual force responsible for creating the universe and providing it with life and sustaining that life through the distribution of power.

Typically, Stó:lō people today refer to this creative energy as either Chíchélh Siyá:m (Chief Above) or “Creator.” In 1936, Old Pierre of Katzie, one of the last of the formally trained Stó:lō shamans and a key informant for the anthropologist Diamond Jenness, explained that he preferred the name “Most High Respected Leader,” or “Lord Above,” whereas one of Charles Hill-Tout’s late nineteenth-century informants from near Fort Langley elaborated that while the Supreme Being was indeed Chíchélh Siyá:m, He was addressed in prayer as “cwaietsen,” meaning “parent, Father or Creator.” Such diversity in address continues today.

Academics have long struggled to determine whether the name Chíchélh Siyá:m, and much of the idea and ceremonial worship associated with it, show evidence of having been introduced or at least heavily influenced by early missionaries. Most have concluded that the idea and name are foreign and their adoption by the Coast Salish relatively recent.58 Stó:lō people, however, do not share this opinion. They generally insist that the belief in, and worship of, a Supreme Being pre-dated European contact. As such, many regard the academics’ efforts to separate Christian beliefs from indigenous ones as efforts to undermine Aboriginal belief in the one true God.59
In terms of historicizing the belief, it would be tempting to favour the academic interpretation were it not that the earliest historical evidence appears to support the indigenous assertion over the twentieth century anthropologists’ scepticism. Thomas Crosby, a Methodist missionary who began his proselytization work in 1862 and quickly became fluent in the Halq'eméylem language, explained that the Stó:lō “believed in a Great Spirit, who created all things and was all-wise, but who was not actively concerned for them, and for whom they never called upon except in cases of great difficulty or distress.” Royal Navy officer R.C. Mayne shared this opinion. In his 1862 publication *Four Years in British Columbia and Vancouver Island*, Mayne argues that “It is certain that the Indians here [Coast Salish] have some idea of a Supreme Being; and that this idea, no doubt, dates before the appearance of any priest among them.”

In 1881, retired Hudson’s Bay Company officer, Joseph William McKay, provided even greater insight into the indigenous belief system. Although he did not use the terminology, McKay clearly regarded as ethnocentric the idea that missionaries had introduced the concept of a Supreme Being to the Coast Salish. McKay lived much of his life in HBC posts along the lower Fraser river and on the adjacent shores of Vancouver Island, interacting both professionally and socially with Stó:lō and other Coast Salish people. When asked by a now long-forgotten aspiring eastern academic about Coast Salish religious beliefs and observances McKay explained,

[The Coast Salish] believed in Scha-us the Creator and ruler of the universe. The Missionaries have clumsily translated the name of our Diety into “Chief Above” [Chíchelh Siyá:m]. This they readily identify with Scha-us. Their original idea of the Creator who pervades through all space and who rules the universe and is everywhere is better than the idea of the local Missionary’s Deity who is localized to a certain extent by being styled the Chief
Above. Scha-us een is a word which in this idiom conveys an idea which may be represented expressed translated by the English word First [or] primary. X-us means new in their Vernacular and the prefix S would [be] the Superlative of new i.e. newest or first.... Scha-us, the great first cause of the Cowichans [Halkomelem speakers] is omnipresent and Omnipotent and [in] his control over demons and all other powers he was is the great Creator. His name implies Newest and may be translated The first as Ha-us is equivalent to the english word new (The Cowichan language has no equivalent for our word first. It has the words l.kha-la before and Ha-us New. Ha-us is nearest in significance to our word new first) His existence at present is more a passive than an active one, the demons and other subordinate forces are not only occasionally interfered with in the exercise of their functions.... [Other spiritual forces] remain under the power and check of the Great First. 62

McKay recognized that changes in Coast Salish theological interpretations pertaining to the powerful forces responsible for creation can be understood as a modification of older indigenous understandings rather than as simply adoptions of new and foreign ideas; that Native ideas, like Native history, could change to account for new information and new historical experiences without ceasing to be Aboriginal in nature.

In addition to having the comfort of finding that contemporary oral history and the earliest European observations corroborate one another in asserting the antiquity of a belief in a Supreme Being, the rules surrounding the transmission of certain kinds of oral history also suggest that the idea is ancient. Among the Coast Salish, not only is it improper to change or modify sacred stories such as those pertaining to ancient transformations and collective tribal origins, it is outright dangerous. Protocols pertaining to a historical narrative's integrity make it highly unlikely that the concept of the Great First could have been borrowed or introduced without that action provoking a major debate within the indigenous community that would be reflected in the indigenous
oral historiography, that is, collective memory. This is not to say that the concept of a Supreme Being did not undergo a certain degree of modification (as McKay suggested when describing how missionaries were encouraging the idea of God as residing in the sky). Rather, the cultural imperative typically expressed as an obligation to “keep the [sacred] stories right,” that is, in unaltered form, is sufficiently powerful within Stó:lô and all Coast Salish society, especially among the social and spiritual elite, to prevent such a prominent idea from being so recently borrowed without an account of the borrowing remaining.

Indicative of the obligation on Coast Salish historians to maintain the integrity of sacred historical narratives are the protocols and sanctions Sally Snyder observed and recorded in 1963 among even her “acculturated” Skagit informants; people she described as being “compulsive about telling stories ‘right.’” As Snyder discovered,

If a story was imperfectly recalled it was wrong for... [people] to ‘guess,’ meaning to pad, improvise, paraphrase or omit. It was better not to tell it at all for it was dangerous to omit scenes and to shorten myths. Nubile women in the audience might then give birth to deformed children, incomplete or malformed like the abbreviated or truncated story. And shortening of myths would shorten the lives of all listeners.63

On numerous occasions, both casual and formal, contemporary Stó:lô people clearly and forcefully articulated the conviction that it is wrong to modify or alter even slightly stories about the Creator and the actions of the transformers and the origins of the Stó:lô people. Good Stó:lô historians use oral footnotes to legitimise their knowledge in the eyes of their audience (that is to say, they explain to their audience from whom they acquired their information and how). People seldom chastise a person who tells a story “wrong” to their face. Rather, they speak about the offending
individual behind their backs as someone who is "low class" (that is "worthless" because they have "lost" or "forgotten their history"). In addition, the Stó:lō typically regard those who tell stories incorrectly as "people who don’t know right from wrong," or, on the other hand, and perhaps more tellingly, as people who have been too influenced by white society. As one respected cultural authority on cultural protocols explained, "Some of our own people think our transformer and origin stories are like fairy tales; things you can make up or change. They aren’t. This seems to be especially the case with those of our people who have gone off to university and gotten degrees."64

Old Pierre of Katzie explained that prior to non-Native hegemony, whenever a dispute arose as to the proper form and content of an historical narrative, it became necessary to "summon two old men who belonged to different villages but were both well versed in local histories" to discuss and reconcile the different historical interpretations.65 Severe differences in historical interpretation, Old Pierre maintained, such as arose in the case of a dispute over the hereditary right to use a name, required the defender of a particular version of history to enlist two additional "lawyers" to plead his case, after which, as anthropologist Diamond Jennesse recorded, the adjudicating "old men retired to consult in private. Whatever decision they reached was final."66

Recently, in discussing the matter of the integrity of historical narratives, two elderly, fluent Halq'eméylem-speaking women explained to me that in the past there were people who were recognized as the keepers and communicators of sacred histories. Such a person, typically a man, was referred to as sxá:sls, meaning "He who keeps track of everything."67
Protocols discouraging people from altering a story by guessing at content or omitting key components should not, however, be equated with a prohibition on acquiring new or forgotten information to supplement existing sacred historical narratives or from acquiring entirely new stories for the indigenous literary canon or historiography. In other words, properly trained people can acquire new sacred historical information, but only through special means. In this context, it is probably important to re-state that such narratives are not exclusively about the distant past. Rather, they are a distinct set of historical discourses, and some of the information they convey pertains to the very recent past, potentially as recent as a few moments ago. Properly trained or particularly gifted individuals can acquire certain types of sacred historical knowledge, not by referencing documentation, but by travelling to particular sites on the landscape where they access metaphysical tunnels that lead to special locations in the spirit world where knowledge and information can be "remembered." The land itself was the Stó:lō archive.

Put another way, accepting that the concept of a Supreme Being, or Great First, predates contact is not to say that the indigenous understanding of who or what the Great First is or was did not undergo alterations or refinements over the last two centuries. Indeed, the relationship between Stó:lō people and the Great First likely was modified over time, especially inasmuch as it is reasonable that McKay is correct in suggesting that the Stó:lō came to regard the Great First in more Christian-like terms as a fatherly entity residing in the more localized spiritual geography of Heaven above. Historian John Milloy's account of the Plains Cree's shift towards greater monotheism following their migration from the forest lands of the northern Canadian Shield to the open bison
dominated prairies may provide a model for conceiving of subtle but important changes in Stó:lō theology among those living in the generations after the great smallpox epidemic of the late eighteenth century. Perhaps the survivors who migrated found it important to place greater emphasis on their relationship with the Great First vis-à-vis those with other lesser spiritual forces and entities. Hence, though the Great First was presumably a more “passive” force prior to contact than described in the mid-nineteenth century, nonetheless, He (She, It?) could, and presumably did, occasionally exercise a prerogative to “interfere” in the lives of humans and “other subordinate forces,” especially during those times, as the Methodist Reverend Crosby pointed out, “when people were confronted with great difficulty or distress.”

**Precedent and Sacred History: Affiliation Through Narratives of Movement**

Ultimately, as the shared belief in the Great First indicates, cohesion within and among tribal groups was not exclusively a factor of watershed-based geography, residence proximity, or economic strategies to cope with periodic shortages of food. Indeed, for the Stó:lō, geography appears to have been more commonly thought of as the product of tribal cohesion rather than its source. It is genuine past precedence as reflected in sacred narratives describing the formation of the contemporary world that bring meaning to the pragmatic and practical materialist and ecological networks described earlier. The origin of tribal identities are found in ancient stories of transformations accounting for how the world came to be in the form and state it is today. Identities, therefore, are in at least one important way primordially based in
Aboriginal cosmology, making discussion of their historical expressions a sensitive issue.

Stó:lō people classify their historical narratives into two categories: sqwélpwel, often translated as "true story" or "real news," which seem to tell of recent happenings; and sxwówxwiyám, which often appear to describe the distant past when Xexá:lís, "the Transformers," and the tel swayel "sky people" transformed the chaotic world of creation into the stable and permanent form it takes today. This classification of two types of history, both considered true accounts of past happenings, corresponds with what Jan Vansina has documented as a relatively common expression of Native cosmologies elsewhere. While this classification accounts for aspects of the way people shared historical narratives, the dichotomy Vansina describes between a distant past that was mythical and a recent past that was real does not adequately reflect Coast Salish ways of knowing. To better bridge the gulf between Stó:lō and western epistemology I previously assisted in the construction of metaphor defining Stó:lō history as a series of sometimes unrelated happenings occurring simultaneously within the different rooms of a house. Hallways were grey areas where human and supernatural beings from the various rooms met and experienced things that would not have occurred had they remained in their separate rooms. In deference to Clifford Geertz's assertion that bridging the gulf of understanding between cultures requires continually re-evaluating metaphors of understanding, offered here is a new interpretation of Coast Salish history inspired by a re-reading of Sally Snyder's unpublished analysis of Coast Salish oral traditions, and subsequent ruminations over information shared by Stó:lō friends and consultants:
Imagine Stó:lō historiography as a single play unfolding simultaneously on two separate stages separated by a passageway. On the first stage occurs the drama of the familiar physical world. On the second are depicted the actions of the xá:xa (sacred or taboo) realm of the spirit world. The spiritual actors on the second stage are able to observe the actions on the first, but the physical actors on the first cannot see the characters and happenings of the second. Actors from one stage can, and occasionally do, pass behind the curtain and enter the action on the other stage. Access points for beginning the journey are found at various xá:xa places located throughout the physical landscape, but only specially trained people can successfully negotiate the arduous and danger-fraught journey into the spirit world. Spirit actors, meanwhile, can and still do enter the drama of humans, often emerging into the physical world through these same xá:xa places. Sometimes their visits are short; other times their stays are lengthy. The play's author and director is Scha-us, The Great First. However, he has only revealed the drama's full script to the spirit beings on the second stage, and so only the shamans who have made the journey behind the curtain to the spirit world understand his directions. These shamans may occasionally hear the director's instructions, but more often they learn of the Great First's intentions second hand from their associates in the spirit world. Thus, Stó:lō history is filled with significant points of interpenetration between the two dimensions. In the ancient past the penetrations were so frequent as to make the two dramas essentially indistinguishable—the division between the stages was eliminated, so to speak. This is the era anthropologists have typically described as the "myth-age;" what fluent Halq'eméylem speakers refer to as sxwóxwiyám. More
recently the drama occurring in the spirit realm has played a slightly less prominent role in the ongoing drama of Stó:lō human history or sqwelqwel.

From the late nineteenth through the early twentieth-century ethnographers such as Franz Boas, Charles Hill-Tout and Diamond Jenness collected stories from Stó:lō Elders such as Chief George and Mary Anne of the Chehalis tribe on Harrison River, Pat Joe of the Scowlitz tribe at the junction of the Harrison and Fraser Rivers, and Old Pierre of the Katzie tribe on Pitt Lake, describing how the world was once in a chaotic state where trees could talk to animals and where dangerous men and women (evil Indian Doctors) with incredible powers caused harm and despair. Into this world the Great First sent certain people who fell from the sky at particular places to become the original leaders of either individual settlements or entire tribal communities. Swaniset “The Great Benefactor” was one such person who “was planted on Sheridan Hill” adjacent to Pitt Lake. Another was Sumqeameltq, who parachuted from the sky at Scowlitz near the junction of the Harrison and Fraser Rivers. According to the indigenous histories, these and other sky people possessed special powers, which they used to fix the world and set it straight. Their modern-era descendants, such as the Elders who spoke with the ethnographers, inherited special rights of leadership and prestige. In this way, as Old Pierre explained, “each village community had its own set of ancestral names (some for males only, others only for females) ... a man’s lineage connected him with several communities, he often received one name in his father’s village and another in his mother’s.”

The Elders described how in addition to the sky people, the early sxwóxwiyám age also witnessed the slightly later arrival of Xexá:ls (three bear brothers and their
sister). Xexá:ls were the orphans of Red Headed Woodpecker and Black Bear (who had been killed by Red Headed Woodpecker’s jealous second wife, Grizzly Bear). They travelled throughout the world performing miraculous events of transformation, rewarding certain good people by transforming them into the “first people” of additional different tribes, or into a valuable component of the regional ecosystem. They punished evil people by turning them into giant stones or other features of the landscape. Some of the transformations they performed were not linked to moral causes but were motivated simply by Xexá:ls’ desire to demonstrate their power. Together Xexá:ls traversed the world “making things right.”

The stories describing the ancient past, as recorded by anthropologists, make apparent the fact that not everyone knew all the details or full narratives describing the beginning of time or the travels and works of Xexá:ls and the sky people. Chief George and Mary Anne of Chehalis independently explained to both Boas and Hill-Tout that Xexá:ls the Transformers started their journey in the mountains at the north end of Harrison Lake. From there they travelled down to the Fraser and then upriver to the canyon, making transformations as they travelled. Chief George did not know the details of Xexá:ls’ journey after their departure from the Stó:lō region of the lower Fraser canyon, but he knew that they eventually reached the sunrise where they began a journey through the sky until they reached the sunset. Once at the western horizon they began travelling eastward once again until they eventually arrived at the mouth of the Fraser River. From the moment the transformers reached this point Chief George again knew many of the details of their actions. He explained that, from the Fraser estuary, the Transformers travelled upriver again, passing through the Fraser Valley and
adjoining watersheds all the while continuing the process of fixing the world and putting
all the individual tribal components in order until eventually they journeyed up through
the Fraser canyon and disappeared once again into the sunrise, this time never to be seen
again.76 (See Figure 2.5)

Like Chief George and Mary Ann, Old Pierre had been taught that Xexá:ls’ and
the sky peoples’ actions occurred as part of a coherent narrative in which the actions
central to one tribal community were necessary to inform the historical development of
another. His knowledge base, however, was much deeper than either George’s or Mary
Ann’s in terms of the metaphysical world of spirit power associated with the life-giving
power of the Great First, or “Lord Above,” and the sky people. This was not so much a
difference between Katzie and Chehalis epistemology, as Charles Hill-Tout and other
early anthropologists sometimes characterized it,77 but, rather reflections of the
difference between vocationally based knowledge and geographically based knowledge
within a single cultural group. As Hill-Tout’s informants explained in the 1890s, and as
Old Pierre corroborated in 1936, for example, while everybody learned the general
stories, only specially trained healers, known as shxwlá:m, received the hereditary
knowledge and full initiation into the body of esoteric experience and knowledge which
enabled them to travel through the mystical spiritual dimension of the xá:xa realm. That
journey enabled them to receive the true and full stories of creation and the spirit
world.78

Chief George’s and Old Pierre’s stories encompass broad geographical regions,
but both are more detailed for the territory closest to their respective winter residences.
Hill-Tout’s Scowlits informant, Pat Joe, by way of contrast, related a Xexá:ls story that
had nothing to do with the immediate vicinity of his home. Instead, his narrative described the transformer's actions at Point Roberts on the coast just south of the Fraser River's mouth. Elders living today explain that in the past, inter-community gatherings provided opportunities for stories to be shared in a context that emphasised the need for connections to distant places. The stories themselves are about travels and movements, and they are fully appreciated in the context of the travels of the storytellers themselves who moved and spoke with audiences from geographically diverse homes, and who apparently also possessed vocationally- and/or status-based differences in knowledge levels. Thus, while learning the full meaning behind the stories was often restricted to vocational experts such as shxlä:m, the process of sharing the stories emphasized the unity of the broader region, for without knowledge of sxwōxwiyám-era happenings in neighbouring tribal communities, one's own tribal stories were themselves incomplete.

The Swaniset stories related by Old Pierre exemplify the role of the unity of the broader region in providing meaning for local stories. They are not simply about Katzie history and identity; indeed, Swaniset is also claimed by the Kwantlen near Fort Langley as one of their original people. Swaniset's travels and important actions and experiences in Puget Sound mean that places and resources far from Pitt Lake are of vital importance to Katzie concepts of self. It was in the interest of Katzie people to develop and maintain relations with people living abroad to ensure the Katzie's continued relationship with places and people far from their tribal homeland—places of vital importance to their understanding of how the world was put into its contemporary form and of the sacredness of certain human and social relations between geographically distant settlements. Once relationships were formed, the process of repeated inter-
community story sharing formed a bridge that then reinforced the need to maintain those same relations. Thus, while sxwōxwiyām transformation narratives are ostensibly about tribal origins and identity, they also serve as the basis of many Salish people’s sense of supra-tribal identity.

In addition to creating distinct First People for the various tribes and settlements, Old Pierre explained that the Great First also gave to each tribal group a “special rite or ceremony (cexwte’n) to increase... [its] joy or comfort in grief.” These ceremonial rites, sometimes referred to as “entertainments” or “magic playthings,” were central aspects of tribal identities. Prohibitions barred people who were not members of the community who had received them from performing them. In this way each tribe, and even villages within tribal clusters, claimed a distinct and special power and attribute derived from the spirit world at the beginning of time. Significantly, however, the privilege/authority to perform the rite spread to many different tribes through inter-community marriages. Jenness recounts that according to Old Pierre, for the Musqueam at the mouth of the Fraser river and a community farther up river, the tribal ritual was the masked sxwō:yxwey dance. For a neighbouring group that had subsequently merged with the Musqueam, the tribal ritual involved “an entertainment with two dolls that are called xa’malca and xa’pxep.” For the Chilliwack tribe, it was a rite involving the skins of fishers that were referred to as sxwamecen, and tlukel. Hill-Tout learned from people at Scowlitz that their special tribal rite was a feathered ring called selmoqtcis.

Contemporary Stó:lō corroborate the continuing importance of these special tribally specific “gifts,” although with the exception of the masked dance ceremony,
people generally explain that the associated characteristic of the gift—the gift's legacy, if you will—is of greater importance than the physical manifestation of the gift itself. Indeed, as Old Pierre observed more than half a century ago, most of the special rites have “dropped out of memory” and are no longer practised. My own field work collaborates this. For example, the unique ritual of the Ohamil community just downriver from Hope was the sturgeon dance. Today at least two Elders have a vague knowledge of this rite (one of whom explains that he has acquired as much of his information about the sturgeon dance through conversations with deceased ancestors during dreams as from his own childhood memories). The sturgeon rite, although not performed for nearly a century, continues to inform a sense of distinctiveness among members of the Ohamil community.

In a similar fashion, certain members of particular tribal communities claim tribally based rights of supra-tribal political authority, arguing that leadership ability is innately theirs as a legacy of the events and bestowed gifts of the sxwōxwiyám era. More than 100 years ago this claim was expressed to Hill-Tout by members of both the “Royal” Kwantlen tribe near Fort Langley and the Chehalis tribes near Harrison Hot Springs. More recently, members of a central Fraser Valley Band have made the same claim with respect to themselves.

Significantly, for the purpose of tracking change over time, the one remaining actively practised tribal based rite, the masked sxwō:yxwey dance, has come to foster and represent a collective identity that transcends its original tribal specificity. Within Coast Salish society, hereditary rights are traced bilaterally, that is, through both mothers and fathers. This system sets Coast Salish culture apart from the more northern,
and often better known, matrilineal Northwest Coast cultural groups that trace hereditary rights through mothers. As such, although residence patterns for elite Coast Salish families were generally patrilocal, with the wife coming to live with her husband, children inherited rights from either their father’s or their mother’s family. As Old Pierre explained to Jenness, the right to perform certain tribally anchored rights therefore “spread through intermarriage until nearly every community had within it someone who claimed legitimate right to the ritual.” The spiritual link which exists among all members of the sacred sxwó:yxwey ritual fraternally binds male dancers of different communities together through shared ancestral connections. While all dancers are members of their fraternity, each of the different spiritual expressions the individual dancers assume forms a distinct sub-community within the spirit world. Suttles identifies as the various sources of sxwó:yxwey spirit helper power: Thunder, Raven, Sawbill, Snake, Two-headed Snake, Beaver, Spring Salmon, Owl, Ghost, Buzzard, Eagle, Bear and Clown.

As the example of the sxwó:yxwey illustrates, understanding Coast Salish definitions of “community” is an extraordinarily complicated proposition. Beyond associations of families who trace their rights to ancient tribal rituals or gifts, or even the connections people form with guardian spirit helper communities, Coast Salish collective identity emerges at its most basic level from the belief that each individual has within him or her a community of up to seven distinct types of spirit entities, each of which has radiating relationships outside of its physical human host. There is no tight consensus among all Stó:lō or Xwélmexw people as to the nature, expression, form and function of each spirit expression, but there is a general shared understanding in the
Once again, differences in interpretation appear to be less reflections of regional or tribal distinctiveness than distinctions between various individuals' depth of knowledge. Put another way, certain knowledge is vocational in nature; acquired through specific training related to the pursuit of a particular career. For comparative purposes, we might think of the distinction between how a contemporary lay Catholic might explain the distinction between the human soul, mind and intellect, or the distinction between angels and spirits or saints, and how a priest or theologian might define the same concepts.

According to Old Pierre, seven spirit entities reside within each Stó:lō person. One is a “soul” (shxwêl) that at death returns to the Great First who may reassign it to be reincarnated in one of the deceased’s descendants. Another is a “vitality” (smestîyexw) that is responsible for people’s conscious thought. A third is a “talent or power” (swia’m) which is closely associated with the vitality/thought and is sometimes difficult to distinguish from it, and which perishes with the physical body at death. A “shadow” or “reflection” (qey’xene’?ten) is literally the spirit associated with one’s shadow cast by the sun or moon. Then there is a “shade” or “ghost” (spoleqwith’a) that is the merging of the vitality and shadow after death, and which roams invisible in the neighbourhood of its old home, being a source of great concern among surviving relatives who fear it may entice away a living person’s vitality. The sixth are the “guardian spirits” (syûwêl or ô:lkwlh) that are generally acquired from birds, animals or natural elements and which manifest themselves during the winter dance, and which were associated with professional or vocational skills and abilities. Finally, there are the spirits, which impregnate one’s breath with power (sle’qwem).
Old Pierre not only listed the seven classes of spirit entities residing within each Coast Salish person, he also described in detail how they functioned, sometimes autonomously, and other times in unison and harmony with one another. While descriptions and explanations similar to Old Pierre's continue to be shared among Coast Salish people and in particular Coast Salish shxla:m, the account Jenness recorded from Old Pierre in 1936 remains the most comprehensive and well-integrated extant account. As such, it forms the core of the following discussion.

Old Pierre explained that according to traditions he learned during his training all plants and animals possess shadows, vitality (or thought), and special powers or talent. They had souls during the age of sxwóxwiyá:m, but when Xexá:ls transformed them into their permanent form their souls were sent back to the Great First. As a result, of all living things, only human beings and sockeye salmon, which are really regarded as humans whose home is far out to sea, retained their souls.92 Humans and sockeye are together distinct from all the rest of creation. Each year it is imperative that the bones, skin and intestines of the first sockeye salmon caught be cast back in the water; by this means all sockeye souls accompany the bones back to their home where they take on a new body so they can return the following year. In like fashion, many people's souls are reincarnated, but only if a deceased person is mourned unceasingly. In such cases the Great First sends the soul back to be born in a new baby who then possesses all the same features as its predecessor. A person's shadow or reflection might also end up being reincarnated, but unless the soul accompanies it, the infant will bare only a general resemblance to its predecessor. In this manner, powerful, shared identities are forged across temporal gulfs and between generations.
In the generation before contact it was universally believed that the sun provided people with vitality (or thought). In the winter, vitality left the limbs and trunks of trees and retired into the roots. That is why, Old Pierre explained, leaves fade and drop. Evergreens, made directly by the Great First, retain their vitality better than the deciduous trees Xexá:ls made. Evergreen trees continue to be used in rituals to transfer vitality to people and increase their strength. Cut trees, dead animals, and harvested plants have no vitality, as with dead humans. Unlike the soul or shadow, whose departure brings instant death, the vitality can leave the body for short periods. Vitality is also responsible for memory. Vitality can travel through the spirit world to a xá:xa (sacred or taboo) place and there acquire knowledge, or re-acquire lost knowledge (forgotten memories). A person's vitality could also acquire power or talent during its travels. However, if not returned within a reasonable time period, a person without vitality would go crazy and die. When vitality left a person's body it took the person's power and talent with it.

Old Pierre had been taught that people's vitality and power weakened with age. He explained that these forces also weakened during the winters when the sun was distant. Winter dances ("smílha," also commonly referred to as "spirit dances") serve the purpose of enabling people to rejuvenate themselves. Dancing itself, however, was not sufficient. Dancers depend on the power or talent they receive from special animal or bird spirit "partners," or helpers, who come from the mountains to assist them. The power received from these sources wells up inside people causing them to sing and dance and thereby regain health and vigour. In earlier times, these helpers provided people with vocational direction and professional expertise. Healers, warriors,
clairvoyants, and others all acquired special vocational skills and powers from their guardian spirits. Mosquitoes and wind, therefore, were not uncommon spirit associations for shxwlá:m ("Indian doctors" or shamans), who were required to "blow" their medicinal power into people to effect a cure, or likewise, "suck" or "pull" malevolent spirits from their patients. Interestingly, stó:méx (warriors) also sought the spirit power of mosquitoes and other tenacious creatures to provide them with ferocity in combat.94 Warriors and healers, therefore, were often joined through their identical spirit helpers as part of a spirit-based single community. In this way, individual Coast Salish spirit dancers, like the sxwó:yxwey dancers, formed collective identities with members of the animal world, and also with other unrelated humans who shared their animal partners. In the early 1960s, the anthropologist Sally Snyder’s Skagit informants explained that in the past winter dancers who shared the same source of spirit power danced together as a group.95 Today, all Stó:lō and Skagit winter dancers dance independently. The audience, who sing and drum and in other ways participate, form the dancer’s collective support group.

Additionally, outside the parameters of strict blood and in-law connections and common spirit associations, members of the winter dance community also form special "family" ties that serve as the basis of additional smaller collective groupings. As a result of acquiring their spirit helper, new initiates (xawsó:lh, or "babies") emerge from their initiation as new people. Henceforth, their chronological age is less important than the age of their association with their spirit helper. All winter dance "babies" who are "born" the same year within the same longhouse community refer to one another as siblings, to their individual longhouse leaders as parents, and to their initiators as
xólhemílh or “baby-sitters.” Likewise, all winter dancers, regardless of which spirit community or individual longhouse to which they belong, consider themselves members of a special community distinct from st’elt’ólkwílh (non-spirit dancers).

The power and talent associated with dancers, Pierre explained, varies in strength, depending on how far away it is acquired. The further away one has to travel to obtain spirit power or talent the stronger the power’s manifestation. While all animals have power they can share with humans, certain animals exist only in the mystic xá:xa realms where they reside at varying distances from humans. A person had to make the perilous journey into the xá:xa dimension in order to encounter such a spirit. Later, after a person’s vitality returned from the xá:xa animal’s body and travelled back to its home, the spirit’s power would only be known and recognized from visions. Only a person who had undergone intense and prolonged purification, and received proper hereditary training, ever arrived in the xá:xa realm, and it was only from this realm that one could acquire true healing power and become a genuine shxwlá:m.

Certain other powers, Old Pierre believed, came not from these xá:xa creatures and realms but directly from the “Lord Above,” who bestowed them on those Pierre referred to as priests, but whom anthropologists prefer to call ritualists. Special powers from the Great First continue to manifest themselves through the prayer and incantations of contemporary ritualists who trace hereditary rights through unbroken chains back to prominent original people like Swaniset. Such ritualists continue to protect individuals from mysterious forces as well as wash away impurities people acquire by going to forbidden places, or such impurity as is associated with achieving puberty, or giving birth to twins. Ritualists also remove malevolent shades or ghosts
from people, and restore peoples’ lost or stolen vitality. They accomplish these feats through special prayers called syewin or yewin. As such, in Pierre’s time, as today, such ritualists are often referred to as syewinmet or yewinmet: “He who knows many prayers.” Ritualists’ prayers are capable of changing the weather, and in the past they also robbed enemy warriors of their vitality. Ritualists might also use their prayers to tame fish and animals to render them easier to catch.

Pierre explained that in the past different ritualists, perhaps best thought of as clairvoyants, possessed the power of sight. This power came unsolicited as a gift of the “Lord Above;” and apparently was not associated with hereditary knowledge or ritual training. Such people sang special songs, given to them by the Great First, to determine who was in danger. Once a clairvoyant ritualist identified a potential victim they bathed them with water from a basis to wash away all danger.

Clearly then, in the early contact era many of the most fundamental expressions of collective identity derived from an understanding of the workings of the spirit world, past and present. Knowledge of these matters, if not always their practice, was transmitted into the twentieth century and through to the present. Ancient mythical transformations created distinct tribal homelands, resources and sacred rites and ceremonies, but they were also responsible for the vitally important links that bound the various tribes together. Continuing spiritual expressions, as Jay Miller recently documented for the Skagit, formed anchored radiances in which shamanic and other spirit-based power and energy were acquired from distant locales and brought back to tribal or personal homes. The tribal-based rites also radiated from their original homes through ties of family to form collective fraternities with supra-tribal expressions. These
family-based cross-tribal linkages follow similar patterns as the more economic based identities described below.

The picture that emerges of traditional Stó:lō society is one of overlapping networks of nested identity. Each person was simultaneously a member of more than one expression of group affiliation, some of which were set at odds with one another. People operationalized various systems to meet perceived needs through models provided by past precedent and illustrated through ancient narratives. Status and gender were, therefore, powerful factors in shaping people's decisions about affiliation. Hereditary names, knowledge, resources and special myth age gifts anchored people to their tribal homes, as did the mysterious powers of local shaman and ritualists. Individual tribes held within their local watershed-based territories a number of special resources that were obtainable only at specific times and found only in specific locations. Certain resources were available in greater quantities and for longer periods in different tribal homelands. These economic realities motivated people to forge complex webs of affinal ties across large and diverse geographies. This pattern was common throughout all Coast Salish territory, but the special geography of the lower Fraser River with its numerous tribal sub-watersheds and unique salmon preserving opportunities in the canyon facilitated unprecedented opportunities for communication and interaction.

Supra-tribal identity was the result of the numerous linkages that radiated from tribal centres. The work of the transformers joined regionally diverse tribal communities through mythical stories that were intelligible only with reference to
happenings far beyond any given single tribe’s territory. Likewise, shamans and others seeking the strength and assistance of the spirits from the xá:xa realm were required to travel far beyond their tribal territory through a dimension invisible to untrained or unworthy human senses. Through these spiritual connections communities of people from various tribal homelands were connected as members of spirit-based fraternities, the most prominent of which being the masked sxwó:yxwey dancers or the collectives of people with shared spirit helpers in the winter dance. Constant movements and visits by affines between tribal communities and the massive convergence of people in the canyon meant that the strong sense of supra-tribal identity also had a strong secular economic basis. Extended families of blood and in-law connections, which the smallest of the various collective identities were, were therefore often the most interested in promoting supra-tribal Stó:lō identity. Moreover, generally patrilocal patterns of residence meant that women were especially interested in the familial connections that linked communities for it was they who left their birth home to live elsewhere. Maintaining ties to their place of birth, as well as those places where their sisters had moved to reside, likely had personal meaning that transcended or at least supplemented the more official and strategic social, economic and political rationale their male family members had for building and maintaining such linkages.

Throughout the late eighteenth and nineteenth century, as we shall see, these cross-tribal linkages and supra-tribal identifications played a central role in shaping the way Stó:lō people adjusted to a series of externally produced pressures and crises. The various expressions of collective identity came under incredible strain, and often the system was unable to adjust to the changes quickly enough to prevent overt fractures and
increased tensions between the various expressions of identity and the justification behind them. The role of movement, that is, the ability to move around and the extent of the range, so important to the traditional functioning of Coast Salish collective identity, came to play an increasingly important role in determining which expressions of identity would dominate in light of external pressures and strains. Over time, certain aspects of the internal flexibility of the Coast Salish system became more rigid, while others grew so flexible as to become all but impossible to distinguish, as the following chapters will demonstrate.

2 Within the anthropological literature the Coast Salish are divided into six major groupings or language families: 1) The isolated Bella Coola (Nuxalk) of the central coast of British Columbia; 2) the Northern Coast Salish of the northern Strait of Georgia (speakers of the Comox, Pentlatch, Homalco, Klahoose, Sliammon, and Sechelt languages); 3) The Central Coast Salish of southern Strait of Georgia and the Strait of Juan de Fuca (Speakers of the Squamish, Halkomelem, Nooksask, Straits and Clallam languages); 4) the Southern Coast Salish of Puget Sound and Hood Canal (speakers of the Lushootseed and Twana languages); 5) The Southwestern Coast Salish of the outer coast of Washington State (speakers of Quinault, Chehalis, and Cowlitz languages); and finally, 6) the isolated Tillamook of the coast of central Oregon. For ethnographic and historical overviews of these groupings consult Suttles, *Handbook of North American Indians*, especially: “Dorothy Kennedy and Randall T. Bouchard, “Bella Coola,” 323-339; Dorothy Kennedy and Randall T. Bouchard, “Northern Coast Salish,” 441-452; Wayne Suttles, “Central Coast Salish,” 453-475; Wayne Suttles and Barbara Lane, “Southern Coast Salish,” 485-502; Yvonne Hajda, “Southwestern Coast Salish,” 503-517; William R. Seaburg and Jay Miller, “Tillamook,” 560-567.
6 Suttles reports that his informants translated Xwêlmexw simply as “Indian” or used it to apply to any identifiable group of Native people. He speculated that the older indigenous meaning was likely restricted to a tribe. In my own investigations Elders have consistently translated the word as “Aboriginal people” or First Nations people (equivalent to Suttles’ “Indian,”). However, they also point out the significance of the suffix “mexw,” which is found in many terms associated with life such as mexwiya (belly-button or navel); hence as one Stó:lō person who had given the matter much thought explained, the best translation of Xwêlmexw is probably “people of life,” a concept best appreciated within the context of social and spatial distance. Thus, I will be using the term to refer to all those “known people” whose lives centre around the lower Fraser River. They need not be year-round residents.

8 In the *Second Report to the British Association for the Advancement of Sciences* in 1898, the Committee on the Ethnological Survey of Canada contained a letter from Charles Hill-Tout which promised the imminent publication of an article he then had “in hand” describing “an account of a great confederacy of tribes in the Salish region of ‘Chilliwack.’” This report was never published, and no trace of the manuscript has yet been found.


10 The significance of the watershed-based tribal community was recognized by even the earliest permanent European observers as in 1838 when Hudson’s Bay Company (HBC) Chief Factor James Douglas commented that the Puget Sound Salish were “without a doubt...one and the same people, deriving a local designation from their place of residence.” Douglas explained that river-based “community” or “society” “appellations,” (corresponding with what the earlier HBC employee, T.C. Elliot, had described as “tribes” or “nations [see, “The Journal of John Work, November and December, 1824,” *Washington Historical Quarterly*, 3:3(1912): 198-228]) such as “Squaly amish, Puce alap amish, Sino amish, Sina homish, Skatchet, Nowhalimeek...were regarded as the source of an imaginary line of demarcation, which divides the inhabitants of one petty stream, from the people living upon another, and have become the fruitful source of the intensive commotions, that so frequently disturb the tranquility of the District.” See James Douglas, Fort Vancouver, to Governor James Simpson, 18 March, 1838, in *The Letters of John McLaughlin from Fort Vancouver to the Governor and Committee, First Series, 1825-38*, Vol. 4, Appendix A, E.E. Rich, ed. (Toronto: Champlain Society, 1991), 280-281.

11 Ibid., 2-3.


13 Subsequently, Sally Snyder documented five distinct tribes along the Skagit River. With the exception of the lower Fraser system the Skagit drainage is home to more tribes than any other Coast Salish river. See, Sally Snyder, “Skagit Society and its Existential Basis: An Ethnolocial Reconstruction,” (Unpublished Ph.D. Diss. in Anthropology, University of Washington, 1964), 63, 65.


15 Ibid., 3.

16 I provide a preliminary exploration of the applicability of this model to the Fraser River region in “Expressions of Collective Identity,” in Carlson, *Atlas*, 24-29.

17 Charles Hill-Tout explained during a phone conversation with Miss Annis of the Carnegie Library in Vancouver that his informants defined the term St6:lo as “River of Rivers.” Miss Annis conveyed this information to Denys Nelson who in turn had the information collaborated by Jason Allard, the son of a Coast Salish woman and an HBC traders at Fort Langley. See, “Diary of a Trip up the Fraser,” in Denys Nelson’s Journal, 5 March 1925, Hill-Tout Collection, Vancouver Museum, General Files, B.XI.


20 Ibid., 210-211.

21 Suttles, “Variation in Habitat and Culture on the Northwest Coast,” in *Coast Salish Essays*, 32.

22 Ibid., 36-37, 40. Suttles compared the seasonal availability of food resources within the lower Fraser River habitat region to those farther north to tentatively suggest that “as we go northward along the coast
we find less variety in types of resources, greater local and seasonal variation, and possibly less year-to-year fluctuation." As a result, "the more northern tribes rely on fewer kinds of plants and animals and get them at fewer places and for shorter times during the year, but in greater concentration, and with consequently greater chance for failure."


26. Contrary to evidence presented here as collected by myself and most anthropologists, Charles Hill-Tout's investigations of the Chehalis tribe led him to declare that the "essentially democratic spirit" of the Salish prevented the development of individual or family based property rights. "Hunting, fishing, berry, and root grounds were all common to the whole tribe." See, Hill-Tout, *The Mainland Halkomelem*, 116.


34. Suttles, "Variation in Habitat and Culture," 42.

35. Duff, *Upper Stalo*, 76.


38. Ibid., 271.


40. Ibid., 30-33.

41. Duff states that it took four to five days to travel from Musqueam at the Fraser's mouth to Yale at the entrance to the canyon, and two to travel the reverse downriver; see, Wilson Duff, *Upper Stalo*, 16. Simon Fraser made his hasty retreat from Musqueam to Yale in four days, stopping along the way to steal a canoe and put down a threatened mutiny; see, W. Kaye Lamb, *Simon Fraser: Letters and Journals, 1806-1808* (Toronto: MacMillan Company of Canada Ltd., 1960), 107-114. On numerous occasions while traveling in a small boat between Yale and Langley on the Fraser I have been impressed by how often my companions and I encountered locations where if we pulled in near to shore and shut off the boat's motor we would be drawn upstream, often for several hundred meters, by the currents of gigantic back eddies.

42. Fishing sites are owned and regulated by families during the fishing season. During other times of the year these sites are left open and others used them for purposes other than fishing (mainly travel); other uses of these sites were not contested, so long as those uses did not interfere with the owner's ability to fish during the appropriate season.


44. Smith, *Puyallup-Nisqually*, 3.


47. More than one St6:lō Elder has explained to me how the spirit songs of the Coastal Raiders hypnotized listeners and ensured safe and expeditious passage up and then back down the Fraser River.

51 Tollefson, “The Snoqualmie,” 123.
53 Miller and Boxberger, “Creating Chiefdoms.”
55 A renaissance, that forty years later continues to gain momentum despite the increased emphasis on the local village community being fostered by most government funding programs.
57 Miller, *Anchored Radiance*.
58 The early ethnographer, Charles Hill-Tout, noted that the idea of a supreme being is “entirely foreign to the native mind, and is in direct conflict with the democratic genius of Salish institutions, and with the ideas embodied in their myths.” This interpretation was directly challenged by Diamond Jenness’ informant Old Pierre who insisted that the idea was ancient and indigenous. Jenness himself, as with every other anthropologist who followed him into Stó:lō territory asking similar questions, was very reluctant to accept Old Pierre’s opinion. See Suttles, *Katzie Ethnographic Notes*, 6. See also, Wayne Suttles, “The Plateau Prophet Dance Among the Coast Salish,” in *Coast Salish Essays* (Vancouver: Talonbooks, 1987), 164, 178, 185-187. See also, Wilson Duff, *Upper Stalo*, 119-120. Jay Miller’s recent conclusion that the “Salish belief in a supreme deity... was probably ancient, although subsequently influenced by beliefs about the Christian God” is in keeping with my own thoughts on the subject. See Miller, *Anchored Radiance*, 64, 50. This view appears to be in keeping with the early ethnographic observations of Franz Boas who noted “Among the Coast Salish... [the sun] is worshiped, although no offerings are made to him, while it is said that the Salish of the interior burn food, blankets and other property as an offering to the sun... The wanderer... considered the son of the deity, ...is called Qals.” Franz Boas, “Indians of British Columbia,” *Transactions of the Royal Society of Canada*, Section II, 1888, 6:2 (1888): 55.
59 For an account of indigenous Christian’s opposition to social scientists’ efforts to historicize belief in a Supreme Being see Ian McIntosh, “Anthropology, Self-determination and Aboriginal Belief in the Christian God,” *Oceania* 67 (4), June 1997.
62 J.W. McKay, “Indian Tribes, Correspondence 1881, Regarding Festivals, Traditions, etc,” in J.W. McKay Papers, British Columbia Provincial Archives, Add Mss 1917.
64 This person asked not to be identified with this particular comment.
66 Ibid., 78. A non-Native anthropologist who came to regard himself a genuine Indian storyteller recently altered a swoxwiyam and began publicly telling his new version of the story quickly found himself ostracised from a large portion of Stó:lō society and ultimately censured. His initial explanation, that he had “made a mistake,” and later assertions that he had altered the story to advance what he had independently determined to be “Stó:lō political objectives” or, as he ultimately claimed, that he “was exercising his academic freedom and poetic licence,” fell on unsympathetic Stó:lō ears. It was wrong to alter the story, and there could be no exceptions.
68 For an interesting discussion of the way Cree concepts of the spirit world and the relative importance of a monotheistic Creator vis-à-vis other spirit helpers and entities changed throughout the contact and colonial eras see, John Milloy, “‘Our Country’: The Significance of the Buffalo Resource for a Plains Cree Sense of Territory,” in Kerry Abel and Jean Friesen, eds., *Aboriginal Resource Use in Canada: Historical and Legal Aspect* (Winnipeg: University of Manitoba Press, 1991).
69 Crosby, *Among the An-ko-me-nuns*, 112.
70 In my most recent discussions with fluent Halq'eméylem speakers a third category of historical narrative called *xelth'it*, has been discussed, which is also translated as “true history.” The context in which this
expression is used suggests it is probably the word applied to a version of an historical narrative that has proven more true than another after a council of historical experts has assessed the merits of two competing historical discourses. Hill-Tout, in his work among the Kwantlen tribe near Ft. Langley identified two types of Sto:lo historical narratives, “stiyis—which his informants described as “stories they believed to be true, in contradistinction to the term soqwiam (swoxwiyam) which signifies a ‘fable or myth’.” See, Hill-Tout, “Mainland Halkomelem,” 416-441, which includes the linguistic analysis Hill-Tout conducted, but which was not incorporated Maud in The Mainland Halkomelem.


I first heard the expression “making the world right” used to describe the works of the transformers from Mrs. Matilda “Tilly” Guitierez in the summer of 1992. Since then I have heard many other Elders using the same phrase.


This synoptic description conveys the general belief of most Sto:lo people concerning the Transformers. It is interesting that many Elders knew continuing stories of Xexa:ls that occurred after their journeys had taken them beyond Coast Salish territory into British Columbia’s Interior Plateau. In these stories, the bear siblings are replaced by coyote, but clearly seem to be continuations of the bear Transformer stories. Sto:lo Elders, however, do not tell these stories themselves. Instead, they simply explain that Xexa:ls eventually “reached the sunset.” They explain that the Transformers’ activities beyond the Fraser Canyon “are not our stories.” This lends support to the thesis of this dissertation that collective identity is related to specific territories that are defined at least in part through reference to sacred stories.

A central objective of Hill-Tout’s writing and analysis was to identify evidence that could be used to demonstrate distinctions between Coast Salish tribes. Thus, for example, he spent a great deal of time speculating, from little evidence, about the possible greater antiquity of one tribes’ occupation of a region than another’s. Such uninformed theorizing, disregarded and discredited by most of his peers, appears to have been a contributing factor to Hill-Tout’s academic marginalization.

See Hill-Tout, *The Mainland Halkomelem*, 48, and footnote #9 on 53. See also, Jenness, *Faith of a Coast Salish Indian*, 39. Healers, of course, still train and inherit powers and special incantations. Old Pierre describes how this was true for his time as well, but he argues these people receive weaker powers due to the less rigorous training they undergo: “Today there are priests who know many old prayers, but they have little power because they did not undergo the long training and purification of their ancestors.” Wayne Suttles reminds us that the role of gossip within Coast Salish societies serves as a powerful check on claims to greatness. It was common for him, as it is for me today, to encounter people who claim that their power is stronger and more legitimate than another’s for a variety of reasons, whereas the belittled individual will privately say the same thing about the original person. Moreover, not all people who learned the esoteric knowledge of the spirit world and transformer narratives were training to be healers. One Sto:lo Elder living today from the community of Chawathil was taken as a pubescent girl by her Elders and instructed to sit in the spot where Xexa:ls sat when he battled an evil Indian doctor. She sat there all night and contemplated Xexa:ls’ history and the meaning of his transformations. Subsequently she was taught the many transformation stories and was given the responsibility to “keep these stories and pass them down.”

See Hill-Tout, *Mainland Halkomelem*, 69. While I am inclined to think that both the Katzie and Kwantlen are referring to the same myth age individual, it is possible that they are speaking about different entities and simply using the name Swaniset as a title. Evidence for this line of thought derives from the fact that the Kwantlen translated the word Swaniset differently than the Katzie. The Kwantlen translation is “to appear in a mysterious manner.”


Certain technical knowledge was also considered specific to certain groups of people. According to oral histories, when upriver Nooksack tribal territory was over-run and occupied by coastal people certain Nooksack community members were retained as slaves specifically to operate the great salmon weir. It was not that coastal people could not have figured out how to physically maintain and use a weir on their
own, but that that particular weir functioned in part due to special Nooksack spirit power. The coastal people did not even bother to try and operate the weir, knowing full well that it would only work for those who built it and those in whose territory it resided, for only they had the appropriate spirit helpers and associated knowledge from the spirit world.

82 In the published “Faith of a Coast Salish Indian,” Jenness lists only the Musqueam as having original rights to the sxwoywxwoy. In his unpublished manuscript and fieldnotes in the National Museum of Civilization in Ottawa, Jenness quotes Old Pierre as listing a second unnamed community farther up river. This was undoubtedly Ewawas near Hope, the people of whom claim that the mask reached Musqueam indirectly via marriage from them.

83 Jenness, “Faith of a Coast Salish Indian,” 71.

84 Ibid.

85 Hill-Tout, Mainland Halqemeylem, 150.

86 Ralph George and James Fraser, personal communications with Keith Thor Carlson (Summer 1994).

87 Periodically throughout the 1990s, and as recently as 1999 certain members of the Cheam Band asserted their community’s inherent right of her community to supra-tribal leadership—an assertion that is hotly contested by many other Stó:lo who consider the Cheam claim to be a fictitious manipulation of sacred knowledge associated with the swoxwiyam era. Likewise, people connected with the now abandoned settlement at Ewawis near Hope contest the Musqueam claim to the sxw:xxwey mask and regalia as a swoxwiyam era given right, arguing (as I mention in f.n. #48 above) that the mask and dance came to the Musqueam indirectly through marriage from their own community.

88 Jenness, Faith of a Coast Salish Indian, 71.

89 Old Pierre reported that “the prerogative [to wear the mask] was heritable through either the male or female line” (see Jenness, Faith of a Coast Salish Indian, 72). Wilson Duff’s informant Mrs. Robert Joe corroborated that “the right to use a sxwaixwai mask, costume and ritual was obtained from either parent and passed on to all children [exactly like the right to use a fishing-station]” (see Duff, The Upper Stalo, 78). Mrs. Joe also explained that initially, the masks were also worn by women; see, Duff, The Upper Stalo, 124. Today, among a certain family in the Chilliwack area the role of the special female sxwaixwai dancers is being revived. It is important to note that both the dance and the function they perform in the ceremony differ from those of male dancers.


91 For a slightly different description of spirit entities residing within humans see Duff, Upper Stalo, 116-117. Duff, however, acknowledges that some of the knowledge of the older pre-Christian system may have been forgotten by his informants. As is more likely, many of his informants did not know the full body of knowledge because they were not entitled to know it as per indigenous protocols. See also, Homer Garner Barnett, The Coast Salish of British Columbia (Eugene: University of Oregon, 1955), 211, 221. See also, Brent Galloway, A Grammar of Upriver Halkomelem (Berkley: University of California Press, 1993).

92 Jenness, Faith of a Coast Salish Indian, 27, 35.

93 See Suttles, “Spirit Dancing and the Persistence of Native Culture among the Coast Salish,” in Coast Salish Essays, 207-208. In 1960 Suttles observed that, “at present most songs are not associated with specific skills or professions still practiced. A great many dancers have, in fact, songs which once would have been associated with a professional warrior... [spirits which when expressed] today... can only mean ‘I am an Indian.’” My own contemporary field work and observations indicated that Suttles’ observations still generally hold. Many male dancers continue to acquire warrior spirit helpers, but healing helpers, or wood-working helpers are not uncommon, for example, and these expressions certainly do have modern professional application.

94 For a longer list of spirit helpers and their vocational expressions consult Jenness, Faith of a Coast Salish Indian, 48-64.


96 Most Coast Salish, Old Pierre asserted, did not know or understand the difference between travelling to seek spirit powers at physical distance and travelling to seek spiritual powers through the spiritual dimension of the xá:xá realm as this was part of the special esoteric knowledge of properly trained and initiated healers. People without hereditary access to this special knowledge who wanted spirit helpers simply went to remote physical locations to acquire their power, power which was fundamentally weaker than power acquired in the xá:xá realm, or so Old Pierre explained. See Jenness, “Faith of a Coast Salish
Indian," 90.
97 See Jenness, "Faith of a Coast Salish Indian," 37-38.
PART II
MOVEMENTS AND IDENTITIES ACROSS TIME AND SPACE
CHAPTER THREE

From The Great Flood To The Smallpox Epidemics

The Lord Above looked down and saw how they crowded upon the land, and one summer, after the Indians had dried their salmon, He sent the rain. It rained and rained without ceasing until the rivers overflowed their banks, the plains flooded and the people fled for shelter to the mountains, where they anchored their canoes to the summits with long ropes of twisted cedar-boughs. Still it rained until every mountain-top was covered except Mount Golden-Ears, on which the Indians of the lower Fraser had taken refuge, and even on this mountain many Indians drowned when their canoes crashed into one another and upset. Higher up the Fraser River, Mount Cheam also rose above the flood and sheltered many Indians on its summit, while on Vancouver Island Mount Tzuhalem, near Cowichan, floated upward on the rising waters.

The Lower Fraser Indians riding the flood on Mount Golden-Ears lived on their stores of dried salmon until the water subsided. Several canoes, however, broke away and were carried by the swiftly flowing current far to the southward. The Kwikwitlam Indians in Washington are descendants of the Coquitlam Indians who drifted away from Golden-Ears, the Nooksack are descendants of Squamish Indians, and the Cowlitz are some Cowichan natives who were swept away from Mount Cowichan....

Old Pierre, February, 1936

Narratives describing and discussing historical events, and in particular those events that precipitate human migrations, form an important component in both the ancient Stó:lō stories of how the world came to be the way it is, and of their more recent historical accounts of event-inspired movements within the past two centuries. Seldom, however, have such narratives been considered within the context of indigenous
historiography. Nor have they been scrutinised for the role they play in collective identity formation, and reformation. Today, the Stó:lō continue to use and interpret ancient migration narratives in ways that justify or explain certain circumstances. This is not to say that stories simply become metaphors for migration in remembered history; rather, that ancient stories of migrations inform the way that subsequent historical events are understood, and they shape the indigenous historiographical discourse within which a series of historical population movements are interpreted. In this way, the stories become accounts and explanations of collective identity formation.

The Stó:lō discuss certain historical events and happenings within the context of major upheavals—upheavals that cause genuine changes in the way people organize themselves and think about themselves vis-à-vis others and their resources and territories: Stories of the great flood, the work of the Transformers, the earliest smallpox epidemics, and the impacts of the fur trade all fit into this model. It is the medium—the narratives—as opposed to messages—the stories’ descriptive contents—that provide the historiographical context that Stó:lō people themselves have used to interpret and understand a never ending series of subsequent events. In this way the indigenous oral history becomes a sequence of organic living accounts not only of past happenings, but of emerging and evolving paradigms and world views. This is not to say that the contents of the narratives necessarily change or are malleable, especially the sxwówxwiýám describing the ancient past. Rather, subsequent interpretations of the world and people are shaped by the paradigms and world views imbedded in the narratives, and as such each successive narrative’s content is informed by those which have come before. The narratives are, in this sense, genuinely historiographical: they
build upon one another and are informed by one another. Thus, each set of historical narratives informs and shapes not only subsequent historical discourse, but the manner in which historical happenings are understood, interpreted and reacted to.

What follows is a series of discussions of pivotal historical watershed events, recorded in indigenous memory and shared across generations and cultures. The particular stories discuss the great flood and other similar devastating events up to and including the first smallpox epidemic of the 1782. These events were momentous enough to cause large-scale migrations and the reformations of collective identities. This chapter seeks to elucidate the role of intergenerational historical memories not only for Aboriginal history (what happened), but for Aboriginal historiography (how people have talked about and reinterpreted what happened), and place this within the context of shifting and emerging Stó:lō collective identities. To this end, I ask two questions: How have memories and knowledge of certain past events shaped people’s interpretation of and response to subsequent ones? And how, in turn, have an ever unfolding series of more contemporary events moulded people’s understanding of who they were and are? I attempt to date the various migrations and community reformations of the late 1700s and early 1800s while seeking to explain the role of event in migration and of migration in identity formation, all within the context of Aboriginal historiography.

Old Pierre’s 1936 description of the fate of Stó:lō people swept away from their Fraser River nested homelands by the great flood is not the only account of flood-induced relocation. Ethnographers working among the Stó:lō in the late nineteenth through the mid twentieth century collected several such accounts. In 1902, early local
ethnographer, Charles Hill-Tout, reported that one of his Kwantlen consultants had described a “great flood [that] overwhelmed the people and scattered the tribes. Then it was that the Nooksack tribe was parted from the Squamish, to whom they are regarded as belonging.” Hill-Tout learned that a branch of the Kwantlen became the northernmost Coast Salish speakers, the linguistically isolated Bella Coola. Bob Joe at Chilliwack described to the mid-century anthropologist Wilson Duff how “rafts holding people from Chehalis and Scowlitz on the Harrison River were tied to a peak on Sumas Mountain that broke off. The rafts floated southward, and the people became the Chehalis and Scowlitz tribes of Washington.” Yet another version provided by Cornelius Kelleher to folklorist Norman Lerman in 1950 describes how upper class members of the Chehalis tribe were able to return to their home after the flood, whereas those people on the other raft were swept away and “never heard of again.” Lerman also heard from Harry Uslick a more detailed version of the flood story that had been related through the generations from at least as far back as Harry Uslick’s great-great-great-grandfather. The story spoke of people being swept away and never heard from again while others found themselves stranded in different parts of the broader territory, struggling to return to their decimated homes after the waters receded. Uslick began:

Long ago... the people were nearly all drowned in a big, big water which flooded this country. It rained such a big rain that time. The people didn’t care at first because they had seen big rains before. But this time the rivers and creeks could not take it away, so the water rose up and up until it reached our houses. We took our dried salmon and berries and moved to the mountains, but the water kept following us. We climbed higher and higher up the mountain but still the water kept coming after us.

So the greatest leaders called a council of the warriors and doctors on the highest hill beyond our village. The council
could see that if the water kept coming as it had this hill
wouldn’t be dry [for] very long. Everything kept drifting
past, even the great cedar planks that we used to build the
walls of the smoke houses [longhouses]. The leaders
ordered the youngest man to swim out and gather all the
cedar planks so to make two rafts from the house boards
and piled all their provisions on it. Then they got on
themselves.

Uslick then described how the water continued to rise until it eventually engulfed
the local area. It was

over the top of the place where they were on the highest hill
behind the village. So we drifted around. Then a big wind
came up washing a lot of the provisions away. Now for
food we had to catch some of the animals that swam to the
raft, looking to be saved. The two rafts got separated then,
one of them drifted far until the leader saw a peak still out
of the water, and the wind blew the raft straight to that
peak....

The Uslick narrative goes on to describe how a traveler today passing through the
Fraser Canyon will notice a big mountain behind the town of Yale that looks like a
“pointing thumb.” It was on Pointing Thumb Mountain, Uslick explained, that the one
raft eventually landed. There, the survivors took up residence in a cave:

The people lived in a cave there and whenever they ate the
dried salmon they took the sticks out and laid them on the
side near the fire. Now, when you go to that place, you can
see those sticks but you can’t pick them up because they’ve
gone to dust.

Its been a long time, you see, since those people went up
there to live, to get away from.

Next, Uslick indicated the environmental devastation that occurred and the
suffering of the people when they returned:

They had a hard time getting down and nearly starved.
They ate the skins that they wore and what little fish they
could get in the small pools. When they got back, there
was nothing left of their homes. Even the house posts had
fallen down in the mud. There was no sign of life and the people on the other raft were never heard of again.

Everything had changed. Some of the creeks that had been there were no more, and there were new lakes and creeks in different places. The people were pretty weak before the salmon came again but that year there was lot of salmon and the people were saved.

Collectively, the Great Flood narratives complement the stories of the sky-born heroes like Swaniset and of the transformers Xexā:ls. They explain how certain clusters of affiliated people came to be where they are. Moreover, given the attributed social characteristics of the various tribal groups, and the strict inherited distinctions which are believed to divide the “worthless” class from the noble “worthy” class, people today still commonly use these stories to explain why certain clusters of people are the way they are. Perhaps most importantly of all, the narratives provide the basis for shared collective identities over vast geographical distances. The people who floated away from the mountains during the floods are not regarded as being lost and in need of repatriation. Rather, within the indigenous historiography they are recognized as distinct and separate people, but people with connections to the place where their ancestors lived prior to the flood.

It does not matter that the current descendants of people allegedly swept away by the rising waters might not recognize their alleged role in the flood story, or that they might have origin stories of their own locating them in their current homeland since the beginning of time. Nor does it matter that in the stories those who were washed away were usually less ‘worthy’ than those who managed to stay—for the purpose of relating a story to identify distant relations and open lines of communication, this aspect of the story is not publicly shared.
What matters is that the story exists, and if necessary it can be referred to by anyone seeking to open a line of communication or build a relationship with the other group. The Coast Salish acceptance of variation in different family-based versions of ancient stories easily allows a member from the supposed relocated community to hear a story describing their supposed movement without insult being taken. Instead, the Stó:lō take it as a compliment, a statement of shared ancestry and common interest, and recognize it as an invitation to build (or rebuild) stronger connections based on a common identity derived from history. That some versions of the flood story do not identify all the groups who were swept away or where they landed (such as the one Dan Milo shares and related above: “There’s three canoes went lost from there; that broked off and nobody knows where they went to”) holds open the door for acknowledging collective identity with practically any distant group with whom one has an interest.\footnote{Indeed, within the Halkomelem languages exists the term “siyá:ye” which is often translated simply as “friend or relative” but more accurately means “someone to whom I feel very close, and yet with whom I am unable to demonstrate any direct blood or marriage tie.”\footnote{It is someone outside the standard kin and affine system with whom one wishes to establish and cement a relationship. In the current politically charged climate of Native-newcomer relations, such words, coupled with vague versions of the flood story such as Milo’s, have been referred to by Stó:lō politicians while speaking to their colleagues on Vancouver Island or in Puget Sound to rationalize and validate the construction of modern political alliances. (See Figure 3.1)
The "great flood" inspired migrations constitute just one chapter in a long
history of population movements and collective identity reformations. The great flood
stories provide a context for explaining the earlier migrations associated with the
transformers, and through the process of reducing population generally. They also
create the context that facilitated post-flood movements. Charles Hill-Tout's turn-of-
the-twentieth-century Kwantlen consultants, August Sqqcten, Jason Allard and Mrs.
Elkins, explained that while the sky-born hero Swaniset was their tribe's first person,
they also recognized certain earth-born ancestors as other legitimate "first people." One
of these earthly men was called Skwelselem, and through him the Kwantlen traced their
hereditary line of leadership in the late nineteenth century.

Skwelselem the First lived during the time of the great transformations. With
him the Great First created all the tools and utensils required for living, and from him
Kwantlen people living in the early twentieth century traced an unbroken genealogy for
nine generations, bringing their history up to contemporary times. It was during the
lives of the earliest chiefs that, as Hill-Tout recorded, "certain important events"
occurred, events which have become metaphors for various purposes. During the time
of Skwelselem the Second a "mighty conflagration" (which Hill-Tout thought might
have referred to "some volcanic phenomenon") "spread over the whole earth"
devastating the land and killing many of its inhabitants. It was during the life of
Skwelselem the Third that the Great Flood occurred, causing segments of the Squamish
and other tribal communities to be separated from their Fraser River homeland and to
develop autonomously elsewhere. Similarly, while Skwelselem the Fourth was living a
"severe and prolonged famine, which lasted for many weeks, decimated the tribe." Hill-
Tout recorded similar genealogical traditions and associated accounts of great calamities among the Squamish and the other Coast Salish tribes with whom he worked.\textsuperscript{12}

Within Stó:lō historiography, accounts of such devastating and depopulating disasters as floods, fires and famine explain and account for population movements and changes in group identities. Wayne Suttles discusses how the phenomena of occasional food shortages played a central role in shaping classic Coast Salish culture. The failure of a salmon run, or even its tardy arrival in spring after winter stores of dried food had been exhausted, were serious matters. Storing food as a hedge against periodic shortages (which ranged from regular seasonal variation to devastating once-a-generation deprivations) may well have been the catalyst behind the classic quest for prestige that distinguished Northwest Coast potlatch society. And, as Suttles points out, surviving and thriving in the face of periodic shortages required (in addition to sophisticated harvesting technology, ritual knowledge, an elaborate potlatch system of redistribution, and a society built around the quest for prestige) a method of acquiring and storing food. Additionally, thriving through periods of shortage required the development of mechanisms for forging social relationships through economic trade and exchange. These intertwined social and economic systems were based largely on marital rights to hereditarily controlled and regulated resources located at some distance from a person’s winter settlement.\textsuperscript{13} Stories associated with famine, in addition to emphasizing the importance for each new generation of preparing for food shortages, serve to explain for Coast Salish people how certain tribal communities came into existence, and why those communities, while distinct, can only be understood in terms of inter-tribal relationships.
Mrs. Amy Cooper, a Stó:lō woman originally from Ohamil near Hope, married a Chilliwack man named William Commodore and later, after being widowed, married another Chilliwack man, Albert Cooper, who was a relative of her first husband. She lived most of her adult life on the Soowahlie reserve above Vedder Crossing. As a young woman in the early twentieth century she listened to her husbands’ tribal elders and half a century later shared those stories with local ethnographer, second generation pioneer resident, and friend, Oliver Wells. In 1962, she related to Wells a story of a great famine of Biblical proportions that simultaneously provides the context for, and accounts for, the subsequent development of the Soowahlie community:

There was a famine that everything there—well, I suppose like in India and other places there—that they couldn’t save anything. And they couldn’t dig anything to put away, like these wild potatoes and other things that they used to dig, roots and that. All that there was died off, and what didn’t die off the bugs got. They didn’t say it was grasshoppers. And they said the worms ate it; and all the berries there, they were all worm eaten. And the fish never came up. The creeks there was so dry there, that the fish never came up. And according to the Soowahlies, everyone died but a woman; and she saw them all just doubling over, she says, when they were getting too weak. There was nothing to eat; so she went and got cedar bark, and made herself a pair of corsets, like, and bound that up, and she was able to stand and breathe. And then she went down to a little creek down at South Sumas [Road]. Now I don’t know where that creek is; but I saw it once when we went out when I was a kid there to pick cranberries. I don’t know if it’s around Ling’s [Chilliwack’s old China Town] or someplace there. And she went there. And what did she get? Minnows! So the only thing she could do to catch them was to weave a little net and make a little scoop-net out of grass there. And she got minnows. And that’s how she lived. Then, when she got stronger, and the spring came and the roots came back and the other stuff there that they eat, you know, she went back home and gathered up all the bones, skin and bones, and cleaned out the big long-house that she lived in. She got that clean. But she didn’t have a
dog or she didn't have a man, woman or child to talk to. And she was all by herself till one day a man showed up. And he came from Lake Whatcom [via the Nooksack Tribe just south of the Canadian border]. He was the only one that survived over at Lake Whatcom. And they say that's where the Soowahlie people came from, from the man from Lake Whatcom and this woman from Soowahlie.\textsuperscript{14} (See Figure 3.2)

The contemporary Soowahlie community, therefore, was not a primordial creation made at the beginning of time, but rather an historical amalgam of two people originally from different places. The narrative, and by extension the resulting community described in the story, are legitimized by virtue of containing genesis-like features. As in the stories of the Transformers and Sky-born founders of other Coast Salish communities, the Soowahlie famine story explains an important historical event—the coming together of remnants of two older communities to create a new one—in terms that are similar to, and informed by, the historical precedent of the earlier creation stories.

In her continuing conversation with Wells, Mrs. Cooper explained that there was at that time, in the winter of 1962, a dispute among the Nooksack people as to who among their community should carry the Lake Whatcom man's name. Mrs. Cooper had no intention of directly involving herself in this dispute. However, she did demonstrate her conviction that the man's name belonged to the 'new' Soowahlie people as much as the 'old' Nooksack, and, implicitly, that the two communities were really one and the same. With the return of the man's name to Nooksack a vital part of Soowahlie history (and by extension, Chilliwack and Stó:lō history) was being removed and potentially lost: The man had "come to Soowahlie, and he died and he was buried in Soowahlie, and that's where the generation comes from."\textsuperscript{15}
As Mrs. Cooper's story illustrates, there is a long history of Stó:lō collective identities disappearing and then others being born or reborn in new form. Prior to the great famine a Soowahlie community already existed—or at least a settlement with people existed on that spot. The name Soowahlie translates as “melting away,” a direct reference to the famine itself and the fact that “the people here once died in great numbers.” What the original pre-famine community was, and its relationship to other settlements and clusters of people is, is now uncertain, but undoubtedly such history once existed. Indeed, it may still exist in Chilliwack oral histories that have not yet been revealed to outsiders. What was important to Mrs. Cooper’s generation, or at least for the elderly people from whom she learned the story, was that the new Soowahlie community was an amalgamation of an older resident stock and new blood from Nooksack. Some oral traditions explain that the Chilliwack tribe, of which Soowahlie is a part, were originally endogamous, preferring to marry within their own community. Within the indigenous historiography, therefore, the precipitating event of the famine explains and accounts for changes in social customs and practices, and perhaps more importantly, sets an historical precedent allowing subsequent generations to change and adapt to new circumstances. Massive death, survivor dispersal, and assistance received from a distant place together created a context for the formation of a new identity stemming from inter-community amalgamation. In this way, identity, history, and place are all linked and serve to continually inform one another.

Dan Milo, at the age of ninety-five in 1962, shared with Oliver Wells a story similar to the one related by Mrs. Cooper. Milo’s narrative describes not only an unidentified calamity that wiped out most of the Lower Fraser River’s Aboriginal
population, but movements and a series of community amalgamations and subsequent fractures that account for the existence of the linguistic unity among the Stó:lō people and by way of extension, all the factors of pan-tribal unity stemming from a common language:

Well, there was a boy from Kilgard. In them days they used to call that place Semá:th. That means ‘Sumas.’ Well, that one boy was left by himself. All his people died. So he went home. And the next morning he made up his mind to come over there and see who was living at Yarrow, where he saw that smoke coming out of a big house where there was a lot of Indians living. When he come there, he went right into the house there. There was just one girl that was left, after she had all the bodies put away. So that is the first time he ever saw this girl. So he got acquainted with her. So he got real acquainted, and they got married right there. So they stayed together. And that’s where the language that the Indians are using started from. They went over to Nicomen [Leq’á:mel], where there’s a lot of Indians there. That was the only people that used that language that the Indians are using now, today... They come home. They raised children, and that’s how the people began to speak that Halq’eméylem language. (See Figure 3.2)

Milo’s story refers to the indigenous etymological understanding of the word “Halq’eméylem,” which he and others have translated as the “language of Leq’á:mel.” Implicit in the story is the knowledge that it was not only the two Sumas settlements that experienced the sudden depopulation, but all Stó:lō communities along the lower Fraser river. Following the mysterious depopulating event people from the previously more distinct Stó:lō tribal groups, with their individual languages, came together at Leq’á:mel, in the geographic centre of Stó:lō territory. There, they amalgamated to become a single people speaking a single language. They subsequently re-fractured to re-establish
distinct tribal communities that remained linked in a manner previously impossible by virtue of a shared language and the common experience of surviving the depopulation.

The existence of flood stories, and narratives like Mrs. Cooper's famine chronicle and Dan Milo's account of the unidentified calamity that wiped out most of the region's population, have collectively created an historiographical context through which Stó:lô people have been prepared for similar experiences within their own lives. Events and the recorded responses of people to them provide successive generations of Stó:lô with a series of precedents/historical examples and human responses upon which they base their own behaviour. Perhaps this is what Marshall meant when he wrote "History is ordered by significance; peoples' response to and interpretation of events are governed by the logic of the structures they unwittingly reproduce; and in so doing, transform." Thus, the devastating smallpox epidemic of the late eighteenth century, arriving through Native trade networks at least a decade in advance of actual European visitors and therefore completely unprecedented in terms of its biological nature, was not incomprehensible in terms of its demographic effects, nor was the social response without indigenous precedent.

Most of the scholarly discussion concerning smallpox epidemics on the Northwest Coast has focussed on the question of time (When did the epidemics occur?) and demographic effect (What was the fatality rate?). Less attention has been directed toward assessing the cultural responses and social effects. Robert Boyd maintains that the first virgin-soil smallpox epidemic probably reached the Coast Salish in the late 1770s via either European ships visiting the west coast of Vancouver Island in the wake
of Juan Perez and James Cook's expeditions, or possibly (though less likely) through indigenous trade networks from Kamchatka and Alaska, where Russian fur traders had introduced the disease in 1769. Based largely on Duff's reading of Old Pierre's conversations with Jenness, Boyd maintains that a second smallpox epidemic probably struck the region around 1801 (a view that appears to have been accepted by Suttles).

Historical geographer Cole Harris's recent review of the extant European explorers' accounts and Coast Salish oral histories led him to conclude that the evidence better supports a single epidemic in 1782. Having reviewed the same literature and documents, I am inclined to agree with Harris, although I am willing to accept the possibility that a second, less virulent epidemic (likely variola minor or perhaps measles) may have followed in the wake of the 1782 epidemic with less devastating effects. For my purposes, however, the timing of the epidemic is less important than its impact on Aboriginal concepts of self as reflected in reshaped collective identities resulting from depopulation and the consolidation of what were previously more scattered settlements. Within Stó:lō historiography, the arrival of smallpox was an historic event with profound effects.

Significantly, it has been a common practice of many of those studying introduced disease and depopulation to interpret "mythic" accounts of devastating historical events (such as famine stories and accounts of supernatural monsters) as being indigenous accounts of what were most likely early epidemics. It is, of course, reasonable to expect people to interpret new things within existing paradigms; however, it is important to consider that within the indigenous Coast Salish historiography the ancient sxwōxwiyám, or mythic stories, are generally distinguished
from the historical accounts of the arrival of smallpox—even accounts that describe smallpox as arriving prior to the physical visitation of Europeans. This suggests that while the Aboriginal population initially interpreted the disease as something else (as either a disruption in the spirit world, or within the discourse of ancient myths), their subsequent experience with identifiable epidemics and the Europeans who carried the disease enabled them to reconsider and correct earlier interpretations within their own historical record. Alternatively, it is reasonable to think that by 1782 they would have acquired sufficient information about Europeans and their diseases through inter-tribal communication networks to allow them to have adequate knowledge to distinguish between smallpox and earlier “natural” calamities. Certainly this is what a close reading of the oral historiography reveals.

Old Pierre, Jenness’s consultant, and each of Hill-Tout’s consultants clearly distinguished the first smallpox epidemic from earlier disasters, providing historical narratives that unfolded within a strict chronology that, contrary to many popular beliefs about the non-linear nature of Aboriginal historical consciousness, was sequentially developed. Old Pierre related how human history was divided into a series of eras, each punctuated by significant historical happenings or events. In Pierre’s rendition of history, the Lord Above first created an imperfect, incomplete, world; then came the ages of the sky-born transformers, like Swaniset, followed by the second generation of transformers, like Xexá:ls, who “made the world right.” It was many generations later that the great flood occurred, and then, many generations after the flood, that “the Indians multiplied again,” becoming “too numerous in the land.” It was at this point, “during a certain year” that the snow began to fall so steadily that for three months
people were trapped in their longhouses, living exclusively on their dwindling stores of
dried food. When they were finally able to dig themselves free, they were forced to
scavenge dead birds and animals for sustenance while they awaited the return of the
eulachon to the river. All told, Old Pierre explained, it was “nine months before the
snow melted completely from the house tops,” during which time “half the Indians died
of starvation.” It was many generations after this great snow that “the people again
multiplied for a third time.” Then it was that the smallpox swept into their territory and
killed off the majority of the people:

News reached them from the east that a great sickness was travelling over the land, a sickness that no medicine could
cure, and no person escape. Terrified, they held council with one another and decided to send their wives, with half
the children, to their parents’ homes, so that every adult
might die in the place where he or she was raised. Then the
wind carried the smallpox sickness among them. Some
crawled away into the woods to die; many died in their
homes. Altogether about three-quarters of the Indians
perished....

If you dig to-day on the site of any of the old villages you
will uncover countless bones, the remains of the Indians
who perished during this epidemic of smallpox. Not many
years later Europeans appeared on the Fraser, and their
coming ushered in a new era.32

Unknown to Old Pierre, evidence of the precipitous event that ushered in the new
era was also observed and described by the officers and men on board HMS Discovery
and Chatham as they sailed through the Coast Salish waters of Puget Sound and the
Strait of Georgia in 1792 under the command of Capt. George Vancouver. The British
sailors described numerous abandoned Coast Salish settlements that were littered with
the bones of smallpox victims:
In all our excursions, particularly those in the neighbourhood of Port Discovery, the skulls, limbs, ribs, and backbones or some other vestige of the human body were found in many places promiscuously scattered about the beach, in great numbers. Similar relics were also frequently met with during our surveys with the boats. And I was informed by the officers that in their several perambulations, the like appearances had presented themselves so repeatedly, and in such abundance, as to produce an idea that the environs of Port Discovery were a general cemetery for the whole of the surrounding country.  

Vancouver described Coast Salish territory as “nearly destitute of inhabitants” though he astutely recognized that it had recently “been infinitely more populous.” Throughout Puget Sound and Georgia Strait he encountered numerous abandoned settlements, “Each of [which] …was nearly, if not quite, equal to contain all the scattered inhabitants we saw [in Puget Sound].” The cause of this massive depopulation (calculated to have swept through the region only a few years earlier) he judged to have been smallpox rather than warfare on account of so few men having battle scars, and so many people suffering the permanent disfigurement of the pox: “Several of their stoutest men having been observed perfectly naked, and contrary to what might have been expected of rude nations habituated to warfare, their skins were mostly unblemished by scars, excepting such as the small pox seemed to have occasioned; a disease which there is great reason to believe is very fatal amongst them.” Indeed, in a later journal entry he recorded that “This deplorable disease is not only very common, but it is greatly to be apprehended is very fatal amongst them, as its indelible marks were seen on many, and several had lost the sight of one eye, which was remarked to be generally the left, owing most likely to the virulent effects of this baneful disorder.”
Other accounts of the epidemic, remembered through oral traditions, are just as horrific. Charles Hill-Tout, interviewing an aged Squamish historian at the close of the nineteenth century, learned that many generations after the great flood, and the great winter, a new “dreadful misfortune befell” the Coast Salish people, ushering in a “time of sickness and distress:”

A dreadful skin disease, loathsome to look upon, broke out upon all alike. None were spared. Men, women and children sickened, took the disease and died in agony by the hundreds so that when the spring arrived and fresh food was procurable, there was scarcely a person left of all their numbers to get it. Camp after camp, village after village, was left desolate. The remains of which, said the old man, in answer to my queries on his head, are found today in the old camp sites or midden-heaps over which the forest has been growing for so many generations.  

Hill-Tout himself subsequently conducted the first methodical archaeological examinations of some of these forest-covered ancient burials.  

Along the same lines, Albert Louie, an Elder living in the central Fraser Valley in the 1960s, explained to Oliver Wells that when the first smallpox epidemic reached the Stó:lō “It killed, oh, half the Indians all around the Fraser River there.”  

Stó:lō Nation’s Cultural Advisor, Albert “Sonny” McHalsie, has often told me how he remembers his Elder, Evangeline Pete, explaining to him that when smallpox struck a community near Hope it killed at least twenty-five people each day; the bodies were placed inside pit houses and set on fire. From that time onward, McHalsie learned, the site was known as Sxwóxwiymelh, which translates as “a lot of people died at once.” In 1993 my good friend and teacher, Jimmie Charlie of Chehalis, then 91 years old, explained to me that a site near the junction of the Chehalis and Harrison River is known as Smimstiyezwála (“people container”) because it was there that people interred the bodies of relatives and
neighbours during the first smallpox epidemic. At the entrance to the Fraser canyon near the town of Yale are other sites where smallpox victims were buried in their pit houses. Similar stories exist throughout the broader region.

Critical outcomes of epidemic disease and depopulation were population migrations and the resulting social transformations. The image that emerges from the oral traditions and echoed in the early explorers’ accounts is one of massive depopulation, but also, in perhaps a more muted voice given the lack of attention it has received, one of survivor migrations. Indeed, as Old Pierre’s narrative demonstrates, shifts in population actually began immediately prior to the large-scale deaths when married women left their husbands’ settlements to return to the place of their birth to die. Jay Miller suggests that in the face of illness Coast Salish people sought the safety of their home communities and the associated spirit forces who resided there.

Western scholars have long been aware of the prominence of migration stories within Northwest Coast indigenous oral histories, but until recently little energy has been directed towards understanding their social and cultural import or their historical significance. Among the first to identify movement as an ethnographic/historical issue was geologist and early BC ethnographer, George Dawson. In 1885, upon visiting the Coast Salish’s northern neighbours, the Kwakwakawakw, he noted

When small-pox [sic] first ravaged the coast, after the coming of whites, the Indians were not only much reduced in numbers, but became scattered, and new combinations were probably formed subsequently; while tribes and portions of tribes, once forming distinct village communities, drew together for mutual protection, when their numbers became small.
Robert Boyd has recently documented the process of village abandonment and survivor consolidation following early contact era epidemics among the Haida on the Queen Charlotte Islands, the Dakelhne-Nukalk of the mid-British Columbian coast, and the Chinook along the lower Columbia River. What remains unexplored are the implications of such migrations for changes in indigenous social structures and the formation or reformation of collective identities, as well as the role such movements play in Aboriginal understandings of their own history. Moreover, Boyd’s analysis of settlement abandonment never included the Coast Salish.

Among the Stó:lō, ancient historical narratives describing sudden depopulation followed by migration provided people living in the late eighteenth century with an epistemological frame of reference to understand subsequent depopulating events, such as smallpox epidemics. The ancient narratives shaped the way smallpox was reacted to, for while the disease was new, depopulating events were not. Smallpox, and the social response of migration and community reformation, were accounted for in Stó:lō historical memory. History prepared people for the event, and it provided them with a precedent for an appropriate response.

Stó:lō oral history is rife with accounts of smallpox-induced population movements similar to those mentioned over a century ago by Dawson for the Kwakwakawakw. Old Pierre relates how his great-grandfather happened to be roaming in the mountains when the epidemic broke out,

for his wife had recently given birth to twins, and, according to custom, both parents and children had to remain in isolation for several months. The children were just beginning to walk when he returned to his village at the entrance to Pitt Lake, knowing nothing of the calamity that had overtaken its inhabitants. All his kinsmen and relatives
lay dead inside their homes; only in one house did there
survive a baby boy, who was vainly sucking at its dead
mother's breast. They rescued the child, burned all the
houses, together with the corpses that lay inside them, and
built a new home for themselves several miles away.\footnote{59}

Old Pierre's son Simon, working with the anthropologist Wayne Suttles in 1952,
explained that several settlements and at least two complete tribal groups had been
"wiped out, or nearly so, by smallpox before Fort Langley was founded [in 1827]."\footnote{50}
These included the settlements of "snakwaya at Derby... Skweelic on Bedford Channel
north of the mouth of the Salmon River, [which were the main settlements of the
Snokomish tribe] the Q'ó:leq' [Whonnock tribe] at the mouth of the Whonnock River,
the sxa'yeqs [tribe] at Ruskin at the mouth of the Stave River, and the Xat'seq [tribe] at
Hatzic."\footnote{51} From a Semiahmoo consultant at Lummi, Suttles also learned that a tribe
called Snokomish who occupied Mud Bay, and the Nicomekl-Salmon river portage
system leading to the village of Snakwaya on the Fraser River at Derby Reach had also
been "wiped out by smallpox."\footnote{52} Old Pierre listed for Jenness an additional place, called
"Hazelberries" in English, just north of Townsend Station near the mouth of the Fraser
River, as still another settlement "whose inhabitants perished in the great smallpox
epidemic.\footnote{53} The disappearance of people from these and other sites, either through mass
death or resulting from women and half their children fleeing to the settlement of the
mother's birth, created urban vacuums within the Stó:lô universe.

Initially, it appears, survivors gathered primarily at what had previously been the
most densely populated settlement sites at or near the junctions of the Fraser River and its
tribal tributaries. Smaller outlying villages and camps or hamlets located up the tributary
watersheds were largely abandoned. The Stó:lô world thus changed from one in which
each tribe was characterized by a fairly populous central town surrounded by a series of smaller affiliated outlying villages and hamlets, to one where most of the smaller settlements were abandoned and survivors clustered in what had been the tribal core settlements. Smaller tribes, unable to sustain themselves, often disappeared altogether with whatever survivors might remain seeking refuge with relatives in neighbouring centres. Later, as the demographics stabilized, and possibly even began to temporarily rebound, people took advantage of the opportunities the depopulation presented to migrate and establish themselves in places formerly occupied by others.

The consolidation of survivors happened first. While detailed information is not available for all regions of Stó:lō territory, the evidence that does exist for certain areas paints a vivid picture of settlement and collective identity reformulation. For example, as Old Pierre explained, “several small settlements at the mouth of the Fraser River merged with the Musqueam, but in earlier times they were quite separate.”54 Previously, these separate communities may have been considered distinct tribes, for each had received a special and distinct ritual from the Great First.55 On the Alouette River the survivors of another community under the hereditary leadership of Cilecten were so reduced in numbers that both they and their funerary ritual “merged with the Katzie.”56 What had been southern Snokomish territory around Boundary Bay was, according Suttles’ Lummi consultant, subsequently occupied by the Semiahmoo “who had intermarried with them.”57 Northern Snokomish lands at Derby Reach on the Fraser River eventually fell under the influence of the Kwantlen, and ultimately became the site where the Hudson’s Bay Company established the first Fort Langley in 1827.58
Farther upriver Charles Hill-Tout recorded from his Lilloet consultant that the headwaters of Harrison Lake and the lower reaches of the Lilloet River were formerly occupied by Halq'éméylem speakers. The Lilloet who occupied the area after the mid-nineteenth century had moved into the region to take advantage of opportunities presented by the 1858 gold rush and the establishment of a European transportation centre at Port Douglas. Corroborating this interpretation of migratory history are the Halq'éméylem place names Hill-Tout recorded for the region. Living Stó:lō, such as Matilda Guiterrez, who was trained as a young girl to become a historian and who is one of less than a dozen remaining fluent Halq'éméylem speakers, remembers being told that the region was formerly occupied by the St'qwó:mpth people ("those who speak our language") but that they were all killed by the smallpox. Incursions by Lilloet people into what had formerly been held by the Halq'éméylem speakers affected settlement patterns and precipitated population migrations many kilometres south of the area that was eventually consolidated as Lilloet territory in the 1860s. During the previous generation (circa 1820 to 1845) the Lilloet embarked on a series of violent raids down Harrison Lake against the inhabitants of a settlement on the north end of Seabird Island known as Sq'ewqeyl. To protect themselves the Sq'ewqeyl residents moved across and slightly down the Fraser River to Skw'átets, a site safe from northern raiders who would have had to leave their canoes on the other side of the Hick's Lake portage on Harrison Lake.

Farther upriver still, the region between what is now Agassiz and Hope appears to have followed the same pattern of depopulation and emigration. In addition to Sḵwóxwiymelh ("a lot of people died at once") other settlements, such as the one now
referred to as Ruby Creek, were likewise abandoned by whatever survivors lived through the horror of the smallpox epidemic. Wilson Duff interpreted this particular stretch of the river as having been "characterized by an internal fluidity of population... in pre-white times," and while I agree this was generally true during the early nineteenth century, I think the recorded mobility of residents had much less to do with a natural state of affairs, as Duff implies, than with adjustments being worked out in the wake of smallpox-induced depopulation. Indeed, his consultants Edmund Lorenzetto and August Jim both claimed that the sites of Ohamil and Skw'átets were vacant prior to the early-to-mid-nineteenth century when the emigrants from Alámex and Sq'ewqéyl occupied them.

In a similar vein, Wilson Duff learned from a Musqueam consultant that the original inhabitants of Indian Arm Inlet (at the head of Burrard Inlet immediately north of the Fraser River near present day Vancouver) had been Halkomelem speakers known by the name Tamtami'uxwtan. These people, distinct from the contemporary Squamish occupants of the central and lower reaches of Burrard Inlet, were "closely allied with the Musqueam," but, like so many of the small tribal communities along the lower Fraser River, appear to have been wiped out by the earliest smallpox epidemic. What was formerly Tamtami'uxwtan territory appears to have become the homeland of the Tseil-Waututh tribe, who maintain a historical narrative of their contemporary community being an amalgamation of an original remnant population (possibly the Tamtami'uxwtan) supplemented by new blood from afar. In a history of tribal origins provided by Tseil-Waututh Chief Dan George we learn that great misfortune befell the original community resulting in the Chief's son, Wautsauk, being orphaned and raised by a
female wolf. Ultimately, as a young man Wautsauk wanted to find a “mate of his own kind.” To accomplish this he made an arduous journey to a distant land: “Travelling up the Indian River, over the mountains to the canyon of the Fraser River, he found a bride among the people there. They came back to the Inlet and started to build our tribe.” In this way, the Tseil-Waututh, like so many other Salish communities, trace their origins to the coming together of what had been two distinct communities following a crisis. In this case, the communities appear to have been a remnant resident Halkomelem group and Interior Salish Lilloet people from the middle Fraser River region.

According to traditions, Wautsauk was still Chief of his community when Captain Vancouver sailed into Indian Arm a decade after the first smallpox epidemic. At that time, according to Dan George, the main Tseil-Waututh settlement was near the present site of Belcarra and smaller camps were situated near the mouths of streams draining into Indian Arm. After Wautsauk’s death in the “late 1700’s,” his son inherited his name, becoming Wautauk the Second. This second-generation Tseil-Waututh leader is supposed to have died about 1840, which would date his life to the second decade of HBC fur trade operations.

The snippets of oral histories recorded by westerners in the twentieth century provide only aspects of the total picture of post-smallpox era resettlement. As a result, many of the early migrations have been misunderstood and wrongly or excessively attributed to the economic incentives associated with the establishment of Fort Langley. This is not to deny that Fort Langley acted as a magnet and drew certain Stó:lo settlements more closely into its economic orbit (the Kwantlen in particular), but it is
important to realize that the migrations previously attributed to the establishment of the fort were in fact well underway before the Hudson’s Bay Company’s arrival, and largely the result of earlier disease-induced depopulation.

The Kwantlen, one of the most prominent Stó:lō tribes discussed in the records of early European fur traders, have a history replete with relocation and movement, as well as tribal fracture and absorption, making their collective history among the most interesting and better documented. As mentioned, Hill-Tout’s consultants explained that the original Kwantlen person was the sky-born hero Swaniset, who as Old Pierre explained to Jenness, originally dropped from the sky at Sheridan Hill near the east shore of Pitt Lake. According to Old Pierre, Swaniset (the “Supernatural Benefactor”) was the greatest of the Lower Fraser River’s First People, for he “accomplished even greater miracles than the other leaders of his generation” including the Katzie people proper’s own first ancestor, Thelhatsstan. In the earliest histories, as related by Old Pierre, Swaniset played the predominant role not only in facilitating physical and metaphysical transformations, but also in providing the region’s populace and the other tribal leaders with supra-tribal leadership. As Jenness learned, among other great feats, Swaniset created the network of sloughs connecting the Fraser Delta’s various waterways. The last (and therefore the most important) slough Swaniset created stretched from the Alouette River southward, terminating at a point about 300 yards north of the Fraser River.

Although the village at the end of the slough was named “Katzie” (a geographical reference to the fact that a spongy moss, called Katzie [Q’eytsi’i] in Halq’eméylem, grew in abundance there), the slough itself was known as the “River of the Kwantlen People”, for it was at Katzie that the Kwantlen people lived. The Kwantlen, however, were not to
remain the sole occupants of what was then a seasonally flooded settlement site, or even its most permanent residents, for as Old Pierre explained, Swaniset subsequently "ordered" the rest of "his people to accompany him to Katzie on the Fraser River, and to make homes for themselves at that place." The modern Katzie tribe, as Jenness learned, was therefore "an amalgamation of at least two, and perhaps several, communities that claim separate eponyms. Only one community inhabited the vicinity in early times, and its village was not at Katzie itself, but at Port Hammond, a mile away. The other community occupied the district around Pitt Lake, 10 miles to the north, and did not move permanently to Port Hammond until the latter half of the nineteenth century." Thus, according to the indigenous history, the people ultimately and officially identified by fur traders and later government officials as "the Katzie" appear to have been the formerly more distinct community from the settlement on Pitt Lake.

Once the Katzie and Kwantlen winter homes were unified at Katzie, Swaniset set about making the site an important seasonal gathering place for other more distant people. Shortly after the amalgamation Swaniset's wife shared the contents of a special box with the people gathered at Katzie, thus introducing eulachon to the Fraser River system. Swaniset then "traveled around the country inviting the more distant people to come and share their good fortune." Those who accepted the invitation came to benefit from their relationship with the growing and wealthy community at Katzie, while those who refused to make the journey and partake of the eulachon gift were chastised as "senseless."

So powerful and influential was Swaniset, and so intent his desire to create supra-tribal social and economic relationships, that he even ventured with canoes of dried
eulachon to distant salt water settlements in Puget Sound where he engaged in trade and
gambling games. After visiting various human communities he eventually traveled so far
to the south that he reached the homes of the various salmon species. Within Stó:lō
history, great things are usually only achieved after heroes complete arduous journeys to
distant places, and so it was with Swaniset who, upon visiting the southern settlements of
the various species of salmon people, ultimately reached the home settlement of the great
sockeye salmon people. It was among the sockeye that Swaniset announced his intention
to marry the leader’s daughter. Sometime after the marriage union was achieved,
Swaniset declared his desire to bring his new sockeye wife back to the Fraser River with
him, thus establishing the precedent of patrilocal marriages among the upper class and
instituting the practice of regular visits of affines to their in-laws’ residences, as
demonstrated by the regular return of the sockeye woman’s family to her new home on
the Fraser.78 The amalgamated Kwantlen and Katzie settlement at Katzie, however, had
now become too crowded, and so, following Swaniset’s lead, many of the people
dispersed to other locations. Swaniset himself “moved his home a mile farther up the
river.” Later, at an unspecified time, Swaniset’s Kwantlen people (who continued to
recognize Swaniset as their first leader, but henceforth appear to have traced their
leadership through another “first man” named Skwelselem who was not sky-born but a
“descendant of the earth”) “moved away from Katzie and occupied the site now covered
by the Penitentiary at New Westminster.”79 These New Westminster Kwantlen
settlements were called Qiqa:yt and Skaiametl.80 It was after this migration that Xexá:ls
the transformers arrived to finish the work of Swaniset. As such, the indigenous
historical discourse records that it was prior to the arrival of the great Transformers, and
hence before the commencement of the stable human era, that Swaniset had used a
variety of social networks to establish himself as regional supra-tribal leader.

How long the Kwantlen people lived at New Westminster is uncertain. What is
remembered is that the eventful arrival of Xexá:ls set in motion a series of new
transformations which led to subsequent movements. At New Westminster Xexá:ls
encountered a man who always wandered through the woods. This apparently prevented
him from being a good father and husband, and so as punishment he and his family were
changed to wolves who continued their wandering ways. Henceforth, the wolf people
made available to other Kwantlen special spirit power to assist young men in hunting and
women in mat-making and weaving woolen garments. According to oral traditions
collected by Wilson Duff, Charles Hill-Tout and amateur historian B.A. McKelvie, when
the Hudson’s Bay Company arrived in the Fraser River and established Fort Langley in
1827 the Kwantlen and certain other lower Stó:lō communities moved upriver to be near
the fort. Old Pierre explained that the New Westminster Kwantlen ultimately made
their home on the north side of the Fraser River across from the fort. Today, the branch
of Kwantlen living on that site is known as the Thomas family. When I interviewed
Robert Thomas Sr. in 1992 he explained that his son Robert Jr. carried the name of the
hereditary Kwantlen earth-born leader Tsi-ta-sil-ten (or as Hill-Tout recorded the name Sqtcten). Robert Jr. had been given the name by his grandfather Francis Thomas when
just a boy. By the mid-twentieth century the Kwantlen as a whole were commonly and
legally referred to as the “Langley Indians,” though in 1994, under the leadership of
Chief Marilyn Gabriel, the community officially changed their name back to Kwantlen.
Significantly, Gabriel had inherited her “Indian name” and position from her father Joe
Gabriel and through him from his father Alfred Gabriel, who in turn received it from the prominent turn of the century leader, Chief Casimir (aka Strkakel).  

If the Kwantlen migration to Fort Langley was primarily motivated by a desire to seek new opportunities (the Fort’s journal clearly shows that the Kwantlen attempted to regulate trade between the HBC and other Stó:lō while simultaneously seeking military protection from the Kwakwakawakw raiders), the move was nonetheless an aspect or extension of an earlier process of migration triggered by smallpox’s eradication or weakening of the region’s other occupants. Its expression is therefore more complicated than the early-to-mid-twentieth century’s ethnographers’ renditions and interpretations of the oral traditions would lead one to believe—not surprising given the early salvage ethnographers’ tendency to regard pre-contact Aboriginal society in ahistorical terms; that is as a static rather than a dynamic entity. The fact that the early ethnographic literature omits references to the pre-HBC migration is also a factor of the advances that have been made in dating the earliest smallpox epidemics to the pre-fur trade era; it had earlier been assumed that smallpox accompanied or followed the traders into Coast Salish territory, rather than preceding them. It is also a reflection of the propensity of western observers to impose overly rigid structure onto the indigenous mechanisms and expressions of tribal cohesion and identity. For among the Kwantlen people created under the leadership of Swaniset there existed a number of distinct collective social groupings, each of which was under the hereditary leadership of various lesser earth-born heroic ancestors.

The early historical documentation of Stó:lō migration and identity is, unfortunately, rather sketchy. The European explorers and fur traders, while keen
observers and experienced students of Aboriginal culture, were motivated to record
different information than a contemporary audience might ask for. During his brief
sojourn in Stó:lō territory in 1808, Simon Fraser recorded little that assists in locating or
identifying Aboriginal communities. He refers to all the lower Fraser Aboriginal people
collectively by the name “Sachinco,” which is the Nlakapamuk name for Stó:lō used by
Fraser’s upriver interpreter/guide. It is still widely in use by Nlakapamuk people today.
Indeed, the only Halkomelem-speaking tribe identified by name in Fraser’s journal is
Musqueam, located at the Fraser’s mouth. In December of 1824, however, clerks
working under James McMillan, who had been sent north from Fort George on the
Columbia River to scout for a site for the future Fort Langley, recorded information
indicating that the Kwantlen had already firmly established themselves in a series of
winter villages stretching over 30 kilometres up-river from New Westminster. Upon
entering the Fraser via the Nicomekl-Salmon river portage route from Boundary Bay,
McMillan’s party encountered a people who identified themselves as members of what
clerk John Work recorded as the “Cahoutetts Nation.” Later, when they had ascended the
Fraser as far as Hatzic Slough, McMillan met people living in a winter settlement that he
considered to be of the same tribe and which he identified as “Cahantitt.” Upon their
descent the HBC party encountered more members of the “Cahotitt” tribe near present
day New Westminster. Suttles has interpreted these names as variations of the term
Kwantlen, which would mean that the Kwantlen had already established themselves as
far as Hill-Tout’s Kwantlen consultants of nearly a century later identified as the
uppermost extent of their post-migration territory.
Significantly, in the fort's early years, its journal writers frequently mention at least two major Kwantlen settlements with separate leaders who appear to have been brothers: the first, located on what the traders referred to as "the Quoitle [Kwantlen] River," and which today is better known as Pitt River, "where the chief of the Quoitlans, Whittlekanim, has his residence;" and the second under a leader called Nicamous at a site an unspecified distance upriver from the fort. The name of this second Kwantlen leader (variously rendered by the journals' three authors as Nicamuns, Nicamous, Nicameus, Nicamoos, Nic,ca,ueus, Ni,ca.meous, Ni,ca.mous, etc) is suggestive, as it is most likely a down-river Halkomelem dialect speaker's attempt to render the upriver dialect name Leq'á:mel. Leq'á:mel as discussed earlier, is the name of the place where the survivors gathered in Dan Milo's story of the mysterious depopulating event, and the birthplace of the Stó:lō Halkomelem language. The most obvious distinction between upriver and downriver Halkomelem is the substitution of "n" for "l." Leq'á:mel in the downriver dialect, therefore, becomes Neq'á:men, or expressed in common English, Nicomen. Thus, while the exact location of Nicamous' settlement is never specified, it would appear that the second most prominent Kwantlen leader of the early nineteenth century may have been residing at, and bearing the name of, a site known among Stó:lō people as the birthplace of the modern Stó:lō people. By 1839, following Whittlekanim's death, Nicamous became the entire Kwantlen tribe's most prominent leader. By this time he had also taken up permanent residence on McMillan Island, adjacent to Fort Langley where, through his sister, daughters (and nieces?) who had married employees of the fort, he strove to regulate trade and (much to the chagrin of the HBC) extract payment as a middleman from those of other tribes without marriage ties to the post's resources.
early as June 1829 many of the Kwantlen had taken up residence directly outside the Fort’s palisade, and by this time references to the Pitt River Kwantlen settlement disappear from the journal, although the Kwantlen settlement “a few miles higher up” the Fraser continued to be mentioned. Likewise, the Musqueam, whose tribal core was on the north arm of the Fraser near the river’s mouth, are reported to have had a fairly permanent settlement across the river from the fort’s first site at the mouth of Kanaka Creek.

Repeated early references to the main Kwantlen settlement being on the Pitt River and to the Katzie as “a weak tribe [further] up Pitt’s River” suggest that when the fort was established Old Pierre’s Katzie ancestors had not yet made the move to the Fraser proper—the site where they would ultimately have their major settlement site secured as a reserve by the Royal Engineers in 1861.

For all its strengths as an ethnographic document, the *Fort Langley Journal* presents certain challenges in terms of its usefulness in plotting early nineteenth-century settlement locations, and for assessing the historical expressions of collective identities. This stems largely from the fact that, as the post’s second chief trader (and the journal’s third author) Archibald McDonald acknowledged, both the interconnections and the distinctiveness of the various Stó:lō groups were difficult for outsiders to comprehend: “When we say the Quaitlines [Kwantlens] we very often mean anyone of the distant Tribes called among themselves—Quaitlains, Musquams [Musqueams], Kitchis [Katzie], and at a distance even the whole collectivity are better known by the appellation of the Cawaitchens [Cowichans] as that Tribe is the leading nation in this quarter.” By “the whole collectivity” MacDonald likely was referring to all of the Coast Salish people
living within the region serviced by Fort Langley. This reference, however, calls into question what otherwise appear to be the identities of distinct tribes, and likely reflects the reality of competing collective identities traced through male bloodlines (tribal), and those created through marriage and the relocation of women to their husbands’ homes which cut across tribal lines (affinal in the first generation but necessarily also consanguinial in the second).

Wilson Duff took the Journal’s ambiguity about tribal nomenclature as an indication that the Kwantlen had somehow amalgamated with what were formerly more distinct tribal entities around them: “an aggregation that probably included the Kwantlen, Whonnock, Sxayuks, Matsqui, Hatzic, Nicomen, Qeqayt, and Coquitlam.” While this is one possible interpretation, the evidence better accommodates a hypothesis of Kwantlen occupation of territory left vacant by others, an assumption of another’s land and resources without an accompanying loss of Kwantlen identity. The absence of the above-mentioned seven other tribal names within both the 1830 and the 1839 HBC censuses indicates that the territory was assumed by the Kwantlen, not that the Kwantlen moved in and began sharing the lands of existing tribes. As quoted previously, George Gibbs documented more than a century ago that it was a tradition among Coast Salish people that a tribe’s title continued only until such time as the tribe became extinct. Among the Salish, as elsewhere in human history and geography, *natura abhorret a vacuo*. Coupled with Gibb’s interpretation is Suttles’ observation that Coast Salish tribal territory is better conceived not as an area confined by specific borders, but as an ever decreasing interest in lands as one moves farther from the core of tribal lands. This might best be conceived as a series of diminishing rings emanating from a cluster of
tribally affiliated settlements. (See Figure 3.3) What emerges, then, is a picture of Kwantlen people simply asserting ownership rights over land and resources that had previously been considered by them as peripheral sites where they had formerly held only access privileges forged through marriage alliances. The fact that what had once been the distinguishing tribal names of these other sites were never forgotten by subsequent Stó:lō people, and in fact were retained as simple geographical place names by the occupying Kwantlen, suggests that the Kwantlen never intended to erase the history and identity of their previous occupants. It also indicates the power of settlement names as cross-tribal unifying forces, and suggests an historical expression of a group identity that was broader than the tribal unit. Be that as it may, whatever questions may have originally existed among the various Stó:lō communities over the legitimacy of the primacy of Kwantlen claims to these territories seem to have disappeared by the colonial era when the colonial government set the settlement sites aside as reserves for the Kwantlen people.

The picture that emerges from the oral traditions is, therefore, one of a Stó:lō society that has been repeatedly reshaped or recreated by cataclysmic events: the great flood, devastating famines, depopulating epidemics, the establishment of European trading posts. Each of these events was understood within the context of the even earlier events of the age of the Transformers and Sky-born founders of tribal communities. Historical, and therefore changing, collective identity is the product of people’s accommodation of unpredictable and upsetting change through a variety of social networks and historiographical narratives. Stó:lō society was not completely taken off guard by the horrible smallpox epidemic of the late eighteenth century, nor was it
confounded by the arrival of European fur traders. While the cause of smallpox, for example, was unknown, the scope of its destruction was not unprecedented. People knew of earlier depopulating tragedies and had the comfort of the historical precedent of their ancestors' responses to guide them. Likewise, the change in economic patterns precipitated by the emergence of a lower Fraser Valley European-based trade centre to rival the Fraser Canyon fishery was disruptive, but not devastating in any fundamental way. The generally accepted view of a relatively static society that underwent profound change as a result of contact is, therefore, misleading. The Stó:lo and their Coast Salish neighbours were indeed impacted by smallpox and the fur trade, but it was an impact that could be understood in terms of previous experiences. The response of a large number of survivors, in the first case, and of the eager Native traders who sought to turn Fort Langley to their personal advantage, in the second, was not without precedent—migration. What is more, as the next chapter demonstrates, these smallpox and economic induced migrations were not only not the first in Stó:lo history, they were also not the last. Much of the nineteenth century was also characterized by a series of identity shaping migrations that, through the power of place and the problem of time, did as much to undermine certain tribal-based affiliations as they did in other instances to enhance tribal cohesiveness while simultaneously promoting competing notions of supra-tribal identity.

1 Salmon can only be effectively wind dried in July, although the use of smudges can extend the season through September. River and lake levels peak in late June following the spring melt in the inland Rocky Mountains. Beginning in July water levels begin to quickly recede. Rivers and lakes within Stó:lo territory are generally at their lowest through the fall and winter. As such, the flood Old Pierre is referring to was not simply a summer freshet, but something truly exceptional.

2 Chaos and discord result in tragedy; a common theme in Stó:lo oral traditions.

3 Jenness, *Faith of a Coast Salish Indian*, 33.
Charles Hill-Tout, "Ethnological Studies of the Mainland Halkomelem, A Division of the Salish of British Columbia" in *The Salish People*, 70.


Often Stó:lo people telling stories of the ancient era will speak in the present tense and use the third person personal pronoun "we." This may be indicative of spiritual link between people of different generations. Further research is required to determine if this is the case.


The flood story shared by Dan Milo does not specify exactly where people went to, but clearly emphasizes that groups of people did go somewhere. Milo is quoted verbatim in Wells, *The Chilliwacks and Their Neighbours*, Ralph Maud and Brent Galloway, eds. (Vancouver, BC: Talonbooks, 1987), 88. He shared the same story with CBC radio personality Imbert Orchard a few years later. See Imbert Orchard, interview, cassette tape recording and typed transcript, cassette 96-SR11, SNA.


Hill-Tout, "Mainland Halkomelem," 70.

Suttles, "Coping with Abundance: Subsistence on the Northwest Coast," in *Coast Salish Essays*, 45-63.

Mrs. Amy Cooper, interview by Oliver Wells, 8 February 1962. See Wells, *The Chilliwacks and Their Neighbours*, 50.


Bob Joe asserted that this was previously the Chilliwack custom (see Bob Joe, interview Oliver Wells, 16 January 1964, Tape recording, SNA). Charles Hill-Tout collected the same information over half a century earlier from his Chilliwack consultants. See, Hill-Tout, *Mainland Halkomelem*, 46.

*Kw'ekw'e:i:qw*, a Sumas settlement just west of Sumas Lake.

By which Milo means, "has been translated by Europeans as."

Yarrow is the modern European name for a town built on the former site of Sali:ts, a Sumas settlement on the south east side of Sumas lake.

On Nicomen Island in the Fraser River immediately north of Sumas.

Dan Milo, interview by Oliver Wells, 8 January 1962. See Wells, *The Chilliwacks and Their Neighbours*, 40.

Robert Joe provided Duff with the same translation. See, Wilon Duff, Fieldnotes, Book 3, 1950, SNA, 41. Interestingly, linguist Brent Galloway believes the word Leq'a:mel translates as "level place" or "meeting place." Often folk etymologies emphasize the significance of a name, that is, its historical meaning or significance, over what linguists feel is the genuine etymological root of the word. In this case, however, Galloway's second translation "meeting place" would fit with the story of the locale becoming the place where survivors gathered after the mysterious depopulating event. Galloway records the word for "visiting one another" as la:leq'el, which appears to be derived from the same proto-Salish root.

Sahlins, "The Return of the Event, Again."

The leading figures in this debate have been Robert Boyd and Cole Harris. However, among others, significant contributions have been made by Robert Galois and Gibson.

See, George M. Guilmet, et al, "The Legacy of Introduced Disease," 1-32. However, as Boyd points out in *The Coming of the Spirit of Pestilence*, what we know about the effect of introduced disease and population decline on Northwest Coast cultural systems remains largely speculative. See Boyd, *Spirit of Pestilence*, 276-278.

Sahlins, *The Coming of the Event, Again.*

The leading figures in this debate have been Robert Boyd and Cole Harris. However, among others, significant contributions have been made by Robert Galois and Gibson.

See, George M. Guilmet, et al, "The Legacy of Introduced Disease," 1-32. However, as Boyd points out in *The Coming of the Spirit of Pestilence*, what we know about the effect of introduced disease and population decline on Northwest Coast cultural systems remains largely speculative. See Boyd, *Spirit of Pestilence*, 276-278.


Much of the most interesting analysis in this regard has focused on Aboriginal interpretations of Europeans at first contact. Marshall Sahlins, for example, argues the Hawaiian people originally
interpreted the British explorer Captain James Cook as the god Lono; see Marshall Sahlins, *How ‘Natives’ Think: About Captain Cook for Example* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1995). Wendy Wickwire has advanced essentially the same interpretation for the Nlakapamux in their initial interpretation of the Northwest Company explorer Simon Fraser as the returning Transformer; see Wendy Wickwire, “To See Ourselves as the Other’s Other: Nlakapamux Contact Narratives,” in *Canadian Historical Review*, LXXV, No. 1, (March 1994): 1-20. I have personally encountered a number of Sto:lo oral histories which suggest that their ancestors initially also interpreted Fraser as the returning transformer Xa:ls.

31 Most of the early Coast Salish genealogies collected by anthropologists record only eight or nine generations reaching back from the present to the beginning of time. This caused Sally Snyder to speculate that the Coast Salish regarded history as cyclical; that each seven or eight generations history began over again with the first generation (Snyder, “Skagit Society and Its Existential Basis,” 29). Hill-Tout considered the nine generation genealogies as evidence that the Coast Salish were relatively recent immigrants to the region; that the spectacular stories of the actions of the “first people” were really glorified accounts of the actions of the first generation of Coast Salish conquerors who wrested the territory from its earlier inhabitants. Hill-Tout’s thesis has been largely discounted by subsequent anthropologists who argue for a great antiquity in Coast Salish occupation of the region, whereas Snyder’s remains largely unexplored. While her thesis is possible, the fact remains that neither her Aboriginal consultants, nor anyone else’s have ever interpreted their history as cyclical, that is, they never discussed or described it as being a repetitive narrative that began anew each eight or nine generations. Rather, they presented it as a linear narrative with a fixed beginning and a fixed end. However, the fact that Halq’emeyem kin terms extend through time for a maximum of seven generations in either direction from the person using them, coupled with the fact that names and aspects of identity are regarded as hereditary, may be suggestive of a repetitive view of history.

32 Jenness, “Faith of a Coast Salish Indian,” 34.
34 Ibid., 517.
35 That the disease had decimated the population only a few years before Vancouver’s arrival is evident from his observation that “the habitations had now fallen into decay; their inside, as well as a small surrounding space that appeared to have been formerly occupied, were over-run with weeds; amongst which were found several human skulls, and other bones, promiscuously scattered about.” (Vancouver, *Voyage of Discovery*, 516-517). On other occasions he described the extent of the vegetation that had encroached on the former living spaces in terms which perhaps better indicate that several years had passed since the depopulating event: “nothing but the smaller shrubs and plants has yet been able to rear their heads.” (Ibid., 538).
36 Ibid., 540.
37 Ibid., 528. A few days later, while traveling northward along the east coast of Puget Sound Vancouver recorded that among the people he encountered “most had lost their right eye, and were much pitted with small pox.” (Ibid., 559).
40 Albert Louie, interview by Oliver Wells, 28 July 1965, see tape copy on file at SNA.
43 Jimmie Peters, interview by Gordon Mohs and Sonny McHalsie, 29 September 1986, Tape recording, SNA.
44 Cole Harris documents the evidence of early disease extensively. See R. Cole Harris, *The Resettlement of British Columbia* (Vancouver: UBC Press, 1997), 3-30. See also, Boyd’s *Spirit of Pestilence*, 38-58. In addition, Sto:lo Elders Elizabeth Herrling and Rosaleen George, dedicated participants in the Halq’emeyem language revival program, regularly insist that almost every village has a story of depopulation resulting from smallpox, but that only a few resulted in the name of a place being changed to reflect that history.
Early explorers and fur traders' ship's logs suggest that the Kwakwakawakw escaped the first smallpox epidemic. Their experience with the disease was therefore within the period when they would have had no doubt that the Europeans were the source of their disaster.


Boyd, Spirit of Pestilence, Chapters 8 and 9.

Jenness, Faith of a Coast Salish Indian, 34. Emphasis added.

Suttles, “Katzie Ethnographic Notes,” 12.

Ibid.

Ibid.

Jenness, Faith of a Coast Salish Indian, 57.

Ibid., 72.

Ibid., 71.

Ibid.

Suttles, “Katzie Ethnographic Notes,” 12. Also related in more detail by Boyd, who quotes Suttles' field notes verbatim, in Spirit of Pestilence, 43.

Maclachlan, Fort Langley Journals, 28.


Mrs. Matilda “Tilly” Guiterrez as a young girl achieving her first menses, was taken by her Elders and instructed to spend an entire night alone sitting on a site known as Th’exelis (“gritting his teeth”) located at the edge of the Fraser River near Yale. It was a site where the transformer Xa:ls had himself once sat while engaged in a spiritual confrontation with a shaman on the other side of the river. Mrs. Guiterrez was instructed to contemplate the stories of the beginning of time, and thereafter received ongoing training in how to relate the various narratives of Stó:lō history. To this day, she is sought after by Stó:lō and non-Natives alike as an expert on both the content and meaning of numerous ancient historical narratives. I consider myself privileged to have become a friend of both her and her husband Alan. Mrs. Guiterrez first related to me the story of her training in the summer of 1992.

In 1993 the Stó:lō Tribal Council conducted a study which found only eight people could fluently speak the Upriver Halkomelem dialect. Even these fluent people humbly acknowledged that their command of the language was only a fraction of what the fluent speakers of the previous generation had been.

Mrs. Guiterrez has told this story to the author on numerous occasions.

This migration is discussed in Duff, Upper Stalo, 40. See also, Skw’atets Indians, Chilliwack, to H. Graham, 6 December 1918, National Archives of Canada, RG 10, reel C-12144, Vol. 7859, file 30165-5(1).

Duff, Upper Stalo, 41.

Ibid., 40.

Ibid.


Chief Dan George is possibly best known among the non-Native population as Dustin Hofman’s Indian “grandfather” in the movie Little Big Man, and as Clint Eastwood’s companion and comic foil in The Outlaw Jose Wales.


Ibid., 6.

Ibid.


Jenness, “Faith of a Coast Salish Indian,” 12.

Ibid., 16.

Ibid., 6.

Ibid., 10, 12-13.

Ibid., 17.

Ibid., 17-20.


Duff, Upper Stalo, 23.
Jenness, “Faith of a Coast Salish Indian,” 22.

Ibid., 48.

Hill-Tout, Mainland Halkomelem, 68. Also, Duff, Upper Stalo, 23.

Jenness, “Faith of a Coast Salish Indian,” 48, footnote three.

Yet another group of New Westminster people Xeqal:s recognized as lazy, for they never worked for their livelihood, preferring to beg from the other people. Xeqal:s transformed these people into Ravens. See Jenness, “Faith of a Coast Salish Indian,” 23. From what I have learned from one of the few remaining fluent Halq'emeylem speakers, the close relatives of those Kwantlen people transformed into ravens migrated upriver to occupy the territory anchored around Stave Lake and left vacant by the Skayuk who were decimated by the first smallpox epidemic. Rosaleen George, personal communication with Keith Thor Carlson (Summer 2000).

Robert Thomas Sr., personal communication with Keith Thor Carlson (July 1993).

I was in attendance at the naming ceremony on the Langley Indian reserve on McMillan Island where Chief Marilyn Gabriel officially reassumed the Kwantlen name for her community.

Maclachlan, Fort Langley Journals, 107. See especially entry for 7 April 1829.

Using much the same evidence and methods Wayne Suttles has likewise recently expressed the opinion that the Kwantlen migration was already underway prior to the establishment of Fort Langley. See Suttles, Fort Langley Journals, 170.


Suttles, Fort Langley Journals, 170.

Hill-Tout, Mainland Halkomelem, 68, 69.

The Quaitlain Chief Nicamuns and his brother [Whaitlakainum] came in with 20 skins, small and large which they traded for blankets - these being the principal Indians of the neighbourhood, and who at all exert themselves to collect beaver, we thought it good policy in Mr. Yale to form a Connection with that family – and accordingly he has now the Chief’s daughter as after making them all liberal presents.” See, Maclachlan, Fort Langley Journals, (13 November 1828, and 25 November 1828), 85 and 86. Later, it turns out that Whatlikainum’s daughter was already married to a Skagit man, a fact resulting in a great deal of tensions and confusion among the St6:lo and the HBC. In Halq’eméylem, siblings and cousins up to the fourth degree are called by the same kin term “Qelo.qtel,” meaning that while Nicamous and Whatlikainum chose to emphasize the closeness of their relationship for social and political reasons, they may have actually been rather distant blood relatives. See Carlson, Atlas, 27.

Maclachlan, Fort Langley Journals, 35.

See especially, Maclachlan, Fort Langley Journals (8 January 1829, 7 April 1827, 19 May 1827, 31 July 1829, and 5 May 1830), 92, 107, 113, 122, 147.

Ibid., 116, 133.

Ibid., 136-137.

Ibid., 67.

By “made the move” I perhaps should say “made the return move” for it is unclear whether Swaniset’s call for the Katzie to relocate from Pitt Lake to the settlement near the Fraser occurred: a) once, at the beginning of time; b) is thought of as occurring at the beginning of time but actually occurred during the early fur trade era, or c) whether after Swaniset’s amalgamation of people the Katzie eventually returned to Pitt Lake whence they ultimately made a second return journey to the Fraser in the mid-nineteenth century. While the timing of these movements is of interest to historians, the more important thing for the St6:lo is the fact that the movements occurred, not when they occurred.


MacLaughlan, Fort Langley Journals (26 February 1829), 99.

Duff, Upper Stalo, 24.

Archibald McDonald, [Census] Report to Governor and Council, (25 February 1830), HBCA D.1/123:66d-72. Also, James Murray Yale, “Census of Indian Population [From Fort Langley] and
Crossing Over to Vancouver's Island and Coasting at About Latitude 50° From There Returning Southward Along the Mainland and Up the Fraser's River to Simpson Falls," (1839), HBCA B.223/2/1:30-53.


105 Nature abhors a vacuum.
CHAPTER FOUR

Displacement, Dispute Resolution, Status, And Colonial Manipulation

Stories of population movements and large-scale migrations feature prominently in many eras of Stó:lō history and historical understanding. As discussed in the previous chapter, numerous community origin stories are associated with cataclysmic events such as the great flood, devastating famines, unidentified calamities (like the story of the origin of the Halq'emeylem language), and contact-era smallpox depopulation. Other narratives, however, tend to place greater emphasis on the different social processes which moulded certain tribal communities into their currently recognizable forms, or, as the case may be, literally caused certain other tribal communities to cease to exist. Although related within the context of event-inspired migration, these stories are as much about social dynamics as physical movement. They describe the relationship between social and physical displacement or relocation, and the association between collective identity and such matters as Native efforts at dispute resolution, internal conflicts over status, and external colonial manipulation. These indigenous processes functioned throughout the contact era and later served as precedents for colonial era identity re formations.

Stories describing the origins of the modern Chilliwack and Chehalis tribes are particularly indicative of the social dynamics phenomenon. The accounts of these communities’ arduous migrations from mountainous uplands to the valley lowlands, and their establishment as genuine Fraser River orientated collectives, illustrate the power of earlier stories as precedent-setting guides. Likewise, they demonstrate the many
complicated social mechanisms people employed to facilitate the new residents’ integration into existing social and physical geographies.

In a similar manner, the stories describing the subsequent abandonment of settlements at Alaméx and analogous tribal clusters along the Fraser River, and the subsequent geographical readjustments to new tribally-defined spaces, are indicative of the complex nature of identity politics in the early post-smallpox era. They document the process through which the participants in these migrations struggled to reconcile the tensions that emerged between the pull of their older identities nested in their former homelands, and the need to establish and legitimise their claims to the land and resources of their new territories.

The process of readjustment was not swift, however. As recently as the late nineteenth century Stó:lō people seeking to maximize the benefits of a new colonial economy reconstituted their tribal affiliations following a series of migrations designed to allow canyon people to access valley farms lands. The oral history describing the emergence of the rather loosely defined and somewhat enigmatic Teit or “upriver” tribe is particularly useful in demonstrating the extent to which external colonial initiatives assumed a life of their own within Aboriginal society, and how the Aboriginal responses were not necessarily what the colonial architects desired or anticipated. Moreover, the Teit tribe represented the first modern expression of a supra-tribal political identity of a sort that helps explain the forces behind contemporary Stó:lō Nation identity.

Not all of the movements and collective identity reformations occurred within a tribal system, however. Stories of class mobility and the establishment of independent, though stigmatized, tribal communities out of people who were formerly of the lower
and slave classes constitute an important chapter in the history of Coast Salish identity development. Following the first smallpox epidemic the established elite experienced difficulty regulating the behaviour, as well as the identities, of their former subordinates. Narratives illustrate that long-standing class tensions within Coast Salish society became more pronounced. These same ancient stories provided Stó:lō people of all classes with precedents to follow as they adjusted to the changes. In many instances slaves and serfs alike took advantage of the pockets of unoccupied space left between newly reconfigured tribal cores to forge increasingly autonomous identities of their own. And yet the stigma of lower class ancestry continues to plague the modern day descendants of these people. An appreciation of the forces that allowed these networks to become operationalized as formal geographical tribal units is essential for understanding the subsequent tensions that appeared between indigenous collectives and colonial institutions in subsequent generations.

Robert “Bob” Joe is widely regarded as the foremost mid-twentieth-century Stó:lō tribal historian. In terms of historical depth and volume, his knowledge was equal to Old Pierre’s. His various recorded accounts of the Chilliwack origin story, in particular, stand apart from those shared by other Elders of his generation in terms of their comprehensiveness and detail and for the sheer extent of the coverage of them. Fortunately, Joe was interviewed a number of times over a more than twenty-year period and so multiple accounts of his narrative are available for review. He cooperated first with the anthropologist Marian Smith in the mid-1940s, and then folklorist Norman Lerman and anthropologist Wilson Duff in 1950. During the 1960s he was repeatedly
tape recorded by his friend and local ethnographer Oliver Wells. As well, he shared his
traditional knowledge with a host of university graduate students, most notably linguist
Jimmy Gene Harris, and a number of radio and print journalists. Regardless of what
topic his interviewers wanted to discuss, Bob Joe always ensured that they heard the
story of the migration of the Chilliwack people from the upper regions of Chilliwack
Lake to the Fraser Valley.

Through the story of the development of modern Chilliwack tribal identity, Joe
provided the details of Stó:lō social-political structures and functions. Moreover, as
with so many other stories of Stó:lō collective identity, this one, too, involves a
migration facilitated by epic events (in this case a landslide on the upper reaches of the
Chilliwack River) and, implicitly, a coinciding smallpox epidemic along the river’s
lower courses. Following these events, the narrative documents the reluctant merging of
two distinct tribal communities and the emergence of the Chilliwack collective as an
accepted member of the Fraser River-orientated community of Stó:lō tribes.

Probably because they have never been prominent features in any of the
publications resulting from his interviews, published accounts of Bob Joe’s Chilliwack
migration story are somewhat jumbled and confused, a fact more attributable to his
interviewers’ lack of familiarity with the local landscape and their own divergent
research interests than to inconsistencies in Joe’s narrative. Wilson Duff, for example,
in *Upper Stalo*, erroneously assigns the location of the landslide that precipitated the
Chilliwack’s migration to a settlement site referred to as X̱éy̓cles, roughly three-
quarters of a kilometre upstream from Vedder Crossing. Duff’s own field notes, by way
of contrast, clearly record the location as “Below Centre Creek” which is thirty-eight
kilometres farther upriver, a site in keeping with the facts as presented in other recordings of Joe’s narrative,\(^3\) and with Albert Louie’s corroborating assertion that Xéyles translates as “side” and not “slide.”\(^4\)

As Bob Joe explains, the Chilliwack people formerly lived in a series of settlements along the upper reaches of the Chilliwack River and at Chilliwack Lake. The tribe was led by four brothers, the most prominent and influential being Wileliq, whose ancient origins, as Dan Milo related, involved the transformation of a black bear with a white spot on its chest.\(^5\) The Chilliwack settlements were not equal. Wileliq and his influential brothers originally conducted and co-ordinated the tribe’s political and social activities from their “main headquarters,” the tribal hub or town of Sxóčhaqel on the north shore of Chilliwack Lake near the river’s mouth. The word Chilliwack (“Ts’elxweyéqw”) literally translates as “head,” meaning either the headwaters of a river, or the head of a person or group of people.\(^6\) One day a young hunter was traversing the series of trails that ran along the ridges of the region’s mountains and noticed a crack in the rocks. When he returned to the site sometime later the crack had grown larger. Fearing that there was “going to be great trouble, or disaster,” he warned the people living in the settlement below the fissure that they were in imminent danger of being crushed by a landslide.\(^7\) However, instead of thanking the hunter, the people “started razzing and laughing at him, saying ‘where did you ever hear of a mountain cracking in two?’”\(^8\) The next morning, people living in the neighbouring settlements heard a “rumble.” Joe continues: “When daylight came, the families that were warned were no more. They were all buried under half of the mountain-slide.”\(^9\)
While Joe's narratives do not detail the social and emotional reaction of the remaining Chilliwack people to the tragedy of the slide, it is clear that the avalanche became the pivotal event in their modern collective history. For with the slide, Joe asserts, "the main history starts." Wileliq and his brothers began moving the Chilliwack tribe "farther down" the river, embarking on a process of migration and ultimately the displacement and slow integration with a number of neighbouring groups (See Figure 4.1). In addition to burying the village near Centre Creek, the landslide also likely blocked the river's main channels, severing the migration route of salmon trying to reach their spawning grounds near the tribal headquarters a few kilometres upriver on the shores of Chilliwack Lake. Without salmon, and suffering the grief associated with the loss of their kinsmen and the spiritual dangers inherent in living near the site of such massive human tragedy, the Chilliwack could do little else but begin the process of relocation.

After the slide, Wileliq and his brothers moved the tribal "headquarters" twenty-four kilometres downstream from Chilliwack Lake to Iy'othel, a settlement straddling both sides of the Chilliwack River. Over time, as the population grew, Iy'othel became crowded and so the headquarters was again shifted approximately twelve kilometres farther downstream to the open prairie at Xéyles, located about one kilometre upstream of Vedder Crossing. Each time the headquarters moved, the satellite villages followed. By the time Wileliq established himself at Xéyles, other Chilliwack were living in the adjacent settlements around Soowahlie. Not too long after their arrival at Xéyles the brothers decided to move the headquarters again, this time a mere couple of hundred metres farther downstream to Tháthem:als. Joe points to the significance of the move:
"At Tháthem:als was born a man who was to become a great leader of the Chilliwacks and to bear the name Wileliq—the fifth man to bear that name since time began."

The fifth Wileliq was destined to become a notable leader because of his noble bloodline and the remarkable circumstances associated with his birth: Wileliq was a twin, and what is more, his twin sister was not born until he was a month old. Moreover, Wileliq V’s birth occurred at the climax of the era of Chilliwack migration, and he was accordingly regarded as special by virtue of his being a product of his antecedents’ excursion to a distant location. Thus, it is not surprising that under the leadership of Wileliq V the Chilliwack consolidated their position as a community no longer orientated to the mountainous upper reaches of the Chilliwack River and adjacent Nooksack and Skagit watersheds to the south and east, but to the mighty Fraser River itself. Indeed, until their appearance on the Fraser floodplain the Chilliwack did not speak Halkomelem, but a dialect of the Nooksack language called “Kluh Ch ihl ihl ehm.”

The arrival of the Chilliwack was a disconcerting development for those already living at or near the junction of the Chilliwack and Fraser Rivers. Oral narratives collected in the mid-twentieth century record that prior to the Chilliwack people’s downriver migration, the territory drained by the streams flowing into and out of the body of water now known by the Chinook jargon name of Cultus Lake was occupied by the now “forgotten tribe” of Swí:lhcha people. Like their upstream Chilliwack neighbours, the Swí:lhcha people spoke a dialect of the Nooksack language, reflecting that their social orientation was primarily southward through the network of trails connecting Cultus Lake to the upper reaches of the north fork of the Nooksack River,
and not through what was then the boggy marshland leading from Vedder Crossing to the Fraser River. These are likely the people who occupied Soowahlie during the great famine Amy Cooper discussed (see chapter three), only in John Wallace's 1967 account, the Śwí:lhcha were wiped out by smallpox. According to Wallace and others, the settlements at the south end of Cultus Lake and on the flat near Xéyles were completely depopulated by the virus, and the few survivors consolidated themselves in a village at the mouth of Sweltzer ( Śwí:lhcha) Creek.¹⁴

The establishment of the Chilliwack in Śwí:lhcha territory did not result in the immediate merging of the remnant population with the new. In 1858, one of the earliest Europeans to visit the area, Lieutenant Charles Wilson of the British Boundary Commission, described the Śwí:lhcha as still a separate community.¹⁵ A century later, Mrs. Cooper remembered that during her childhood in the early twentieth century, though by then united on the single government reserve called Soowahlie, the remnants of the Śwí:lhcha population remained strictly separate from the Chilliwack:

Those people never associated with the Soowahlie [Chilliwack]. They were Śwí:lhcha. They were a separate people. There was a line there that they couldn’t cross; and these people never talked to them... Not unless they had to. And you couldn’t go and hunt on their side, and they couldn’t hunt on your side.... They kept to themselves and there’s very few of them left that belonged there.... See the Band of Soowahlie [Chilliwack people] is different from the Śwí:lhcha. They were different people all together.¹⁶

So entrenched was the feeling of distinctiveness between the two groups occupying the single reserve, and so bitter the animosity, that as recently as the 1920s the descendants of the original Śwí:lhcha and Chilliwack communities refused to collect their drinking water from the same spring, the Śwí:lhcha of west Soowahlie preferring to
walk a considerable distance and take their water from an inferior location rather than drink from the main Soowahlie source with the Chilliwack people. Socializing was so forbidden that if younger people engaged in it they ran the risk of physical violence from the other side.\textsuperscript{17}

While relations between the Chilliwack and the displaced Swí:lhčha took a long time to reconcile, those between the Chilliwack and the various Fraser River Stó:lō tribes proper, though initially often violent, were quicker to be rationalised. Albert Louie, an old man in the 1960s, recalled learning that the Chilliwack advance to the Fraser River was not entirely peaceful. Oral histories document how as they edged ever nearer the Fraser the Chilliwack warriors engaged in a series of largely successful conflicts with the Stó:lō Pilalt tribe over territory and resources considered of central significance to that group.\textsuperscript{18} The \textit{Fort Langley Journal} corroborates that at least during the late 1820s violent clashes more frequently occurred between the Chilliwack and the older Fraser River resident communities than between the established Stó:lō themselves.\textsuperscript{19} This suggests that by that date the Chilliwack presence on the Fraser was not yet fully solidified or accepted by neighbouring communities. Indeed, Chilliwack visitors to Fort Langley made known to the HBC traders that their homeland was in the upper reaches of a "river that comes in from Mt. Baker," that is, the upper Chilliwack River, and an exploration team from Fort Langley that ascended the lower ten miles of the Chilliwack River in the winter of 1828 mentioned seeing cached canoes, but no people or settlements.\textsuperscript{20}

Violence, of course, was not the only tool available to the Chilliwack. Wileliq V in particular was especially adept at consolidating both his own personal position and
that of his tribe among the Fraser River communities. One of the continuing
characteristics of Coast Salish society is that particular circumstances are not always
regulated by fixed rules. Put another way, in a society where authority was not backed
by a permanent professional military or judiciary, cultural options existed, enabling
leaders to choose from among a series of potentially applicable rules and thus behave in
different legitimate ways. The point was not to pick the correct rule as opposed to an
incorrect rule, but rather to be able to demonstrate to people and convince them that the
rule you chose to follow and apply was the best and most appropriate for the given
circumstance.

Wileliq V chose as one means of gaining acceptance of his leadership and his
community’s place on the Fraser floodplain the forging of marriage alliances with some
of the more prominent established Stó:lō families. On one occasion an important Katzie
family invited Wileliq V and his brothers to a young girl’s puberty ceremony. During
the celebration, the Katzie hosts, impressed with Wileliq, suggested that he “should
take” the girl as a wife. Wileliq already had a wife and child waiting for him back at
Vedder Crossing, probably a Swí:lhcha woman, but polygamy was common at the time
and so he accepted the offer. What is perhaps more significant is that Wileliq chose to
remain at Katzie with his new in-laws until his new wife had a child, a little girl. By
living in his newest in-laws’ home, Wileliq publicly demonstrated the paramount
importance of his Katzie connections, and although he ultimately lost his first wife and
child, who grew tired of waiting for him and moved to the Swí:lhcha settlement at
Cultus Lake, his new alliance resulted in his assumption of the ownership of certain
resource sites within his second wife’s family’s territory. Wileliq V is undoubtedly
one of the “two men from other tribes” Suttles learned of who “had married Katzie women” and come to be the recognized owners (sxwsiyá:m) of valuable sites and “their neighbouring streams, berry bogs, etc.”

With his regional status much enhanced Wileliq V eventually returned to Tháthem:als, where he gathered his people and again moved the headquarters of the Chilliwack tribe, this time a few hundred metres downriver to a small flat immediately upstream from Vedder Crossing. At this site he began construction of a remarkable longhouse that was to secure for him immediate recognition and lasting fame. The edifice he built was unique in that it had an inverted gabled roof. Perhaps the best way to visualize the structure is to imagine two classic Coast Salish shed roofed longhouses butted up back-to-back against each other. The building and the settlement where it stood came to be known as Qoqolaxel or “Watery Eaves,” for running down the centre of the inverted gable was a giant hollowed-log ridge-pole designed to catch rain water. Through an ingenious system of gates and levers the log could be manipulated during ceremonial occasions, causing hundreds of litres of stored water to burst through an ornately carved opening at the back of the building.

This tremendous structure, which according to Bob Joe required a pole over ten fathoms long—roughly 20 metres—to lift the roof planks to allow smoke to escape, became a focal point for central Fraser valley ceremonial life. As a reflection of Wileliq’s growing stature, the building was constructed through the co-operation and assistance of prominent families from the neighbouring tribes of Katzie, Kwantlen, Whonnock, Sumas, Matsqui, Leq’á:mel, Pilalt, Chehalis, and Scowlitz. The
participation of such a broad spectrum of the region’s elite undoubtedly sent a clear message that the Chilliwack tribe was an accepted presence in the area.

At some point, Bob Joe explained, not too long before the construction of Qoqolaxel, the Chilliwack River changed its course. Instead of running west after passing through Vedder Crossing and flowing into Sumas Lake it swung east and then north, running along the base of the mountain and then out to the Fraser. Branches of this river slowly emerged to the west, and, as a result, the marshy land between Vedder Crossing and the Fraser rapidly became dryer and suitable for year long habitation.

Onto this land Wileliq V, as an old man, moved the majority of the Chilliwack people to a settlement called Sxwó:y̓xwela, and there he constructed a second, less ornate house, with fewer carvings on the interior house posts. After Wileliq’s death his relatives established further settlements at Yeqwyeqwioose, Sq’ewqeyl, Athelets, and a few other downriver sites.25

Wileliq V chose to pass the name and all its invested prestige and power to his grandson26 (who came to be known in English as Jack Wealick), though he was only a boy of ten to fifteen years at the time.27 Jack’s uncle Siemches, who as an adult also acquired the name Tixwelatsa, actually exercised leadership until his nephew came of age and had demonstrated his worth and ability.28 Wileliq V gave Siemches “$20.00, the acceptance of which was [a] sign he’d accept responsibility of leadership.” The agreement also included acceptance that the line of leadership would remain with the Wileliq boy’s descendants.29 Upon Jack’s death at age seventy in 1900 the Wileliq name appears to have been transferred to his grandson George Wealick, who died at age sixty-
In the 1970s the Wileliq name was transferred to Ken Malloway (born 1953).

This genealogical evidence, coupled with a reference by Bob Joe in which he stated that he knew an old woman who died about 1925 who told him that she remembered seeing the “Watery Eaves” building still standing when she was a girl, suggests that Wileliq V built the inverted gabled home about 1800. This date is consistent with a Chilliwack migration associated with the smallpox epidemic of 1784. That the HBC expedition of 1828 makes no reference to the structure can be explained if the traders turned back at the rapids approximately three-quarters of a kilometre downriver from the settlement of the inverted gabled home. Corroboration of a circa 1800 date is also provided in the oral history passed to Bob Joe by his Elders, who explained to him that Tixwelatsa was the acting Chief at the time the first Europeans arrived in Stó:lō territory. The date Tixwelatsa assumed this role is relatively easy to calculate given that Jack Wealick was a young teenager at the time. A cemetery marker recording that Jack died in 1900 at age seventy makes clear that Tixwelatsa took over the leadership of the Chilliwack tribe in the 1820s, just as the HBC was establishing Fort Langley.

Significantly, none of the narratives about the Chilliwack migration makes reference to sudden depopulation other than that associated with the Centre Creek landslide. Possibly, aspects of the story have been neglected, or perhaps the avalanche is meant as a metaphor for smallpox. If, however, the oral tradition is accepted at face value, then with the exception of the Chilliwack settlement crushed by falling rocks, the majority of that tribe escaped the demographic disaster that so affected their neighbours.
Given the relative isolation of Chiliwack Lake *vis a vis* other known habitation sites, and the memories emphasizing the tribe’s social insularity (both Hill-Tout and Duff recorded that the Chilhiwack were supposed to have been endogamous prior to the migration to Vedder Crossing), it is not difficult to conceive of the Chihhiwack escaping the first epidemic. The seasonal timing of the smallpox’s arrival would have increased or diminished the opportunities of its spread to more isolated neighbouring communities, since at certain times of the year Coast Salish people spend less time traveling and visiting neighbouring relatives and friends. The Chilhiwack’s numerical superiority, and the fact that they would not have been suffering from the same psychological stress as survivors throughout the rest of the Lower Fraser River watershed undoubtedly facilitated their migration and territorial expansion.

Bob Joe reports that during the time of Wileliq VI and VII (c. 1830s and 1840s) the Chilhiwack tribe “split up,” that is, certain families moved to different camps and came to be associated with particular settlements along the lower Chilhiwack and Luckakuk Creek, where the two waterways run through the Fraser Valley floodplain. According to Joe, this diffusion did not happen all at once; the “scattering had been slow; took years.” Meanwhile, under the leadership of Wileliq VI, the tribal headquarters moved a short distance downstream to Yeqwyeqwioose.

Perhaps most importantly, in terms of its significance for collective identity, it was during Wileliq VI’s leadership that “the [tribal] boundary lines were set,” distinguishing Chilhiwack territory from the lands and resources of their Pilalt, Scowlitz, Leq’á:mel and Sumas neighbours. As Bob Joe explained, “Before that, lines [which had previously been] only back in mountains now extended to what had been waste land.”

33
(Figure 4.1) The demarcation of these lines represents a significant historical
development in Coast Salish political development. As mentioned in the previous
chapter, Coast Salish concepts of tribal territorial ownership were not traditionally
exclusive except for the tribal cores. Rather, they were distinguished as ever
diminishing interests the farther one moved from the core, or “headquarters.”

This system, however, applied only to Xwélmexw (people of life whose lives
centred around the Fraser River). Outsiders—different people (latsumexw)—who
lacked sacred histories linking them to the region, or who had not developed economic
and political relationships to allow them access to the same, were simply outside the
system. Until their migration, the Chilliwack had not been Xwélmxexw. Rather, their
lives had centred around the upriver transitional zone between the Chilliwack and the
Skagit watersheds. Their movement down to the Fraser Valley and into Xwélmxexw or
Stó:lō space required an adjustment and clarification of their place in the Xwélmxexw
universe. In practical terms, the migration meant the establishment of formal alliances
with the older Fraser River elite, as well as the adoption of the Halkomelem language.
To ensure a smooth transition while evidence of commitment to the Xwélmxexw system
were adequately proven required the establishment of clearly defined territorial
boundaries.

Thus, through a shrewd combination of violence, strategic marriage alliances,
and astute political manoeuvring, all precipitated by a devastating epidemic among their
neighbours and a landslide among themselves, the Chilliwack established themselves as
the occupants and regulators of a large tract of land and resources near the junction of
one of the lower Fraser Rivers largest tributaries. Their newly defined territory
ultimately included an important communication centre, fishing and salmon-processing sites, and even a profit-generating local HBC salmon saltery. Moreover, they strictly regulated access to their new territory. Lest anyone should question the validity of the newly established boundaries the Chilliwack killed trespassers found hunting within their territory.  

In a manner somewhat similar to the Chilliwack migration story, members of the Chehalis tribe at the junction of the Harrison and Chehalis rivers have a collective history that features the migration of an interior “mountain” people down to the lowlands adjacent to the Harrison River. Their historical narrative likewise explains how their modern tribal community was formed as a result of the resolution of a dispute between the previously distinct mountain community and the original occupants of the lowland settlement. The lowlanders were under the leadership of the sky-born hero Squailimeltq, whose name connotes “surprised,” and his two sky-born wives, Tcutcawilwet (“getting down”) and Cwialem (“glad”). People associated with Squailimeltq lived in a cluster of villages near the junction of the Chehalis and Harrison rivers. A second community, known as Tciltcaloktel, which signified “people of the interior” or “those who live in the forest,” consisted of three family groups who lived farther up the Chehalis River, probably at Chehalis Lake, the most prominent of whom were led by the earth-born hero Otter. According to the account collected by Charles Hill-Tout from his consultant Francois, whose ancestors were of the upriver interior community, the sky-born people constructed weirs across the Chehalis River so that the salmon “might be more easily caught and speared.” These weirs, however, like the
landslide on the upper Chilliwack River, prevented any salmon from reaching the river’s upper reaches where the Tcilcatloktel people lived. There is no mention in the story of the fact that the weir would have prevented any salmon from spawning and therefore ultimately have been detrimental to the weir’s builders as well as those living along the river’s upper courses; but then of course the lower community, unlike their upriver neighbours, would still have had access to the fish and salmon resources of the larger Harrison River, making any subsequent hardship less severe in relative terms. Instead, the story focuses on how, after a number of unsuccessful clandestine attempts to dismantle the weirs and restore the movement of salmon, the Otter Chief arranged a pact whereby he agreed to pay yearly tribute in exchange for the opening of the weir. Over time this relationship was replaced with a more intimate one based on arranged marriages which permitted the Tcilcaloktel to relocate permanently with their in-laws, after which, according to Franz Boas’ consultant Chief George (who traced his ancestry back to Squailimeltq the sky-born hero) “the two tribes have lived jointly in Chehalis.” Additionally, they have come to live jointly as the Chehalis people, taking as their collective tribal name the term “Sts’ a’i:les” (Chehalis), which had previously been a simple descriptive place name describing the way the Harrison River’s water tumbled over rocks like a heart beat.

By the beginning of the twentieth century all of the Chehalis tribe lived in a single village centred around a small Catholic Church, but the names and locations of the five villages where the various descendants of the sky-born people and descendants of the interior people lived after the latter’s migration were still remembered and identifiable. A century later the contemporary village is located at yet another site, this
time a few hundred yards farther up the Harrison River. People continue to share the story of the movement of the interior people, and certain members of the Chehalis community still describe themselves as descendants of either the mountain people or the original lower settlement people. Significantly, the migration story is not currently discussed in terms of explaining how regional management of migratory salmon was achieved. Rather, contemporary people generally relate the story in the context of explaining the formations of the modern unified tribal community. Likewise, the account is also still periodically used in a more covert fashion, namely, to set one collective identity against another, and to criticize perceived inappropriate behaviours in the descendants of either the sky-born weir builders or the original earth-born mountain people by descendants of the other group. In this capacity, it is a narrative about the evils of greed. Thus, for example, a few years ago when one family felt that the then current Chief was providing housing services to members of his family with prejudice toward another family who needed and deserved them more, it was noted that little could be expected of someone who was a descendant of the person who, through his weir, denied the original upriver people salmon. Likewise, descendants of the original mountain people have been criticized for not caring enough about the current reserve community, ostensibly “because they are not really from here.”

Within Stó:lō history, epic movements loom large not only as a means of forging new collective identities, but as ways of severing existing ones. Not all disputes could be resolved through increased community integration or amalgamation. Sometimes, the cultural obligation to reduce conflict and restore balance could only be
discharged by community fracture, or what was more commonly referred to in the anthropological literature as “fission.” Such was the case for the families of the Stó:lo tribe formerly living on the flat lands known as Alámex (present day town of Agassiz). Interviewed by Oliver Wells in the fall of 1964, Chief Harry Edwards of Cheam explained that within this tribe a dispute arose over the appropriate location for the placement of certain house posts. In the early nineteenth century, Coast Salish settlements often consisted of a series of interconnected longhouses, stretching together as a single structure sometimes for hundreds of metres along a river’s bank or ocean shoreline. In 1808 Simon Fraser observed one such house in the central Fraser Valley that was 210 metres long, and another at Musqueam behind a kind of palisade that was over half a kilometre long. Within these structures place and space were apportioned according to status, the most prestigious families (or segments of families given that extended families were not homogeneous by class) occupying the largest and most defensible quarters. Carved house posts depicting family leaders’ spirit helpers or the heroic deeds of prominent ancestors anchored certain individuals and families to designated places within the longhouse. Moving a house post was not only a laborious task, it also signalled a change in the status of the family living beneath such monumental carvings. According to Edwards, among the families living at Alaméx, “One party was always moving the posts. Well the other party, the other party would move it back again. So they split up, they split up without getting into a fight, you know; they just split up. Part of them went to Ohamil, and the other party moved over to what you call Cheam now. They split up without any quarrel [violence]."
Fourteen years earlier Wilson Duff recorded from August Jim, a descendant of the people who relocated to Ohamil, a more detailed version of the story of the abandonment of Alámex. His version provides an explanation as to why a certain man's house post might have been unwelcomed within the communal longhouses:

One day the women and children of Siyita [Si:yita] went to a camp 3 or 4 miles north of the village at the foot of a mountain to dig roots. The women went out to dig, leaving the children in camp. One woman had left her baby in the care of her small brother. The baby cried and cried despite all the boy's attempts to quieten it, and finally... [the boy] got angry, made the fire bigger and pushed the baby into the fire. The other children ran to get the mother, but when she returned, baby and cradle had been reduced to ashes.

The unacceptable violence and aggression demonstrated when the boy killed his younger sister only continued to grow as he matured, until ultimately it became more than the settlement could effectively mitigate against:

The boy grew up to become a large strong man, but a troublemaker. Several times, in fits of anger, he killed people, even visitors from salt water. The people of Alaméx (Agassiz, the whole area) got tired of him and wouldn't speak to him. Finally, in fear of reprisal raids from down-river, and to get away from this man, they decided to move away.

All of the people from the village of Pilalt [Pel6:lhxw] moved across the river to Cheam [Chey6:m]; the rest moved up-river. Some went to Popkum; the Siyita people, led by Edmund Lorenzetto's great-grandfather, moved upriver to Ohamil; Old Louie's people from Axwetel moved up to Skw'atets. The trouble maker himself moved up-river to Restmore Caves near the mouth of Hunter Creek, and living there alone continued his murderous deeds.... (See Figure 4.2)

Thus it came to pass that what had once been a densely populated region of the central Fraser Valley quickly came to be abandoned. The abandonment, however, was not the result of disease or natural disaster, but the concerted efforts of people seeking to both...
socially and physically distance themselves from a psychopathic member of their community.

Contemporary oral histories date the abandonment of Alámex at shortly after the establishment of Fort Langley by the HBC in 1827. Three years later Chief Trader Archibald McDonald conducted an informal census of the Aboriginal population. Analysis of McDonald's report suggests that in 1830 the total population of Alaméx approximated 1,100 people. In 1839 a second census compiled by McDonald's successor, James Murray Yale, records that only 427 people were living in the same region. Suttles takes such inconsistencies as indicative of the census' flaws. As such, he was "strongly inclined not to take McDonald's figures seriously." But perhaps Suttles' dismissal is too hastily conceived. In his accompanying report, McDonald noted his own concerns over the population figures and distribution pattern but assured his superiors that "it is however the fact proved by the repeated examination of the Indians themselves and in particular... [Sopitchin] who is mostly a resident here, and on whose acct. of the lower Indians we knew to be correct." As no evidence exists for an epidemic in the intervening years, the most likely cause of this large depopulation is migration. It is likely that the abandonment described in the oral histories was well underway by the time Chief Trader James Murray Yale took his census in 1839, and was completed by the following year, leaving the settlement sites throughout Alámex empty, or nearly so, by 1840.

August Jim explained that the people who left the village of Pilalt resettled largely in Cheam on the Fraser's adjoining southern bank. From there they later dispersed to occupy additional sites along the Hope Slough system leading to the mouth
of the Chilliwack River. These people's descendants, still living primarily in the two sites at either end of Hope Slough, regard themselves as the modern "Pilalt Tribe" and as rightful inheritors of the earlier Alámex occupants' property rights. Those who left the settlements of Si:yita and Axwetel and relocated to Ohamil and Skw’atets respectively had by the mid-twentieth century largely transferred their former identity affiliation from the Alámex area to the new region in which they lived. As Duff learned in 1949, they considered themselves, and were regarded by others, not as Pilalt or Alámex, but as Teit or "upriver" people. These attitudes continue in the present, as is indicated by the reaction of certain people living in Ohamil and Skw’atets to the "Map of Pilalt Territory" produced in 2000 by the Cheam Band. This map included as "Pilalt" those upriver lands associated with the Ohamil and Skwa’tets settlements. (See Figure 4.3) People in these upriver communities did not necessarily interpret the map as a gesture of their shared and common interest in land and resources, but rather more as a provocative move by the people of Cheam to assert control over "Teit" resources. For some contemporary politicians of the upriver settlements it was a "wake-up call that all us Teits need to start working together more."49

Do the people of Ohamil and Skwa’tets, who so clearly acknowledge their migration, feel that they themselves, or at least their ancestors, were interlopers in another's territory? Such does not appear to be the case. Indeed, in addition to recognizing the role of migration in establishing the Ohamil community where it is, the Ohamil people also cite ancient stories of transformation as justifying and explaining how and why they are where they are. In the 1980s, Agnes Kelly related that Xexá:ls the transformers reached the village where the Ohamil people lived during the winter.
There they found the people starving because it was too difficult to find food while the land was cold. What made life especially difficult for the people of Ohamil, she explained, was the fact that the salmon and eulachon only came into the river in the spring and summer. In the winter, the Fraser "was empty." The narrative, as shared by Mrs. Kelly with Sonny McHalsie describes how

Xá:ls the transformer [the youngest of the XeXá:ls siblings] wanted to help the people so he transformed one of the village men into a sturgeon. The man's wife was very lonely without her husband, and so was told to stand by the edge of the river. She carried her lunch — a small piece of deer meat tied in a pouch on her wrist. As she stood there in the snow, her husband called her to join him. She dove into the ice-cold river. She was suddenly transformed into a sturgeon herself. Because she had lunch tied to her wrist, all sturgeon today have dark tasty meat right behind their gills.50

Though the sturgeon transformation story ostensibly refers to the current location of the Ohamil settlement, Franz Boas learned a slightly different version of the story from Chief George of Chehalis, who related the transformer narrative as it applied to the people of Alaméx prior to their migration. In this version Sí:yita is identified as a collective tribal name rather than a single village. According to Chief George, the primary Sí:yita village was Squha'men, which is the downriver dialect pronunciation of the word Ohamil, or as it is known in its fuller form, Shxw'óhámél. Boas learned that at Squha'men there lived a bear who had been transformed into a man and assumed the name Autle'n. This man had a daughter who was receiving mysterious erotic nocturnal visits from unknown strangers. News of his daughter's multiple anonymous relationships threatened to bring disgrace on Autle'n's family's good name. After due investigation the father and daughter together discovered to both their shame that one of
the visitors was the father’s own dog. The second was Sturgeon, who, when confronted, insisted that he had been having relations with the girl for a longer time than dog, and that if she were pregnant surely the child was his:

[The girl’s father] remained completely silent but the girl was very much ashamed. When she gave birth to a boy, Sturgeon took him and carried him to the water. He threw him into the river and he was at once transformed into a small sturgeon. Old Sturgeon caught him, killed him and cut him up. Then he served him to the people saying, ‘Don’t throw away any of the bones, but give them all to me.’ This they did. Then he placed the bones in a bowl and carried them into the water. They came to life immediately and the boy stepped unharmed from the water. He grew up and became the ancestor of the Siyita [Sí:yita].

Chief George’s narrative goes on to explain that subsequent to these events Autle’n eventually ran afoul of the transformers and was turned into a rock resembling a bear lying on its back. In Boas’ time that rock was still visible on the outskirts of the town of Agassiz, as it remains today. That the Sí:yita people considered the Sturgeon their legitimate ancestor and not Autle’n the Bear, who was forever fixed in a permanent location, is significant. Sturgeon fish were found in abundance throughout all of the lower Fraser River’s lower reaches, meaning that the subsequent high status men carrying the sturgeon name were not restricted to living at a specific place; as sturgeon roamed the ‘River of River’s’ freely, so too could their human relatives and descendants.

The Sí:yita people, led by August Jim’s ancestor, were doing nothing exceptional in relocating their settlement. Following the precedent of their Sturgeon ancestor they simply relocated their home to another part of their Stó:lō (River) territory. What might appear to outsiders as discrepancies between the Agnes Kelly version of the story and that provided by Chief George are not important to Stó:lō people. For the Ohamil
Among Stó:lō society, the decision to resolve tension within a collective group by way of community fracture was not unique to the people living at Alámex, nor are narratives explaining how certain people chose, or were forced, to assume new identities as a result of social tensions and through the process of relocation. References to settlement fractures as a result of what were portrayed largely as personality clashes among elite males are found in many standard Coast Salish ethnographies, and, as mentioned, anthropologists assumed the splintering of villages was common long before European contact. What have been less well documented and interpreted are the fissions and migrations that occurred as a result of tensions between different social and economic classes within Coast Salish societies—as a result of internal indigenous efforts at boundary maintenance—and yet, these form a significant chapter in the story of how Stó:lō people constructed and discussed their historical narratives and their identity.

Within Stó:lō historical memory, class tension is a common and prominent theme, and yet one to which scholars have devoted scant attention. Academic analysis into the question of Coast Salish class has revolved around three issues: documenting and analysing the nature of the three-tiered Coast Salish socio-economic structures; differentiating the Coast Salish “class-based” system from the “ranked” strategy of their northern Wakashan neighbours; and especially, explaining the function of the rhetoric of class within contemporary Coast Salish status maintenance. In addition, some recent archaeological analysis explores the question of the antiquity of Coast Salish class
divisions. Thus far little effort has gone into appreciating the role of class tension in the unfolding of Coast Salish history and historiographical developments over the past 250 years.

While the subject of slavery is delicate due to the stigma still attached to people of slave ancestry, Stó:lō historical narratives contain many references to slavery and the tension between slaves and free people. The most detailed involve movements of people signifying changes in status and collective identity. Interestingly, one such story involves the repopulating of a portion of Alámex by slaves after the desertion of the region as described in the narratives above. This account, and other ones likely referring to somewhat earlier times, explain how certain groups of disadvantaged and exploited people were, through a process of event-facilitated migration, able to begin the process of securing greater personal and collective autonomy and freedom, as well as land and resource rights, while forging new collective identities and acquiring land and resource bases.

In Old Pierre’s genesis narrative he described how his original namesake, Thelhatsstan (“clothed with power”), performed many wonderful deeds of transformation, improving the world and helping put it in the order it assumes today. As mentioned, an important aspect of this work involved transforming people into forms for which they were most suited, that is, assigning them identities appropriate to their nature. Some of these transformations were targeted at individuals, while others affected groups of people collectively. He transformed his own daughter, for example, into a sturgeon because, despite her father’s admonitions, she spent all of her days playing in the water and at night rested by the shore. Likewise, Thelhatsstan
transformed his son, who mourned inconsolably for his sister, into a special white owl-like bird, stating that “Hereafter the man who wishes to capture your sister the sturgeon, shall seek power from you.” This bird, Old Pierre explained, was visible only to Thelhatsstan and his descendants. In terms of collective transformations, Pierre explained that of the people who lived around Thelhatsstan, some “were so stupid that he made them serfs (st’ëxem) and divided them into three groups.” The first he settled at a site called Hweik on Fox Creek [Reach]. A second group he placed at Xwla’lseptan on Silver (Widgeon) Creek, and a third at Kiloelle on the west side of Pitt Lake at its mouth.55 (See Figure 4.4) These people were separated both physically and socially from the other Katzie, at least until the late nineteenth century when the combined forces of declining numbers, a shrinking Aboriginal land base, and pressure from western missionaries and government agents compelled higher status people to marry people with tainted pasts.

In addition to the three st’ëxem sites associated with the Katzie, Old Pierre listed other st’ëxem settlements that also functioned as “tributaries” of other tribes. These included the Coquitlam, who were subjects of the Kwantlen, the village at Ioco near Port Moody, which was tributary to the Squamish of North Vancouver, and the settlement of Nanoose on Vancouver Island, whose residents were serfs of the Nanaimo.56 Another of Jenness’ consultants from Nanaimo on Vancouver Island added the Sechelt and the Kuper Island settlements to the list of Coast Salish settlements considered st’ëxem.57

The term “st’ëxem” that Old Pierre used to describe these “stupid” people is significant, for it is distinct from the Halkomelem word for slaves, “skw’iyéth.”58 Slaves proper were women or children captured in raids (or purchased thereafter) and
their descendants. While many slaves were treated kindly, they and their descendants were nonetheless generally not considered fully human; that is, they were not considered to be Xwémexw—people of life. Slaves were property in the strictest sense, and as such could be treated or disposed of as their owner saw fit: exploited, sold and even killed. 59 St’éxem people, on the other hand, were indeed humans, but humans who suffered from a severe stigma.

As explained earlier, the term fluent Halkomelem speakers use for high status people is “smelá:lh.” They explain that the word translates as “worthy people.” When asked what they mean by “worthy” they have explained that worthy people “know their history.” Low class st’éxem people, similarly, are considered to have “lost” or “forgotten their history,” and as such become “worthless.” The choice of the verbs lost and forgotten is significant for it implies an historical process of change: people become st’éxem after they have become disassociated from their history. Thus, theirs is a history of losing their history, and in lacking history, st’éxem people had neither claim to descent from prestigious sky-born or transformed First People, nor could they trace ownership rights or affinal access privileges to productive property sites. In this regard Old Pierre’s use of the term “serfs” to describe st’éxem people is appropriate, for as Jenness learned, st’éxem villages “enjoyed their own communal lives without interference, but the overlord villages could requisition from them supplies of firewood, salmon, deer-meat, or whatever else they required…. Apparently the tributary villages accepted their position and obeyed their overlords without question.” 60 St’éxem people were, in the strictest sense, “worthless.”
Given that the historical narratives of st’éxem people always place them in separate settlements, or in separate dwellings within the settlements of high status people, it is clear that within Coast Salish society status and identity have long been intimately and inescapably linked to spaces and places. While Old Pierre explained the permanent status of st’éxem communities generally as the work of the transformers Xexá:ls, who at the dawn of time elevated the humble and reduced the haughty to permanent subordination (implying that there is a long history of class segregation and mobility in Stó:lō society), he nonetheless acknowledged distinct developments in the st’éxem settlements’ histories. As “semi-independent” villages they had their own leaders, healers, and family names; as well they held their own winterdances, suggesting that the people could at least forge relations with the spirit world distinct from their overlords.\(^{61}\)

Indeed, I believe Jenness’ and his contemporaries’ interpretations of their Stó:lō consultants’ discussions about the dawn of time origins for st’éxem people are not meant to imply that the particular st’éxem communities described in the narratives were all created at the beginning of time, but rather that st’éxem people (as individuals) were considered to have been created at the dawn of time and continued to exist throughout time. Only later, as a result of specific historical events, did st’éxem people consolidate, somewhat independently of their masters, into separate settlements. Thus, though st’éxem communities could not legitimately claim descent from ancient “First People,” and were therefore unable to forge links to families with such histories and their associated natural resources, they (as distinct collectives) nonetheless lived historically subsequent to their genesis as separate (though tributary or subordinate) settlement
communities. Put another way, while st’éxem individuals do not have a history that is culturally recognized as legitimate, st’éxem communities do, and those histories appear to be products of relatively recent (post-smallpox) historical events—events that have historical meaning only because they facilitated group migrations which in turn provided people with historically nested collective identity.

Evidence of these developments is found in numerous indigenous histories. One of Jenness’ Nanaimo consultants explained that the above listed st’éxem communities emerged “about four generations ago... [after] an extraordinary severe winter gripped the land and nearly half the population died of starvation.” According to this particular historical narrative, the winter was so devastating that many families were completely wiped out. Among the survivors were many orphaned infants and children who were raised among the surviving adults’ own children. But without true parents of their own, and without recognized or acknowledged blood relatives to train them, “people of established families would not marry them.”

They therefore intermarried among themselves, and for protection built small houses close to the big houses that sheltered a number of closely related families, in return for whose protection they assisted in various tasks such as hunting and gathering of berries and firewood. They received the name st’éxem (low people) because they could not marry into established families, yet they were not slaves; they could not be bought and sold, but were as integral a part of the community as the families they served. St’éxem people were, therefore, creating separate community histories outside of the dominant paradigm of ethnogenesis metanarratives used by the hereditary elite, who justified their status in terms of claims of direct descent from heroic ancestors.
Assuming Jenness’ un-named Nanaimo consultant was at least 70 years old in 1936 (placing his birth around 1860) and assuming 25 years between generations, and also assuming that the people discussed in the story who lived four generations earlier were in the prime of their lives (their mid-twenties), we can roughly date the devastating winter of starvation to sometime in the late eighteenth century, or to approximately 1785. It is likely, therefore, that the devastating winter that caused the creation of entire communities of st’xem people was associated with the smallpox epidemic of the same era. Even if the devastating winter is not a metaphor for smallpox itself, it is reasonable to assume that the smallpox survivors would have faced a series of subsequent harrowing winters as they struggled to cope with the physical and social ramifications of the disease. It is probable, in other words, that smallpox survivors may have faced winter starvation as a result of not being physically, socially or psychologically capable of gathering and preserving adequate winter food supplies.

Hill-Tout’s Kwantlen consultants likewise linked the emergence of the st’xem communities, and especially the Coquitlam settlement (located just upriver of New Westminster), directly to the calamity of a devastating winter. It was during the time when Skwelselem IV was leader of the Kwantlen (four generations before the siya:m-ship of Chief Casimir who was chief when Hill-Tout conducted his investigations) that “a severe and prolonged famine... caused by a great snowstorm of unusual duration... decimated the tribe.” At that time the Coquitlam, who had apparently up until then been living in separate houses within the main Kwantlen village at New Westminster, “were sent away... to the marshy flats opposite, across the river” where they were compelled to fill the marsh with stones and gravel and convert the site into a fishing ground.64
Franz Boas' consultant Chief George also related the story of the Coquitlam servitude to the Kwantlen in terms of forced movement across the river to prepare fishing grounds and of their subsequent freedom. What is more, he too dated this change in st’éxem status to roughly the turn of the eighteenth century, saying that the Coquitlam gained their autonomy "five generations ago, when wars were raging on this part of the coast...."\textsuperscript{65} Perhaps most significantly of all, Chief George also explained that the Coquitlam were originally subordinate people because they were descendants of the Kwantlen Chief’s slaves. Based upon a relatively early and obscure piece of linguistic analysis conducted by Hill-Tout we learn that the literal meaning of st’éxem is offspring of female slaves sired by their masters.\textsuperscript{66} If this is the more accurate description of the Coquitlam people’s history, then we can perhaps best understand st’éxem people’s otherwise odd status as neither free born people of wealth nor slaves, as a product of their being recognized children of a high status men who were nonetheless denied the right to claim hereditary prerogatives and privileges through their father due to their mother’s slave ancestry. Coast Salish extended families, as a rule, were not homogeneous by class. But st’éxem people could neither claim their father’s noble birthrights, nor could they access the specialized training of the upper classes, who were required to demonstrate their good pedigree. As such they were people without history, for their father’s history was lost to them and their mother’s (as girls typically captured in raids as children) forgotten.

It appears clear, therefore, that within immediate pre-contact Stó:lō society a distinction existed between people who traced slave descent through both the maternal and paternal lines, and those who traced descent through slave mothers but noble men.
This is significant, for if it is correct it explains, and goes a long way toward
historicizing, the class distinctions documented and discussed by Wayne Suttles and
Homer Barnett, among others, who identified a three-tiered social structure that was
demographically weighted to an upper class, but who do not fully explain the rationale
behind people of lower (non-slave) status. Suttles described the demographic
expression of Coast Salish social classes as resembling an inverted pear, with a great
number of upper class and a smaller number of lower class and slaves. From Hill-Tout’s
analysis it appears that the lower class people, whom my own consultants also identified
by the term st’exem, were likely people of mixed slave and master ancestry. They
constituted, therefore, a social middle ground: free, but simultaneously subordinate and
dependent. Perhaps these make up the majority of the 30% of Coast Salish people listed
as “followers” in James Murray Yale’s 1839 Hudson’s Bay Company census, a portion
no doubt being full slaves.

What emerges is a picture of long-term pre-contact class tension resulting from
the growth of a lower class of people made up of the children of slave/master unions (and
undoubtedly those offspring’s own children) being suddenly augmented by the influx of
orphans (history-less people) from the first smallpox epidemic. Literally overnight the
proportion of history-less or “worthless” people to free people reached an unprecedented
imbalance while the region’s smallpox-induced depopulation resulted in fewer people
overall to fill the Stó:lō physical universe and therefore fewer people to compete for
plentiful resources. This created a situation pregnant with the possibility of social
change, for the upper class leadership was undoubtedly more disorganised than at any
time before, and faced with the daunting task of re-establishing a degree of societal
stability and normalcy. Under these circumstances st'éxem people undoubtedly found themselves with an unprecedented degree of freedom, and yet frustrated by the continued stigmatisation applied by the population of free people. Therefore, it is reasonable to assume that a solution was reached whereby these st'éxem were permitted to move out on their own into separate villages where they asserted progressively more and more autonomy, until by the mid-nineteenth century (when the British Crown assumed fiduciary responsibility for Indian people) they no longer paid formal homage to their former overlords, and the overlords were no longer able or willing to try and assert their control.

If the late eighteenth century witnessed the social, political and economic advancement of st’éxem people, there is evidence to suggest that by the mid-nineteenth century similar opportunities were presenting themselves and being taken advantage of by the lowest status members of Stó:lo society, the skw’iyéth, or slaves.

In 1949, Robert (Bob) Joe told Wilson Duff a fascinating story of the separation and subsequent migration of slaves from a community on an island near present day Hope. According to Joe, the island’s occupants had accumulated a relatively large number of slaves through raids against various coastal and interior communities. The population of slaves was also continually augmented by births until it became so large that the owners “wouldn’t let them live in [their] houses,” and they were compelled to build and “live in their own houses on this little island.” It would appear that over time the “slave village grew, multiplied and mixed,” and the owners found it increasingly difficult to compel obedience and servitude from the increasingly autonomous slaves.
Rather than try to impose their will through violence, the owners "held a council over it and decided to leave them alone on the island." In fact, the owners determined to abandon their settlement and leave their slaves behind on the island while they "moved across [the river] to our own home." The slaves, now effectively without masters but living within the gaze of their former overlords, decided to migrate themselves. By joining canoes together with planks from the walls of their cedar longhouses, they created catamarans upon which they loaded their possessions, including (according to the version of the story shared by Mrs. And Mr. Edmund Lorenzetto) a copy of the sacred high status sxwóyyxwey mask, which they stole from their former owners. As the slaves undertook this historic action, their "owners... just watched," and sent word to the downriver tribes, "not to interfere." The former slaves then permitted the currents of the mighty Fraser River to sweep their make-shift rafts over 40 km down stream until they reached the flats at Alámex, immediately downriver from the abandoned villages of Axwetel, Sí:yita and Peló:lhxw. There they landed and "rebuilt" a home for themselves at a settlement they called Chi’ckem, but which is more commonly referred to by the English name “Freedom Village.” And “from there they scattered through relocation and marriage.”

Bob Joe insisted that subsequent to their migration the slaves not only became free, but that they, like the community of st’ékem people known as Coquitlam farther down river, acquired the status of an independent “tribe.” Like the Coquitlam’s, however, their territory was very restricted, stretching only a few miles “along the bank [of the Fraser River] from Mountain Slough, which skirts the mountain west of Agassiz, to Haha’m, a rock in the river a short distance above Scowlitz.” Significantly, their
Of all the Stó:lo tribes, the Teit stand out as somewhat of an ethnographic enigma. Wilson Duff was unsure whether to even call the Teit a tribe, for they appeared to lack some of the fundamental traits associated with that class of collective grouping. Unlike other Stó:lo tribes whose settlements tended to be clustered in tight geographical proximity, the Teit were scattered along the Fraser River from Popkum all the way to Yale. Moreover, and more importantly, in his eyes, Duff reported that the Teit did not have traditions of descent from mythical ancestors, and as such lacked the strong sense of association with a particular place that characterized other Northwest Coast groups. It was for these reasons, he concluded, that his Teit informants experienced no genuine feeling of internal unity, and therefore felt free to move about into the territory of neighbouring tribes "with no thought of tribal identity." 

While I question Duffs' assertion that the Teit lacked traditions of descent from mythical ancestors (indeed, his own fieldnotes as well as the published reports of both Boas and Hill-Tout reference sxwõxwiyám narratives of miraculous First Ancestors), he was quite correct in asserting that there is something unique and distinct about Teit tribal
identity. The Teit riddle can, however, be answered when one ceases to seek solely geographic and cultural explanations to the exclusion of temporal factors for the causes of the special nature of Teit identity.

It bears restating that the upper reaches of Stó:lō territory, where salmon can be caught and processed with greater speed and ease than anywhere else on the Northwest Coast, has contributed much to the general social cohesion felt by all indigenous people whose lives revolve around the lower Fraser River and its resources. So valuable and important was the salmon fishery that it resulted in a modification of what is generally the standard Coast Salish practice of clustering the largest population centres at the mouths of rivers emptying into salt water or main tributaries. Given that the Fraser River below Yale was generally considered an extension of the open Pacific Ocean this is perhaps less surprising than it might otherwise be. Nonetheless, the population density of the Fraser canyon was remarkable. According to the 1830 HBC census, slightly more than one third of the total Aboriginal population residing along the lower Fraser River lived in a cluster of settlements along the seven-kilometre stretch of river between Lady Franklin Rock and Sailor Bar Rapids (approximately 2,574 people in the canyon compared to roughly 4,928 along the river’s lower reaches).74 (See Figure 4.6) And yet, by 1878 the Department of Indian Affairs listed only 267 Stó:lō living in the Fraser canyon,75 and by 1882 there were a mere 222 (compared to 2,276 living between Yale and the Pacific Ocean).76 Who were these canyon people, and where did they go? Clearly something was happening to seriously alter the geographic expression of Stó:lō demographics.
According to Franz Boas' informants, when ascending the Fraser River the last Coast Salish tribe one encountered before reaching Nlakapamux territory at Spuzzum was the now all but forgotten Ts'okwám people. The unique canyon geography occupied by the Ts’okwám facilitated not only the economic prestige derived from the salmon fishery, but also the ability for effective multi-settlement military defense. As Stó:lō Nation archaeologist David Schaepe has recently documented, each settlement site within the seven-kilometre long river frontage of Ts’okwám river territory was defended by a massive rockwall. These stone palisades, apparently unique on the Northwest Coast, were not only extremely effective defensive fortifications, but preliminary analysis suggests that they were also connected by a line-of-sight making the region a truly integrated social/political region. Though by eighteenth century indigenous standards, the Ts’okwám real-estate was among the most coveted in Salish territory, it lacked a feature that Native people had come to consider essential to their survival in the rapidly changing colonial world of the late nineteenth century: flat irrigatable agricultural land.

Because the region between present day Agassiz and Hope was severely depopulated during the late eighteenth century we can assume that this stretch of the Fraser, with its relatively small and non-navigable tributary rivers, limited slough and side channel system, and relatively mediocre fishing opportunities, was not especially coveted in pre-smallpox times. That is not to say that this stretch of the Fraser was undesirable, except in strictly relative terms. The archaeological record clearly demonstrates that the area was densely occupied throughout antiquity. Indeed, the people living there were quite possibly divided into as many as eight small tribal communities, likely similar in scale to the downriver community of Whonnok mentioned earlier. If this
was the case, the first (in ascending order going upriver) was likely clustered around the present-day site of Popkum and around the southern passage between Herrling Island and the mainland. The second would have been centred around a main settlement at the north-west corner of Seabird Island. The third, centred at the mouth of Ruby Creek, might have had satellite hamlets along the upper reaches of both Ruby and Garnet Creek, as well as across the Fraser River at the mouth of Jones Creek (although that may have been yet another separate tribe). Archaeology sites near the mouths of Silverhope Creek and the Coquihalla River indicate large pre-contact settlements, and both Emory and American Creeks are prime locations for similar finds. Whatever the makeup of this region’s immediate pre-contact population, oral histories explain that whoever survived the 1782 epidemic probably abandoned the region in favour of taking up residence with relatives living either farther up or down the Fraser River. By the end of the eighteenth century the region was all but vacant of permanent human occupants.

Thus, while the area between Agassiz and Yale had been partially repopulated by the mid-nineteenth century with emigrants from Alaméx, the area above Yale remained the most densely populated in Salish territory. But as Wilson Duff noted, and as other historians have documented elsewhere, the establishment of Fort Hope and Fort Yale in 1846 “acted like magnets to the Indians, [and] at Fort Yale, which the Indians pronounced Puci’l, a large Indian population gathered, and the canyon villages came to be abandoned in winter....” The 1858 gold rush and subsequent construction of the Caribou Wagon Road and Canadian Pacific Rail Road, accelerated this process, providing canyon fisherpeople with new wage earning employment and other economic opportunities. Even more important was the government’s reserve allocation process,
coupled with western society's general insistence that Native people adopt European style agricultural pursuits as evidence of their advancement in civilization. These pressures both drove and attracted the canyon people to seek permanent new settlements in the Fraser Valley below.

Within the mid-to-late nineteenth century western mind, agriculture and concepts of European civilization were tightly interwoven. Certainly this was the case with those devising and implementing Canadian Indian Policy in Ottawa. In 1898, Deputy Superintendent General James A. Smart spelled out clearly the Indian Affairs Department's position when he specified that the adoption of fixed residency and western-style agricultural pursuits were pre-requisites to taking further steps in the evolutionary process from savage to civilized citizen:

Increasing acquaintance with Indian affairs can hardly fail to strengthen the conviction that the initial step towards the civilization of our Indians should be their adoption of agricultural pursuits, and that if the red man is to take his place and keep pace with the white in other directions, he will be best fitted to do so after a more or less prolonged experience of such deliberate method of providing for his wants. For the transition of nomadic denizens of the forest or prairie, or of such of them as under changed conditions have become vagrant hangers on about the outskirts of settlement, the first essential is fixity of residence, and the formation of the idea of a home. Without that neither churches nor schools nor any other educational influence can be established and applied. Cultivation of the soil necessitates remaining in one spot, and then exerts an educational influence of a general character. It keeps prominently before the mind the relation of cause and effect, together with the dependence upon a higher power. It teaches moreover the necessity for systematic work at the proper season, for giving attention to detail, and patience in waiting for results. It inculcates furthermore the idea of individual proprietorship, habits of thrift, a due sense of the value of money, and the importance of its investment in useful directions. 82
Deputy Superintendent Smart's statement illustrates that adopting fixed residency and agricultural pursuits were regarded as essential prerequisites to becoming “civilized.” But as historian Sarah Carter has demonstrated in her examination of the way these attitudes were applied to the Aboriginal people of the Canadian prairies, evolutionary models of development could be used to justify holding enterprising Native farmers back from engaging in what was regarded as the more advanced form of profitable commercial agriculture. Western attitudes demanded that people pass through each evolutionary stage in due course. Adopting fixed residency followed by subsistence farming were equated with proof of Indian people’s progress toward being civilized, which in turn was seen as essential to surviving in the new world order ushered in by the arrival of European settlers.

As early as the late-1860s, responding to the western rhetoric and the economic opportunities agriculture provided, many Ts’okwám had taken up private farms near the mouths of creeks between Hope and Yale and at the junction of other major tributaries below Hope, especially at the mouth of Ruby Creek across the Fraser from the Alaméx migrants at Ohamil. Five brothers from the canyon settlement of Xelháłh whose mother’s ancestral ties linked them to Ohamil relocated there and became neighbours with the recently arrived Alámex group. The majority of the so called “Hope Indians” similarly left their settlements near the mouth of the Coquahalla River and adjacent to old Fort Hope to establish themselves on fertile farmland three kilometres down the Fraser at Chawathil.

In 1878 and 1879 all of these sites were designated reserve lands, but the government agent responsible for setting the land aside recognized their physical
inadequacy as productive farms for the local Native population: "Between Popkum and above Yale there is scarcely any area of suitable land for Indian reserves. The reserves they have are of thin poor soil easily spoiled by cropping and are really more residential or timber or poor stock runs than anything else, except in patches here and there." The "Yale Indians in particular," he observed, "had no good land [suitable for cultivation] and I had to find them some."  

The replacement land that the agent found was Seabird Island just upriver from Agassiz (See Figure 4.7). It was allocated not to the residents of a specific settlement, as was the government’s usual practice, but collectively "for the Yale Indians Proper and other tribes down to, but not including Cheam." This is significant in a number of ways. First of all Seabird Island had not been the site of an Aboriginal settlement since its residents abandoned the village of Sq’ewqeyl near the island’s northern tip sometime between 1820 and 1845 after Lilloet raids down Harrison Lake drove them to seek refuge across the Fraser at Skw’atets. Second, and more importantly for the purpose of this study, the government agent learned of Seabird Island from a committee of six prominent upper Stó:lō chiefs led by the renowned Liquitem of Yale. Finally, and perhaps most importantly, the reserve was to exclude non-Teit tribal groups, in particular people from Cheam (Cheam being the settlement site just east of Chilliwack where the Pel̓ēxw̱̓ people relocated to after the abandonment of the Alaméx region).  

It is clear that the high-ranking Ts’okwám people considered their future intertwined with the more recently arrived Alámex immigrants at Ohamil, the "Hope Indians" and the Popkum and Skw’a’tets community. Why Cheam was specifically excluded is not clear. In subsequent years the residents of Cheam played a central role in
defending the island from non-Native squatters. Nevertheless, the new Teit tribe worked consistently as a group to protect their collective interest in Seabird Island from outside whites and other Stó:lō alike.

The migration to Seabird Island of the Stó:lō’s highest ranking figure, Yale’s Chief Liquitem, signaled an important change in Stó:lō identity politics. For Liquitim and the other prominent Ts’okwám personalities who chose to relocate to the Valley brought with them the sense of tightly knit identity their ancestors had nurtured in the tight canyon geography and overlay it on the dispersed and tribally mixed settlements between Yale and Popkum. For these “upriver” Teit people, collective identity was a product of supra-tribal amalgamation, not exclusive site-specific mythical genesis. Thus, as the only Stó:lō tribe whose collective origins are genuinely the product of post-contact colonial developments, Teit tribal identity has, as Duff observed, often assumed a less well defined expression than that of other older tribes. But, as will be seen in the next chapters, the Teit precedent also worked to provide tangible form to an even broader supra-tribal identity, that of the Stó:lō Nation.

Simply put, the migrating Ts’okwám people brought with them a sense of unique canyon identity, as well as a certain notion of economic and cultural superiority derived from their ownership of the river’s richest fishing and salmon processing sites. Their upriver canyon identity was overlaid on the various and diverse community identities below. Among the new merged upper-class, which included not only the Ts’okwám elite but also ranking families among the previous generation’s Alámex immigrants, a nascent sense of broader collective “upriver” Teit identity emerged that was modeled, it would seem, on other older tribal collectives, but with even greater emphasis on the forces of
regional social cohesion that cut across localizing nodes of collective identity. This Teit identity, when conceived within the cumulative context created by the to-the-Fraser migration of the formerly more remote upper Chehalis and Chilliwack, ultimately did much to foster the maturation of an even broader sense of Stó:lō collective identity; an identity that encompassed the entire lower Fraser river system. This trend was reinforced by the disruption of status boundaries associated with the increased independence of the various st’éxem and slave communities, who likewise took advantage of open spaces created by smallpox induced depopulation. Thus, although Stó:lō identity has been couched in an historical discourse of even older economic and mythic (or metaphysical) historical relationships, in truth it assumed a socially meaningful form primarily as a result of specific contact-era historical events. Although Stó:lō communities had been linked through shared regional resource ownership and access protocols and overlapping stories of ancient tribal creation long before European contact, it was the post-smallpox migrations that ultimately tipped the balance and resulted in the broader identity eclipsing the more local ones.

One thing is clear. By the mid-nineteenth century, a host of factors were placing stresses of various kinds on the different expressions of Stó:lō identity. What had previously been relatively easily defined tribal and class divisions were being blurred and replaced by newly constituted collective identities. Migrations played a pivotal role in facilitating these changes, but the migrations were themselves the results of other factors that were generally triggered by older pre-existing tensions. To appreciate their modern significance, these tensions need to be examined in light of the history wars that emerged
on the new battlefields of cross-racial boundary maintenance and identity politics. By that time, colonial interests had restricted full-scale indigenous migrations and replaced them with more temporary constrained, but equally influential, movements of other kinds.

1 In addition, audio recordings in the Stó:lo Nation Archives (SNA), Stó:lo Nation, Chilliwack, BC, reveal that Bob Joe spoke softly and had a deep voice, sometimes making it difficult to understand him.
2 Wilson Duff, Fieldnotes, Book 2, 1950, SNA, 50. I have personally visited the areas below Centre Creek and observed the sites of two major landslides. One involved boulders more than three metres in diameter, whereas the second was made up of small rocks and debris.
3 Lerman recorded Joe as stating that the slide occurred “just above Slesse Creek,” which is consistent with the site also being “below Centre Creek” as described in Duff’s notes. See Lerman, “Lower Fraser Indian Folktales,” SNA.
4 Albert Louie, interview by Oliver Wells. See Wells, The Chilliwacks and Their Neighbours, 160. Duff’s translation of Xeyles as “slide” rather than “side” may have been a simple typographical error. The fact that Wells and subsequent ethnographers, as well as Stó:lo people have accepted the error is indicative of the problems associated with particular ethnographic accounts coming to be accepted as authorities on given subjects.
5 Dan Milo, interview by Oliver Wells, July 1964, Compact Disk audio copy, SNA.
6 Bob Joe, interview by Imbert Orchard, 2 April 1963, transcripts, CBC Archives, Toronto and SNA. Linguist Jimmy Harris, who conducted research with Dan Milo in the early 1960s recorded from Milo a translation of Chilliwack as being “back water” referring to the point on a river that was “as far as you can go [in a canoe].” Milo, however, admitted to Harris that he was guessing at the meaning, whereas Bob Joe was confident of his translation. Jimmy Gene Harris, personal communication with Keith Thor Carlson (July 1996).
7 Bob Joe, interview by Lerman, “Lower Fraser Indian Folktales,” 269.
8 Bob Joe, interview by Orchard. See also Dan Milo, interview by Wells, in The Chilliwacks and Their Neighbours, 90.
9 Bob Joe, interview by Lerman, “Lower Fraser Indian Folktales,” 269.
10 Bob Joe, interview by Oliver Wells, 8 February 1962, Compact Disk audio copy, Track 2, 4:55. SNA.
11 Lerman and Keller, Legends of the River People.
12 Duff, The Upper Stalo, 43. While Joe describes this Wileliq as the “fifth,” five years earlier, when speaking with Marian Smith he provided an even greater genealogical history in which he explained that the Wileliq born at Thatemaliwas was actually the seventh man to bear the name since the beginning of time. Joe himself never referred to any of the Wileliqs by numbers, instead referencing them in relation to one another as in “the third Wileliq since such and such....” In this way the discrepancies in numbers between Smith and Duff reflect the emphasis assumed by the ethnographer and not that implied by the narrator.
13 Bob Joe and Billy Sepass both provided Oliver Wells with this as the name of the language spoken by the Chilliwack people prior to their movement down river and their adoption of the Halkomelem language.
14 John Wallace, interview by Oliver Wells, 3 October 1967, audio tape copy and transcript, SNA.
16 Mrs. Cooper, interview by Oliver Wells, in The Chilliwacks and Their Neighbours, 106.
17 Mrs. Cooper, interview by Oliver Wells, 31 March 1968, audio tape copy, SNA.
18 Albert Louie, interview by Oliver Wells, 5 August 1965, audio tape copy and transcript, SNA. See also, Wells, The Chilliwacks and Their Neighbours, 390.
19 Carlson, Atlas, 48-49.
20 See entries for December 1828, in Maclachlan, Fort Langley Journals, 1827-1830.
23 Andy Commodore, personal communications with Keith Thor Carlson (Summer 1993).
24 This full list of tribes who assisted in the building of the inverted gable house is found in Wilson Duff, Field Notes, Book 2, 68, and differs from the edited list found in his published material.
25 Bob Joe, in Smith, summer 1945, Field Notes 5:5:12.
26 The various recorded genealogies are confusing on this point. The Halqemeylem word for grandson is the same as the word for grandnephew (as well as grandfather and grand uncle). An account of this genealogy collected by Duff records that Wileliq V passed his name on to his grandnephew by his younger brother. Both accounts concur that Jack Wealick became Wileliq VI.
27 Bob Joe, in Smith, Field Notes. Duff's field notes and published accounts contradict what is found in Smith's records. Duff records that Wileliq V had no sons and so passed his name to his nephew, the son of his younger brother. This man, in turn, passed it to his grandson who was an old man in 1950. I believe Duff was confused. See Duff, Upper Stalo, 44, and Field Notes, Book 2, 65.
28 Again, there is some confusion here. Tixwelatsa may have been a different uncle (another brother or cousin of Siemches and Wileliq).
29 Bob Joe, in Smith, Field Notes, 5:5:10.
30 Joe explained to Marian Smith that his wife's oldest son by her earlier marriage to Wileliq VI's son carried the Wileliq name in 1951. Wileliq VII was also known as George, who in addition to being Bob Joe's stepson was also his cousin viz, Mrs. Bob Joe was great great grand daughter (niece?) of Wileliq V's second wife (the Katzie woman). Wileliq VI was Bob Joe's grandfather's older brother. See Duff, Upper Stalo, 44. See also Duff's field notes, Book 2, 67
32 I am grateful to genealogist Alice Marwood who drew my attention to Jack Wealick's grave marker, and who patiently provided guidance as I struggled to make sense of the complicated Weliliq family tree. I am also grateful to Sonny McHalsie who spent at least two full days with me as I struggled to plot and understand the information on Wileliq genealogy found in the various oral histories recorded by Oliver Wells, Wilson Duff and Marian Smith.
33 Bob Joe, in Smith's field notes, 5:5:5.
34 Patrick Charlie and Robert Joe, in Duff's field notes, Book 4, 37.
35 Boas records the name as Tsatsemltq. See Boas, Indianische, 38-39.
37 Archaeology field work is required to determine the actual location of the settlement sites.
38 Hill-Tout, "Mainland Halkomelem," 97-98.
39 A version of the story has even been printed in the format of a children's story and incorporated into the public elementary school curriculum.
40 Community fission was not an unusual process in societies with social organization such as that found among the Coast Salish. Fission, without much historical context, is described in most standard Coast Salish ethnographies. They occurred for a variety of reasons, some as mundane as sanitation or to access new sources of firewood, although both these concerns were typically met by seasonal rounds and the steady supply of wood which was deposited along the sides of the Fraser and its tributaries in yearly floods and freshets. One of the most sophisticated discussions of the social tensions and mechanism used to facilitate community fission is found in Sally Snyder's unpublished Ph.D. dissertation wherein she describes how new leaders occasionally arose among the Skagit and challenged the existing elite by forging their own settlement community. She also documents how these new communities attempted, often unsuccessfully, to legitimize themselves through the hosting of potlatches and other ceremonial activities. See, Snyder "Skagit Society and its Existential Basis."
41 Lamb, Simon Fraser, 103, 106.
42 Chief Harry Edwards, interview by Oliver Wells, 8 October 1964, compact disk audio copy and transcript at SNA, 283.
43 These caves were destroyed by the construction of the Trans-Canada highway in the 1960s.
44 Duff, Upper Stalo, 42. Likewise, Dan Milo, in 1964, provided additional details about the reasons behind the abandonment of Alamex. According to Milo, there were "a lot" of people living there at the time "And the head man of those people... had a little son, a small little kid, and that kid gets so rough and killed other kids. And he could do nothing [to stop] this little child. He told his friends, 'the only way we can do it is to leave my kid. We'll leave him. We'll move away from here.'" As a result the headman told
the other boys to take his son behind the little mountain in the woods, and to abandon him there. According to the story, "He called, and they answered him at different times, then they just played dumb." The boys came back and the rest of the people were "ready to move." "They took off and came way up to Cheam... They went to Cheam and they began to get that name [the people of] 'Lexwichiam' [always strawberries]. See Dan Milo, interview by Oliver Wells, July 1964, SNA.

Archibald McDonald, 1830 Census, Fort Langley; James Murray Yale, 1839 Lower Fraser River Census, Hudson's Bay Company Archives, Winnipeg Manitoba. For both the 1830 and 1839 census I have combined the Pellalt and Teiton population figures as both tribes dwelled at Alamex. For the 1830 census McDonald only provided figures for "men." I have therefore multiplied his totals by 4.4, the ratio of men to other family members found in the 1839 census.


This is a commonly told story among the people of Ohamil. Sonny McHalsie recorded the version related here in Keith Thor Carlson with Sonny McHalsie, I Am Stó:lo – Katherine Explores Her Heritage (Chilliwack: St6:lo Heritage Trust, 1998).

Boas, Indianische, 40.

Leland Donald's excellent and provocative Slavery on the Northwest Coast is one of the few studies to confront the issue of class tension within Northwest Coast society and history. Unfortunately, due to what he refers to as a lack of information, his analysis is particularly thin on the Coast Salish. See Donald, Slavery on the Northwest Coast.

For an overview see Suttles, "Introduction," Handbook of North American Indians.


Jenness, Faith of a Coast Salish Indian, 12.

Ibid., 86.

Ibid.

Jenness also noted the distinction between the term for serf communities and the common expression for slaves. Ibid.

Duff, Upper Stalo, 82-84. Also see Homer Garner Barnett, Coast Salish of British Columbia, 136-137, 249-250. See also Suttles, Handbook of North American Indians, 465. Also, see Donald, Aboriginal Slavery, 34, 91, 126-128, 279-184, 295-298.

Jenness, Faith of a Coast Salish Indian, 86.

Ibid.

Ibid.

Ibid.

Hill-Tout, Mainland Halkomelem, 70.

Boas, 64th Report of the British Association, 455.

Hill-Tout, The Salish People, 33.

Suttles, "Private Knowledge," 3-24. See also, Barnett, Coast Salish of BC, 239-271. Sally Snyder, however, does attempt to provide a more interpretive discussion of the significance of class distinctions within Coast Salish society, by looking at the symbolic associations between class, property and gender. See Snyder, "Skagit Society," especially 72-100.

While 30% of the total Coast Salish population are listed as "Followers of all descriptions" only 12% of those living along the Fraser River proper are so identified. James Murray Yale, "1839 Census," 30-53.

In his field notes Duff lists Sechelt, Vancouver Island, and the interior as the sites the slaves were taken from. See Duff, Field Notes, Book 2, (1950), 56.


All preceding quotes relating to the story of Freedom village were taken from Wilson Duff's field notes, Book 2, 56-58 which provided a slightly richer account than the block quote found in Duff, The Upper
Stalo, 21.

Duff, Upper Stalo, 21.

Ibid., 12, 19-21, 30-37, 40-43, 85-87.

Plotting of place names here differs from those found in Harris, The Resettlement of British Columbia. I believe my map more accurately reflects actual Aboriginal settlement sites, but for this all credit goes to Sonny McHalsie and the Elders who translated the HBC orthography into proper Halq’eméylem.

Canada, Department of Indian Affairs, “Indian census of Yale Tribe, 1878,” RG 10, Vol. 10012A.

Carlson, Atlas, 80.

Literal, “skunk cabbage.”


David Schaepe, personal communication with Keith Thor Carlson (May 2001).

Duff, Upper Stalo, 41. The phenomenon of Native people moving to live nearer European outposts and settlements was repeated numerous times in British North America. See, for example, Ray, Indians in the Fur Trade, especially, Chapter Seven, 125-136.


James A. Smart, Canada, Sessional Papers, Department of Indian Affairs Annual Reports, 1898, xxi. Emphasis added. I am indebted to Amber Kostenchenko for this citation.


Duff, Upper Stalo, 42.

Oral history records that Governor James Douglas promised Chawathil to the Hope Indians as a reserve [Sonny McHalsie, personal communication with Keith Thor Carlson (June 1993)]. In 1879 Reserve Commissioner G.M. Sproat reported that the move to Chawathil took place around 1858, which would be consistent with the Douglas story. Chawathil was not officially designated a reserve until 1879.


Named after a steamboat that ran aground on the island.

G.M. Sproat, (note accompanying map), 5 August 1879, INAC LTS, Vol. 5/1:19. I am grateful to Hillary Blair for drawing my attention to this document.

As mentioned in previous chapter. See also Duff, Upper Stalo, 40.

See Chief James of Yale, testimony before the 1913-1916 Royal Commission, SNA.

In 1891 twenty-seven white squatters built rudimentary houses on the Seabird reserve and attempted to have their claims to the land recognized. See A.W. Vowell to Superintendent General, 19 May 1891, RG 10, reel C-10139, Vol. 3795, file 46607-1. See also, F. Passingham to P. McTiernan, 21 February 1891, both in RG 10, reel C-10139, Vol. 3795, file 46607-1.

In 1958 the various Bands making up the Teit tribe succeeded in having Seabird Island officially designated as an independent Band with its own local Chief and council. See the excellent local history of Seabird Island by Hillary Kathleen Blair, “Settling Seabird Island: Land, Resources, and Ownership on a British Columbia Indian Reserve” (Unpublished M.A. Thesis in History, Simon Fraser University History Department, 1999).
PART III

CONSTRUCTED MOVEMENT AND FRACTURED IDENTITY
CHAPTER FIVE

The Emerging Colonial Order

If the Stó:lō were largely unaware of the colonial nature of some of the forces affecting them throughout the late-eighteenth and early-nineteenth centuries, this changed after 1858. It was then, in the wake of the Fraser River gold rush, that the effects of anonymous and new disease-causing viral microorganisms and the readjustments associated with the spread of the European fur trade were compounded by the emergence of overt human efforts to shape their society. Prior to the arrival of thousands of gold miners in their territory in 1858 the Stó:lō had responded to change, whatever its origin, on their own terms; thereafter, their responses were to a significant degree limited and shaped by the coercive nature of the changes. After the Fraser gold rush the migration-inspired identity reformations of the preceding decades had serendipitously and effectively remodeled Stó:lō society. Numerous tribal communities, formerly linked only informally, were now fewer in number and often entirely reconstituted. Moreover, the collective experience of having survived smallpox epidemics and accommodated the arrival of European fur traders meant that Stó:lō people now had a better appreciation of the role of European newcomers as agents of change. This knowledge and experience, I would argue, enabled Stó:lō people to choose from a wider range of options than perhaps could have been provided by the more socially and politically autonomous communities that characterized the pre-contact era.

Some colonial initiatives were designed to foster, and indeed did foster (not always the same thing), a more localized collective identity and political authority. These
actions might ultimately be seen as having established conditions that privileged an enhanced geographically nested form of tribal- and settlement-based collective identity similar to those that would have resonated with elite males in the generation immediately preceding the first smallpox epidemic. That is to say, identities that encouraged a world view where identity and authority were connected to place (i.e. to local spiritual sites such as the stone remains of transformed ancestors). On the other hand, other countervailing colonial initiatives or actions often inadvertently created a context whereby indigenous regional connections became of principal importance. Such developments provided increased momentum toward the supra-tribal concept of collective identity that had previously been more intimately associated with elite women (and likely lower status men) who as adults often lived away from their childhood homes and as such retained special personal affinities with people and places farther afield. Whether the more geographically localized expression or the more expansive manifestation prevailed depended to a significant degree on which concept better facilitated effective responses and counter initiatives to colonial authority.

Assessing this matter involves answering a series of more specific questions. What was the nature and effect of colonial identity politics and how did the indigenous community understand and respond to these initiatives? Did colonial actions ultimately alter or contribute to the process of increased supra-tribal collective identity that had been underway since at least the late-eighteenth century? Boundary maintenance in the colonial era assumed a number of expressions. Likewise, identity-altering events assumed a number of guises. In addition to being a significant event in Stó:lō history in and of itself, the 1858 gold rush also establishing the context of subsequent colonial
Indian policy, and dictated the haste with which that policy was conceived and implemented. An examination of the immediate effects of the gold rush provides a method for assessing the nature of the colonial Indian policy that followed and its indigenous import. Early on, the British Columbia government decided on a policy of "forming settlements of natives"—a process as much concerned with social identity as with physical geography. White posts demarcating the perimeters of Indian reserves were only the most obvious boundaries erected to separate Native and newcomer societies. Indian Band membership lists that fixed Aboriginal people's residences was a less apparent but equally intrusive marker of government initiatives designed to reify local settlement-based collective identity.

The main studies of Canadian West Coast Native-newcomer relations from Wike and Duff through to Fisher and Harris describe the 1858 gold rush as the event that transformed forever the cooperative, mutually beneficial (even enriching) contact era association between Natives and newcomers into a relationship characterized by inter-racial conflict. According to this argument, with the dawning of the settlement era, Aboriginal people shifted from being major players in a drama that was largely of their own creation, to bit players in a theatrical production that was directed by white men who generally regarded Natives as actors unfit for speaking parts.  

While it is true that the gold rush ushered in forces of colonial change that, though probably unavoidable, might otherwise have occurred later and at a slower rate, the distinction between contact era co-operation and settlement-era conflict given my discussion to this point is better conceived as blended shades of gray than as crisp lines separating black from white. What is more, while BC colonial Indian policies were
ultimately too rigidly conceived to result in anything other than the wholesale
marginalization of indigenous people, the way Aboriginal people responded did hold the
possibility of multiple historical outcomes. Considered in this light, the history of
colonial-era Stó:lō-newcomer relations assumes a grander significance. The Colony-
wide Indian policy that emerged in the wake of the gold rush was in large part a product
of the Stó:lō context in which it was principally developed. That is to say, Native-
newcomer relations in Stó:lō territory was the crucible for British Columbia Indian policy
generally. Therefore, to understand such seemingly unrelated matters as why the
Okanagan people had their original reserves reduced, why the Sechelt Band felt it
required municipal-style self-governance, or why the Nisga’a were not able to secure a
comprehensive treaty until the end of the twentieth century, one must first understand the
largely Stó:lō circumstances in which BC Indian policy was created.

Among the indigenous population of the lower Fraser River watershed there has
long existed a concept of ‘otherness.’ This idea, in turn, has informed the corresponding
and contrasting abstraction of ‘sameness,’ felt to varying degrees by all those who
collectively regard themselves as somewhat distinct from others. In the generation prior
to contact, not all people were considered Xwēlmexw, that is “People of Life,” whose
lives revolved around the resources of the Fraser. “Different People”—people who
behaved in a “strange manner” and were not considered legitimate members of the Fraser
River (Stó:lō) social and economic network—were referred to collectively, regardless of
their place and culture of origin, as latsumexw. These people served as critical
counterpoints to the concept of sameness derived from being Xwēlmexw. This is not to
say that there necessarily existed any formal political unity among Xwélmexw, but rather that Xwélmexw operated within a system that was known and understood by one another, which formed a cohesive social continuum. Within this network existed a plethora of social, economic and political relationships, not all of which were amicable. Violent conflicts and raids were common among and between variously constituted Xwélmexw groups. But, even violent relationships were conducted, if not according to strict rules, at least along lines that were fully comprehended by those concerned, involved and impacted.⁴

Some groups of lats’umexw were so notoriously different that they were known by additional separate names. Today, in the early years of the twenty-first century, “Coastal Raiders” is the English term most commonly used by Stó:lō when referencing “the” indigenous bad guys of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. During the early days of the Hudson’s Bay Company operations, it was the cry of “Yukletaw” (Lekwiltok) —literally “Unkillable Things”—announcing the arrival of a southern Kwakwaka’wakw raiding party that threw the lower Fraser River inhabitants as far upriver as Sailor Bar Rapids, seven kilometres above Yale, into mass panic (and not without good cause).⁵ In 1828, the Fort Langley Journal reported that on a single, and not altogether atypical, raid the Lekwiltok killed over 30 Musqueam men and captured six young girls as slaves.⁶ On at least one occasion the Xwélmexw, under the general leadership of a Cowichan man from Vancouver Island, collectively embarked on a massive retaliatory attack against the Yukletaw.⁷ In later years, after the establishment of Fort Victoria as the Northwest Coast’s major cross-cultural trade and communication centre, the distant Haida of the
Queen Charlotte Islands joined the dreaded Yukletaw as annual intruders venturing into the lower Fraser River.

These aggressors provided a context through which the Stó:lo were prepared for the arrival of bellicose non-Native strangers. The first non-Natives to arrive at Fort Langley integrated themselves somewhat into the Xwélmexw social continuum by forging marriage alliances. The subsequent influx of non-Natives associated with the 1858 gold rush and its aftermath remained for the most part outside of Stó:lo society. As with the Yukletaw and the other more generic “Coastal Raiders,” these foreigners also came to be known by a specific term, Xwelítem, that identified them as special strangers with particular and unique characteristics and attributes that would forever mark them as “different.” For the Sto:lo, this new generation of European visitor was remarkable because it was “hungry to the point of starving” (in a sense that refers to much more than gastronomics). To this day the Stó:lo refer to non-Natives as Xwelítem (the starving ones). If the term originated as a reference to physical hunger it lasted because of its applicability to non-Native appetites for natural resources, land, and even children (as federal mandatory school legislation and subsequent provincial adoption policies through to the 1980s demonstrate). To ensure the European penchant for consumption was gratified, colonial officials strove to mitigate potential indigenous opposition. This launched Colonial officials into a process of developing Indian policy that was remarkable for its overwhelming concern with identity politics.

The 1858 Fraser River gold rush constitutes a particularly violent moment in Canadian history. Given the speed of the event, the number of people involved, the size
of the indigenous population affected and the extent to which the latter held firm concepts of property ownership, violence was inevitable. In the summer of 1857 less than one hundred non-Native men (almost all of whom were associated with the Hudson’s Bay Company) lived along the lower Fraser River. Then, between April and July 1858 no less than 30,000 “Starving Ones” arrived in Stó:lō territory seeking the “New Eldorado.” Stó:lō prophets of the previous generation had foretold the coming of the white men, but no one seems to have anticipated that the whites would all arrive en masse, converging on the lower Fraser Canyon from every conceivable direction.

Almost immediately, aspects of the relations between the miners and the Stó:lō turned hostile. When the veteran California’49ers arrived the Fraser River was in freshet; the gravel bars where the miners hoped to establish their placer operations were inaccessible under several metres of surging, muddy, debris-filled water. Small groups of miners clustered about the mouths of Emory and American Creeks and at Hill’s Bar. Their population swelled so quickly, however, that within a few short weeks hastily erected camps were transformed into small cities supporting substantial corporate and then even government infrastructures. While the gold rush environs ultimately encouraged miners to band together for security and to increase productivity, each new arrival was nonetheless a competitor to those who preceded him. Those first on the scene no doubt watched the river’s relatively rapid rise and subsequent gradual descent with mounting anxiety, for so long as the gravel bars were submerged it was next to impossible to stake a claim. What is more, registering a claim required a visit to the government offices in New Westminster—a minimum four-day round-trip canoe journey. And untended claims, as the California experience showed, had a tendency to “get
jumped.” By late July more than 10,000 miners were huddled side by side along the narrow stretch of river between Fort Hope and Fort Yale, waiting for the waters to drop and expose what would ultimately turn out to be a mere 35 gravel bars containing no more than 173 hectares (428 acres) of land, or less than $1.8m^2$ (0.04 acres) per miner.\(^\text{11}\)

Though the proclamation James Douglas read at Fort Langley in November 1858 providing for the government of British Columbia officially referred to the region as “wild and unoccupied” the miners certainly appreciated that they were not arriving in an empty, unused, \textit{terra nullius}.\(^\text{12}\) The most recent Hudson’s Bay Company census showed the Fort Hope to Sailor Bar stretch of river (the area of most intense mining activities) was the summer residence of thousands of Stó:lō, whose settlements were grouped primarily along the river frontage adjacent to creek mouths—the very sites the miners wanted to excavate.\(^\text{13}\) One particularly revealing gold rush story, shared with me by Stó:lō Elder Harold Wells in 1995, relates how Chinese miners arrived, probably just after the initial wave of goldseekers, and started panning the gravel on the river bank, at what had become known as American Bar, near his family home just as his ancestors were leaving to visit relatives at the Fraser’s mouth. Upon their return Wells’ relatives found that mining operation had expanded, “back 200 feet [from the river] onto a flat field,” leaving a permanent twelve-foot deep quarry scar where the family longhouse had been.\(^\text{14}\)

The Stó:lō, however, should not be considered simply as local residents who opposed the industrial development of their neighborhood. Indeed, as academic research has made increasingly clear, initially Native people did not try to avoid European-based economic development. If anything, as labour historian Rolf Knight suggests, “Indian
people did not merely take up defensive positions around their villages and camps. In many cases they reached out to meet the dangers, but also whatever opportunities existed in the new situation." Arthur Ray has demonstrated with respect to Native people encountering western economic systems elsewhere in Canada, Aboriginal people generally only opposed change and development when they were denied the ability to benefit from it, or when they were forced to react to it in ways that ran contrary or challenged their world view.

In 1858 the Stó:lō were less opposed to mining than they were to sharing the spoils of mining with the newcomers. It was, after all, the publicity concerning the active Aboriginal gold trade with the HBC that had precipitated the Rush of '58 in the first place. In the early summer of that year, Stó:lō miners were themselves standing along the river banks suspiciously eyeing the growing immigrant mining population and awaiting the river's drop. As Marshall has revealed through his thorough search of hitherto ignored American records pertaining to the Fraser River gold rush, miners themselves were keenly aware of the vigorous Native mining activities. One American miner recorded, "the Indians [were] very industriously employed, and all along the river, from Fort Hope up, engaged in washing out the ore."

The Stó:lō and their upriver Nlakapamux neighbours, however, were quite prepared to assert preemptory rights to the gold when they regarded the foreign miners' activities to be excessively injurious to their own economic enterprises. Throughout the spring and summer of 1858, Native miners made concerted efforts to derive as much benefit from the gold discoveries as possible. Marshall's research demonstrates that part of their strategy involved finding ways to prevent the foreign miners from monopolizing
the economic opportunities. Reporting to officials in Britain, James Douglas noted that the “...Native Indian population, who are extremely jealous of the whites and strongly opposed to their digging the soil for gold, ...have expressed a determination to reserve the gold for their own benefit....”

Stó:lô participation in mining, no matter how important it became, did not mean an end to Stó:lô salmon fishing. The same stretch of the Fraser River offering the most lucrative mining profits also constituted the most productive Aboriginal salmon fishery on the entire Northwest Coast. Indigenous fishing in this region consisted largely of men standing on rock outcroppings and scooping salmon from the river in specially designed “dip-nets.” Stó:lô women and their slaves, meanwhile, butchered and then wind-dried the fish on “dry-racks” immediately above the dipping sites. These “spots,” as they are called by the Stó:lô, were among the most prestigious of hereditary properties and were accessed and used by large networks of extended families who did not necessarily live in adjacent settlements during the non-fishing season. Each spring, as the river’s water level changed, Stó:lô families conducted sacred “first salmon ceremonies” to welcome the arriving salmon and to ensure their future return. The arrival of the sockeye in early July marked the beginning of the two-month period when the sun’s daytime heat was sufficient to warm the canyon rocks where they kept the air surrounding the dry-racks hot and dry 24 hours a day. (Figure 5.1) Every July the Stó:lô and thousands of other Xwèlmezwx gathered in the lower Fraser canyon to wind-dry salmon and conduct trade to ensure a diversity of winter supplies. (Figure 2.1) In 1858, however, the indigenous populace was competing for space with the thousands of armed non-Native miners who
were encamped on their fishing grounds. A Hollywood scriptwriter could not have invented a more potentially explosive situation.

Into this powder keg a match was thrown when, following the miners, came the usual complement of opportunists who sought to profit from the miners' vulnerability. Stó:lo people, government officials and missionaries alike all became increasingly concerned over the copious amounts of a noxious substance popularly known as "whiskey" (but more accurately described by Oblate missionaries in the 1860s as a mixture of fermented "alcohol mixed with camphor and tobacco juice"), that was being illicitly supplied to both the new miners and the Stó:lo in the summer of 1858. For miners watching the freshet waters slowly recede, whiskey provided a distraction and bolstered fortitude. For the Sto:lo, who had never before encountered alcohol as a trade commodity, and who were experiencing unprecedented changes, the whiskey likewise proved a powerful and addictive attraction. The following report in the June 19, 1858, edition of the *Times of London* suggests that alcohol impaired judgment and intensified inter-racial aggression.

A ‘difficulty’ occurred between a white man and an Indian chief on the river 2 1/2 miles below Fort Hope, in which the Indian was shot through the body; whether killed or not I don’t know. The Indians returned the fire and killed a white man,—not the aggressor, or rather not the same man who shot the Indian; this caused a great commotion, but the [HBC] company's agent at Fort Hope pacified the Indians.23

By mid-July, such isolated acts of violence were giving way to larger scale coordinated conflicts. Douglas gave an indication of the extent of the tensions when he described for officials in London how “…the white miners [at Hill’s Bar] were in a state of great alarm on account of a serious affray which had just occurred with the native
Indians, who mustered under arms in a tumultuous manner, and threatened to make a

clean sweep of the whole body of miners assembled there....”24

Following the Hill’s Bar incident a delegation of Stó:lō leaders approached

Douglas at Fort Hope and “...made no secret of their dislike of the white visitors... and

complain[ed] of maltreatment....” Douglas later reported that:

...in all cases where redress was possible it was granted
without delay. One small party of those natives laid claim
to a particular part of the river, which they wished to be
reserved for their own purposes, a request which was
immediately granted, the space staked off, and the miners
who had made the claims were immediately removed, and
public notice given that the place was reserved for the
Indians, and that no one would be allowed to occupy it
without their consent.25

Such stopgap measures, however, ultimately proved inadequate to stem the
rapidly deteriorating situation. On a hot day in mid-July the naked and decapitated body
of a French miner was found swirling in the river adjacent to New York Bar (a place still
commonly referred to by Stó:lō and non-Natives alike as “Deadman’s Eddy”).

According to the Times correspondent, the killing represented an act of “retaliation”
against a man who had “stole away and deforced [sic] an Indian girl,” and was designed
to serve as an “example, perhaps, to all poachers on other men's manors.”26 Within a few
days the “headless trunks” of three other white miners had to be “picked from the waters
between Fort Yale and Fort Hope.” The journalist noted that beyond this one incident,
the “Indians complain that the whites abuse them sadly, take their squaws away, shoot
their children, and take their salmon by force.” In the reporter’s opinion, “Some of the
‘whites’ are sad dogs.”27
While disjointed tales of escalating inter-racial violence along the lower Fraser River appeared sporadically in major papers like the *Times of London* and the *New York Times*, giving the outside world glimpses of the conflicts erupting in British Columbia, official British government records are generally silent about the wide-scale clashes that followed the Deadman’s Eddy incident. However, relying on unpublished British sources and previously ignored documentation left by the American miners historian Daniel Marshall has reconstructed how, in response to the death of the Frenchman, well-armed bodies of American miners organized themselves into militia forces and embarked on a desperate campaign to either subjugate or exterminate the upper Stó:lō and their Nlakapamux neighbours. What followed was a series of coordinated deadly skirmishes in which dozens of American combatants and an even greater number of indigenous men, women and children appear to have lost their lives. According to Marshall, American records reveal that militia under the command of a Capt. Charles Rouse razed five Aboriginal settlements, destroying entire winter stores of berries and salmon near the Stó:lō-Nlakapamuk border at Spuzzum. In the associated battles, Rouse’s men killed up to thirty-one Natives and six chiefs. Somewhat muted media accounts of this clash drew the attention of Britain’s influential Aborigines Protection Society which (rather belatedly, given the extent of the violence to date) lobbied the Colonial Office to adopt mitigative measures lest the “present danger of a collision between the settlers and the natives will ripen into a deadly war of the races.”

According to Stó:lō oral accounts, reported here for the first time, and the complementary American records reviewed by Marshall, by the time London learned of the true nature of the situation a race war had already occurred. Speaking in 1950, Stó:lō
Elder Patrick Charlie described how the prominent Stó:lō chief, Liquitem, was largely responsible for bringing a peaceful resolution to the rising hostilities. Liquitem apparently “held council” with a faction of the more liberal-minded miners under the command of Major Snyder, who presented the Stó:lō Chief with a white flag symbolizing the indigenous population’s acceptance of peaceful alternatives. Liquitem himself then traveled upriver to Spences Bridge, bringing his considerable influence to bear on the people of that settlement in the interest of non-violence. As a result, the majority of the campaign’s subsequent violence was restricted principally to the Nlakapamux Native communities in the vicinity of Boston Bar and Lytton, and by the time the Colonial Office’s concerns were relayed to Douglas the warring Aboriginal and American forces had themselves concluded a succession of hastily conceived “peace treaties,” bringing a tenuous end to the bloodshed and facilitating non-Native access to Fraser River gold.31 Thereafter, however, the tone and tenor of Douglas’ dispatches shifted from being primarily concerned with protecting Aboriginal rights to ensuring compliance with London officials’ desire that Indian policies “in no way interfere with the progress of the white settlers.”32 From 1858 onward, Stó:lō people were widely viewed as anachronistic impediments to non-Native industrial, pastoral, agricultural and urban development schemes. Racial boundary maintenance became a pre-eminent colonial concern.

Over the past forty years, historical enquiry into colonial British Columbia Indian policy has generally revolved around the question of reserve size and the debate over whether Governor Douglas ever intended to negotiate treaties and compensate Natives for lost land and resources. Lost in the layers of this debate is an appreciation of
other factors, important to understanding Colonial Indian policy, especially the desire to curtail Aboriginal mobility and to reform their collective identity. The pattern here in BC reflected that in eastern and central Canada and elsewhere in the British Empire as white settlement began to spread.

The issue of addressing Aboriginal people's allegedly nomadic nature in order to recast their identity on a more European-style agriculturalist model permeated the correspondence regarding Indian Policy. Writing to Douglas at the height of the 1858 racial tensions, the Secretary of State for the Colonies, Edward B. Lytton, clarified that it was the British government's desire that "attention be given to the best means of diffusing the blessings of the Christian Religion and civilization among the natives." To expedite the Stó:lo people's "entrance into the pale of civilization", Lytton considered it necessary to eliminate those things in the Native character that made them different: in particular, their assumed unsettled nature and propensity for movement. He proposed, therefore, a policy that would fix the lower Fraser indigenous people "permanently in villages," thereby reducing their opportunity for coming into conflict with the new settler element, while simultaneously increasing the opportunity for positive social manipulation.

If Native people's assumed migratory nature could be curbed, the reasoning went, it followed that Aboriginal society could be more easily controlled and shaped; and once remodelled it would become compatible with development interests. For both Douglas and Lytton, Indian identity was conceived as a product of an unanchored relationship with geography—an outgrowth of an errant migratory existence. In an ironic move, given the fact that movement had already actually facilitated a series of transformations
in Coast Salish identity over the past century, Douglas embarked on a policy initiative predicated on the assumption that Native people’s “wandering” nature had placed them in a timeless and unchanging state of primitive existence. The key to thawing Aboriginal social identity, it was thought, lay in freezing their physical movements.

The BC plan was neither unique, nor original. It was derived from a firmly established intellectual tradition, the origins of which in British thought could be traced back at least as far as the writings of John Locke. Locke divided the world’s population into two groups, “civilized” and “natural.” He regarded Aboriginals, as natural people, as living in a disorganized, savage state of nature, without the benefit of organized government. Aboriginal people’s only property rights were to products of their own labour. To vast tracks of land, they had no rights for the simple reason that he considered them not to have invested their labour into the soil. Participating in western-style agriculture was, therefore, regarded as symbolic of an Aboriginal people’s decision to embark on the path to civilization, the benefits of which included property rights. But before natural people could become farmers they first had to associate themselves permanently with a particular piece of land.

A prominent theme within recent Canadian historical literature examines nineteenth and twentieth century efforts by Ottawa, and earlier colonial authorities, to devise policies aimed at preventing Native people from following traditional seasonal cycles of migration in order to transform them from hunters and gatherers into farmers. As Henry Reynolds has demonstrated for Australia, and Cole Harris for British Columbia and Canada, Locke’s ideas about property, labour, and agriculture meant that “labour established its right without any need of consent.” Indeed, Barbara Arneil shows how
Locke rejected conquest as a legitimate means of acquiring property rights. It was only through the investment of labour in the soil that settled and civilized Europeans could be justified in alienating land that Aboriginal people occupied but did not properly use.\textsuperscript{38} Put another way, within the British colonial context, European agriculturalists had preemptive rights over Native hunters and gatherers. Accordingly, once westerners arrived and invested their labour into the land they acquired property rights. At that point, the onus fell on the Native population to demonstrate to colonial authorities that they too should be entitled to a piece of the Crown's land. The only way to legitimately accomplish this, from a European perspective, was to settle on a farm and begin farming.\textsuperscript{39}

Considered in this light, is not surprising that Douglas reacted enthusiastically to Lytton's suggestion of settling Indians permanently into villages. Lockean principals continued to drive British North American colonial policy toward indigenous people. In the nineteenth century this was most vividly expressed in the Judicial Committee of the Privy Council's 1888 ruling in \textit{St. Catherine's Milling} where it was determined that while Canadian Aboriginal people possessed a "usufructory" right to hunt and gather, they did not hold property rights by virtue of their failure to cultivate the soil. \textit{St. Catherine's Milling} has proved tenacious in judicial rulings down to the present day.

Douglas regarded Lytton's "simple plan" "feasible" because in contrast to the dependency-spawning policies pursued by the Spanish in South America, and the costly and ineffective American system, it appeared "the only plan which promises to result in the moral elevation of Native Indian races; in rescuing them from degradation and protecting them from oppression and rapid decay." Douglas was convinced the scheme
would be successful so long as the newly settled Indian could be made as “comfortable and independent in regard to physical wants in his improved condition as he was when a wandering denizen of the forest.” He therefore quickly embarked on a strategy he described as “forming settlements of natives.”

The colonial process of forming new Indian communities necessarily involves the dismantling of previous systems. Douglas and his successors were concerned that the ties linking various Native settlements be severed. This was implicit in all dealings with the indigenous population, and occasionally stated explicitly. Whenever indigenous populations began making active use of the social, economic and spiritual mechanisms connecting them together as a supra-settlement community, the government acted quickly to discourage it. This is perhaps best illustrated in the historical reflections of the “Concerned Citizens Committee” struck in the late 1870s to oppose a move to amalgamate Salish people from multiple settlements into single language-based self-governing bodies. This committee, composed in large part of prominent retired HBC fur traders and leading lights of BC’s colonial society, recounted for the new provincial government the virtues of the previous decade’s policy of divide and rule: “The past safety and security we have enjoyed in the Province is owing to the fact that the large Indian population of the Country has been divided into small bands without a head Chief possessing general authority or influence, and without the ability to unite and constitute themselves a powerful and formidable force.” Upon reading the Concerned Citizens Committee petition, Superintendent of Indian Affairs for British Columbia, Dr. Israel Wood Powell, stated that he “fully endorsed every statement contained in the protest.”
By the summer of 1859 the colonial government had cobbled together the framework of a comprehensive Indian policy centred around the complementary aims of curtailing Aboriginal mobility while geographically restricting indigenous activities. As the non-Native population grew and urban/industrial development expanded outward from the metropolitan hubs of Victoria and New Westminster, the colonial government sent military surveyors to work with affected Native leaders to demarcate Indian settlement land from territory open to settlers. They accomplished this by hammering white stakes into the ground around Stó:lō settlements: "The extent of the Indian Reserves to be defined as they may be severally pointed out by the Natives themselves." Initially, the reserves included only village sites, burial grounds and cultivated potato patches, but by 1862, owing to mounting Stó:lō-immigrant tensions, the criteria were expanded to include "isolated provisioning grounds" (which in practice meant some of the fishing sites most valued by Native men, but despite at least one Stó:lō petition requesting that cranberry patches be set aside as Indian reserves, none of the countless berry sites prized by women). In addition, that same spring, in what a top colonial authority regarded as "an interesting turning point in the history of the Indians of British Columbia," lower Fraser River indigenous people requested and were granted the right to pre-empt private land "on the same terms as they are disposed of to any purchaser in the Colony, whether British subjects or aliens." Within two months Stó:lō were reported to be, "pre-empting lands precisely as a white man could... in 'extended order' along the [lower Fraser] River...."

A key component of the reserve creation process, and one that was to fracture the links between Stó:lō extended families in a profound and lasting manner, involved the
creation of lists of people who “belonged” to particular settlements or reserves. By the end of the nineteenth century these lists had become known as Band membership lists, and were governed by the Indian Act.  

The procedure for generating membership lists emerged out of the reserve creation process. While Douglas had instructed surveyors to mark off reserves to dimensions specified by Aboriginal leaders, many of his subordinates, and certainly his successors, were concerned that the size of reserves identified in that manner were beyond Aboriginal “requirements.” The means used to assess the adequacy of a reserve quickly came to involve assessing the ratio between residents and acreage. Thus, by 1863 reserve surveys involved the collection of census data and, increasingly thereafter, information that could be used to assess a Native community’s ability to “make adequate use of the land,” that is, information on livestock as well as occupation. Douglas himself was the first to raise the question of the people-to-land ratio. In April 1863, in response to indigenous protests, the Governor accused his Land and Works Department of creating an Indian reserve at Coquitlam that was “insufficient” to meet the settlement’s vegetable production requirements. Heretofore, surveyors had included only existing cultivated fields within the reserve boundaries, but as historical geographer Cole Harris has documented, for Douglas’s intentions to be fulfilled, that is to make “Native settlements… self-supporting, adequate resources had to be secured them. This implied fairly large reserves.” Henceforth, Douglas made clear that he wanted reserves to include sufficient lands to ensure agricultural-based self-sufficiency, and that if the Natives themselves did not request sufficient land for this purpose the officer concerned was to take it upon himself to set apart a larger area. Under Douglas’ system, Indians
who remained committed to collective life on the reserve (as opposed to becoming individual farmers through private pre-emption) were not to expect to be able to access agricultural produce beyond their borders. That is, they were not to come to expect government handouts. As such, they required sufficient land to be agriculturally self-supporting.

Responding to Douglas’ reiteration and clarification of the reserve system, Chief Commissioner of Land and Works, R.C. Moody, wrote the Governor, explaining that without the services of someone who was sufficiently versed in the local Native language it was unrealistic to think that confusion over what was actually required by the Natives would not continue to characterize the reserve creation process. He proposed as a means of eliminating such ambiguity that a competent non-Native translator assist his men to better demarcate reserve boundaries by providing lists of the total number of villages in the region, “the number of population in each, and extent of land wished for or requisite....” – a task Moody thought perhaps best suited to the activist missionaries.54

Following this high level exchange the next surveyor to attempt the creation of new reserves along the lower Fraser judiciously decided to meet with Douglas personally prior to embarking on his mission. Sgt. McColl, therefore, heard first hand the Governor’s instructions to identify an adequate agricultural land base for each reserve, as did two senior government officials and the delegation of central Fraser Valley Stó:lō leaders who were present when Douglas gave McColl his instructions.55 In May 1864 McColl produced a remarkably detailed and artistically beautiful water-colour map of the central Fraser Valley Stó:lō settlements which in addition to plotting out reserve
boundaries included a table with population data and commentary on the value of the land's agricultural potential. (See Figure 5.2)

This document ultimately caused an incredible stir within the colonial administration and remains a focus of Native-newcomer disharmony in the Fraser Valley, and indeed all of British Columbia, to this day. By the time it was completed, Douglas, had retired and Frederick Seymour had taken over as Governor. With Seymour’s ascension, de facto control of Indian affairs had transferred to the new Chief Commissioner of Lands and Works, Joseph Trutch. As the voice of BC capitalist development interests, Trutch complained bitterly about McColl’s work, arguing that the reserves were of “most unreasonable extent, amounting, as estimated by himself [McColl], to 50, 60, 69, 109, and even to as much in one case as 200 acres for each grown man of the tribe.” The fact that Douglas was no longer in office and that McColl had likewise died shortly after producing the map no doubt encouraged Trutch to devise the strategy of publicly dismissing what he knew to be McColl’s authorized actions as the improper actions of a lone surveyor operating under dubious instructions from an aging and anachronistic governor. Aboriginal people and scholars alike have subsequently made much of the inequity between even these ratios and the 160 acres of land available to each adult white male, to say nothing of the fact that upon Trutch’s direction the colonial government soon succeeded in implementing a 92% reduction of the reserves mapped by McColl. What has received less attention is the result this colonial discord had on the Stó:lō people’s sense of collective identity. After the reversal of McColl’s work all subsequent colonial surveys followed a formula of assigning a maximum of 10 acres per adult Stó:lō male, along with “a moderate amount of grazing land for those
tribes which possess cattle and horses."\textsuperscript{61} The following chart, produced by Joseph Trutch and Captain Ball after personally visiting most of the Stó:lō reserve communities originally demarcated by McColl, is the first of what were to become increasingly standardized settlement membership lists.\textsuperscript{62} These lists included not only human census data, but also livestock statistics. Together, such information was used to justify the reduction of earlier larger reserves and to rationalize subsequent land distribution activities. That is, Trutch's work was used to make sure Indians did not have more land than they could be expected to make immediate European-style agricultural use of. (See Figure 5.3)

Thus, to facilitate colonial land development schemes it became imperative to determine how many Stó:lō were associated with each Native settlement, and what is more, to formally and permanently associate certain Stó:lō people with various settlements, that is, to create communities. Moreover, Native people's ability to relocate to the settlements of relatives and friends was curtailed not only by government discouragement, but by the strain such emigration placed on the receiving community's collective land resources as defined by government reserve boundaries. By the time Ottawa assumed responsibility for Indian Affairs in 1871, the anonymous lists of people included in the colonial-era documents were being replaced by official census records that identified by name all the adult male members of each Stó:lō reserve. Once a name was registered on the official reserve census a person ceased, in official eyes, to be a part of any other Indian community. This was especially true in the sense that such membership related to the distribution of government resources, the most important of which being reserve land, for by 1867 the colonial government had repealed its earlier
policy of allowing Native people to pre-empt private land off reserve. To access “off-reserve” land, a Stó:lō man first needed to prove that he had become “civilized” and in other ways ceased to be an Indian (that he had become a brown-skinned British subject). After confederation with Canada in 1871 this was made more formal through the application of the Gradual Enfranchisement Act (later the Indian Act), which specified a procedure whereby “civilized” Aboriginals could cease to be “Indian” and became citizens with voting rights. To the extent that becoming a Canadian citizen meant a termination to Indian status, it was genuinely impossible for a Stó:lō person to acquire (that is, receive external recognition of ownership of) land off reserve.

The social effects of government membership lists on Aboriginal people were great. In addition to preventing Stó:lō and other Native people from being able to freely relocate to the settlements of relatives to take advantage of better economic opportunities, it also meant that the extended family ties that had facilitated the movement of people to access geographically diverse, hereditarily owned properties were officially severed and replaced by “communal band lands.” This new category of lands could be accessed and used only by officially recognized members of the local resident group. This had a particularly profound effect on the Stó:lō. Discussing this point with anthropologist Marian Smith in 1945, Seabird Island band member Harry Joe decried the artificial divisions the lists had created for Stó:lō people:

We can’t go to Cheam now because we don’t belong there. No forefathers [live] there. Can’t go to Popkum. We can’t go to Puchil [Yale], Hwiaukum, Iwawas [Iwówes near Hope], Iyem [Iyem above Yale], K’alsiln’p, Thla’mzx.... People say Vincent don’t belong here [at Seabird Island], but his grandfather lived here at Kaltsialp when he was a young man. His grandfather on his mother’s side was from
Sq’ewlets and so he could go there if it was in the olden days.\textsuperscript{65}

By the end of their interview Harry Edwards had provided Smith with a long list detailing exactly "who could have gone where," had the membership lists not been imposed and had people remained free to relocate to where they had familial or ancestral ties.\textsuperscript{66} Under the government’s system of creating local band governments on specific tracts of reserve land the cross-tribal social networks that had been so important to earlier generations were effectively outlawed so far as residency was concerned. From the perspective of colonial society, Indian people living on one reserve simply had no rights in another.

Though perhaps the most explicit, Mr. Edwards was certainly not the first Stó:lō to publicly express his dissatisfaction with the way colonial membership lists had linked Stó:lō people to particular tracts of land. Stó:lō first publicly raised concerns in the early 1870s. In 1874, twenty-five Stó:lō Chiefs, along with a number of their Aboriginal colleagues from coastal and interior communities, petitioned the federal government, protesting a number of pressing concerns. This document has previously been interpreted within the academic literature as referring principally to the inadequate sizes of reserves.\textsuperscript{67} The contents, when read in light of the restriction of movement crisis for the Stó:lō, suggest that the assigning of particular lands to particular groups of people and the inability of people to take advantage of traditional inter-community opportunities for relocation were at least as much a concern as the simple question of land quantum. The 1874 document demonstrates that the Stó:lō recognized that new circumstances had arisen restricting their freedom of movement. What is more, a young female residential school alumna penned the petition. The wording she selected suggests that recent exposure to representatives of western society had enabled the Stó:lō leadership to
understand that European notions concerning the supposed non-settled nature of Native existence were being used to justify the denial of Aboriginal title to land and resources. “We are not roaming-about people, as we used to be,” she wrote on behalf of the Fraser River Chiefs.68

Because band membership had restricted their ability to relocate residences and their ability to seasonally visit an extensive and geographically diverse range of resource sites, the Stó:lō demanded a more equitable and sustainable land-to-people ratio for their new reserve-based communities. In other words, it was restricted mobility that subsequently made the question of reserve size so important. With mobility curtailed the Stó:lō leadership did not in 1874 simply ask for larger reserve land, they demanded it in considerable detail and through thinly veiled threats of violence:

Our hearts have been wounded by the arbitrary way the local government of British Columbia has dealt with us in locating and dividing our reserves. Ohamil, ten miles below Hope, is allowed 488 acres of good land for the use of twenty families; at a rate of 24 acres per family; Popkum, eighteen miles below Hope, is allowed 369 acres of good land for the use of four families, at the rate of 90 acres per family; Cheam, twenty miles below Hope, is allotted 375 acres of bad, dry and mountainous land for the use of twenty-seven families, at the rate of thirteen acres per family; Yuk-yuk-y-oose, on Chilliwack River, with a population of seven families, is allowed 42 acres: 5 acres per family; Sumas, at the junction of Sumas River and Fraser, with a population of seventeen families, is allowed 43 acres of meadow for their hay, and 32 acres of dry land; Keatsy, numbering more than one hundred inhabitants, is allowed 108 acres of land. Langley and Hope have not yet got land secured to them, and white men are encroaching on them on all sides....

We consider that 80 acres per family is absolutely necessary for our support, and the future welfare of our children. We declare that 20 or 30 acres of land per family will not give satisfaction, but will create ill feelings,
irritation amongst our people and we cannot say what will be the consequence.⁶⁹

And yet, as Alexis and the other Lower Fraser Indian Chiefs discovered, it was difficult in Coast Salish and other territories to orchestrate a coordinated indigenous response to colonial injustice. Part of the problem stemmed from the difficulty Stó:lō people experienced in the 1870s in trying to reconcile their generally positive relationship with Christian missionaries with the proselytizers' own visions of a reshaped indigenous society. The Catholic missionaries—the very people the early Stó:lō converts to Christianity like Alexis regarded as allies—were actively pursuing policies of their own. These Catholic policies, like the government initiatives, sought to fragment older cross-settlement associations and replace them with collective identities that fixed Coast Salish people onto what were increasingly isolated social and geographic landscapes.

While Oblate missionaries actively supported Native efforts to secure larger reserves, and even provided sophisticated arguments to rebut the Lockean denial of property rights based on invested labour,⁷⁰ the Church simultaneously assisted the State with their own initiatives to undermine those structures that fostered a sense of shared identity across reserve boundaries. The banning of the potlatch in 1885, in particular, contributed to this process. Although ostensibly designed to undermine Aboriginal religious beliefs and what were deemed offensive cultural expressions, the various State and Church anti-potlatch initiatives directly affected the functioning of indigenous government and the operations of inter-settlement property management protocols and extra-territorial property laws. Thus, while scholarly analysis has treated colonial reserve policies and missionary actions largely as separate matters, or in terms of their
cumulative effect in marginalizing Aboriginal people from the perceived benefits of colonial development, their greater importance for indigenous people lies in their combined impact on indigenous people’s sense of shared identity. It could be said that at the dawn of the fight for indigenous land rights the missionaries had turned the Coast Salish world upside down in more ways than one.

2 Robin Fisher’s reissued and still popular 1977 study, Contact and Conflict remains the most prominent work to distinguish between contact era co-operation and settlement era conflict. See Fisher, Contact and Conflict. See also the other recently reissued classic, Wilson Duff, Indian History of British Columbia, 53. See also, Wike, Effect of the Maritime Fur Trade. See also, Harris, The Resettlement of British Columbia.
3 Cole Harris, writes that “the cultural enrichment hypothesis needs to be approached very cautiously. Crudely applied, it quickly becomes ethnocentric and far too simple. It tends to measure cultural achievement against quantitative and materialistic Western values of accumulation.” See Harris, “Social Power and Cultural Change,” 45-82. For other works that blur the line between the eras of co-operation and conflict, and which find continued Aboriginal agency well into the settlement era and perhaps greater instances of colonial coercion in the pre-gold rush period see, Tennant, Aboriginal Peoples and Politics. See also, Rolf Knight’s Indians at Work: An Informal History of Native Labour in British Columbia, 1858-1930 (Vancouver: New Star Books Ltd., 1978; second ed. 1996). Also, Gough, Gunboat Frontier. Also see, Newell, Tangled Webs of History. Also see, Galois, Kwakwaka’wakw Settlement. See also, Carlson, Atlas. See also, Alexandra Harmon, Indians in the Making.
4 Raids against other communities occurred for a number of reasons: to avenge an earlier raid or perceived wrong; to acquire wealth (for example, to steal); to allow a new warrior to demonstrate his spirit power and prowess; to alleviate the suffering in one community by inflicting greater suffering on another and therefore transferring the grief.
6 For accounts of this particular Lekwiltok conflict with the Musqueam see various entries for June, 1827, in Morag MacLachlan, ed. The Fort Langley Journals, 1827-30, (Vancouver: UBC Press, 1998). The ethnographic context of the conflict and raiding described in the Fort Langley Journal are discussed in detail by Wayne Suttles in “The Ethnographic Significance of the Fort Langley Journals,” an appendix in MacLachlan’s Fort Langley Journals, 1827-30, 197-206.
7 The collective military response to the Yukletaw aggression is placed within a larger context in the next chapter.
8 Xwelitem remains common in Stó:lō parlance. Both folk etymologies and the work of professional linguists such as Brent Galloway state that Xwelitem is the Halq’eméylem term for someone who is “hungry to the point of starving.”
9 Between 19 May and 1 July 1858, nineteen steam ships, nine sailing vessels and fourteen decked vessels transported 6,133 men from San Francisco to Victoria, while thousands more trekked northward along the coast on foot in or in small private vessels. On a single day in July over 2,800 miners arrived at Victoria harbour on two steamers, looking for smaller vessels to take them to the Fraser. See, G.P.V. Akrigg. “The Fraser River Gold Rush,” in The Fraser’s History, from Glaciers to Early Settlements: Papers from a Seminar Presented at the Annual Meeting of the British Columbia Historical Association on May 27, 1977, Burnaby, British Columbia, with a foreword by Blythe Eagles (Burnaby, BC: Burnaby Historical Society, 1981), 32. According to the estimates of the American consular agent, during the months of May, June and July at least 23,000 men had travelled from San Francisco to Victoria by sea and another eight thousand
reached the Fraser River through Puget Sound or overland. See Elwood Evans, “The Fraser River Excitement, 1858,” Unpublished manuscript, British Columbia Archives (BCA).

During the 1830s a prophesy movement swept through Coast Salish territory. Indigenous prophets acquired knowledge of the world to come and then embarked on a process of informing people how to prepare for change. See Carlson, Atlas, 154-161. See also, Sutlles, Coast Salish Essays, 137-151. Chapter Five of Dan Marshall’s Ph.D. documents the feverish nature of the early migration of miners to the Fraser River gold fields. See Daniel Marshall, “Claiming the Land: Indians, Goldseekers, and the Rush to British Columbia,” Unpublished Ph.D. dissertation in History, University of British Columbia, February 2000. While most miners arrived in Stó:lo territory by boat up the Fraser River via Victoria, many came in small vessels northward through Puget Sound, and then overland along the Whatcom trail from what is now Bellingham Washington. Still others reached the gold fields from the north, having traveled through the Okanagan Valley from Washington Territory and ultimately down the Thompson and upper Fraser River.

The region between Hope and Yale, while subject to incredible annual hydrologic forces, contains a relatively stable sand and gravel profile (each year a roughly comparable amount of gravel is both washed away and replaced) allowing contemporary TRIM data to inform our understanding of the scope of gravel availability in 1858. I am indebted to Leeanna Rhodes, GIS technician at Stó:lo Nation, for providing me with information on the size of contemporary gravel bars between Hope and Yale.

See preamble to Anno Vicesimo Primo et Vicesimo Secundo, Victora Regina, CAP. XCIX. An Act to provide for the Government of British Columbia. [2nd August 1858.]


Harold Wells, in conversation with Keith Carlson and Brian Thom at Mr. Wells’ home, near Hope, (21 February 1995). Mr. Wells explained that the story had been told to him by his grandmother. For a discussion of the economic and political process through which the various sites along the lower Fraser River came to acquire gold rush names such as “American Bar.” See Daniel P. Marshall, “Mapping a New Social-Political Landscape: British Columbia, 1871-1874.” Histoire Social/Social History. XXXI:61(May 1998): 127-153.

Knight, Indians at Work, 87.


James Douglas, to Home Government, 6 April 1858, Colonial Correspondence, BCA.

Although it does seem to have at usurped the salmon trade to the HBC for the summer of 1858. In that year the HBC canneries at the mouths of the Chilliwack and Harrison Rivers sat idle as the Stó:lo pursued more lucrative mining operations. See, “British Columbia,” Times of London, 30 November 1858, 4. Stó:lo people, however, continued to preserve sufficient salmon for their own needs, as well as enough surplus to allow them to trade for profit with the foreign miners in their territory. See “British Columbia,” Times of London, 1 December 1858: 9.

Sockeye was the preferred species, but Spring (Tyee, King) were also caught in this manner.

Fr. Leon Fouquet to to Rev. Father Tempier, 8 June 1863, Missions, 1864.

“British Columbia,” Times of London, 5 August 1858, 8.

“Copy of a Despatch from Governor Douglas to the Right Honourable Lord Stanley, M.P.” (No. 26) Victoria, Vancouver’s Island, 15 June 1858 (Received 9 August 1858) (Answered No. 8, 14 August 1858, 47) -- Papers Relative to the Affairs of British Columbia, Part I, London, 1859, 16-17.

“Copy of a Despatch from Governor Douglas to the Right Honourable Sir E.B. Lytton, Bart,” Victoria, Vancouver’s Island, 12 October 1858 (Received 14 December 1858) (Answered No. 60, 30 December 1858, 74) -- Papers Relative to the Affairs of British Columbia, Part II, London, 1859, 3-7.


“British Columbia,” Times of London. 1 December 1858, 9.


F. W. Chessen, Secretary of the Aboriginal Protection Society, to the Right Honourable Sir Edward Bulwer Lytton, M.P., Her Majesty’s Principal Secretary of State for the Colonies, (enclosure in Sir Edward
Lytton to Governor James Douglas), Despatch No.12, 2 September 1858, in Papers Relating to the Indian Land Question, 12-13.


32 Governor James Douglas to Edward Lytton, 15 August 1859, Dispatch No. 199, Colonial Office, 60/5, 13; also Public Record Office (PRO), London. See also, Edward Lytton to Governor James Douglas, 20 May 1859, in Papers, 18.

33 Edward Lytton to Sir James Douglas, 31 July 1858, in Papers, 12.

34 F.W. Chessen to E.B. Lytton, copy forwarded to Governor Douglas, 2 September 1858, in Papers, 12-13.

35 E.B. Lytton to James Douglas, 30 December 1858, in Papers, 15.


39 Nancy M. Williams provides a succinct discussion of the way Lockean ideas concerning property and the law of nations, and the four stages theory of human social development associated with the Scottish philosopher Adam Smith, were applied to Aboriginal lands within the British Empire. See The Yolngu and Their Land: A System of Land Tenure and the Fight for its Recognition, (Stanford: Stanford university Press: 1986), 109-138.


41 Emphasis added. Ibid., 17.


43 I.W. Powell to Superintendent General, 29 September 1879, NAC, DIA, RG 10, reel C-10, 117, Vol. 3669, File 10: 691.

44 Charles B. Goode, for the Colonial Secretary, to R.C. Moody, 5 March 1861, in Papers, 21.

45 William Young to R.C. Moody, and R.C. Moody to William Young, June 1862, in Papers, 24.

46 Fraser Valley Chiefs, “Petition of Fraser Valley Chiefs to Governor Musgrave Regarding Sale of Cranberry Patches,” in Holbrook to Musgrave, 7 January 1870, Colonial Correspondence, F778/38, Reel B-1334, BCA. Copy also in Carlson, Atlas, 172.

47 R.C. Moody to William Young, 27 May 1862, in Papers, 23.

48 William Young, reported Douglas’ instructions regarding Aboriginal pre-emption rights in, William Young to R.C. Moody, 18 June 1862, in Papers, 24.

49 R.C. Moody to William Young, 11 June 1862, in Papers, 25. See also R.C. Moody to William Young, 2 July 1862, and R.C. Moody to James Douglas, 28 April 1863, in Papers, 25.

50 Membership lists became a formal part of Department of Indian Affairs administrative procedures in 1951.

51 Joseph Trutch, a construction contractor, became Chief Commissioner of Land and Works in 1864. The question of whether natives “made adequate use of the land,” became particularly synonymous with Trutch and his interpretation and application of Indian policy, as it was used by him repeatedly in his colonial correspondence and subsequently, while he was Lt. Governor of the province of British Columbia, with his superiors in Ottawa.

52 Harris, Making Native Space, 33.
54 Emphasis added. R.C. Moody to Governor James Douglas, 28 April 1863, in Papers, 27.
56 William McColl’s map of the “Douglas Reserves” as they are commonly referred, has been at the centre of Stó:lō specific and comprehensive claims from the moment of their reduction in 1867 through to the present climate of treaty negotiations and specific claims. The original is held in the Provincial Crown Land’s Vault, Surveyor General’s Office, Victoria BC, Ref # 31-T1. When I first examined this precious document in 1990 it was still in relatively good condition. The intense interest in this document has resulted in a marked deterioration in its physical health over the intervening decade. Bits of the map, present in 1990, have subsequently fallen off and disappeared, while portions of the penciled comments inserted to show the location and status of various non-Native pre-emptions have smudged and can no longer be read.
57 While Stó:lō people have consistently protested the loss of these reserves, the period from 1969 through to the present has seen the rise of direct action initiatives as well as litigation to secure redress over the loss of these lands. Litigation is currently on-going.
58 Joseph Trutch to Acting Colonial Secretary, 28 August 1867, in Papers, 41-42.
59 The deception in Trutch’s public statements is revealed by his own hand in the marginal notes he made on a series of letters discussing the conflict between the McColl reserves and the desires of newly arriving non-Native settlers. Also in his official memorandum of justification sent to governor and then to federal officials after confederation: “There is yet an impediment to the survey of the claims in question. All the ordinances and Proclamations on the subject of Pre-emption have consequently required the Pre-emption claims shall be of a rectangular form and the shortest side of the rectangle shall be about two-thirds of the long side - except where the land is bounded in whole or in part by natural boundaries. In the accompanying tracing [sic] in which the boundary lines of the Pre-emption claims as recorded are indicated by dotted lines and those of the Indian Reserves as laid off by Sarg’t McColl in a blue line, it appears that the longer side of the[pre-emption] claims are four times the length of the shorter sides. If this departure from the strict requirement of the encroachments on this subject should be sanctioned in these cases which do not appear to me to offer any extraordinary grounds for compliance with the specific wording of the law, a precedent will be established which must rule in all other surveys. I am aware that but few records of pre­emptions will be found to comply with the requirements above skiled [sic] when surveyed, and I can only suggest that a provision be inserted in the said ordinance -allowing discretion to the CCr of the L&W [Chief Commissioner of Lands and Works - that is Trutch himself] in regard as to all claims hitherto recorded - and that all future records should comply exactly with the survey clause of the ordinance.”
60 See Carlson, You Are Asked to Witness, 65-79. See, William Young to Joseph Trutch, 6 November 1867, also Joseph Trutch to William Young, 19 November 1867, and William Young to Joseph Trutch, 4 December 1867, in Papers, 45-47.
61 Joseph Trutch to Colonial Secretary, 19 November 1867, in Papers, 45-46.
62 Ibid., Papers, 47.
63 Women of any race could not pre-empt land on their own, and so it is only Stó:lō men discussed here.
65 Harry Joe, interview by Marian Smith, Summer 1945, in Smith, Fieldnotes, 4-5.
66 Ibid., 5-7. Ironically, while the government worked so hard throughout the 1860s to replace the Stó:lō sense of collective family title with communal Band title, within a generation the dominion’s Indian Affairs bureaucracy was devising new policies to break down band title and replace it with a system private individual ownership.
67 Fisher, Contact and Conflict, 184; Tennant, Aboriginal Peoples and Politics, 53-54; Harris, Making Native Space, 85-86.
Ibid.

Lynn A. Blake, "Oblate Missionaries and the Indian Land Question," *BC Studies*, 199(1998): 27-44. Blake shows how various Oblates, and in particular Father C.J. Grandidier, employed Thomas Aquinas’ ideas about how property rights derive directly from God, and how human actions, including the investment of labour into agricultural pursuits, did not change God’s will. Grandidier wrote copious letters to government officials articulating this position, at least one of which was published in the widely circulating *Victoria Standard* Newspaper.
CHAPTER SIX

Missionaries and the Anti-Potlatch Law

Colonial land and reserve policies played a central role in the solidifying of localized settlement-based collective identities, but they were not the only forces at play, nor were they necessarily always the most important. Other government policies, and indeed other players, also contributed to this process—though the former did not always have this as a stated objective, and the latter as often as not developed their tactics in isolation of state authorities. Apart from designating reserve boundaries and establishing membership lists, colonial authorities largely delegated the responsibility for forming new Native settlements to Christian missionaries. The first on the scene and ultimately the most successful missionaries in Coast Salish territory were the Roman Catholics. The "Durieu system" of ecclesiastical community building advanced by the missionaries of the order of Oblates of Mary Immaculate in all regions deemed suitable for western-style agriculture, as well as the complimentary Church/state sponsored process of "creating" Aboriginal leaders, had profound effects on Aboriginal collective identity in Stó:lō territory. Likewise, the passing of the federal anti-potlatch law significantly altered the manner in which indigenous people, including the Stó:lō, transmitted and publicly professed notions of collective self (an aspect of the prohibition’s impact that has not been previously considered).

Catholic evangelists first began making sporadic forays into Stó:lō territory in 1840. By the late 1850s they had established a permanent headquarters in Victoria on
Vancouver Island, and in the wake of the 1858 gold rush, and at Governor Douglas' invitation, they had expanded their proselytising activities to the BC mainland at New Westminster. A permanent mission and residential school were established soon thereafter at what would become Mission City on the central Fraser Valley's north shore.

For the Oblates, conversion was predicated on escaping older pagan beliefs and practises, but also, and perhaps more importantly, on rejecting the less savoury elements of western society. In the early 1860s, the Stó:lō were exposed to and drawn into many of the worst aspects of frontier society. Thus, as Father Fouquet explained, "We had to not only uproot their deep-rooted savage vices, but also to attack the new ones that came along with drunkenness." With this view in mind, the Oblates under Bishop D'Herbomez set about creating a "model reduction," that is, a series of archetypal Church-centred villages where converted pious Stó:lō could be separated from the debauched elements of European settler society while simultaneously remaining isolated from the reactionary and corrosive influences of their traditional indigenous culture. "Reduction," therefore, was a Catholic euphemism for social laboratory.

Jesuit missionaries in Paraguay originally pioneered the reduction model in the sixteenth and seventeenth century. While the South American experiment ultimately failed, D'Herbomez, and his successor, the flamboyant Bishop Paul Durieu, were convinced of the system's potential. They determined that it was not that the philosophy behind the system that was flawed, but the fact that the Jesuits had neglected to cultivate a sufficient degree of autonomy and self-governing authority among the indigenous populace to allow them to continue to function after Paraguay's secular authorities had expelled the missionaries. In other words, the Jesuit reduction had systematically
dissolved because of the vacuum of indigenous leadership created by excessively paternalistic Jesuit policies of priestly control. Under the Oblates, the British Columbia (BC) incarnation of the Reduction Model emphasized a significant degree of local Aboriginal self-governance, economic self-sufficiency, and autonomy from secular state interference, or, as the Oblates themselves described it, “an Indian state ruled by the Indians, for the Indians, with the Indians, under the directive authority of the bishop and the local priests as supervisors.”

As the Catholic priest and historian Vincent McNally points out, the “Durieu System,” as it came to be known, aimed largely at creating a new category of Stó:lō identity: the “good” Native Catholic. Ideally, the Oblates hoped to establish entirely new Indian communities on fertile agricultural lands away from the sites of older Native settlements. Until measures could be put in place to facilitate this, the short term preoccupation was to recast existing Stó:lō settlements on the reduction model through a two-fold process of internal and external isolation.

Recasting communities so as to isolate Native people from perceived external evils was the first and greatest priority in the Oblates’ strategy for promoting “civilization.” Despite the temptation the Oblates undoubtedly felt to depict pre-missionary (but post-gold rush) Aboriginal circumstances in the starkest and darkest of terms in order to accentuate any subsequent “improvements,” the Oblate descriptions of a Stó:lō society reeling under the effects of alcohol were actually quite accurate. The picture the Oblates painted of a generation of Stó:lō among whom alcohol was wreaking havoc is largely corroborated by contemporaneous colonial records as well as the Stó:lō’s own oral histories. In 1898, the prominent Stó:lō Chief, Captain John, also known as
Swalis, which means “getting rich,” explained that he had been introduced to alcohol during the 1858 gold rush and that almost immediately had “became very fond of whiskey;” that it was “fast obtaining such a hold” on him, and that soon “it was becoming impossible” for him to resist it, and that when he tried to “break himself away from the habit” all his efforts “proved unavailing.”(See Figure 6.1) Thus, in order to save Stó:lō souls the priests determined it necessary to eradicate the demon rum; for, after being introduced during the gold rush these particular spirits proved especially difficult to exorcise.

Describing the state of Stó:lō society in the wake of the gold rush as one where alcohol had “spread the most terrifying corruption,” the zealous and dramatic Father Fouquet reported that:

Their immorality would have made Sodom and Gomorrah, pagan Rome, and Turkish Constantinople blush; they were infected with dreadful/ghastly/horrible corruption. These unfortunate people had combined their own crude vices with the foul trappings of the disgusting scum of a corrupt civilization. That is not all: in spite of the laws of the country, shameless men were trafficking poisons they call liqueurs: which was really alcohol mixed with camphor and tobacco juice. At that time, one met none but drunken Indians everywhere. From what I saw during five or six months, it seems that fewer than one hundred of a thousand were not usually drunk, and there were many who were never sober. They were seen in groups around and even in places where the whites were, fighting and killing each other, screaming like ferocious beasts. In one night alone, two were killed in New Westminster.... In their camps, where they had nothing to fear from the whites, it was even more horrible: that relatives, even friends should fight and kill each other was nothing unusual; we saw drunken fathers stab their innocent children.

According to Bishop D’Herbomez’s report of May 1861, “the abuse of liquor among [the Stó:lō] has caused terrible ravages. Nearly all the Chiefs have been victims
of this corrosive destroyer of civilization. A great number of youngsters have disappeared due to this abuse." While contemporary Stó:lō people generally do not like to talk about this sad aspect of their history there is a general agreement that such descriptions as Chirouse and D’Herbomez provide are largely accurate.

To counteract the whiskey, the Oblates set about establishing "Temperance" or "Sobriety" Societies in every Stó:lō community where they could identify sympathetic followers. Each Society, though under the supreme direction of the Church, was designed to operate autonomously for the months on end when no priest could be present. Locally, the Temperance Societies were led by Church-appointed "watchmen," "captains" and "catechists." The gold rush, however, had caused the Stó:lō to be suspicious of newcomers. Throughout their "first five or six months" of proselytising the Oblates lamented that the Stó:lō "would not even approach the missionaries." But if we can judge by the writings of Father Chirouse, by the end of the first year, "everywhere, the Indians en masse, [had] enrolled under the Banner of Temperance.... With the Chiefs at the head, captains and watchmen were organized in every camp."

After overcoming the initial Native misgiving, the Oblates found that their primary opposition stemmed less from Stó:lō traditionalists than from the non-Native whiskey bootleggers who had established themselves among the Stó:lō. The first in what would become a series of direct clashes between the Oblates and the temperate Stó:lō community on the one side and the "peddlers of poison liqueurs" and their Native supporters on the other, occurred at the settlement of Cheam midway between Fort Langley and Fort Hope. There, on one particular day Father Fouquet and a prominent
local figure and early convert to Catholicism known as Alexis, together challenged three whiskey peddlers who had established a presence by building a storage and distribution shed for their product right among the Stó:lō longhouses. At the end of a prolonged sermon nearly 200 Stó:lō reportedly gathered around Alexis and Fouquet showing their support for sobriety and civilization, while only 15 remained with the white purveyors of alcohol. Under Alexis’ charismatic leadership the majority then threatened to burn the “rum merchant’s house” and were only dissuaded by Fouquet’s caution that the matter might be better dealt with by the colonial authorities who could put the offenders in jail. Following this pivotal incident, Fouquet claims the Oblates “received many requests to visit other camps and establish ‘sobriety societies.’”

The effects of alcohol reinforced for the Oblates the importance of boundary maintenance and provided a focus to their missionary activities. If the devil was at work among the Stó:lō his influence was perceived as emanating at least in equal parts from the non-Native whiskey peddler and his alcohol, as from the Stó:lō shaman and his magic. Indeed, for the Oblate observers, evil emanated from multiple sources. Boundaries were therefore needed internally as well as externally. Internally, the watchmen and other indigenous Church-appointed and sanctioned officials were assigned the duty of directing local religious instruction, monitoring community activities and reporting moral violations to the priest—a responsibility many fulfilled with vigour. Within each settlement at least two catechists were appointed to lead the community in religious instruction: a man to teach the boys and a woman to instruct the girls. On those Sundays when a priest could not be present the catechists were expected to lead the faithful in communal morning and evening prayer, recitation of the rosary, catechism
classes, vespers and the Stations of the Cross. When a priest was available they acted as lay deacons assisting with the Mass and ensuring people attended confession.  

Watchmen, as the name suggests, were the village’s monitors—the eyes and ears of the Oblate fathers—the de facto leaders of the powerful Temperance Societies. Late twentieth-century Elders carried oral traditions describing watchmen of the mid-to-late nineteenth centuries as men who were both respected and feared. They “looked in on everything; kept tabs on people, and reported to the priest people who were doing bad things, like drinking or beating their wives and children.” Church records corroborate such descriptions. Under the Durieu System, watchmen reported to chiefs “not only on the important violations of important laws, but on family quarrels between husbands and wives, on neglect of children by parents, on the disobedience of children, on rowdyism of some men, etc., etc.” Of course, they also monitored the activities of the shaman and his clientele. As agents of the Church, watchmen were the point men in establishing and maintaining a new set of internal social divisions.  

“Indian Courts” were central features of the Durieu system and contributed directly, if inadvertently, to the fragmentation of Stó:lō society into two new identifiable groups. These tribunals concerned themselves primarily with issues of morality, and sought to maintain a degree of boundary maintenance through the regulation of Temperance Society membership. All those who “converted” to temperance were required to make a “communal pledge” before being admitted as full members of the society. Upon becoming members, initiates received a “ticket” as an external sign or token of their commitment to Catholicism and “civilization.” If, upon charges brought forth by a watchman, a Temperance Society member was found guilty by the local Indian
tribunal of immoral conduct, the presiding Chief and Oblate father confiscated his ticket and expelled the offender from the new community. As a result, throughout the latter decades of the nineteenth century the Oblates tried to inculcate within the Stó:lō population the importance of being identified with the “good” Catholic Indian community, rather than with those who had retained their superstitious traditional culture and/or had been corrupted by the vices of western society.

While expelled former members of the Temperance Societies could in theory regain their membership, as time advanced it became increasingly clear to the Oblates and the Temperance Societies’ indigenous leaders that to allow what were considered incorrigible personalities to remain within the settlements risked enticing others to fall away as well. At Chehalis, where the Harrison and Chehalis rivers meet, the Oblates strove to make the distinction between good and bad Indians something more tangible than mere boundaries of the mind. From Father Edward MacGugein’s 1886 annual report we learn that some years earlier, “in order to separate the good from the bad,” Bishop Durieu had physically “divided” the 127 inhabitants of Chehalis “into two camps.” Those deemed “bad” (adherents to traditional spirituality as well as those who drank) were essentially abandoned and rejected by the “good” temperate Catholic people who relocated a few hundred metres from the old settlement to live in new western-style homes in immediate proximity to the new Catholic Church.

Chehalis was, as outlined in chapter four, the site where the formerly separate mountain and lowland people had united following the resolution of the dispute brought about by the lowland people’s construction of the weir that blocked the path of migrating salmon. One cannot help but wonder the extent to which this older division was perhaps
reborn through the work of the Oblate priests. Significantly, while the two new adjacent settlements retained somewhat distinct identities until the beginning of the twentieth century when they again “merged,” the Oblate visitor of 1886 could not help but ruminate over the fact that the supposed black and white division between Durieu’s good and bad Indians was actually rather blurred. “The majority of these self-called good Indians leave a lot to be desired. The good settlement has as yet many deplorable cases of drunks and superstition. The Chief is too inconsistent in his ideas and his conduct, and so carries the principal responsibility for this state of affairs.”

The divisions at Chehalis clearly never produced the results the Oblates desired. Indeed, they had been nothing more than ad hoc adaptations of the Oblates’ older and grander scheme of creating a genuinely new model reduction built not upon the foundations of an ancient established indigenous settlement, but rather, upon the virgin agricultural fields of Matsqui prairie. There, directly across the river from St. Mary’s mission, the Oblates aspired to build a community where, instead of struggling for conversion and against vices old and new, already converted members of their Temperance Societies could live in isolation from corrupting influences and direct their energies toward achieving ever-higher expressions of civilization.

Ultimately, the rapid pace of non-Native settlement and the shift in colonial attitudes marked by Governor Douglas’ retirement in the spring of 1864 prevented the Oblates from securing an adequate land base (and forced them to try experiments such as the Chehalis division). The massive 9,600 acre Matsqui reserve demarcated by Sgt. McColl in May 1864 appears to have been intended by the cooperating Stó:lô and Oblate leadership precisely for this purpose. Indeed, by the mid-1860s plans were well
underway to substitute the upper class Stó:lō tradition of arranged marriages with new Church orchestrated matrimonial unions between the male and female graduates of St. Mary’s residential school. Trutch’s 1868 diminution of the Stó:lō reserve base at Matsqui to a mere 80 acres “caused great dissatisfaction” among the indigenous population. Together, the leaders of the Temperance Societies and the Oblate clergy had planned for that particular reduction to become the destination of the residential schools’ brightest alumni—a model town surrounded by thousands of acres of cultivated fields, and what was most important, separated and isolated from the uncivilized elements of indigenous and western society.

As the era of colonial settlement progressed, one thing was becoming clear: State and Church authorities were collaborating to undermine the social and familial linkages between communities upon which supra-tribal identity was based. Under the combined systems of Department of Indian Affairs Band governments and Oblate Reductions, settlements were intended to be autonomous of one another. Leadership was to be expressed through western-style institutions and conducted under the supervision of non-Native individuals rather than through the extended family connections that bound people of different settlements together under variously ranked family and tribal leaders. As Elder Patrick Charlie explained in 1950, in the nineteenth century the “priest came, and said each village [was] to boss themselves”.

Not all the divisions that resulted from the Oblates’ efforts at separating Aboriginal Christians from those who retained older belief structures were geographical. Among the most profound and disruptive were those that were generational. A cornerstone of the Missionary platform was the development of initiatives designed to
convert children. In the mid-1860s at St. Mary’s residential school this process was facilitated in part by taking children on late spring field trips to sacred sites their parents had forbidden them to visit because of their spiritual potency and danger. After ten months of tutelage these excursions were the last official school functions children participated in before returning to their parents for two months of summer vacations.

The power of these excursions as tools for community fracture and a new form of boundary maintenance are vividly portrayed in Father Gendre’s report describing the Oblate’s field trip to the “Devil’s mountain” in 1864:

Before sending my dear children off on vacation, I had them go for a long walk on the mountain known as “The Devil’s.” Tradition maintained that whosoever should challenge that fearsome mountain would pay for his foolhardiness with his life. All of the Savages sought to frighten me with ever more sombre and dramatic tales. Thus, my students, who are as superstitious as their fathers, trembled in fear when I proposed we climb the mountain. 26

The fearful field trip was not a spontaneous event. Rather, it was planned and announced to the children months in advance. According to the priest, this enabled the children to become accustomed to the idea. One can imagine that it would have also created a focal point of anxiety over a prolonged period of time, and likely led to tensions between students as they wrestled with the idea of proving their individual bravery within a context of rejecting the teachings of their parents.

Nearly every day for three months, I attacked their ridiculous superstition and gradually, they grew accustomed to the idea of attempting this endeavour, which could not possibly present any danger, with me. I succeeded in conquering their hereditary superstition. Towards the evening of the 31st of May, we all set off in canoes, with the necessary provisions and we camped that night at the foot of the dreaded mountain on the shores of a magnificent lake. Early the following day, after prayers,
we ascended the slope and towards noon we arrived, without a single mishap, at the summit, where none had ever stood before. There, we sang out our triumph and our victory. I was pleased to show these children to what extent their traditions were lies and that only the priest could speak the truth, which he receives from the Great Chief from above.  

We should not assume, however, that the children regarded the field trip and its significance in terms identical to those of the priest. Pulled between the alleged “lies” of their parent’s traditions, and the teachings of the Church, the children may well have understood the event as an example of the potency of one particular shaman’s power (the priest’s) over that of whichever Stó:lō shaman had earlier identified the site as dangerous. More to the point, however, the children who participated in this allegedly transformative event were forever distinguished from their parents and all others who had avoided the site by the fact that the priest left a lasting reminder of the identities of his followers on the mountain as proof of their separateness:

> We amused ourselves and afterwards, I wrote a list of the names of all of the brave (children) who had climbed the Devil’s Mountain. I placed the list beneath the bark of a cedar tree, where it will remain until next year when we return to this summit which is now the “Mountain of God.” On the eve of that very pleasant day, we returned to Sainte-Marie singing the Litanies of the Most Holy Virgin.  

This must have been extraordinarily traumatic for the children.

If the trip to the forbidden mountain had been traumatic for the children, one can imagine how news of the outing must have genuinely terrified their parents. The fact that the children’s names had been written on paper and then stored beneath the bark of the sacred cedar tree would have been especially distressing, given the Coast Salish belief in residual spirit power and the understanding that even the utterance of a person’s name, let
alone its encryption, necessarily carried spirit power with it. Their children would not have been regarded simply as lucky to return from a dangerous site without harm. Rather, if one can take contemporary attitudes toward xá:xa (taboo) spiritual places as indicative of past behaviour, families would have been terrified that aspects of their children’s spiritual being would have been stolen from them and left at the site. The priest had, in other words, not only taken them to a dangerous spot, he had ensured their spiritual misfortune by leaving aspects of the children’s identity in physical form at a place their parent’s feared to tread. Given that it is still common for contemporary Stó:lō parents to take children who have been exposed to similar, but much milder xá:xa situations, to visit shamans for the purpose of having them “brushed off” and “fixed-up,” we can assume that many children must have gone through similar ritualistic cleansing ceremonies upon their return from Devils’ Mountain at the end of the 1864 school year.

Those who received treatment and did not subsequently experience profound spirit loss and death would likely have been considered saved by the shaman. Any children who either refused to receive shamanic treatment, or whose parents did not compel it, and who still did not get sick and die must have shaken the very foundations of the Stó:lō belief systems. Not only was the physical world rapidly changing, but the spirit forces that provided the world with life and order were being regarded by at least some Stó:lō as having been falsehoods. A more profound division within a community than a generational divide between believers of the old tenets and the new is difficult to imagine.
As the colonial era progressed and it became increasingly apparent that sufficient land would not be secured for even one single "new" Catholic community, divisions of different sorts came to influence Stó:lō senses of self within their existing settlements. Of increasing importance were inter-denominational conflicts among the emerging Stó:lō Christian population. While the Oblates were the first missionaries to arrive on the scene, they did not have to wait long for competition. During the generation following the gold rush the Methodists and to a lesser extent the Anglicans challenged the emerging Catholic hegemony in the Fraser Valley.

For both Protestant and Catholic missionaries, paganism was preferable to the heresy of conversion to the wrong form of Christianity. Commenting on the 1871 activities of the Methodist missionary at Chilliwack, the Oblate priest Charles Marchal proudly reported that the Wesleyan Rev. Thomas Crosby found himself "established in the centre of these [Catholic] villages unable to spread his work." However, Marchal noted that according to his Catholic supporters, the Protestant cleric was attempting to intimidate Stó:lō into becoming Methodists by preaching that those who rejected the Protestant faith in favour of the "Rome-ish" doctrine "would be chased from this land and transported along with the Catholic priest to an island in the ocean where there is no sweet water, no drink and no food of any kind; where he would soon die of misery."  

On the other hand, in his autobiography Among the An-ko-me-nums [Halkomelems], Thomas Crosby paints the picture in reverse, stating that it was the Oblates who subjected those Stó:lō who had shown interest in Methodism to "the most bitter persecution." According to Crosby, at least one circulating version of the Oblate's "Catholic Ladder" mnemonic pictorial teaching device depicted Catholic Indians going to
Heaven, while “Crosby and his friends went head first into the flames of hell-fire.” Not to be outdone, the Methodists soon devised their own retaliatory “Protestant Ladders” depicting the history of the world from creation to the apocalypse through Reformation eyes. In the Methodist version history ended with Protestants being allowed access into Heaven while the Pope himself tipped headlong into Hell’s torturous flames. (See Figure 6.2)

Competition dividing the Stó:lō into increasingly polarized camps remained a feature of missionary activity throughout the nineteenth century. In 1886, the Oblate Priest Father Edward Peytavin described the inter-denominational rivalry at the Stó:lō community of Skw’átets in terms reminiscent of the European-age of Counter-Reformation. Of a total population of only fifty-one people, thirty-six were Catholic, the remainder Protestant. The man claiming ancient hereditary prerogatives of leadership was reportedly an Episcopalian Anglican, and the Methodist families allegedly “refused to recognize an Anglican Chief.” In response, the Methodist parson had appointed a “Methodist Chief.” However, according to the Oblate author, this action was unacceptable to the remaining Catholic population. And so, in order to “maintain peace and discipline among the Catholics,” Peytavin “chose” a “Catechist or Zealator” for the Catholic majority. Once appointed, this individual was allegedly given by his “co-religionaries” the “title of Chief.”

There are now three [chiefs] in this little village. It is the Catholic who has the most subjects, the Methodist is in control of thirteen, and the Episcopalian has only his wife to govern. This situation causes much laughter among whites and Indians.
The fact that it was not the priest but the Stó:lô Catholics themselves who ultimately
anointed the Catholic Chief is significant, and goes a long way to illuminating the degree
to which internal boundaries were being created by indigenous people along lines that
were ostensibly controlled by outsiders—a process that has recently been the subject of
growing academic enquiry.\textsuperscript{33}

Significantly, the composition of the competing religious camps was at least
occasionally subject to sudden shifts. Slightly upriver from Skw’átets, at the settlement
of Shxw’òwhámél, Father Peyatvin reported that while fifty-one families were Catholic
and only four or five Anglican (and not a single Methodist), a few years earlier the
situation had been drastically different and the “three different parties were in a dispute
over pre-eminence, with the Catholics losing ground.”\textsuperscript{34}

Such swings in denominational allegiance suggest that conversions were at least
in some instances less profound than any of the missionaries cared to admit, and likely
followed older patterns of people allying themselves with the shaman who showed the
greatest power and ability. Indeed, they appear to share features with the disputes
documented within contemporary Tlingit culture in Alaska by Kirk Dombrowski.\textsuperscript{35}

Occasionally, relatively disadvantaged members of particular Aboriginal communities
used Christian religions as a way of rejecting distinctions, including traditional class
distinctions, which had served to oppress them. The fact that those nineteenth century
Stó:lô who participated in these inter-Christian affiliation struggles apparently took their
denominational identities seriously, despite their sometimes ephemeral nature, suggests
that they carried considerable indigenous import regardless of whether they served as
vehicles for other older identity divisions that the non-Native observers could not perceive.

Notably, as these examples demonstrate, the missionaries’ objectives were intimately concerned with the question of indigenous leadership. All representatives of the various centres of power in colonial society appreciated that leaders inspired, and others followed. Controlling, or at least influencing, the mechanisms of leadership selection allowed distant secular and ecclesiastic colonial authorities to exert pressure and exercise control inexpensively and indirectly. The Oblates, Methodists and Anglicans all worked to promote their particular and divergent interests by appointing and anointing or in other ways elevating their own choices for Stó:lō leaders. These acts sometimes set them at odds not only with each other and traditionalist elements within Stó:lō society, but occasionally with the governing colonial authorities as well.

Government officials had their own interests in identifying indigenous leaders. In particular, government agents considered it important to have someone the indigenous community accepted as a legitimate representative in its increasingly complicated relations with the colonial and later Canadian governments. In pursuing its efforts at “forming settlements of natives” and in seeking to simplify administrative procedures, the government desired that each Stó:lō settlement speak with an autonomous voice. The denominational divisions were, in this context, often just as annoying and confusing to the government as the older indigenous inter-family or class-based rivalries. What is more, they also held the potential for calling into question the ethics, if not legality, of
certain government actions and decisions associated with the modification of established reserve boundaries.\textsuperscript{36}

Up until Frederick Seymour's colonial administration began reducing the reserves William McColl demarcated in 1864, an important expression of indigenous leadership in the Chilliwack area remained concentrated in the hereditary line of Wileliq V's descendants, where it functioned at the multi-settlement or tribal level. As discussed in chapter four, the Chilliwack had only recently become established in the Fraser Valley proper. The reserve boundaries identified in 1864 reflected the unified nature of Chilliwack collective identity. Ultimately the map McColl created under the direction of the Chilliwack leadership depicted a string of Indian reserves (some of which contained more than one settlement) located side-by-side, forming a continuous strip of Indian land stretching from the base of International Ridge mountain range in the south all the way to the Fraser River in the north. Thus constituted, it was impossible for anyone travelling from New Westminster along the south side of the Fraser to the BC interior not to pass through a Chilliwack Indian reserve.

Government and Church officials together sought to use the occasion of the 1868 reductions to transform the previously associated Native settlements into autonomous political entities. Not only was the indigenous land base abridged, but, more importantly in terms of its effect on collective identity, small disconnected islands of Aboriginal space were created within a sea of white farmlands.

Presented as a \textit{fait accompli}, the constriction of the lands previously reserved under Douglas' governorship sparked diverse Aboriginal responses. Some Stó:lō protested the government’s actions while others pragmatically took advantage of the
opportunities the initiative provided for promoting specific agendas reflective of older internal class conflicts and interfamily rivalries. In an era when the marginalization of Aboriginal interests made it increasingly difficult for Stó:lō people to access and regulate hereditary properties located off reserve it its not surprising that certain people sought new colonial derived methods to enhance their status within Native society.

Under the emerging colonial system, Indian Chiefs, as spokesmen and representatives of their settlements, became key figures through whom government resources – not the least important of which were reserve lands and agricultural implements – were distributed. Thus, obtaining and retaining government sponsored symbols of chiefly authority quickly assumed practical as well as symbolic significance in Stó:lō society. Understandably, therefore, we learn that in 1868 competing claimants had almost “come to blows” over the question of who was more legitimately entitled to have their name “inserted... in the duly authorized [reserve] map of the District as the real Chiefs.”

When J.B. Launders arrived in Chilliwack in October 1868 to begin anew the process of surveying Stó:lō reserves he was directed by local white settlers to the house of Captain John Swalis, a recent convert to Methodism who piously rejected shamanism and strove to abolish its practice among his friends and family. Together with John, Launders walked the perimeter of the small cultivated fields, houses and cemetery sites, and in the process redrew the Soowahlie reserve map. In so doing, the two men effectively erased the original 4,000-acre reserve and replaced it with one of just 600 acres. Afterward, Captain John’s name appeared on the resulting map as “Chief,” and in
Launder's report "Chief Captain John, was reportedly "satisfied" with the results of the reduction.39

If Captain John was satisfied with the smaller land base, other claimants to the title of Chief certainly were not. Launder's surveys effectively divided the Chilliwack tribe into nine small and distinct settlement-based political entities. The Chiefs of three of these reserves, including Chief Captain John, were Methodists who apparently did not count Wileliq V among their direct ancestors. The following spring, on the occasion of the annual Queen's birthday celebrations in New Westminster, the older leadership manoeuvred to displace Captain John and transform their hereditary status into government-recognized chieftainships. The Catholic priests supported (led?) the hereditary elite in their efforts to consolidate political power. It was at the priest's behest that a senior official in the Lands and Works Department took the maps away from Captain John and his fellow Methodist Chiefs, and gave them to those men the Catholic priests identified as the true hereditary Chiefs. Before the transfer, the official altered the maps so they contained only the Catholic Chiefs' names. As a concerned Wesleyan Minister astutely observed, the Methodists, or "real Chiefs," found themselves "in the position of being, in the eyes of the Government, no Chiefs at all."40

The dispute did not fade quickly. The Methodists appealed the change and demanded that the "papers" containing the names of the originally listed Chiefs be restored to their original possessors.41 After considerable haranguing (at one point the government agent accused Rev. A. Browning of interfering in government business and of trying to "make chiefs," the Lands and Work's Department decided to produce a second set of maps that included the names of each and everyone of the various
claimants, only with the Methodists apparently listed as "second" or sub-chiefs. Each new Native official was then provided a copy of the same.\textsuperscript{42}

Ultimately, this compromise proved unsustainable. Aboriginal representatives from each camp reported to the government that White missionaries associated with their opponents' candidacy threatened that unless everyone supported their choice for Chief the government ultimately would reduce their reserve lands even further.\textsuperscript{43} In response, at the two settlements where tensions were the greatest the government conducted the first municipal-style democratic elections for Indian Chief in British Columbia history. At Squiala, the adult male population "Selected their hereditary chief, (and not the [Methodist] one who had represented himself to... [the government agent] as chief) to receive the map by a majority of three, 9 to 6." At Soowahlie, meanwhile, twenty-four adult males voted to reject Captain John "by a majority of fourteen, 19 to 5."

Despite the electoral endorsement for the hereditary leadership, the government eventually reversed even this decision and ultimately recognized Captain John. The reasons for this final switch are unclear. Likely, they stem from the pressure brought to bear by the twenty-eight non-Native settlers who supported Captain John, and whose pre-eminents happened to fall either in part or in whole within the original 1864 reserve boundaries. In late 1869 these settlers petitioned the government to reverse the election results and recognize Captain John and the other non-hereditary Methodists aspirant as Chiefs. Their reasoning was simple: unless the government took quick and decisive action to anoint Captain John "serious troubles will arise, involving, perhaps, the whites as well as the Indians."\textsuperscript{44} The threat of Indian military action always captured the colonial government's attention. Thus, even despite subsequent clarification by the local
government agent that Captain John and the other non-Catholic aspirants referred to in the settler’s petition “were not the hereditary Chiefs of their tribes, and not the Indians to whom the majority of their respective tribes wish the maps to be given,” the following year yet another set of maps was produced, inscribed with the names of “Captain John” and the other Methodist claimants to the title of Chief. (See Figure 6.3)

Despite the actions of Captain John and the Methodist clergymen, and despite what may well have been their long-term intentions, in most cases the government preferred to acknowledge leaders who were already recognized as such by their fellow Stó:lō residents. Generally this meant providing those men referred to as “hereditary” leaders with government recognition of their role as settlement spokesmen and advocates. Over the following decades the Methodists and Anglicans largely abandoned the Fraser Valley, and so, with the exception of Captain John’s Soowahlie reserve, internal contests over leadership gradually ceased to assume denominational expressions. But even when this was not the case, the Catholic Temperance Societies’ hierarchy of Chiefs, Watchmen and Captains tended to be able to accommodate the government requirements without shifting authority too far from the Church’s own chain of command.

In cases where the government and Catholic Church disagreed, certain accommodations were made so as to avoid open conflicts. In the early years of the Durieu system, for example, many Stó:lō reserves often had two or more Chiefs: an “honourary” figurehead elected by the local populace and then appointed and recognized by the government, and what was considered by the Church to be the “real” one (popularly referred to as “Church Chief”), appointed by the priest who served at the
Church’s sufferance. By the last decades of the nineteenth century most of the Chiefs recognized by the Canadian state were also Catholic Church Chiefs, but more importantly, they were also men who were able to demonstrate blood ties to prominent hereditary leaders of the past. In this context, there was general continuity in leadership from past generations, but the roles leaders played within Stó:lō society assumed new and important, if sometimes nebulous, expressions and significance. “Chiefs” were considered necessary by the government and the Church. Indeed, after BC joined Canada, Stó:lō Chiefs officially became part of the structure of both the Canadian government as defined by the nascent Indian Act, and the Catholic Church as defined in the reduction model. Thus, as time progressed, Stó:lō Chiefs increasingly came to serve the dual and often contradictory and awkward functions of being the primary DIA/Church officials in the reserve as well as the principle indigenous spokesmen against DIA and the Church—clashing roles that continue to compromise Native leaders to this day.

Clearly, indigenous leadership and governance were severely compromised in the late nineteenth century. In addition to developing policies that targeted residence patterns and leadership selection processes, the government and churches also cooperated to dismantle the fundamental governing structures of indigenous society through their opposition to the ubiquitous Northwest Coast tradition of the potlatch. In a manner that has not previously received scholarly attention, the 1885 amendment to the Indian Act making the potlatch illegal directly and profoundly affected Stó:lō mechanisms and protocols regulating property ownership in such a manner as to influence mobility and
therefore collective identity—although in fairness, this was seldom explicitly articulated as a goal of the prohibition.

In Victorian British Columbia society the potlatch was condemned as a major impediment to Aboriginal people successfully achieving a state of western civilization. According to historians Douglas Cole and Ira Chaikin, non-Natives cited three main reasons for wanting to see the institution eradicated. The first was health related. In an era of growing awareness of the workings of infectious diseases, paternalistic missionaries and government agents regarded the large number of people gathered closely together participating in a potlatch in what were perceived to be unsanitary conditions as a contributing factor to continuing Aboriginal demographic decline. Secondly, respectable Victorian society was aghast at rumours of ambitious Aboriginal men prostituting their wives and daughters to raise money to host potlatches and re-pay old potlatch debts. The third, and most effective and serious objections to the potlatch, however, concerned the institution’s incompatibility with western-style industry and labour. Natives participating in the elaborate series of autumn potlatches were unable to commit themselves to year-round employment. This is not to say that significant numbers of Native people, or non-Natives for that matter, were engaging in year-round employment (as Rolf Knight has shown, this did not occur until after World War Two), but that missionaries and government officials held this out as the goal and saw the potlatch as an important impediment to this vision’s fulfillment. What is more, even those who participated in the wage labour economy were largely electing to hoard and then extravagantly distribute their hard-earned wealth rather than accumulating it for the purpose of private, individual material progress. Relatedly, Native parents attending
and participating in a series of autumn potlatches (and then winter season spirit dances—popularly known as Tamanawas dances—which were banned along with the potlatch) brought their children with them, meaning they were unable to attend missionary-run schools for months on end.

Thus, whatever the reasons behind Aboriginal people’s participation in the potlatch, and whatever its function or functions within Aboriginal society, by the 1880s a prominent segment of non-Native society had determined that the potlatch was anathema to civilized society. The Oblates had begun to dissuade people from participating in the potlatch shortly after the establishment of St. Mary’s mission in 1862, when they attempted to make it one of the things that watchmen kept track of as something that could be cited as cause for expulsion from the Temperance Societies. It was not until the 1870s, however, that a coalition of social crusaders consisting primarily of government agents and missionaries began to seriously lobby the federal government to assume a more proactive role in establishing fertile grounds for economic advancement and religious enlightenment by outlawing the potlatch.\footnote{In the summer of 1883, at the urging of Joint Reserve Commissioner Gilbert Malcolm Sproat (who otherwise was one of the staunchest and most influential non-Native supporters of Aboriginal land and governance rights), Prime Minister John A. Macdonald, in his capacity as Superintendent General of Indian Affairs, advised his cabinet that he intended to introduce measures to suppress the potlatch. In April of the following year an amendment to the Indian Act announced that as of January 1, 1885, participating in a potlatch would be a criminal offense.}
Within the anthropological literature the traditional potlatch has been studied primarily with an eye to understand the meaning and function of exchange. Analysis of historical change in the potlatch’s purpose and expression was first attempted by Helen Codere who, in 1950, argued that contact and colonialism caused Kwakiutl potlatching to greatly expand and ultimately to function as a replacement for warfare. Since Codere’s ground-breaking work, historical analysis has focussed almost exclusively on the European side of the equation, exploring the causes and expressions of the ecclesiastical and then government prohibitions of the potlatch. While this has greatly expanded our understandings of the nature of colonial society and authority, it has done relatively little to illuminate the effects and consequences of the banning of the potlatch on indigenous societies. Indeed, within the historical literature the potlatch largely remains a captive of Codere’s study and the enrichment thesis first advanced by Joyce Wike and still most strongly associated with Wilson Duff and Robin Fisher.

Assessing the social and political effects of the potlatch prohibition on Stó:lō society is difficult. Few contemporaneous records discuss such ceremonies, and those that do tend to describe the way potlatches were conducted rather than explain why they were occurring or the purpose they served. Moreover, despite all the energy that has gone into trying to understand the potlatch, nobody appears to have bothered to ask the Stó:lō what effect the banning actually had, other than in ad hoc attempts to elicit stories about attempts at holding covert potlatches. Indeed, the entire matter is significantly complicated by the fact that the Chinook trade jargon term potlatch has no exact Halkomelem translation. It has been applied indiscriminately to any large gathering where gifts are exchanged. Even among the contemporary generation of Stó:lō who
speak English as their first language the word potlatch remains largely meaningless. Instead, a host of different gatherings involving the exchange of wealth are referred to and distinguished by their purpose (i.e., naming ceremony, puberty ceremony, wedding, memorial, winter dance sweep-up, etc.).

Fortunately, oral traditions exist (both frozen on paper and living among families), that describe the purpose of certain nineteenth-century Sto:lo gatherings. We know that people were required to come together at ceremonies, where wealth was distributed and sometimes destroyed, to mark and celebrate any significant change in a person's status or position. We also know that the families hosting these celebrations were required to distribute items of wealth among their invited guests. All such gatherings, referred to as potlatches by non-Native observers, were vitally important if for no other reason than they allowed a non-literate society to transmit important news and information to as broad an audience as possible in as pure and unadulterated a form as possible; that is, with a minimum of interpreters.

Now, as in the past, at every Sto:lo gathering involving the distribution of wealth the host family “calls witnesses” from among the most respected and highest status guests. These people are charged with the responsibility of “witnessing the work that is done here tonight,” and they are specifically charged with the responsibility of describing the events and their import to family and friends who could not be in attendance. Without fail, they are also informed by the speaker (who is “hired” to officiate over the proceedings) that if any question ever arises as to the nature or validity of the work that they witnessed, that they will be called upon to verify its form as well as content. What is more, should a controversy arise – as in someone else laying claim to a name that was
bestowed or, perhaps more importantly, to the property associated with the name – a second gathering would be required, after the adjudication, to allow the witnesses to be re-called as witnesses to the correction ceremony, where they would receive the same charges and enter into the same obligations with regard to disseminating the news and keeping it accurate.

We can be fairly confident that the gatherings described in earlier chapters, such as occurred at the raising of Wileliq’s inverted-gable house and his subsequent marriage to the Katzie woman, were legitimized through what the government would have characterized as potlatch ceremonies. Indeed, it is unlikely that any of the movements and migrations described in earlier chapters could have occurred without a potlatch either clearing the way for them or ratifying and sanctifying them retrospectively.

Among the Stó:lō people interviewed by Wilson Duff in 1950, two types of status-marking exchange ceremonies (referred to in the literature as variations of the potlatch ceremony) were described as having been particularly common and important during the mid-to-late-nineteenth century period: the first were ceremonies where names and associated lands were transferred to a new generation in order to facilitate change of residence among the original holders of the property; and the second were essentially one-upmanship ceremonies, similar to those Codere described among the Kwakiutl as “fighting with property,” wherein rival families or communities attempted to outdo one another by hosting ever more elaborate giveaways. One of the best examples of the former is the c.1880 ceremony where Súx’yel, the prominent canyon resident, transferred his name and land holdings to his youngest son Patrick Charlie.
Súx’yel was the leader of a prominent and distinguished Stó:lō family living in
the Fraser Canyon above Yale. Like his father, he possessed great wealth: he counted the
snake, grizzly bear and loon among his spirit helpers, and on behalf of his family he acted
as steward of valuable hereditary lands and canyon fishing sites. Súx’yel was a confident
man who boldly engaged with non-Native society, ultimately securing an administrative
position with the colonial government, although in what capacity it is no longer known.
In his middle age Súx’yel decided to fully avail himself of the opportunities the new
colonial order presented by becoming a European-style farmer. Accordingly, he moved
to the flats across the river from Fort Yale, but insufficient water stymied his agricultural
endeavours. He determined that to be successful required leaving the canyon altogether.
After unsuccessfully trying to establish himself at a second site farther downriver near
Fort Hope an elderly relative at Ohamil suggested he try his luck on the fertile meadows
surrounding the mouth of Ruby Creek, which had remained vacant since the first great
smallpox epidemic. There, adjacent to the remains of the burned pithouses, where
survivors had simultaneously cremated and interred the virus’s victims, Súx’yel
successfully built a farm for himself and some of his children and their spouses.

Before Súx’yel could make the move, however, the elders of his family insisted
that he first transfer his hereditary name and Fraser Canyon land holdings to a member of
the next generation. Typically such a transfer was from father to eldest son, but in
Súx’yel’s case the decision to break with tradition appears to have been influenced by the
fact that his youngest son, Patrick, possessed special spiritual potential. Patrick had been
born with pierced ears and a bleeding head. What is more, his head bled freshly each
spring until he reached the age of twelve. This had “scared the old people,” who had
unsuccessfully hired an Indian doctor to try and unveil the secrets of Patrick’s past life in an effort to explain his strange stigmata-like symptoms. Ultimately, Patrick learned the identity of his past self, and the circumstances of his previous death; knowledge that elevated rather than diminished his status. His special condition appears to have influenced his family elders’ decision to select him as the one who would remain in the canyon and carry the ancestral names and property after his father moved away.

Preparation for the name-transferring ceremony occupied Súx’yel’s family for a full year. Taking advantage of the annual influx of people visiting the canyon fishery each summer, Súx’yel’s family rejected the normal autumn timing for their potlatch and hosted the naming ceremony in June. Guests were invited from as far north as Sliammon near present day Powell River and as far west as Vancouver Island. Hundreds of people were in attendance to witness and validate the transfer. In addition to the dozens of cattle and pigs that were butchered to feed the guests, well over $1,000 in cash and countless blankets and other items were distributed among the witnesses. (See Figure 6.4)

Within approximately five years of Súx’yel transferring his name and property to Patrick the federal government officially banned the potlatch. Most of the academic enquiry into the potlatch prohibition has focused on those more remote Aboriginal populations where enforcement of the amended Indian Act was most difficult. The Stó:lō, located in immediate proximity to the fastest-growing non-Native urban centres in the province, were relatively easy targets for government agents. Indeed, the first person to be convicted for violating the anti-potlatching law was the Stó:lō man Bill Uslick. Under the anti-potlach law high-status Stó:lō people were not merely prevented from gathering together to distribute wealth, but were also prevented from changing residence.
After the anti-potlach law came into effect we can assume that those Stó:lō people with the greatest traditional wealth either found themselves unable to relocate for fear of being regarded as having either lost or abandoned their property rights in the eyes of their contemporaries, or been forced to try and transfer their title to a new generation without the benefit of a public ceremony where others could witness the transmission. This, perhaps more than any of the more direct Church and government efforts to restrict movement, undoubtedly caused a reification of settlement-based collective identities among the Stó:lō population at the expense of pan-tribal associations. Certainly, it led to bitter internal twentieth-century conflicts over hereditary ownership rights among the descendants of those nineteenth-century family leaders who chose to relocate despite the ban and had been forced to transfer their names and property at small informal gatherings where witnesses could not be called to verify proceedings. Perhaps more to the point, however, the banning of the potlatch simply reduced the number of opportunities for the sort of formal and ritualized intercommunity gatherings where bonds of family were emphasized.

Throughout the colonial era the Stó:lō experienced the full thrust of external initiatives to remodel their collective identities. Their proximity to major urban centres meant they were easy targets for what were as yet largely untested colonial policies. The extent to which priests and government officials concerned themselves directly with initiatives designed to regulate indigenous movements on the landscape, while recasting indigenous relations with the physical and social geography of their ancestors is remarkable, given the scant attention it has received from scholars. Policies ostensibly
designed to facilitate the removal of Aboriginal people as obstacles to western
development have been regarded primarily in terms of their impact on Native land and
resources, when, in fact, their import was much broader and struck directly at the core of
indigenous notions of collective identity.

Yet, it is an ironic twist of fate, and an example of indigenous agency and self-
determination, that the increased isolation and autonomy of local Native bands that was
an intended result of these colonial initiatives was simultaneously sowing the seeds for
genuine expressions of supra-tribal collective political identity. This is not to say that the
government’s and Church’s intentions were completely thwarted, but rather that they
became immersed within an existing indigenous tension between localized and dispersed
expressions of collective identity; they became fodder for indigenous history wars.

In the wake of the gold rush, as government and Church authorities conspired to
create new geographically restricted indigenous communities and parochial identities, a
series of countervailing colonial forces, some of them better conceived as processes than
events, were subtly working to undermine the colonialist’s explicit designs by enhancing
and augmenting the trend toward greater supra-tribal identity that had been occurring
independently at least since the smallpox epidemic of 1782. Frustration over their
ignored overtures to develop a genuinely predictable relationship with colonial society
based upon the rule of law led to increasingly bold assertions of autonomy. Ultimately,
when rule of law failed to materialize, this frustration was manifested as anger and
genuine military mobilization. Significantly, however, in the end it was not British
actions that spawned this response, but rather British indifference to bold-faced cross-
border American aggression and vigilantism.
Together, state and ecclesiastical policies worked to promote the fragmentation of older indigenous cross-settlement associations with the aim of fixing Coast Salish people onto what were increasingly small and foreign social and geographic landscapes. And yet, while these policies were coercive, their ultimate effects were neither certain nor necessarily always imposed. As the Stó:lô engaged in the new employment opportunities provided by the canneries and other industrial enterprises they acquired an increasingly sophisticated understanding of non-Native society. These insights were coupled with a growing appreciation of the long-term consequences of colonial actions and intentions. Within these changed circumstances, the Stó:lô continued to respond to colonial initiatives in a manner informed by Coast Salish traditions and historiography. To a certain extent, and within certain parameters, the Stó:lô exercised agency. While they struggled to adjust to life on geographically confined Indian reserves and in environments where their potlatch form of governance was increasingly prohibited, and where new economic opportunities increased the opportunities for cross-tribal communication, those features of their culture emphasizing the linkages between settlements worked to reinforce the importance of broadly defined collective action against colonial intrusion and aggression. Thus, despite European assumptions to the contrary, in the early colonial settlement period the fate of Aboriginal collective identity was anything but sealed.

1 In 1838, the Jesuits, headquartered at Fort Vancouver on the lower Columbia River, became the first Catholic priests to begin active missionary work on the Northwest Coast since the abandonment of Nootka by the Spaniard. Father Norbert Blanchet was the first missionary to set foot in Stó:lô territory, visiting Ft. Langley in 1840. Blanchet was accompanied to the west coast by Father Modeste Demers, who, in 1841, claimed to have baptized 400 children after preaching to 1,500 Stó:lô at a summer camp near Fort Langley. In 1844 Father Peter DeSmet became the third priest to visit the Stó:lô.
2 Fr. Leon Fouquet to Rev. Fr. Tempier, 8 June 1863, Missions, Vol. 3.
4 McNally, Distant Vineyard, 58.
E. M. Bunoz, Vic. Apost., "Bishop Durieu's System," *Etudes Oblates: Revue Trimestrielle*, (Montreal: Maison Provinciale, 1942), 194. I agree with McNally that Bunoz's writing should be considered a primary source, as his descriptions of Stó:lō society and the Durieu system are based upon his personal conversations with Durieu, and his own participation in trying to implement the Durieu system among the Coast Salish People.

There has been no effort to formally collect oral accounts of the history of alcohol and alcoholism among the Stó:lō. Nonetheless, these are rather common topics of conversation among Stó:lō people gathered together in semi-formal family settings. In addition, at least some such information has been collected inadvertently by earlier ethnographers such as Oliver Wells and Jimmie Harris while in the process of documenting folk tales or vocabulary. Wells even recorded a Stó:lō "drinking song" entitled, "Oh Chief, It Must have Been Nice To Be Drunk and Have Whiskey," which appears to date to the early settlement era. See Dan Milo, interview by Oliver Wells, January 1962, SNA. Also, Wells, *The Chilliwacks and their Neighbours*, 15.

Captain John, "The Story of the Conversion and Subsequent Experiences of Captain John, as Narrated by Himself." Translated from Chinook into English by Reverend W. H. Barraclough, B.A. (30 March 1898), Chilliwack Archives, Add. Mss., 253.

Bishop D’Herbomez, 30 May 1861, *Missions, 1862*.

Throughout the 1990s, as an invited speaker at a number of local Stó:lō Band hosted "community healing" sessions, I was repeatedly told stories of the horrible effects of alcohol on past generations of Stó:lō people. While most of the stories people shared described alcohol and drug problems among more recent generations, some explicitly identified the problems of generational alcohol addiction as beginning with the whiskey introduced during the 1858 gold rush.

E. M. Bunoz, "Bishop Durieu’s System," 194, 199.


Fr. Chirouse, 16 July 1862, *Missions*.


Ibid.

Many Stó:lō communities were only visited three or four times a year by the Oblates, and indeed, as historian Dianne Newell has documented, after 1870 missionaries all along the BC coast often found it easier to conduct their proselytizing activities within the context of visiting industrial work sites, such as those associated with the commercial cannery industry. At the canneries, and later at the hop yards, missionaries essentially found the equivalent of large multi-tribal seasonal villages that relieved them of some of the necessity of making more frequent visits to smaller remote settlements (See Dianne Newell, *Tangles Webs of History*, 46). Methodist missionaries, lacking the numbers and institutional backing of the Catholics, appear to have been especially attentive to the opportunities the canneries provided. See, for example, the logbooks for the Methodist missionary vessel, *Glad Tidings*, as it traveled up and down the BC coast in the 1880s. See Robert Clyde Scott, Add Mss 1299, Box 2/2. Scrapbook. Logbook entries for July 16, 23, 24, 25, 28 1887, and March 24, 1887; Second logbook entries for June and July 1884, and July 1886, British Columbia Archives, (BCA). I am grateful to Dianne Newell for directing me to the Scott manuscript.


McNally, *Distant Vineyard*, 64.


The Oblates had much greater success among the more isolated communities of Sechelt on the Gibson’s Peninsula and among the Squamish of North Vancouver. The Methodists achieved even greater success with Metlakatla. See Fisher, *Contact and Conflict*, Chapter 6.


Edward Mohun to Joseph Trutch, 3 December 1868, in *Papers*, 54. A few years later two separate reserve were created on the Matsqui meadows, one 50 acres and the other 82 acres.

In the summer of 1993 I attended a meeting of Matsqui Elders and listened as two elderly women described what they remembered about the nineteenth century OMI plans for Matsqui prairie. This
paragraph is derived from my memory of their observations. I did not record their conversation or make extensive notes, as I was there on other business and was only serendipitously privileged to hear their oral history.

25 Patrick Charlie, interview with Wilson Duff, in Fieldnotes, Book 1, 47.
26 R.P. Gendre, OMI, Missions, 302.
27 Ibid.
28 Ibid.
29 Reverend Father Charles Marchal to Reverend Father Durieu, 12 February 1871, in Missions, Vol. 12.
30 Crosby, Among the An-ko-me-nums, 189.
31 Ibid.
33 Historian Susan Neylan has recently documented how within Tsimshian communities competing families also used denominational rivalries to their advantage to the point of recruiting churches to their areas. See Susan Neylan, “‘The Heavens are Changing’: Protestant Missionization on the North Pacific Coast,” (Montreal: McGill-Queen’s university Press, 2003.
35 Dombrowski, Against Culture.
36 For a variety of reasons, some no doubt being legal, the local colonial (and later provincial) government wanted to be able to demonstrate that it had consulted with Native people whenever it reduced their reserves, or in other words curtailed their rights. Between the summer of 1864 and the summer of 1874, when the BC government was actively engaged in shrinking and then restricting the size of St6:lə reserves, the colonial correspondence is replete with references to various St6:lə communities having been “visited” or in some manner talked to (in a way implying “consulted”) during the process of defining or redefining reserve boundaries. It is seldom specified who was visited (that is, which individuals), how any consultation occurred, or to what extent such consultation might have resulted in or represented indigenous agreement or compliance. It is interesting, however, that Trutch in particular identified and expressed concern in instances where decisions were pending on communities who had “not been visited.” See, for example the following correspondence: Joseph Trutch to Acting Colonial Secretary, 28 August 1867, in Papers, 40. See also, Joseph Trutch to Colonial Secretary, 19 November 1867, in Papers, 45. Also, Pearce to Trutch, 21 October 1868, in Papers, 52. See also, Mohun to Trutch, 3 December 1868, in Papers, 54; J.B. Launders to Trutch, 18 December 1868, in Papers, 54-57.
37 A. Browning to Officer Administering the Government, 6 July 1869, in Papers, 71.
38 Captain John, “The Story of the Conversion.” Additionally, in 1992 I was told by Captain John’s grandson Andy Commodore that Captain John had at one time attempted to prevent winter spirit dancing from occurring on the Soowahlie reserve. When his own mother began dancing Captain John physically attempted to stop her. However, when he touched his dancing mother he was struck and knocked back by the spirit, and himself began to dance uncontrollably. From that point onward Captain John remained opposed to spirit dancing, but never again attempted to directly intervene to stop others.
39 J. B. Launders to the Chief Commissioner of Lands and Works, Joseph Trutch, 18 December 1868, in Papers, 54-57. Also, J.B. Launders, survey maps, St6:lə Nation Archives (SNA).
40 The Rev. Mr. Browning to the Officer Administering the Government, 6 July 1869, in Papers, 71.
41 Ibid. See also, Captain Ball to Colonial Secretary, 4 December 1869, British Columbia Archives (BCA), GR 1372, File 397/1 B-1322.
42 Captain Ball to Colonial Secretary, 4 December 1869, British Columbia Archives and Records Services (BCA), GR 1372, File 397/1 B-1322. Also, Mr. Ball to the Colonial Secretary, 14 July 1869, in Papers, 72.
43 Ibid.
44 V. Vedder and 27 others to His Excellency Anthony Musgrave, Governor of British Columbia, 30 November 1869, in Papers, 73.
45 H.M. Ball, S.M. to the Colonial Secretary, 15 December 1869, in Papers, 74.
46 Indicative of Captain Johns’ ability to consolidate his power is the fact that ten years later in 1880, he was still listed as Chief in the new reserve map created by W.S. Jemmett. See Jemmett, Fieldnote book, 31 July 1880, B.C. Surveyor General’s Office, W26, Provincial Crown Lands Vault, Victoria, BC.
For example, refer to the correspondence between A.T. Bushby and B.W. Pearse describing the confusion over government recognition of the Chehalis Chief in 1870. See, A.T. Bushby to B.W. Pearse, and Pearse to Bushby, in *Papers*, 83.

The *Gradual Enfranchisement Act* and the *Assimilation Act* were not combined into the single *Indian Act* until 1876.


Most other early twentieth-century scholars, by way of contrast, interpreted the potlatch as an expression of Indian greed. See in particular Ruth Benedict, *Patterns of Culture* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1934; repr. 1969). (I am grateful to Wayne Suttles for drawing my attention to Benedict’s work.) Against this intellectual and social backdrop, Edward Curtis’ provided a fresh and insightful interpretation that challenged all previous interpretations. Curtis was the first academic observer to recognized that people potlatched out of a sense of pride and accomplishment. His conclusions, however, were largely overlooked—perhaps obscured behind the prominence of his beautiful and evocative photographs that for so long were deemed to speak without the need for accompanying text. See Curtis, *The North American Indian*, 141-155.

By the mid-twentieth the growing body of ethnographic investigation allowed academics to apply increasingly sophisticated comparative dimensions to their study of the potlatch. George Murdock alerted people to the fact that potlatching had different meanings within and between various Aboriginal communities (indeed, outside of the awkward Chinook Jargon term, there was not a single indigenous word that could account for the range of “potlatch” exchange ceremonies existing even within a single culture group). Murdock, demonstrated that (at least within the Haida context) potlatches served to elevate the status of the host’s children and not their own. Viola Garfield, meanwhile, argued that among the Tsimshian the potlatch stimulated economic productivity and in so doing facilitated the redistribution of wealth.

In what remains among the most insightful revisionist challenge to the Boasian assumption that potlatches were primarily investment systems dependent upon sustained competition, Homer Barnett observed that the potlatch was less about acquiring a new status than about asserting one’s claim to a position that was already largely understood and accepted by society at large. Guests validated their host’s claims by accepting gifts as witnesses to the transference of property and titles, and by their commitment to reciprocate (see Homer Barnett, “The Nature of the Potlatch,” in *American Anthropologists*, 40:3(1938): 349-358). Certainly, this is the context in which the traditional Coast Salish potlatch continues to be described by such contemporary cultural experts as the St6:lo Nation’s official Cultural Advisor, Albert “Sonny” McHalsie. This interpretation informs the discussion found in chapter three of this study.

It was during the rise in environmental consciousness of the 1960s that a new generation of scholars, led by Wayne Suttles, advanced the innovative and compelling interpretation that the potlatch was largely a social response to ecological variation over time and space: a safety valve created to enable in-laws living in dispersed settlements to access a range of food wealth that was subject to geographic and temporal fluctuations in availability. (Suttles, “Affinal Ties, Subsistence, and Prestige,” 296-305. Also, Suttles, “Variations in Habitat and Culture.” Also, Suttles, “Coping with Abundance.” This interpretation informed and inspired the discussion of traditional culture presented in the second chapter of this volume.

Most scholars embraced Suttles’ interpretations, but some remained unconvincing. Philip Drucker, for one, saw value in defending the older interpretations, while others, especially in the late 1960s and 1970s, rejected the economic functionalist approach altogether and looked instead to the symbolic and psychological theorizings for new insights. See, Philip Drucker and Robert F. Heizer, *To Make My Name*

Most recently, the potlatch has come under the gaze of scholars inspired by the post structural approach of literary criticism. Christopher Bracken’s monograph, The Potlatch Papers: A Colonial Case History, (Chicago and London: University of Chicago Press, 1998), presents the potlatch as a figment of the western imagination and a product of colonial anxiety. Without colonialism, he argues, the diverse and multifaceted indigenous gift exchange ceremonies that characterized the Northwest Coast would never have been conceived as a coherent social or economic system.

Drucker and Heizer rejected this view, but Codere’s thesis remains influential if for no other reason than the fact that no one has seriously engaged the subject since, although Ferguson’s 1984 review of Northwest Coast warfare essentially kept the interpretation before the public eye and probably accounted for its continuing appeal. See, R. Brian Ferguson, “A Reexamination of the Causes of Northwest Coast Warfare,” in Warfare, Culture, and Environment (New York: Academic Press, 1984).

John Lutz has argued that the large gatherings associated with certain non-Native economic activities such as hop picking and cannery work may have provided indigenous people with an opportunity to fulfill certain potlatch obligations in a manner not regarded as threatening to colonial society. (Lutz, “After-The Fur Trade,” 69-93). Another largely overlooked study promoting a different view of post-contact change in the potlatch is Daniela Weinberg, “Models of Southern Kwakiutl Social Organization” in ed., Bruce Cox, Cultural Ecology: Readings on the Canadian Indians and Eskimos (Toronto: McClelland and Stewart, 1973), 227-253.

Forrest LaViolette, in 1951 (the year the potlatch was decriminalized) documented the role of missionaries in late-nineteenth century public policy and social engineering. See, Forest LaViolette, “Missionaries and the Potlatch,” in Queen’s Quarterly, 58(1951): 237-251. Then, in 1961 she expanded her analysis, placing the anti-potlatch law squarely within the context of the larger cultural clash between indigenous ideology and the protestant work ethic. See, Forest LaViolette, The Struggle for Survival: Indian Cultures and the Protestant Ethic in British Columbia (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1961). In 1977, Robin Fisher discussed the banning of the potlatch within the context of the consolidation of European settlement interests, linking its motives to questions of land and resources ownership and management. See, Fisher, Contact and Conflict, 207-109. More recently, Christopher Bracken, has applied the theoretical methods of literary criticism to his analysis of the colonial documents concerning the potlatch prohibition. From these records he argues that the potlatch is best understood as a European construct emerging from and directed toward ill-informed fears about Indian people and savagery. See Christopher Bracken, The Potlatch Papers: A Colonial Case History, (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1998).

In their 1990 monograph An Iron Hand Upon the People, Douglas Cole and Ira Chaikin embrace Codere’s view and some of the older anthropology. As a consequence, they present a picture of the potlatch as competitive gift exchange aimed at enhancing the host’s status that got more and more pronounced throughout the nineteenth century as Aboriginal people who would have been formerly lower status acquired new wealth through the opportunities of the fur trade and wage labour economy and then used this wealth to try and augment their positions within Native society vis-à-vis the old elite. An Iron Hand focuses on the repressive measures the government used to suppress the potlatch and the debate within non-Native society over the means and merits of these measures. The authors do not describe the indigenous import of the prohibition in terms of how it caused alterations in Native society other than in their efforts to thwart the prohibition itself.

Interestingly, the government’s own inability to define a potlatch in their legislation led to more than two decades of half-hearted and geographically imbalanced efforts at enforcing the anti-potlatch amendment to the Indian Act. The judicial response to early attempts at convictions was to call on the government to
more precisely define potlatch and to articulate what it was about the potlatch that was so objectionable. See Cole and Chaiken, Chapter Three, “The Law is Weak as a Baby,” Iron Hand, 25-42.

58 See in particular Patrick Charlie, interview by Wilson Duff, Fieldnotes, Book 1, 1950, 81.

59 The following information about Suxyel comes from Wilson Duff’s Fieldnotes, Book 1, and from the oral history preserved within Suxyel’s family. In particular, I am indebted to Sonny McHalsie, Suxyel’s great-great-grand son, for sharing his knowledge of his ancestor. Elsewhere I have presented additional information on Suxyel. See Carlson and McHalsie, I am Stó:lō, 83-94.

60 Bill Uslick was arrested and convicted in 1896. See Carlson, You Are Asked to Witness, 99.
PART IV

EXPANDED MOVEMENT AND THE EMERGENCE OF MODERN “STÓ:LÔ” COLLECTIVE IDENTITY
CHAPTER SEVEN

Reservations for the Queen’s Birthday, 1864-1876

While many mid-to-late nineteenth century colonial forces conspired to fix indigenous people onto specific sites by fracturing the links between settlements and tribes, and in other ways strengthening localized collective identities nested around individual settlements, other colonial actions simultaneously gave rise to the countervailing development of the modern sense of supra-tribal Stó:lō collective identity. To the extent that complicated narratives emerge from any historical enquiry into identity, history is inevitably, and ironically, regarded as much a part of the problem as the solution. The persistent rhetoric of the noble savage, and the current vogue of depicting pre-contact indigenous society in utopian terms (essentially as everything western society is not) are among the many factors making it difficult for certain contemporary people to acknowledge that serious tensions existed within Aboriginal society prior to contact. These same factors also make it difficult for some to accept that there have been historic shifts in expressions of Native collective identity despite the fact that these shifts in emphasis often reflect indigenous agency and native people’s ability to adapt in innovative fashion to a series of rapidly changing events. Regarded in this light, it is precisely the power of place that, set in an ahistorical context, creates the problem of time.

Several key historical events (all associated with human movements on the landscape) served as catalysts for supra-tribal Stó:lō identity formation. Examined here are those associated with the common struggle for an adequate land base that were
manifested through the political opportunities provided by the annual celebration of the Queen’s Birthday in New Westminster between 1864 and 1874, and the massive gathering associated with the visit of Governor General Lord Dufferin in 1876. Together, these incidents demonstrate that while the infrastructure upon which contemporary supra-tribal Stó:lo political identity is based long pre-dated the European settlement era, it was nonetheless certain manipulative colonial forces that operationalized those networks and caused them to manifest themselves as a genuine political expressions.

Considered within the light of the analysis of forces contributing to a fragmentation of shared identification provided in the previous chapters, the effects of the Queen’s birthday celebrations and the massive political rally associated with Dufferin’s visit are probably most easily appreciated by contemporary outsiders as an ironic development set at odds with colonial intentions. From the point of view of many lower Fraser River indigenous people, they are more often typically considered a natural development with roots in ancient social structures. Considered within the anthropological literature, these overtly political acts are indicative of the flexibility of Coast Salish leadership and the adaptability of Coast Salish culture in the face of change. Colonialism, for them, was simply another factor among many that caused their ancestors to make certain decisions. For indigenous people, the Queen’s birthday celebrations came to epitomize government indifference and dismissive paternalism, which in turn raised among the Stó:lo issues about their place in the newly-established colonial order.

In 1950 Wilson Duff noted that the “name which has been most often applied and which the natives prefer and use themselves is Stalo.” Wayne Suttles corroborates Duff,
noting that, according to his informants, “Stalo is an ancient term.” And yet, one would search in vain through the massive body of published and unpublished literature describing and discussing Pacific Coast Aboriginals in the century prior to British Columbia’s joining Canada in 1871 and not find any reference to a people called “Stó:lō.” Indeed, the word apparently first appears in print no earlier than 1882 when ethnographer James Teit assigned the title “Dream Book of a Stalo Prophet” to a ledger he deposited in the national museum in Ottawa containing mysterious paintings and drawings that had been left by a deceased lower Fraser Aboriginal mystic. A few years later, in 1888, a French Catholic Missionary used the word “stalo” to describe the “people of the Fraser,” and in 1896 the Catholic Church began publishing a translated prayer book entitled Polyglot Manual—Stalo Manual; or Prayers, Hymns, and the Catechism in the Stalo or Lower Fraser Language. That same year the ethnographer Charles Hill-Tout recorded Chief Mischelle of Lytton referring to “the Lower Fraser River Indians” as “Stalo,” and in 1899 Hill-Tout again described the collective of Natives living downriver of Spuzzum in the Fraser Canyon as “the Stalo or Lower Fraser Tribes.”

It is unlikely that any of these sources invented the phrase. Rather, the uses of the term “Stó:lō” most likely reflect indigenous realities as they existed at the time. Certainly, in 1938 “Stallo” was the term the indigenous people of the region used to refer to themselves and their ancestors when they erected the “Eayem [Iyem] Memorial” just upriver from the town of Yale. That stone marker commemorates a new graveyard containing the remains of people from a variety of older cemeteries made necessary when road and railway developments destroyed older village and associated cemetery sites. Of course, “Stó:lō” is also the name the majority of the lower Fraser Aboriginal people
have chosen to describe themselves, as demonstrated in their membership in the Stó:lō Nation organization.\(^9\)

If one thing is clear, it is that Duff cannot, as some have asserted, be credited with coining the expression Stó:lō.\(^10\) Nineteenth-century literature proves that the word carried and conveyed an indigenous import long before Duff arrived on the scene. But how much longer? Is its relatively recent late nineteenth-century appearance in the western lexicon suggestive of the fact that though the term might be older than Duff’s writings, it is nonetheless still a product of a colonial writer’s imagination? If, as Suttles maintains, his informants of nearly fifty years ago insisted that the word Stó:lō was ancient, then why does it only make its literary début in the 1880s? Why, in other words, did earlier explorers and fur trades not record the word? Perhaps these earlier non-Native sojourners and immigrants were less engaged with the Aboriginal people than subsequent missionaries and ethnographers. But a potentially more satisfying explanation seems to arise when one considers that it was not until the late 1800s that it became consistently necessary for the lower Fraser indigenous population to act collectively in the face of persistent external intrusions.

Considered in this light, and within the precedence of the identity-shaping migrations and movements of the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, one can interpret the relatively sudden appearance of the term Stó:lō as the emergent political expression of what had formerly been economic, social and spiritual linkages connecting diverse settlement groups over a broad geographic region. This nascent political consciousness emerged largely through indigenous agency and in response to pivotal historic events that were themselves linked to processes of geographical movement.
The idea of Stó:lō identity is, therefore, indeed an ancient one. Until imperial forces threatened the very fabric of indigenous society, however, the concept was largely social and economic, and to the extent that it was informed by ancient stories of the Transformers' movements and epic floods, it was also spiritual and sacred. Moreover, it was primarily the upper-class women of a predominantly polygamous and patrilocal society who were interested in maintaining intimate social connections between settlements. Likewise, lower status men, by virtue of their lacking geographically anchoring hereditary rights and property, were especially vulnerable to local economic and political fluctuations and therefore dependent to a greater extent than the male elite on maintaining intimate ties with more powerful distant relatives in other settlements for the purpose of being able to relocate to live under the sway of a more wealthy and generous leader elsewhere.

Lower Fraser River Aboriginal identity politics, therefore, were largely gender and class based in the pre-gold rush era. As such, it is not surprising that the local settlement and tribal elite who supplied the explorers and fur traders with almost all their information concerning Aboriginal society chose to emphasize settlement and tribal political collectives and not the broader supra-tribal identity that would have carried greater meaning for women and lower status men. This indigenous bias is, not surprisingly, reflected in the early European documentation. Here, we document those post-gold rush colonial forces that inadvertently worked against the Native upper class males' disposition to emphasize local political units, and to explore the manner in which the broader Stó:lō identity that had previously been of primary interest to high status
women and lower class males came to prominence, and was, in fact, ultimately embraced by certain prominent members of the male hereditary elite.

Earlier it was demonstrated how the process of reserve creation was a key component of the colonial government’s plan to “create” Indian communities. Under Governor Douglas’ tenure, efforts were made to fracture the mechanisms responsible for linking lower Fraser Aboriginal society together and to arrest the fluid movement of Aboriginal people across the landscape. Thus, when Douglas instructed Sgt. William McColl to mark out generous reserves that would provide Stó:lō people with the means of becoming agriculturally self-sufficient he was in large part seeking to facilitate Aboriginal people’s integration into non-Native society by fixing them onto a particular place to promote local community identity. Little could he have anticipated, however, that his successor’s wholesale reversal of these policies would actually sow the seeds for a unified Stó:lō identity set increasingly in opposition to non-Native society.

News of James Douglas’ impending retirement caused anxiety among the Stó:lō. While his Indian policies were often frustratingly vaguely defined (a fact that ultimately caused his former Native wards no end of problems after his retirement), Douglas was nonetheless regarded as an ally and protector against the growing and increasingly demanding local settler population. His status stemmed not only from his long tenure as Chief Factor of the Hudson’s Bay Company, but also from his role as Queen’s representative. Fearing the new colonial administration, which now included for the first time an elected assembly to directly represent settler interests, would abandon them, the “Fraser River Indians uttered many lamentations over their deserted condition.”11 Within
the Temperance Societies, a rumour quickly spread throughout “all the Indian tribes that all who spread the word of the Catholic priest will have misfortune: and once the big new English chief [governor] arrives, He will reject the earth and the priests and all those who pray.”

Some time in late March, 1864, a delegation of lower Fraser Indians travelled to New Westminster to lay their common concerns directly before the outgoing governor. This collective political action has parallels with the previous decade’s large gatherings of Coast Salish people in Puget Sound, who debated how to respond to American treaty offers. In the pre-colonial era, a similar precedent for such extensive intertribal political cooperation has been recorded with respects to the great 1830s, Cowichan-led, Coast Salish attack against the more northern Lekwiltok (“unkillable things”) of Johnston Strait. In each case it was the incursions of an external enemy into Coast Salish territory that had inspired the indigenous leadership to activate the political linkages that more typically lay dormant in the social, economic and spiritual connections between tribal groups. Beginning in the 1780s, the Lekwiltok began acquiring significant American firearms from Bostonian fur traders off the north coast of Vancouver Island. These weapons, and the fact that the smallpox epidemic of 1782 seems not to have reached them, provided the Lekwiltok with a military advantage that enabled them to relentlessly push southward, killing, enslaving, and permanently displacing the northern Coast Salish people. By the 1840s they had successfully occupied northern Coast Salish settlements in areas now better known as Campbell River and Comox, and assumed control of many of the adjoining resources. From their new position at the northern end of Georgia Strait, Lekwiltok raids on the central and southern Coast Salish people living
in the vicinity of the Fraser River and southern Vancouver Island increased. It was this
development that had led people to devise collective plans to halt the Lekwiltok’s
southward advance. Political and military co-operation had proven effective then—the
Lekwiltok had been stopped.

In 1864, as alcoholism and disease reduced their numbers and recently arrived
European farmers occupied more and more of their lands, the central Fraser Valley tribes
sought to recreate something of the ephemeral political unity that had served them so well
two generations earlier. This time, however, the tactic would be more diplomatic than
military, for while violence was occasionally and increasingly implied and threatened, it
was never opted for. The Stó:lō chose to walk softly and carry a big stick. As will be
demonstrated, however, the balance of power on the Northwest Coast was shifting
rapidly. As more settlers arrived the Stó:lō stick became ever smaller in relation to the
power at the disposal of non-Native society. Indeed, by the first decade of the twentieth
century the indigenous war club had become, in the eyes of the representatives of
newcomer society, little more than an annoying switch.

It is uncertain if the Stó:lō were aware of the statements James Douglas had made
to the colony’s first Legislative Assembly on the eve of his retirement in January 1864.
Likely, one of the Oblate priests conveyed the news to Temperance Society members.
That the governor chose to describe his policy of reserving “lands embracing the Village
Sites, cultivated fields, and favourite resorts of the several tribes,” as having “secur[ed]
them from the encroachments of Settlers, and forever removing the fertile cause of
agrarian disturbance,” was no doubt meant to soothe the settlers’ own fears that BC’s
Native population would retard the colony’s economic growth. His assertion that the
effects of these policies had “been productive of the happiest effects on the minds of the Natives,” is best appreciated in light of his desire to allay fears that isolated farmers on remote pre-emptions might fall prey to hostile or savage Natives. Furthermore, in a blatant lie most likely designed to curry favour with the settler population by creating the popular impression that he was someone who had facilitated rather than hindered the colony’s advancement from fur trade backwater to agricultural and industrial centre, Douglas stated that the reserves “thus partially defined and set apart, in no case exceed the proportion of ten acres for each family concerned, and are to be held as the joint and common property of the several tribes, being intended for their exclusive use and benefit, and especially as a provision for the aged, the helpless, and the infirm.” The fact is, however, that reserves larger than 10 acres per family had been created, and that where they had been created smaller, Douglas had regularly intervened to make them larger.

It is the concluding section of the outgoing governor’s speech that provides the clearest indication of his true intentions toward the Aboriginal population, for there he explained the limits of his reserve policies, noting that they were not intended to interfere with the private rights of individuals of the Native Tribes, or to incapacitate them, as such, from holding land; on the contrary, they have precisely the same rights of acquiring and possessing land in their individual capacity, either by purchase or by occupation under the Preemption Law, as other classes of Her Majesty’s subjects; provided they in all respects comply with the legal conditions of tenure by which land is held in this Colony.

These measures, he clarified, were designed with an eye to “averting evils pregnant with danger to the peace and safety of the Colony, and of confirming by those acts of justice and humanity, the fidelity and attachment of the Native Tribes to Her Majesty’s rule.” In other words, Douglas was clinging to the hope that the Aboriginal population, and in
particular the Stó:lō of the lower Fraser River, would continue making "progress," as he saw it, along the path to civilization and integration; that like his own Aboriginal wife, perhaps, they would within a single generation cease to require large communal reserves and become, for all intents and purposes, British subjects living on individual plots of private land, indistinguishable from the recently arrived English farmers except for the colour of their skin.

For the Aboriginal population, this vision was at best only partially appealing. For those Fraser Valley Natives still lacking reserves, as well as those who had encountered the racism that characterized the new settler communities off reserve, change was occurring too rapidly, and in too many instances, at the discretion of people other than themselves. Even if the Lower Fraser Natives had wanted to become assimilated the non-Native population was making it abundantly clear that they were not welcome. It was within this context that the Stó:lō delegation met with Douglas on the lawn of the government building on a cool March morning in 1864. The context for their arrival made clear to Douglas that his dream of quick integration was not coming to fruition; that the Natives were not necessarily as "quiet and well disposed" as he had characterized them to the Legislative Assembly.

Calling a number of prominent government officials as witnesses, as well as the surveyor assigned to demarcate their reserve boundaries, Douglas, speaking in Chinook and then English, assured the Stó:lō chiefs and instructed his staff that "all lands claimed by the Indians were to be included in the reserve; the Indians were to have as much land as they wished, and in no case to lay off a reserve under 100 acres." The Stó:lō left well satisfied and within a few short days William McColl arrived in the central Fraser Valley
and began the job of marking off the reserves. By mid-May he reported that he had “laid [them] off accordingly.”\textsuperscript{16} Collective action had worked for the Stó:lō tribes: their concerns had been addressed and they were publicly given the governor’s assurance that the land demarcated for each reserve community would be secured through a consistent and equitable system that would ensure that each settlement had the resource base to achieve self-sufficiency in the emerging new economy. That is to say, the Chiefs identified not only the small cultivated potato patches associated with every settlement, but also thousands of acres of as yet uncultivated meadow and pasture land, as well as forests, adjacent to their settlements.

Within a few days of McColl beginning his work some of the most recently arrived immigrants began complaining to their legislative representatives that the land they had intended to pre-empt, indeed the land that some of them had already begun clearing and cultivating and in some cases constructed homes on, fell within the newly identified Indian Reserves.\textsuperscript{17} The local media picked up the story and decried Douglas’ March address to the Stó:lō delegates on the government-house lawn as a “grand potlatch” at which the outgoing governor had “given away... to the Indians... seven or eight miles square” of land in the central Fraser Valley. As far as the paper’s editor was concerned, Douglas’ promise to the Stó:lō leadership was indicative of the extent to which the governor had failed to establish policies that would elevate Natives into European-style civilization. They were instead proof that Douglas himself had regressed and fallen into a savage state of being; that “in one fell swoop” his Indian-like actions had “throw[n] so large a tract of settled country into the hands of the Indians” that it was
almost certain that the effect would be “trouble between the white settlers and the natives.”

The following week, in an unrelated incident on a trail at the head of distant Bute Inlet, Chillcotin Natives killed a party of road construction engineers. The local reasons for the clash were not deemed important enough to investigate. The Legislative Council simply linked the two events as proof that the retiring Executive had left the colony in an untenable situation: local Fraser Valley agricultural land was being denied to loyal British settlers and provided to Indians who were not necessarily farming it, while farther north Indians were killing white men who were involved in trying to facilitate the development of the colony’s mineral wealth.

It was within this climate of racial tension that, on May 14, Frederick Seymour contacted the priests at St. Mary’s mission and informed them of his desire to “to reunite all of the savage chiefs and their subjects for the 24th of May, The Queen’s birthday.” He then “ordered” the priests to “inform the Indians and... [to] help in the organization of this event,” a task the Oblates happily consented to.”

According to non-Native observers, ten days later on the muddy grounds outside the government house in New Westminster between 3,500 and 6,000 Aboriginals gathered, most of whom were Lower Fraser River residents. Seymour described the assemblage as “probably the largest Native gathering ever seen on this side of the Rocky Mountains.” Various observers recorded their impressions, but none in such detail as Father Gendre, OMI, who actually accompanied the Coast Salish flotilla from St. Mary’s mission to the governor’s residence in New Westminster. His account portrays vividly the extent to which boundaries had been created separating Natives from newcomers, and the growing effects
that realization had on an indigenous sense of shared identity or nation building. Because of its richness, and despite its length, Gendre's account is presented here almost verbatim:

There was little time to lose in informing the tribes, even those in the farthest distances, of this news, I sent a chief travelling throughout the camps in a distance covering over one hundred miles. In four or five days all those who could respond to the calling had been notified; and in order not to miss their chance, they came and reunited immediately at St. Marie, where we were given the opportunity to educate and strengthen them....

The 22\textsuperscript{nd} of May, prior to the eve of the big day, was for us a day of hard work and preoccupation. It was not an easy task for us to maneuver three thousand savages, to prepare them to meet at a designated area, not far from New Westminster, in order to form one compact mass on the Fraser river and to land near the governor's house, to compose three speeches that the chiefs of the main tribes were to recite to His Excellency, etc....\textsuperscript{22}

It is unclear to what extent the three speeches conveyed three different messages from three different indigenous constituencies, or a single message in three languages. Certainly the Governor's brief response, as described below, was aimed at a single indigenous audience. That such a large grouping of Native people could be organized so quickly speaks to the Oblate's organizational skills and the sense of urgency Aboriginal people felt regarding their collective future vis-à-vis newcomer society. The collective nature of the event was demonstrated not only in the political messages, however, but also in the very nature of the coordinated movement of people Gendre described from St. Mary's mission downriver to the Governor's residence in New Westminster:

In the afternoon the weather cleared after a long bout of rain. I gave the signal to leave and we embarked, singing, on the short waves of the Fraser. We raised our elegant flags, as did all the chiefs; our fleet resembled a triumphant
parade. A few miles from the designated encampment, a steamboat passed traveling from Fort-Yale en route to New Westminster. On board were the governor, the colonial secretary, and the ship captain. These three men, charmed by the looks we bestowed upon them, turned toward my canoe and saluted our flags by waving their hats. We returned the gesture in the savage fashion. This salutation dissipated any past worries we had anticipated about the governor's intentions.

Upon arrival at two miles from New Westminster we pulled ashore and camped in the forest for the night. How I would have loved to describe to our dear inexperienced and scholastic brothers the wonders of this night spent under the stars, under the great trees of the forest, in the company of close to three thousand savages! Brothers of Breton and the South (of France) believe me, it was pure poetry!

Impressive indeed. Although, as the priest goes on to explain, the awesome spectacle of the first day's events were exceeded by the pageantry, pregnant with political significance, of the following day's activities:

Early the following morning the whole party was on its feet. The bells of each chief could be heard through the thick of the woods, instantly five or six savages fell to their knees on the moss to worship the one the angels love in the heavens in indelible beauty. O religion! Thou art so beautiful! How you help the poor child of the rallied forest grow around your immortal flag!

At nine o'clock, I received from New Westminster the order to organize our naval army; but all our men were already in their vessels with flags flying. Soon the R. P. FOUQUET arrived, accompanied by R. P. GRANDIDIER, at the head of five hundred savages that expanded our rows. The R. P. FOUQUET held a large white paper, wrapped in a magnificent red ribbon, in his right hand, that was quite intriguing to our savages. He travels though the rows to give his orders, and at his command all the vessels moved off shore; six to seven hundred ships slide into the current of the Fraser. Sixty flags, on which shines the symbol of redemption, wave in the free will of the wind; fifty-five savage chiefs lead the first line; the students of St. Mary's hold a place of honor. They break into the song of the oar,
and three thousand five hundred mouths hold the mountains
and the forests at bay. What a panorama! What enthusiasm!
As for me, it was difficult to hold back shouts of
admiration.

When the Native flotilla arrived in New Westminster a large crowd of nervous,
and rather awe-struck, settlers greeted it. From that point onward, all those celebrating
the Queen’s birthday, and participating in the associated politicking, would be in the
same location but occupying distinct racially designated spaces. The Native community
assumed positions appropriate to conveying their message(s) to the government, while
the non-Natives looked on as though the politics was itself a feature of the birthday
celebrations:

A few moments later, we arrived at our landing stage, quite
close to the governor’s house. A large number of whites,
friends or enemies, were present at the landing stage and
assisted in the spectacle of disembarkation. The reunion
took place a few feet away from the residence. The R. P.
FOUQUET thus opened his grand paper wrapped in red
ribbon, he pronounces all the savage chiefs, and carefully,
in order not to insult their vanity, places them in a half
circumference so that no one comes last. The school
children of St. Marie formed two rows above the chiefs,
and our three or four thousand savages grouped themselves
around the semi-circle. All the colonists of New
Westminster contemplated the Indian meeting. Finally, at
noon, the R. P. FOUQUET, who had been assigned a place
of honor, arrives at the residence of His Excellency. The
Governor thus emerges from his lodgings with his first
officers in full dress; he is accompanied by his guards and
led by a musical band. Upon arrival, all heads turned and a
thunder of twenty thousand cheers for His Excellency could
be heard far in the distance. What a dignified moment for
our dear savages!...

Seymour’s arrival on the muddy lawn in front of his official residence has to be
considered in the context of the meeting Douglas had held at the same location a few
short weeks earlier. Prior to Douglas meeting with the central Fraser Valley Chiefs to
address their concerns over reserve size, official Indian policy in the broad sense had never been conveyed directly from the Crown’s representative to indigenous people. Certainly Douglas had on a number of occasions in the past resolved disputes and clarified his position “on the spot.” But before 1864 Native people had not collectively approached the government’s top official demanding that government policy be applied equally to all Native communities. Following the meeting with Douglas, William McColl had been immediately sent to demarcate Stó:lō reserves according to Stó:lō specifications.

Thus, as the May 24th Queens’ birthday celebrations unfolded, Governor Seymour was presented with a series of speeches by Native leaders who had either just had their new reserves demarcated, or who had within the past couple of days heard about such activities from their neighbours and relatives.

When there was silence, the first chief, who had been given orders to speak first, presented himself to His Excellency, gave a grand salute and proceeded to recite imperturbably his short speech given in his native language, interpreted in Chinook by another savage, and finally translated into English by the R. P. FOUQUET. The first speech followed by the second, followed by a third. The governor responded to the three speeches with one. The R. P. FOUQUET translated the words of the governor into Chinook, and three good interpreters would then translate these words into their own language, with loud bellowing voices in order to be heard by the people far in the distance. This truly unusual scene brought smiles to the lips of the spectators.

The speeches were thus followed by the distribution of presents. Each chief presented himself before His Excellency to receive a gift reflective of his royalty: a pretty cap laced with a gold braid that dazzles, like the sun’s rays, the joys of the day; fifty five chiefs, fifty five royal caps. The little school children of St. Marie all took turns in front of the governor to receive promises, a
handshake and a complimentary tie. With the completion of the gift distribution the governor left the chair and reentered his dwelling among loud and dizzying cheers.

A joyous meal was offered to our dear Indians. They were lavished by bread, cookies, molasses and tobacco, their appetites satisfied with delight because for them, molasses is a food that was for the Gods of a fable.\textsuperscript{23}

While the impressive gathering was ostensibly a celebration of Queen Victoria’s birthday, Seymour had other, more politic reasons for desiring to meet with the Aboriginal populace. In a letter to London, he explained that in truth he had originally conceived of the gathering primarily as an opportunity to soothe the Lower Fraser Indians’ fears over Douglas’ departure and to ingratiate himself in their minds: “It became desirable for me to make myself known to the natives and show them that I had succeeded to all the power of my predecessor and to his solicitude for their welfare.”

Yet, it was the intervening “recent intelligence of the terrible massacre of our Countrymen at Bute Inlet, and vague rumours... of a general insurrection of the Indians being imminent,” that set the tone for the massive get together.\textsuperscript{24} While the Stó:lō and their immediate neighbours feasted on the governor’s biscuits and molasses the Chilcotin of Bute Inlet retreated before an advancing retaliatory military expedition.

Reflecting upon the Queens’ birthday celebrations in a letter to the Colonial Office three months after the gathering, Seymour drew obvious pleasure in contrasting the written petition from the Lower Fraser Natives with the violent methods employed by the Chilcotin. For the Stó:lō, however, the non-violent nature of their political expression was less significant than the experience of having spoken with a united voice and through the newcomers’ written medium. They came away from the gathering with a new sense of their collective power and influence. To the extent that following the delivery of the
speeches the indigenous leadership were relegated to eating biscuits and molasses at the river's bank while the "whites repaired to the Legislative Hall where they partook of a sumptuous dejeuner provided by His Excellency," the Stó:lō also became increasingly aware of the racial boundary maintenance that was coming to shape their collective Aboriginal identity. (See Figures 7.1, 7.2)

The 1864 Queen's Birthday celebration represents a genuinely pivotal moment in Northwest Coast indigenous history. The gathering was of unprecedented scope and rife with pageantry, but more importantly, it involved the movement of Coast Salish people from diverse, scattered, and increasingly isolated settlements to a single site for a concentrated political purpose. To be sure, large inter-tribal gatherings were nothing new to the Coast Salish, and especially the lower Fraser Stó:lō. The annual summer migration of thousands of coastal people to the Fraser Canyon for the purpose of procuring wind-dried salmon provides perhaps the best example of such "traditional" opportunities for gatherings. In addition, in the early years of the twentieth century Chief William "Billy" Sepass of Skowkale related to a non-Native friend that Chilliwack had formerly been the site of great intertribal gatherings that were held every fourth year to "celebrate the sun ceremony." Contemporary Elders such as Jeff Point of Skowkale still carry and share oral traditions of these events.

All of these pre-colonial gatherings, however, appear to have been held principally for either social reasons, or for focused economic or spiritual reasons. The 1864 Queen’s Birthday celebration may well have built upon such indigenous precedent, but ultimately, as the celebration turned into an annual event, it came to be regarded by
the Aboriginal participants as a primarily political occasion where shared visions were presented and defended, and where shared collective identity was nurtured and strengthened. The roughly 4,000 Natives in attendance each year between 1864 and 1874 were provided only brief opportunities to publicly address the governor. As such, the pre-gathering gatherings at St. Mary’s Mission hosted by the Oblate priests assumed even greater importance as they provided opportunities for the leaders of 50-odd regional settlements comprising at least three distinct language groups to compose a single, or at the least a series of coordinated, political statements.28

Thus, it was as a single body that the lower Fraser Natives and some of their neighbours made known to the colonial and later federal authorities their collective concerns, hopes, and wishes. In particular, at the first Queen’s Birthday gathering they attempted to explain that those who had only days before had their reserves created by William McColl were well satisfied with their land, and that those still lacking a reserve wanted the same; that they expected Seymour to protect and honour their land base, and to provide them with compensation for lost resources outside of the reserves. Thus it was what was to become known as the “Indian land question” that lay at the heart of the movement toward modern collective Stó:lo political identity:

Please to protect our land, that it will not be small for us; many are well pleased with their reservations, and many wish that their reservations be marked out for them. Please to give us good things as to make us become as the good white man, as an exchange for our land occupied by white men.”29

This message, composed in the wake of Douglas’ promise and McColl’s surveys, was to be repeated yearly over the ensuing decade with only slight modification in wording. What would eventually change were the government’s responses. So long as
incidents like the Bute Inlet conflict raised the spectre of Indian violence the government was willing to engage in meaningful discussions with Native people to avoid open conflict. As legal scholar Douglas Harris has observed, in nineteenth century British Columbia it was the government, and not the Aboriginal people, whose actions concerning Aboriginal land policy were unpredictable and outside the rule of law.\textsuperscript{30} Indeed, as Seymour’s correspondence to the Colonial Office in the summer of 1864 make clear, an inverse relation existed between the degree to which Indians behaved in a civilized manner and the extent to which the government addressed their concerns. The greater the perceived threat of violence from supposed savages the more the government strove to encourage progress in civilization. But the more a Native community demonstrated that they were civilized (that is, the more they acted peacefully, used written petitions, and sent their children to residential schools, etc.) the less the government considered them worthy of consideration and the more the government saw fit to ignore their own established laws and protocols for dealing with Natives.

In his 1864 Queen’s Birthday speech, governor Seymour announced to the gathered Natives,

As you say, there is plenty of land here, for both White men and Indians. You shall not be disturbed in your reserves. I shall protect you from both bad White men and from bad Indians. I am glad you want to be civilized and raised to an equality with the White Men. Cultivate your Lands; send your children to school; listen to what the clergymen tell you, and believe in it.\textsuperscript{31}

Within a few years Seymour’s promises that the Stó:lō would not be disturbed in their reserves, and, more specifically, that their reserves “shall not be reduced without my personal inspection,”\textsuperscript{32} were broken, and reserves laid out under Douglas’ directions
reduced by over ninety percent.

For colonial society, the peaceful nature of the first Queen's birthday gathering caused the subsequent gatherings to be viewed not as political events where through the process of racial boundary maintenance two distinct groups negotiated their relationship, but rather as festivals, or "celebrations" with ample opportunities to observe exotic others behaving exotically. Whites gathered not to hear the Aboriginal political speeches and to engage in cross-racial political dialogues, but to listen to Native music, marvel at Native costumes, and be thrilled by Native canoe races.33 (See Figure 7.3) For the Stó:lō, by way of contrast, who regard all gatherings, especially those associated with music, drumming, singing and eating, and in particular, any event associated with human movement over great physical space, to be spiritually charged, they were powerful events in other ways as well. As such, they were inherently political.

At the Queen's birthday gatherings geographically fixed tribal and settlement-based collective identities were momentarily subsumed in a supra-tribal identity caste in opposition to the political power of non-Native society. With each passing year Aboriginal leaders more fully appreciated that whatever distinctions existed between themselves and their variously defined communities, a division with greater meaning as concerned their ability to govern land and resources existed between Indians generally and the white hosts of the Queen's birthday celebrations. Identities cast in relation to tribal watersheds and transformed ancestors remained meaningful, but in the face of mounting non-Native competition over land and resources Native people recognized the value of a united voice. Non-Natives' claims to land were not based on ancestral references to place. Non-Natives did not use the potlatch to assert property ownership.
To use a modern metaphor, the western and Aboriginal systems of governance and resource management simply could not interface.

Henceforth, despite the government's best efforts to the contrary, the Lower Fraser River Indians acted increasingly as a single unit. The urgency of a rapidly diminishing land base remained at the heart of their shared vision and their shared identity. As such, in 1867, when Seymour's lieutenant Joseph Trutch reduced the Indian reserves established under Douglas's directions, it became suddenly clear that even the Queen's representative could not necessarily be trusted to respect either Stó:lo interests or even the British rule of law. The government simply did not honour promises. As a result, the Stó:lo, like some other British Columbia indigenous communities, increasingly focused their energies on achieving a means to become more independent of government control through the implementation of new systems of Aboriginal self-government. As legal scholar Douglas Harris has documented for the Stó:lo's upriver Nlakapamux neighbours, indigenous people sought to create a system that would establish predictable rule-based relationships between indigenous and newcomer society. But to be meaningful, the new Native government initiatives needed more than predictable rules. They also needed to be crafted in such a way as to not directly challenge or undermine existing expressions of indigenous governance and identity. The option that emerged for the Salish of the lower Fraser River was a model of supra-tribal collective governance built upon the existing network of family connections that would ensure consistent protection of resources and standardized political experiences throughout the broadest territory.

1 For discussions of leadership and innovation see Suttles, "The Plateau Prophet," Coast Salish Essays; also, Miller and Boxberger, "Creating Chiefdoms," 283-284.
2 Duff, *The Upper Stalo*, 11.

3 Suttles, personal communication with Keith Thor Carlson (February 1998).


6 Chief Mischelle’s father was St6:lo from Yale.

7 Hill-Tout, *The Salish People*, 95, 100, 102.

8 The Iyem Memorial was erected under the general direction of Dennis S. Peters, the first cousin of Pierre Ayesick.

9 Nineteen of the twenty-nine lower Fraser River Bands are active participants in St6:lo Nation governance, another five receive certain services from the St6:lo Nation while remaining politically autonomous, and five other Bands have no formal ties to the St6:lo Nation at all.

10 The Chief and council of the Yale Band, one of more extreme defenders of this position, assert “The word ‘St6:lo’ or ‘Stalo’ was coined by the anthropologist Wilson Duff around 1950, and is only the word meaning ‘river or river people’ in a local dialect. The term was not used earlier, and is not the name of a group or tribe in any traditional sense.” The argument’s protagonists maintain that Duff manipulated the information shared with him by lower Fraser tribal Elders. He is accused of inventing a collective identity that had never really existed in either indigenous minds or indigenous history, ostensibly to advance his career. To some people, Duff’s well-publicized suicide in the early 1970s serves as proof of his earlier improper intentions and actions. Within Coast Salish cosmology it is assumed that people who have done something wrong—especially anything that might have offended deceased ancestors—will pay heavily for their transgression. Duff lived a tormented existence and ultimately took his own life, so goes the logic, at least in part because he could not live with the sin of having manipulated St6:lo history. (While to my knowledge representatives of the Yale First Nation have never expressed this view publicly, individuals from the communities of Skowkale, Soowahlie, and Sumas have all described Duff’s death to me in these terms).

Another Native people boldly reject this view. Some even point out the irony of criticizing Duff in this manner when in fact he never classified the St6:lo as any sort of cohesive political group in any of his writings. Duff in fact went excessively far in the other direction, emphasizing the situational and ephemeral nature of St6:lo leadership and the tenuous network connecting people across a broad and diverse landscape. As such, there is in fact a body of counter indigenous thought that ironically takes issue with Duff for not fully recognizing the powerful, if largely latent, supra-tribal collectivity that existed in the century prior to his conducting his fieldwork. Those defending the “St6:lo have always known they were St6:lo” position like to point out that their opponents are typically male chiefs from Bands whose reserves lie adjacent to the most valuable natural resources: forest land, minerals, water, salmon, spiritual sites etc., and that by denying the historicity of the concept of shared St6:lo identity these “greedy men” simultaneously deny the broadest definitions of shared collective Aboriginal title. The significance of this position is that if the concept of the broader St6:lo nation did not exist pre-historically, then Aboriginal title to resources, as well as the right to manage those same resources and govern the Native people who may access and benefit from them, falls by default to the next smallest cultural-political unit: the supposedly autonomous tribe or band.

11 Frederick Seymour to Cardwell, 31 August 1864, Colonial Despatches, CO 60/19, no. 30, 95.


13 These political gatherings, most commonly associated in the popular mind with the quixotic speech attributed to Chief Seattle, are discussed within the context of other nineteenth century evidence for and against Coast Salish Chiefdoms in Miller and Boxberger, “Creating Chiefdoms,” 273-277.


15 For a detailed account of the impact of western fire arms and the aggressive southward movement of the Yukletaw see, Galois, *Kwakwakwakw Settlements*, 223-276.


17 J. Hendrickson, ed., *Journals of the Colonial Legislatures*, Vol. IV (Victoria: Provincial Archives of...
18 "The Last Potlatch," The British Columbian, 27 April 1864.

19 Gendre, Missions, 298.

20 Ibid., 296-307.

21 Frederick Seymour to Cardwell, 31 August 1864, Colonial Despatches, CO 60/19, no. 30, BCA, 95.


23 Ibid.

24 Frederick Seymour to Cardwell, 31 August 1864, Colonial Despatches, 95.

25 "The Queen’s Birthday," The British Columbian, 26 May 1865.

26 Eloise Street, Sepass Tales, the Songs of Y-ail-mihat (Chilliwack, BC: Sepass Trust, 1974), 13. This particular series of gatherings were possibly products of the prophet dance phenomenon of the early nineteenth century. See Suttles, The Plateau Prophet Dance. Perhaps this was associated with the “great confederacy of tribes in the Salish region of ‘Chilliwack’” that Charles Hill-Tout is reported to have “in hand” in the Second Report to the British Association for the Advancement of Sciences in 1898, 698-699.

27 Jeff Point, personal communication with Keith Thor Carlson (17 May 1995).

28 Both the pre-birthday gatherings at St. Mary’s Mission and the New Westminster meetings provided Native people with opportunities to meet that were deemed non-threatening to government officials and settlers alike. The Treaty Day celebrations of the Puget Sound Salish were similar events that were equally palatable to American authorities. See Miller and Boxberger, “Creating Chiefdoms,” 278; also Harmon, Indians in the Making, 151-152, 182.

29 Frederick Seymour to Cardwell, 31 August 1864, Colonial Despatches, CO 60/19, no. 30, BCA, 95. Quoted in full in Carlson, Atlas, 170. The following year, as the newspapers reported, the St6:i6 again emphasized the land question in their presentation to the governor: “The prayer and hope of the Indians is that Your Excellency will constantly preserve their lands to them and protect them from bad white men and bad Indians.” See “The Queen’s Birthday,” The British Columbian, 26 May 1865, 3.


31 Governor Frederick Seymour to Edward Cardwell, C.O. 60/19, Microfilm B-4034, BCA, 95-104. See also Birch Papers, MSS 0061, Vol. 2, File, “Birch Papers,” Reel #A00272, BCA.

32 Governor Seymour to the Earl of Carnarvon, C.O. 60/27, BCA, 237-240.

33 See accounts of Queen’s May 24th birthday celebrations in successive years editions of the British Columbia Guardian.

34 Harris, “The Nlha7kapmx Meeting at Lytton,” 5-25.
CHAPTER EIGHT

Collective Governance and the Lynching of Louie Sam

While the Queen’s Birthday gatherings and the subsequent meeting with Dufferin together steadily enhanced a sense of Stó:lo collective identity, they ultimately proved unsuccessful in affecting government policy or non-Native public opinion. Indeed, it was the gatherings’ failure to affect real change in either colonial or later federal/provincial government policy that provided the impetus to create a collective government to advance and protect shared Aboriginal interests. These developments had two key expressions. The first was in the Stó:lo people’s 1879 attempt to establish a genuine supra-tribal political body that would provide local self-governance under the rubric of the British Crown and Canadian federalism. The second was largely in response to the government’s failure to act upon the first initiative. The Stó:lo will to operate as a collective political unit with genuine political authority manifested itself briefly, but poignantly, in 1884. Early that year, before the drifting ice had disappeared from the Fraser River, hundreds of lower Fraser Aboriginal people travelled by canoe to gather in Chilliwack and contemplate a coordinated supra-tribal military campaign against the civilian population of Whatcom County Washington, USA. Stó:lo ire had been raised after a mob of more than eighty mounted Americans had crossed into Canada and lynched a young Stó:lo boy who was then in the custody of Canadian police officers. It was the Canadian government’s abject failure to protect Aboriginal life and liberty that effectively operationalized Stó:lo supra-tribal political identity, and the explicit hypocrisy in subsequent Canadian overtures to bring the guilty American’s to justice that
demonstrated to the Stó:lō that external governing bodies could not and should not represent their interests.

By 1874 the Stó:lō and their neighbours had become disenchanted with both the birthday celebrations and the government’s patronizing responses to their concerns. That year, during the pre-gathering meeting at St. Mary’s, the Chiefs decided that it was insufficient to simply ask for general protection of reserves and compensation for lost lands and then leave it to the government to interpret what that meant. Instead, they drafted a detailed petition outlining not only their concerns, but also what they considered just options for government redress. Local land issues were identified on a tribe-by-tribe basis, but the petition demanded that a consistent and equitable land and governance policy be applied to all lower Fraser Indians. In this way, the Stó:lō made clear that they were a community of communities. An equitable share of resources between Native settlements and consistent access to government services were crucial. At the heart of the petition lay the statement that reserves needed to include a minimum of 80 acres per nuclear family. The chiefs explained that they were frustrated with the government’s inconsistent treatment and unpredictable behaviour: “We are commencing to believe that the aim of the white men is to exterminate us as soon as they can, although we have always been quiet, obedient, kind and friendly to the whites.” Clearly recognizing that their efforts to behave in a civilized fashion had actually worked against them with the government, they put the government on notice that their tactics might soon change, that failure to give them “satisfaction” would “create ill feelings, irritation among our people, and we cannot say what will be the consequence.”
The government's failure to respond to the 1874 petition caused the Stó:lō leadership in mid May 1875 to write to Powell stating that they would not participate in that year's Queen's birthday celebration, that through her agents, Queen Victoria had "not been a good mother and Queen to us, she has not watched over us that we should have enough land for the support of our families." The time was fast approaching to take matters into their own hands—to create a government that would be responsive to their cultural traditions and particular needs, but also established in a form and style that the European newcomers could relate to and understand.

Within the colonial-era historical record describing the Stó:lō, the majority of people referred to as "Chiefs" or "headmen" are associated with individual settlement-based communities. As was demonstrated, state or ecclesiastical authorities created a good portion of these authority positions. Certain leaders, however, are described as "hereditary." Within this same period, a few names also begin to be associated with some form of supra-tribal leadership. In particular Alexis Squateelanoo of Cheam and Liquitim of Yale, but Casmir of Langley, William Sepass of Skowkale, and Pierre Ayessik of Hope are also periodically referred to as "Head Chief of the Lower Fraser Indians." In 1950 Wilson Duff reported that all his informants "were clear there had been no chiefs—in the sense of men chosen to fill an office of leadership—in former times..." That is to say, prior to the colonial era there had been no one "appointed by the Indian Superintendent to conduct the affairs of a reserve."6

The Elders Duff worked with explained that while there were no "chiefs," "there had been 'leaders' and 'main leaders.'" In Halkomelem, a leader was referred to as
siyá:m. Edmund Lorenzetto explained to Duff that “a siyá:m was a good man who talked to his people to keep them straight and to settle rows. He didn’t really boss the people around, that is why they liked him, but all the people would take his advice.”

Persuasive, charismatic Stó:lō siyá:m were, Duff learned, “ranked in an ascending scale regardless of place of residence, but this was a social ranking and only incidentally and to a limited degree a political one.” According to Edmund Lorenzetto, “The two most highly respected by the Stalo have always been the heads of permanent family lines at Yale and Langley.”

Given that the hallmarks of a good “traditional” siyá:m were “wisdom, ability, industry, generosity, humility, and pacifism,” and that the most respected and therefore influential leaders were able to demonstrate “the marks of wealth,” we can safely assume that the most respected leaders were not only experts in dispute resolution, but also controllers or regulators of important resources. They were, in other words, the ones who took care of people and communities.

It is not surprising, therefore, that Duff’s informants identified the two most prominent pre-colonial leaders as having always come from Yale and Langley. Yale was at the entrance of the region’s most important fishing and fish processing sites, and, prior to the 1858 gold rush, Langley was the only place where coveted European trade goods could be readily accessed. Both locations were scenes of massive gatherings where not only important financial transactions occurred, but where information could be shared and social or diplomatic relationships arranged and maintained. Moreover, as was discussed earlier, the resources of both sites were, much to the chagrin of HBC traders at Langley, strictly regulated through indigenous hereditary access protocols.
By the 1860s the resource that people most needed to access was fast becoming farm land, and the disputes siyá:m were asked to resolve increasingly involved interpersonal and inter-racial violence and tension surrounding the land issue. Given that in the absence of adequate reserve lands, and with the banning of the potlatch, the canyon fishery retained its social and economic significance long after other retail outlets presented themselves as alternatives to Fort Langley, it is understandable that the Yale Chief retained a prominent status well into the settlement era. It also explains, however, why a new cadre of leaders arose—leaders who were equipped to best look after the people by advocating for them in their relations with the colonial and then federal and provincial regimes.

Alexis Squiteelanoo of Cheam and Pierre Ayessik of Hope increasingly assumed roles as supra-tribal leaders throughout the 1860s and 70s. They do not, however, appear to have done this in opposition to more traditional leaders such as Yale’s Liquitim or Langley’s Casmir, but rather more as protégés of the older elite. In fact, both Alexis and Pierre were related to Liquitim. Indeed, while many Elders today remember Pierre Ayessik of Hope as having been a prominent “Church Chief,” his authority was not based entirely on his relationship with colonial authorities. Later generations argued that proof that “he was a real siyá:m” was illustrated by the fact that he had been born with pierced ears and nasal septum—clear indications of upper class status and the endorsement of prominent ancestor spirits.12

What is more, Alexis’ and Pierre’s names appear alongside Yale’s Liquitim on petitions to the government.13 Unlike Liquitim, however, these new regional leaders spoke, and increasingly wrote in, English.14 Additionally, through their involvement in
the Temperance Societies, they had close relations with the influential Catholic Missionaries at St. Mary's. By the time British Columbia joined Canada in 1871, Alexis and Pierre had together assumed the role of primary political spokesmen for the Stó:lo collective. From these positions they provided broad guidance and leadership as the indigenous people of the lower Fraser River adjusted to what Old Pierre of Katzie would later refer to as "a new era." Ultimately, the perceived roles of the two generations of leaders were the same: look after community interests as best they could. It was the definition of what constituted both community and the community's interests that was changing.

In the decade following the 1858 gold rush the lower Fraser Aboriginal population retained an immense, if ultimately unfounded, trust in the honour of the British Crown. The first formal associations established with white society were, as per indigenous custom, honour based, and built upon personal relationships. Their petitions demonstrate a persistent faith that the British Crown would eventually honour its personal commitment to providing adequate reserve acreage to facilitate farming around existing Native settlement sites. By the 1870s this faith was being seriously questioned, and Aboriginal people were looking for new and better ways of creating binding relations with the representatives of settler society. By far the greatest concern was the omnipresent fear that in meeting their persistent demands for a more equitable ratio of people to acres the Crown might abandon the practice of making existing Native settlements the core of new agricultural-based Indian reserves, and instead forcibly uproot Aboriginal people and compel them to live on a single giant reserve far removed
from their ancestral homes. This concern was neither irrational nor groundless. The American government’s policy in adjacent Washington Territory had been precisely this. As early as 1860 the Coast Salish living on the British side of the 49th parallel had sought assurances from Governor Douglas that the same would not happen to them. Indeed, as Lt. R.C. Mayne of the Royal Navy learned first hand, the Coast Salish living in British territory had an intense hatred of Boston Men

owing in great measure to the system adopted by Americans of moving them away from their own village when sites became settled by whites. The Indians often express dread lest we should adopt the same course, and have lately petitioned Governor Douglas on the subject.16

From a colonial administrative perspective, such reserves made sense. One of Joseph Trutch’s strongest reservations with the village-by-village reserve system was that it separated the open farm lands from one another, making them less appealing to arriving white settlers. In places like Chilliwack, it also made it difficult for the government to establish urban township centres.17 As such, although the idea of establishing central reservations does not seem to have been seriously considered by Douglas, the spectre of forced resettlement on communal reserves was a constant terror for the Stó:lō.

By the time BC joined confederation in 1871 the central reserve idea had gained a great deal of currency among certain members of the colonial elite. Politicians and administrators in Ottawa were especially intrigued by the apparent success the Anglican missionary William Duncan had in converting and civilizing a large number of Tsimshian Indians. Duncan’s technique had been to remove those Indians who followed his doctrine from their old settlements and to re-establish them on his new Christian island colony of Metlacatlah.18 So impressed were both Ottawa and Victoria officials with
Duncan’s achievements that his advice was solicited to help resolve the intractable Indian land question confronting the rest of the province, and in particular the lower Fraser Valley.¹⁹

For Duncan and many other British Columbians of his generation, the “scattered condition of the Indians” was a problem requiring a “remedy.” Writing to the federal Minister of the Interior, Duncan predicted, “Unless they become more collected it would seem impossible that education or civilization should ever reach them as a whole.” Chief among Duncan’s proposed remedies was the suggestion that the government “lose sight of the tribal divisions of the Indians, which are so numerous and perplexing.” Instead, he proposed that they “regard only the natural division of languages”—divisions that would soon be equated in official provincial and federal documents with “nations.”²⁰

Duncan estimated that there were approximately a dozen natural linguistic divisions, each with a population of roughly 4,000-5,000 Natives. He proposed that a government agent be assigned to live near the centre of each of these language-based collectives at a remote site as far as possible removed from existing Native and White settlements. The agent’s primary task, in Duncan’s view, would be to “encourage [the Natives] to settle around him, without regard to tribal or sub-tribal distinctions,” and to thereby establish a “headquarters” around which a new civilized “Native town” or “Indian Settlement” would emerge.²¹ Under Duncan’s proposal, the problem of “having some ten or fifteen smaller reserves for each language” that inevitably resulted from the complicated village-by-village system of reserve allocation would be eliminated. In its place there would be “one Reserve for each tongue.” Though the Protestants and
Catholics never worked together and seldom agreed, what Duncan was proposing was in large part the Durieu system of Reductions writ large.

Both federal and the provincial officials were receptive to many of Duncan’s recommendations, if for no other reason than they seemed to confirm ideas that had been floating around rather loosely within the halls of government for a number of years. Indeed, as early as 1872, the Victoria office of the Superintendent of Indian Affairs had drafted a map that divided the province into “Nationalities or Dialects.” (See Figure 8.1) Throughout the 1870s the provincial government found especially appealing a system consisting of a series of differentiated Indian Agencies that could accommodate themselves to the requirements of larger language-group-based collectives. In 1875 Victoria passed an Order in Council stating “That no basis of acreage for [Indian] Reserves be fixed for the Province as a whole, but rather that each nation [and not tribe] of Indians [of the same language] be dealt with separately on their respective claims.” For British Columbia, this was a not so thinly veiled attempt at ensuring that Natives who lived in agriculturally rich regions of the province could be denied larger reserves than those in areas deemed less desirable by European settlers.

Ottawa, too, embraced the idea of “dealing separately” with “each nation of Indians of the same language.” After receiving the Stó:lō petition of July 1874, prominent federal officials stationed in British Columbia briefly encouraged the Dominion government to adopt a reserve policy that established a minimum of eighty acres per family of five. In the end, because of fierce provincial opposition and an insistence that twenty acres be the maximum allotment for each Indian family, Ottawa capitulated and decided to work with the provincial government through a special joint
commission. The proposed Indian Reserve Commission would travel the province and visit with “Each Indian nation (meaning by nation all Indian tribes speaking the same language)… and after full enquiry on the spot into all matters affecting the [land] question, …fix and determine for each nation, separately, then number, extent and locality of the Reserves or Reserves to be allowed it.”

Under the Duncan model, the existing reserve base of the lower Fraser population would be gradually eliminated and replaced by one or two regional reserves—probably one for each of the two mainland Halkomelem dialects. News of the recommendation apparently spread rapidly through a receptive non-Native community, and rumours of its impending implementation were soon ringing in Aboriginal ears. Throughout the spring of 1876 the Indian Superintendent at New Westminster received visits from large numbers of Natives representing “deputations from the various Tribes of the Lower Fraser country and Burrard Inlet.” Though many in number they presented a single message: they were concerned about reports “that they were to be removed from their present Reserves.”

Experience had taught the Aboriginal people that even well intentioned government appointees could not be relied upon to protect their interests from the whims and abuses of the local settler population. The ever-increasing number of European descent immigrants was a growing problem. What was needed was a return to a time when Aboriginal people could speak directly to the Crown’s representative; when Douglas would meet personally with Stó:lō delegates and immediately address their concerns. Government leaders were the settlers’ representatives, but the Queen was the Indian’s “mother.” What was needed was one or two recognized indigenous
The best solution seemed to be to develop a system of internal collective decision making that would facilitate the establishment of a direct relationship with the British Crown; one consistent with the familial ties the Queen professed, but that was also based on predictable rules that could be connected to existing British law. The summer of 1876 provided just such an opportunity.

While the Indian land question was the most pressing political concern for the majority of British Columbia's still predominantly Aboriginal residents, it was the failure of the federal government to live up to its commitment to provide a transcontinental railroad which captured the attention of the non-Native minority and therefore received the most notice in the columns of the local media and the halls of the legislature buildings. To help quell the "spoilt child of Confederation's" anxieties over the railroad issue, Governor General Lord Dufferin was dispatched to the Pacific to remind westerners of the east's devotion to the Pacific. He was to assess the situation, try to allay concerns, and then report back to Ottawa. For the Stó:lō and other Native people, this was regarded as a golden, and perhaps last, opportunity to have their mounting concerns addressed through the British/Canadian government system.

Dufferin arrived in Victoria via steamer from San Francisco on August 15, 1876, where the aged Sir James Douglas officially greeted him. Together, Douglas and Dufferin travelled to the legislative buildings, passing under ornately decorated arbours and along streets lined with cheering crowds. The sight of the Queen's new
representative shaking hands with the old Chief Factor must have lightened many Native hearts.

Three days later, the Stó:lō and many other Coastal people began gathering in New Westminster at the site where twelve years earlier the first great gathering with the Crown’s representative had occurred. Although Dufferin’s revised agenda took him directly north to the Queen Charlotte Islands before returning to the Fraser River, thousands of Coast Salish Aboriginal leaders determinedly chose to wait. The Governor General finally arrived at New Westminster on September 5th. After meeting with white politicians and discussing the railroad issue he was confronted by the giant Aboriginal delegation. (See Figure 8.2) The grandeur, pageantry and symbolism of the day’s event, if not the political import, were captured in the journal of the Marchioness of Dufferin and provide a sense of the importance of the affair to the indigenous people:

After various varieties of white men had presented addresses and been replied to, and after numbers had been shaken hands with, we looked down the hill, and saw a mass of flags marching up; the bearers of these gay banners were all Indian Chiefs, or great men, followed by a set of Indian Volunteers, who had got themselves into a very smart blue uniform, and were commanded by the owner of an old red coat and a paid or epaulets. The chiefs formed into a circle, while the army remained in a column, and stood facing the platform. D[ufferin] went down and shook hands with the chiefs, and then returned to the platform and listened to the speeches of four of them, every sentence of each being translated by an interpreter into English.

When it was his turn to reply, D[ufferin] spoke one sentence, which was taken up by five interpreters, who each, in turn put it into some new Indian tongue. The process was long, but it was interesting....

[Later that evening] we stood on the roof of our drawing room on the steamer to see a most beautiful torch-light display by the Indians in canoes. We steamed up a little
way, and then back, the canoes following, their torches looking very brilliant in the darkness and reflected in the water. Some men on foot, also with torches, ran along the banks, and then the town was illuminated. Before the lights disappeared there was cheering, and ‘God save the Queen.’

For people who for two years had steadfastly chosen not to participate in the celebration of the Queen’s birthdays hosted by the Superintendent of Indian Affairs, the presence of the Crown’s actual representative acted as a political lightning rod. Exactly what the various indigenous leaders said, and what Dufferin replied, was, unfortunately, neither documented by the local newspapers nor preserved in personal papers in the archival collections left behind by the participants. Some indication of the talks, however, can be gleaned from a subsequent speech Dufferin made to the corporate and political elite in Victoria a few days later. On that occasion the Governor General stepped beyond the bounds of protocol and into the arena of provincial politics by stating frankly that the condition of the BC Aboriginal question was “unsatisfactory;” that it had in fact been in “error ever since Sir James Douglas quitted office.” In light of these bold assertions we can be fairly confident that the Aboriginal leaders at New Westminster had raised the land question. Whether or not they also addressed the inadequacy of the emerging Indian Act Band governance model is less certain, but certainly by 1881 Superintendent Powell was vigorously promoting municipal-style government in BC, and especially among the Cowichan. Whatever the specifics, however, it is clear that Dufferin had been made aware of the defectiveness of the colonial sponsored system of Aboriginal governance and the mechanisms regulating Aboriginal-newcomer relations.

The use of four spokespersons to convey distinct messages to Dufferin suggests that the numerous Native people gathered in New Westminster had somehow devised and
agreed upon a decision-making system whereby certain people were sanctioned to speak as representatives of particular Native political groups or interests. It is unclear whether the choice of four speakers reflected a simple attempt to ensure that a single message was communicated in languages that could be witnessed and understood by a diverse multi-linguistic group of Natives, or whether the various speakers delivered different messages and therefore represented separate and distinct issues or perhaps even nascent political communities that cut across language groups. Either way, the gathering represented a pivotal moment in the history of Aboriginal nation building. Many indigenous participants saw fit to describe the gathering and its significance to their descendants, some of whom have in turn felt obligated to transmit that knowledge to subsequent generations.30

Whatever might have been communicated verbally to Dufferin, one thing is certain: the lower Fraser Valley’s indigenous inhabitants apprised Dufferin of their opposition to the proposed amalgamation of their reserves and relocation of their homes. The New Westminster gathering had been largely a Catholic affair. While Protestant Natives shared the same political concerns as their Catholic relatives, they felt it necessary to present them independently. The relatively small Methodist Aboriginal communities at Sumas and Chilliwack ensured that their voice was heard by hand delivering the following written petition to Dufferin when his steamer reached Yale the following day:

A rumour has reached us that it is probable we shall be removed from the home of our ancestors and placed with strangers upon distant reserves. We feel, therefore, very much troubled on account of this report and wish that your Excellency would intercede on our behalf that we may be
allowed to remain at the reserves already allotted to us 
where remains of our parents and children are buried.\textsuperscript{31}

From an indigenous perspective the process leading to the written and verbal 
dialogues with Dufferin were simultaneously empowering and frustrating. Following
Dufferin's visit little changed in terms of government policy, and no official assurances
were given regarding Native concerns over settlement relocation. Ultimately, the
centralized reserve option was rejected by government, not, however, because of
Aboriginal protest, but rather because non-Natives ultimately thought it too dangerous to
consolidate Native people. Divide and rule was the preferred option, and the military
threat posed by the "Shushwap Confederacy" in BC interior plateau region seemed to
prove this point.\textsuperscript{32} The dialogue with Dufferin had, however, reinforced in the Aboriginal
mind the need for collective action to secure a more standardized and predictable system
of communicating with the Queen's government. In the wake of Dufferin's visit,
indigenous groups along the Fraser-Thompson River corridors began to organize
themselves into a series of formal supra-tribal political bodies.

When, after spending two years demarcating reserves throughout the Okanogan
and Thompson River regions, Reserve Commissioner Gilbert Malcolm Sproat finally
returned to the lower Fraser in 1879 he was immediately confronted by an indigenous
delegation with an urgent political mission: "All the tribes living between Yale and the
mouth of the Fraser" wished to organize into a single government.\textsuperscript{33}

Unfortunately, Sproat did not record the details of what the lower Fraser
Aboriginal leaders envisioned for their government. As was so often the case when
ranking federal officials visited Stó:lō settlements in the late nineteenth century, when Sproat met the chiefs from between Yale and mouth of the Fraser on July 29th 1879 he was “en route” to another part of the province. As such, his schedule prevented him from stopping and discussing the matter more fully with the Stó:lō. At a similar meeting among the Nlakapamux the previous week, however, the commissioner had agreed to a request that he stop to witness and document proposals for collective Indian self-government. In his correspondence concerning the lower Fraser Native leader’s proposal, Sproat simply observes that they “wished to do what the... [Nlakapamux] have done; ...to organize themselves under the Indian Act.”

The lack of documentation makes it impossible to know the extent to which the Stó:lō proposal might have been derived from the previous week’s Nlakapamux example, or if, indeed, the Nlakapamux had instead modelled their new government after the Stó:lō. The only chronology that is clear is the one provided by Sproat’s correspondence, and that was a product of his travel itinerary. Indeed, if one indigenous group was a leader in this regard, perhaps one needs to look beyond the Fraser corridor to find it, for the previous summer the Shushwap had been acting as a “Confederation.” Similarly, in 1880s the Cowichan of Vancouver Island were amalgamated into single political body and became the first Band in Canada to have employed municipal-style governance under the Indian Advancement Act. This suggests that the move toward tribal amalgamation had earlier historical roots among the Coast Salish Cowichan at least. What is more, the man elected Head Chief of the Nlakapamux, Michel of Spuzzum, is remembered by current Stó:lō as a cultural broker—one of his parents was Stó:lō and the other Nlakapamux. Europeans also regularly hired Michel when they needed a translator to
communicate with Fraser River Natives. The following discussion and analysis, therefore, is not necessarily exactly what the Stó:lō were contemplating. It is a description of what the Nlakapamux had proposed, as related by Sproat, and what the Stó:lō apparently requested as well:

Reflecting the tension between localized and dispersed expressions of Salish collective identity, as well as the new boundaries being maintained between Natives and newcomers, the constitution adopted by the Nlakapamux on July 17, 1879 identified and codified various spheres of authority. In addition to recognizing a distinction between national and tribal spheres of authority, the Nlakapamux plan provided for a distinct judicial system, as well as a formal role for the Queen or her representative in indigenous governance. In this way, their model provided for direct linkages with the Canadian federal government and bureaucracy. Though reminiscent of western European governing systems, and clearly informed by the judicial processes established under the Oblate’s Temperance Societies, Sproat nonetheless considered their particular manifestation to be genuinely indigenous. In fact, the Reserve Commissioner made clear that the idea for the government and the rules by which it was supposed to function were entirely of the Native’s own making. Sproat expressed genuine surprise and, at least initially, real concern at how the system departed from one that he might have recommended. He came to appreciate, however, that such ingenuity was appropriate not only given the realities of current Native-newcomer relations, but also the cultural context in which the Salish people found themselves.

The Nlakapamux constitution specified that their national government was to be led by a Head Chief who would be assisted by an elected council. Both the Head Chief
and the Council were elected for three-year terms at what might best be described as a national convention. Whatever other obligations these representatives carried they were obliged to meet as a governing body at least once per year. That is to say, at an annual convention they were to have the power to make laws and regulations "over such matters as schools, medicine, fishing and hunting, and aspects of personal conduct." The system was not entirely democratic, however. In addition to restricting the vote to adult males (which was also, of course, still the norm in non-Native Canada), the constitution provided that in the event of a Councillor ceasing to hold office, the Head Chief and a majority of the remaining Councillors were empowered to appoint a replacement for the remainder of the three-year term.

Distinct from the national-level government, the constitution also recognized the authority of domestic tribal collectives. All traditional hereditary tribal chiefs were entitled to remain in office "until their death, resignation or removal by the Queen," after which the adult males of each tribe would elect successors for three-year terms. The tribal chiefs would presumably exercise jurisdiction over certain local tribal matters, while the Head Chief and his council acted nationally. The tribal chiefs' primary responsibilities, however, were judicial and not legislative or executive. This, of course, was consistent with the traditional role of Salish leaders who, as mentioned, were expected to function as dispute resolution experts to diffuse inter-personal and inter-family tensions. Under the Nlakapamux constitution, tribal chiefs were also eligible to run for positions as national Councillors, and in fact, in the first election tribal chiefs secured most of the Council seats.
After forming their government the Nlakapamux Council immediately passed a series of resolutions. The first provided for the building of a school and the hiring of a teacher to instruct children in arithmetic and teach them to read and write English. The second pertained to the provision of medical services and western medicine. Fifty percent of these services were to be financed through separate school and medicine taxes. The balance would be made up through fines. Once these structures were in place the Nlakapamux lost no time in passing their first legislation: the banning of drunkenness, gambling and the potlatch. In addition, legislation declared that agricultural lands on reserves were to be divided “in a fair way” into individual landholdings, and that houses and yards were to be kept tidy and fenced. Animals were to be kept corralled and fines levied for damage caused by trespassing animals. “Idleness” was not only a sin, but also a crime, and restrictions were devised for the regulation of hunting and fishing. Those who violated the laws faced fines of between five and fifty dollars. Those found guilty of potlatching could also be disqualified from becoming a chief, councillor or constable.

The Nlakapamux criminalization of the potlatch is striking given the attention scholars have drawn to Native opposition to the federal government’s subsequent decision to ban the potlatch in 1884. The Nlakapamux action is indicative of the extent to which some indigenous communities strove to demonstrate that they could survive and even thrive in the new western society. Moreover, many of those who ultimately opposed the potlatch did so not because it represented indigenousness, but because the recent transformations in the ceremony appeared to render it incompatible with western-society and corrosive of all what was regarded as best in traditional society. In describing the Nlakapamux decisions to officials in Ottawa, Sproat explained that Native men who
previously would have sought to elevate their status through feats of hunting or as warriors were no longer able to do so in the colonial era. As an alternative method of “making themselves known,” some had succumbed to what he described as a “mania”; that is to say, they had taken to “more or less lavish distributions of property,” the initial funds sometimes being raised through the prostitution of women. The Nlakapamux hereditary elite, like Sproat, opposed such developments.

When recently asked about the Nlakapamux banning of the potlatch one contemporary Nlakapamux family leader provided an additional context for understanding his ancestors’ decision. He noted that his Elders had explained to him that elaborate potlatching of the kind practiced on the coast had only been introduced among the Nlakapamux around the time of the fur trade. Because it was not a deeply established tradition it was relatively easy for the Nlakapamux to abandon it. Indeed, the Nlakapamux of 1879 may have regarded the coastal-style potlatch as a foreign influence within their culture—the sort of elaborate gift giving ceremony the missionaries opposed might also have been regarded as unwelcome among Nlakapamux ‘traditionalists.’ The prominent act of banning the potlatch may have been a relatively easy matter for a community seeking to protect its own traditions and distinguish itself from its downriver neighbours. Considered in this light, what may have been a traditionalist reaction to change would have served the valuable function of appearing to non-Native authorities a strong indication of the Nlakapamux’s commitment to working within the new Canadian political system.

The Nlakapamux legislative body that created these laws was a thirteen man national council. It is important to stress, however, that this number was not determined
by any numerical formula. There were neither provisions for tribal representation by population nor guarantees to ensure at least one Councillor per tribe (although efforts were made to ensure all groups felt included and accounted for). Rather, at the national general assembly prominent Elders, traditional tribal leaders, and other respected individuals determined how many men qualified as “just and good,” and from among this group of “generally younger men,” how many were willing to hold office. As such the election did not necessarily conform to democratic traditions that most non-Native Canadians living either then or now would necessarily recognize, but they did meet Salish requirements.

All Nlakapamux were bound by the laws of the Council. Enforcement was placed in the hands of a series of local “Tribal Committees of Council.” The various hereditary or elected tribal chiefs led these tribal-based judicial committees, but the other committee members were chosen from the national council. Sproat had initially objected to this model, suggesting that each tribe select from among its membership its own councillors to assist the tribal chiefs. This western-style system of representative government, however, proved unappealing to the Aboriginal community. As they pointed out, it not only ensured a higher calibre of representative, but as Sproat conceded, also meant that those within the various tribes who were seeking adjudication and dispute resolution would regard the councillors sitting on these adjudicating bodies as more impartial.

Sproat also expressed concern over other features of the Tribal Committees of Councils. The Nlakapamux constitution stated that a minimum of four Councillors sit on each committee. Paternally sensing an oversight, Sproat pointed out to the Nlakapamux community that “a court of four would not work among white men, for 2
might think the same and the other two differently, and so there would be a deadlock.”
The Nlakapamux’s confident rejoinder was simply that “this could not happen in an
Indian court.” In his subsequent correspondence to Ottawa, Sproat conceded that, indeed,
“Though [the Indians] debate vehemently and at great length, the minority in the end
quietly disappears.” Consensus across tribal and family divisions was therefore an
integral feature of Salish government. What was important was not that there be an odd
number to break an impasse, but that there be at least four people, each with a broad
enough set of life experiences and family connections, to ensure that justice was served
and that all interests were accounted for. Perhaps the Nlakapamux also chose four as the
minimum membership of a Tribal Committee of Councils because of that number’s
sacred significance in Salish cosmology. In Salish society the number four conveys a
special spiritual significance not unlike the Holy Trinity-derived number three in
European Christian society.

The Tribal Committee of Councils were required to act consistently and according
to firm standardized rules in all their judicial decisions. They were required to give
notice that they were going to hear a case, after which they were obligated to meet at the
appropriate time, state their decisions clearly, and have them noted for future reference.
What is more, Council decisions could not be altered after the court had finished sitting.

Finally, to ensure sectarian differences did not weaken indigenous national
identity, the Nlakapamux constitution prohibited, with the exception of “proposals
connected with schools,” the introduction of “church matters” before either the Council
or the Tribal Committees. This provision was less an indication of the Salish adopting a
western-style division of religion and governance (or “the spiritual and the material,”) as
some have suggested, than it was an innovative means of protecting communal Native interests against powerful outside forces. As Sproat learned, the goal was to provide the Nlakapamux community with stronger negotiating power vis-à-vis those Churches currently working within their territory as well as any who might “arrive in the future.” Spirituality was still considered inseparable from daily life and human existence. In short, the Nlakapamuk not only established a constitution, a national government and a locally responsive tribal-based judiciary, but also two nationally funded public services, a revenue system to operate them, and a series of laws to protect the public good and regulate resource sectors such as fish and wildlife.

Interestingly, while Sproat initially embraced the Nlakapamux proposal and promoted its virtues to Ottawa, he was much less keen on the lower Fraser Natives’ collective government initiative. Rather than assist in the process of constitution building he informed the lower Fraser delegates that “they must not be in too much a hurry.”

This reluctance might in part be accounted for by the long standing bias within colonial society that placed coastal Aboriginal fisher-people lower on the evolutionary scale than the more manly hunting societies of the interior plateau. An additional cause of Sproat’s reluctance was that the much larger Stó:lō population (nearly double the Nlakapamux) was in closer proximity to the rapidly growing non-Native urban/commercial centre of New Westminster/Vancouver. In his report, Sproat nervously emphasized to his Ottawa superiors that the Natives living between Yale and the Fraser’s mouth who were proposing a collective government “number[ed] about 1900 Indians.”

By way of contrast, two years later the official Census of Canada listed New
Westminster as having a total of only 1,500 inhabitants, and this town, located in Stó:lō territory, was the largest non-Native urban centre on the British Columbia mainland.46

BC colonial society was simply not ready to allow that much concentrated power to manifest itself in the hands of Indians. Six months earlier, having caught wind of the Aboriginal plans to organize, the province’s largest newspaper openly expressed its opposition, arguing that “Singly the Indian tribes are easily dealt with, but once bind them together by ties, whether political or social, and they will be much more difficult to coerce or persuade.”47 Sproat’s dominion colleagues in the Department of Indian Affairs Pacific office made no effort to distance themselves from the popular white opposition. Deputy Superintendent James Lenihan warned Ottawa that the “new organization…” [would] be the entering of the small end of the wedge, for the promotion of [Indian] schemes and intrigue,” while Superintendent I.W. Powell wrote that he believed Sproat had “committed a most serious error in attempting to combine the large population of [Nlakapamux] under one head chief.” In fact, as mentioned in the previous chapter, Powell “fully endorsed every statement contained in [a letter of] protest” presented by a group of prominent “Concerned Citizens” to the provincial premier warning of the dire consequences of allowing Natives to organize into supra-tribal organizations.48 In their letter, the concerned citizens explained that “at the present time these hereditary chiefs have little authority or influence for good.”49 They expressed fear that “the future peace of the province is being seriously jeopardised [sic] in this proposed combination of semi-civilized natives,” and that “serious trouble and probably bloodshed” would be the result of allowing the scheme to proceed. In their opinion, the Native population was “in a state of transition… and unable to appreciate or properly utilize the advantages of civilized
government.” Until the civilizing process was complete (and the petitioners clearly doubted that it ever would be) any large Native organization inevitably posed a security risk: “especially just at a time when their ancient privileges are being somewhat curtailed.” Ultimately, the concerned citizens justified their opposition to supra-tribal indigenous self-government with reference to historical precedent:

We desire especially to bring to your notice, that the past safety and security which we have enjoyed in the Province is owing to the fact that the large Indian population of the Country has been divided into small bands without a head Chief possessing general authority or influence, and without the ability to unite and constitute themselves a powerful and formidable force.

This formidable opposition to collective Indian self-government, even self-government designed to link with the federal Indian Affairs bureaucracy and explicitly subordinate to the British Crown, effectively killed any thoughts the Dominion government had of supporting either the Nlakapamux or the Lower Fraser initiative. Indeed, it became an accepted practice in Ottawa to designate all western Natives as “less civilized” than central Canadian ones, and therefore suitable to be treated differently and even more paternalistically.50

The Stó:lo, however, were largely oblivious to developments in Ottawa, and their prolonged exposure to the rabidly anti-Indian nature of BC politics had rendered them jaded and all but numb to local BC political rumblings. Dufferin’s visit was still fresh in their minds, and what is more, their proposal to Sproat was entirely consistent with what they had been led to believe the government wanted and what the Indian Act was designed to promote: self-sufficient, civilized Indian communities. It was not Sproat’s subsequent unwillingness to immediately press their case in his correspondence with
Ottawa, but his rather impromptu recommendations when he met with them to informally begin the process of political organization and establishing self-government that made the greatest impact and provided them with lasting encouragement. While Sproat had told the lower Fraser leaders to be patient, he had also assured them that the best way to secure Ottawa’s and the Queen’s recognition of their scheme was to work to “try to abate the prevalent jealousies among themselves and limit the number of ridiculously small tribes... [and] show... good sense and businesslike views.” Likewise, he suggested that since *de jure*, government recognized, political unity was going to be slow in coming, the Stó:lō would be wise to move ahead independently with *de facto* organization. He noted that government agents would never be as competent in matters of Indian justice and governance as the Indians themselves, and so he encouraged the Stó:lō to get “organized, and for their chief and a few councillors [to] form a court and settle questions [themselves].” The following day the Stó:lō chief returned to Sproat’s tent to inform the Commissioner that he had taken the advice and established a judicial committee, and with councillors adjudicated an old dispute between two families over a piece of land. What they had done, in short, was to apply an Oblate Temperance Society-like court system but within an inter-tribal context and without the involvement of Church or state authorities.

Shortly after meeting with the Stó:lō, Sproat retired from the Reserve Commission. The government’s failure to recognize a unified lower Fraser Aboriginal political entity did not, however, stop the momentum towards stronger collective identity and political unity. While the Stó:lō did not oppose government-and Church-sponsored initiatives designed to strengthen and fortify local band-level governance, they clearly
wanted to pursue the parallel development of something bigger—a national government to deal with national issues. It quickly became apparent that collective governance required more than internal legislative and judicial mechanisms. It also required the power to compel outsiders to respect indigenous life and property; it required the power to ensure non-Natives compliance with what were clearly emerging shared cross-cultural concepts of the rule of law and jurisprudence. When a young fourteen year old Stó:lō boy named Louie Sam was wrongly accused of murdering an American shop keeper in Nooksack Washington, and then later kidnapped from a Canadian jail (where he was awaiting transport to New Westminster to stand trial) by a mob of American vigilantes who summarily lynched him from a giant cedar tree 500 feet north of the Canadian border, (See Figure 8.3) the scene was set for the enactment of Stó:lō government despite European opposition.

On a cold February day in 1884, approximately 200 lower Fraser Native men representing all the Native settlements between the Fraser’s mouth and the canyon travelled by canoe and trail to the central location of Chilliwack to “consider the best means of obtaining justice.” That is to say, they came to decide upon a collective response to the murder of one of their youth. The inter-tribal gathering lasted for more than a week. Before the gathering ended, two prominent tribal leaders and an Indian Constable “summoned” the local Indian Agent and asked him to record “on paper” the community’s feelings and intentions, and to send that message to the senior official in the Department of Indian Affairs. Through their spokesmen, the Stó:lō informed the Indian Agent that “Some of those present objected to letting you know anything about our intentions until it was all over, but the majority have decided to tell you everything and to
take your advice.” The Natives, the agent discovered, were debating not whether to take action against the Americans, but rather, the form their action should take: “Some of the most determined men [believe we have] a perfect right to... hang and kill sixty-five Americans” (the number reported to have been in the lynch mob). While consensus had not been achieved on the number of lives to take, the Stó:lō were “unanimous” in feeling “fully justified in going immediately in very large numbers across the boundary line and tak[ing] the first white man [they met] and bring[ing] him to the spot where they hung the Indian and treat[ing] him in the same manner.”

It is a long-standing Coast Salish tradition that justice be informed by a notion of balance and harmony. In the past, if raiders killed someone, the victim’s family was under an obligation to restore balance. Typically this involved a counterattack against the collective group responsible for the first death. The revenge did not have to be against the specific individual who had committed the offence, but against someone, anyone, with whom the culprit was closely associated. For example, while a family would typically seek vengeance among those believed responsible for a particular wrong doing (ie. a shaman believed guilty of killing or injuring someone with bad magic) they might kill someone close to the shaman rather than the shaman himself. Balance could be restored in other ways as well. For example, members of the family guilty of the original offence could compensate the injured family with items of wealth. By washing away the offence with payments those associated with the actual offender restored balance by mitigating a counterattack against themselves.

Oral histories also explain that the process of restoring balance did not necessarily even have to involve any determining of guilt or innocence. In one example provided
Marian Smith, her informant explained that it was not considered wrong or improper for a parent who was grieving the loss of a child who had died of natural causes (fallen in the river, say) to restore balance in their life by randomly selecting and visiting a different settlement with the expressed purpose of killing a child there. The grief caused the second child’s family would bring balance to the first by having someone match their own grief. Whether the second family would accept this is doubtful. More likely, they would launch a retaliatory attack against either those responsible for their child’s death or some other non-grieving family in an effort to bring balance back into their own lives. Arranged marriages were one method family leaders used to pre-empt any such aggressions. What has been referred to in anthropological literature as the “blood balance” was, therefore, only the most sensational example of the way in which Coast Salish brought balance and harmony to their inter-personal relationships.55

With regard to Louie Sam’s lynchers, the indigenous desire to restore balance was mingled with the more typically British concern (also found in the Temperance Society court proceedings) with determining guilt and responsibility. According to the government reports, the Stó:lō were at pains to point out that that Louie Sam had indeed been innocent of the shop keeper’s murder.56 They were, in other words, meeting British criteria for justice before administering their own. Significantly, the information the Stó:lō provided the Indian Agent (which named the shop keeper’s true murderer, as well as the name of the leader of the lynch mob) were later corroborated by Canadian undercover detectives, who conducted a thorough investigation within American territory.57
If the Nlakapamux and Lower Fraser efforts to organize had caused unease in 1879, the collective Stó:lō reaction to the lynching of Louie Sam five years later caused near panic. To a society whose economic and political hegemony depended in large part on the maintenance of racial boundaries, the Stó:lō response to the illegal cross-border lynching of an Aboriginal boy raised serious problems. This was all the more the case when one considers that Louie Sam was not a prominent individual from a prestigious family. Indeed, Louie’s father was universally known by Natives and whites alike as Masachie Sam—Masachie being Chinook jargon for evil or bad. Masachie Sam was currently serving time in the provincial penitentiary, having been convicted of killing his half-brother when the latter attempted to stop Louie’s father from marrying his own widowed stepmother. The Stó:lō were not acting savagely against non-Natives. In fact, it was Louie’s lynchers who had painted their faces with red and black designs intended to mimic and mock Coast Salish spirit dancers. In responding to Louie’s murder the Stó:lō were attempting to create predictable order out of a chaotic world. In their minds, the consistent deceit demonstrated by powerful representatives of non-Native society over the land question and other pressing Native concerns would have dwarfed many of the wicked deeds of the evil Indian doctors that Xexá:ls the transformers had been compelled to defeat as they turned an ancient world of disharmony into one of predictable order. The lynching of Louie Sam, perhaps, marked the moment when Stó:lō society as a whole came to understand that they could not leave it to others, not even the honourable Queen, to look after their interests; that they would have to take action to achieve ends, or at the very least, threaten violence to compel others to.
What frightened the government most was the Aboriginal insistence that their own indigenous sphere of governance (linked to concepts of justice which they had been told were not inconsistent with the Crown’s) be extended to include jurisdiction over non-Natives. The worst fears of Victoria’s “concerned citizens” appeared to be coming to fruition. Lower Fraser Aboriginal self-governance appeared to be assuming a supra-tribal military dimension with regard to the administration of justice. The Stó:lō leadership, with the “unanimous” support of their various constituent tribes, offered to strike a formal arrangement with the dominion government. Speaking though the Indian Agent, they asked that the government be told “how sick our hearts are.” Then they offered to hold their own governing mechanisms temporarily in abeyance while the Crown’s agents worked to bring the lynch mob to justice. The government was granted three months to prove its honour and ability, after which the Stó:lō reserved the right to act independently.58

Ultimately, the good faith upon which this decision was made proved unfounded, at least as regards the immediate goal of providing justice to Louie. Though investigators quickly proved that the Stó:lō had been correct—that Louie Sam had been innocent of the original murder charges, and that in fact the leader of the lynch mob had concocted the story of Louie’s guilt and then co-ordinated the daring cross-border lynching to hide his complicity in his brother-in-law’s murder of the shop keeper—the Canadian government chose neither to act on the information, nor to inform the Stó:lō of the investigation’s results. Instead, they boldly lied time and time again to the Stó:lō delegates who visited the government offices over the ensuing year to enquire the results of the investigation and what the Queen’s government proposed to do about it.
In the end the Stó:lō were deceived and disappointed. But the seeds of unity and the desire for self-government had been sown. What is more, the experience of political co-operation through shared collective identity in the face of colonial intrusions and violations had been empowering and invigorating. Henceforth, the Lower Fraser River Indians came to be most commonly known among themselves as well as non-Natives, not by their various tribal affiliations, nor even as the Lower Fraser Indians, but by the term they chose to reflect their own indigenous supra-tribal unity: the Stó:lō.

Throughout the two decades following the lynching of Louie Sam the government and churches continued their efforts to solidify a splintered settlement-based or band-level collective identity. And yet other factors continued the trend towards strengthening supra-tribal Stó:lō identity. New employment opportunities in the 1870s associated with cannery work and hop yards provided renewed opportunities for intercommunity gatherings, as did the popular and widely attended Easter Passion plays hosted by the Oblate fathers at St. Mary’s Mission. Together, all these provided opportunities for the nascent political identity emerging from the earlier Queen’s Birthday celebrations to be sustained, and for and the political response to the lynching of Louie Sam to be reinforced on an annual basis in forums that were not considered threatening or subversive by either colonial or Church authorities.

The debate over whether western academics created a fictional Stó:lō identity is in many ways really moot. The fact that people continue to engage it, and that it conjures such strong emotional responses, is, however, fascinating. It reflects a long history of tension between various expressions of collective identity, and is a signifier of the
ongoing importance of such debates to contemporary indigenous people. It provides insights into the way in which colonialism can become a factor operating within indigenous culture and history, and not just upon it. It also provides insights into the nature of indigenous history wars and the cultural and economic import behind such tensions. Finally, it helps clarify the multifaceted nature of various expressions of boundary maintenance both between ethnic class and gender groups and among them.

1 In Making Native Space, (see page 85) Cole Harris states that the meeting took place at Hope. He apparently bases this assertion on the fact that the petition’s principal Aboriginal author, Chief Pierre Ayesik, resided on a reserve adjacent to Hope. It is more likely that the political meeting actually occurred at the Oblate’s Mission headquarters at St. Mary’s during the annual pre-birthday celebration gathering. Ayesik likely coordinated or spearheaded the meeting, but there is nothing to indicate that it took place at Hope. Pierre Ayesik was a devout Catholic and is remembered to this day as a “Church Chief.” As such, although Harris is correct to note that the “meeting itself was an extraordinary achievement,”(85) it was perhaps less extraordinary than it might otherwise have been. The significant point is that the St. Mary’s meeting, though designed by priests and government officials alike to be a social gathering to coordinate planning for the Queens’ birthday celebration, had in fact clearly become the region’s principal forum for supra-tribal political strategizing.

2 The Chiefs of Douglas Portage, the Lower Fraser and other Tribes on the Seashore, petition to Superintendent of Indian Affairs I.W. Wood Powell, 14 July 1874, reproduced in Carlson, Atlas, 173.


4 Alexis’ Indian name is also rendered variously: Srouchealeou, Shrouityneeoh, Rwetselalough, Srouetlanoh, and Sru-ets-lan-ough on various church records.


6 Duff, Upper Stalo Indians, 81.

7 Ibid.

8 Ibid., 80.

9 Ibid., 81.

10 Ibid.

11 Ibid., 80.

12 Ibid.

13 For a fairly comprehensive list of Stó:lō petitions to the government see “Appendix II” in Carlson, Atlas, 170-191.

14 Alexis’ daughter was among the first literate Stó:lō, having been the first to complete her studies at St. Mary’s Missionary School, in Mission. She taught her father rudimentary writing skills and went on to establish the first Native-run school in British Columbia. Within the small Catholic Church on the Cheam reserve she taught children (whose parents preferred a day school to the Church-run residential school) how to read and write.

15 Jenness, Katzie Ethnographic Notes and The Faith of a Coast Salish Indian, 34.

16 Mayne, Four Years in British Columbia and Vancouver Island. Indeed, some contemporary Elders have suggested that the Semiamoo tribe, who formerly lived in settlements located primarily on what after 1846 was to become the American side of Mud Bay, chose to relocate to the British Columbian in the 1860s precisely because they did not want to be relocated to collective reserves by American authorities.

17 See for example, Joseph Trutch, Chief Commissioner of Lands and Works to Colonial Secretary, 20 September 1865, in Papers, 30. See also, The Journals of the Legislative Council, 11 February, 1867, Vol.
For an overview of Duncan’s operation at Metlakatla see Fisher, *Contact and Conflict*, 124-137.

Unless otherwise noted, the quotes in this and the following paragraph come from William Duncan’s “Letter on Indian Affairs” to the Minister of the Interior, Ottawa, May 1875, in “Report of Indian Commissioner James Lenihan, Mainland Division, British Columbia, 1875”, in *Report of the Deputy Superintendent General of Indian Affairs* (Ottawa: Government of Canada, 1875), ix.

See in particular the discussion contained in R.W. Scott, “Memorandum of 5 November 1875, Papers, 161-163. See also, the provincial Executive Council Committee Report approved by the Lieutenant-Governor on 6 January 1876, in *Papers*, 169.

Emphasis in original.


See Assistant Superintendent of Indian Affairs, James Lenihan, to the Provincial Secretary, 15 October 1874, in *Papers*, 148-150. Also William Duncan to Hon. G.A. Walkem, 6 July 1875, *Papers*, 16 (at back).


Fisher, *Contact and Conflict*, 188.

The Marchioness of Dufferin and Ava, *My Canadian Journal, 1872-8, Extracts From My Letters Home, Written While Lord Dufferin was Governor-General* (London: John Murray, Albermarle Street, 1891), 271-272. See also the coverage in the *Victoria Colonist* newspaper: “His Lordship took his place on the front of the platform with Lady Dufferin and listened to the addresses from each tribe. At the conclusion of the Indian addresses his Lordship addressed the assemblage of Indian chiefs. He told them that he had been sent by their English mother the Queen to converse with them about their affairs, and assist them when practicable. He had been told by their chief [prob. Shd be chiefs] that they were ignored and weak, but this he attributed to their humility. He found them sturdy and respectable in appearance, sober and well conducted. He said there were three persons in whose eyes the Indian were always equal to the white man, the were God, the Queen and the Law. His Lordship, in conclusion, warned them against the effects of intemperance and indulgence in spirituous liquors.” The paper goes on to mention that on the departure at 9 pm his steamship was followed by “upwards of 100 canoes each carrying from five to ten torches. The sight was most effective and at midnight the Vice Regal Party sailed for Yale.” On September 10th, the *Colonist* noted that at Yale there were addresses from the white, Chinese and Indian population. “The scene of a third arch, erected by the Indian population, when then visited and the chief here, by means of an interpreter addressed the distinguished guests,” after which, “the Royal party went to the Oppenheimer house”. See *The Victoria Colonist*, Victoria, BC, 10 September 1876, 3.

The oral history concerning this event is complicated and I have not completely sorted through its intricacies. Stó:lō Elders have consistently throughout the twentieth century asserted that the Crown made a formal promise, or “proclamation” to their ancestors that one quarter of the revenues generated from the alienation of their traditional lands would be returned to them as compensation. If true, it is unclear which representative of the Crown made this promise. If not true, it is unclear what event or statement was misconstrued or misunderstood to be this. It may have been Douglas, Seymour, Dufferin, or perhaps even King Edward the VII, when he met with Coast Salish delegates at Buckingham Palace in 1906, who made the statement. Research is on-going and I plan to publish on this matter in the future.


Today, for example, Rena Point-Bolton shares what she has learned of the great gathering with the Queen’s representative with her children and grandchildren. She learned of the event from her father-in-law Dan Milo who, as a young boy, had been present at the gathering.

Sumas and Chilliwack Methodist Chiefs, petition to Earl of Dufferin, 18 August 1876. This petition is presented in full in Carlson, *Atlas*, 174.


Gilbert Sproat to Superintendent General, 29 July 1879, RG 10, Reel C-10, 117, Vol. 3669, File 10,691.

Ibid.

32 The Indian Reserve Commission hired Michel as translator in 1878. See Harris, “The Nlha7kapmx Meeting at Lytton,” 8.
33 All information pertaining to the constitution for supra-tribal government come from letters Sproat wrote to the Superintendent General: 17 July 1879, RG 10, Vol. 3696, File 15,316; 26 July 1879, RG 10, reel C-10, 117, Vol. 3669, File 10,691; and 27 October 1879, RG 10, Vol. 3669, File 10, 691, National Archives of Canada (NAC). Also, from reports Sproat provided to the Mainland Guardian on 20, 23 August 1879, and The Daily British Colonist, 21 August 1879.
34 Harris, “Nlka7apmx Meeting at Lytton,” 7.
36 Gilbert Sproat to Superintendent of Indian Affairs, Ottawa, 27 October 1879, NAC, RG 10, Vol. 3669, File 10, 691, 5-6.
37 Sonny McHalsie, personal communications with author, November 1993. Sonny’s father was Nlakapamux, and his mother St6:lo. He and his siblings relocated with their parents back and forth across the St6:lo-Nlakapamux border many times growing up. Sonny acquired his knowledge of Nlakapamux potlatching traditions principally through his father’s relatives, but also through family friend and Spuzzum Elder, Annie York.
38 Harris, “Nlka7apmx Meeting at Lytton,” 10.
39 Sproat to Superintendent General, Papers, 29 July 1879.
41 Alexander C. Anderson, William Duncan, Rod Finlayson, W.I. Macdonald, I.W. McKay, Archibald McKinlay, W.F. Tolmie, Charles A. Vernon, and Admiral Prevost, petition to the Honourable G.A. Walkem, Attorney General and Premier of BC, 25 September 1879, RG 10, Vol. 3669, File 10, 691, NAC. It is important to note that the letter’s salutation clearly identified Anderson as the former Dominion Reserve Commissioner who served with Sproat. Prior to that, Anderson had been a ranking officer of the HBC and the first non-Native to explore overland routes between Kamloops and the lower Fraser in 1846. William Duncan was prominently listed as “the missionary from Metlakatla,” who, of course, was proposing the creation of centralized reserves (but under clear DIA control). I.W. McKay was the retired HBC trader quoted in chapter 2 who described pre-contact Coast Salish monotheism. Most of the other names were also those of retired HBC officers.
43 Sproat to Superintendent General, Papers, 29 July 1879.
44 P.M. McTiernan, Indian Agent, to I.W. Powell, Superintendent of Indian Affairs, 14 March 1884, RG 10, Vol. 3,679, File 12,061, NAC.
45 For a discussion of the gathering, as reported by Canadian officials, see I.W. Powell, Superintendent of Indian Affairs to John Robson, Provincial Secretary, 24 March 1884; Powell to Robson, 21 March 1884; Report of a Committee of the Honourable Privy Council, Approved by His Excellency, L’Marquis de Lansdowne, Governor General of the Dominion of Canada; P.M. McTeirnan, Indian Agent, to I.W. Powell, 14 March 1884; Report of Indian Agent Patrick McTiernan, New Westminster, 15 August 1884, all of which are located in RG 10, Vol. 3,679, File 12,061, NAC.
47 “The Sumas Tragedy,” in The British Columbian, New Westminster, 15 March 1884. The reporter cites Indian Agent Patrick McTiernan as his source. Interestingly McTiernan never officially communicated this
information to his superiors in Victoria or Ottawa.

57 The reports of the undercover detectives can be found in Russell to Roycroft, GR 431, Attorney-General Inquisitions, File 1884, British Columbia Archives (BCA).

PART VI

CONCLUSION
CHAPTER NINE

Entering the Twentieth Century

On a hot day in August, 1906, after traveling more than 7,000 kilometers and overcoming concerted opposition from the Canadian Dominion government, Simon Pierre of Katzie walked into Buckingham Palace and spoke directly with King Edward VII. Together with Squamish Chief Joe Capilano, the delegation’s official leader, Chief Basil David of Bonapart and Charlie Isipaymilt of Cowichan, Simon had completed an incredible journey that started nearly two months earlier at the Canadian Pacific train station in Vancouver, British Columbia. Unlike the other members of the delegation, Simon Pierre was neither an Aboriginal politician nor a traditional leader. Rather, as a residential school graduate, he had been chosen at a massive inter-tribal gathering to accompany the three senior indigenous statesmen as translator. It was Simon Pierre, therefore, that the British journalists swarmed around immediately following the Royal audience. The question they asked (in addition to “What did the King say?”) was the same one that for the past three weeks had been inspiring headlines in London’s leading daily newspapers: What was wanted by these Indians, who, though claiming to be Chiefs of particular villages, had traveled across a continent and an ocean to seek redress for grievances on behalf of “all 80,000 of British Columbia’s Indians”? The British journalists were confused by the relationship between place, time and Aboriginal collective identity.

Though Simon Pierre’s voyage was undoubtedly the greatest journey undertaken by a Stó:lō person up to that time, other Salish people from British Columbia’s interior plateau had, in fact, preceded the 1906 delegates to London by two years. In 1904,
Chiefs Chilihiza and Louis of Douglas Lake and Kamloops, in the company of the Oblate priest Fr. Le Jeune, traveled to England on similar business. However, these earlier sojourners officially represented only their home settlements—two relatively impoverished Indian reserves far from any large non-Native urban centres. From the British government’s perspective, Chilihiza and Louis were easy to ignore. After waiting for nearly a month and receiving no indication they would ever be permitted to speak with the King, the 1904 delegates moved on to Rome, where (as a consolation?) they secured a private audience with Pope Pius X.¹

Joe Capilano was determined that his delegation would not suffer the same fate as his predecessors.² The leader of the world’s largest empire would listen to the 1906 delegates, Capilano reasoned, because they spoke on behalf of a large multi-tribal Indian population in an important region of the Canadian Dominion. His designs were overtly political and extremely well conceived. There was nothing naïve about the 1906 delegates’ decision to bypass the British Columbian and Canadian governments in their effort to secure recognition and protection of indigenous governance and economic security. Nothing in Capilano’s or the other delegates’ numerous discussions with government officials or the media suggested that they actually expected King Edward to immediately or unilaterally restructure Canadian Indian policy. Capilano, in particular, was skillful and cagey as he teased and manipulated not only the Canadian and British press, but also a host of political figures ranging from the Mayor of Vancouver to the Minister of the Interior in Ottawa, to the Canadian High Commissioner in London. It seems clear that the delegation’s aim was to draw attention to the injustice of Canadian
Indian policy in British Columbia as a whole, and in so doing embarrass the Dominion into applying the rule of law with consistency in all of its provinces.  

And yet, being a political act did not prevent the sojourn from also assuming a deeply spiritual nature for the Native travelers. The trip to London was a sacred journey; a spirit quest not unlike those Coast Salish shamans embarked upon when they traveled through the xá:xà realm linking their homes with the metaphysical domain of the Great First. Like shamans, the delegates sought information and power: they wanted clarification of the Crown’s intentions and proof of the government’s willingness to live up to the rhetoric of the rule of law. Thus, it was a movement across not only physical and legal landscapes, but spiritual and racial ones as well.  

Clearly it was a very proud moment for Simon Pierre when he translated the words of Joe Capilano and his other Elders for the King, and then those of the British Monarch back to his Chiefs.  

The audience in Buckingham Palace represented a masterful political coup for the British Columbia Native leaders. After arriving in England they had spent three weeks trying to circumvent the Canadian High Commissioner’s concerted efforts to derail their mission. Contemporary Stó:lō oral traditions relate how, as Old Pierre’s son, Simon had been trained in certain of the esoteric traditions of Coast Salish shamanism, and how, in order to demonstrate the potency of Native spirit power, Simon had conjured a small bird and caused it to circle repeatedly less than a meter above his head during a dinner meeting with senior British and Canadian government officials. This feat so amazed and impressed the Londoners, the oral history explains, that it was in large part responsible for the delegation’s success.
in securing respect for indigenous political aspirations and Royal guarantees for Aboriginal rights.

British newspapers, as well as official government correspondence documenting the 1906 delegation, also relate a complicated game of identity politics engaged in by both the indigenous delegates and the Canadian High Commission office. Each side struggled to have contrasting interpretations of the delegates' political standing and objectives recognized by British authorities, and through them, by Dominion officials in Ottawa. But, unlike the oral traditions, these western mnemonics suggest that it was the Aboriginal leaders who were overawed and impressed by symbols and expressions of British power. As a result, the documents explain, the delegates were ultimately thwarted in their aspirations and returned home humbled and firmly aware of their subordinate position to the Canadian government.

With the exception of a single academic article, the 1906 delegation to London receives cursory attention in scholarly treatments of West Coast people and history. Neither, for that matter, do standard histories of British Columbia or Canada refer to the 1906 delegation as significant to understanding regional or national political development. And yet, it represents the first time an Aboriginal leader represented himself as the spokesperson for the entire indigenous population of Canada's Pacific province. Following this act a series of formal supra-tribal and broad regional political organizations emerged, which, operating in varying degrees of formal political unity, placed and kept British Columbia Aboriginal rights issues firmly on the Canadian political agenda throughout the twentieth century.
That the current indigenous memory of particular details of the delegation's actions and experiences do not perfectly coincide with the documentary observations left by contemporaneous non-Natives is unimportant. Even without the added complexity of trying to understand an occurrence across a temporal gulf of nearly a century, it is uncommon even for people of the same gender, class and ethnic predisposition to describe a shared experience in identical terms. Native and non-Native politicians involved in a serious contest over the definition of Aboriginal land and governance in 1906 are unlikely to have transmitted identical interpretations and memories. The important point is coming to recognize that even if it is difficult to reconcile the various interpretations of what happened in London in 1906, it is impossible to deny any longer the significance of this event, when read in light of the history of Stó:lō-Coast Salish collective identity leading up to and following it.

This study concludes with an account of the 1906 delegation not because it represents the culmination of the history of Stó:lō or British Columbia provincial Aboriginal collective identity, for it does not. Indeed, there have been since then numerous instances when certain groupings of indigenous people openly rejected the idea of any meaningful collectivity beyond the local reserve-based settlement. Rather, the 1906 delegation more accurately represents an important climax in a long process of collective identity reformation tending unevenly toward ever-greater supra-tribal association and affiliation. The converging of a generally shared appreciation that meaningful, legitimate and real Aboriginal collective identity could simultaneously nest or reside not only at the local band level, but also at the supra-tribal Stó:lō, Coast Salish,
Salish and ultimately British Columbian level is reflected publicly for the first time in the 1906 delegation. Yet, it was a realization that had been gaining currency within indigenous society at least since the smallpox epidemic of 1782 that swept in with the first arrival of Europeans. Certainly, throughout that period there had been countervailing forces emphasizing smaller, more localized expressions of collective identity, the most prominent being the settlement and tribal-based symbols of authority emphasized by the Coast Salish male elite on the one hand, and the colonial reserve creation initiatives and government banning of the potlatch on the other. But as the 1906 delegation so ably demonstrates, these trends were being constantly challenged by the perceived advantages of increased collective cooperation and group identification between Aboriginals—matters that upper class women and non-elite males had typically emphasized as important in the past.

If the move towards greater emphasis on broader regional collective identities parallels the history of European colonial penetrations into the region, it does not necessarily follow that supra-tribal identity is a product of colonialism. Though the public expressions of broad-based political identity increasingly assumed western-looking appearances, they were nonetheless based upon long-established indigenous precedence. The emerging new order had to be rationalized within the old epistemology. Ancient stories of flood-inspired migrations provided models for intercommunity amalgamation in the wake of the earliest smallpox epidemics, just as the periodic and ephemeral collective supra-tribal Coast Salish political response to certain instances of external aggression by Coastal Raiders provided a model for collective action against American whiskey peddlers and then later the colonial government on the land question.
And all of these expressions of shared identity were built upon a pre-contact economic and diplomatic network designed to minimize conflict while maximizing access to regionally dispersed and seasonally specific food resources.

Thus, while the process of Stó:lō supra-tribal collective identity formation ultimately assumed expressions that appeared to outsiders to be derivative of European ideas and institutions, they were not necessarily regarded as such by indigenous people. Yet, to earlier historians these expressions were inconsequential to the story of European expansion and therefore ignored. Likewise, for the salvage ethnographer they were largely dismissed as being too contaminated by western influences to assist in the documenting of pre-European cultural types. Certainly these factors account in large part for the scant attention practitioners of either discipline have paid to the gigantic gatherings associated with the Queen’s birthday celebrations in the 1860s and 1870s and Lord Dufferin’s 1876 visit, or the efforts to form rule-based supra-tribal governments such as emerged out of these earlier inter-tribal gathers and during the time the government began inducing Fraser canyon residents to relocate to fertile agricultural lands in the lower Fraser valley (lands earlier abandoned because of epidemics). Equally, they explain why scholars have overlooked the coordinated military action that the 1884 lynching of Louie Sam by American vigilantes almost provoked, or even the 1906 delegation to London.

What is significant is that the trend toward broader regional group affiliation developed not as a result of colonial design, but in fact despite overt governmental objectives to atomize Aboriginal collective political consciousness. Thus, the ascendancy of Stó:lō and similar expressions of supra-tribal collective identity elsewhere in the
province represent remarkable examples of indigenous agency despite the increasingly European appearance of their formal organizational expressions. Considered in this light, the old ethnohistoric debate over whether contact resulted in increased fragmentation of collective identity and political authority, or a narrowing of group identification and a reification of chiefly authority, takes on a new meaning. Indigenous communities have never been static units. The various options available at any given time have meant that collective identity has always been a somewhat contentious and negotiated matter.

Thus, it is possible to say with confidence that collective identity has long assumed a situational salience. Aboriginal people, like people everywhere, accept or adopt a form of identity (from among a number of widely recognized legitimate options) that they think provides them the greatest benefits in any given historical context. Aboriginal culture has been constantly changing, but indigenous experience has shaped the changes.

Among the people commonly identified as “the Stó:lō,” collective identity is an expression forged in the hearth of vigorous debate where more than one legitimate option is always available. “Traditional” identity in this sense can never be anything more than a particular cultural expression that is informed by past experience and historical understanding. The more informed a definition is, the more likely it is to be perceived as legitimate. And so, while internal tensions remain over what constitutes the most traditional definition of collective identities, it is important to remember that these strains are nothing new—this is as it has always been.

The indigenous criteria used to assess how and why certain collective identities periodically eclipse others is not always readily apparent to outside observers who do not
share their historical experiences or cultural perspectives. The contemporary lack of indigenous consensus over what constitutes the most important identity today can be too easily misunderstood from a modernist view as unresolved indigenous efforts to define empirical truths, or from a postmodern perspective as proof of the absence of truth and possibly evidence of the continuing colonial state of indigenous thought processes. When viewed across both temporal and cultural divides the subtleties of indigenous ways of knowing are difficult to appreciate. This study does not claim to have fully achieved cross-cultural historical understanding. And yet, a prolonged period of intimate professional and social interaction with the indigenous people of the lower Fraser watershed has provided insights not readily achievable though standard interview research methods alone.

Close ethnographic study is essential to historical analysis. Without it, modern western sensibilities are inevitably projected onto past Native cultures. The ethnographic information that late-nineteenth and early-twentieth century Stó:lō Elders provided to various anthropologists working in Coast Salish territory reveal the importance and significance of movements and migrations to indigenous historical understandings. Coast Salish indigenous historiography emerges through stories of human population movement. After each movement/migration, the deck was reshuffled, so to speak, and people needed to re-establish their identity in reference to new places of residence and new physical and metaphysical geographies. Indeed, another reason the 1906 delegation represents the beginning of modern Stó:lō and British Columbia Aboriginal political identity is that the population movements characteristic of an earlier age had been effectively halted by this time. The final phase of significant reserve
creation in Stó:lo territory occurred in 1904 when the last of the Fraser canyon reserves were established. Henceforth, the Indian land base was essentially fixed, and changes of residence between reserves governed by strict rules as defined in the Indian Act.

If careful ethnographic contextualization is essential to understanding local indigenous groups, it also contains within it the potential to reinterpret important aspects of the histories of such non-local entities as nation states and corporate globalization. The fact that indigenous people did not disappear in the face of concerted government assimilation policies and the onslaught of international capitalism is significant. That indigenous people have found new ways to be different principally through complicated internal negotiations emphasizing the value of maintaining connections to the past reveals the importance local studies have for our understanding of national and global processes.

Ethnohistorical investigation also provides a foundation upon which new historical interpretive frameworks can be built to enrich the history of Native-newcomer relations. That is to say, the combining of ethnographic investigation with temporal analysis holds the potential to do more than add regional flavour to what has largely been portrayed as essentially the identical story of the advance of western colonialism across a politically and culturally diverse continent.

The existing literature portrays the history of Native-Newcomer relations in terms that have little regional or temporal variation. What happened in British Columbia in the nineteenth century is, for all intents and purposes, the same as occurred in the Maritimes in the eighteenth century, or in the Yukon in the twentieth, or indeed, in any and all places where indigenous people have encountered colonialism: Europeans arrived, engaged in an initial phase of meaningful relationships during which they were largely
dependent upon Native good will, but over time the relationships soured as the Europeans came in greater numbers, settled and promoted settlement and became increasingly exploitative of the human and natural resources they encountered. Eventually, Natives came to be perceived as impediments rather than facilitators of European aspirations and as such were displaced and marginalized through systematic state-sponsored assimilative initiatives. Ultimately, however, Aboriginal people avoided complete victimization and cultural extinction, and instead began a process of cultural revival and renaissance associated with court victories and direct action that led to greater economic and political clout.

Whatever their value (and undeniably it is great), these stories essentially portray western colonialism's impact on Aboriginal people from the colonial perspective. Within this interpretive framework, Native people are principally foils used to critique and expose the excesses of western colonialism and capitalism. This, unfortunately, has prevented indigenous people from being portrayed as anything more complex than reactive victims in the history of western development, and more recently as ecological prophets for a society that experiences pangs of guilt over its consumptive past. And yet, accounts such as the history of the trend toward greater collective identification among the Stó:lo in the period leading up to the twentieth century illustrate that individual tribal histories, and even the history of westerners in Native history, can also be understood as the unique products of conscious and unconscious decisions made by indigenous people in a host of unique historical and geographical circumstances.

The title of a popular collection of Native history essays asserts that the Aboriginal historical experience needs to be brought "out of the background." The
assumption is that Aboriginal happenings are significant to all Canadians, and have been improperly and unjustly hidden in shadows. Certainly, historical events of the scale and significance of the various migrations associated with the smallpox epidemic of 1782, the establishment of Fort Langley, the abandonment of Alamex, the merging of the two Chehalis communities, the Chilliwack displacement of the Swílhcha people, and the abandonment of the Fraser Canyon settlements have at least on occasion become part of the Canadian historical consciousness when they involved non-Natives.

Of course, others would argue that these and other Stó:lō events did not impact the unfolding of Canadian history generally. Yet it is difficult to imagine political rallies on the scale of the various Queen’s birthday gatherings, or the coordinated Aboriginal response to Lord Dufferin’s visit, or the reaction to the Lynching of Louie Sam, occurring anywhere else in Canada by non-Natives and not receiving significant attention. Standard histories of British Columbia devote considerable space to the various white people and organizations that made presentations to Dufferin at New Westminster, and yet whites made up only a small fraction of the total number of people present at that event. Perhaps it is indicative of the political clout the Stó:lō and other indigenous communities are now acquiring in Canada that works like this dissertation are being composed. The coordinated indigenous response to the marginalization of their land rights; their determined efforts to thwart government efforts to restrict their movements across the landscape; and their continuing spiritual connection to what are simply dismissed by outsiders as the “resources” of their largely alienated territory have resulted in a series of legal and political victories that have made their collective history
meaningful to those non-Native individuals and interest groups that stand to lose or gain from the changes Aboriginal self-governance and treaty settlements may facilitate.

Given that non-Native society is currently struggling to adjust to the new economic and political influence of Aboriginal communities, interest will no doubt turn increasingly to trying to understand within which expression of Native collective identity power nests. Among the Stó:lō there are differing opinions as to which identity is the most legitimately empowered to represent certain Aboriginal interests. If, like the people behind the recent Trans-Canada Trail Project, one wants to do something as supposedly benign and innocuous as construct a hiking trail across Canada, one is faced with the dilemma of trying to identify from which Aboriginal political bodies to seek permission: Each local Indian Band the trail passes near? The regional Tribal Council? Provincial bodies like the BC Summit or Union of BC Indian Chiefs? And what happens when two or more Native communities assert conflicting and possibly exclusive claims to the natural or heritage resources of a particular region? Whose claim will take precedence, and who will arbitrate such a decision? Stated simply, non-Aboriginal society is suddenly faced with the dilemma of trying to figure out how to consult, and with whom.

Canada’s scattered Indian reserves have contributed to the false impression among non-Natives that indigenous collective identity is principally settlement-based as well as primordially fixed. A short while ago, in November 2001, members of the Ohamil Band discovered that the Federal Department of Indian Affairs’ official Reserve Registry no longer listed the Xelháh reserve in the Fraser Canyon as belonging to their Band. Instead, it was shown as the property of the nearby Yale First Nation. When Ohamil representatives questioned and challenged this change the government official
replied that it was simply a clerical oversight created by an anonymous bureaucrat who assumed the map had originally been made incorrectly. “Why,” the Ottawa based civil servant asked, “would Ohamil have a reserve so many kilometers away?”

In a related manner, in the summer of 2001, the Department of Fisheries and Oceans issued special Aboriginal fishing licenses on a Band-by-Band basis that resulted in certain Native individuals attempting to fish at sites claimed as the hereditary property of other families, ostensibly because the government gave them the right. Conversely, the Seattle City Light and Authority paid annual compensation to a single Canadian Interior Salish Indian band for damage caused by the damming of Ross Lake simply based on the fact that a century old ethnographer’s map identified the region as the territory of the Thompson Indians. Canadian Coast Salish people living on reserves closer to the affected area who also claimed the territory were neither compensated nor consulted.13

The French proverb “l’action est fille de la pensée” reveals a great deal about the way Europeans conceive of human agency in the unfolding of history. Among the Stó:lō there is a saying that, “The ancestor of everything is an action.”14 Actions, events, happenings, all have agency that take precedence over unaided human thought and reason. Important actions are literally charged with history-shaping power. A person’s journey through one of the mystical tunnels that connect various indigenous communities in Coast Salish territory; the transformation of a person into a stone; the never ending movement of the Fraser River’s waters;15 a region’s sudden depopulation by disease; a community’s migration from the mountains to the valley; a shaman’s metaphysical travels into the domain of the Great First; a group of freed slaves’ journey to a territory
recently abandoned by others; the surveying of Indian reserves; the banning of the
potlatch; the lynching of a young boy, etc.—these actions, these events, have
consequences and results. They shape people’s relationships with the environment and
with one another. Over time these relationships change. However, when one’s status and
authority are largely dependent upon the ability to demonstrate connections between
important actions and one’s family’s history, the relationship between place and time
becomes central to maintaining shared notions of collective identity. Since actions and
events affect people differently, history becomes the arbiter of identity. Hence, while
actions, events and places are powerful and, in turn, provide power, they are also
compromised by the problem inherent in maintaining a stable and shared collective
understanding and acceptance of collective identity over time.

1 Robert Galois erroneously reports that the delegates met with Pope Leo XIII. Leo XIII died in 1903. See
Galois, “The Indian Rights Association,” 1-34.
2 The two 1904 delegates were originally scheduled to travel with Capilano in 1906. One, however, had passed away and the other was too ill to travel.
3 See in particular the delegates’ petition as quoted in the Victoria Daily Colonist, 6 July 1906, and
successive newspaper accounts from across Canada and London of how Capilano refused to disclose the
exact purpose of his mission to anyone other than the King. The High Commissioner’s office was
particularly concerned over the political ramifications for the Laurier government, in terms of Ottawa-
Victoria relations, should the publicity the delegates drew to the issue of their unjust treatment receive too
much public scrutiny as a result of the London visit.
4 Interviews with Simon Pierre and the other delegates by British newspaper journalists immediately
following the Royal audience portray the Aboriginal delegates as extremely happy and excited. See “King
Receives Indian Chiefs,” Vancouver Province, 13 August, 1906; “Redskins to see the King,” Daily
Express, 14 August 1906; “‘Good, King Good,’” Daily Mail, 14 August, 1906; “The King and the Indian
5 Lord Strathcona in particular worked diligently to subvert the delegates political objectives. A major part
of his strategy was to over-awe the delegates with symbols of British power and authority, and to.encourage the tabloid journalists to portray the Aboriginal spokesmen as quaint primitive buffoons in order
to de-emphasize the political significance of their presence and message. See Public Records Office
(PRO), London, “Colonial Correspondence,” 42/908; 42/907, original Despatches, 1906.
6 Steven Point, a distant relative of Simon Pierre’s, shared this account as it was told to him by his mother,
Rena Point-Bolton.
7 Robert Galois’ 1992 article remains the only detailed examination of the 1906 delegation. (See, Galois,
“The Indian Rights Association”). He astutely recognizes the implications of the delegation for Native
public relations and comments on its effect on sparking greater supra-tribal political co-operation. He
explains the delegation as being a response to the increased pressures on Aboriginal lands emerging after
the completion of the transcontinental railway. He does not recognize the extent to which the delegation was the culmination of a trend toward greater supra-tribal identity that had been on-going since first contact, nor that it was built upon earlier Coast Salish precedence for shared co-operative action and political identification.

8 See Tennant, *Aboriginal Peoples and Politics*.

9 Even with what had come to be regarded as Stó:lō territory certain bands, have been less inclined to identify with or participate in supra-reservation political organizations such as the Allied Tribes, the Union of British Columbia Indian Chiefs, the BC Summit, the Lower Fraser Aboriginal Fishing Authority, or the Stó:lō Nation.

10 For an discussion of the multifaceted ways in which this can occur see the debate over late-eighteenth century Hawaiian interpretations of Europeans found in Gananath Obeyesekere *The Apotheosis of Captain Cook: European Mythmaking in the Pacific* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1992), and Sahlins, *How “Natives” Think: About Captain Cook for Example* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1995).

11 Coates and Fisher, *Out of the Background*.


13 Coast Salish people living on the American side of the international border, in particular the Upper Skagit, were paid compensation by Seattle City Light and Authority.

14 Steven Point, personal communications with Keith Thor Carlson (16 May 1994).

15 During his shamanic training, Old Pierre’s mother told him, “The [Fraser] river is holy; it journeys day and night, coming no man knows whence, and travelling no man knows whither. Pray to it. Tell it that you are striving to be a medicine man, that for a long time you are going to fast, and ask it to help you. Then come back into the house.” See Jenness, *Katzie Ethnographic Notes and The Faith of a Coast Salish Indian*, 66.
Fraser River / Strait of Georgia — Tributary ("tribal") rivers — Seasonal movements through in-law relationships

- Family-owned resource, typically inherited through women
- Family-owned canyon fishing / wind-drying site, typically inherited by men through men
- Regional watershed-based town (tribal core)
- Tributary settlement / hamlet

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>ZONE 1</th>
<th>ZONE 2</th>
<th>ZONE 3</th>
<th>ZONE 4</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Nutritional Resource</strong></td>
<td>Ocean marine and delta/estuary resources such as molluscs, shellfish, marine mammals and migrating salmon</td>
<td>Valley lowlands / marsh and hillside forest resources such as bog cranberries and wapato, migrating salmon and berries</td>
<td>Arid canyon resources, primarily migrating salmon</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Salmon Harvest Potential</strong></td>
<td>POOR TO GOOD</td>
<td>GOOD</td>
<td>EXCELLENT</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Salmon Preservation Technique</strong></td>
<td>Primarily smoking and salting</td>
<td>Primarily smoking and salting</td>
<td>Primarily wind-drying</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**FIGURE 2.1**

Relationship between resource availability and collective identity accounting for regional variation in salmon processing technology.
FIGURE 2.2

The Halq'eméylem language reveals the connection between past, present and future generations.

Bolded figures represent the living, and faded ones stand for people who are deceased or yet unborn.
**Smestiyálh** • sibling of deceased parent

\[
\begin{align*}
\Delta &= \emptyset \\
\Delta &= \emptyset
\end{align*}
\]

**Swelméylh** • child of deceased parent or child of deceased sibling

\[
\begin{align*}
\Delta &= \emptyset \\
\Delta &= \emptyset
\end{align*}
\]

**Th'á:ya** • relative of a deceased spouse (in-law after connecting relative dies), i.e., mother, sibling or cousin of a deceased wife

\[
\begin{align*}
\Delta &= \emptyset \\
\Delta &= \emptyset
\end{align*}
\]

**Ts'ilhxám** • deceased child, deceased child's spouse, or deceased child's spouse's parent (from xé'lem, "to cry because others cry; to share the suffering")

\[
\begin{align*}
\Delta &= \emptyset \\
\Delta &= \emptyset
\end{align*}
\]

**Shxwemthiyálh or Qaqá:lh** • deceased aunt/uncle/grandmother, etc. who, though not your parent, was responsible for raising you

\[
\begin{align*}
\Delta &= \emptyset \\
\Delta &= \emptyset
\end{align*}
\]

**Qethiyálh** • deceased uncle or grand-uncle

\[
\begin{align*}
\Delta &= \emptyset \\
\Delta &= \emptyset
\end{align*}
\]

**Syewá:l** • "ancestors," lineage, deceased people one is related to, or deceased people one is related to through others

\[
\begin{align*}
\Delta &= \emptyset \\
\Delta &= \emptyset
\end{align*}
\]

**Syesyewálelh** • all of one's ancestors

**Syá:tel** • widow, widower, "spouse of deceased person"

\[
\begin{align*}
\Delta &= \emptyset \\
\Delta &= \emptyset
\end{align*}
\]

**Wálém** • orphan, "child of deceased parents"

\[
\begin{align*}
\Delta &= \emptyset \\
\Delta &= \emptyset
\end{align*}
\]

**Ts'its'á:ya** • in-law when the connecting link dies

\[
\begin{align*}
\Delta &= \emptyset \\
\Delta &= \emptyset
\end{align*}
\]

**Stewéqel** • deceased one

\[
\begin{align*}
\Delta &= \emptyset
\end{align*}
\]

**Siyolexwálh** • elders who have passed away

**Mameláselh** • his or her deceased children

\[
\begin{align*}
\Delta &= \emptyset
\end{align*}
\]

**Sóstem** • lost (deceased)

**Kwsú:tl'ó:lh** • that was her (deceased)

**Kw'ú:tl'ó:lh** • that was him (deceased)

---

**LEGEND**

- Δ Male
- O Female
- = Married
- ∅ Deceased

All charts read from dark grey to light grey, i.e., Δ=∅ (father)

---

**FIGURE 2.3**

Decedence Relations
Coast Salish territory is best conceived as a four-pointed star consisting of four major open waterways.
FIGURE 2.5
A Stó:lō view of the journey of Xegá:ls.
– per Albert Sonny McHalsie
FIGURE 3.1

Flood story migrations and their relations to tribal identities.

LEGEND

1. Kwantlen to Bella Coola (Hill-Tout's consultant)
2. Coquitlam to Kwokwiltam (Old Pierre)
3. Squamish to Nooksack (Old Pierre)
4. Cowichan to Cowitz (Old Pierre)
5. (Harry Uslick)
6. (Dan Milo)
7. Chehalis to Chehalis (Bob Joe)
8. Scowlitz to Scowlitz (Bob Joe)
9. Chehalis to ? (never heard from again) (Cornellus Kolleher)
10. To Yale (Harry Uslick)
According to Amy Cooper, after "the famine" Soowahlie was repopulated by the lone surviving Soowahlie woman and a man from Nooksack.

According to Dan Milo, after the mysterious depopulating event, a surviving boy from Kw'e kw'e'lwqw' and girl from Sial'tits moved to Leq'a:mel. It is from Leq'a:mel that the Halkomelem language spread to all Sto:lo.
One's tribes core was another's periphery.
The centre, or heartland, of tribal territory was characterized by absolute or near absolute control of land & resources. Control diminished as one moved into the periphery of a tribe's territory. However, within the periphery one could secure access privileges and even ownership through marriage and similar arrangements. The disappearance or extinction of one tribe often led to a neighboring community asserting its former access privileges as full ownership. Put another way, one tribe's core was another's periphery. Such beliefs and attitudes continue to shape contemporary concepts of Stó:lo political identity and jurisdiction.
FIGURE 4.1

The migration of Chilliwack tribal "headquarters" and the establishment of tribal borders.

- per Bob Joe
FIGURE 4.2
The abandonment of Alámex.
- per August Jim
Figure 4.3

Pilalt territory as defined by the Cheam Band, 1999.

All digital land base information provided by Ministry of Environment Lands and Parks.
All placenames provided by a gathering of Stó:lō Elders.
All work compiled by Leanna Rhodes Stó:lō Nation, Aboriginal Rights and Title.
FIGURE 4.4

St'éxem settlement created by Thelhatsstan [Θε'λακτάν].

— per Old Pierre
FIGURE 4.5

Freedom Village migration.

- per Bob Joe
In 1830 Archibald McDonald, chief trader at Fort Langley, compiled an estimate of the number of local Aboriginal “Men” on a community-by-community basis. McDonald derived his figures from information provided by prominent Native leaders visiting Fort Langley, which he then measured against his personal knowledge of village sizes along the lower Fraser River. His estimates were always multiples of 10 – suggestive of the speculative nature of his study – and here they are multiplied by 4.4 (the average family size as detailed in the later 1839 HBC census) to approximate total community populations. McDonald provided only vague descriptions of village locations, a problem reflected in subsequent efforts to map his data. Locations depicted here are derived from orthographic analysis of Halq'emeylem place names and are believed to be more accurate than previous mapping by Harris (1994) and Suttles (1998).

**1830 Census Figures**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Hudson's Bay Company Orthography</th>
<th>Halq’emeylem Orthography</th>
<th>Contemporary English Spelling</th>
<th>1830 Population</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Musquams</td>
<td>Xxemłl /xwinyem</td>
<td>Musquam</td>
<td>220</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Klikites</td>
<td>Q’uyldr’</td>
<td>Katzie</td>
<td>88</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Squaktem</td>
<td>Qw’èyit’</td>
<td>Kwitan</td>
<td>264</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Skwals</td>
<td>Sams’th</td>
<td>Smai</td>
<td>176</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sk’ułýhsk’oosk’</td>
<td>T’alx’wiyiq’</td>
<td>Chilliwack</td>
<td>264</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pella’tts</td>
<td>P’alux’</td>
<td>Pilot</td>
<td>220</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Squal’s</td>
<td>Sq’’l’we’r’</td>
<td>Squilbf</td>
<td>440</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>T’um’mas</td>
<td>T̓sí’k’i’</td>
<td>Chelats</td>
<td>250</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yelkon</td>
<td>Tł’i’ge’n’</td>
<td><em>McCallum site</em></td>
<td>880</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sk’x̣e’s &amp; Improvement Sk’x̣e’s &amp; Improvement</td>
<td>Sk’x̣e’w’iy’</td>
<td>Smai’wth (Peters) and Waleath</td>
<td>440</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Helli’q’ae’</td>
<td>Hel’li’q’ae’</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>396</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kukumt’aq’</td>
<td>Sp’elx’w’èh’</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>352</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>W’wluqum’</td>
<td>W’wluqum’</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>358</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Huk’ut’um’</td>
<td>S’mi’x’w’u’um’</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>660</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>K’l’uk’ut’um’</td>
<td>S’mi’x’w’u’um’</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>660</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hukul’oos’</td>
<td>S’mi’x’w’u’um’</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>348</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nak’ut’um’</td>
<td>S’mi’x’w’u’um’</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>106</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nak’ut’um’</td>
<td>S’mi’x’w’u’um’</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>775</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hukul’oos’</td>
<td>S’mi’x’w’u’um’</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>772</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>W’wluqum’</td>
<td>W’wluqum’</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>174</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Huk’ut’um’</td>
<td>S’mi’x’w’u’um’</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>380</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hukul’oos’</td>
<td>S’mi’x’w’u’um’</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>480</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nak’ut’um’</td>
<td>S’mi’x’w’u’um’</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>132</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

| Total recorded Halq’’em’ylem speakers = 8,954 |
| Total recorded population of all Halq’meylem speakers = 9,552 |

**Figure 4.6**
Lower Fraser Population, 1830.
– per Hudson's Bay Company Census
FIGURE 4.7

From the Ts'okwam to the Teit.

Tribal migration & identity in the face of government agricultural policy.
Figure 5.1
Summer temperature, humidity and wind in the lower Fraser Canyon as relates to salmon processing.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name of Reserve</th>
<th>Area in Acres</th>
<th>Souls</th>
<th>Remarks</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Who nock</td>
<td>2000</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>Good dry land no preemption claim on this reserve.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Saamoqua</td>
<td>500</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>Nearly all swamp a narrow belt of dry land along the edge of the river. No preemption claim on this reserve.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Masquee</td>
<td>9600</td>
<td>88</td>
<td>About 1/3 of this reserve is flooded in high water. No preemption claims on this reserve.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tlat-whaas</td>
<td>2000</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>This reserve is partly flooded in high water and contains a preemption claim. (Mr. Kregand.)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sumass (Upper)</td>
<td>1200</td>
<td>43</td>
<td>This reserve is nearly all flooded in the high stages of the river.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sumass (Lower)</td>
<td>6400</td>
<td>93</td>
<td>This reserve is nearly all flooded in high water and contains 3 preemption claims occupied by Codville, McLairdy and Finlayson.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nochoomen</td>
<td>6400</td>
<td>120</td>
<td>This reserve is partly flooded in high water. The Indians on this reserve claim the whole of the island as marked and objects to the Sumass Indian reserving any of it as is shown on the plan.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Iswhy</td>
<td>300</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>Partly flooded in high water.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tsquhay</td>
<td>3200</td>
<td>130</td>
<td>This reserve contains part of several preemption claims as shown on the plan.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Koqua-pilt</td>
<td>400</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>Nearly all good dry land.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tswhya-aayla</td>
<td>1000</td>
<td>45</td>
<td>Partly flooded in high water &amp; contains 1 preemption claim (McGill’s house built, no other improvements).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Assay-litch</td>
<td>400</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>Partly flooded, 1 preemption claim on this reserve.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yukeyouquay yoose Scokale</td>
<td>2500</td>
<td>80</td>
<td>This reserve is partly flooded by the rising of the Fraser River – 2 Indian villages on one reserve.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>So-why-lie</td>
<td>4000</td>
<td>70</td>
<td>This reserve is partly flooded by the Chilukweyak River – no preemption on this reserve.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Figure 5.2**
Detail of McColl’s 1864 map of Lower Fraser River Indian Reserves.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Initial letter on the plan</th>
<th>Name of Tribe</th>
<th>No. of Acres laid off by Mr. McColl</th>
<th>No. of men in the tribe</th>
<th>No. of women in the tribe</th>
<th>No. of children in the tribe</th>
<th>No. of cattle, horses, pigs, etc., belonging to the tribe</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A</td>
<td>Whonock</td>
<td>2000</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>3 cattle, 12 pigs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B</td>
<td>Saamoqua</td>
<td>500</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>5</td>
<td></td>
<td>6 cattle, 3 horses, 5 pigs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C</td>
<td>Matzqui</td>
<td>9600</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>12 pigs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D</td>
<td>Tlalt-whoas</td>
<td>2000</td>
<td>Not visited</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>E</td>
<td>Sumass (Upper)</td>
<td>1200</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>21 horses, 12 pigs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>F</td>
<td>Sumass (Lower)</td>
<td>6400</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>39</td>
<td>39</td>
<td>1 cow, 3 horses, 16 pigs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>G</td>
<td>Nickaamen</td>
<td>6400</td>
<td>Not visited</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>H</td>
<td>Iswhy</td>
<td>3200</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>Some pigs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I</td>
<td>Isquhay</td>
<td>3200</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>5 cattle and some pigs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>J</td>
<td>Koquaa-pilt</td>
<td>400</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>8 cattle, 1 horse, &amp; some pigs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>K</td>
<td>Iswaya-aayla</td>
<td>1000</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>9 cattle, 1 horse, &amp; some pigs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>L</td>
<td>Assay-litch</td>
<td>400</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>Some pigs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>M</td>
<td>Yukeyouqua yoosesockale</td>
<td>2500</td>
<td>Not visited</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>N</td>
<td>So-why-lee</td>
<td>4000</td>
<td>Not visited</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Figure 5.3**
Trutch's chart showing demographics and indicators of "civilization" used to justify Sto:lo reserve reduction.
FIGURE 6.1
Captain John of Soowhalie.
Figure 6.2
The Pope falls headlong into Hell's tortuous flames in a "Protestant Ladder."

- Henry and Eliza Spalding, "Protestant Ladder" [1846]
Oregon Historical Society M6631, 632, Portland, Oregon
Figure 6.3
Detail of official map of Soowahlie Reserve, showing name of government appointed (recognized?) Chief, Captain John.
FIGURE 6.4

Artist’s depiction of Suxyl’s naming potlatch.
— Rachel Nicol-Smith, Stó:lō Nation Archives
Figure 7.1

Queen's birthday celebration, New Westminster, 1867.
— British Columbia Archives D-07233
FIGURE 7.2
Queen's birthday celebration, New Westminster, 1874.
- British Columbia Archives HP009343
Figure 7.3

Indian’s racing in front of Government House on Queen’s Birthday, 1867.

— By Jane Needham (British Columbia Archives PDP00252)
FIGURE 8.1

"Map of British Columbia – Being a Geographical Division of the Indians of the Province according to their Nationality or Dialect."

- Compiled at the Office of Superintendent of Indian Affairs, Victoria, BC, 1872 (National Archives of Canada)
FIGURE 8.2
Gathering to address Lord Dufferin, New Westminster, 1876.

- Author unknown, British Columbia Archives PDP01792
Figure 8.3

Site of the lynching of Stó:lō boy Louise Sam by American vigilantes on Canadian soil.

- Percivale R. Jeffcott Collection #981, Centre for Pacific Northwest Studies, Western Washington University, Bellingham, Washington, 98225
Bibliography

Museums and Archives Abbreviations:

American National Archives (Regional Branch, Bellingham Washington) ANA
British Columbia Archives (Victoria British Columbia) BCA
Centre for Pacific Northwest Studies (University of Western Washington) CPNS
Chilliwack Archives (Chilliwack British Columbia) CA
Hudson’s Bay Company Archives (Winnipeg Manitoba) HBCA
National Archives of Canada (Ottawa Ontario) NAC
Oregon Historical Society (Portland Oregon) OHS
Provincial Crown Lands Vault (Victoria British Columbia) PCLV
Public Records Office (London Great Britain) PRO
Royal Anthropological Institute (London Great Britain) RAI
Royal British Columbia Museum (Victoria British Columbia) RBCM
Stó:lō Nation Archives (Chilliwack British Columbia) SNA
Vancouver Museum (Vancouver British Columbia) VM

Archival & Manuscript Collections:


Ball, Captain H.M. to the Colonial Secretary. 4 December 1869, BCA, Government Record (GR) 1372, File 397/1 B-1322.

Brew, Chartres to Joseph Trutch, Chief Commissioner of Lands and Works, 26 January 1866. BCA, GR 1372, File 943/13, Microfilm B-1339.

British Columbia. Colonial Correspondence, 1857-1872. BCA, GR 1372.

_______. Colony. Lands and Works Department, 1859-1872. BCA, GR 2900.

_______. Provincial Secretary, 1861-1877. BCA, GR 0504

_______. Provincial Secretary, 1876-1878. BCA, GR 0494.

Canada, Department of Indian Affairs. NAC, Record Group (RG) 10, Black Series Volumes 10012; 3669: 3679: 3795: 3669: 2116: 7859: 3795.

_______. "Indian Census of Yale Tribe, 1878." NAC, RG10, Vol. 10012A.

_______. "Report of a Committee of the Honourable Privy Council, Approved by His Excellency, L'Marquis de Lansdowne, Governor General of the Dominion of Canada."

Captain John, "The Story of the Conversion and Subsequent Experiences of Captain John, as Narrated by Himself," translated from Chinook into English by Reverend W. H. Barraclough, B.A., 30 March 1898. CA, Add. Mss., 253

Chief James of Yale. "Testimony before the 1913-1916 Royal Commission." SNA.

Douglas, James. Correspondence Relating to Fort Langley, 1830-1859. BCA A/B/20/L3A.

_______. Fort Victoria. Correspondence Out, 1856-1858. BCA, A/C/20/Vi4.


Douglas, James to the Right Honourable Sir E.B. Lytton, Bart. Victoria, Vancouver's Island, 12 October 1858. Received, 14 December 1858; Answered, 30 December 1858, Despatches, No. 60. Papers Relative to the Affairs of British Columbia, Part II. London, 1859.
Douglas, James to Edward B. Lytton. 15 August 1859, Dispatch No. 199, Colonial Office, 60/5, 13; also PRO, London.

Evans, Elwood. *The Fraser River Excitement, 1858*. BCA copy of unpublished manuscript from Bancroft Library, Berkley California.

Fraser Valley Chiefs. "Petition of Fraser Valley Chiefs to Governor Musgrave Regarding Sale of Cranberry Patches," in Holbrook to Governor Musgrave. 7 January 1870, Colonial Correspondence, BCA, F778/38, Reel B-1334.

Great Britain. PRO Colonial Office (CO) 60: British Columbia, original correspondence, 1858-1871; despatches from the Governors of British Columbia, Draft Replies, Interdepartmental and Miscellaneous.

Howse, A.R. Report, 18 December 1865. BCA, Colonial Correspondence, File 1030.

Howse, A.R. to William McColl. 1864, BCA, Colonial Correspondence, File 1030.


Launders, J.B. Various Survey maps, PCLV.


Magee, Bernard. BCA, "Log of Bernard Magee While On Board the Jefferson, 1793-1794."

McCull, William to Colonel Moody. 13 May 1861, BCA Royal Engineers Letterbooks, C/AB/30.6J.


McDonald, Archibald. 1830 Census, Fort Langley, HBCA.

McKay, J.W. "Indian Tribes, Correspondence 1881, Regarding Festivals, Traditions etc," *J.W. McKay Papers*. BCA, Add Mss 1917.

McTiernan, P.M., Indian Agent to I.W. Powell, Superintendent of Indian Affairs. 14 March 1884, NAC, RG 10, Vol. 3,679, File 12,061.

Moody, R.C. Letters and Enclosures, Colonial Correspondence – Indian Reserves on the Fraser River, 1860. BCA, GR 1372.

Nelson, Denys. “Diary of a Trip up the Fraser,” Denys Nelson’s Journal, 5 March 1925. VM, Hill-Tout Collection, General Files, B.XI.

Passingham, F. to P. McTiernan, 21 February 1891. NAC, RG 10, Reel C-10139, Vol. 3795, File 46607-1.

Powell, I.W. to Superintendent General. 29 September 1879, NAC, DIA, RG 10, Reel C-10, 117, Vol. 3669, File 10, 691.


Powell, I.W. to John Robson, Provincial Secretary. 21 March 1884, NAC, RG 10, Vol. 3,679, File 12,061.


Russell to Roycroft. BCA, GR 431, Attorney-General Inquiries, File 1884.

Saavedra, Ramon. BCA, Informe de lo ocurrido en Noutka del 7 de Junio de 93 al 15 de Julio de 94. Translated by Mary Daylton.

Scott, Robert Clyde, BCA, Add Mss 1299, Box 2/2.

Seymour, Frederick to Edward Cardwell. 31 August 1864. BCA, Colonial Despatches, CO 60/19, No. 30, Microfilm B-4034, 95-104.

Skw’atets Indians, Chilliwack to H. Graham. 6 December 1918. NAC, RG 10, Reel C-12144, Vol. 7859, File 30165-5(1).

Spalding, Henry and Eliza. “Protestant ladder,” OHS, Hi631, 632

Sproat, Gilbert Malcolm. BCA, Gilbert Malcolm Sproat Papers, MS 0257.

______. Field Minutes, NAC, Government of Canada, Department Indian and Northern Affairs Canada LTS, Vol. 18:309.
Sproat, Gilbert Malcolm to the Superintendent General. 1 December 1878, NAC, RG 10, reel C-10, 117, Vol. 3669, File 10, 691.


Sproat, Gilbert Malcolm to the Superintendent General. 26 July 1879, NAC, RG 10, Reel C-10, 117, Vol. 3669, File 10,691.


Sproat, Gilbert Malcolm to the Superintendent General. 5 August 1879, NAC, RG10, LTS, Vol. 5/1:19.


Strathcona, Lord. “Colonial Correspondence,” PRO, 42/908; 42/907, original Despatches, 1906.


Vowell, A.W. to the Superintendent General, 19 May 1891. NAC, RG 10, Reel C-10139, Vol. 3795, File 46607-1.


Yale, James Murray. “Census of Indian Population [from Fort Langley] and Crossing Over to Vancouver’s Island and Coasting at About Latitude 50° from there Returning Southward Along the Mainland and Up the Fraser’s River to Simpson Falls.” HBCA, B.223/2/1:30-53.

**Published Primary Documents:**

- Ayessik, Peter, Chief of Hope and other Chiefs, petition to the Superintendent of Indian Affairs. 14 July 1874.

- Ball, Captain H.M. to the Colonial Secretary. 14 July 1869.

- Ball, Captain H.M. to the Colonial Secretary. 15 December 1869.

- Browning, A. to the Officer Administering the Government. 6 July 1869.

- Bushby, A.T. to B.W. Pearse, and Pearse to Bushby.

- Chessen, F.W., Secretary of the Aboriginal Protection Society, to the Right Honourable Sir Edward Bulwer Lytton, M.P., Her Majesty’s Principal Secretary of State for the Colonies. Enclosed in Sir Edward Lytton to Governor James Douglas, Despatch No.12, 2 September 1858.


- Douglas, James to R.C. Moody. 27 April 1863.

- Duncan, William to the Hon. G.A. Walkem. 6 July 1875, in “Report of the Government of British Columbia on the Subject of Indian Reserves, Appendix D.”

- Goode, Charles B., for the Colonial Secretary, to R.C. Moody, 5 March 1861.

- Launders, J.B. to Joseph Trutch, Chief Commissioner of Lands and Works. 18 December 1868.

- Lenihan, James to the Provincial Secretary. 15 October 1874.

- Lytton, Edward to Governor James Douglas, 31 July 1858.

- Lytton, Edward to Governor James Douglas, 30 December 1858.

- Lytton, Edward to Governor James Douglas, 20 May 1859.


- Mohun, Edward to Joseph Trutch. 3 December 1868.

- Moody, R.C. to William Young. 27 May 1862.

- Moody, R.C. to William Young. 11 June 1862.
-Moody, R.C. to William Young. 18 June 1862.

-Moody, R.C. to William Young. 2 July 1862.

-Moody, R.C. to James Douglas. 28 April 1863.

-Pearse, B.W. to Joseph Trutch. 21 October 1868.

-Scott, R.W. Memorandum of 5 November 1875.

-Trutch, Joseph, Chief Commissioner of Lands and Works to Colonial Secretary. 20 September 1865.

-Trutch, Joseph to Acting Colonial Secretary, 28 August 1867.

-Trutch, Joseph to Colonial Secretary, William Young. 19 November 1867.

-Trutch, Joseph to Colonial Secretary. 19 November 1867.

-Turner, George to Joseph Trutch. 20 October 1865.

-Vedder, V. and 27 others to His Excellency Anthony Musgrave, Governor of British Columbia. 30 November 1869.

-Young, William to R.C. Moody. 18 June 1862.

-Young, William to R.C. Moody. 11 May 1863.

-Young, William to Joseph Trutch. 6 November 1867.

-Young, William to Joseph Trutch. 4 December 1867.


________. Department of Indian Affairs. Annual Reports, New Westminster District.

-Chief Alexis of Cheam to James Lenihan, New Westminster, 5 September 1875. Reproduced in Keith Thor Carlson,

-Chiefs of Douglas Portage, the Lower Fraser and other Tribes on the Seashore, petition to Superintendent of Indian Affairs I.W. Wood Powell, 14 July 1874.

Oblats de Marie Immaculée. Reports and Letters published in the annual series, *Missions de la Congrégation des Missionnaires Oblats de Marie Immaculée*. Reviewed volumes 1864 through 1906, especially:

-Chirouse, Fr. Eugene Casimir. 16 July 1862, (1862).

-D'Herbomez, Bishop Louis-Joseph. 30 May 1861, (1862).

-Fouquet, Fr. Leon to Rev. Father Tempier. 8 June 1863, (1864).

-Gendre, Fr. R.P., OMI. (1865).


Great Britain. *Anno Vicesimo Primo et Vicesimo Secundo, Victoræ Regina, CAP. XCIX. An Act to provide for the Government of British Columbia. [2nd August 1858.]*

**Unpublished Ethnographic Collections:**


Carlson, Keith Thor, Unpublished fieldnotes (1992-2002). Author’s possession. (These will eventually be deposited at the Stó:lō Nation Archives (SNA) with copies to the University of British Columbia Special Collections.)

Galloway, Brent. Interviews with Elders. CDs and transcripts. SNA.


Orchard, Imbert. Cassette tape recordings and transcripts, SNA.


Stó:lô Nation Archives Oral History Collection. SNA.

Stó:lô Oral History Project tapes, SNA.

Court Decisions:

British Columbia Supreme Court. In the Supreme Court of British Columbia, between: Delgamuukw, also known as Ken Muldoe, suing on his own behalf and on behalf of all the members of the House of Delgamuukw, and others, plaintiffs, and Her Majesty the Queen in right of the Province of British Columbia and the Attorney General of Canada, defendants: reasons for judgment of the Honourable Chief Justice Allan McEachern. Vancouver: British Columbia Supreme Court, 1997.


Affidavit:

Newspapers:

*British Columbian,* “The Last Potlatch,” 27 April 1864.

*British Columbian,* “The Queen’s Birthday,” 26 May 1865.

*British Columbian,* “The Sumas Tragedy,” 15 March 1884.

*Chilliwack Progress,* “Yale Territory Defended from Stó:lô Invasion,” 7 April 1998.

*Chilliwack Progress,* “Yale Territory Defended from Stó:lô Invasion,” 12 April 1998.


*Daily British Colonist,* 21 August 1879.

*Daily Express,* “Redskins to see the King,” 14 August 1906.

*Daily Gazette,* “A Present for the Queen,” 13 August 1906.


*Daily Mail,* “‘Good, King Good,’” 14 August, 1906.

*Mainland Guardian,* 20 August 1879.

*Mainland Guardian,* 23 August 1879.


*Times of London,* “British Columbia,” 5 August 1858.

*Times of London,* “British Columbia,” 30 November 1858.

*Times of London,* “British Columbia,” 1 December 1858.


*Vancouver Province,* “King Receives Indian Chiefs,” 13 August, 1906.

*Victoria Colonist,* “His Lordship took his place...”10 September 1876.
Victoria Daily Colonist, 6 July 1906.

Published Sources:


Crosby, Thomas, Rev. *Among the An-ko-me-nums [Halkomelems] or Flathead Tribes of the Pacific Coast.* Toronto: William Briggs, 1907.


_______.


Dutton, Tom. “Successful Intercourse was had with the Natives: Aspects of European Contact Methods in the Pacific,” in *A World of Language: Papers Presented to Professor S. A. Wurm on his 65th Birthday*. Edited by D. Laycock and W. Winter. Canberra: Australian National University, 1987.


Geographic Board of Canada. *The Handbook of Indians of Canada.* Ottawa: C.E. Parmelee, Printer to the Kings Most Excellent Majesty, 1913.


Limerick, Patricia, Clyde Milner et al., eds. *Trails: Towards a New Western History.* Lawrence, Kansas: University of Kansas, 1991.


Marchioness of Dufferin and Ava, *My Canadian Journal, 1872-8, Extracts From My Letters Home, Written While Lord Dufferin was Governor-General.* London: John Murray, Albemarle Street, 1891.


Parr, Joy and Mark Rosenfeld, eds. Gender and History in Canada. Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1996.


Ryan, Thomas F. *Narrative of Encounter: The Anthropology of History on Niue.* (Unpublished Ph.D. Dissertation in Anthropology, University of Waikato, New Zealand, 1994.)


Smart, James. Sessional Papers. Government of Canada, Department of Indian Affairs Annual Reports, 1898.


Ph.D. and M.A. Theses:

Kennedy, Dorothy. "Looking for Tribes in all the Wrong Places: An Examination of the Central Coast Salish Social Network." M.A. thesis in anthropology, University of Victoria, 1993.


