

Chu Tesh Ha Timiux "HE WORKED HARD ON THE LAND"

THE STORY OF JOEYASKA

by

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(Nk-Xetko)

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ABSTRACT

This paper provides a history of my great grandfather, Joeyaska; who he was, where he came from, and how he came to acquire 320 acres of land in 1878 near Merritt, in the interior of British Columbia. Joeyaska was considered a Stuwix. From all that is known, Joeyaska was a Stuwix from the Athapaskan group. Joeyaska a warrior, a survivor, a horseman, a family man and protector of his rights passed on to his children and grandchildren his land. Who are the descendants of Joeyaska and what are we doing today in the threat of encroachment by the chief and council of the Lower Nicola Band. How are we defending and carrying on traditional land rights and practises. This paper is a compilation of oral tradition and documented history on Joeyaska, our great grandfather.

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DEDICATION

I am pleased to dedicate this thesis to the memory of Joeyaska and all the work that he did on his land. May his spirit of integrity, persistence and determination live on to carry us into the future

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INTRODUCTION

Without a story you have not got a nation or a culture, or a civilization. Without a story of your own to live you haven't got a life of your own. (Keepers of Life Caduto & Bruchac 1994, p.12)

In July 1999 I went home to pick saskatoon berries with my mother and my sisters. "Home" is at Joeyaska Indian Reserve #2 near the town of Merritt, in the interior of British Columbia. Julie Cruikshank (1991) states, "...indigenous place names link people and their stories to place." (p.110) Picking saskatoons at Joeyaska has been a tradition for my mother since she first moved to Joeyaska in 1935 when she married my father the late Albert Frederick Sterling, son of Sarah Sterling, nee Joeyaska, daughter of Joeyaska and Martha or Bueltko.

In the month of July every year since anyone can remember, someone has been picking berries on the land of Joeyaska. My mother's mother-in-law Sarah Joeyaska picked berries as her parents Joeyaska and Bueltko did before her. This is the story of Joeyaska the man who made it his home in the 1880's during those years of change and uncertainty for Interior Salish First Nations. Through persistence and determination he sought after and acquired the plot of land that has come to be known as Joeyaska Indian Reserve #2, home of the Sterling family.

My sisters and I, our children, and now the grandchildren carry on this tradition of picking saskatoon

berries at Joeyaska. Our great grandfather initiated the tradition of occupying and living off the land, we continue in that tradition. Thomas Berger, author of Village Journey (1985) described subsistence patterns among Alaskan natives that very closely resemble our own.

Subsistence activities link the generations and the extended family into a complex network of associations, rights, and obligations. (p.52)

Saskatoon berries have always been a very important food source for the Ntla'kapmux people. They continue to be valued for their taste, nutrients, vitamins and it is just plain fun to go picking with family. It is during these food-gathering times that visiting occurs, catching up on what's happening and sharing good stories and being together. We share family ties and we share ties to the land as well as ties to our grandfathers. Berger elaborated further on harvesting cycles,

This network both reflects and re-creates the social order and gives meaning and value to each person's contribution and rewards. (p.52)

This thesis will present the ways one family, my family, the Sterlings, stay in touch with each other. It describes how those traditional and family ties that we have with each other give meaning and value to those connections which are strongly linked to our land, and to the man known as Joeyaska after whom the land was named.

I will trace the history of Joeyaska the warrior, our great grandfather, and answer these questions: where did he come from and how did he come to acquire the 320 acre plot of

land named after him? Who are his descendants and how do we carry on in his traditions today? My thesis includes oral history passed on to me from my parents and siblings.

Jan Vansina (1985) stated,

The expression 'oral tradition' applies both to a process and to its product. The products are oral messages based on previous oral messages at least a generation old. The process is the transmission of such messages by word of mouth over time... (p.3)

It is a tradition among the Sterling family to relate with each other through storytelling and oral tradition usually around the kitchen table. Pueblo oral tradition describes our experience at family gatherings. "Voice, emphasis, tone, rhythm, facial expressions with gesture, atmosphere, and many other things all convey meaning and nuance." (Peterson 1984, p.44) It is a tradition now continuing with the fourth and fifth generation from the time of Joeyaska. Woven in and among the stories of this storytelling tradition comes a restoration process, one which includes the reclaiming of self-identity, family ties, family history and strong ties to the land. Those are the very things that past governmental policies attempted to destroy through assimilation policies and through the residential schools. Connections to each other and to our heritage have now become the strength that helps us to survive and brings us together.

Information written by historians, land commissioners, missionaries and anthropologists located at the UBC Archives, and information located at the Indian Lands Office in

Vancouver will form the documented history which contributed to a major part of this paper. I will give an outline of the people who live at Joeyaska today because it is our home, our inheritance from my father, in essence an inheritance from the man known as Joeyaska.

There are two main reasons I'm giving voice to our history. The first is that I am giving honor to my late father and to his grandfather, the two men who lived and worked on the land over an extended period of time. They valued the land and protected it to the best of their ability; Joeyaska acquired the land and persisted in protecting his rights on the land, and my father carried on in the tradition of working on and protecting the land for over 50 years. My paper is based on oral tradition and oral accounts. In the Supreme Court of British Columbia, in 1997 DELGAMUUKW vs. HER MAJESTY THE QUEEN, oral tradition was accepted as evidence. For the first time the courts gave oral tradition recognition as being valid evidence.

The second purpose is to strengthen the Sterling family's claim to Joeyaska Indian Reserve #2. The Department of Indian Affairs (DIA) amalgamated Joeyaska Indian Reserve #2 with the Lower Nicola Indian Band in 1938. The Lower Nicola Indian Band has plans to build a gambling casino on the portion called Joeyaska North because they believe that Joeyaska Indian Reserve is part of the Lower Nicola Band, not Sterling property, and as such is available for development by the band without consultation or permission from the

Sterlings. DIA recognizes all First Nations land as belonging to the Crown and land issues on reserve are complex because two disparate land ownership concepts; private ownership and collective ownership are in conflict and need to be resolved. In cases where land disputes arise, oral tradition could be used to argue that Aboriginal title does exist. The oral accounts of our ancestors will help, serve and resolve these disputes.

The history I learned in school did not include anything about Ntla'kapmux people. Our stories have been overlooked or recorded in someone else's voice. It is time to change that. Today there is an emphasis on telling the stories of our people. As I peruse the list of conference themes for 1999 I see that storytelling, writing tribal histories and giving voice are included as important topics, for example, Multi-Cultural Storytelling (Education/Focus '99 Victoria, B.C.), Who Speaks For Whom? (EDST Re-Search Programme April 1999 UBC), Researching and Writing Tribal Histories (June 1999 Norman Oklahoma), Stories Are Our Salmon (The Revitalization of Aboriginal Societies July 1999 SFU).

In giving voice to the ways we carry on Ntla'kapmux traditions and our use of the land at Joeyaska I am not only describing the value we place on the land today by our present activities, but emphasizing the important responsibility we have in taking care of the land for the next generation. I am giving voice to a tradition established by our great grandfather, Joeyaska. This

tradition has been passed on to me by means of storytelling and the example set by our elders and ancestors, and now has become my responsibility. I will carry out this responsibility by learning all I can and by writing about it in this thesis to share with others and pass it on.

Two types of oral tradition in the Ntla'kapmux language are "speta'kl," referring to creation stories, and "spilaxem," which means news or information. The Thompson/Ntla'kapmux Dictionary (1996) defines the word for truth as: "pilex-m", a root word "pelx" means to tell or to inform. A derivative "kek" means to find out the truth, the expression, "xe?-e" means, as you can see, or, the truth is obvious. (Thompson & Thompson p.1279) I will feature "spilaxem" because the information I have received represents facts, history and truth to me.

My main source of "spilaxem" comes from my mother Sophie Sterling and from my siblings who heard the information and personal memories from my father. I will be using related literature and the testimony of elders who spoke about the man known as Joeyaska. The work of Shirley Sterling The Grandmother Stories: Oral Tradition and The Transmission of Culture (1997) inspired my use of the narratives and stories which have been passed on to me from former generations. She stated, "Oral Traditions are one of the most effective methods of Nlakapmux education and they can restore relevance to what and how we teach Nlakapamux and other learners in the classroom today." Sterling (1997) From oral tradition and

storytelling we gain knowledge and understanding of our roles in the family and our roles in the community. This awareness helps teach respect for each other and for the land we live on. My hope is that oral traditions can help restore relevance within the political framework of the Lower Nicola Indian Band as well. The Lower Nicola Band possesses 18,000 acres compared to 320 acres at Joeyaska Indian Reserve #2.

Some of the main questions many First Nations educators attempt to answer regarding a starting place in education have been voiced by Ntla'kapmux educator, the late Robert Sterling Sr. in 1985. He asked three questions as first steps in the greater vision represented in education,

1. Who am I?
2. Where do I come from?
3. Where am I going?

The policy paper presented to the Minister of Indian Affairs and Northern Development in 1972 by the National Indian Brotherhood stated,

Unless a child learns about the forces which shape him: the history of his people, their values and customs, their languages he will never really know himself or his potential as a human being. (p.9)

When answering the question of who I am, it is necessary that I establish my identity. My name is Nk Xetko, my nation is Ntla'kapmux, my family are the Sterlings of Joeyaska. I come from the Joeyaska Indian Reserve #2. My history includes twelve years of separation from family, home, and time spent at an Indian residential school. There

my true identity was replaced by a number and a new name. The policy paper about the Indian child learning about his heritage adds, "The lessons he learns in school, his whole school experience should reinforce and contribute to the image he has of himself." (p9) This did not happen for me in school. I had much to learn and much to repair. In the years following graduation from school I have had to journey back to traditional ways and family teachings taking those steps which helped restore that which had been separated and lost to me, such as the identity I was born into, my name, my culture and heritage.

The second question, where do I come from, establishes my identity and connection to family and place. Tracing the history of my home at Joeyaska Indian Reserve #2 included researching my great grandfather Joeyaska, the individual, and subsequently the land named after him, the property that we call home. This inquiry included the means by which my father inherited this property and what he did to prove that Joeyaska Indian Reserve #2 was indeed his home.

The third question, where am I going, states that my mother, brothers, sisters, nieces, nephews and myself inherited the land known as Joeyaska Indian Reserve #2, we live there, we call it home and carry on in the traditions set by my father and his grandfather before him. I am not separate and alone in my love for the land. I do not want something apart from what my family wants, it is a collective desire, the goal to protect the land as best we can lines up

with our dad and his grandfather's goals; to live in a safe environment today and to ensure that it is a safe environment for future generations.

All of the questions; Who am I, where do I come from, and where am I going have answers which can be directly traced back to our great grandfather Joeyaska.

How do I know what the rest of my family wants for Joeyaska? I know because I keep in touch with them, we share thoughts and feelings as well as hopes and dreams. Whatever information I have about the land gets passed on. We take our 'discourse' together very seriously and consider it to be a very powerful and enabling form of human communication. The Random House Dictionary (1980) defines discourse as: communication of thought by words, a formal discussion of a subject in speech or writing, to talk or converse, to treat a subject formally in speech or writing. (p250) Riddington (1990) wrote, "Human communication is a cultural accomplishment and a means of defining cultural identity." (p.189)

I am affected by the powerful discourse of others. When truth is spoken and I hear it, something happens within me and that power acts upon and regulates my forming of myself. For example the residential school system forcibly removed my voice, my power and caused me to feel shame about my heritage. Through a gradual series of steps I have been regaining the important things that once were lost such as family history, culture and language. I get to know the dad

who was separated from me for years. I have since learned that my father was not only a warrior, a rancher, a veteran and an interpreter, but he carried on in spiritual traditions as well. My late brother Robert Sterling sang a drum song at a family gathering in 1982. Hearing my father's song for the first time had a transformative effect on my life. My father's song was powerful, it sounded like the song of a warrior. Historian William Powers (1986) wrote,

The Oglala medicine men call this transformation 'blessing' a process whereby the sacred state of one object or being is transferred to the sacred state of another through the proper ritual. (p.23)

I can say that the sacred states found in discursive traditions of our Ntla'kapmux family have had a healing effect upon me.

Where did my father learn about singing drum songs? My mother said he learned from his grandfather. To hear about the history and the teachings of Joeyaska in an atmosphere of respect and truth has been part of the restoration process. It becomes not only a positive impact but an empowering one as well. I have lived on the land acquired through pre-emption. I see the irrigation ditches, the fences, the corral, the barn, they are there today. Joeyaska's efforts are evident today, they serve to sustain and strengthen me.

My thesis statement is this. Albert Sterling's children have a right to occupy and utilize the land known as Joeyaska Indian Reserve #2. Along with that right comes the responsibility to be good stewards of the land to do all we can to safeguard and protect the land against exploitation.

In discourse I have the power to affect others and in this written discourse I have an opportunity to help restore the emphasis that this land known as Joeyaska Indian Reserve #2 is our home, it is a treasured inheritance from our great grandfather.

When I learn my history, rights and priviledges I can follow in the footsteps and maintain traditions set by those who blazed the trail before me. In doing so I can ensure that my actions are worthy of their approval. This is significant because it sets a standard, a standard that by combining oral tradition with educational knowledge, one family, the Sterling family can use the best of both worlds to protect a birthright. This thesis will voice those standards which can best be defined as, honoring the family, becoming educated, learning the laws, establishing strong work ethics, promoting cultural traditions and values.

By outlining who I am, where do I come from and where am I going, I am making a statement which reflects not only my identity but my philosophical outlook as well. My identity includes strong family ties on Joeyaska Indian Reserve #2. It is a message to the world that I stand with my family to value family tradition. We have a high regard for our home and we will do everything we can to make sure Joeyaska Indian Reserve #2 is a safe place to live, and that our rights are protected. By painting a picture of how my father and his grandfather loved the land I want to show how their warrior spirits included a commitment to and the protection of the

land. By caring for the land and by being good providers for their families on the land, I want to expose this noteworthy trait as having survived to the sixth generation. This philosophy of caring and commitment practised and handed down by my father Albert Sterling and his grandfather Joeyaska are especially important.

Former distorted residential school teachings forced me to believe that my heritage was not worthy of honor or respect. For example, J.S.Frideres (1978) wrote,

These schools attempted to separate the child from his parents and community because they were not 'good' influences on the children with regard to pursuing 'academic' careers. (p.32)

I can attest to the forced alienation and trauma in having been cut off from family and culture in the pursuit of academic education and how it created the personal crisis of loss. Loss of family and loss of identity. I remember crying myself to sleep every night at the residential school during my first four years there. However, my father saw the importance of a good education and made sure I didn't quit school at age 16 when so many of my classmates who were disillusioned with life at school either ran away from school or stayed home with their parents' permission. I endured the difficult times at residential school by working hard, keeping busy reading, and thinking about the family times that gave my life meaning at home.

As I recall, my father's work on the land was continual. He cut hay, hunted, mended fences, made horse shoes, repaired

harnesses, branded calves. As children, we helped or sometimes accompanied our dad. One such occasion was the summer when I was ten years old, my father brought us along when he went to check the water-flow for one of his irrigation ditches and to check the state of the wild raspberries. Four of us rode two horses, my sister Shirley and I rode Dixie, my younger brother Austin rode with Dad on his horse Baldy.

Life at home was different than at school. There was no regimentation at home. It was natural to spend time with parents as they worked during the day and to help out. It was also natural to check out traditional foods that grew in the wild, there were no formal lessons with pencil and paper, parents modeled and showed by example the ways to survive. We observed and followed.

In the History of the Nicola Valley Indians (1979) it is written that,

For centuries and even into the present local Native Indians possessed a hunting and gathering mentality...tribal members were trained in the proficiencies of recognizing foods, trails, dangers and the need for cooperative sharing. (Sterling p.39)

We spent our lives together doing the things that were necessary to stay alive. There was very little money to buy food. My father asserted his aboriginal rights and fished and hunted when it was against the law. He carried that a step further and hunted for elders who needed meat. My mother told me that when all of us children went back to the residential school in the fall, my father brought a wagon

load of deer from the hills for those who had no one to hunt for them. In our family, it was expected that we pick and preserve our own foods. We learned about survival and family ties as opposed to memorizing academic texts in isolation at Indian School. Oscar Kawagley (1995) summarized the confusing effect the imposed education system has had upon Native children.

The rationale behind residential schools was to facilitate the shift away from their languages and lifeways...a cataclysmic experience from which Native people are still struggling to recover. (p.37)

When I research family history to safeguard identity and homeland, I am not only making meaning of my life but I am shaping my destiny. Not too long ago many freedoms of First Nations had been forcibly taken from us, freedom to practice culture, speak our languages as well as rights such as voting, and the right to self-determination. Many of us are now aware of what has happened and are taking steps to make things better.

Musqueam weaver Debra Sparrow said to me recently that she was glad that I am researching my father's land.

You are honoring your father and great grandfather by what you do. As a people we are waking up to the truth of what happened to us. When we wake up, it's time to do the right thing.

Joeyaska Indian Reserve #2 has become 'land in dispute' by the Lower Nicola Band. It is not land in dispute for the Sterlings. We know who acquired and worked on the land, our great grandfather, and we know who has the right to harvest the hay fields and to live on and occupy the land. Deanna

Sterling wrote about the present attitude of the 1938 amalgamation of Joeyaska Indian Reserve #2 with the Lower Nicola Band whose members chaffed at accepting newcomers who spoke different languages.

The disparity is prevalent to this day. The band wants to develop the Joeyaska lands which are adjacent to the newly constructed Coquihalla highway. The band is interested in putting in a complex including casino, shopping mall and gas stations, the latest of a long list of other attempted developments over the decades on Joeyaska North and South. (1998 p.20)

As a descendant of Joeyaska I can say no one has a right to the land at Joeyaska Indian Reserve #2 except the descendants of Joeyaska. We weren't just born there, but we worked on the land and helped out with ranching and farming chores as well. George Manual (1979) stated,

The lands that belong to us by native title, and the compensation for our aboriginal rights, are our birthright as the aboriginal peoples of North America. (p.260)

No one has the right to set foot on Joeyaska Indian Reserve #2 without the permission of the Sterling family. I have gained this knowledge through oral tradition and storytelling and through archival and land allotment documents. In answer to the question, where did the problem of land dispute begin? In 1938 the Federal Government took over the affairs of Indian lands and reserves from the Provincial Government. It was convenient for the Indian Agent to meet with a single chief and council when Joeyaska Indian Reserve #2 was amalgamated with the Lower Nicola Band. Formerly, Joeyaska Indian Reserve #2 was separate, Joeyaska was the chief of his family clan. He was consulted by the

Indian Agent. With this knowledge the Sterling family can "take up the burden of our history and set out on our journey," (Manuel 1979 p.261) to carry on in the tradition of Joeyaska on the land he loved so well.

In July 1995 my art therapy instructor Roberta Nadeau told us the silent statement violinist Isaac Stern makes to the audience before he starts playing. In his mind he says, "I am here to tell you the truth." In the Ntla'kapmux language I say "Pel peepluxkin tk spilaxem" I am going to tell you my truth. This is the story of Joeyaska.

CHAPTER ONE

Many of Canada's Indigenous people define themselves in terms of the homelands that sustained their ancestors. These are the places where their spiritual roots lie. (Arthur Ray, 1996 p.1)

En-jawa en-skwest Nk'xetko. (My name is Nk'xetko). I come from the Joeyaska Indian Reserve #2. My parents are Sophie and the late Albert Sterling. Fred Sterling and Austin Sterling are my brothers. Sarah Stewart, Deanna Sterling and Seepeetza are my sisters. There are numerous children and grandchildren. We were all born in Merritt, have resided at Joeyaska and most of those Sterlings named continue to live there and call it home. The Sterlings are associated with the land at Joeyaska. A few of us have moved elsewhere, however, we return to family, and land because we have strong ties and connections; it will always be home to me. This chapter will introduce Joeyaska, and his relationship to my name and I will draw a link between my great grandfather and my name. I will present the history of this man known as Joeyaska, who he was and why he chose to settle at Nicola Lake then move to Godey Canyon, now Joeyaska Indian Reserve #2.

Words and stories from parents and family members help establish who I am in relation to my place in the family and where I come from. In essence, my identity. My father named me "Nk'xetko" at birth, after a relative he'd heard about from the states. This statement about my name introduces a part of my father's heritage. Why did he have relatives in

the States and who was he related to?

I always felt that my father knew something funny about the name Nk'xetko because he usually chuckled whenever he spoke the name. When I was a teen at the residential school one of my Ntla'kapmux classmates heard my name and told me she thought the name meant "Water Lily". I asked my mother if that were true, she laughed and said no, that's not how to say water lily.

Whenever I asked my mother or other elders what the name Nk'xetko meant, they always said the same thing, "We don't know what it means, it comes from a language in the States. It's your father's relatives from across the line."

We don't know what tribe Joeyaska came from in the States, it is possible that he was either Okanagan or Nez Perce from Washington State. All we know is that he fled the United States Cavalry and settled at Nicola Lake.

The Handbook of American Indians Part 2 (1960) on names states that, "Personal names among Indians define or indicate the social group into which a man is born." (Hodge p.16) My name would indicate that I was born into Joeyaska's group. Other family members have names from the Ntla'kapmux language and they can be translated, such as my sister Sarah's name, 'Tzul-tza-linek,' means 'huckleberry eyes'. My mothers name is 'Lhi-lhetko' which means 'little squirt of water'. Hodge goes on to describe that titles or honorary names which fall into a different category require ceremony and feasts, but for the sake of bureaucratic efficiency, "...the office of

Indian Affairs has made an effort to systematize the names of some of the Indians for the purpose of facilitating land allotments etc." (p.18) For the purpose of baptismal records, registration with the Department of Indian Affairs and being sent to residential boarding school as well, our names were changed to Christian names.

The Gage Canadian Dictionary (1983) defines a name as: The word or words by which an individual, person, group, animal, place or sometimes a thing is known and spoken to or about. (p.759)

My name was important to me because it defined my place in the family unit and it established my place within the community. At residential school the policy about names sought to remove those family connections from me by replacing my name Nk'xetko with a number, 39, and with a new name, Mary Jane. I had no way of knowing at age six that being forced to change my name from Nk'xetko to Mary Jane was part of the Canadian Government's rule of "English only" at residential schools. John Boyko (1995) described such a rule.

All residential school lessons were taught in English. It was forbidden for any student to speak their language even in private conversations. (p.187)

The rule applied to names as well. It was quite a shocking experience having to give up one's name and have it replaced by a Christian name and a number, however, despite all these new changes, I always considered myself to be Nk'xetko, great grand daughter of Joeyaska. I felt honored to be related to

him and to receive the name that was associated with his family of origin.

Who was Joeyaska and where did he come from? These were always the questions that created mystery and wonderment among us grandchildren. All I knew about him was bits and pieces of information told by my mother. For example, after my father was born in 1896, "He lived with his grandfather because his mother Sarah worked with her husband Charlie Sterling on the wagon roads hauling freight between settlements." (Personal Communication) Baillargeon & Tepper (1998) describe this lifestyle change from the "fur brigade to the pack train" for many Interior tribal people due to the demand for food, goods and transportation brought about by the gold rush. "The arrival of so many new people began the transformation of the economic base of Native people in the southern interior from hunting and gathering to ranching, farming and wage labor." (p.100) Many changes came about for our people, it was natural for grandparents to pitch in and help raise their grandchildren when necessary. Extended family is very helpful in times of need, I remember my grandmother helping raise me because my own parents were so busy working on the land.

I was told that my father as a little boy stayed with his grandfather Joeyaska at Nicola Lake. They lived in a winter lodge or 'shi-istken' and my father slept between his grandparents because he didn't have his own blanket and it was cold during the winter. (Field Notes) Anglican

Missionary J.B. Good described going in to a pit house in 1867. "These underground dwellings for winter occupation were delightful places to enter on days when the wind was blowing fiercely from the north." (Ecclesiastical Archives 1958 p.98)

The story I heard my mother tell about Joeyaska is that he was an American Indian, a warrior.

Joeyaska, on horseback was being chased by the U.S. Cavalry in the State of Washington. His horse stumbled, Joeyaska fell off. He quickly covered himself with dirt, dried leaves and pine needles. The horse ran off. Cavalry soldiers on their horses galloped over and around Joeyaska, they didn't see him. When it was dark, Joeyaska found his horse and rode north into the safety of Canada. He settled at Nicola Lake.

It is not known exactly what year this took place. I estimate that it had to be in the late 1850's or the early 1860's. I have come to this conclusion because my father was born in 1896, he had a brother Eddy who was 10 years older than himself, his mother would have been born around 1868 allowing that she would have been at least 18 years old when she married Charlie Sterling. Joeyaska would have taken up to ten years after the initial cavalry chase to make his way to Nicola Lake and get settled with wives and children.

The book Death Stalks the Yakima (1997) gives a picture of the bitter clashes and conflicts between the plateau tribes of Washington with the U.S. Cavalry in the 1850's. Clifford Trafzer wrote,

When two Yakama men murdered Indian Agent Andrew Jackson Bolon, the United States sent troops into the Yakima Valley. Thus began a war which lasted

intermittently from 1855-1858, ending in disastrous consequences for Yakima people. (p.29)

One of those consequences was being run out of one's homeland by the American soldiers when European settlers began to occupy the territory and prospectors mined the land. The book Native American Testimony (1991) described such a loss of land for Indian tribes.

"Between 1853 and 1857 Congress ratified fifty-two treaties by which tribes living in Idaho, Oregon and Washington lost 157 million acres." (p.119) It is a sad reflection upon governments to draw up treaties with tribes in the appearance of setting up partnerships when in reality it was a "call for the Indians to move to the least fertile corner of their existing lands, abandon their homes and move elsewhere." (Nabakov p.118)

Joeyaska among many others had no choice in the matter. Baillargeon & Tepper (1998) present Nez Perce cowboy Jackson Sundown's similar escape from American soldiers.

Caught up in the Nez Perce Wars of 1877 as a young teenager, Sundown survived the massacre at the Battle of Big Hole by hiding under buffalo robes in a tipi until the tipi was set on fire. He escaped from the battlefield at Bear Paw Mountain by clinging to the side of his horse, remaining out of the soldiers' sight. (p.191)

The horse in this incident is featured as a very important vehicle for escape. Many First Nations owned and prized horses, which have been an important part of the lifestyle for Plains and Plateau cultures. Horses made life easier with regard to "trading and hunting methods, expanding territorial occupancy, aboriginal people became superb

equestrians." (p.24)

Horses enhanced the lives of men like my great grand father Joeyaska, and Jackson Sundown among others. In these cases horses helped save their lives. It is documented that, "Sundown traveled wounded and without food, moccasins or blankets through the late autumn cold." (p191) He made it to Chief Sitting Bull's village east of the Rocky Mountains in Canada. Prior to 1870 two chiefs among the Nez Perce, Kamiahton and White Bird, escaped and fled to Canada when "The tribe was still reeling from the crushing defeat of Col. Wright. Their militant chiefs Owhi and Qualchen had been killed." (Drury 1979 p.266)

One can see why Joeyaska fled to Canada during those violent and uncertain times in the States. Many unanswered questions remain as to why he chose to live at Nicola Lake. Possibly it was because the fur trade route ran along the plateau north from the Columbia River through the Okanagan Valley up to Nicola. (Baillergeon & Teppen 1998, p.98) This was a popular route prior to the fur trade as well for the procurement of food. Historian James Teit described how Interior tribes gathered at Kettle Falls for the summer fish runs;

Many Lake (Okanagons) went down to near Marcus, Kettle Falls and other places along the Columbia on the confines of the Colville. The chief salmon-fishing places in the territories of the Okanagon tribes appear to have been in the vicinity of Kettle Falls. (Smithsonian Report p.247)

When my mother said that Joeyaska spoke the Okanagan and the

Stuwix languages, this strongly suggests that he had associations with the Okanagans and Stuwix already living in the Nicola Lake area. It opened the way for him to settle in a place where he was familiar with the language of the people in that vicinity. In any case, Joeyaska married into and adopted the languages and customs of the people at Nicola Lake, some of whom were Ntla'kapmux. I heard that Joeyaska had four wives, one was Okanagan and one Ntla'kapmux, I'm uncertain as to which tribe and language the others belonged to. There is documentation in a book about Northwestern Tribes by Franz Boas that suggests Joeyaska to be "of the Thomson, Tinneh and of an Okanagan speaking branch of the Interior Salish" when his assistant James Teit went up to Nicola Lake in 1895 to see,

One of the old men named Tcuieska or Shesulushkin, is the first person of the NatlakyapamuQ whom I have seen tatooed in the body. He is one quarter Stuwix'HamuQ one quarter Okanagan and half Nkamtc'i'nemuQ. (p.32)

How did I recognize this individual as being my great grandfather? I know from oral tradition that Joeyaska was Stuwix. I immediately recognized the name Shesulushkin, it was the name given to my eldest brother, the late Robert William Sterling. Names were generally passed on from the ancestors to babies and kept within the family unit, and these were familiar to everyone.

In the Memoir of American History (1900) James Teit gave an account of the "unity of the family through hereditary names. Each family had certain names, and no one but members of the family were permitted to use them." (p.290)

An example of such a naming took place at Joeyaska Indian Reserve #2 in July 1997. Four of my nieces received names from my father's and mother's family. They called it an Ntla'kapmux Naming Ceremony. After researching our grandmothers, and aunts' names and receiving the approval from my mother that this was right and correct, they called family and friends together to witness the account. Opening prayers were said, gifts were given, the elders were acknowledged, food was shared, drum songs and stories marked the occasion. I now know Lisa Sterling as Powtan'maalks, Janessa is Kwistaz -Yetko, Jackie is Kwil-kwilko and so on. It was a special and memorable occasion. Teit called it "proclaiming before them the name by which the child is to be known." (p.291)

I know my brothers and sisters by their Indian names as well, no one else I know has the same names. When I read that James Teit went to see Shesulushkin at Nicola I recognized Robert Sterling's name, and I knew the meaning, 'Red sun rising over the mountain.'

Teit wrote the name 'Tcuieska' which sounds like an anglicized and earlier version of the name Joeyaska. When Teit described that Joeyaska was Stuwix and Okanagan, I knew that was correct because my father spoke those languages as well as Ntla'kapmux. I asked my mother an Ntla'kapmux speaker, how did my father learn so many languages. She said that my father learned Okanagan from his mother Sarah Joeyaska, he learned Stuwix from his grandfather Joeyaska,

and my father learned Ntla'kapmux from his grandmother Martha, or Bueltko who was Ntla'kapmux. I asked my mother if she know that Joeyaska had been tatooed, her answer was, "Oh, that's probably right. Joeyaska had run away from the American army, he probably tatooed himself so no one would recognize him and make him go back there."

It was a great thrill for me to read something about Joeyaska from an encounter in 1895. In looking into the subject of tatooing in the Smithsonian Report by James Teit, he wrote that "Tatooing among the Thompson people, although done in a large measure for ornament nevertheless was also intimately connected with religious beliefs of the people." (Teit p404) He went on to say that tatooing was a 'custom that was falling into disuse and that Indians were reluctant to give explanations of tatoo marks occurring on their person.' (Teit p.404)

I have no doubt that Joeyaska said nothing to James Teit about his tatoos. Nothing in that book is recorded about it. I know that my brothers say very little about personal customs especially about religious or spiritual matters, they don't share that kind of information. However, on reading Teit's brief account about Tcuieska or Shesulushkin, it helped verify some of the oral history I'd heard family talk about. Now we see it in print.

Another written account about Joeyaska is found in a monthly newsletter called the Kamloops Wawa Vol. IV, No. 1, in by Father J.M.Le Jeune (1895) Catholic missionary in the

interior of British Columbia.

In the Nicola Country B.C. there are three old men- Temlh-skool-han, Haap-kan and Shoo-yaska who are still pagans and who have spent their lives in the Similkameen or between the Similkameen and the Nicola. But they are neither Similkameen nor Nicola Indians. They belong to another family, of which they are now the only survivors. (p.98)

Contrary to Father Le Jeune, Joeyaska was not the only survivor of his family. He had many descendants. However, this statement shows that Father Le Jeune recognized Joeyaska's tribal difference. Our family maintains that Joeyaska was Stuwix.

The Stuwil'HamuQ (Stuwix) was a part of the Athapaskan language group related to Chilcotin and Carrier in central and northern B.C. and the Apache and Navaho of the American Southwest. (Sterling 1998 p.8)

I find it interesting that Father LeJeune stated that my great grandfather was a pagan. I believe this refers to the fact that Joeyaska or Shoo-yaska had four wives, and this practice was in conflict with the teachings of the missionaries. For example Brett Christophers (1998) wrote about the 'savages' in the Lytton district, "From 1868 mission statutes ruled not only that monogamy was essential but that a man was only eligible for baptism if his partner was his first wife." (p.122) Reverend J.B. Good, Anglican missionary at the time struggled with the teachings of the church and the enforcing of such regulations among the Ntla'kapmux spelled Nlha7kapmx.

In 1900 James Teit documented the Thompson people and polygamy. "For a man to have several wives was indicative of

wealth." (The Jesup Report p.326) It is possible that Father LeJeune's and Reverend J.B. Good's influence prevailed because eventually Joeyaska relented and chose to marry one wife. He chose Martha an Ntla'kapmux from the Lytton area. Shirley Sterling elaborated further on Joeyaska's decision on 'putting aside the other wives.' "Joeyaska cared about the other wives and continued to visit them." (Sterling 1997 p.3)

The third mention of Joeyaska in print happens to be the earliest written account which gives a surveyor's description of land. The title, "Joeyaska's Reserve in S11 T91" is dated September 11, 1878 and states that it is "A Reserve near the junction of the Nicola and Coldwater Rivers." This particular information is handwritten by the Commissioner G.M. Sproat in Volume 1 of the Minutes of Decision. A very curious notation exists on this page, the title is preceded by the words "Naweesistikun's tribe", and that is a name I have never heard of. However, it suggests that Joeyaska is one of the members. The name "Naweeshistan" is also mentioned in Positioning the Missionary 1998, a book describing missionary accounts with Ntla'kapmux in the Lytton and surrounding area.

The fourth written account about Joeyaska is also handwritten by G.M. Sproat in Volume 4 of his Field Minutes of an incident on October 19, 1878. In the letter he described how Joeyaska, spelled Jo-i-yas-kah, has met him in the town of Hope, B.C. to bring a grievance about a piece of

land. Sproat (1878) stated in his letter that,

I have decided to allot the land and that Jo-i-yas-kah shall have a piece of land at the place he so much desired. (p.279)

This place is situated in Township 91, Merritt, B.C.

Section 11 on Godey Creek, 4 miles south of the town of Merritt. It is important to note here that in 1878,

There was considerable British Columbian land policy: Crown grants, pre-emptions that were confirmed by certificates of improvement, mineral rights, water rights, grazing rights, as well as Native reserves. (Harris 1997 p.125)

By 1870 much of the land had been surveyed and laid out by the Royal Engineers. My mother told me that the old people heard that the surveyors were measuring out parcels of land. "Moi Ees was sent to inquire of the surveyors and ask for a bigger portion of land." (Sophie Sterling 1995) There was a communication problem. The efforts of Moi Ees to request more land was not heard and there was a general feeling of disappointment among the Coldwater Indians. However, the name Joeyaska and Joeyaska's Place was clearly documented. In 1878 Lands Commissioner Sproat "assumed" Native settlement overrode any non-Native claims.

Where there was uncertainty, the balance of doubt should favor the Natives. (Harris 1997 p.126)

Joeyaska got his land. It is written and recorded. I have reason to believe Joeyaska gave a feast and sang his drum songs long into the night in celebration of this event. Joeyaska occupied, made improvements and complied with the regulations of the day. He passed the land to his sons and one daughter who were full blood Indians having 'status' and

being registered with the DIA. My father was born 'status' because his mother did not marry Charlie Sterling until 1898. Charlie was a half-breed, his father was from the British Isles, his mother was from the Nicola Lake area. Being 'status' gave my grandmother Sarah Joeyaska the right to occupy and use the land and to pass it on to my father Albert Sterling who in turn occupied, and considered it his property. Because my father had one-quarter white blood he was called a half-breed. However, in his lifestyle, his fluency in Indian languages, his subsistence traditions, he was First Nations. He put up buildings and made improvements kept the land safe and shared his hospitality. When he was happy and celebrating he sang his drum songs long into the night.

CHAPTER TWO

Storytelling may be the oldest of the arts. We know that every culture on earth has passed essential ideas from one generation to the next by word of mouth. (Cruikshank 1991 p.11)

When I was seventeen years old at school, one of the priests brought me from Kamloops to Nicola Lake to gather some information about my culture because my teacher requested it. I spoke with Nellie Gutteriez, an Okanagan elder who was the main cook at the Guichon Ranch. As we sat at her kitchen table she told me many things about the history of the Ntla'kapmux people. For example, what life was like prior to European contact, about food, shelter and clothing, the general subsistence lifestyle common to Interior Salish people. Though Nellie's language and tribal affiliation was Okanagan, with the exception of language, the Okanagan and Ntla'kapmux shared many similarities.

In 1904 James Teit collected material description of the Salishan tribes for the Smithsonian Institute. He had already completed an extensive study of the Ntla'kapmux or Thompson tribes in 1900 for the Museum of Natural History. There were many items Teit introduced such as habitat, stone and bone implements, "The tools...appear to have been the same as those employed by the Thompson" (p.217) Numerous examples of physical descriptions are comparable between the two tribes and found to be similar.

After Nellie finished sharing her cultural and historical knowledge she told me about how my great grandfather acquired his land at Godie Canyon, "Your

father's grandfather Joeyaska got hold of 320 acres of land, it was a pre-emption." (Personal interview 1968) I remember that statement very well because Nellie repeated the word 'pre-emption' and I had no idea of what it meant at the time. Nellie's words that day represented an important lesson on the importance of oral tradition. Her statements have since become a crucial source of information not only to me but to other members of my family as well in our study of Joeyaska Indian Reserve #2.

Jeannette Armstrong, an Okanagan author (1992) describes verbal testimony,

You not only have to assume responsibility for speaking those words, but you are responsible for the effect of those words on the person you are addressing and the thousands of years of tribal memory packed into your understanding of those words. (p.293)

Nellie's words had a profound effect on me. Her testimony was empowering and it helped restore some lost knowledge to a young residential school student. What she told me was knowledge common to most everyone in the Nicola Valley, but news to me. Firstly, my parents told me nothing about our history or culture to save me from getting punished at school as they had been, and secondly, history learned at school did not include local information.

Nellie fulfilled her responsibility of sharing oral tradition that day by telling me another story about the history of Joeyaska.

Before Joeyaska moved up to Godey Canyon, he fished at the Coldwater River. He had many fish racks where he

dried strips of salmon. When the whitemen wanted that land near the river, they burned the fish racks. This forced Joeyaska away from the river. (Personal notes 1968)

Nellie's spilaxem that day served to give voice to our First Nations knowledge of Joeyaska's land pre-emption. Subsequent land records show that Joeyaska 'acquired' the land and it is important to know the circumstances that lead up to that acquisition. It gives a more rounded picture of the event and helps re-enforce the Sterling family's claim to the land.

I recently asked Pat Lean, historian at the Merritt Archives, if he could tell me anything about Joeyaska. He said,

Joeyaska had some fish racks by the river (Coldwater). Some white men burned those racks because they considered that land their property. Joeyaska was so angry that he fired at them with his gun. He didn't kill anyone, just shot a hole through the hat. (Personal interview 1999)

Again, Mr. Lean's verbal testimony helped establish Joeyaska's situation and the unfolding of events leading to his land allotment at Godey Creek.

I learned by discussing this incident with my family and reading my sister Deanna Sterling's Graduating Paper (1998) that it was my mother's grandfather William Voght Sr. who was shot at. His pre-empted land by the river was trespassed on by Joeyaska. Voght's wife Klama, an Ntla'kapmux woman,

Intervened and spent hours in dialogue with Joeyaska interpreting for her husband (Voght) the rules of pre-emption, trespass and protection of law. Joeyaska was told to find another fishing spot. He complied though most unwillingly. (Sterling p.24)

The harvesting of food has always been a major activity among the Interior Salish people, "The most important of all foods was salmon which was caught by means of spear, net, trap or weir." (Nicola Valley Archives 1989 p.4) This remains true today. My brother Fred and his son Rick along with my nephew Ron and his young son Corey spent two days salmon fishing with a dip net at the Thompson River. Despite the rigorous camp-out, Corey said they 'slept on the rocks' and they caught 60 sockeye salmon during the allotted time fishing was open for First Nations food fishing. As in Joeyaska's day, salmon is a valued food source for our family today.

In July 1986 the Lower Nicola Band members had been called to a meeting regarding the beginning stages of land claims negotiations that many bands were undertaking with the provincial and federal governments. Chief Don Moses introduced the topic of land claims by stating,

Joeyaska was among the first in British Columbia to get a land settlement in the 1870's. He gave up land at Nicola Lake for a sack of flour and a pouch of tobacco. (Personal Remembrance 1986)

Deanna Sterling's Graduating Paper 1998, answered one of my questions regarding Joeyaska. What was he doing at the Coldwater River when he was said to have lived at Nicola Lake. Ms. Sterling stated,

Joeyaska had lived on the flats where the Nicola River flows from Nicola Lake. A rancher who pre-empted the land gave Joeyaska a sack of flour and a pouch of tobacco for each of his clan's tents as a land trade. Joeyaska was to move to the mountain to live as he was a hunter and fisherman and not a farmer. (1998 p.20)

In speaking with my family about this 'gift,' it was not a land trade. Joeyaska had been displaced.

In the years following European settlement, Joeyaska along with many others were affected by the changes which were sweeping the whole province regarding land settlements and reserve allocations. Brett Christophers stated that in July 1858,

A company of Royal engineers surveyed potential town sites, built roads and bridges opening up land for settlement. (1998 p.141)

Certain developments were taking place in the Nicola Valley which forced change among many First Nations life styles. For example when First Nations gave up hunting and fishing as a way of life in order to trap furs, "this created a dependency upon trade goods when furs were depleted." (Nicola Valley Archives 1989 p.14) First Nations who lived off the land suddenly found themselves in need.

Further complications arrived with ranchers who were impressed by the natural grasses and rolling hills of the area. They began the process of pre-empting land that was formerly utilized by local First Nations for grazing, hunting and gathering foods of the land. What a difference between land allotment for Indians and land allotted to Whites. In a book about the Douglas Lake Cattle Company, Nina Wolliams (1979) illustrates an example of those differences, "By 1877 Douglas owned around 700 acres," (p.18) while the local First Nations were restricted to a few acres causing an uproar. They reacted, "...becoming hostile and awaited only the word

of Chillihitzia, the chief of the Okanagans, to start a full-scale war against the white settlers." (p.19)

In 1871 when the province became part of the dominion of Canada, land commissioners under the 'Lands and Works Department' were appointed to resolve the affairs dealing with allotment and pre-emptions. It appears that European settlers benefited when administrator Joseph Trutch "shaped the new colonial order and its politics of dispossession" (Christophers 1998 p142) Trutch allotted very few reserves yet "Nlha7kapmx territory would be available for preemption." (p.142) This action caused friction and fear leading to hostilities. Peter O'Reilly, a magistrate in Yale, recognized the land disputes and "recommended that surveys be made and reserves set aside." (Christophers p.143) However, he protected the "European claims and squeezed the reserves onto poorer land in between."

Joanne Drake-Terry 1989, described one of the major policies to affect First Nations, the "Order-in-council, dated March 21, 1873 recommending that 80 acres of land be allocated to every Indian family of five in British Columbia...the figure was to be amended to 20 acres per family of five." (p.110) In some places, the allotment was 10 acres. Such injustice could only lead to outrage among First Nations when a single white was able to pre-empt many times that amount of land.

John Booth Good, Anglican missionary, made an effort to help the Nlha7kapmx, one of whom was Nawheeshistan, a chief

of the tribe Joeyaska belonged to, according to G.M.Sproat, Land Commissioner, (Vol.4/10 p.280) Christophers pointed out the angry reaction, "Not surprisingly, the Natives were enraged and sought redress, to which end Naweeshistan, a chief, approached Good, who understood their anger and wrote to Musgrove." (p.143) Musgrove was the Governor of British Columbia at the time. Good drew up a petition from Naweeshistan requesting that "unless the reserves were extended and preemption was denied, white settlers would continue to take land and resources that belonged to Natives." (O'Reilly Diaries, 21-3 August 1868 50-1) When there was no positive reaction, Good "Reeled off a second letter, this time a furious attack on the government in general, and on O'Reilly in particular." (p.143)

Land Commissioner Gilbert M. Sproat was given power to "make reserve land allocations and to finalize his decisions "on the spot" within the extensive district of Yale." (Drake-Terry 1989 p.127) Sproat recognized the consequences of not dealing with First Nations and their land reductions, warning of 'Indian Wars' and 'halting railway construction'. In a letter in his field minutes, Sproat stated "the case of Joeyaska which was brought before me by the indians and also by Mr. Clapperton, J.P., has involved much trouble and correspondence, but I finally decided that the Indians ought to have the place known as Joey-aska's place, near the mouth of the coldwater where there is a big field fenced." (Sept.6, 1878 p.8) Former land commissioner Joseph Trutch carried out

a land policy which reduced Indian land reserves yet protected non-Indian land ownership. Author Robin Fisher (1989) pointed out some of the unfair practices during the 1870's.

When Europeans owned land they fenced in the grass and tended to bring trespassers before their courts. Areas cultivated by Indians, however, were not always similarly protected, either in the courts or from white encroachment. (p.273)

When Gilbert Malcolm Sproat took over as Commissioner of Indian lands he made an effort to rectify and bring about justice to First Nations regarding their land matters. In the Field Minutes dated September 6, 1878 Sproat detailed complaints William Charters brought to him regarding "his right to the water from "Mountain Creek" being stronger than Joeyaska's." (p.9) However Sproat explained that "The old man Joeyaska claims the prior right to having years ago cut some three ditches to carry water from said stream," the stream in this dispute being named the "Joeyaska Creek" (p.10) Sproat stated that "the Indians right to 20 inches (water) should come first" because "Mr. Charters will find enough for what he may reasonably claim." (p.10)

Sproat continued in the Field Notes making mention of dispossession which took place at the Coldwater River;

The Indians as already said feel very strongly about their leaving without compensation at the Coldwater being dispossessed in favor of white settlers. (p11)

This appears to be the incident of Joeyaska losing his fish racks at the Coldwater River when William Voght pre-empted that land. Sproat continued on about this outrage,

There would be great trouble were any attempt made to deprive them of this remnant consisting of a small privilege to enable them to cultivate about 15 acres of agricultural land. (p.11)

Further documentation by Christophers 1998, states that in the spring of 1872 a Victoria paper published "a stinging criticism of Good, written by seven residents of the land claimed by Naweeshistan." (p.144) The residents blamed Good for meddling and inciting the uproar.

In the letter dated Sept. 6, 1878, Sproat granted considerable favor to Joeyaska. In addition, in a second letter dated October 19, 1878, Sproat mentioned Joeyaska.

I met him yesterday near Hope, but not having an Interpreter with me I did not know quite what he said. I think he said that Mr. Charters has said that he would not let him have any water but I can hardly think this is the case, as that gentleman has too much good sense not to appreciate that the whole Indian adjustment in Nicola is entirely a compromise on the give and take principle. (p.279, 280)

What was Joeyaska doing in the town of Hope? Hope is 69 miles south of Merritt, an arduous journey of several days by horseback. It is apparent that only the most urgent matter could have brought Joeyaska to Hope which is nearby the town of Yale where land allotments, land matters and pre-emptions could be filed. "A government official, a revenue collector was located at Yale." (Harris 1997 p.110) Sproat's letter states that Joeyaska sought him out in order to lay a complaint about his neighbor William Charters who was attempting to lay claim to all the water rights. It appears that Sproat was well aware of the potentially volatile situation should he not deal fairly with a man of Joeyaska's

warrior reputation. The matter of burnt fish racks and the loss of his winter food supply, causing Joeyaska to deal with the incident by firing a shot, was still fresh in everyone's memory including Sproat's not to mention those 'hostile' Okanagans in the Nicola Lake region who were ready to go to war.

In his letter, Sproat noted that, "the whole Indian adjustment in Nicola is entirely a compromise on the give and take principle," (p.280) which goes against the grain of land policy under Joseph Trutch whose own rulings were described as unsatisfactory land policy that "has been cited as having caused the Indians of the Interior to reach a boiling point." (Fisher 1980 p.275) Trutch was responsible for creating dangerous situations, ones which Sproat took great effort to difuse as it is shown in his handling of William Charters' demand of water rights from Joeyaska. He pointed out the wrongful case of Mr. Charters,

His own late water record would be invalid if rights were processed and the Indian can only want very little comparatively. (p.280)

It is clear that Sproat supported Joeyaska because in the next line he wrote of his decision. It is the same decision he had arrived at in his previous letter of September 1878. "It is decided that Jo.i.yas.ka shall have a piece of land at the place he so much desires, and he may proceed to cultivate it." (p.280)

It is little wonder that Joeyaska was so adamant about building and protecting ditches on his land. Water was

crucial for cultivation. This shows that Joeyaska had been working for years to clear the land and making serious effort to honor his land pre-emption. The task of harvesting one's winter supply of food was important especially if white land owners could burn anyone's fish racks to suit their purposes. These points were evident to Gilbert Malcom Sproat who presented a tactful approach to this particular situation between Joeyaska and William Charters. In a very serious and reflective mood, Sproat revealed his knowledge about the whole land situation in general, and his own duty to do what was right.

It should be remembered in Nicola that until I visited the valley, the Indians both by Provincial and Dominion law had superior claims to all lands on which they had settlements which they had not consented to abandon and for which they had not been compensated. (p.280)

Sproat recognized the considerable sacrifice made by the First Nations who lost land in the name of policy, law and European settlement. It could be said that Sproat was a protector of Indian rights.

I believe that these incidents are the ones referred to by Sproat in his field minutes in 1878 when the case of Joeyaska which was "brought before me by the Indians, and also by Mr. Clapperton, J.P., has involved much trouble and correspondence." Coming to an understanding of the situation with or without an interpreter would have been difficult enough, but Joeyaska was adamant about getting his point across. Sproat concluded, "I finally decided that the Indians ought to have the place known as Joey-aska's place,

near the mouth of the Coldwater." (Vol. 4/10 p.8) He recognized the urgency of Joeyaska's case and he complied.

In this same letter dated 1878, Sproat outlined a meeting of the Ntla'kapmux that was to take place in the following summer at Lytton.

The Indians among whom I have been working this year who call themselves the Nekla. kap. a muk Nation wish to have a great meeting or convention at Lytton to talk over matters. (p.280)

Historian Cole Harris described this meeting in a book The Resettlement of British Columbia, 1997. "July 17, 1879 ... a gathering of 1200 Nlha7kapmx encamped at Lytton with tents and flags and 1500 horses." (p.128) Mr. Sproat made a speech to the assembled group then retired, "to be available as needed as legal advisor." The outcome of that meeting was that a head chief was elected, several proposals were made regarding a school, hiring a doctor and making laws and regulations. No doubt Joeyaska was in attendance here. In a document regarding coal rights, Joeyaska is called 'Chief'. Deanna Sterling stated, "Old records of Indian Agent meeting at Inshiskt later to be Joeayska Indian Reserve #2 after "Chief Joeyaska" indicated that the reserve was considered a separate entity from the Lower Nicola Band." (Sterling 1998 p.20)

Christophers (1998) described Gilbert Malcolm Sproat as "by far and away the pivotal and most energetic member of the committee," (p.145) in reference to the land commissioners. The Interior Salish were so appreciative of Sproat's work for

them that "one old chief, for example, who had resisted mission ethics for many years, would set aside one of his three wives now that Sproat had come to solve the land question." (p.151) This statement shows Sproat's intention, "...he shared the opinion that the Natives in British Columbia had prior title to the land." (Harris 1997 p118) When I searched through the records at the Lands and Titles Office at the Department of Indian Affairs in Vancouver, I overheard a fellow researcher comment on Sproat. "Sproat acted like he was a god back then." I'm thankful that Sproat had two years in which to make decisions on lands. During that time my great grandfather's land was allotted to him. Joeyaska indeed got the desires of his heart, his land.

When Nellie Gutteriez worked in the households of white ranchers, it is apparent that the land conflict between her ancestors and the ranchers had been settled. It is documented that the government attempted to smooth out some of the disparities among land holders with the help of Gilbert Malcolm Sproat. Nellie and the elders of her time were well aware of Joeyaska's situation and the whole land allotment system of the time. Pre-emption was a big word, it carried a lot of weight. Joeyaska earned his pre-emption, my father inherited the pre-empted land. That was common knowledge in the region, a familiar story in the households of the Nicola Valley. That story reached my ears in 1968, it turned out to be an essential piece of information for 1999.

CHAPTER THREE

I have worked hard on my land so I should not go round begging. (Xitha Gaxe, Native American Testimony 1991 p.238)

My mother, Sophie Sterling passed along information related to her by our dad and by the elders. She told my sister Deanna about Joeyaska's arrival in the Nicola Valley.

Sophie Sterling said that the old people remember how Joeyaska looked when he first came to the valley. He was carrying a musket and had wounds as if fresh from a battle of some kind. No date was given for his arrival. (Sterling 1998 p.19)

I try to imagine the loss Joeyaska felt having been chased from his village and away from his people. My parents and siblings experienced the loss of many things, but not at gunpoint as Joeyaska had. These words written by an anonymous author depict such displacement.

I see the land desolate and I suffer an unspeakable sadness. Sometimes I wake in the night and I feel as though I should suffocate from the pressure of this awful feeling of loneliness. (Nabakov 1979 p.184)

What grief to have been forced in such violent manner to start a new life. It is no wonder that Joeyaska did not return to Washington, he left behind a devastated homeland. He made a new life for himself in the Nicola Valley.

Joeyaska settled in the Nicola Valley area by taking four wives. He associated with the tribes of the area and was able to communicate in the Okanagan language. James Teit 1895, wrote "Tcuieska was Ntlakya'pamuQ, one quarter Stuw'hamuq, one quarter Okanagan and one half Nkamtci'nemuq." (p.32) This visit by Teit appears to be a rather formal

occasion in which to gather information. I don't know what year Joeyaska came into the valley. The story is that Joeyaska fled from a war and dangerous encounter in Washington State. My mother said that 'he was scarred heavily in the chest area.' (Sophie Sterling) I remember Nellie Gutteriez telling me that Joeyaska came from Brewster, Washington. (Personal Communication 1968) The town of Brewster borders the Coville Indian Reservation in Washington. All I had was that story of Joeyaska and the land that was named after him, our home. In a chapter about 'newcomers' arriving in British Columbia in the 1800's Joanne Drake-Terry included an incident of warfare among the Cayuse and Yakima in northern Oregon. In 1855 a deceitful Indian agent lured them to cede a great portion of their land to the American government. The people found out, killed the agent and were punished by the U.S. military which sent hundreds of armed vigilantes to wage war against them. Missionaries known as Oblates who lived and taught among the tribes were powerless to help, they then "left all Indian territories south of the 49th parallel and moved north...into the Cariboo." (p.79) When Father LeJeune called Joeyaska or "Shoo-yaska" a pagan (Kamloops Wawa 1895) it appears that Joeyaska had not converted to any one of the Christian religions. Joeyaska held his own spiritual beliefs. I know that from information from my mother, "Your dad lived with his grandfather, Joeyaska when he was a little boy. Joeyaska taught him everything. How to live off the land and how to

pray." (Personal Communication) James Teit documented prayer among the Thompson and Okanagan as "belief in mysterious powers and the chief objects of prayer were the fulfillment of their desires, and the protection from harm." (The Jesup Expedition 1900 p.344)

Incidents where missionaries were ineffective in times of war suggests one of the aversions Joeyaska had toward their doctrine. It is understandable to see that a man of Joeyaska's stature resisted Father LeJeune's catholicism in 1895. One of the main reasons why Joeyaska did not convert was because Christian religions forbade polygamy. Priests would not baptize men who had more than one wife. I trust that Joeyaska had his own spiritual beliefs which carried him along besides another reason for resistance would have been attitudes such as,

If we could elevate such people and set them on the Rock of our Salvation we must be willing to go down to the very depths of their degradation and patiently lift them up. (Missionary John Booth Good, among the Ntla'kapmux in Lytton. Ecclesiastical Archives 1958 p.98)

Having come from an American state where he experienced loss of parents and family, relatives, friends and tribal community as well as homeland in the betrayal by government and military Joeyaska sought to surround himself with a new family group. Nabakov (1979) summarized the injustice of such displacement in the long history of Indian-white warfare.

The majority of Native American "uprisings" occurred when Indian territory was being encroached upon or some local incident ignited a frontier already tense with

injustice towards the Indians. (p.94)

If the old people remember that Joeyaska came into the Nicola Valley with only a gun to his name, it seems apparent that he had lost everything else except his life. Deanna Sterling's Graduating Paper (1998) describes two of Joeyaska's tribal names listed by Teit. "The Stuwí'Hamuq (Stuwix) was a part of the Athapaskan language group related to the Chilcotin and Carrier in central and northern B.C." (p.18) Nkamtchi'nemuq which means 'people of the entrance' or 'where the creek meets the river' refers to the Thompson people around Spences Bridge. The Okanagans ranged from central Washington and into the central Interior of British Columbia. According to James Teit, the Okanagan tribes include Sanpoil and Colville and call themselves "Nsi-lixtcen which means Salish-speaking as in Salish or Flathead tribes." (Bureau of Ethnology 1930 p.199)

Joeyaska had wives from two of the tribal groups mentioned, the Ntla'kapmux and Okanagan. It is most probable that he was able to communicate with them and to have learned their languages. Keeping four wives shows what an exceptionally good hunter and provider Joeyaska had to have been. I heard that Joeyaska was agile and lively even at an old age. It is said that "if anyone approached Joeyaska when he was seated cross-legged on the floor or ground, Joeyaska leapt to his feet in one move." (Personal Communication)

My brother Austin Sterling told me recently that in order for Joeyaska to have been accepted into the community

of the Nicola Lake region, he first would have had to proceed in correct form, he had to know how to conduct himself and practise proper protocol in the new territory. (Personal communication July 1999) James Teit (1930) made these notes about property among the Okanagans. The tribal territory was common property, and free to all the people for hunting and fishing, berrying, and root digging.

But people of one band did not as a rule pick berries or dig roots in the grounds near the headquarters of another band without first obtaining the consent of the chief in charge of the territory and then only at the proper season. (Bureau of American Ethnology p.277)

It is obvious that Joeyaska complied with the customs of his hosts, first of all for having survived, and secondly, to become a good provider along with his wives.

One of the main routes to gaining peace amongst tribes was by intermarriage. When Joeyaska is reported to have several wives from differing tribes, that means he lived peaceably among those tribes. This is important to note because there had been wars between the Stuwix, Thompson, Okanagan and Shuswap. "Long ago the Stuwix had frequent wars with the Thompson. This was at a time before the latter had intermarried much with them." (Teit 1930 p.257) Joeyaska placed a great importance upon the forming of alliances through his wives and children and therefore lived at peace in their country and among their kin.

Gilbert Malcolm Sproat, land commissioner, listed Joeyaska under "Naweesistikun's tribe" (Minutes of Decision 1878). According to James Teit (1930) there were only four

real chiefs in the Nicola-Similkameen country, one of those he named was, "Nawi'seq En which means (raised high head or able to be high head) became recognized in the central part of Nicola Valley." (American Bureau of Ethnology p.262)

Sproat and Teit appear to have different spelling patterns for the same name. As well, a third variation is found in Positioning the Missionary (1997). John Booth Good, missionary in the Lytton area among the Ntla'kapmux, attempted to help "Naweeshistan" when settlers at Nicola Lake petitioned against him. (Christophers p.150) It is apparent in Land Commissioner Sproat's notation that Joeyaska is considered part of Naweeshistan's group, which is very significant because Teit claimed that "at Nawi'seq En's death he owned about 1,000 head of horses." (p.262) I trust that had Joeyaska aligned himself with Naweeshistan, as is pointed out by Sproat, one of the ways he did so was possibly by marriage to one of Naweeshistan's relatives and another by his horsemanship talents. In 1867 missionary John Booth Good remarked about the importance of the horse in the interior of British Columbia. "Their most valued possession was their horses of which they had some hundreds all told."

(Ecclesiastical Archives 1958 p.103) Joeyaska is said to have fled on horseback from American soldiers. It was not mentioned that he arrived with a horse in the Nicola Valley. The story about Joeyaska's escape on horseback reveals that the horse was his means of transportation. He most likely acquired and trained his own horse and brought that skill

with him to Nicola Lake where the First Nations owned many horses. Father LeJeune wrote, "The Indian especially in Nicola have very fine horses owning some of the best stallions in the country." (Kamloops Wawa Vo.IX No. 12 1900, p.5) My father, Albert Sterling, as a six year old boy had a pony given to him by his grandfather Joeyaska. I was told that my father rode his pony to the school house several miles south of the Joeyaska Indian Reserve #2. Horses served as a major part of the lives of my parents and grandparents including Joeyaska.

Deanna Sterling described Joeyaska's land trade with a white rancher because "Joeyaska was a hunter and fisherman and not a farmer." (Sterling 1998 p.20) However, I know from oral tradition that Joeayska was very upset to have lost that land. It appeared to have been a misunderstanding. In any event he had family responsibilities and having been forced off his land at Nicola Lake by white settlers urgently required another homestead property for himself and his family group.

Joeyaska had already experienced the loss of his tribal homeland in the States. He would have been extremely wary about losing more. The land deals being carried out in favor of the white settlers in the Nicola Lake region while tribal lands shrunk would have affected Joeyaska. He not only aligned himself with but persisted with his chief to gain security in the form of land for his family. As a member of the community Joeyaska would have witnessed the amassing of

great tracts of land among the settlers compared with the shrinking tribal territories. As an associate of Naweeshsitan, he would have known of and supported Naweeshistan's persistent efforts to gain favor in land petitions. Those skills helped settle his own land allotment.

Christophers referred to Naweeshistan with regard to a land dispute going on in the Nicola Valley between the chief and white settlers. Reverend John Booth Good stationed at Lytton was called upon to help Naweeshistan, however his efforts proved fruitless despite several tactics to try and bring about some justice for the Ntla'kapmux chief from Nicola. Several chiefs became suspicious of gifts given in friendship at meetings with J. Powell former Indian Commssioner. "They began refusing the gifts for fear that by accepting them, more of their land would be given up. It is documented that Naweeshistan made this declaration."

(Christophers 1997, p.145)

James Teit described the Okanagans' wars about 1875.

Owing to strong feeling engendered by the failure of the Government to provide reservations and make treaty with the Indians, the Okanagan and Shuswap tribes made a compact to attack the whites and drive them out of their territories. This was frustrated by the strong influence of Chief Tcelahitsa of the Douglas Lake Band. (Bureau of Ethnology 1930 p.259)

Joeyaska had experienced treacherous loss of lands at his former home in Washington. When he was displaced at Nicola Lake by settlers, he moved to the Godey Creek at the base of Iron Mountain in the vicinity near the Coldwater River. The

incident at the banks of the Coldwater River where he lost fish racks and retaliated against such flagrant waste of winter food supplies showed Joeyaska's intolerance of injustices suffered at the hands of white settlers. However, when Klama, William Voght's wife, explained the laws he became knowledgeable of the legal processes regarding land acquisition. Joeyaska had settled his family at Godey Creek, an area that included accessible wagon roads between the towns of Merritt, Hope, and Princeton. It was land apparently not claimed or pre-empted by anyone else. Witnessing land allotments in nearby fields for others would have hastened Joeyaska's right to pre-empt and occupy the land at Godey Creek. Therefore he investigated the system of homestead acreages for himself. Through his own desire and with the help of his chief Naweeshistan the surveyors in the valley helped make his claim and pre-emption of 320 acres valid at Godey Creek. It is likely that Joeyaska had already laid claim and occupied the two homestead plots. When he searched for the land commissioner to file his claim and to complain about the white settler next door, 'William Charters taking up the water supply in the neighbouring field', his claim and his complaint was known to Sproat who subsequently wrote,

I do not mean to exclude Jo.i.yas.kah's place. I met him yesterday near Hope, but not having the Interpreter with me I did not know quite what he said. (Letters Vol.4/10 p.279)

In this particular instance Sproat had been made aware of Joeyaska's dissatisfaction with William Charters taking all

the water supply. "I think he said that Mr. Charters had said that he would not let him have any water." (p279) This statement reveals that Joeyaska had already filed claims for the land through the pre-emption process. He had occupied the land, dug the ditches and had begun work on the land. He considered it his land. Water is crucial for livestock and for cultivation. William Charters preventing water access was a threat, an injustice Joeyaska would not tolerate. For wives, children and livestock water was a necessity, it was a life threatening situation for him. Therefore, Joeyaska's urgency to press the matter with Land Commissioner Sproat who made the statement, "I did not quite know what he said" reveals Joeyaska's urgent attempt at getting the matter cleared. He did not give up despite the language barrier between them. The lands commissioner ruled in his favour. According to Sproat's decision,

It is decided that Jo,i,yask.kah shall have the piece of land at the place he so much desired, and he may proceed to cultivate. (p.280)

That day marked the ownership of land for Joeyaska. Sproat had been given "power to make reserve land allocations and to finalize his decisions "on the spot " within the extensive district called Yale." (Drake-Terry 1989 p.127)

How did Joeyaska acquire 320 acres, the equivalent of two homestead plots when the reserves allotted for local First Nations were very minimal.

Deanna Sterling wrote that at the time of Joeyaska's claim, Whites and Mexicans could pre-empt 120 acre plots of

land, "while Indians were allotted 10 acres per family of 5."
(Sterling 1998 p.21)

When Joeyaska presented his case with the land commissioner, all criteria had been set in place to grant his request. Joeyaska's initial proceedings of land development and cultivation, and Joeyaska's persistence and determination to make a stand, the threat of warfare at Nicola Lake, Sproat's desire to keep the peace, all paid off. Joeyaska knew his rights, he proved that he was able to tend the land, he made a stand, therefore Sproat granted him the pre-emption that day. It appears that Sproat had been very careful to "avoid further trouble, he elaborated on why William Charters' claim would fail for 3 reasons;

1. Being contrary to the grand equitable rights of the Indians.
2. Being recorded by the Asst. Comm in error
3. Because it is not proper to interfere with his taking water that is in the creek at the point he mentions namely "where the said" "creek enters my" "pre emption claims" The creek after leaving the mountain, passes through Joeyaska's place before reaching the land of Charters. (Field Minutes Vol. 4/10 Oct. 6, 1878 p.14, 15)

The tensions about land issues were considered 'burning issues' in the interior. Drake-Terry 1989, described that Sproat was afraid to travel to the interior in 1877 because 'the Okanagan Indian nations were about to form a confederation and declare war on the white settlers." (p.124)

Joeyaska was deadly serious about securing land and providing for his family. Lands Commissioner Sproat most probably granted him 'the land he so much desired' in hopes

of keeping the peace. Land allotment was a new concept, to gain title was a major victory that included its own list of responsibilities. Ones that Joeyaska already practised. The American Indian Handbook (1960) defined the new concept of land tenure.

Instead of depending on the spontaneous products of the land the Indian began to sow seeds and to care for the plants. In order to do this he had to remain on the soil he cultivated. Thus occupancy gradually established a claim or right to possess the tract from which a tribe or an individual derived food. (Hodge p.756)

It is apparent that Joeyaska had occupied the land at Godey Creek for some time. He had begun the arduous tasks of digging ditches and clearing land for cultivation. However, a question arose. As previously noted, my father Albert Sterling stayed at Nicola with Joeyaska in the winter lodge or shi'istken, Father LeJeune and James Teit documented that Joeyaska was from Nicola. How could Joeyaska be in two places? My mother said that Joeyaska utilized the grazing lands from his allotment at Godey Creek all the way to Nicola Lake. This land was called 'commonage' and he grazed his horses there. Later when my father was a guard in Princeton in 1941 this land became leased to someone else. (Personal Communication) Joeyaska moved back and forth from Nicola Lake to Godey Creek where he finally settled. He built a house, barn, corrals and fences yet continued to associate with his relatives and friends at Nicola. My father's grandmother on Charley Sterling's side lived at Nicola Lake and he stayed with them as well.

Lands Commissioner Sproat also noted that since Joeyaska was allotted the land, "he must abide upon the land he now occupies and upon which he has made great improvements." (Field Minutes Vol.4/10 Oct. 6, 1878 p.11, 12) That made it official. Joeyaska held favor with Sproat.

It was a foreign concept to fence in a plot of land when, in past, the whole territory had been considered home and sustenance. Nabakov (1991) described the versatile man.

The ordinary Indian man although perfectly ready to defend his life or community, was at the same time family man, provider, craftsman and participant in his people's demanding social and religious schedule. (p.91)

Joeyaska proved to be all these. He taught his children and grandchildren spiritual beliefs, to be industrious and to be defenders of their rights. My father was well aware of these teachings for he carried on in those traditions. He went through vision quests and later built a sweat lodge for spiritual cleansing and he prayed in the manner taught by his grandfather, Joeyaska. My brother Austin Sterling witnessed our dad praying at dawn facing the east. He ended his prayer with, "Hooh" which sounds very much like the Lakota who say, "Hoh" to close the prayers. (Personal Communication).

In order for Joeyaska to get hold of the tools necessary to begin clearing land and digging ditches, he had to procure a great supply of goods to trade for these implements. The late Robert Sterling (1979) wrote,

For centuries and even into the present local Native Indians possessed a hunting and gathering mentality. All their possessions - tools, food, shelter, myths and ceremonies, medicines, and beliefs came from the natural

environment. (History of the Nicola Valley Indian p.39)

Joeyaska's survival depended upon his relationship with the land. His family depended upon his knowledge of hunting and gathering. Thomas Berger in Village Journey (1985) speaks of the importance of 'subsistence' and living off the land. "Subsistence living was not only a way of life, but also a life-enriching process." (p.54) Robert Sterling (1979) summarized such patterns of survival, "While this was a difficult existence, the local ancestors considered it the ideal life." (History of the Nicola Valley Indians p.39)

James Teit (1930) commented on the exchange of goods for trade items by the Interior Salish with the Europeans.

Indian-hemp twine, and dressed skins, chiefly deerskins, ...were in demand constantly because they were so much required for manufactures and clothing. All commodities could be bought with them. (p.255)

Joeyaska was a deer hunter. His wives, children and grandchildren were equally industrious. I have seen my great grandmother Martha's cedar root baskets. I had heard that Joeyaska's chosen wife Martha was a master basket weaver. Our family possesses a few of Martha's baskets and consider them a treasure beyond price.

Teit (1930) made reference to the coiled root basketry of the Thompsons as a popular trade item.

The Okanagan made comparatively few baskets... the Athapaskan Stuwix were the only people who made no coiled baskets but procured them from the Thompsons, some Thompsons who intermarried and lived with them made baskets. (p.223)

Martha continually made baskets. My father said that when he was a little boy he would go up the hills with his

grandmother to get cedar roots so she could make baskets.

One time I took my mother to the Museum of Anthropology. She recognized Martha's baskets by the patterns. We looked up the donor of the baskets, it was a judge from Merritt.

(Personal communication) My sister Shirley Sterling has in her possession a stone hammer, one of the tools most probably belonging to and acquired by our great grandfather through trade. It was stored in the blacksmith shop at Joeyaska Indian Reserve #2. These implements were mentioned by James Teit (1900) "Stone hammers and hand hammers were imported from the Lillooet." (Smithsonian Papers p.183)

Joeyaska and his family adapted to the new laws of land ownership by; occupation, making improvements and cultivation at the same time pursuing traditional subsistence as a way of life . Thomas Berger (1985) summarized the subsistence lifestyle, "Subsistence in actual fact is a complicated economic system, and it demands the organized labor of practically every man, woman and child in a village." (p.56) There were unwritten laws which ensured proper game and land management, conserving the resources, never taking more than was necessary and leaving some fish, game and plants for the perpetuation of the species. I had learned this custom of hard work and respect of the land from my father, who learned it from his parents and grandparents. George Manual 1979, remembers similar teachings. "I recall our traditional chiefs leading the people into the fields to tend the crops. The men would work at the harvesting or planting or clearing

the irrigation ditches according to season." (p.41)

My mother's grandfather Yapskin, was a hereditary chief. She has oral accounts about the role of chiefs, she said that in the past, the chief was like a servant. That the people could depend upon the chief to be honest and helpful in times of need. However, the Sterlings have yet to witness such compassion from past and present chiefs of the Lower Nicola Band. Tribal Councils have had the power to set policies regarding CP's or Certificate of Possession. After 1972, no CP's were granted. Despite the fact that my father claimed ownership, inhabited and worked the whole of the property, he was granted only 16 acres as CP land. The chiefs had development plans for the remainder of the Joeyaska lands because they had knowledge that the Coqhihalla Highway was being built along the property known as Joeyaska North.

Another factor which prevented my father gaining CP for his land was that a number of vacant houses on his property were inhabited by people from other reserves for seasonal or temporary shelter. Some of these 'squatters' began laying claim to the land. Indian agents and chiefs supported their claims. My father wrote letters of protest, however, his letters were ignored.

DIA and band policies have been inconsistent regarding Joeyaska's pre-empted land. A forum was held in 1986 by the Lower Nicola Band to determine if land at Joeyaska Indian Reserve #2 was considered Band Land or Sterling property. Deana Sterling attended the meeting. She remembers the words

of the late Harriet Paul, descendant of Chief Chillhitz. The interpreter was Okanagan speaker, Herb Manuel, from Douglas Lake.

No one has the right to take the land away from the Sterlings. Joeyaska gave the land to his sons and daughter. His daughter Sarah Joeyaska passed the land to her son Albert Sterling. You young people should leave them alone. (Personal Communication)

To date, past and present chiefs have yet to heed the words of elders regarding oral tradition and the rightful ownership of Joeyaska Indian Reserve #2.

Since the mid 1980's the Sterling family has retained lawyers to help point out errors to the chiefs. The land question has never been settled, however, development schemes have been put on hold.

My mother, Sophie Sterling is adamant about who owns the land at Joeyaska Indian Reserve #2. She has never faltered in her belief that the land belonged to her husband, Albert Sterling, my father, and that the land now belongs to her and her children and grandchildren.

CHAPTER FOUR

The Indians were natural riders, strong fencers and fine teamsters but casual farmers. (Wooliams 1979, p.63)

Once Joeyaska secured the land he made a great effort at settling in.

He took Lot 11 below Iron Mountain which consisted of 320 acres and which later became known as Inshiskt (little valley) or Joeyaska Indian Reserve Number Two, and settled there with his family. (Sterling 1998 p.20)

Family history tells that Joeyaska worked very hard clearing brush from the fields in order to cultivate and produce crops for his livestock. He utilized the natural grass which grew in the swampy fields and he planted vegetable gardens. He built a pit house at first than later built a wood frame house past the road that cuts through the land. This road later became the Merritt-Princeton Highway. Occupying the land and putting up buildings shows that Joeyaska complied with the order of the day concerning 'pre-empting land and making improvements.' Governor Douglas in 1862 answered the question; were Indian people allowed to buy and pre-empt land precisely as a white man could? His reply was that "Provisions will be made for permitting Indians to hold land under pre-emption on the following conditions:

First, that they reside continuously on their farms.

Second, that they build thereon a house of squared logs,

Third, that they clear, enclose and cultivate..."

(Drake-Terry 1989 p.87) These conditions were followed by

Joeyaska. His barn still stands today, however the house he had built burned down in 1920. The wooden rail fences have been replaced with barb wire and have been repaired and up kept over the years. The hay fields continue to be harvested. Horses had always been important to Joeyaska, he built a barn for the horses and the few cattle he owned, as well as a corral in the vicinity of his wood frame house.

(Personal Communication 1998)

Joeyaska and Martha had three children. Stloopa, Barnes and Sarah were born at Inshiskt (Joeyaska Indian Reserve #2). As previously mentioned Sarah worked on the wagon or 'pack' trains with her husband Charlie Sterling, their youngest son Albert, my father stayed with the grandparents. I heard from my mother Sophie Sterling that Joeyaska taught my father everything he knew for his first six years of life. For example, how to live a subsistence lifestyle of snaring small game, hunting, fishing and gathering roots and berries. He shared cultural knowledge and spiritual teachings. My father followed in many of the traditional ways of his grandfather. For example, he built a sweat lodge to 'cleanse' along one of the deeper ditches of running water among the pine trees. He went on a 'vision quest' where he fasted and bathed in the cold water. He told my sister Deanna that he didn't 'see any vision.' However, we know that elders do not speak about religious or spiritual experiences, these are kept to oneself. My father sang drum songs and 'received his own song.' My father learned the basics of horsemanship and land

management from Joeyaska. Joe Giron, Apache Range Manager summarizes the First Nations relationship with the land that describes my father and his grandfather's land stewardship "We belong to the land. We express our feelings for the land by the way we take care of it. We are naturals at land management." (Video 1983) One day my mother was chuckling because she remembered something my father told her about his life as a child. "Your father worked very hard as a child, he had to help his grandparents everyday, all day long. They ate the same things each day. Once in a while for a treat his grandmother would put some dried saskatoon berries in his mush (dried bitter roots were cooked like mush) and he thought that was just wonderful." Joeyaska made sure that he and his family were well provided for regarding the basics of food, shelter and clothing. He built fences along his property lines to keep out other livestock otherwise he'd have no hay. They lacked for nothing. My father learned how to live off the land, to make deer hide clothing. The work ethic he had learned from his grandfather was, "If you want to eat you have to work." (Sarah Stewart 1999) She said that was a teaching he passed on to her and her children. My mother said this was a teaching my father learned from his grandfather.

In 1903 at age seven my father was enrolled at a school for the local children, it was located several miles away. Joeayska placed great importance upon education and gave him a horse to ride back and forth to school. One of the

students who was a classmate later became Judge Henry Costilliou. (Personal communication) Later my father was sent to St. Louis College for boys in New Westminster for two years until his tuition was no longer paid for. This school later burned down. Because he was 'status' my father was sent to St. Mary's Residential School at Mission, B.C. For six years he heard nothing from home, no one from his family visited him. My sister Shirley remembered some of the things our dad told her about life at school. She wrote, "I think of the smart boy at residential school, held back because he is Aboriginal. Dad had a cynical side. Probably this came of living in a residential school for years without going home or having visitors and seeing children beaten so badly they became crippled."

It was while my father attended residential school that he experienced some of the worst treatment and punishment by the Catholic priests and brothers. Chief Simon Baker recounted similar treatment at St. George's Residential School in Lytton where a supervisor named Mr. Timmins used extreme punishment for an offense. "Mr. Timmins hit Wilfred with a great big leather strap that he used to tie the cows' legs." (Khot La Cha 1994 p.33) It was such a shocking sight for Simon to witness that he decided to run away from school that night. Little did Joeyaska know that when he sent his grandson to distant schools for an education that he would be subjected to rules and regulations drawn up "to dissociate the Indian child from deleterious home influences...to

reclaim them from the uncivilized state." (Furniss 1992 p.22)

Unbeknownst to most First Nations, a piece of legislation known as the Indian Act gave government agents and missionaries powers to control, enforce and promote an assimilation policy. Fortunately, my father had been trained from an early age by his grandfather to stand up for himself. When he was fourteen years old my father had witnessed a nun and a priest kissing, he was caught and punished severely. It was then he and two boys from the Neskonlith Band decided to run away from school.

They packed raw vegetables in a sack and tied sheets together to climb down the wall to the ground. They ran at night and hid during the day following a path along the railroad tracks. They saw the priests and police walking along the tracks looking for them. (Sophie Sterling)

It was the law to attend school until the age of sixteen. My father lived in hiding for two years. He changed his name from Frederick to Albert, he went to his home at Joeyaska Indian Reserve #2 and found out that his grandfather had died in 1906. His mother said no one knew where he was at, but that the authorities had come looking for him. My father told everyone that he would rather die than go back to that school. He was deeply grieved at the loss of his beloved grandfather who had left a well-trained pony complete with gear for his grandson. Joeyaska must have had a sense of humour, he named the pony 'Poopoolinek'. With his pony my father was able to ride to isolated ranches in the Nicola Valley to work. It is at those ranches where he learned how to do all the work associated with ranching. Nina Wooliams

made note of First Nations workers regarding ranches. "The riders, farmers, fencers, teamsters and chore boys caring for the cattle at Douglas Lake were predominatly Indians from Spahomin; Okanagans, Athapaskans and Thompsons." (Cattle Ranch 1979 p.63) My father learned to 'break wild horses for riding and for pulling wagons or machinery.' (Austin Sterling 1999) He became a cowboy and entered rodeos until he rode a skinny horse at which time he chose to be a rodeo announcer. Author Nina Wooliams (1979) summed up the characteristics of cowboys. "In those days of the west, a cowboy was an all round man of the range. He could ride any horse, mean or gentle, break, shoe, pack and care for a horse." (p.158) When I was a little girl I liked to watch my father make horse shoes by heating a metal rod till it was red hot, then shaping it on the anvil, cooling it in water and measuring it on the horse's hoof. That blast of steam hissing in the water as the red rod cooled was fascinating. In order to prevent the horses' feet from wearing down, it was necessary to make horse shoes. My father carried out the chores important enough for the protection of his horses and livestock as well as taking care of all other details needed for the well being of his stock.

By the time my father turned seventeen years of age, he had been well trained and had become adept at carrying out all the chores required to run a ranch. When he was eighteen years old the First World War broke out in Germany. It is told that he was so pleased to sign up for service

that he left his horse and gear at Douglas Lake where he had been a wrangler. He never went back to claim them. I have been told that my father was still in hiding when he signed up for service. Wooliams (1979) described the state of the large cattle ranches as 'having a skelton crew' during the First World War. "Canadian men who had gone into the army made labour scarce." (p.121) On the application form to join the army my father stated that he had been born at Nicola. Under trade; my father wrote, "Teamster." He excelled with horses.

My father served with the Canadian Expeditionary Force with many First Nations who like himself were great horsemen, had learned to live close to the land and were excellant marksmen. It is written in one war journal that, "Many Natives became snipers or reconnaissance scouts, drawing upon traditonal hunting and military skills to deadly effect." (Summerby 1970 p.9) Those skills kept my father alive at the Battle of Vimy Ridge. My brother Austin Sterling related some information about horses in the First World War. He said our dad told him about how impressed he was with the well trained horses because they stood still even during the loudest gunfire. (Personal Communication)

My father was listed in rank as 'Private' having served with the 121st and 102nd Battalions. (Army Records) My mother said that shortly before he was wounded at Ypres my father felt alone and desolate, everyone around him was shot down. My father said a prayer and blacked out. He woke up

in a hospital and when the war was over he returned home to Joeayska Indian Reserve #2. Army records state that he was in a hospital in Seaford, England. His uncle Barnes was very proud of him and therefore gave him the land at Joeayska South, on the west side of the Merritt-Princeton Highway and one field which extended across the highway in to Joeyska North. When other Canadian soldiers returned from the war, they were given land. Woolliams (1979) stated, "Canada rewarded her soldiers with a free land grant of 160 acres." (Cattle Ranch p.125) However, my father refused to take any land. He was satisfied to inherit the land at Joeyska South. He married his first wife, Annie Simpson, an Okanagan from Vernon, B.C. She gave birth to a daughter Agnes. Annie died in 1929, their daughter Agnes was raised by her grandmother Sarah Joeyska. Agnes remembers life at Inshiskt (Joeyska Indian Reserve #2) as "working all the time." She said her father did a lot of good work, he raised horses and cattle, and had a large garden. He built a granary shed and planted oats, cut hay in his fields and others' fields, called 'contracting hay' where he took a crew of men to someone else's field to 'put up hay' for a portion of their crop or a wage. Her fun time was horseback riding. Agnes married a rancher Tommy Hewitt and lived in Wallachin for many years. She is now retired and lives in Spences Bridge, B.C.

My father did not immediately marry again but had a son Patrick who was also raised by Sarah, the grandmother at

Joeyska (Inshiskt). Patrick remembers his father 'working both sides of the reserve' Joeyaska North and South in the summer putting up the hay. He said that Alan Collette, later the mayor of Merritt, leased the land at Joeyaska North for grazing his cattle and for the hay. Patrick was raised by his grandmother Sarah whose Indian name was Pow Tan Maalks, or Maalks for short. He called her Maalks and said that Maalks took in several children and raised them. However he was sent to the Kamloops Indian Residential School. Patrick has six sons, many grandchildren. Now retired Patrick and Donna live in Merritt. He serves on the Lower Nicola Indian Band as elected councilor.

Deanna Sterling wrote that, Joeyaska left the ranch,

To his sons, Barnes and Stloopa. Joeyaska South went to Barnes who died in the 1918 flu epidemic, the land went to Sarah then to Albert. Joeyaska North went to Joeyaska's son Stloopa who left it to his daughter Angeline Bent. (1998 p.27)

My father married Sophie Voght, grand daughter of William Voght Sr. in 1935. Their first child Robert William was born in 1937. My mother is eighty three years old, she remembers,

Albert purchased a cedar frame house downtown. It took two days and six teams of horses and twenty men to bring the house up to Joeyaska by rolling logs under the house.

She has told me that when she moved to her new home at Joeyaska, Sarah, her mother-in-law had a milk cow and six beef cows and several horses, and chickens and that she took great pride in her currant and gooseberry bushes. There was

a well, a pond and a root cellar, a barn and a blacksmith shop and a corral. A meat house or shed was built to hang deer meat, my father was a hunter. A large vegetable garden was ploughed and planted by my father and had to be tended every summer. My mother milked the cow everyday, and made butter with the cream. Saskatoon berries grew in abundance along the creeks and ditches in summer. She picked and dried them for winter as well as making jam and preserves. She helped put up the hay and cooked for the haying crew who helped my father in the summers. She noted that my father purchased more beef cattle which required summer grazing pastures. This involved branding the calves in spring and herding them up to Quilchena Creek to graze where other First Nations brought their cattle. She said that with the right amount of water from the irrigation ditches, they could get two crops of hay to feed the cows during the winter. One summer there was no water, they had to buy the hay which was too expensive. My father built a wooden flume hundreds of feet long to carry water from another source up the hill. That flume has partly disintegrated but it can be seen today. It represents the crucial need for water to irrigate the fields, and it meant a lot of hard work on the part of my dad.

My brother Robert was born in 1937, Frederick was born two years later. They were brought up with the family at the Joeyaska Indian Reserve #2 until school age then they spent the summers with the family who by that time were

living near Princeton, 1941-1945. My father was recruited by the R.C.M.P to be a guard at a Japanese Internment camp for men who were building a road from Princeton to Hope. This camp was 60 miles from Merritt. He served in Number "A" Company Veteran Guards of Canada. My mother remembered that it wasn't so much to guard the Japanese as it was to protect them from an angry public. It appears that many of the veterans who were recruited to guard the Japanese were good men. Many were like my father, veterans from World War One. A racist population in 1941 reacted in mass hysteria and directed their government to send the Japanese people away from the coast "for their own protection." (Broadfoot 1976 P80) I asked my mother if my father felt any anger toward the Japanese. She said no. "It is because Albert was a 'half-breed' that he harbored no hatred or bitterness toward the Japanese. He could sympathize with the Japanese because he himself suffered under similar conditions at residential school." (Interview 1997) I asked why my father left his land at Joeyaska. There were several reasons. For instance, an army paycheck was a bonus. Fred Gaffen (1972) remarked about First Nations men who were willing to join the service. "The war had a significant effect, usually an improved income." (p.68) Another reason was the fact that in 1939 Sarah Joeyaska, my father's mother, had been killed. People who wanted the land at Joeyaska said my father had murdered his mother, as a result my father spent four months in jail. He was not guilty but had to prove it. His childhood friend

came to the defense, lawyer Henry Costilliou won the case for him. Henry's "good work for the Indians" is mentioned in the book The Fourth World, 1979 (Manuel p.116) Years later my father interpreted in the courts for Henry Costilliou.

My brother Fred told me that this incident in 1939 was a very difficult and discouraging experience for our dad. He spent four years as a guard at the Princeton internment camp, coming home to Joeyaska for a couple of days a month on his days off. He left the haying and care of the cattle to his brother Eddie Sterling who owned a ranch to the south of Joeyaska. Eddie harvested the hay and grazed my father's cattle on the fields at Joeyaska North as was customary by my father depending upon the water supply. My father had previously seeded the hayfields at both Joeyaska South and North. He grazed his cattle there also.

My mother didn't like being in a cabin near Princeton because the camp was a deserted coal mine complete with rail tracks and empty tunnels that served as bear dens. She felt afraid of the bears and afraid of the Japanese. My father had warned her not to talk to any Japanese if she encountered them. However my brother Fred had no fear of the Japanese. He told me that "The Japanese seemed to sense that we had no bad feelings towards them. There was always a friendly banter between them and our dad." He recounted a story of the time when he and our late brother Robert were walking near a tunnel with our dad when they came face to face with a grizzly bear. Fred said that, "Our dad immediately picked up

a tree limb and gave a loud war whoop and charged toward the bear. The bear ran off." Fred said that he wasn't afraid of anything after that.

When Robert and Fred were of school age they were sent to the Kamloops Indian Residential School along with First Nations children who were 'Status' Indians registered with the Department of Indian Affairs. The establishing of boarding schools is a painful reminder about who was behind the government's decision to build and staff these schools. "The beliefs about Native inferiority that served to legitimize church and government control over Native people mirrored prevailing beliefs within Euro-Canadian society." (Furniss 1983 p.108) However, my brothers Robert and Fred attended the school for four years when my father took them out. This is the story my mother told me about why Robert and Fred attended the public school in the town of Merritt, B.C. when the rest of us children had no choice but to go to the residential school in Kamloops.

One day we went to visit Robert and Fred at the Indian School in Kamloops. We asked the administrator to get our boys so we could visit them. He said no, they were picking tomatoes in the field. Albert refused to accept that, he demanded that they be brought out. We took them out that day and put them in the public school.

Robert lived with his uncle Joe Sterling and aunt Elizabeth at Joeyaska Indian Reserve #2 for one year of school when my parents were in Princeton at the Japanese internment camp. They occupied one of the vacant houses at Joeyaska Indian Reserve #2, however, they did not help with the care of the ranch. There was always extended family living there, my

grandmother Shanny Voght, lived at Joeyaska and fed the chickens and tended the gardens. My parents did not give up their home. After the war my parents and their toddlers Sarah and Deanna moved back home to Joeyaska Indian Reserve #2 to stay.

It was during the years between 1941 and 1945 that the Department of Indian Affairs made decisions regarding the north field of Joeyaska Indian Reserve #2 because this was the only time that my father was away from his land. Upon returning to Joeyaska Indian Reserve #2 my father saw the changes that were made without his knowledge. His field at Joeyaska North was leased out. My mother said that several times my father went to the Indian Agent's office to try and clear up the matter of his 'leased' fields only to be told that the official was not available. Yet his car was parked outside. Deanna Sterling wrote,

Joeyaska's granddaughter, Angeline from Stloopa, married Neil Bent from Shulus. Neil, in trouble with the law, fled to Chopaka Reserve near Keremeos. Angeline and her children followed him later leaving Joeyaska North in the care of her 'nephews' Antoine and Jimmy Spahan, with the intention of returning at a future date. Angeline's daughter, Mary Allison (personal communication 1986), maintained that her family had never forfeited title to Joeyaska North. (Sterling 1998, p.21)

From 1945 to today, Joeyaska's children, lived on, worked on the land despite the squatters and incorrect band policies. For example, in 1939 the Merritt-Princeton Highway split the land at Joeyaska into North and South. This not only partitioned the land but it destroyed an important water

supply to the fields at Joeyaska North. That is why in some years my father could not cut hay in his field across the highway. Another factor of conflict was that in 1953 Indian Agent A.E Sharpe listed squatters as owners of land when the Trans Mountain Gas Pipeline went through the land at Joeyaska. This agent did not consult with my father, he dealt with the chief and council of the Lower Nicola Band. Joeyaska's grandchildren and now the great great grandchildren know that we have never forfeited title to any of the land North or South at Joeyaska Indian Reserve #2. No one has any right to take the land from us. When my father took over the land at Joeyaska Indian Reserve #2 he asserted his right to occupy and utilize the land. He made that very clear. I heard a story about an incident where my father asserted himself in true warrior spirit in the early 1970's.

The chief of the Lower Nicola Band came by to inform your father that he had sold the timber on all band land including Joeyaska. You dad didn't say anything, he went and got his gun and told the chief, "Get the hell off of my land." The chief jumped into his car and sped off. (Personal Communication)

The timber remains to this day. Trees shield the cattle during snow and windstorms. Calves are born among the pine trees. The timber now provides a buffer against the heavy traffic of the Coquihalla Highway.

My father also took on the responsibility of caretaker of this inheritance and birthright. He carried on in the maintenance of fields, fences, ditches as well as family obligations. When he passed away in 1973, my mother carried on as matriarch and 'cultural professor' of the family.

However, she has felt the brunt of the disparity between the Lower Nicola Band and the Sterlings of Joeyaska. My sister Deanna wrote about it.

The frustrated tribal council and local council have subjected the Joeyaskans to all manner of punishment from boycotting them from tribal employment, band benefits and gaining a certificate of land possession. Sophie Sterling has been driven virtually to distraction by the harassment over the decades by the local tribal leaders. Other land owners are not subjected to such treatment. (Sterling 1998 p.20-21)

Joeyaska knew and understood that the 320 acres were his property. Sproat made that clear in 1878. "Property rights were binding. Sproat respected them, so did the government and the courts..." (Harris 1997 p.127)

My father spoke the Ntla'kapmux and Okanagan languages, he was an interpreter in the courts for people who could not speak English. He knew the laws and his words were true. My mother said that he helped elders settle land disputes. She said many times an elder would come in a taxi to get my father to go and help settle people's land problems.

Sproat's decision in 1878 to grant Joeyaska the land was binding. My father knew that and he lived on that principle. The errors that have been made by Indian agents, chiefs and claimants regarding land ownership of Joeyaska Indian Reserve #2 need to be corrected.

CHAPTER FIVE

The Indian peoples have a tradition and a culture to offer to the world. (Manuel 1979 p.265)

When looking at the whole picture of the Joeyaska Indian Reserve #2 it is important to go full circle and take note of Albert And Sophie Sterling's children and grandchildren. It is necessary to see the roles and the parts we play today in the maintaining of traditions initiated by our great grandfather Joeyaska. What has this warrior, rancher, survivor, inspired and instilled in his descendants. Mother, Sophie Sterling

Sophie Sterling has lived at Joeyaska Indian Reserve #2 for 64 years, with the exception of the four years spent at the Japanese Internment Camp in Princeton, B.C. She has been the heart of the Sterling Clan, nourishing and nurturing her children and grandchildren and now great grandchildren. At age 83, she has a strong heart though her ability to get around has been slowed by arthritis and diabetes. Her mind is full of care and concern for her offspring. Her long term memory is keen and alert yet. The greatest thrill for my mother is that we come to visit her or call her on the phone. Picking berries in the hills or fields comes second. From my earliest recollections I rarely saw my mother sit down. She was always busy from morning till night and many times she

worked alongside my father on the ranch. What impressed me most was her cooking talent, such good food probably because it was homegrown. When we were children on any Sunday of the year one of the missionary priests would sit down to dinner with us. It was natural to witness such hospitality. Any one who visited our home received the best that my parents had to offer. My mother learned at an early age that it is important to have a thankful heart. That is where it begins for her and that is the most important lesson she has taught me. My mother is very much like her own mother in so many ways for example, showing kindness, sharing with others, giving time to listen to others and valuing spirituality above all else. Her hard work and love inspired me to survive the hardest times at residential school. She has always been patient with me in the teachings of our language and culture. Her devotion has been unconditional. Over the course of their 38 year marriage my father told her everything he knew. Anytime I need information I just have to ask. My father passed away at the age of 77 in 1973. My mother tells me that he visits her in dreams.

Robert William Sterling

My brother, the late Robert William Sterling Sr. was given Joeyaska's Indian name 'Sheshuluskin' (Red Sun Rising Over the Mountain) at birth. He had red hair for which he most probably received a lot of attention as well as his name. Because he was 'status' Indian he attended Kamloops Indian Residential School in 1943 for six years. In 1949 our

parents took Robert and Fred out and enrolled them in public school in the town of Merritt, B.C. In the 1940's and 50's if 'status' children lived within walking distance to a public school, they were allowed to attend. Robert and Fred would run the mile and a half distance to the school. One time Robert told me that he and Fred walked to school on a cold day but the school was locked. They waited around for an hour till a woman came out to say that there was no school when the temperature reached 50 below zero. What Robert hadn't said was that he and Fred were healthy rugged boys who were used to hard work and the outdoors, our dad made sure everyone of his children helped out with the ranch at Joeyaska no matter what the weather. They hadn't noticed it was any colder than usual he said. They just walked home again.

Robert accomplished many goals in his lifetime. For example in 1956 he was the first Ntla'kapmux to graduate from high school in the Nicola Valley. Both Robert and Fred set 'Attendance Records' at school which have yet to be matched. They were remarkable students. Twenty years later Robert graduated from UBC with a Bachelor of Arts Degree with a major in Psychology. In looking over the accomplishments of Robert's life, there are words such as 'he pioneered' many firsts in the field of education and he was involved with several 'breakthroughs' in First Nations education. He was an active member in the B.C. Native Teachers Association (BCNITA) and in their getting official recognition from the

B.C. Teacher's Federation. In the memorial about Robert, free lance journalist Lynn Jorgensen wrote that he was "integral to the formation of the Native Indian Teacher Education Program (NITEP). Robert could easily have become a dominant leader on the provincial or national scene, but such was his devotion to his family and the land where he was born that in 1977 he opted to return to his roots in the Nicola Valley." (Memorial Publication 1983)

I remember Robert taking his children to the hills picking berries, camping overnight with the rest of us. They built a boat together and liked fishing at isolated lakes for trout. Robert donned old denims on weekends and holidays, he enjoyed the outdoors with family and friends, especially when his vehicle got stuck in the mud, the more mud the better. On Monday morning Robert was back in a suit and tie at the office. His efforts among students were rewarded, "when the Nicola Valley attained the highest per capita ratio of native high school graduates in the entire country." (Memorial Publication 1983) I remember when Robert worked to increase educational success and how he was met with opposition when he did not promote a 'rodeo school.' His opponents picketed his office. That was a lonely and difficult time for him. (Personal memory) Robert was a family man with strong connections to parents, brothers and sisters, nieces and nephews and relatives. Christmas holidays, family birthdays, ice-fishing derbys, weddings and funerals were the times and places that Robert would be at. Robert wrote of himself,

By tradition and upbringing I am a hunter and fisherman. I can tan hides, pick berries, make baskets. I can break and train a horse. I love the wilderness and seek out uninhabited areas for spiritual solitude and relaxation.

When Roberts' son the late Corey Owen Sterling went hunting for the first time, he was a little bit disappointed to have to give away all of the deer meat. Tradition required that a young boy's first kill was to be shared, he wasn't allowed to keep any for himself. James Teit 1900, mentioned a boy's puberty ceremonial. "He must become familiar with the deer and salmon, the pursuit of which will occupy much of his time in future years and furnish him with most of his food." (The Thompson Indians of British Columbia p.380) I was very happy and thrilled to have been a witness to Ntla'kapmux tradition and to Corey's first hunting experience. His eyes sparkled with pride as he shyly handed me a piece of tenderloin. (Personal Memory) Robert taught his son Corey in the tradition passed on from his father who learned from his grandfather Joeyaska.

Robert's daughter Allyson has two little boys ages three one. In keeping with family tradition the older one named Jack received his great grandfather Jimmy Moses' name "Shu-shep" in August 1997 at a gathering at Lower Nicola. Robert William Jr. recently graduated from Simon Fraser University with a Bachelor of Arts Degree, majoring in Archaeology. Robert Jr., or Bob, lives at Joeyaska Indian Reserve #2 in his late father's house and is an elected Band Counsellor for the Lower Nicola Band. He studies the Ntla'kapmux language

and is working on getting a diploma as a language teacher. Like his father and grandfather, Bob is a fisherman, berry picker, deer hunter and grouse hunter. These practises of traditional local natives are described in History of the Nicola Valley Indian. "Going hunting and going huckleberry picking are extremely popular activities and pride is high among those who go." (Sterling 1979 p.125) I have seen my mother cleaning grouse or trout that Bob dropped off. He continues the tradition of his parents and grandparents. "Traditional sharing is still meticulously practised and maintained." (P126) Bob and his sister Allyson have inherited the land bordering on the Hope-Princeton Highway at the fork along the road to Coldwater within the 16 acres of 'CP' land designated from our dad to Robert Sr.

Robert and his son Corey drowned when their boat overturned in the Thompson River on February 26, 1983.
Frederick Albert Sterling

My brother Fred was born in 1939. His Indian name is "Shnowt" meaning wind. He told me recently about some of the things he learned about the teachings and practises of our dad. He said that our dad "practised the proper protocol about hunting in his own territory, he didn't go into anyone else's hunting grounds. He was respectful in that light." (Interview June 1999) I was speaking to Fred behind his home at Joeyaska Indian Reserve #2. The water flowed swiftly in one of the initial ditches that irrigates the main hay fields. The same ditch that branches off from Godey Creek

was hewn out more than one hundred years earlier by our great grandfather Joeyaska. Fred has put up a hay barn near the corral he recently built so he can keep an eye on the hay and the cattle. With the town of Merritt expanding around the land of Joeyaska things go missing. He said that our dad did a lot of unseen things around the ranch, for example riding up the hill on horseback to check for water for a second crop of hay in late summer. The book Legends of Our Times (1998) made note of the importance of hay.

The land on reserves was not left idle. Many families who had access to irrigation systems or a source of water put up hay to feed their own stock or to sell to the larger ranches. (Baillargeon & Tepper p.106)

In my father's case he was making a living and continuing in the tradition of his grandfather by working on the land. Fred does not cut hay on Joeyaska North. It is important to document that our dad used to cut the hay there in previous years. That is why Joe Lauder recently signed a notarized statement that my father sold hay from the property on Joeyaska North during the Depression of the 1930's to his father who owned a ranch at Stump Lake. This is important to note because it confirms that our dad was not restricted to or limited to harvesting hay at Joeyaska South. Fred took over running the ranch in the summer of 1962 when he got married and moved into the new house built by the Lower Nicola Band. This house is situated beside the old cedar frame house brought up to the land by six teams of horses in 1935. Fred made changes such as haying with machinery, bailers and stackers rather than hire a haying crew who did

the work by hand and with horses as our dad had done. Fred worked full time at the local lumber mill for years and with the help of our aging father looked after the ranch work. He maintained fifty head of cattle, which meant bringing them up to summer grazing at Quilchena Creek for six months. He said this ranch can only stand a small herd otherwise the purchase of hay gets too expensive. On one occasion I was at home from university for Thanksgiving weekend in 1970. The men had ridden the herd for two days bringing them back to the ranch. My father was 74 years old at the time and he was in a foul mood. "What are you doing home. Shouldn't you be in school." He had high expectations of us and the cattle drive got harder with age. On a more recent visit on the May 1st weekend I stayed with my sister Deanna Sterling and in the early morning we heard dogs barking, the thundering of cows trampling the ground, cowboys hooting and whistling. My brother Fred, age 60, recently recovered from gall bladder surgery was on horseback with our relatives driving the herd including the calves up to summer range. Within a few minutes the noise subsided, the cows had moved swiftly. Hay is generally preferred at the summer range. Fred reminds me of my father in so many ways. When he said that our dad inherited this land from his mother Sarah Joeyaska, I knew that it was a binding agreement. The spoken word is packed with importance and meaning. My father inherited the land, he occupied and worked on the land. The land in turn sustained him and his family. I see the homes, the out-

buildings, the hay fields, the fences and the ditches. As long as I have known, Fred has been a hard worker and an early riser like our dad. He has trained his share of horses, branded and inoculated calves in spring, sold and purchased a number of bulls. His children and grandchildren are the treasures of his life. He has inherited the bulk of the land and like our dad, Fred occupies, works and looks after the land making sure that the place is run in keeping with the teachings of our dad. He takes his responsibility seriously when maintaining fields, ditches, fences, the herd. He has a backhoe business as well and considers himself very fortunate to partake in the best of small time ranching.

In 1957 Fred set a new track record in running the mile. I felt very proud of him. The newspaper clipping hung on the wall of our house for years. The Merritt Herald news clipping stated that he had run the mile in under five minutes and showed his photo. A tradition initiated no doubt when he and his brother Robert raced each other to school every day. Traditions carried through the years and continue today. When we spoke together in June 1999 Fred was working on a deer hide that was stretched and laced on a frame. He said that his daughter Jackie wanted to make a drum and he was happy to prepare the deer hide for her, especially that particular hide. It had been a big buck and he had saved the hide for several years before having a good reason to clean it. Memories came to mind of my father who knew how to tan deer hides. I had asked my mother to ask my father to teach

me. She told me his answer, "She better prove to me that she can sew first."

Fred married Lorna Anderson of Spences Bridge. They have five children, their four daughters received Ntla'kapmux names in 1997. Rona is married and living near Godey Creek, she has a son and a daughter and is presently completing a Master's Degree in Social Work. Jackie lives in Vancouver and works in computer graphics. Angie is married and building a home near Godey Creek. She has a baby daughter and is a certified teacher (SFU) and presently works for the Lower Nicola Band as Child Care Worker. Lisa lives in Coquitlam and is completing a Ph.D. Their son Frederick is a computer technician working with the Department of Indian Affairs in Vancouver. Like Fred, he hunts and goes fishing. I notice that he works alongside his father, branding calves, haying, driving the herd up to grazing, or in the purchasing of a new bull, whenever he is home from the city.

Sarah Dorothy Stewart

My sister Sarah was born in 1941. She was named after our dad's mother Sarah Joeyaska. As a baby she received the name Tzul-tzul-linek from friends in the village of Shulus. Sarah lives in a double wide trailer next door to the house my parents moved into in 1967. Sarah has always lived close to our parents. She worked for 20 years for Medical Services as a Community Health Representative for the Coldwater and Lower Nicola Bands. Her favorite time on the job was time spent with elders who knew our parents and grandparents.

Hector Stewart, an Okanagan from Douglas Lake, married Sarah 27 years ago. For a short while they lived at Douglas Lake, but moved back to Joeyaska Indian Reserve #2 on land that is considered as part of the 'Certificate of Possession' or CP'd land (sixteen acres) which belongs to our mother Sophie Sterling. Sarah and her children spent a lot of time with our parents. She said our dad had a big influence on her sons, teaching them good work ethics and the importance of being caretakers of the land. Their land is fenced off from the rest of the fields because they raise horses. At the time Sarah gave me her written information about our dad, she told me about the horses that Hector and her son Ron were breaking in the field near their place. She said that the mare which had just recently given birth to a colt had come to disown the colt because the 'dry' mare somehow got the afterbirth, therefore the hungry colt followed the dry mare and was getting kicked away. Hector had to hobble and tie the mother down to set things right. Together they have raised three sons and two grandsons, and they continue in the Ntla'kapmux traditions of food gathering; they pick mushrooms in spring, berries in summer, the guys go salmon fishing and help Fred with branding the calves in spring and stacking hay bales in summer. Sarah's oldest son Greg is in the Canadian Air Force, stationed in Ontario. Ron is a logger, in free time he goes elk hunting, salmon fishing and he smokes fish. He likes to take his son Corey ice fishing in winter. Sarah's youngest son Ted is a carpenter and contractor who

builds houses. The older grandson Lloyd is training to be a meat cutter. Sarah is presently recovering from a heart attack. Hector is elected on the Band Counsel for the Douglas Lake First Nations, and he works full time with the Lower Nicola Band as child-care worker. They are a family who love people and enjoy sharing hospitality.

Deanna Sterling

Deanna was born in 1943. She was named by a priest at her baptism because he refused to allow her to have the Indian name "La Allema" on her record. She was named after our mother's mother who was godmother at the baptism.

Deanna taught primary grades at the Lower Nicola Band School, she also taught elementary and adult education around the province for twenty-four years before completing a Master's Degree in Education (Ts'kel) at UBC in 1998. She is presently the caretaker of our aging mother, Sophie Sterling.

Deanna used to be known as the weekend visitor until she finally hired a carpenter to build her a house near Godey Creek in the area picked out for her by our brother Fred. When she was a little girl Deanna learned an important lesson from our dad about respecting birds. She tried snaring a tiny bird, our dad stopped her. After an initial scolding he impressed upon her the important role that song birds play in the environment. Years later the children found a featherless starling on the ground and brought it to Deanna who raised it and cared for it for five years till it died. In 1998 a baby robin was found and brought to Deanna who put

aside the writing of her thesis to dig for worms and catch bugs and moths. The robin flourished but Deanna was exhausted, however in each of the worm pits she tossed in a potato and by summer's end harvested a good crop. Deanna spent as much time as possible with our parents and grandmother, she loves being with elders hearing stories and learning about our history. It was natural for Deanna to write a Graduating Paper on our family history titled; The Joyaska-Voght-Yepskin Clan: A Family Timeline. Deanna loves reading mysteries, she is a good storyteller and has a good sense of humour. Deanna also takes our mother out to the fields and hills to pick herbal teas, mushrooms, berries and medicines. I like to follow Deanna when we pick berries because she picks only the biggest ones and leaves the smaller more abundant berries behind.

Shirley Sterling

My sister Shirley or "Seepeetza" was born in 1948. She presently teaches two days a week at UBC. The other days are divided between marking papers, taking care of her grandson Kieran in Vancouver, then heading home to the Joeyaska Indian Reserve #2 to concentrate on writing another novel. Her first novel My Name Is Seepeetza won the children's B.C. Book Award in 1993. She told me that the name Seepeetza, which means 'white skin' given to her by our dad has two significant meanings. "The name gave me inclusion among the Nlakapamux, and the mythology by which I have been able to make meaning out of my life when nothing else made sense."

(Personal Communication 1999) Besides the name our dad gave Seepeetza many gifts, for example, the upbringing on the Joeyaska Ranch, the trips to the mountains and rivers to learn about our culture, the example of hard work and generosity and the feeling of safety when he was around. What she has come to understand after five years of reflective thought is that our dad must have seen the sacred in all things, blessings as well as challenges. The inspiration to go further in education and to reach for higher goals accompanied by storytelling at its finest as well as the sense of humor and imagery voiced by our dad has helped Seepeetza in her writing. Another important trait is the bond and connection that links Seepeetza and her children and grandson. The deep love that flows to little Kieran was born of the acceptance and affection she received from our parents. When we were children I was aware of the pride my father had for Seepeetza, when she raced and won the hundred yard dash on July 1st in 1960 he beamed with pride. He had special terms of endearment like; "You have a million dollar smile" and "You're a real square shooter" expressed his affection. "Everything my dad did for me was a labor of love and he continued to provide for me until his death without any hope of reciprocation." (Personal Journal 1999). I can recognize a similar labor of love that Seepeetza has for her two children. Her son Eric completed a Diploma in Forestry and works in Northern British Columbia. Her daughter Haike recently completed a law degree and works with First

Nations students as Advisor in the Faculty of Law at UBC.

Seepeetza lives at Joeyaska and commutes to Vancouver.

Austin Sterling

Austin was born in 1952. He was given the Indian name "Hepa-Lex-Keyn" by a relative of Sarah Joeyaska, an elder who wanted Austin to have the name. When I went to visit my brother Austin in July 1999 at his home on the Joeyaska Indian Reserve #2 he was hoisting up the freshly skinned body of an elk to hang high in the tree near his house. He moved carefully and cautiously when handling the meat and the knives. It reminded me of the way our dad took great care with the preparation of meat and game, our food supply. After cleaning the tools Austin told me many things he had learned from our dad. For example, he learned how to plant grain and seed for a high quality fodder in the fields, he learned how to look after the stock, he fed the cows in winter and he hunted and fished. He said our dad built a chicken coop, he cleared irrigation ditches and was very talented in the care and making of tools needed for ranch work. He practiced selective hunting, he didn't shoot at every deer he saw, and he was a precision shooter, causing no harm or pain to the animal, and he left the land intact, there were no harmful chemicals or sprays allowed on the land. Those are the things that stand out in Austin's memory of our dad. The things I recognize Austin doing are, continuing in the traditional cleanse in the sweat lodge, he is presently studying the traditional healing practices of

the Ntla'kapmux. He plays guitar, writes and sings drum songs and carries on in the teachings of our dad. He is respectful in all his ways. Austin is an elected Councillor for the Lower Nicola Band, he makes his home on the 14 acres given to him by our dad, he wants to live there, it is his choice.

Nk Xetko

I am the second youngest child of Albert and Sophie. My twelve years at the Kamloops Indian Residential School were a painful testimony of being wrenched away from parents, home and family. I have since become re-acquainted with my family, history, traditions and teachings. These connections helped me attain a Bachelor of Education Degree at UBC in 1996. I enjoy taking some of the teachings from my culture and developing lessons for classroom use - recontextualizing Ntla'kapmux myth. I check things out with my mother first. When my father challenged me to learn how to sew I set out immediately with my mother's guidance to make a pair of moccasins at age fifteen. Later I had married into the Southern Tutchone Tribe in the Yukon and lived there for fifteen years and raised my two children there. It was there among a culturally traditional people that I had the opportunity to learn how to cut and dry salmon, moose meat, tan moose hides and make buckskin clothing complete with beadwork. My father's challenge helped me to survive many difficult situations in life. "Do the best you can," he would always say. I took that to heart and try to live up to

that directive. My son Darren works as a heavy duty equipment operator and is a budding writer in the Yukon. My daughter Nadia is in second year sciences at UBC.

I have remarried and live at Musqueam. I teach a First Nations Studies course and a seminar to NITEP students at UBC. I feel it is important to practise the teachings of my parents and grandparents and some of these I share with my students. For example, I do not kill spiders. In Ntla'kapmux legend, it was Skwok-We the spider who went up to the sky and brought weaving back to our people. When I take anything from the land I give something back in thanks as taught by my mother and grandmother. Some of my happiest times are spent at family gatherings with the Sterlings. We share stories, swap jokes, pray together, share good food from the land. In an unpublished document 1979, my brother Robert wrote,

Through kinship and the extended family system the people had their own organization - the family. When individuals had problems or difficulties they turned to their families first. Each family was very serious about looking after their own. (Sterling 1979 p.80)

Robert voiced concerns that in modern times the family unit was becoming weakened through institutional and individual pursuits. However, in and among the Sterling family, kinship and ties to the land at Joeyaska Indian Reserve #2 remain strong and intact. We celebrate birthdays together, we honour the graduates and consider Joeyaska Indian Reserve #2 our home. Though my brothers received the bulk of the land from our dad, he made sure that each of his daughters is provided

for as well. He told us many times when we were growing up that we had a home at Joeyaska Ranch. He gave each of us sisters one acre apiece if ever we want to build a home. We have to consult with the family before choosing the acre. It can't be a hay field. This is what carrying on in Joeyaska's traditions means, we have a home on his land and we have a responsibility of taking care of each other and the land. That is a culture and a tradition worth keeping and sharing with the world.

CONCLUSION

In the documented history of the Nicola Valley Joeyaska's story and my father's story will not be among the written histories. However, in speaking to different individuals from within nearby First Nations communities and reserves, according to oral tradition the name of Joeyaska is known to the elders, and Albert Sterling is quite well known. Well known in the sense that he interpreted for people who couldn't speak English, and he was known for his ability to settle land disputes.

My father was born in 1896, his Indian name was "Inxwhup" which means 'snow on his backside.' My brother Fred told me that our dad must have been sliding downhill in the snow and that name stayed with him. The elders still talk about "Inxwhup." The name sounds like a term of endearment given by a loving grandfather, Joeyaska.

Writing this thesis has put me in touch with the men behind the names. When I look at Joeyaska's life I see a warrior, an industrious man of integrity. An example of how much work went into the acquisition of one musket, James Teit recorded that it cost 600 dried salmon for one musket in trade in the 1800's. (The Jesup Report 1900 P260) My mother said there were no demeaning statements made about Joeyaska, she heard none. Julie Cruikshank (1991) elaborates on oral tradition.

Anyone who has spent time talking with elders about their understanding of the past knows that oral accounts are discussed and debated in communities, and that oral tradition itself is a lively, continuous, ongoing process, a way of understanding the present as well as the past. (p.141)

I have learned of the ways of Joeyaska by looking at my father's life and hearing the stories. In protecting his birthright my father made every effort to safeguard his land for his children. He wrote letters of protest when squatters began claiming land, their claims falsely signed by chiefs and Indian Agents. It is interesting to note that each of the false claimants belong to a different Band, they are not Joeyaska's descendants nor Lower Band members. I knew that my father was a strong man, he was physically strong, ranch work demanded it. I remember as a young girl hearing a big commotion near the barn. My father age 72 was alone on horseback hooting, yelling and cursing his herd of cows which got outside of the fence. Single handedly with his voice and a whip he managed to get the 50 or so head back in to the corral and avoided unnecessary damage. He was also strong in his convictions about his land. He may have been frustrated with the band politics, however, he never wavered about his ownership.

When I say that Albert Sterling's children have the right to occupy and utilize the land known as Joeyaska Indian Reserve #2, it is a right to occupy without fear of encroachment by squatters and by the Lower Nicola Band chief. It is the right to occupy the land without further harrassment by Lower Nicola Band development. In 1878 when

Joeyaska was faced with his neighbor William Charters claiming all his water rights, he made his case known to the lands commissioner. His former displacement, the injustice, his new occupancy at Godey Creek, his ditches and cultivation had all been documented: he was given favor and granted rights to the 320 acres he pre-empted. We need a modern day Gilbert Malcolm Sproat to take note of the evidence of the Sterlings' claim to Joeyaska Indian Reserve #2 and grant my mother freedom from the harassment and grant us freedom from the false claims of the Lower Nicola Band.

When I go home to the land at Joeyaska I go to the corners of each direction, north, south, east and west of Joeyaska Indian Reserve #2 to pray for the safety of the land. Each family member does this as well. It is something my father did and we carry on this important step. I believe that Joeyaska did as well. On Labor Day weekend I stood at the northern most part of Joeyaska Indian Reserve #2 and I must have disturbed a coyote. The coyote trotted off then turned and watched me for the duration of my short time there. At that time I recognized my responsibility to do my best to ensure the safety and wellbeing of the Sterling family. I also became aware that the land at Joeyaska Indian Reserve #2 passed on to us from our great grandfather Joeyaska is special and sacred. I saw my responsibility in being a good steward, to make sure the environment and wild life is protected as well. This is something that appears to have been overlooked in the possibility of building a casino

and shopping mall by the Lower Nicola Band.

I have written, The Story of Joeyaska, a children's version of the story of my great grandfather. I feel that it is important to share his story for two reasons;

1. For First Nations children to see how one Stuwix warrior, Joeyaska, overcame difficult obstacles in his life.

2. For non-First Nations children to see that one man, Joeyaska, a warrior loved his land and cared for his family and became a good provider for his family. A story worth telling in the history of the Nicola Valley.

The term warrior means; A man engaged in or experienced in warfare; one devoted to military life. (Funk & Wagnalls Dictionary 1989 p.1513) This description fits my father and his grandfather. Their legacy of safeguarding the land that befalls us today is that we become the new warriors. Maori educator Pita Sharples challenged us to be warriors.

Warriors of today protect the culture, the language and the land because they are worth protecting. Our world needs the teachings we have to offer. (Voice of the Drum Conference 1998)

Where do we go from here? In talking with my mother, brothers and sisters, it is not possible to experience the freedom and enjoyment of our inheritance, the land at Joeyaska Indian Reserve #2 under present amalgamation with the Lower Nicola Band. One of the errors that needs correcting is representation by elected council. Right now two of my brothers and one nephew are elected on a council of eight members. Any time that business about Joeyaska Reserve

#2 is brought up to council, my brothers and nephew are asked to leave the room because it is considered a 'conflict of interest.' What it means is that the Sterling family has no voice, no representation on the Lower Nicola Band. That is not true democracy and it needs to be rectified.

I feel that the oral accounts combined with historical documentation about the life of Joeyaska the warrior, strongly shows that his land was once a separate entity and we hope to separate to form our own band once again. The Vancouver Sun 1999 reported,

The Supreme Court of Canada in the 1997 Delgamuukw decision made it clear that First Nations hold title to land in B.C. Specifics need to be resolved through negotiation and if necessary, litigation.

The Sterling family holds title to the land at Joeyaska Indian Reserve #2 and we are considering the options open to us. Negotiation with the Lower Nicola Band is the first option, litigation is the second. In 1878 Joeyaska made a strong stand and got his land. His ethics have taught me the benefits of persistence and determination. My father has taught me the benefits of making a stand. This process of re-connecting to land and to ancestors, to their ways and traditions helped establish who I am in the family and in the community. Their traits serve to strengthen my life and help me to be a successful and happy Stuwix/Ntla'kapmux woman today. Their knowledge and strength will help me and our family to take up the cause as Joeyaska did in 1878 of securing the land to make it a safe place to live.

This is the story of Joeyaska. Through my research and

reconnections to family history, I have learned that in his family clan and extended family, Joeyaska has close to one hundred descendants and many are alive and eligible to live on the land allotted him in 1878. Joeyaska is no longer a distant ancestor. He has become 'en spopzuh' a term of endearment, which means 'my grandfather'. Joeyaska Indian Reserve #2 is our homeland and it will require much persistence to make it safe and secure for the future generations.

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