Stó:lō Traditional Culture:
A Short Ethnography of the *Stó:lō* People

Brian Thom

Stó:lō Curriculum Consortium

September 1996

Preface - Writing an Ethnography about Stó:lõ Culture

An "ethnography" of a "traditional culture" is a kind of writing anthropologists do to describe in some systematic detail, the way of life, experiences and beliefs of people. This style of descriptive ethnography is an idealized construction. It is a painting of life and culture from a particular period of time made with the broadest, generalized strokes. No one person's life is exactly like what is presented here. An ethnography like this one does not discuss the changes and variety of culture and practices that has occurred in a society. It paints a static, "synchronic" picture of what life may have been like at some time before the massive changes brought by contact with European (*Xwelítem*) cultures. *Stó:lõ* culture was not a static and unchanging entity before these more recent times. Over the past many thousands of years people's collective lives and experiences have shaped *Stó:lõ* traditional culture, as described here, and the lives and culture of *Stó:lõ* people today.

Writing an ethnography like this one, the author must acknowledge his or her many biases. I have tried to describe what *Stó:lõ* culture was like over two hundred years ago. Much of this information comes from work I have done with *Stó:lõ* Elders and knowledgable "youngers" who know and remember things their parents and grandparents have passed down. Several of these people, including Frank Malloway, Edna Malloway, Rosaline George, Tilly and Alan Guiterrez, Ralph George, Herb Joe, Stan Green, Anabel Stewart, and Sonny McHalsie have taught me a great deal about *Stó:lõ* traditional culture. Although traditions continue to be remembered and practiced today, some things have changed. A great deal of what is written here is taken from the writings of other anthropologists who have worked with *Stó:lõ* Elders and could remember the teachings of their grandparents who lived in or nearer to the time I have tried to describe.[1]

Of course, any writing also involves the personal biases of the author. I wrote this short ethnography while working as an anthropologist for the *Stó:lõ* Nation. I am not *Stó:lõ*, and have learned about *Stó:lõ* culture mainly through my professional work in the past five years. There are certainly many, aspects of *Stó:lõ* culture I have not described here, either because of my own personal biases and interests or because of the distance between myself and the culture that I have written about. It has been with my best hopes and intentions that this ethnography will provide a

---

[1] There have been a number of "classic" works by anthropologists about traditional *Stó:lõ* culture. Although many of these writings reflect as much about the time and cultures of the anthropologists themselves, they are for the most part, worthwhile. For specific ethnographic descriptions of *Stó:lõ* traditional culture see Franz Boas "The Indian Tribes of the Lower Fraser River", Report of the 64th Meeting of the British Association for the Advancement of Science, 1894, Pp. 454-463; Randy Bouchard and Dorothy Kennedy "Tsawwassen Ethnography and Ethnohistory" in *Archaeological Investigations at Tsawwassen, B.C.* edited by Arcas Consulting (Port Coquitlam: Arcas Consulting Ltd, 1991); Wilson Duff, *The Upper Stalo Indians of the Fraser Valley, British Columbia.* (Victoria: British Columbia Provincial Museum, 1952); Charles Hill-Tout *The Salish People, Volume III: The Mainland Halkomelem,* edited by Ralph Maud (Vancouver: Talonbooks, 1978); Hill-Tout "The Salish Tribes of the Coast and Lower Fraser Delta" *Ontario Provincial Museum Annual Archaeological Report* No. 12, 1905 Pp. 225-235; Marian Smith "The Nooksack, the Chilliwack, and the Middle Fraser" *Pacific Northwest Quarterly* Vol 4, Number 1, 1950 Pp. 330-241; Wayne Suttles "Katzie Ethnographic Notes" (Victoria: Anthropology in British Columbia Memoir 3, 1955); Ellen Webber "An Old Kwanthum Village - Its People and Its Fall", *American Antiquarian and Oriental Journal* Vol 21, 1899, Pp. 309-314. For excellent general discussions of Central Coast Salish culture, including the *Stó:lõ* see Homer Barnett *The Coast Salish of British Columbia* (Eugene: University of Oregon Monographs Studies in Anthropology 4, 1955); Barnett "The Coast Salish of Canada" *American Anthropologist* Vol 40, Pp. 118-141; Wayne Suttles "Central Coast Salish" in *Handbook of North American Indians Volume 7, Northwest Coast.* Edited by Wayne Suttles. (Washington: Smithsonian Institution Press, 1990);

wide audience with a glimpse of understanding about *Stó:lō* culture and traditions, and a new respect for traditional *Stó:lō* ways of life.

Stó:lō Territory and Language

S'ólh témexw te íkw'elo. Xólhmet te mekw'stám it kwelát.
[This is our world. We need to look after it]

In *Halq'eméylem*, the traditional language spoken by the *Stó:lō*, the word "*Stó:lō*" means "river". It also means "river people". *Stó:lō* traditional territory includes the entire watershed of the lower Fraser River below Sawmill Creek in the Fraser Canyon. It extends west to the Strait of Georgia, east to the top of the Coquihalla River, north to the headwaters of the Pitt and Harrison lakes, and south to include the Chilliwack River watershed. *Stó:lō* people call this territory *S'ólh témexw:* "our land" or "our world."

The *Stó:lō* and their ancestors are the First People of the lower Fraser River region. *Stó:lō* oral traditions state they have lived in *sólh téméxw* since the beginning of the world. Archaeological evidence suggests *Stó:lō* culture originated here some 10,000 years ago - ever since humans have inhabited this part of the world. Although *Stó:lō* culture has deep roots in *sólh téméxw*, it has not remained static and unchanged. Their rich and complex culture developed over a long period of time, with a special relationship to the land, resources and neighboring cultures. *Stó:lō* cultural traditions continue to change and are practiced today.[2]

Figure 1: Map of Contemporary Indian Bands in Stó:lō Traditional Territory

Halq'eméylem translates literally as "the language of *Leq'ámél* (Nicomen)."[3] *Halq'eméylem* consists of three dialects,"Upriver", "Downriver" and "Island". Each dialect has different sounds and a few different words. The Upriver dialect (pronounced *Halq'eméylem*) is spoken by the *Stó:lō* people living upriver from Sumas. The Downriver dialect (pronounced *Hun'qum ̓i'num'*) is spoken by the *Stó:lō* people living downriver from Matsqui. The Island dialect (*Hul'q'umín'um'*) is spoken by the Nanoose, Nanaimo, Chemainus, Cowichan, and the Malahat peoples of Vancouver Island.[4]

---

[2] For oral traditions surrounding the origin of *Stó:lō* people see Diamond Jenness *Faith of a Coast Salish Indian* (Victoria: British Columbia Provincial Museum Memoirs in Anthropology Number 3, 1955). For discussions of the archaeology of the *Stó:lō* and their neighbors see Donald Mitchell "Prehistory of the Coasts of Southern British Columbia and Northern Washington" *Handbook of North American Indians, Volume 7, Northwest Coast* edited by Wayne Suttles (Washington: Smithsonian Institution Press, 1990) Pp. 340-358.

[3] Duff, 1952 p. 11.

[4] *Halq'eméylem* is spoken fluently by very few people today. Conscious efforts by the government and missionaries to assimilate *Stó:lō* people during the past century forced many children to stop speaking it while they attended residential school. Although several efforts have been made at language revival, there is a crisis in language today, with the real possibility of the upriver dialect of *Halq'eméylem* becoming extinct within a generation. The work of linguist Brent Galloway presents some grammar and vocabulary of *Halq'eméylem. Tó:lméls ye Siyelyólexwa: Wisdom of the Elders* (Sardis: Coqualeetza Culture and Education Center, 1980); *A Grammar of Upriver Halkomelem* (Berkeley:
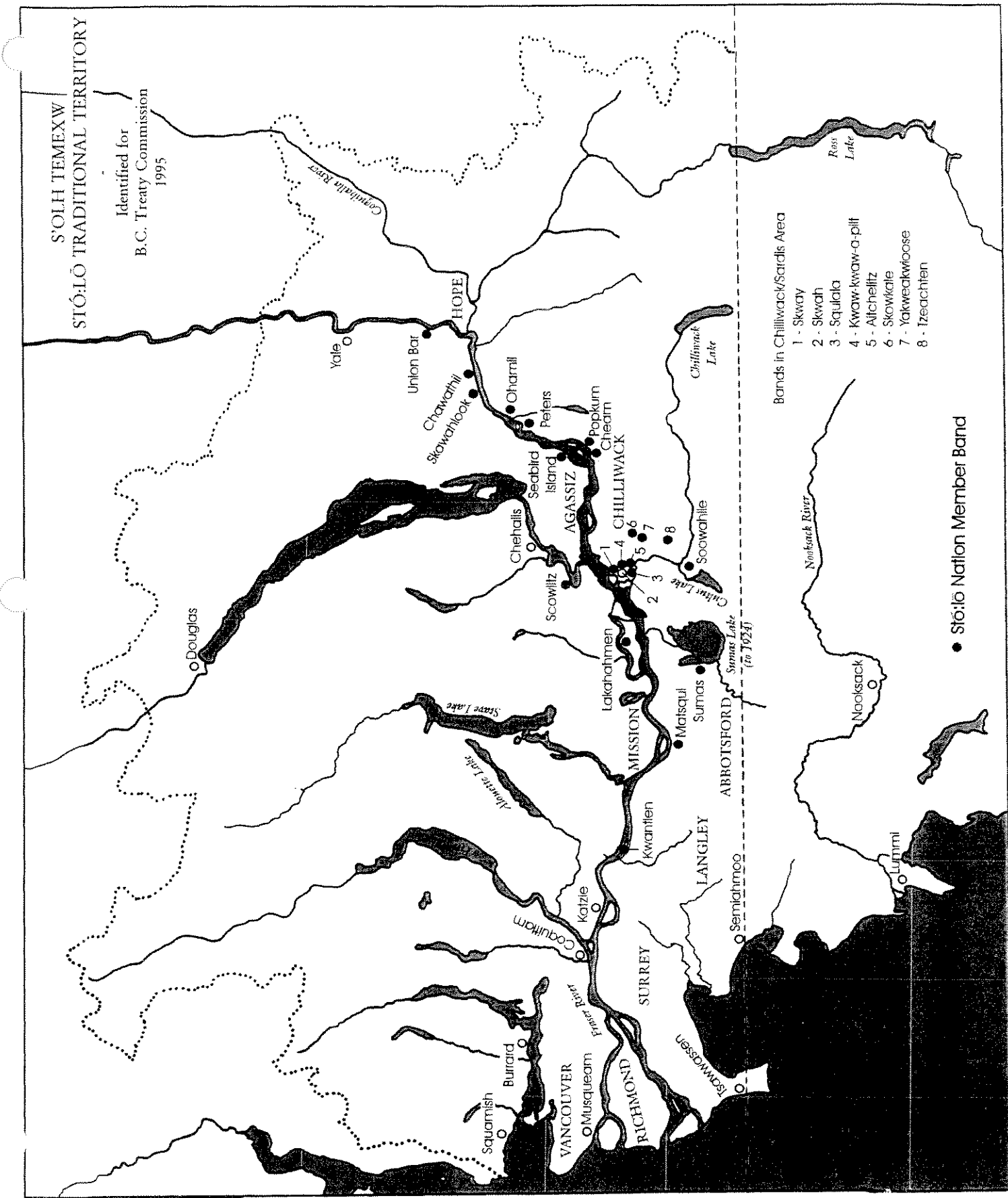
FIGURE 1. MAP OF CONTEMPORARY INDIAN BANDS IN STÓ:LÓ TRADITIONAL TERRITORY

Stó:lō culture is part of the larger group of cultures often referred to as "Central Coast Salish". Central Coast Salish people speak several different languages, but are closely connected through marriage ties, shared stories, beliefs, customs, and traditions. There are ten different languages spoken among the Central Coast Salish cultures, all of which belong to the Central Coast branch of the Salishan language family.[5] The Central Coast Salish languages other than *Halq'eméylem* (Halkomelem) include *Éy7á7juuthem* (Comox Salish), *Shashishalhem* (Sechelt), *Snichim* (Squamish), Pentlatch (now extinct), *Lək̓ʷəŋíʔnəŋ / Senćoten / Xʷlemichosen* (three dialects' names for Northern Straits Salish), *Dxʷləšucid* (Lushootseed), *Tuwa'duxqucɬd* (Twana), *Lhéchelesem* (Nooksack), and *Nəxʷsƛ'ay'əm'u'cən*(Klallam).[6]

In addition to the ten Central Coast Salish languages, there are 13 other languages in the Salishan language family. These languages are identified as members of the Salishan Family because they provide evidence that they are derived from a common source, "Proto-Salish." The lower Fraser River is roughly the center of the whole Salishan territory. Some linguists believe that the this area was the original Salishan homeland, where Proto-Salish was spoken. Given the thousands of years it takes for 33 separate languages to develop from one "Proto-Salish" on the Fraser River, we can say the *Stó:lō* do indeed have very deep roots in the history and culture of this area.[7]

Figure 2: Map of languages spoken in the Central Coast Salish and Surrounding Areas

With this diversity of languages in a relatively small area, many people became bi- or multi-lingual. A trade language developed during at the turn of the 19th century called "Chinook Jargon." Despite of the challenges of linguistic diversity, *Stó:lō* people had relations with their neighbors throughout the Coast and Interior Salish areas.

University of California Publications in Linguistics 96, 1993).

[5] A language family is a groups of languages that share a common origin.

[6] The names from these languages have been given, where possible, in the orthography used by the speakers of those languages. The names in brackets are the simplified English names for these languages. *Éy7á7juuthem* (Comox Salish) is found in Dorothy Kennedy and Randy Bouchard *Sliammon Life, Sliammon Lands* (Vancouver: Talonbooks, 1983); *Shashishalhem* (Sechelt) in Ronald Beaumont *She shashishalhem The Sechelt Language* (Penticton: Theytus Books, 1985); *Snichim* (Squamish) in Aert Kuipers *The Squamish Language: Grammar, Texts, Dictionary,* Janua Lingaurum Series Practica 73, 1967; *Lək̓ʷəŋíʔnəŋ* in Timothy Montler "Languages and Dialects in Straits Salishan", Papers for the 31st International Conference on Salish and Neighboring Languages, 1996; *Senćoten* in Dave Elliott, *Saltwater People,* (Saanich: School District 63, 1983); *Xʷlemichosen* from Timothy Montler, linguist University of Texas, personal communication 1996; *Dxʷləšucid* (Lushootseed) in Dawn Bates, Thom Hess, Vi Hilbert *Lushootseed Dictionary,* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1994); *Tuwa'duxqucɬd* (Twana) in William Elmendorf *The Structure of Twana Culture* (1960) (Pullman: Washington State University Press, 1992); *Lhéchelesem* (Nooksack) from Brent Galloway, linguist University of Regina, personal communication; and *Nəxʷsƛ'ay'əm'u'cən* (Klallam) in Timothy Montler "Languages and Dialects in Straits Salishan", Papers for the 31st International Conference on Salish and Neighboring Languages, Vancouver 1996.

[7] Laurence Thompson and M. Dale Kinkade, "Languages", in *Handbook of North American Indians, Volume 7, Northwest Coast,* (Washington: Smithsonian Institution Press, 1990), Pp. 30-51.

Aboriginal Languages Spoken in the
Fraser River-Gulf of Georgia Region

The lines on this map are not intended to reflect any
historical or contemporary political boundaries, rather
they indicate an approximation of the region in which
Aboriginal languages are spoken.

———— language boundary

· · · · Dialect boundary
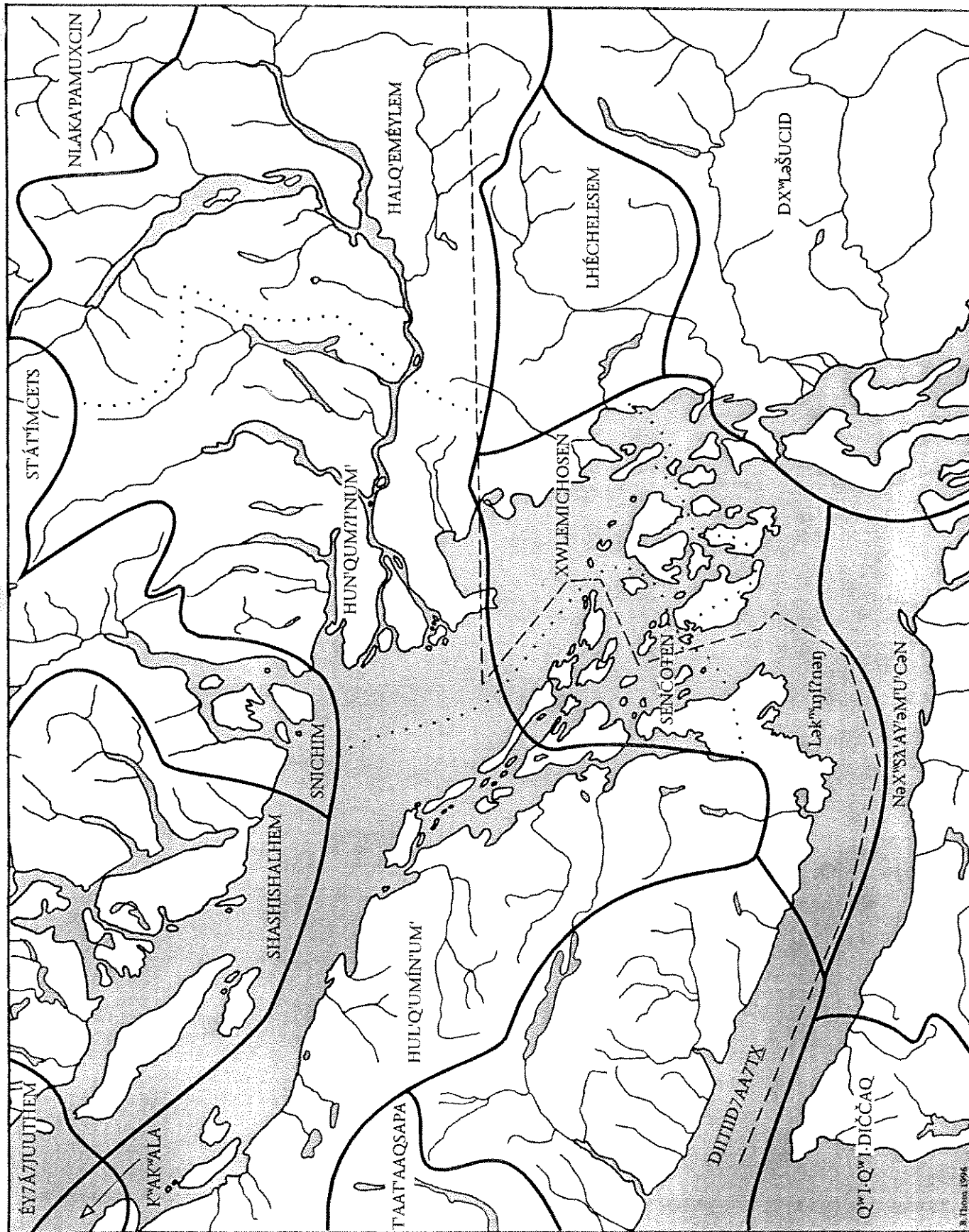
FIGURE 2. MAP OF LANGUAGES SPOKEN IN THE CENTRAL COAST SALISH
& SURROUNDING AREAS

People often refer to the different *Stó:lō* "tribes." These "tribes" are groups of villages which have been given a common name. The people in these named village groups speak the same micro-dialect of *Halq'eméylem* and have common histories, stories, names, environment and economic activities. However, the term "tribe" has certain historical negative connotations, and when used technically, implies features of social organization that do not apply to the *Stó:lō*. Although *Stó:lō* people themselves have used the term "tribe" to refer to these named groups of villages, the term is best avoided so not to cause confusion.[8]

Most of the present-day "Indian Bands" represent several traditional villages, somewhat like the named village groups. In some cases these traditional villages were made into Indian Reserves but in many cases people left these villages or were moved out by *Xwelítem* officials. In several cases, smallpox hit the populations of villages so hard killing entire populations, that the few survivors moved to the homes of their relatives and so no "Indian Band" was made for their former village or village group.

Table 1. Named Stó:lō Village Groups and Current Indian Bands.[9]

Recent *Stó:lō* population estimates prior to the first known smallpox epidemic in the late 1800s range from 7,000 to 28,000 people. The population hit its lowest point in 1929 with approximately 1,300 people. By 1995, the population had rebounded to about 6,000. The effects of this massive fluctuation in population are still being felt in *Stó:lō* society today. These epidemics were likely the most grave and serious set of events in the history of the *Stó:lō* people. [10]

Food and *Stó:lō* Culture

The lives of the *Stó:lō* have been centered around the Fraser River, and the wealth of food it provides. The most important fish is the salmon. It is the staple of *Stó:lō* subsistence, economy and culture. Other fish, animals, birds, and plants ballanced their diet.

Stó:lō people have a special relationship - a spiritual connection - to food and resources. *Stó:lō* traditions tell of their ancient relatives who were transformed into important food resources by the powerful beings who lived during that age. One of these stories was told by *Xáxts'elten* of *Q'éyts'i* around 1935:[11]

---

[8] See Dorothy Kennedy *Looking for Tribes in all the Wrong Places: An examination of the Central Coast Salish Social Network*, M.A. Thesis, Department of Anthropology (Victoria: University of Victoria, 1995).

[9] Brent Galloway, Albert Phillips and Coqualeetza Elders Group "Stó:lō Geographical Place Names File", Ms. Stó:lō Nation, 1976-1979. Sonny McHalsie and Brian Thom "Halq'eméylem Place Names File", ms. Stó:lō Nation, 1994-1996; Wayne Suttles "Linguistic Evidence for Burrard Inlet as Former Halkomelem Territory", papers for the 31st International Conference on Salish and Neighboring Languages, Vancouver 1996; Galloway, 1993.

[10] Gordon Mohs, "The Upper Sto:lo Indians of British Columbia: An Ethno-Archaeological Review", unpublished ms. (Sardis: Stó:lō Nation, 1990).

[11] Diamond Jenness recorded this from Old Pierre and published it in *Faith of a Coast Salish Indian*, (Victoria: British Columbia Provincial Museum Anthropology in British Columbia Memoir 3, 1955).

Named Village Group	Halq'eméylem Name	Current Indian Bands
Tait	*Teltít* "from upriver"	Yale, Union Bar, Chawathil, Skawahlook, Seabird Island, Ohamil, Peters, Popkum
Pilalt	*Pelò:lhxw* "buried house"	Cheam, Kwaw-kwaw-a-pilt, Skwah
Chehalis	*Sts'a'í:les* "lying on the chest"	Chehalis
Scowlitz	*Sq'éwlets* "turn at bottom"	Scowlitz
Chilliwack	*Ts'elxwéyeqw* "quieter water on the head"	Soowahlie, Tzeachten, Skowkale, Aitchelitz, Skway, Squiala, Yakweakwioose
Sumas	*Semá:th* "thick reeds/grass in shallow water"	Sumas
Nicomen	*Leq'á:mél* "level place"	Lakahahmen
Hatzic	*X̱át'suq (X̱áth'aq)* "sacred cat-tail"	(no current band)
Matsqui	*Máthekwi* "easy traveling"	Matsqui
Skhayuks	*Sx̱ẁÿeqs* "all died"	(no current band)
Whonnock	*Xwéwenaqw* (meaning not recorded)	(no current band)
Kwantlen	*Qw'ó:ntl'an* "tireless runners"	Kwantlen
Snokomish	*Snákwemexw* "nothing hidden people"	(no current band)
Katzie	*Q'éyts'i* "springy moss"	Katzie
Coquitlam	*Kwíkwetl'em* "stinking of fish slime"	Coquitlam
Qiqayt	*Qiqá:yt* "resting place"	New Westminister
Tsawwassen	*Stsewéthen* "looking toward the sea"	Tsawwassen
Musqueam	*Xwméthkwiyem* "place to always get iris-like plant"	Musqueam
Tsleil Waututh	*Sel'ílwetalh* (meaning not recorded)	Burrard

Table 1. Named Stó:lō Village Groups and Current Indian Bands.

[My] forefather *Thálhecten* accomplished wonderful deeds at Pitt Lake. Swanaset [a powerful being who transformed things] gave him a wife, by whom he had two offspring, a son and a daughter. These children never ate any food, but, in spite of their father's admonitions, passed all their days in the water and slept at night on the shore. At last, grieved by their conduct, he called together his people and proclaimed: `My friends, you known that my daughter spends all her days in the water. I have decided that she shall remain there for ever, for the benefit of the generations to come.' He then led her to the water's edge and said `My daughter, you are enamoured of the water. For the benefit of the generations to come I shall now change you into a sturgeon. Thus the sturgeon was created in Pitt Lake, the first fish that ever ruffled its waters. Because it is *Thálhecten*'s daughter transformed, it never dies, even when it spawns, unless man kills it. Subsequently it spread to other places, but nowhere dies it possess so fine a flavour as in its original home, Pitt Lake.

Xáxts'elten of *Q'éyts'í* and his descendants could trace their ancestry back into the distant past to when their ancestor was transformed into the sturgeon. This ancestral relationship to the natural environment is profoundly different from how many *Xwelítem* think about food and the world around them. Because of these ancestral relationships *Stó:lō* people generally feel a great degree of respect towards living things and the natural world.

Figure 3. "Lost in the Fraser", Stan Greene print 1982.

Stó:lō people have their own "cosmology" or way of understanding the origins of fish, animals and plants, and reasons for how things came to be in the natural world. These understandings provide explanations for why the natural world is the way it is. They set the parameters for how people should behave. The following story told by William Sepass from Skowkale explains why the sockeye salmon are found in certain areas, where the oolachan fish originated, provides teachings about how men should behave to their wives, and many other teaching about the world:[12]

Once the only salmon that came up the Fraser River was the steelhead. Beaver and some companions made a weir in the Chilliwack River to catch them. When the others had set their bag nets there was no room for Beaver's, so he dug a trench at one end. They caught many salmon and ate them on the spot, taking none home to their wives.

The women sent a boy down to the weir to see what their husbands were doing. He pretended to be chasing butterflies, but unseen, he tied two bunches of salmon eggs round his legs like short leggings and went home. When the women asked him what the men were doing he said "They have caught a lot of salmon and are eating them. See, I have brought you some of the eggs that were hung up to dry." Then

---

[12] This was recorded by Diamond Jenness in 1934-1935 and are printed in his unpublished manuscript "Coast Salish Mythology", VII-G-9M, Box 39, F.1, Canadian Museum of Civilization.

the women were very angry. They pounded up cedar-bark and made from it belts, and head-bands for themselves. Then they lashed together two canoes, dressed themselves up, put quantities of down on their heads, and with two women paddling, went off to find their husbands.

The wind blew the down from their heads towards the men, who sent out two of their number - two Woodpeckers of different species - to fly up the river and see who was coming. When they reported back, the men debated what they should do. Their leader said "We had better go away to the home of the Salmon and steal their babies." They embarked in a canoe, Beaver, Mouse, the two Woodpeckers, and two [Indian doctors - *shxwlá:m*] who know how to make fine weather, and they paddled far away to where the sky alternately dips down to earth and rises again, causing the tides. The [*shxwlá:m*] prayed to the sky to move slowly so that they would have time to pass under it without being caught. They passed under, and approached some houses, the home of the Salmon. As they drew near Beaver jumped overboard, after arranging with the two Woodpeckers to fly after him when he had drawn the attention of the Salmon. He swam to shore, and lay at the edge of the waves, seemingly dead.

The Salmon people came out of their houses and called to one another "Have you ever seen a creature like this before?" None of them recognized him. At last they said "Let us call Coho." Coho walked down to the beach and examined Beaver. "Oh yes," he said, "I know him. It is Beaver. He dug a trench up on the Chilliwack River in which to set his net. Bring me a knife and I will cut him open to see what is inside him." Some one went for a knife, while Beaver lay praying that the Woodpeckers would arrive in time. Just as Coho received the knife the Woodpeckers landed on the beach behind the people, who turned to look at them. "What beautiful creatures," they exclaimed. "Let us catch them." They all tried to catch them, but the Woodpeckers eluded them. While their attention was thus distracted, Beaver and Mouse entered their houses, and while Beaver searched for their richest baby, Mouse ate their bow-strings, the lashing of their weapons, and bored holes in their canoes. Beaver found the baby of Sockeye, the prince of the Salmon, and, tucking it under his arm, fled to the canoe.

Mouse and the Woodpeckers joined him and they fled away to the Fraser River, the Salmon being unable to overtake them because their canoes leaked too badly. They put the head-pad of the baby in the Chilliwack River; that is why sockeye are so plentiful there, and so good to eat. Farther up towards Yale they placed its diaper; sockeye are plentiful there also, but are not so good to eat. The baby itself they set at the bottom of a deep hole in the River near Yale. You can still see it there at low water - a rock that exactly resembles a human being and seems to have long hair on its head.

Meanwhile the Salmon discussed what they should do. Sockeye said "We had better follow them." Humpback announced that he would follow them on the morrow, which meant the next year. So Sockeye and the other salmon went up the Fraser

River, and the Humpback followed them a year later.

The women then debated what they would do. They decided to go down to the salt water, but before leaving they threw an old couple, a man and a woman, into two creeks that unite at Vedder Crossing. You can see them there today - two rocks, one in one creek, one in the other. Children used to be warned to keep away from them, for if flies gathered round these rocks they would become sick. When the women reached the salt water they leaped and changed into oolachan. That is why the Chilliwack Indians would not eat oolachan.

Stories such as these continue to be told about the spiritual relationships people have with the natural world.

First Salmon Ceremony

Each spring, when the year's first salmon was caught, families held a special "First Salmon Ceremony." The ceremony honored the salmon. It expressed the belief that salmon have souls (*sme:stíyexw*), like the souls of people, and thus the Salmon People must be acknowledged and thanked for returning each year. As part of the ceremony, the bones of the first salmon are collected and returned to the river.

Stó:lō Elder, Frank Malloway, describes the origin of the Salmon and the practice of the First Salmon Ceremony as he learned it from *Stó:lō* Elder Ed Leon.[13]

He said that when the Creator first made [the world], you know he had all kinds of meat around here, bear, deer, elk. When you eat meat you get that heavy feeling you know and you don't want to move too much because meat weighs you down. They used to pray to the Creator to send them food that didn't bog them down. He said that one of the *shxwlá:ms* [Indian Doctors] had a dream that the Creator was sending something up the river and told him to go down to the river and scoop their dip nets. And it was the salmon. They told them how to respect the salmon. You thank the ones that sent you the salmon, the Salmon People from out in the ocean. You pray to them and thank them for what they sent. The Salmon People sent their children up to you so you'd have something different to eat and gives you better energy. That's the words that he used. Just thank them, take the bones and send them back after you have eaten the first salmon. He said that if you didn't do that, you don't respect the Salmon People. [If you] don't thank them in the proper way they will quit sending their children out to you, because you are just taking it for granted that they are going to feed you. So you have to show respect for the things that people give to you.

---

[13] Chief Frank Malloway in conversation with Heather Myles and Tracey Joe, transcript on file at (Sardis: Stó:lō Nation, 1996).

8

Figure 4. "First Salmon Ceremony", photo by Gary Feigan

Stó:lō people consider many of the other animals to have *sme:t'íyexw*, or souls. First Food ceremonies are also often held for the first deer and first sturgeon caught in the year.

Community Life - Fishing, Hunting and Gathering

Stó:lō villages were often located at or near productive places to get food, allowing for immediate access to these resources. To obtain a diversity of resources, families moved from their winter village to temporary summer camps where they would fish, hunt and gather foods to be preserved for winter consumption. These seasonal trips took people to their family fishing on the river, into the mountains for game and food plants, to the saltwater for clams and sea foods, and to wetlands for the many special plants found there.[14]

Figure 5. "Fishing and Gathering in the Summer", painting by Gordon Miller, UBC Museum of Anthropology.

Beyond what each family could gather for themselves, the *Stó:lō* visited the distant villages of their extended families, who often obtained enough surplus food to share and trade. People traded and shared access to resource locations throughout the area of their family network. This wide network gave individuals access to resources from areas distant from their own food gathering locations. The abundance of food resources centered on the Fraser River created a wealth for *Stó:lō* people that was virtually incomparable with other non-agricultural societies.

Figure 6: Generalized map of resource locations in traditional Stó:lō territory.

Also unlike many Aboriginal societies, *Stó:lō* people (and other groups living on the Northwest Coast of North America), have ownership rights to specific locations with abundant food. Although everybody had access to food, not everybody had access to productive locations such as prime salmon fishing spots or certain productive wapato patches. Access to these locations were traced through family ties.

Every person in *Stó:lō* communities participated to some degree in fishing, hunting, and gathering activities, regardless of their social status, gender or age. People had specific roles and abilities which guided their activities. Women worked on the shore to process, smoke or dry the fish, as men caught them with their nets, traps and weirs. Without this coordination of labour in fishing, the enormous numbers of salmon which appear in the Fraser River in the fall could not be effectively caught and processed. Men were often hunters while women usually collected plant foods. Women accompanied the men on many hunting journeys, gathering local foods and preparing meals while the hunters were in the forest, and cutting up and curing the meat and hide of the animals caught. Men also participated in gathering at times. Young boys were often asked to work in deer drives, chasing the animals into the traps, and both girls and boys helped their

---

[14] See Wayne Suttles "Central Coast Salish Subsistence" *Northwest Anthropological Research Notes* 24(2):147-152 1990 for a good description of food and community life.
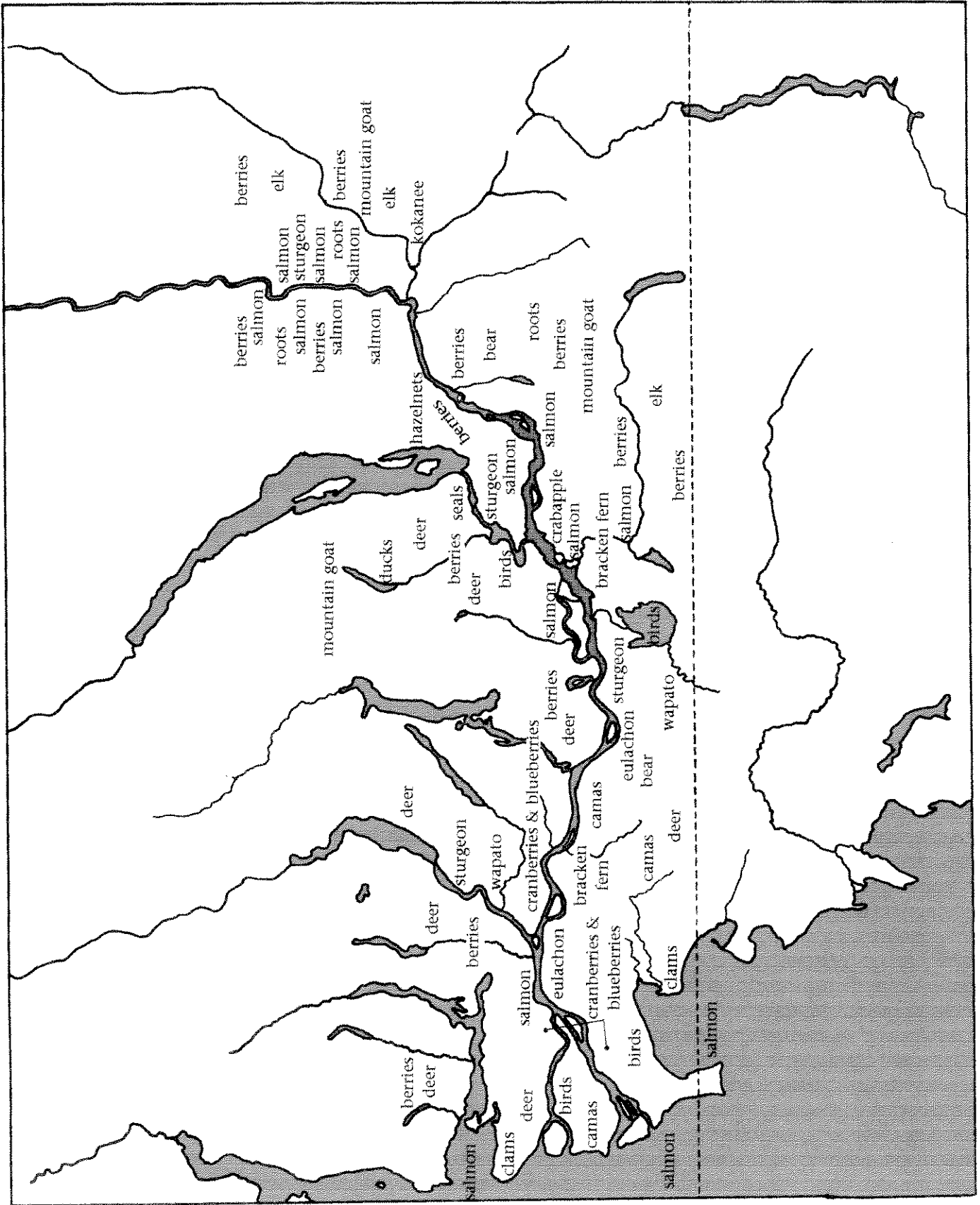
Generalized resouce locations in traditional Stó:lō territory

FIGURE 6. GENERALIZED MAP OF RESOURCE LOCATIONS IN
TRADITIONAL STÓILÓ TERRITORY

mothers and aunts gather plant foods. Elderly people often trained the younger people in the specific knowledge and skills needed to become effective hunters, fishers and gatherers. All people, thus contributed significantly to the food supplies of the communities.

Some people have "expert" knowledge and skills which help them acquire food. This knowledge and skill is usually acquired through special training and developing relationships with the spirit world. This expertise, combined with the ownership of resource locations, contributed to the creation of a hierarchy of social status within *Stó:lõ* society. High class people generally had access to abundant foods, while low class people often had to rely on others for it, or were able to procure just enough for themselves from less productive sites.[15]

Figure 7. "Processing Fish on the Fraser River", painting by Gordon Miller, U.B.C. Museum of Anthropology.

Fishing

As salmon first traveled up the lower Fraser River they were usually caught with trawl nets by people in canoes. A trawl net with floats attached on the top edge and sinker stones on the bottom, was lowered between two canoes. The canoes and floats held the net open against the river's current and fish would swim in and be caught. These nets were precious items which took days of labour to construct from stinging nettle fibers or Indian Hemp (*Apocynum*), the latter of which was received in trade from the Interior.[16]

Figure 8: A trawl net used for catching fish in the Fraser (Stewart, 1977 p. 92).

Further up-river in the Fraser Canyon salmon were caught with dip-nets and harpoons by fisherman poised on platforms or rocks above the river. They tied themselves up to the bank in case they caught a big salmon that pulled them over. These platforms hung over the small bays and eddies in the river where spawning salmon rested as they swam up the Fraser. During spawning season there were so many salmon that dip nets were used to scoop them right out of the silty waters. Leisters, harpoons and gaff-hooks were also used to a lesser degree at these places.[17]

Figure 9: Fishing platforms along the Fraser River from which fishermen dip-netted salmon (RBCM).

---

[15] Wayne Suttles "Private Knowledge, Morality and Social Classes among the Coast Salish" (1958) and "Affinal Ties, Subsistence and Prestige Among the Coast Salish" (1960), both on *Coast Salish Essays* by Wayne Suttles (Vancouver: Talonbooks 1987).

[16] Wilson Duff, 1952; Wayne Suttles "Central Coast Salish", 1990. See Hilary Stewart *Indian Fishing* (Vancouver: Douglas and McIntyre, 1977) for an excellent general discussion of Aboriginal fishing practices on the Northwest Coast.

[17] A leister is a kind of spear specifically designed for salmon fishing, with two barbed side-prongs and a shorter central point attached to a fixed head. This arrangement caught and held salmon very efficiently. Harpoons take salmon by means of thrusing a detachable point into the body of the fish and pulling it in. A gaff is a large, curved barb fixed on a pole used to hook fish and pull them in.

Salmon spawning in the tributaries of the Fraser River were caught in wooden fish weirs. These weirs were set up across streams and rivers, trapping all the salmon that tried to swin to their spawning ground. Men gaffed, speared or harpooned the salmon out of the weir. Operating these weirs efficiently required the effort of many people, so as to not waste any fish.

Figure 10: Salmon weir on small river (Stewart, 1977, p. 103).

Once the salmon were caught, the equally important task of preparing and preserving them had to be done. Women coordinated this labour. They prepared the salmon a number of different ways, depending on the conditions, the fish and the amount of work to be done. Wind-dried (*slhits'es*) and smoked salmon (*sq'éylo*) were the most popular traditional preserved fish. The preparation of fermented salmon roe (*kw'ó:la*) is a smelly, but highly nutritious dish.[18]

Wind-dried salmon (*slhits'es*)

Dry racks - Wind-drying is the main means of preserving fish caught in the Fraser. Large wooden-frame racks are set out on the wind-swept rocks above the river, where fish are hung to dry. The frames have a pitched roof which protects the fish from spoiling from exposure to direct sunlight and rain.

Figure 11. Dry rack in the Fraser Canyon, photo by Gary Feigan.

Cutting and Gutting the Salmon - As the fish are pulled from their nets, they are carefully cut to make them suitable for drying. Freshly caught salmon have their heads cut off, and are then hung upside down for 10 minutes so the blood runs out. If the blood is not drained the fish attracts flies and spoils.

The fish is first cut down the back (not the belly), and along each side of the back bone and ribs. These bones are removed and kept for cooking later. Fish guts are removed through the rear of the fish, leaving most of the belly skin intact. It is laid open and the flesh (not the skin) is scored in 1 cm wide strips to allow for effective drying. The backbone, the scored fish body and fish heads are then hung up to dry on the rack. To hold the fish open while hanging, a small stick is put through the sides of the fish.

If caught late in the season, particularly with the spring salmon, the flesh is cut as before, but then sliced in half, making two thin fillets, which makes it dry faster and more evenly.

Figure 12. Cutting salmon for smoking or drying (Stewart, 1977, p. 138).

---

[18] The following information comes mainly from Sonny McHalsie, personal communication, 1995. See also Duff, 1952.

Drying the fish - The best time to dry the fish is morning, when the dry interior breeze skims over the fish. The wet evening breeze is too moist and may spoil the fish. It takes a few days to fully dry fish. If there is any chance of rain, the fish must be taken down, as moisture will make them go moldy.

Salmon heads - Like the backbone, salmon heads are also dried on the rack. The heads are opened and cleaned, then set out to dry. These heads have a very strong taste when they are dried, and make and excellent soup (*xots'oyiqw slhóp'*).

Dried salmon roe (qéléx) - Salmon roe (fish eggs) are often found inside salmon. Salmon roe are highly nutritious. They were dried along with the rest of the fish, the gelatinous mass of roe being taken out whole and suspended over one of the poles in the dry rack. Such dried roe has to be soaked or boiled before eating.

Storing dried salmon - Once dried, salmon could be taken off the racks and stacked up for storage. Dried fish will stay edible for many months. Traditionally, the dried salmon was place in boxes high-up in trees, far above the morning dew. Some families also built special storage houses which were small, shed-roofed cedar plank caches, which were elevated on poles above the ground. If the salmon had not completely dried on the racks, these storehouses could also be used to further the drying process.

Figure 13. Salmon caches on Fraser River 1868 (Vancouver Public Library, Photo Archives).

Smoked Salmon (*sq'éylõ*)

Smoked salmon is another common way to preserve fish. In the fall, most fish not caught in the Fraser Canyon are smoked. The fish are butchered in the same way as drying, but without the score marks. A tightly-sealed "smokehouse" is constructed from cedar planks and alder-wood is stacked for burning. This wood gives fish the best possible flavour. The cut fish is hung over low-burning fires.

The length of time needed to smoke fish depends on what will be done with it after the smoking is finished. Traditionally, the fish was kept over the fire for a little more than a week. After such a long time, the fish can be stored without risk of it spoiling. Today, people often only smoke the fish for 24 hours and then put it in their freezer. In one method, fish are smoked for four days and then canned. This give the salmon a smoky flavour on the outside and keeps it tender on the inside.

Figure 14. Inside a large smokehouse (Stewart, 1977, p. 140).

Stink Eggs (kw'ó:la) - Fermented salmon roe was another important food item of the *Stó:lõ*. It was nutritious and kept until the end of the winter, but many Elders have recalled not liking its taste. To make *kw'ó:la*, a hole is dug in the ground about 1 to 1.5 meters wide and aproximately 80 centimeters deep and lined with fresh maple leaves. A sharp stick is used to puncture holes in the leaves. This will let the oil from the salmon roe drain through. Fresh bundles of salmon roe are then put in the hole and covered with a further layer of leaves and earth. The eggs are left in the

hole for the winter (about 4-5 months) and when removed have the texture of cheese. Other names for *kw'ó:la* are "stink eggs", "hum eggs" and "Fraser River bacon".

Figure 15. Stink Eggs buried in a pit (Stewart, 1977, p. 146).

Other Fish

Sturgeon are ancient and massive creatures that can weigh up to 800 kg. They are commonly found in fresh water, but can also be taken seasonally in the salt water, near the mouth of the Fraser River and in Boundary Bay. In the 1930s, William Sepass described to anthropologist Diamond Jenness several different ways sturgeon were caught.[19]

> [They were] caught in bag nets drawn by two canoes. At Sumas Lake the Indians had a long weir. They walked along this [the weir], raking the bottom with a hook on the end of a pole. When they hooked a sturgeon, the hook became loose from the pole, but remained attached to a long line. A third method was with set lines, with oolachan or salmon roe for bait. The best time for sturgeon was the spring, when the oolachan was running. Occasionally a man would drift downstream in his canoe, constantly touching the bottom with a long two-pointed spear and raising it again about a foot. Sturgeon were so plentiful that persistently his spear would touch one, then he speared it.
>
> Always throw the sturgeon bones back into water. They change to sturgeon. The man who hunts continually sturgeon... always throws away its *xáxa'eluk*, a certain part of its insides that he is warned about the animal itself. If he eats it he will go crazy.

Like the salmon, almost none of the sturgeon went to waste. Sturgeon were often boiled in large canoes so their fat could be skimmed off the water with a ladle and eaten with other dried fish. A sturgeon glue was made from their bones. The bladder of the sturgeon could be dried and used as a pouch to store preserved foods.

Figure 16. "Sturgeon Spearing on the Fraser River" sketch by John Keast Lord,1866 (Stewart, 1977).

Eulachons were another significant food fish to the *Stó:lō*. They were caught in the spring, just before the Fraser River reached its maximum flood peak. These fish seldom traveled upriver farther than Laidlaw (just west of Hope), but were fished by all *Stó:lō* people. In the past, eulachon runs were so plentiful the river seemed to boil. They were caught with small dip nets by men and women in canoes, and preserved by drying and smoking.

Inter-tidal foods such as clams and mussels were also harvested. Certain high status families owned stretches of beach near the mouth of the Fraser River and along Burrard Inlet where they had access to these valuable resources. Inter-tidal foods were particularly important during the winter, helping supplement the stored salmon and deer meat.

---

[19] Jenness, 1934-1935.

Animals and Birds

Stó:lō hunters focused their catch on deer, elk, black bear, and mountain goat. Other animals, such as hoary marmot (groundhog), beaver, racoon, wildcat, squirrel, and martin, were also taken but in smaller quantities. Hunting techniques varied. Domesticated hunting-dogs, which looked like small wolves, were used to hunt deer and bear. The hunter and his dog tracked the animal and shot it with bow and arrow. Dead fall traps were set so when the animal took the bait away, a log fell on them. Large deer-nets were sometimes used in hunting. The net would be strung across a deer trail. Young boys and dogs would chase the deer along the trail into the net, where it would be caught and killed by the hunter.[20]

Figure 17. Illustration of a dead fall trap (Galloway, 1980, p. 109a).

Men and women made journeys into the mountains for several weeks to kill game. They dried and processed the meat in camp, before returning back to the village. These hunting parties were often led by "expert" hunters called *tewi:t*, who often gained their expertise through the help of their guardian spirit.

Some people were experts in hunting mountain-goats, others sought out spiritual assistance which enabled them to shout at a deer and make it stop in it's tracks. At the moment when the deer turned to look at what made the shouting sound, the hunter let an arrow fly and killed the animal. After each animal was killed, the hunter often spoke to the animal's spirit, thanking it for the food and hide.[21]

Animals had to be prepared and preserved when caught. Women were responsible for this task. Smoked deer meat (*mówech*) prepared at hunting camps made it possible to bring much more game home than if the deer were brought back to the village whole. When on a hunting expedition away from the village, women smoked the deer, elk, bear and mountain goat right at the place the hunters caught it. A small rack with shelves about 1.5 to 2 meters tall was constructed for smoking the meat. The rack's walls were lined with fir boughs to keep the smoke in. Meat was cut into two to three centimeter thick slabs and hung over the shelves on the rack. A fire underneath the meat roasted and smoked it. This smoked meat was a lot lighter to carry back to the community than a whole carcass. Sometimes meat was cached in the mountains for hunters to use on their future journeys. The smoked meat was usually served by soaking and boiling in water.[22]

Almost all parts of the animals were used. Hides were made into winter clothing and footwear; antler was made into tools; horn of the mountain-goat was carved into fine bracelets; mountain-goat wool was spun into wool for weaving; and beaver teeth made sharp carving knives and gambling dice.

---

[20] Duff, 1952 p.71-72; Suttles, "Central Coast Salish", 1990.

[21] Sonny McHalsie, personal communication, 1995.

[22] Sonny McHalsie, personal communication, 1995.

A variety of birds, such as ducks, geese, eagles, and grouse were also hunted. They were shot with bows and arrows, or caught in nets suspended from tall poles set up in their migration paths. In another method, a plank was set across the sides of two canoes (if only one hunter, a small clay hearth was built in a single canoe). At night a small fire was built on the plank or hearth, which attracted the birds. As they flew up to the light, the hunters netted them. [23]

Figure 18. Central Coast Salish-style duck nets, sketch by T. Waterman, 1973.

Seals traveling up the Fraser River were hunted from the shore on rocks and sandbars, and in canoes. *Stó:lō* hunters either lanced them with harpoons, or stealthfully came upon a roost and clubbed them.

Plants

Stó:lō women collected and prepared roots (ie: camus, bracken fern, wapato, tiger lilies), berries (ie: huckleberries, salmon berries, trailing blackberries, salal berries, elderberries, blueberries, cranberries, and saskatoon berries), shoots, nuts and moss. From a young age, girls were taught by their mothers where to find plants and how to prepare them. This was a significant part of a girl's education, and the knowledge of these plants and their uses was often very detailed. [24]

Some particular locations, such as wapato patches at *Q'éyts'i*, were owned by particular families. Non- and distant relatives were required to ask permission to collect plants at the site. Other sites, such as the great berry-picking areas in the mountains surrounding the Coquihalla River were not owned, but were used collectively by many families.

Fire was used to keep some plant areas productive. At the end of the berry collecting season, a trained specialist set fire to a berry or bracken fern patch. This was done just before the specialist expected a steady rain so that the fire would not burn out of control. All of the brush and trees would burn down and the berries and ferns would be the first to re-grow, un-hindered, next season. The regular burning kept the soils rich and productive.

Figure 19. Wapatos, photo by Nancy Turner, 1995.

Plant foods were gathered at different seasons as they became ready for collecting. Thimbleberry and salmonberry shoots (*stháthqiy*) are ready in early spring and can be eaten fresh. Most berries ripen in late summer, around the same time that salmon spawn. Others, such as the cranberries which grow in bogs and marshes, become ripe in September. The roots of bracken ferns and the

---

[23] Suttles, "Central Coast Salish" 1990; Duff ,1952.

[24] Two excellent pieces have been written on *Stó:lō* traditional use of plants: Brent Galloway *Upper Stó:lō Ethnobotany* (Sardis: Coqualeetza Education Training Center, 1982); Kevin Washbrook *An Introduction to the Ethnobotany of the Stó:lō People In the Area between New Westminister and Chilliwack on the Fraser River* ms. prepared for Stó:lō Nation and Parks Canada, 1995.

wapato are ready to be dug up in the fall. All of these foods are eaten fresh and as preserves. Locations of other edible roots were marked with a stick when the plant is in bloom, so the bulbs could be dug-up right through the winter if other food ran short. Tree cambium, the living inner bark of a tree, was scraped off of cottonwood and fir trees with an knife and eaten raw in the spring.

Plant foods were major items of trade in and out of the lower Fraser River watershed. Saskatoon-berries and soapberries were traded from the dry Interior and were prized for their flavour. Camus root, wapato and cranberries were traded upriver and beyond from the marshy areas near the mouth of the Fraser River. Trade in plant foods was an important part of *Stó:lō* economy.

Preserved berries have traditionally been a very important source of nutrition for *Stó:lō* people in the winter when fresh foods are not readily available. Traditionally, berries were preserved by drying on a thick cedar-bark mat hung above a fire for two or three days. The berries which are most often hung to dry are huckleberries, trailing blackberries, and salal-berries.

Saskatoon-berries and elderberries made excellent berry cakes (*sk'ak'áxwe*). The berries were pounded into a pulp, sometimes after having first been boiled. Frames or molds for holding the berry-pulp were made of either a shallow cedar stick frame (75 centimeters square) which was covered with maple leaves, or of creased cedar-bark strips folded into a square about 30 centimeters long and 5 centimeters deep. The berries were poured into the frames and set out on cedar planks to dry in the sun. Sometimes they were covered with more maple leaves and hot ashes if rain threatened. The drying berries had to be continually watched to make sure wasps and flies did not get into them. Small, smoky fires could often help with this. Dried berry cakes are eaten after being soaked in hot water.

Stó:lō people made several different kinds of breads (*seplíl*). One was made out of a lichen called "beard-moss" (*sqwelíp*) which hangs off trees high in the mountains. This lichen was collected and then boiled until it turned black. The black, boiled lichen was then set out on a dish in the form of a cake. When dry, the moss was eaten like bread.

The roots of the bracken fern (*sá:q*), which grows commonly in open prairies and the wooded areas of the Fraser Valley, were made into a flour for another type of bread. They were set out on sticks and roasted for about 10 minutes over an open fire. The roots were then put on a hard surface and pounded while being turned. This pounding loosened the skin and softened the interior. The skin was scraped off and the edible interior was further pounded and ground into a flour. This fern-root flour was then mixed with salmon roe and baked in the ashes of the fire. After cooking, the bread was served fresh.

The *Stó:lō* have medicinal treatments for all sorts of ailments, from gastro-intestinal sicknesses to spiritual and social disorders. For example, Labrador tea, a plant which grows in bogs, make an excellent medicinal tea. Another made from the wild strawberry plant is used as a treatment for diarrhea. Stinging nettle tea continues is commonly used for colds and aches. Today, Elders continue to be consulted for their knowledge of medicinal plants.

Figure 20: A woman gathering reeds (Langley Centennial Museum).

Technology

Stó:lō people had developed a wide range of efficient technologies, a few of which are described here. Central to the technologies of the *Stó:lō* was the cedar. Cedar wood, bark, roots and boughs provided the materials to make a vast number of material things. William Sepass described how Cedar was changed from a generous man to the cedar tree:[25]

> Cedar was a very good man. When *Xá:ls* [the Transformer] was changing things he said to Cedar "I am going to make you into a tree. People hereafter will use your back for clothing and dwellings, your body for dwellings and canoes, and your limbs for rope." Cedar said "All right."

Woodworkers made many daily utensils such as bowls, spoons, boxes, tools, looms, spindle whorls, fishing and hunting equipment. They also worked wood into larger or more elaborate products such as house planks, carved house posts and grave monuments, ceremonial masks and other important ceremonial gear, fishing weirs, canoes, and caches. Distinctive Central Coast Salish style designs were often carved into these objects following the forms and rules of Central Coast Salish art.[26]

Figure 21. Spindle Whorl from Sarids (RBCM 9864) and Mountain-goat Horn Bracelets (British Museum VAN 221).

The bark and roots of the cedar (and other trees and plants) were made into baskets, mats, clothing, canoe-bailers, cordage, rope, and nets. The bark was peeled off the tree (leaving the living tree standing), then shredded, beaten and soaked to make it workable. Baskets were made in a wide variety of shapes and sizes, while mostly following one of two historically used weaving techniques - coiled cedar root baskets and plaited cedar bark baskets - the former being more common in upriver communities than the latter.[27]

Figure 22. Coiled and plaited baskets.

Different stones bones, antler and shells were worked by either chipping, grinding or pecking. Many different implements including fish knives, spear armaments, arrow heads, cutting blades,

---

[25] Jenness, 1934-1935, p. 66.

[26] For a discussion of Central Coast Salish Art see Norman Feder "Incised Relief Carving off the Halkomelem and Straits Salish" *American Indian Art Magazine* 8(2):46-55, 1983; Michael Kew *Sculpture and Engraving of the Central Coast Salish*, University of British Columbia, Museum of Anthropology Note 9, 1980; Wayne Suttles "Productivity and its Constraints - A Coast Salish Case" in *Coast Salish Essays*, 1987, Pp. 100 - 136.

[27] For an excellent general discussion of cedar woodworking and weaving on the Northwest Coast, with specific Coast Salish examples, see Hilary Stewart *Cedar*, (Vancouver: Douglas and McIntyre, 1984).

bowls, hand mauls, hammer stones, grinding stones, scrapers, choppers, woodworking adzes, wedges, and various ornaments. These stone tools were very efficient and many were designated for the jobs they were designed to perform.[28]

Figure 23. An archaeological assemblage of stone, bone and antler tools, photo by Joyce Johnson, courtesy of U.B.C. Laboratory of Archaeology.

Stó:lō women developed the art of Salish weaving. Large, elaborate blankets were woven on a fixed, stand-up loom. The warp was one length of wool wrapped alternately around the two roll-bars and a removable cross-bar or thread. The weft was woven either by plain twilling, or a combination of twilling and twining. The wool was made from a combination of mountain-goat wool and the hair of an indigenous wooly dog, that was domesticated for this purpose. The sorted and beaten wool was spun on a hand-held spindle and then coloured with vegetable dyes if desired. A skilled weaver would often bring elaborate geometric patterns to her weaving. These blankets were both economically and symbolically valuable. Being wrapped or covered in a blanket showed a person's wealth and prestige. Giving blankets away at a potlatch was considered to be an act of great generosity.[29]

Figure 24. Salish Weaving by Anabel Stewart (RBCM).

Transportation

Every *Stó:lō* community was linked by webs of rivers, lakes, streams and sloughs. Canoes carried paddlers and passengers along these waterways. Children learned to navigate in small canoes from an early age. Massive canoes carried entire families, their cargo and sometimes even their houses up and down the rivers and streams in the lower Fraser River watershed. There were three main styles of canoes, each of which were made in several sizes: the Salish style, the Westcoast style, and Shovelnose.[30]

The most common *Stó:lō* canoe was the shovelnose or *tl'elá:y* (which refers to "its ability to shovel onto shore so travelers could step ashore").[31] It was distinguished by its wide, flat bow and stern which projected out over the water. Shovelnose canoes were to 9 meters long with a low, narrow

---

[28] Hilary Stewart has another excellent discussion artifacts in her book *Stone, Bone, Antler and Shell: Artifacts of the Northwest Coast* (Vancouver: Douglas and McIntyre, 1996).

[29] For information on Salish Weaving see Paula Gustafson *Salish Weaving*, (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1980); Elizabeth Johnson and Kathryn Bernick *Hands of Our Ancestors: The Revival of Salish Weaving at Musqueam.* (Vancouver: University of British Columbia, Museum of Anthropology Note 16, 1986); Oliver Wells *Salish Weaving Primitive and Modern* (Sardis 1970).

[30] An excellent account of the canoes used by the *Stó:lō* and their neighbors can be found in Leslie Lincoln *Coast Salish Canoes*. (Seattle: Center for Wooden Boats, 1991).

[31] Galloway, 1993, p. 589.

gunwale. They were ideal for poling over the swift currents of the Fraser River and its tributaries. As *Stó:lō* Elder Frank Malloway explains,

> ... a shovelnose canoe would just ride on top of the waves. The river wouldn't control you, you control the canoe. It was just like a sled, you would ride over the waves.... When you are coming down the river the canoe would go where you want it to, instead of just getting thrown around by the current.[32]

This style shovelnose canoe has carried many people to their gathering, fishing and hunting locations.

Figure 25. Photo of a tl'eláy (shovelnose) canoe (RBCM).

The Salish-style canoe *xwóqw'eletsem* (which means "drags its stern") was constructed from half a hollowed out cedar log. This canoe was typically 8 meters long and 1 meter wide. Its bow was cut into a sharp "v" which extended down the bottom of the vessel, nearly forming a keel. The canoe was low and wide, making it suitable for the sometimes heavy waters of the Fraser River, the open waters of the Straight of Georgia, and the large lakes of the Fraser Valley.

Figure 26: Photo of a xwóqw'eletsem (Salish-style) canoe (RBCM).

Although made by the *Stó:lō*, the Westcoast cedar dug-out canoe *q'exwó:welh*, (which can be described as "largest canoe made"), was also acquired through trade with people from Vancouver Island. It was an excellent ocean-going canoe with a high bow and a long body (up to 12 meters), which held lots of freight or passengers.

Figure 27: Photo of a q'exwó:welh (Westcoast) canoe.

Canoes were used for transportation well into the middle of the 20th century. They were commonly taken on journeys up and down the Fraser River, and to places as far away as the head of Harrison Lake, Puget Sound, and the east coast of Vancouver Island. A trip to Vancouver Island from Chilliwack took two days to complete travelling westward and three days eastward.

Houses & Villages

Large, permanent houses marked the villages of the *Stó:lō*. Long wooden-framed houses commonly known as Salish plank houses or shed-roof houses (*s'iltexwáwtxw*) stood in rows along the river banks. Underground pithouses (*sqémél*) were made commonly upriver to bring families through the colder Fraser Valley winters. Temporary, portable shelters were used when people went on shorter fishing, gathering and hunting trips.

---

[32] Malloway, 1996.

Plank houses (s'iltexwáwtxw)

Plank houses were built on a frame of posts which were dug into the ground. The front posts were approximately 5.5 meters tall and the rear posts were 2.5 to 3.0 meters tall. Wooden beams up to 18 meters long were laid horizontally across the posts to complete the frame. By adding more posts and beams, the plank house could be made longer or wider. Split cedar planks were used as siding. These were held horizontally between pairs of poles that were tied fast to the beams. Cedar planks with carved long trough channels were used for the roof. The planks were very valuable and often owned by individual families living in the house.

Plank houses were made in a variety of sizes. The basic unit was a small house, about 18 meters by 6 meters. August Jim described these houses to Wilson Duff: "[t]he high wall was at the front, with a door in the middle or corner. The walls were lined with plank beds; a single fire burned in the center of the dirt floor." Larger houses were made by attaching these small houses end-to-end, or by putting a row of the small houses under one large roof, sharing a common back wall. Large versions of the basic plank house were also built averaging about 23 meters by 8 meters. In 1808, when Simon Fraser traveled through Stó:lō territory, he observed one plank house (which may have been at Matsqui) that was 195 meters long and 18 meters wide.[33]

Figure 28: Illustrations of a Coast Salish shed roof house (Stewart, 1984, p.64).

The interiors were usually open, being temporarily divided by hanging cat-tail mats (wá:th'elh), which could be easily removed. Benches were constructed around the edge of the house for people to sleep on, sections of the bench being separated by these hanging mats. Each section was occupied by an individual family, usually a husband, wife, younger children and sometimes one set of grandparents. If one man was very wealthy and had more than one wife, the co-wives would live in different sections of the house from the husband. Slaves stayed with their masters and mistresses. Families stored their dried food and personal possessions on suspended platforms or hung them from the rafters, and prepared their meals on their own fire-pit.

When the people in the house organized a ceremony, feast or potlatch, the partitions would be removed and guests invited to sit with relatives on the sleeping benches. A platform was often constructed on the outside of the house from which to make speeches or give gifts. Houseposts were sometimes elaborately carved and placed inside. They were commissioned by wealthy people and represented their ancestors, depicting a story connected to their family, or a showed a representation of their connection to the spirit world.[34]

Figure 29: Housepost of warrior Qiyeplénexw from a house at Xwméthkwiyem (BCARS).

---

[33] Duff, 1952, p. 47-48.

[34] An excellent discussion of plank houses can be found in Wayne Suttles "The Shed-Roof House" in *A Time of Gathering*, edited by Robyn Wright (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1991) p. 212-222.

Pithouses (*Sqémél*)

Sqémél were used as a permanent winter houses by the *Stó:lō*, particularly those living upriver from Stave Lake. These were round structures, 6 to 11 meters in diameter, dug between 1 to 3 meters into the ground. Once the wooden frame was built for the roof, they protruded up to 2 meters above of the ground. This frame was made with four large posts set in the ground near the center of the pits, angled outward. Over these posts were placed cross beams and supports, covered with layers of poles, bark, branches, boughs, and soil. At the top of the roof a hole was left which allowed smoke from the central fire to escape. A log ladder led down from the hole. Bed platforms were built around the edge of the pit, with individual families' sleeping sections separated by handing mats.

Figure 30: Exterior of pithouse at Chehalis, photo by T. Little, 1994.

Insulated by the surrounding soil and designed to blend with the landscape, the *sqémél* provided warmth during the winter and protection from raids. Several nuclear families would live in a *sqémél* during the winter, sharing the cooking fire. Bob Joe, an Elder from the Chilliwack area, remembered some people finishing the insides of these houses very well, making the roof planks and rafters smooth and sometimes painted. However, even with this work, the *sqémél* was a small, cramped, and somewhat smokey residence. *Stó:lō* people stayed in them for a few winter months, but preferred to live in the more spacious and comfortable *s'iltexwáwtxw*.[35]

Figure 31: Painting of life inside a pithouse, by Gordon Miller, U.B.C. Museum of Anthropology

Summer structures

During the summer, *Stó:lō* people often left their main village to visit relatives and get food and materials not found near their villages. They brought with them rolled cat-tail mats, poles and sometimes cedar house-planks from which they could make small, temporary shelters. Women wove the cattail mats which were very portable and provided a dry area to sleep under. Poles were set into the ground and the mats rolled out and attached to them. Sometimes planks from the winter plank house were used instead of mats. When people used their house-planks, they transported them by putting them lengthwise across the gunwales of two canoes. This gave them an additional flat surface to tie their cargo to. Unlike the other houses, only one family stayed in these small temporary shelters.[36]

Figure 32: Temporary summer shelters with mat covers (RBCM).

---

[35] Marian Smith gives a useful description and comparative account of pithouses based on her 1938 work with Bob Joe of Chilliwack and Jack Jimmy of Nooksack in her article "House Types of the Middle Fraser River", *American Antiquity* 1947, 12(4):225-267.

[36] A detailed description of summer dwellings can be found in Homer Barnett, *The Coast Salish of British Columbia*, (Eugene: University of Oregon Monographs, Studies in Anthropology Number 4, 1955), p. 40.

Villages

Stó:lō villages dotted the Fraser River and its tributaries, from the village of *Mále* at the mouth of the river to the village of *Lahits* at Sawmill Creek in the Fraser Canyon. They were usually situated along the shores of rivers, streams and lakes, often at the junction of two bodies of water. The villages were never built far from abundant food resources. Berries and other plant foods were often available directly behind the village and productive fishing grounds at the front.

Figure 33. Map of villages at Xwméthkwiyem, drawing by M. Kew, 1992.

Villages near the mouth of the river were generally large, comprised of ten or twelve dwellings. Farther upriver, villages were somewhat smaller in size but occurred more frequently. In the Fraser Canyon for example, a village was built on almost every level piece of level land, but consisted of only two or three dwellings.

Figure 34. Map of small villages at Sq'ewqéyl and **Yeqwyeqwí:ws** *in 1858.*

Village populations varied greatly over the years. It is difficult to accurately estimate their size prior to the first smallpox epidemic. In 1808, Simon Fraser recorded sighting one village in the *Qw'ó:ntl'an* area with a population over 200 people, while the villages he saw around what is now Yale contained less than 50 people. Even within a single year the population of an individual village could fluctuate greatly, as people traveled to visit relatives or live in temporary camps at places to get food and resources.[37]

Some villages had wooden fortifications with trenches dug near them. These forts often stood to one side of the village, where people would organize and defend themselves during a raid. There was a fortified house just west of the main *Xwméthkwiyem* village at the mouth of the Fraser River. It was a single house with a palisade at a spot called *Q'élexen* "fence". Other villages, such as *Shxw'ōwhámél* had low, discrete pithouses built away from the main village to which people could retreat in a raid. The frequent raids by the *Yéqwelhta* or other disgruntled neighbors made village defense important.[38]

Stó:lō Communities

It is a common assumption of *Xwelítem* society that "communities" are based on people who live in the same place. In *Stó:lō* society the community is more broadly defined. It is a network of people who are more connected through ties of kinship and marriage than they are through the place they

[37] W. Kaye Lamb (ed) *The Letters and Journals of Simon Fraser, 1806-1808.* (Toronto: Macmillian Co. of Canada, 1960).

[38] *Xwméthkwiyem* fortified house information from Michael Kew, personal communication 1996; *Shxw'ōwhámél* pithouse information from Sonny McHalsie, personal communication 1996.

live. As a way to look at the idea of the *Stó:lō* community, we will describe the family, the household, the local group and the village. These different parts of the *Stó:lō* community form the important web or relations that define the *Stó:lō* social world.[39]

Nuclear and Extended Family as Community

The nuclear family (*shxwákw'a*) was composed of a husband, wife (or sometimes wives), unmarried children, and older parents (grandparents). In *Stó:lō* society the extended family consisted of one's parents, siblings, grandparents, parent's siblings (aunts and uncles) and their children (first cousins). It was with these people that most of the major economic activities took place. When a family wanted to fish at a weir, the extended family worked together to catch and process the fish. They also commonly participated in conducting ceremonies and feasts. Today, few extended families live in a single household, but they still work together for many of these activities.

The extended family members who owned property together could be called in English a "corporate kin group". This group is a similar to a corporation which is comprised of kin - extended family as distant as third or fourth cousins - who own property in common. These distant relatives often live far apart in separate villages. Some of their property would be productive places to get food like salmon fishing station. Other kinds of commonly owned property include large salmon weirs or massive bird nets which took the combined efforts of a number of families to build, use and maintain. Still further kinds of corporate property include immortal names; ritual activities; ceremonial paraphernalia; and privileges to certain stories, songs, and dances. These things are not material, but are exclusively owned by the corporate kin group. The co-owners would often act together to coordinate food getting at these productive locations.

Household as Community

When the *Stó:lō* lived in plank houses (*s'iltexwántxw*) and pithouses (*skémél*), extended family members, such as two or three brothers and their families, lived under one roof. Sometimes more distant relatives or non-relatives would be members of the household, including less wealthy, dependent families and slaves. There might be anywhere up to 25 or 30 people in one household. Membership in a household was fairly fluid. The groups of families could break up and form new households if it got too stressful, crowded or otherwise difficult to live under one roof.

Figure 35: Life in a Coast Salish plank house, painting by Paul Kane (National Gallery of Canada 6923, crIV-550).

Because the household was often made up of several extended family members, it was an important part of one's community. Extended family members often shared food and cooperated for economic activities like obtaining and preparing food. They also worked together to host feasts, gatherings, and spirit dances. The most respected family leader would usually act as the head of the household in matters which concerned them all, but these household heads had little means of

---

[39] Wayne Suttles, "Persistence of Intervillage Ties Among the Coast Salish" (1963) in Suttles 1987, p. 209-232; See also Eleanor Leacock "The Seabird Community" in *Indians of the Urban Northwest* edited by Marian Smith (New York: AMS Press, 1949).

enforcing their decisions. The authority of household heads relied a great deal on the respect their family members had for them.

Local Group as Community

Many *Stó:lō* people can often trace their lineage back to an ancestor who lived in the time of *Xexá:ls*, the siblings who transformed the world from a largely supernatural place to the way it is today. These ancestral people are often original members of a community. Many were also transformed into important natural resources. George Chehalis and his wife told the following story about the origin of the *Máthekwi* people:[40]

> Their ancestor *Sq'elíy:etl* (derived from *sqelá:w*, beaver) had a son whom he dressed completely in beaver skins, just like himself. When *Xá:ls* came, they fought by standing opposite each other and trying to transform one another. Finally *Xá:ls* defeated him, *Sq'elíy:etl* jumped into the water and thrashed about wildly. He and his son were transformed into beavers.

All people who can trace their ancestry back to these ancient relatives are part of the same "local group". The "local group" was a key part of the *Stó:lō* community in terms of the sharing of resources. They often live in the same house or village, but are not necessarily members of the same immediate family. Members of local groups do not regard themselves as kin, in the sense of being directly related by blood or marriage. However, they do acknowledge that they are descended from a common "legendary" ancestor. Only members of this group have the right to use names and tell stories which are connected to their ancestor.

This group is important in another sense - in that it connects people to the land and resources. The various ancestors spoken of in the stories were turned into many natural features in or around their ancestral village (like a prominent rock, the cedar tree, eulachon, mountain goat, and so on), by the Transformers, *Xexá:ls*, in the ancient past. People who see themselves as descendants of these ancient ancestors have a special relationship to the land, trees, and animals, because they are their relatives.[41]

Villages as Community

---

[40] Franz Boas, *Indian Myths and Legends from the North Pacific Coast of America*, Translated from *Verhandlungen der Berliner Gesellschaft für Anthropologie, Ethnologie und Urgeschichte* by Dietrich Bertz, edited by Randy Bouchard and Dorothy Kennedy (Victoria: B.C. Indian Language Project, 1982) (1895).

[41] It is interesting to note that the "local group" corresponds with the "named village group" for all of the *Stó:lō* living below Chilliwack, each group having their own stories about their connection to a common ancestor. Duff (1952:85) mentions that the *Ts'elxwéyeqw, Peló:lhxw* and *Teltít* "named village groups" do not have oral traditions of being descended from a common legendary ancestor. The *Ts'elxwéyeqw* recall their connection to four brothers who lead their villages in the move from the Chilliwack River Valley. Individual villages in the *Peló:lhxw* and *Teltít* "named village groups" have their own origin stories, (for example *Shxw'ōwhámél* has a tradition of being related to sturgeon, *Lexwchíyò:m* has a tradition of being related to mountain goat). Thus, how a community related to the land and resources depended on where a person lived, and the history of that community.

Villages were often composed of two or more households. Village members cooperated in only major economic ventures such as a deer drive or building a salmon weir. Village members sometimes also worked together to host spiritual gatherings and in times of raids and defense. However, larger villages were often very diverse, and not organized under any formal leadership such as a "village chief". Some villages were so diverse that different dialects would be spoken by different households. This was much less the case in smaller villages, where many people from one extended family lived together in the same village. Because of this most people had to marry outside their village, so not to marry a relative. Marriage is not permitted with anyone related closer than a fourth cousin. This necessity for marrying out of one's village created a community of relatives throughout the Central Coast Salish region - throughout *s'ólh témexw*.

Like households, villages were fluid in their composition. People moved freely between villages where they had relatives. If there was someone in the village that people did not get along with, it was not uncommon for the entire village to move and leave the troublemaker behind. In 1950, *Stó:lō* Elder August Jim told anthropologist Wilson Duff about why the people from the village *Siyét'e* moved up-river to the village of *Shxw'ōwhámél*.[42]

> One day the women and children from *Siyét'e* went to camp 3 or 4 miles north of the village at the food of a mountain to dig roots. The women went out to dig, leaving the children in camp. One woman had left her baby in the care of her small brother. The baby cried and cried despite all the boy's attempts to quieten it, and finally he got angry, made the fire bigger, and pushed the baby into the fire. The other children ran to get the mother, but, when she returned, baby and cradle had been reduced to ashes.
>
> The boy grew up to become a large, strong man, but a trouble-maker. Several times, in fits of anger, he killed people, even visitors from salt-water. The people of *Alámex* (Agassiz, the whole area) got tired of him and wouldn't speak to him. Finally, in fear of reprisal raids from down-river, and to get away from this man, they decided to move away.
>
> ... the *Siyét'e* people, led by Edward Lorenzetto's great-grandfather, moved up to *Shxw'ōwhámél* ... The trouble-maker himself moved up-river to Restomore Caves near the mouth of Hunter Creek [just east of *Shxw'ōwhámél*], and, living there alone, continued his murderous deeds. From a high vantage point, he would watch down the river for the approach of canoes. When one approached, he would enter the water through a tunnel he had dug from the caves, float out under a mat (in imitation of an old mat floating on the river), grasp the bow of the canoe, and overturn it. Then, leaping up on the overturned canoe, he would club the occupants to death as they tried to grasp it for support. This section of the river derives its name *Ōwqw'éyles*, "watching down-river," from this man.

Stó:lō Social Life

Having described who the *Stó:lō* are, their economy, technology and concepts of community, I will now turn to *Stó:lō* social life. I will begin by looking at *Stó:lō* concepts of kinship (the ideas and

---

[42] Duff, 1952, p. 42.

terms which define who a person is related to), and personal names (which define who a person is as an individual). I will then describe *Stó:lō* social inequality. *Stó:lō* social life was bound by social status, leadership and one's own expertise. High status individuals had very different opportunities than did a captured slave. Feasts, potlatches, exchange and conflict were some of the most important events in a person's social life. Finally I will describe the life-cycle (the usual events which happen in one's life) of an average *Stó:lō* person living at the turn of the nineteenth century.

<u>Kinship</u>

When a child was growing up, he or she was taught, in great detail, who their relatives were and where they lived. A person who knew who their family was would often be able to recite their family tree back several generations and as distant as their fourth cousin. When a person married, they also had to learn who their in-laws were. Parents also had very important relationships with the parents of their children's spouse.[43]

It is sometimes difficult to appreciate the importance of family connections in a culture other than one's own. One way to do this is to examine the system of terms used to refer to relatives in that culture's language (commonly called "kinterms" by anthropologists). Below are charts which show the *Halq'eméylem* terms for blood relatives and in-laws. Some very significant differences from English can be seen:

Figure 36. Halq'eméylem Terms for Blood Relatives (B. Thom 1996).

Figure 37. Halq'eméylem Terms for In-Laws (B. Thom 1996).

At first glance, the terms for blood relatives look like they are used in the same way they are in English. However, there are a few significant differences. The terms for "sibling (brother/sister)" differentiate between older and younger siblings. First cousins are referred to by the same two terms as are used for siblings. Your cousins, in effect, are considered no different than your brothers and sisters. However, when used for "cousin" the term does not depend on whether the first cousin is older or younger than <u>you</u>, but rather whether <u>their parents</u> (your aunt/uncle) are older or younger than <u>your parents</u>. There is no distinction between the terms used to refer to your nephews/nieces and your second cousins. Your grandchildren, your sibling's grandchildren and your cousin's grandchildren are all, likewise, referred to by the same term. The second generation of relatives below you are all your "grandchildren". These kinterms emphasize the importance given to seniority between individuals, and within generations in *Stó:lō* society. It also highlights the close connections of the extended family. If your cousins are all your brothers and sisters, every

---

[43] This section relies heavily on the insights of two articles by Wayne Suttles: "Linguistic Means for Anthropological Ends on the Northwest Coast." (1965) *Coast Salish Essays* (Vancouver: Talonbooks), 1987, Pp. 248-255; and (1960), 1987, Pp. 15-25.

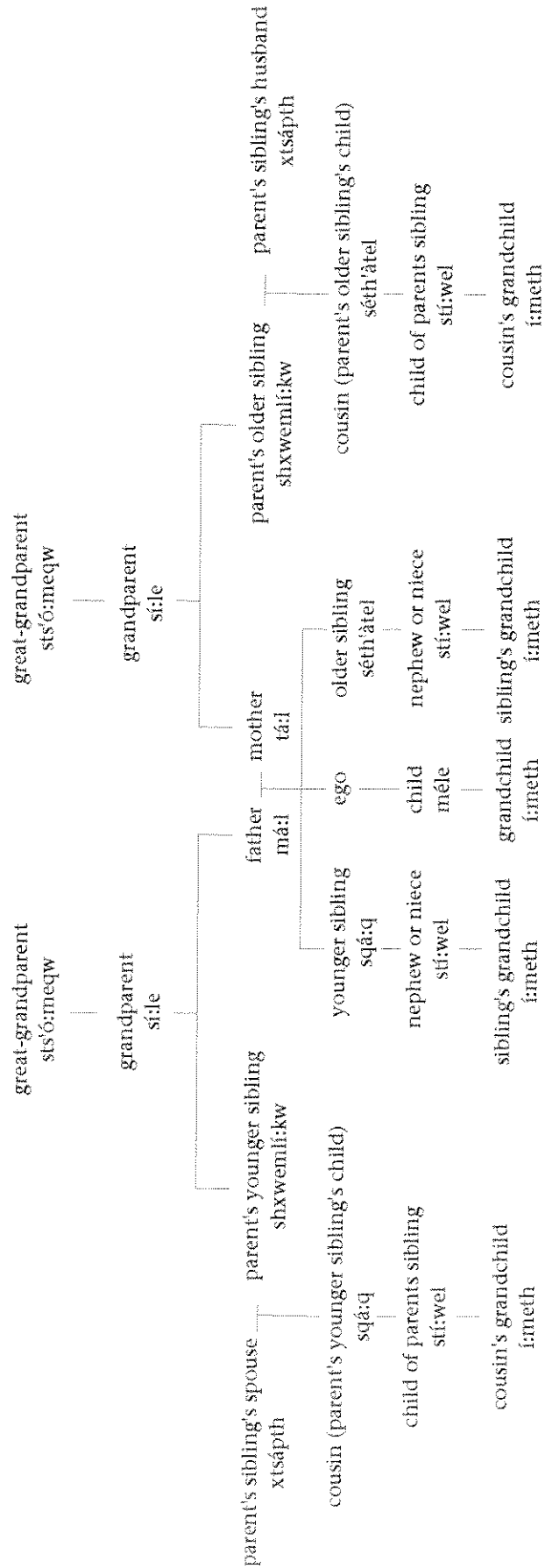# HALQ'EMÉYLEM WORDS FOR BLOOD RELATIVES

great-grandparent
sts'ó:meqw

grandparent
sí:le

great-grandparent
sts'ó:meqw

grandparent
sí:le

parent's sibling's spouse
xtsápth

parent's younger sibling
shxwemlí:kw

parent's older sibling
shxwemlí:kw

parent's sibling's husband
xtsápth

father
má:l

mother
tá:l

cousin (parent's younger sibling's child)
sqá:q

cousin (parent's older sibling's child)
séth'átel

child of parents sibling
stí:wel

child of parents sibling
stí:wel

cousin's grandchild
í:meth

younger sibling
sqá:q

ego

older sibling
séth'átel

cousin's grandchild
í:meth

nephew or niece
stí:wel

child
méle

nephew or niece
stí:wel

sibling's grandchild
í:meth

grandchild
í:meth

sibling's grandchild
í:meth

FIGURE 36. HALQ'EMÉYLEM TERMS FOR
BLOOD RELATIVES

HALQ'EMÉYLEM WORDS FOR IN-LAWS

grandparent in-law
sexwsí:le

parent in-law
skw'ílhew

wife's —— wife's
sister-in-law's husband   sister-in-law
slets'éléq   shxw'áléx

wife's —— wife's
brother-in-law   brother-in-law's wife
smátexwtel   slets'éléq

husband —— wife
swáqeth   stó:les

child —— child's spouse
méle   schíwthá:lh

husband's —— husband's
sister-in-law's husband   sister-in-law
slets'éléq   smátexwtel

husband's —— husband's
brother-in-law   brother-in-law's wife
skw'íllhew   slets'éléq

co-parent in-law
skw'éhwés

FIGURE 37. HALQ'EMÉYLEM TERMS
FOR IN-LAWS.

person has a very big, close family indeed.[44]

The kinterms for in-laws look very different from those of blood relatives. They also look very different than the English and other European systems. In English, words for in-laws match the terms for blood relatives: they are symmetrical systems. Recall that the *Halq'eméylem* terms for blood relatives do not distinguish gender, but do distinguish between generations. The *Halq'eméylem* terms for in-laws group together different generations and differentiate between genders. The terms you use depend on whether you are male or female. A man's parents-in-law and his brother-in-law are called by the same term. His sister-in-law, however, is called by a different term. There is yet another term for a women's sister-in-law. There is also a unique term for people who are married to your in-laws (ie: the husband of your wife's sister), which is different from the word for the people who are married to your siblings. The kinterms for in-laws shows the importance of acknowledging and respecting the family of your spouse in *Stó:lō* society.

Stó:lō people recognize their *skw'élwés*, their child's spouse's parents (co-parent in-law), as an important member of their extended family. There is no corresponding term for this person in English. It is co-parents in-law who exchange gifts at a wedding, and who continue to share food and resources throughout their children's lives. This stretches the bounds of the extended family beyond one's blood relatives and in-laws, to include the in-laws of one's children as well.

These kin relationships form the social foundation of *Stó:lō* society. People use these kinterms to reflect the importance of their relatives. By recognizing relatives as "distantly" related as co-parent in-law, and as closely related as cousin/sibling, people were able to gain connections to many different resources. Leaders had a wide range of family members who they could call upon in preparing for a potlatch, or to help with getting food from very productive places. Common people would be able to choose which leader they lived with (in the house or village) and put their support behind depending on which member of their extended family was "in" or "out". They would do this by emphasizing some of the kin relations while de-emphasizing others. This flexibility in kin relations created a very large "family network" with whom one has social interactions and obligations spiritually, economically and culturally.

Names and Naming

In *Stó:lō* culture, formal names are given to a person when they approach adulthood. These "Indian names" are held one's family, passed on through the generations. Many are connected with a respected and honorable ancestor. For example, *Th'eláchiyatel* was the name of one of the four brothers who were the founding families of the *Ts'elxwéyeqw*. Chief Richard Malloway received that name from his grandfather, who was a family leader during the early and mid 19th century. A few years after Richard Malloway died, the name was given to his grandson, who continues to carry it today. Both the senior and junior Malloway knew of their obligation when carrying such a

---

[44] It should be noted here that in *Halq'eméylem* you must always use a marker to indicate the gender (ie: male or female) and the position (ie: present visible, nearby invisible, remote or non-existent) of your relatives. Thus your younger brother who is in front of you would be *te le sqá:q* "my younger brother whom you see before you", and so on. Having to add these markers to each kin term makes this a very large and complex structure. (See Suttles, 1987, Pp. 251-252).

prestigious name. They had to behave properly, so not to bring shame to the name and all the ancestors who carried it. Names are not always passed along every second generation like the example given here, but this is not an uncommon practice, for the same name cannot be held by two people at the same time.[45]

A name is also connected with a place and to resources. A well-respected person who is given a name in one community may also receive a different name within another community. Having names in various communities allows people to access resources in these areas. A person who is well respected in many communities will have several names. This has been explained by Sonny McHalsie:[46]

> An example is my great great-grandfather from Yale. He had a name in Yale, and attached to that name were certain rights, such as where he could fish, where he could go gather berries, and his position in the longhouse. The main emphasis was his access to resources. He also had a name at *Semyó:me*, and a name across in Duncan. So whenever he went to those places, using his Yale name was useless, especially when he was trying to get access to resources. But having a local name allowed him access to the resources. Those names also had to stay within the locality of their origin. When he moved from Yale to Ruby Creek, he had to host a gathering to pass his name onto his youngest son.

When a person receives a name, their family will host a ceremony to publicly present the name. Family members, friends, and acquaintances are invited to witness the event. At the turn of the last century, local ethnographer Charles Hill-Tout described a traditional naming ceremony. The description he provides varies slightly from those which are practiced today.[47]

> Titular names were bestowed upon their bearers only when they had reached and passed the age of puberty. To show the way in which this was generally done let us suppose a nobleman of standing has a son fifteen or sixteen years of age, on whom he desires to bestow one of the family names or titles. He first goes to the chief..., informs him of his desire and secures his acquiescence and promise of assistance. A date is then fixed for the event and invitations are sent to the neighboring tribes. On the day appointed for the ceremony great numbers of guests come in from the friendly villages around, some also coming from distant settlements if the giver of the feast is well known and of distinguished rank. Preparations have been going on for days past to receive and entertain these visitors. Large quantities of food have been brought together by the host and his kinsfolk; the family treasure-chests have been opened and their contents set in order for distribution at the feast. When all is ready the father of the boy who is to receive the name, the boy himself, and his

---

[45] Brian Thom in collaboration with Edna and Frank Malloway, "Telling Stories: the Life History of Chief Richard Malloway." Ms. on file, Stó:lō Nation and U.B.C. Department of Anthropology and Sociology, 1994.

[46] Sonny McHalsie, personal communication 1995.

[47] Hill-Tout, 1905. Pp. 225-235.

immediate sponsors, friends and kinsfolk all ascend the roof of the house - the pitch of the roofs always being low and convenient for the purpose - and from this vantage point the proceedings take place. These vary a little from tribe to tribe and from district to district. Commonly the ceremony is opened by the father of the boy dancing one of his family dances - to dance meaning also to sing at the same time. This song dance is probably a more or less dramatic representation of some event, fancied or real, in the life or history of his ancestors, perhaps that which gave rise to the name he is going to bestow upon his son. When this is over a distribution of blankets - the measure of wealth of the coast tribes - is made to honor the names and spirits of his family, it being held dishonorable to speak of or even mention an ancestral name publicly without making gifts. The father now calls about him some thirty or forty of the leading noblemen among his guests to act as sponsors or witnesses of the rank his son will acquire by the name he is about to receive. Two elder men, or preferably two aged chiefs, who know his lineage and ancestry, now bring the youth forward and standing one on either side of him the elder of the two proclaims in a loud voice to the assembled audience that it is the wish and intention of the father of the youth to bestow upon him his paternal grandfather's name or title. At this the people express their assent and pleasure by clapping of hand and shouting. The name is then given to the youth after which another distribution of blankets takes place, special care being taken to give at least one each to all the formal witnesses of the ceremony and to the officiating elders. If the father is wealthy he will throw other blankets among the common-folk to be scrambled for. When this part of the ceremony is over the feasting begins.

People continue to spend a great deal of effort listening to their Elders and studying archival records to learn what their family names . Many of the rights and privileges that come with these names are important today. They include access to fishing or gathering locations, the right to tell particular stories, sing particular songs, and use particular carvings in ceremonies.

Social Status

Social status is the amount of respect, esteem, wealth, privilege, and ultimately influence a person has in society. In *Stó:lō* society there were great differences in social status. Some people were noblefolk, born into families with wealth, good upbringing and community prestige. Other families were commonfolk, who were not wealthy, had less than proper upbringing and often recieved little respect for having "lost their history". Slaves had the lowest status of all people, being the property of their masters and mistresses.

People gained their personal social standing or rank within these classes by their life achievements. Because of this variety in a person's social ranking, it would have been difficult to distinguish between a common person of high rank and a noble person of low rank.[48]

---

[48] An excellent discussion of social status in Central Coast Salish communities can be found in Barnett, 1955, Pp. 241-247.

Figure 38. Siyá:m covered with a blanket (BCARS)

Smelá:lh (Upper-class) families had inherited rights and privileges to resources, names, and songs. These people were "worthy" because as children they received "proper" moral training and "advice." Upper-class people knew their family history, which connected them to resource locations, and allowed them to take on privileged names, songs, and dances. The training they received enabled them to have successful relations with the spirit world, which in turn made their lives easier and more fulfilling.

Stítsòs (lower-class) families were considered to have had "forgotten or lost their history." They neither had access to inherited privileges, nor as children were they given the proper moral training and advice needed to be successful. It was difficult for a lower-class person to achieve high status and become a respected leader (*siyá:m*), although not impossible. If a lower-class person acquired the right spirit power to become successful at hunting or fishing, they might gain enough wealth to hold a potlatch, where claims to higher social status could be made.

Skw'iyéth (slaves) were the property of upper-class people. They were considered wealth, and their labour produced additional wealth for their owners. Slaves performed most of the menial tasks required by their owner's family. Upper-class families acquired slaves by raiding other villages, capturing raiders, or purchasing or trading for them at a potlatch. The wealthiest *Stó:lõ* families sometimes owned as many as a dozen slaves. In most instances slaves were well treated.

Status and Expertise
Some people had personal skills or training which gave them status in the community. A woman who was a skilled weaver would be recognized when her weaving were given away at potlatches. A man who could make canoes would gain wealth and status as people bought or traded his canoes. The skilled, expert hunter (*tewít*) could provide his extended family with much surplus meat, which also increased his status. People would often gain their expertise through the assistance of a guardian spirit (*s'elíya*) that would come to them, often in a dream or during a secluded fast. A person's *s'elíya* provides them with powerful assistance and guidance in the skilled work that they do. Thus, having successful relationships with the spirit world is an important way for a skilled person to achieve high social status. Although being a lazy person (*s'íːmet*) was never rewarded with high status, achieving status was often less important than the status a person had through the family he or she was born in to.

Leadership

Leadership was flexible and was determined by the personal strengths of men and women who were the leaders. Skill, knowledge, good up-bringing and respect all contributed to a person becoming a family leader. Each extended family had a "head" or leader, called *siyá:m*, who looked after most family affairs. It is not a title like "chief," but rather describes the qualities of respect and leadership an individual has. This person was usually the most respected family member. Elder Edmond Lorenzetto described the personal character traits of a *siyá:m* to Wilson Duff.[49]

---

[49] Duff, 1952 p. 80.

A *siyá:m* was a good man who talked to his people to keep them straight and settle rows. He didn't really boss the people around, that is why they liked him, but all the people would take his advice. He talked to the people, telling them what they should do, when they should go hunting or fishing, and they did it. He had to be a good hunter and fisherman himself to be a leader. He was getting food all the time for his people. There might be more than one *siyá:m* at a place. They would talk things over. Long ago there was no jealousy in them.

A *siyá:m* had to exchange gifts with their relatives, be good hosts when receiving visiting relatives from other communities, be knowledgeable about practical, economic and spiritual matters, and be able to resolve family disputes when they arose.

Several family leaders from a village would often meet together informally to plan ceremonial events and resolve disputes which effected the whole community. Sometimes these meetings would include *siyá:m* from only one village, sometimes from several. However, this group of family leaders had no formal power. They were leaders because they had status and their families respected them. There was no was for their decisions to be enforced. The honor and respect their family members had for them carried their decisions.

Because leadership was based on the skills and personal abilities of individuals, people were sometimes leaders of specific activities. Some of these people played an important role in the spiritual lives of the *Stó:lō*. Spiritual leaders coordinated the winter dances and trained new initiates to the long house. A *shxwlá:m* (Indian doctor) used their powers to communicate with the supernatural world, speaking with and seeing the dead, or finding a lost soul of another person. There were also people who were able warriors, providing leadership in times of defense. Before inter-village conflicts ended in the mid-1800s, war leaders (*stóméx*) brought together the efforts of people from one or more villages in raids and retaliatory raids. These warriors were not usually highly respected for their generosity and kindness, like a *siyá:m* would be, but were important in times of village crisis.[50]

Figure 39. Dr. Bob, a shxwlá:m from Yequyequí:ws (BCARS)

Expertise

All *Stó:lō* people participated in the day-to-day economic life of fishing, hunting, and gathering. Likewise, every member of society -- regardless of gender or age -- took part in social and ceremonial activities. Children learned the knowledge and skills necessary to become productive members of their extended family. Elderly people devoted a great deal of time and energy towards teaching the young. Virtually everyone had the basic skills to get food and be a sociable person.

However, some *Stó:lō* people became "experts" in certain fields. A person could become an expert

---

[50] A good discussion of *shxwlá:m* and other spiritual leaders can be found in Michael Kew *Coast Salish Ceremonial Life: Status and Identity in a Modern Village*. PhD Dissertation, Department of Anthropology, (Seattle: University of Washington, 1970) p. 225.

hunter (*tewí:t*), fisher (*sth'óth'eqwí*), basket-maker, carver, ritualist (*syewíl*), shaman (*shxwlá:m*), healer (*lhalhewéleq*), undertaker, weaver, canoe-maker, house-builder, story teller, or warriors (*stómex*). Such "experts" achieved their position through special training. Some got their expertise through the wisdom gained with age. Most people said they relied on the spiritual help they obtained through their guardian spirit for their expertise.

Figure 40. Selisya, an expert weaver spinning wool with spindle whorl at Xwméthkwiyem. (RBCM).

Men and women were more likely to become an expert in their own area. For example, women often became expert basket-makers and weavers, while men were more often hunters or warriors. Both men and women were story-tellers, shamen and healers. Experts could provide their services in exchange for food or some other kind of property. However, people could not get all their food through practicing their expertise full-time. Expert weavers still gathered berries and expert canoe makers still went fishing.

Family Feasts and Giving Feasts (Potlatching)

The most important social institution of *Stó:lō* people was the feast. *Stó:lō* people gathered in their plank-houses and pithouses with family and friends to share food and wealth. Sometimes people hosted their in-laws at small family feasts (*tl'e'áxel*). Other times the host family threw a big potlatch or *stl'éleq* ("giving feast") where much food and wealth was given away to the guests, who were witnesses to some important event. Sharing food reinforced the bonds and obligations between extended families and provided a place for expression of social status and spiritual life.

Family Feasts (Tl'e'áxel) - Families often visited their in-laws for a family feast. The visiting family would bring some food that they had an abundance of - perhaps lots of smoked salmon - to the house of their in-laws. The host relatives invited other people from their house or village to share this food. During the feast, the hosts called speakers to "thank" their visiting relatives for bringing food. Witnesses are also called and asked to remember the generosity of their in-laws. The visiting family who brought the food to share could expect their in-laws to return the favour in kind some day. They might get a visit a few months later with their in-laws bringing many smoked clams or some other surplus food.[51]

These regular visits to in-laws gave people the opportunity to share their wealth. Good or wealthy families were expected to be generous in giving gifts in "thanks" for food. The more generous a family was, the more prestige and status they gained in the community. Importantly, these feasts served as a sort of "banking" system. The gifts of food and wealth exchanged between families at these events brought non-local or exotic foods into areas where they were normally unavailable. For example, a family who lived at *Stsewéthen* near the mouth of the Fraser River might have access to clams. They would bring these clams (fresh or dried) to their relatives living upriver, for example at *Chawéthel*. The shellfish would be accepted by the host family and some other food or gift,

---

[51] A very insightful discussion of the importance of feasting with your in-laws can be found in Wayne Suttles (1960), 1987, Pp.15-25.

perhaps wind-dried salmon, would be given in return at a later date. This banking was important when there was a shortage of resources in a year, or if a family wanted to call in their debts for holding a giving feast, or potlatch.

Potlatching - (Stl'éleq) - Many societies on the Northwest Coast are famous for their extravagant give-aways. The *Stó:lō* held these events, called *stl'éleq* in *Halq'eméylem*, which has the meaning "to give" implied in word. Host families would invite guests from many communities to take part in the event. Guests were usually relatives and important people from non-related families. The event was often held over several days, with the host family providing food (which was collected from the host family and all the in-laws they had "banked" with) and entertainment for the people attending. Contests and sporting events were organized. People sang and played *slehà:l* in the evenings.[52]

Figure 41. A big potlatch (BCARS)

Usually there was some kind of "work" to be done, like a naming or marriage. During the work, families would hire a speaker to speak on their behalf. The speaker was usually covered with a blanket across the shoulder to show the respect the family had for him or her. The speaker called witnesses to remember what happened at the event. These witnesses were given a small gift to acknowledge the responsibility they were being given. The speaker then went on to announce the work that was going to be done. Families made claims to names, announced or conducted marriages, honored some deceased ancestor in a funeral or memorial, or made a claim to use some exclusively owned resource (such as a fishing spot or a song). Families who wished to give their work further ceremonial weight organized the sacred masked *sxwó:yxwey* dance, or *syilméxwtses* rattle ceremony.[53]

Once the work was done and everybody fed, the hosts would hold a "give-away", where the guests were given all kinds of wealth. These ranged from beautifully carved house-posts, to canoes, baskets, blankets, to quantities of preserved food, right down to the dishes and utensils people ate from. Selfish or stingy families were not as well respected (or as high status) as those who wanted to give everything away. Of course, those who had received beautiful gifts in "thanks" for attending the potlatch, could be expected to, at some point in the future, similarly honour their hosts during their own potlatch.

Potlatches were also a time when disputes could be resolved. Parties who had some disagreement would make their claims in front of the witnesses called. Other speakers could get up and challenge the claims being made. The party with the grievance against them often had to give away much of their wealth (either right then or at a future potlatch) to make up for their mistakes and reaffirm their own status and worth.

---

[52] See Lynn Maranda *Coast Salish Gambling Games* National Museum of Man Mercury Series, Canadian Ethnology Service Paper No. 93 (Ottawa: National Museums of Canada, 1984) for a discussion of *slehà:l* and other games played at potlatches.

[53] See Wayne Suttles "The Halkomelem Sxwayxwey" *American Indian Art Magazine* 1982 8(1):56-65 for a description and discussion of this important ceremony.

Exchange

Exchanging of food and resources was an integral part of the practices, culture and traditions of the *Stó:lō*. Exchange operated on both a local and regional level. Locally, much of the exchange operated through family feasts and informal exchange of goods between close relatives. Potlatches and other large events provided an opportunity to exchange with people who were more distantly related or who lived further away. A great variety of items were exchanged, from rare stones used in making tools to slaves who were brought far from their home villages.

The Fraser River and its many tributaries were, of course, the major artery for trade among the different *Stó:lō* communities and between *Stó:lō* people and their neighbours. However, trails were also made and maintained through mountain passes, providing overland routes to neighbouring river valleys. *Stó:lō* people often traveled to distant places to visit their relatives and exchange goods, or were hosts to people that came up or down the Fraser River to visit them.

Exotic objects found in *Stó:lō* archaeological sites provides evidence that items were exchanged over a very wide territory. Scientific tests have shown that obsidian (a rare, natural volcanic glass used for stone tool making) found in archaeological sites on the Fraser River was exchanged from as far away as southeastern Oregon. Dentalia and abalone shells reached *Stó:lō* territory from the west coast of Vancouver Island and native copper was imported in from either northern Vancouver Island or the Interior. Indian hemp, which was important for making strong ropes, was traded with the groups from the dry Interior. Goods passed from one family to another over these very wide exchange networks.

Figure 42. Dentalia shells obtained from the deep waters off the west coast of Vancouver Island, recently excavated in Stó:lō territory by UBC archaeologists (G. Mohs, 1992).

Conflict

Raids were generally a retaliation for some harm done to a family or individual, or a slave raid on a distant community. Raids were often initiated by men who possessed the spirit power of the hornet or other aggressive animals. Often their own families were afraid of them. As Elder Edmund Lorenzetto explained in 1949, "the leader of a war party was... a cranky person. He don't care, he's on the fight all the time. Most people didn't like him because they couldn't trust him. If he got mad he killed."[54]

The *Stó:lō* used their intimate knowledge of the natural environment for defensive purposes. For example, villages were sometimes built on narrow twisting sloughs making them inaccessible to the larger ocean canoes. Wet boggy marshlands around Sumas Lake provided natural defense against strangers, and a giant whirlpool in the Fraser River just below Yale is known to this day as "the protector" because of the way coastal raiders were sucked into it.

---

[54] See Wilson Duff's unpublished field notes (copy at Stó:lō Nation Archives, Sardis). See also Duff,1952, p. 96.

During the mid 1800's, the *Kʷakʷala* speaking people of southern Johnstone Strait (called *Yéqwelhta* in *Halq'eméylem*) provided the greatest threat to the *Stó:lō*. They traveled up the Fraser River in their large ocean canoes on slave raids, capturing women and children from numerous *Stó:lō* villages, and killing many others in the process. Although raiding ended in the mid-19th century, as late as the 1940's people still bore resentment against decedents of those who had raided their village in the previous century.

Figure 43. Warriors landing on a village, painting by Paul Kane (Stark Foundation wwc54, crIV-515).

Life Cycle - Birth, Childhood, Adolescence, Adulthood, Death

The "life cycle" is the normal course of events which people in any culture go through. The specific life histories of individuals varies from person to person, but there are general trends which can be followed for most people in a culture. This kind of description of a life cycle is intended to give an idea of what life is like for people at various stages of their lives. It documents what roles people play at different ages, and some of the differences in roles between men and women at a single age. However, this kind of description misses much of the richness and variety in a person's life. It tends to be very "normal", and often fails to acknowledge so many experiences people have. Thus, the following description should be taken as a kind of "thumb-nail sketch" of the lives of *Stó:lō* people in the early to middle 1800's.[55]

Birth - Births occurred in the home with the aid of a trained mid-wife. All family members were required to leave the house while the woman was in labour. After their birth, babies were swathed tightly and placed in a cradle. Prior to the early 19th century, boards were frequently used to carefully shape an infant's skull. This cranial deformation did not physically harm a child, and children would grow up with distinctively shaped heads. To mark a birth, high-status families held special ceremonies where *sxwó:yxwey* dancers performed, meals were shared, and gifts exchanged. All babies were given pet names and presented with proper names later in life.

Childhood - Spiritual "training" stared early in life. Children were awakened before dawn and sent to a spot in a river or creek to take a cold bath. They spent a lot of time with their grandparents, who raised them while their parents were away fishing, gathering, or hunting. They were taught their family history, moral behavior, and given "advice" on becoming a good adult.

Figure 44. Elder Dan Milo taught Stó:lō history and culture to many children

Adolescence - The passage from childhood into adolescence was formally marked with a puberty ceremony. For a boy, this occurred at the first sign that his voice was changing, or after he made his first kill hunting game. A girl was given a ceremony when she had her first menstrual period.

---

[55] Another excellent description of this life-cycle can be found in Diamond Jenness chapter "The Cycle of Life", 1955 Pp. 75-85; Charles Hill-Tout "Curious and Interesting Marriage Customs of Some of the Aboriginal Tribes of British Columbia" *American Antiquarian and Oriental Journal* Vol 24, 1902 Pp. 85-87; Joanne Schriver and Eleanor Leacock "Harrison Indian Childhood" in *Indians of the Urban Northwest* edited by Marian Smith (New York: AMS Press, 1949) Pp. 195-242; Suttles, "Central Coast Salish", 1990;

Both ceremonies involved seclusion with Elder family members, who provided them with more formal training, and determined which ancestor they most closely resembled in temperament and personality. It was believed that their ancestor's spirit was "working" with the child. The seclusion and training process was followed by a public ceremony where the corporate kin group would recognize the child's changed status. At the puberty ceremony the adolescence usually received the proper name of their ancestor they most resembled.

Throughout adolescence, people continued their training. They were taught the skills required in life, such as fishing, hunting, gathering, tool making, basket weaving, and carving. Towards the end of adolescence, they often went on their "spirit quest." This was a very important event in someone's life, where he or she received a "guardian spirit" which would help them throughout their life.

Adulthood - A person entered adulthood when they received an adult name. A high-status person received several names throughout their life, often being given a different name by relatives who lived in other villages. The lives of adults were rich in their diversity. The spring, summer, and fall were primarily occupied by participating in subsistence activities, while winters were spent engaging in ceremonial life and fulfilling family ritual responsibilities. For example, many people concentrated on the training and nurturing of their spiritual powers during the winter.

Stó:lō marriages occurred at a relatively younger age than in contemporary Canadian society. After preliminary negotiations between families, the boy was sent to the home of a girl of equal status (usually in another village). His arrival was regarded as an official marriage offer. The boy sat outside the girl's home for three days and nights, and was totally ignored by everyone, while the girl's family deliberated on the marriage proposal. If after three days the girl and her family were in agreement, the boy was invited into the house for a meal. If not, the boy was sent home. Marriage ceremonies were celebrated by a large gathering, and involved a cleansing ceremony which often included masked *sxwó:yxwey* dancers. Parents exchanged gifts at this time, including non-material items like the right to use names or access fishing locations.

Older upper-class people were treated with a great deal of respect, and listened to for their knowledge and wisdom. They also had many responsibilities involved with the raising and teaching of their grandchildren and passing down of information.

Death - When a person died, they were put in the fetal position, wrapped with blankets, and ceremoniously placed in the family grave-box. These tombs were located away from the village and positioned above ground in specially constructed platforms in the trees. If someone died while away from their winter village, their body was wrapped and placed on a temporary platform until the bones could be relocated and placed in the family grave box. Occasionally, prestige items (which would be of use in the spirit world), were included in the grave-box. Only undertakers who had received specific training and the proper spirit power were able to handle corpses.

Figure 45. Grave posts at Spopetes (BCARS)

Large funeral gatherings were held to mourn the deceased. At these ceremonies, some of the deceased's possessions were ritualistically burned by special spiritual leaders, while others were

distributed among the guests. At the subsequent feast, gifts were given to witnesses by the mourning family. The name of the deceased was not spoken for several years after their death because of fear that dead may return and bother somebody among. Family members would eventually pass on the name and other inherited privileges of an esteemed ancestor. After death, the soul of the deceased stayed in the land of the living, residing in the corners and shadows of our world. The soul was eventually reincarnated into some future grandchild, who had many of the qualities or characteristics of his or her ancestor.

Philosophies and Beliefs - Oral Traditions & Spirituality

Oral Traditions

The *Stó:lō* expressed their understanding of the world through oral narratives. These traditions were key to knowing who a person was and how they fit into the physical, social, and spiritual world. Oral narratives took two distinct forms -- *sqwélqwel,* "true stories or news," and *sxwōxwiyám,* "stories from the Transformer period." *Sqwélqwel* were frequently stories about a person's life history. They could also be recollections of recent historical events that they or people they knew would recall. *Sxwōxwiyám* are often referred to as "legends." *Sxwōxwiyám* relate a great number of stories from the mythical past when the world was different, and humans and animals transformed back and forth. These are the stories of the Mink, Beaver, Mouse, Frog, Skunk, Crane, and other characters. During this age the *Xexá:ls,* the Transformers (referred singularly as *Xá:ls*), traveled through the land permanently transforming these legendary beings into rocks and animals, creating the world as it exists today. These stories embodied the teachings, history, knowledge and collective wisdom of *Stó:lō* culture.[56]

Spirituality

Stó:lō people are taught to respect the spirit world and everything on earth. Teachings also emphasize the importance of giving respect to other people's beliefs. *Stó:lō* spirituality takes many forms. Today, it is most formally expressed in the winter dance ceremony. Many hundreds of *Stó:lō* people participate in the winter dance, which is held in plank house-style buildings commonly called "smokehouses."[57]

---

[56] See chapter "Spoken Literature", this volume for more information. Excellent accounts of Stó:lō oral narratives can be found in Geraldine Appleby *Tsawwassen Legends* (Vancouver: Typescript, U.B.C. Special Collections, 1961); Boas, 1895; Helen Codere "The Swai'xwe Myth of the Middle Fraser River: The Integration of two Northwest Coast Cultural Ideas" *Journal of American Folklore* 1948 61(239):1-18; Duff, 1952; Brent Galloway "An Upriver Halkomelem Mink Story: Ethnopoetics and Discourse Analysis", Papers for the 31st International Conference on Salish and Neighboring Languages, Vancouver 1996; Hill-Tout, 1978; Jenness, 1955; Norman Lerman *Folktales of the Lower Fraser* (Sardis: typescript on file Stó:lō Nation Archives, 1955); Hank Pennier *Chiefly Indian: The Warm and Witty Story of a British Columbia Half Breed Logger* (West Vancouver: Graydonald Graphics, 1972); James Tait "Tales from the Lower Fraser River" *Folk-Talkes of the Salishan and Sahaptin Tribes* edited by Franz Boas (New York: American Folk-Lore Soceity, 1917); Oliver Wells *The Chilliwacks and Their Neighbours* (Vancouver: Talonbooks, 1987); Oliver Wells *Myths and Legends of the STAW-loh Indians of South Western British Columbia* (Sardis, 1970)

[57] A great deal has been written on the topic of *Stó:lō* spirituality. See Pamela Amoss *Coast Salish Spirit Dancing: The Survival of an Ancestral Religion* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1978); Wolfgang Jilek *Indian Healing:*

Figure 46. Smokehouse at Sq'ewqéyl, photo by Brian Thom, 1994.

Becoming a winter dancer involves a lifetime commitment and dedication to spiritual beliefs. As such, it is taken very seriously, and not everyone becomes a "dancer." Once committed to leaving their old lives behind, they are under the care and guidance of a spiritual leader for the duration of the winter season. New dancers spend the first few weeks secluded in a "tent" made of blankets, and most of their time praying, fasting, and connecting with the spirit. Because of their seclusion, limitation of activities, and required special training to help deal with their new spiritual existence, they are referred to as "babies." They must be committed to abstaining from alcohol and drugs, and all other "outside" influences and activities. Most of their time is spent close to nature. In particular, much of the daytime is spent in the mountains, beginning with a bath and then meditating, and walking in the woods and along the streams. The rest of the time they stay in the smokehouse, and at times, traveling to other smokehouses to sing, dance, and learn from their Elders. After receiving their song, when the song and spirit are new to them, they require constant guidance and training by more experienced dancers about the proper way to care for and understand "what they have." For the remaining season, new dancers strengthen their spiritual knowledge and understanding by singing, dancing, and learning from their spiritual leaders.

In subsequent winters seasons, when they have more experience with their spirit, dancers will not necessarily need to sing their song every night, but they do return to the smokehouse to further learn about their new life and assist new initiates. The teaching learned in the smokehouse is about helping one another, and helping those who come to the smokehouse to understand more about the spiritual teachings of our Elders and how to put these teachings into everyday living.

Stó:lõ Traditional Culture Today and in the Future

This short "ethnography", or account of traditional *Stó:lõ* culture does little to demonstrate the vibrant culture of people today. We may ask, "are *Stó:lõ* people still living as they did 200 years ago?", "have the *Stó:lõ* assimilated into Canadian society?" A visit to an Indian reserve or a look through any local newspaper will answer "no" to both these questions. The culture is neither static nor unchanged. *Stó:lõ* cultural practices continue to shift and change while at the same time *Stó:lõ* traditions provide a strong link with the land and the past. Present-day *Stó:lõ* leaders are providing direction for the future that is based upon their traditional culture. They are trying to re-create healthy communities, to restore cultural values, and to promote the rights and freedoms that Aboriginal people have been guaranteed under the Canadian Constitution. *Stó:lõ* traditional culture continues to provide a way for *Stó:lõ* people to understand and live in the contemporary world.[58]

Shamanic Ceremonialism in the Pacific Northwest Today, (Surrey: Hancock House, 1992); Michael Kew and Della Kew "'People Need Friends, It Makes Their Minds Strong': A Coast Salish Curing Rite", in *The World is as Sharp as a Knife: An Anthology in Honour of Wilson Duff.* Edited by Donald Abbott (Victoria: British Columbia Provincial Museum, 1981); Michael Kew "Central and Southern Coast Salish Ceremonies Since 1900" in *Handbook of North American Indians. Volume 7, Northwest Coast,* edited by Wayne Suttles (Washington: Smithsonian Institution Press, 1990); Kew, 1970; Wayne Suttles "Spirit Dancing and the Persistence of Native Culture among the Coast Salish" (1987) in *Coast Salish Essays* (Vancouver: Talonbooks, 1987) Pp. 199-208.

[58] There are a number of excellent works which document Stó:lõ culture in the later half of this century. See Crisca Bierwert *Tracery in the Mistlines: A Semiotic Account of Sto:lo Culture.* PhD Dissertation, University of Washington

Suggested Reading:

Pamela Amoss *Coast Salish Spirit Dancing: The Survival of an Ancestral Religion*. (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1978).

Geraldine Appleby *Tsawwassen Legends*. unpublished typescript (Vancouver: U.B.C. Special Collections, 1961).

Homer Barnett *The Coast Salish of British Columbia*. Studies in Anthropology 4 (Eugene: University of Oregon Press, 1955).

Homer Barnett "The Coast Salish of Canada" *American Anthropologist* 1939 40:118-141.

Crisca Bierwert *Tracery in the Mistlines: A Semiotic Account of Sto:lo Culture*. PhD Dissertation, (Seattle: University of Washington 1986).

Franz Boas "The Indian Tribes of the Lower Fraser River", Report of the 64th Meeting of the British Association for the Advancement of Science, 1894, Pp. 454-463.

Franz Boas, *Indian Myths and Legends from the North Pacific Coast of America*. Translated from *Verhandlungen der Berliner Gesellschaft für Anthropologie, Ethnologie und Urgeschichte*. by Dietrich Bertz, edited by Randy Bouchard and Dorothy Kennedy (Victoria: B.C. Indian Language Project, 1982 (1895)).

Randy Bouchard and Dorothy Kennedy "Tsawwassen Ethnography and Ethnohistory" in *Archaeological Investigations at Tsawwassen, B.C.* edited by Arcas Consulting (Port Coquitlam: Arcas Consulting Ltd, 1991).

Helen Codere "The Swai'xwe Myth of the Middle Fraser River: The Integration of two Northwest Coast Cultural Ideas", *Journal of American Folklore* 1948 61(239):1-18.

Wilson Duff, *The Upper Stalo Indians of the Fraser Valley, British Columbia*. (Victoria: British Columbia Provincial Museum, 1952).

Norman Feder "Incised Relief Carving off the Halkomelem and Straits Salish" *American Indian Art Magazine* 1983 8(2):46-53.

Brent Galloway "An Upriver Halkomelem Mink Story: Ethnopoetics and Discourse Analysis", Papers for the 31st International Conference on Salish and Neighboring Languages, Vancouver 1996.

Brent Galloway *A Grammar of Upriver Halkomelem*. Publications in Linguistics 96 (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1993).

Brent Galloway, Albert Phillips and Coqualeetza Elders Group "Stó:lō Geographical Place Names File", unpublished ms. (Sardis: Stó:lō Nation Archives, 1976-1979).

Brent Galloway *Upper Stó:lō Ethnobotany*. (Sardis: Coqualeetza Education Training Center, 1982)

Brent Galloway *Tó:lméls ye Siyelyólexwa: Wisdom of the Elders* (Sardis: Coqualeetza Education Training Center, 1980).

Paula Gustafson *Salish Weaving*. (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1980).

Charles Hill-Tout "Curious and Interesting Marriage Customs of Some of the Aboriginal Tribes of British Columbia", *American Antiquarian and Oriental Journal* 1902 24:85-87.

1986; Oliver Wells *The Chilliwacks and Their Neighbours* (Vancouver: Talonbooks, 1987).

Charles Hill-Tout *The Salish People, Volume III: The Mainland Halkomelem.* edited by Ralph Maud (Vancouver: Talonbooks, 1978).

Charles Hill-Tout "The Salish Tribes of the Coast and Lower Fraser Delta", *Ontario Provincial Museum Annual Archaeological Report* 1905 12:225-235.

Diamond Jenness *Faith of a Coast Salish Indian.* Memoirs in Anthropology Number 3 (Victoria: British Columbia Provincial Museum, 1955).

Diamond Jenness "Coast Salish Mythology", VII-G-9M, Box 39, F.1, (Hull: Canadian Museum of Civilization 1934-1935).

Wolfgang Jilek *Indian Healing: Shamanic Ceremonialism in the Pacific Northwest Today.* (Surrey: Hancock House, 1992).

Elizabeth Johnson and Kathryn Bernick *Hands of Our Ancestors: The Revival of Salish Weaving at Musqueam.* Museum of Anthropology Note 16 (Vancouver: University of British Columbia Press, 1986).

Michael Kew *Coast Salish Ceremonial Life: Status and Identity in a Modern Village.* PhD Dissertation, Department of Anthropology, (Seattle: University of Washington, 1970).

Michael Kew *Sculpture and Engraving of the Central Coast Salish.* Museum of Anthropology Note 9 (Vancouver: University of British Columbia Press, 1980).

Michael Kew and Della Kew "'People Need Friends, It Makes Their Minds Strong': A Coast Salish Curing Rite", in *The World is as Sharp as a Knife: An Anthology in Honour of Wilson Duff.* Edited by Donald Abbott (Victoria: British Columbia Provincial Museum, 1981).

Michael Kew "Central and Southern Coast Salish Ceremonies Since 1900", in *Handbook of North American Indians, Volume 7, Northwest Coast.* edited by Wayne Suttles (Washington: Smithsonian Institution Press, 1990).

Eleanor Leacock "The Seabird Community" in *Indians of the Urban Northwest.* edited by Marian Smith (New York: AMS Press, 1949).

Norman Lerman *Folktales of the Lower Fraser.* unpublished ms. (Sardis: Stó:lō Nation Archives, 1955).

Leslie Lincoln *Coast Salish Canoes.* (Seattle: Center for Wooden Boats, 1991).

Lynn Maranda *Coast Salish Gambling Games* National Museum of Man Mercury Series. Canadian Ethnology Service Paper No. 93 (Ottawa: National Museums of Canada, 1984).

Sonny McHalsie and Brian Thom "Halq'eméylem Place Names File", unpublished ms. (Sardis: Stó:lō Nation Archives, 1994-1996).

Donald Mitchell "Prehistory of the Coasts of Southern British Columbia and Northern Washington", *Handbook of North American Indians, Volume 7, Northwest Coast.* edited by Wayne Suttles (Washington: Smithsonian Institution Press, 1990).

Gordon Mohs, "The Upper Sto:lo Indians of British Columbia: An Ethno-Archaeological Review", unpublished ms. (Sardis: Stó:lō Nation Archives, 1990).

Hank Pennier *Chiefly Indian: The Warm and Witty Story of a British Columbia Half Breed Logger.* (West Vancouver: Graydonald Graphics, 1972).

Joanne Schriver and Eleanor Leacock "Harrison Indian Childhood" in *Indians of the Urban Northwest.* edited by Marian Smith (New York: AMS Press, 1949).

Marian Smith "The Nooksack, the Chilliwack, and the Middle Fraser", *Pacific Northwest Quarterly* 1950 4(1):330-241.

Marian Smith "House Types of the Middle Fraser River", *American Antiquity* 1947, 12(4):225-267.

Hilary Stewart *Cedar*. (Vancouver: Douglas and McIntyre, 1984).

Hilary Stewart *Indian Fishing*. (Vancouver: Douglas and McIntyre, 1977).

Hilary Stewart *Stone, Bone, Antler and Shell: Artifacts of the Northwest Coast*. (Vancouver: Douglas and McIntyre, 1996).

Wayne Suttles "Spirit Dancing and the Persistence of Native Culture among the Coast Salish" (1987), in *Coast Salish Essays*. (Vancouver: Talonbooks, 1987) Pp. 199-208.

Wayne Suttles "Linguistic Evidence for Burrard Inlet as Former Halkomelem Territory", papers for the 31st International Conference on Salish and Neighboring Languages, Vancouver 1996

Wayne Suttles "The Shed-Roof House", in *A Time of Gathering*. edited by Robyn Wright (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1991) p. 212-222.

Wayne Suttles, "Persistence of Intervillage Ties Among the Coast Salish" (1963), in *Coast Salish Essays*. (Vancouver: Talonbooks, 1987) Pp. 209-232.

Wayne Suttles: "Linguistic Means for Anthropological Ends on the Northwest Coast" (1965), in *Coast Salish Essays*. (Vancouver: Talonbooks, 1987) Pp. 248-255

Wayne Suttles "Affinal Ties, Subsistence and Prestige Among the Coast Salish" (1960), in *Coast Salish Essays*. (Vancouver: Talonbooks, 1987) Pp. 16-25.

Wayne Suttles "Private Knowledge, Morality and Social Classes among the Coast Salish" (1958), in *Coast Salish Essays*. (Vancouver: Talonbooks, 1987). Pp. 1-15.

Wayne Suttles "The Halkomelem Sxwayxwey", *American Indian Art Magazine* 1982 8(1):56-65.

Wayne Suttles "Productivity and its Constraints - A Coast Salish Case" (1987,) in *Coast Salish Essays*. (Vancouver: Talonbooks, 1987) Pp. 100 - 136.

Wayne Suttles "Central Coast Salish Subsistence" *Northwest Anthropological Research Notes* 1990 24(2):147-152.

Wayne Suttles "Central Coast Salish", in *Handbook of North American Indians Volume 7, Northwest Coast*. Edited by Wayne Suttles. (Washington: Smithsonian Institution Press, 1990).

Wayne Suttles *Katzie Ethnographic Notes*. Anthropology in British Columbia Memoir 3 (Victoria: Royal British Columbia Museum, 1955).

James Tait "Tales from the Lower Fraser River", in *Folk-Talkes of the Salishan and Sahaptin Tribes*. edited by Franz Boas (New York: American Folk-Lore Soceity, 1917).

Brian Thom in collaboration with Edna and Frank Malloway, "Telling Stories: the Life History of Chief Richard Malloway." unpublished ms. (Sardis: Stó:lõ Nation and U.B.C. Department of Anthropology and Sociology, 1994).

Kevin Washbrook *An Introduction to the Ethnobotany of the Stó:lõ People In the Area between New Westminister and Chilliwack on the Fraser River*. unpublished ms. (Sardis: Stó:lõ Nation Archives, 1995).

Ellen Webber "An Old Kwanthum Village - Its People and Its Fall", *American Antiquarian and Oriental Journal* 1899 21:309-314.

Oliver Wells *Salish Weaving Primitive and Modern.* (Sardis, 1970).

Oliver Wells *Myths and Legends of the STAW-loh Indians of South Western British Columbia.* (Sardis, 1970).

Oliver Wells *The Chilliwacks and Their Neighbours.* (Vancouver: Talonbooks, 1987).

Stó:lō Traditional Culture:
A Short Ethnography of the *Stó:lō* People

Humanities 10
Social Studies 10
First Nations Studies 12
Society & the Individual 11/12
Comparative Civilization 12

OLD DRAFT

Brian Thom

Stó:lō **Curriculum Consortium**

December, 1995

Introduction

In the _Halq'eméylem_ language, which is spoken by native people living in the lower Fraser River region, the word "_Stó:lō_" means river. It also means "river people," and is the name for the people who live along the shores and tributaries of the lower Fraser River. This paper is a discussion of the lives of the _Stó:lō_ from the time before they were vastly changed by prolonged contact with non-Natives. Although many of the cultural traditions discussed in this paper are very much in practice today, this paper focuses on the early to mid- 19th century. For this reason, the language used in the paper is largely in the past tense. This usage is in no way an indication that the traditions and culture have all but disappeared. _Stó:lō_ culture is alive and well today.

As the title of this paper indicates, this paper is an ethnography. An ethnography is the kind of work anthropologists write to describe the culture of a people. Ethnographies usually deal with living cultures, while archaeology (another topic altogether) deals with ancient cultures. Thus, this paper has been constructed from the perspective of the anthropologist. One of the goals of anthropology is to describe the many diverse ways of life that people have throughout the world. However, not all the multiple facets of a people's culture, history, and way of living can be described in a single short paper such as this one. Indeed, it may be impossible to even attempt to record the enormous diversity of human experience, even within just one culture. However, anthropologists present the general patterns and features of life at a particular time in ethnographic writing. Such descriptions can provide new knowledge about another way of life and give pause for reflection on one's own way of life.

The description which follows has been made mostly through the generosity and kindness of _Stó:lō_ elders who have shared their knowledge over the years with anthropologists (such as Wilson Duff, Marian Smith, Wayne Suttles, Charles Hill-Tout, Franz Boas, Diamond Jenness, Gordon Mohs and myself), linguists (such as Brent Galloway), and cultural researchers (such as Sonny McHalsie, Oliver Wells, and Randall Paul). The descriptions of _Stó:lō_ life written down by Europeans in the early to middle 19th century provides some additional information (such as the letters and journals of Simon Fraser, the Fort Langley Journals, the journal of John Work, the writings of Rev. Thomas Crosby). The oral traditions of _Stó:lō_ elders still tell about these histories, from the perspective of the Stó:lō themselves. Whenever possible, these _Stó:lō_ elders or cultural resource people should be invited into the classroom to talk about their culture, history and traditions.

This paper is meant to be used along side the other curricula developed by the _Stó:lō_ Curriculum Consortium. The material contained in this section provides a brief introduction to many of the topics that are covered in greater depth or in a more specific context in the other studies. Since the culture and life-ways of a people is so rich and complex, we feel that it is important to use this information in a broader historical context.
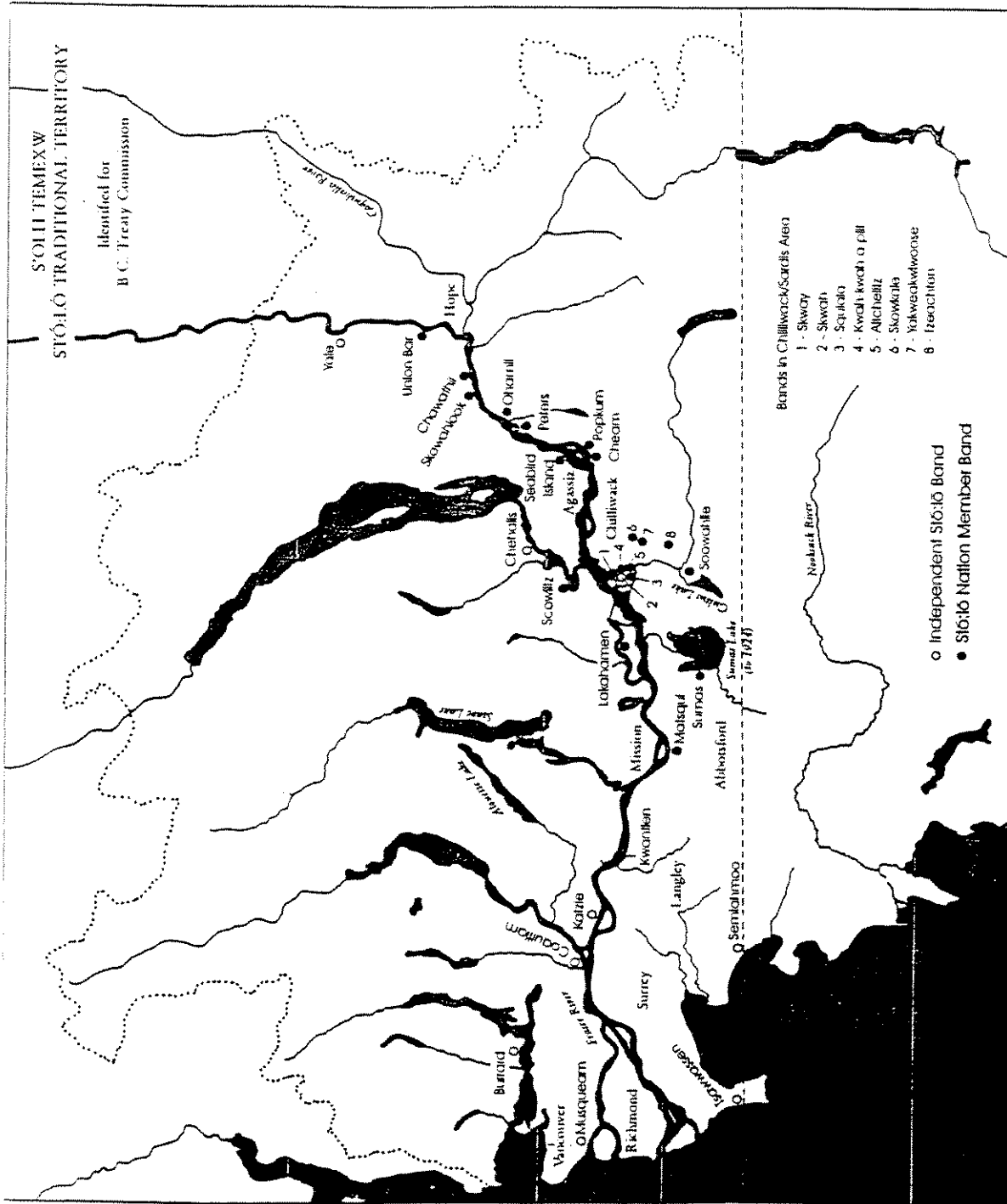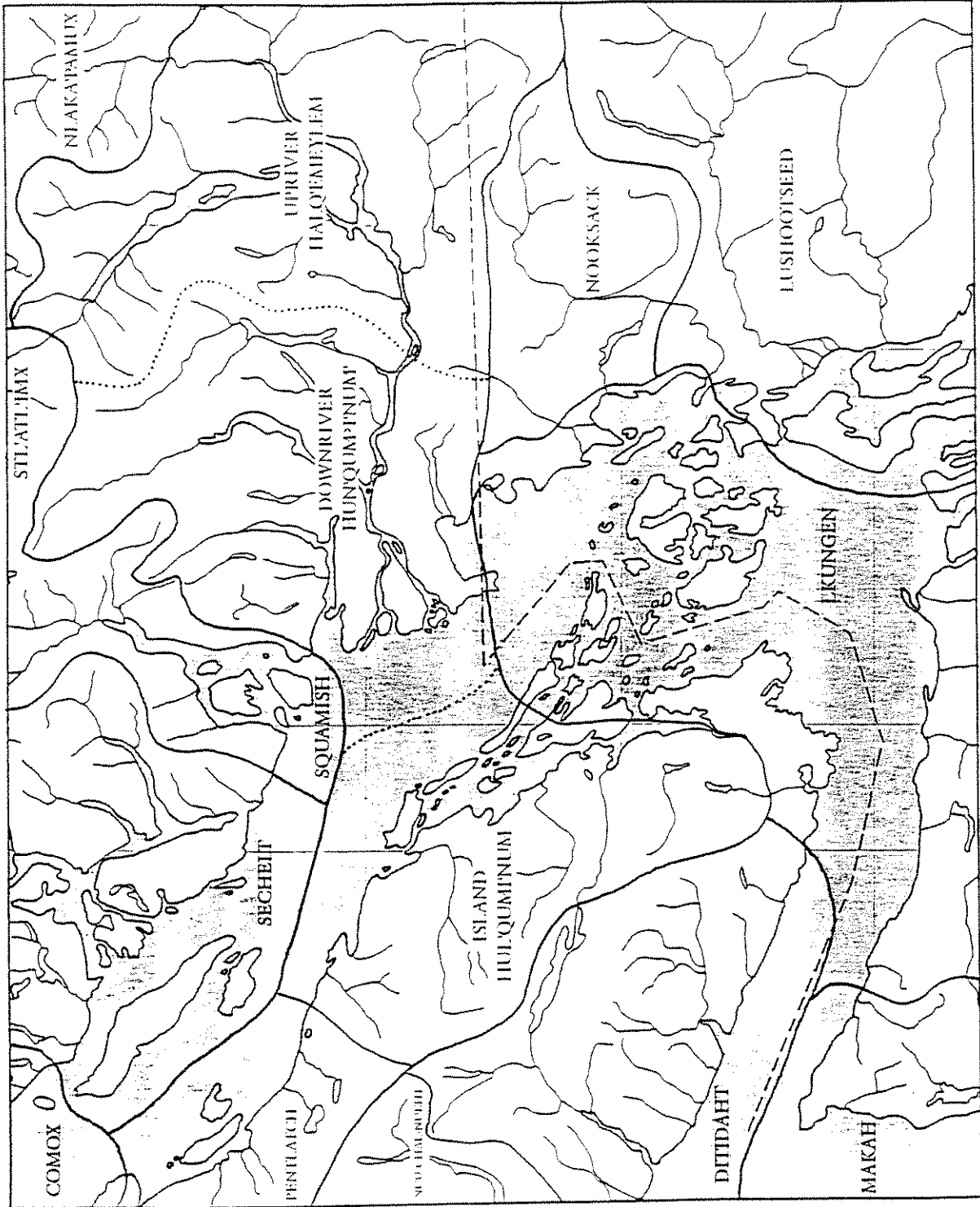
SOIII TEMEXW
STÓ:LÓ TRADITIONAL TERRITORY

Identified for
B.C. Treaty Commission

Bands in Chilliwack/Sardis Area

1 - Skway
2 - Skwah
3 - Squiala
4 - Kwah-kwah-a-pilt
5 - Aitchelitz
6 - Skowkale
7 - Yakweakwioose
8 - Tzeachten

o Independent Stó:lō Band

● Stó:lō Nation Member Band

Yale
Hope
Union Bar
Chawathil
Skawahlook
Ohamil
Peters
Popkum
Seabird Island
Agassiz
Cheam
Cheam
Chehalis
Scowlitz
Chilliwack
Scowlitz
Skowkale
Lakahamen
Mission
Matsqui
Sumas
Abbotsford
Sumas Lake (to 1924)
Chilliwack Lake
Nooksack River
Semiahmoo
Kwantlen
Langley
Katzie
Coquitlam
Surrey
Burrard
Vancouver
Musqueam
Fraser River
Richmond
Tsawwassen
Harrison River
Silver Lake
Stave Lake
Alouette River
Pitt River

Figure 1: Stó:lō Traditional Territory (B. Thom, 1995).

Figure 2: Map of languages spoken in the Coast Salish Region (B. Thom, 1995).

Territory and Language

The traditional territory of the *Stó:lō* includes the entire watershed of the lower Fraser River below: Sawmill Creek in the Fraser Canyon; the headwaters of Nicolum and Silverhope Creeks, and the Coquihalla and Chilliwack Rivers; the Harrison River and Lillooet River below Fire Creek, the headwaters of the Stave, Pitt, Indian and Capilano Rivers. This territory includes all points of land within this watershed to the Fraser River's mouth. This territory is shown on the Map in Figure 1. *Stó:lō* people call this territory *s'olh temexw*, which translates roughly as "our land" or "our world".

The oral traditions of the *Stó:lō* state that they have lived in this area since time immemorial. Archaeological evidence found at a number of sites throughout the region clearly indicates that the roots of *Stó:lō* culture go back as long as people have lived here - at least 10,000 years. The population estimates made for the *Stó:lō* prior to the devastating effects of smallpox (which first struck in 1782) range from 10,000 to 40,000 people. The *Stó:lō* population hit its lowest point in 1929 with about 1,300 people. By 1995, the population has risen back to about 7,000.

In a general sense, *Stó:lō* culture is a part of the larger culture group called "Coast Salish." The term Coast Salish is, in fact, the name for a language family. A language family is a set of languages which are historically connected, usually from some time in the ancient past. Thus, English and German are both part of the same language family, Indo-European, but are indeed very distinct, mutually unintelligible languages. The same holds for the Coast Salish languages, with one being as distinct from the other as English is from German. The languages spoken in the Central Salish branch of the Coast Salish language family include: *Halq'eméylem, Squamish, Sechelt, Pentlatch, Lkungen, Lushootseed, Twana, Nooksack,* and *Clallam*. Each of these languages are common historical roots, but are as distinct as French, German and English. These Coast Salish languages are spoken in an area which covers most of southwest British Columbia and western Washington. Many of these languages are shown in the map on Figure 2.

The *Stó:lō* speak the *Halq'eméylem* language, which translates as "the language of *Leqamel (Nicomen).*"[1] *Halq'eméylem* is traditionally an oral language, in that there is no phonetic or symbolic written tradition. Work by Elders at the Coqualeetza cultural centre over the last 25 years has produced an "orthography," or way of writing the language as it is heard[2]. Very few *Stó:lō* are completely fluent in the language today, although programs are in place to teach it to people.

The *Halq'eméylem* language is also spoken by Aboriginal people living along the eastern coast of Vancouver Island, from Malahat to Nanoose Bay. Within this area there are three dialects which linguists have called "Upriver", "Downriver" and "Island". Each dialect has different sounds and a few different vocabulary words. The Upriver dialect *"Halq'eméylem"* is spoken by the Matsqui, Sumas, Nicomen (Lakahamen), Scowlitz, Chehalis, Chilliwack, Pilalt, and Tait. The Downriver dialect *"Hun'qumʔi'num'"* is spoken by the Musqueam,

Tsawwassen, Saleelwat (Burrard), Kwantlen, Qiqait (New Westminster), Coquitlam, Snokwemelh (Nicomekl), the Katzie. The Island dialect *"Hal'qumi'num"* is spoken by the Nanoose, the Nanaimo, the Chemainus, the Cowichan and the Malahat. Since the *Stó:lõ* live along the shores of the entire lower Fraser River, the people speak either the Upriver or Downriver dialect of *Halq'eméylem*, or *Hun'qum?i'num'*.

All the groups above are commonly called "tribes," and in most cases match present day "Indian Bands." The terms "tribe" and "band" are technical words used by anthropologists to describe particular social groups. In the common use of the terms, they are often though to be interchangeable. The tribes above are not "bands" in the anthropological sense of a small group of nomadic people who forage for their food. What unites these "tribes" above are common sub-dialects of the language, and common place of origin. Thus someone from the Scowlitz "tribe" will have a different pronunciation of *Halq'eméylem* words than someone from the Tait "tribe". Anthropologists commonly use the term "tribe" when referring to a group that has a strong political unification. When used to refer to the *Stó:lõ*, no such higher political body is implied. As the reader can see, "tribe" is a tricky word to use because it has so many implied meanings. This term is probably best left un-used when referring to the *Stó:lõ* people, so as to avoid confusion.

The villages of the *Stó:lõ* were generally located at the junction of two bodies of water - such as a river and a stream. This was practical for both transportation and subsistence activities. The place names maps included with the curriculum show the locations of traditional villages which are located in areas around each school district in the Fraser Valley. The population of these villages varied greatly over the years, and it is difficult to say how large they may have been prior to the smallpox epidemics of 1782. Simon Fraser recorded sighting a village in the Kwantlen area that had a population of over 200 people. The Tait villages encountered however, had less than 50 people in each[3]. Generally, as one travelled up the Fraser River, villages became smaller, but more frequent.

Economy - Fishing, Gathering and Hunting

The Aboriginal people living on the Northwest Coast of North America had developed very complex societies prior to contact with Europeans and Asians. This was due in large part to the region's wealth of food resources. The *Stó:lõ* lived off the rich and bountiful resources of the river and land for many thousands of years. Over the ages, (ie: the last 10,000 years) there have been a number of changes in *Stó:lõ* "subsistence patterns" (or means of getting food). The river has, however, always been the centre of all food extraction and production.

Traditionally, the *Stó:lõ* followed a seasonal round, living in their villages for most of the year, but moving to temporary campsites at various resource extraction locations during parts of the spring, summer and fall. For instance, *Stó:lõ* families who owned fishing rocks in the Fraser Canyon left their winter village for several weeks in the late spring and early fall to catch and dry fish. Hunters and hunting parties travelled into the mountains during the spring, summer and fall to hunt elk and deer. Some men also hunted sea mammals such as

seals, which came up the Fraser River following the spawning salmon and herring. At each of these locations, temporary campsites would be set up that people lived in for many weeks.

Figure 3: A family owned fishing site along the Fraser River (RBCM).

Fishing

Salmon is the most important of all foods for the *Stó:lō*. Several species of salmon are taken from the river, the most important of which are the spring and sockeye. When the first salmon was caught each year, a "First Salmon Ceremony" was held. This ceremony honoured the belief that the salmon has a soul, just like the soul that people have, and that the Salmon People must be acknowledged and thanked for returning each year. In the ceremony, the bones of the first fish caught are put back into the water. In the video "The River is Our Home", Chief Frank Malloway discusses the First Salmon Ceremony.

As the salmon first came up the Fraser River, they were caught by people in canoes mainly with trawl nets. Trawl nets are nets that are strung between two canoes with floats on the top edge of the net and sinker stones on the bottom. This would hold the net open against the current of the river and the wish would then swim in. A trawl net is illustrated in Figure 4.

Further up the river, in the Fraser Canyon, salmon were caught by dip-nets and harpoons, where the fisherman would be poised on a platform or rock above the river. Fish were pulled out of their thick schools by this technique. The men in Figure 5 are dip-netting off of a platform in the Fraser Canyon. Figure 6 illustrates the design of a dip-net, while figure 7 illustrates a typical harpoon. Nets were very precious items, which took days of labour to make. Most every person could afford a dip-net, only the wealthy could afford to make and maintain a large trawl net.

The salmon which spawned in the tributaries of the Fraser River were caught by a variety of methods. Individual people used harpoons, leister spears, gaff-hooks, four-pronged spears, and dip nets to catch fish on these smaller streams. Groups of people - often extended

families - also set up a <u>weir</u> or <u>trawl net</u> on these smaller rivers to catch larger numbers of fish. Figure 8 shows a wooden fish weir that was constructed on the Cowichan River in the same style as those used on the Fraser River.
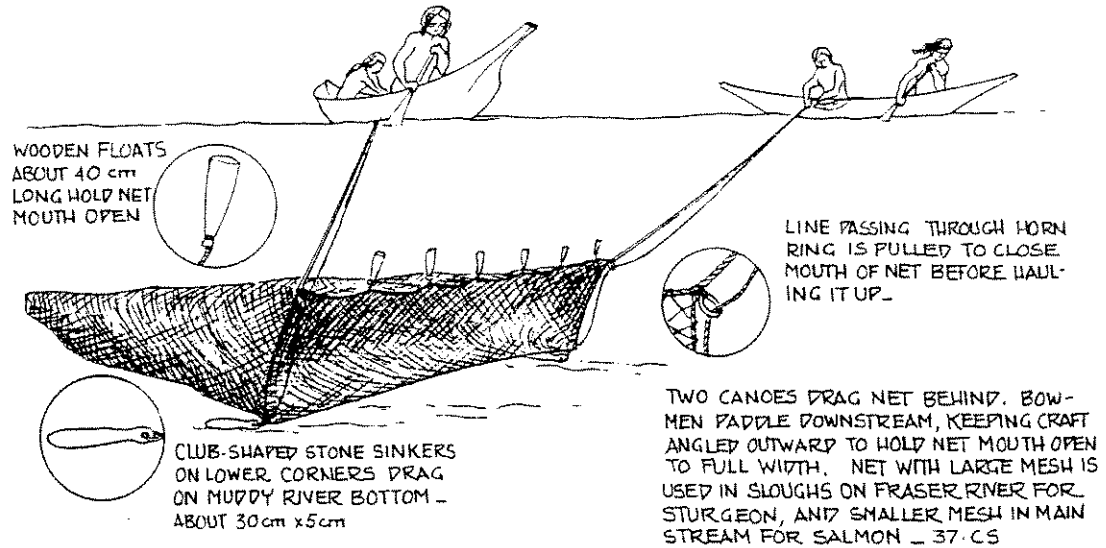

WOODEN FLOATS ABOUT 40 cm LONG HOLD NET MOUTH OPEN

LINE PASSING THROUGH HORN RING IS PULLED TO CLOSE MOUTH OF NET BEFORE HAUL-ING IT UP_

CLUB-SHAPED STONE SINKERS ON LOWER CORNERS DRAG ON MUDDY RIVER BOTTOM_ ABOUT 30cm x5cm

TWO CANOES DRAG NET BEHIND. BOW-MEN PADDLE DOWNSTREAM, KEEPING CRAFT ANGLED OUTWARD TO HOLD NET MOUTH OPEN TO FULL WIDTH. NET WITH LARGE MESH IS USED IN SLOUGHS ON FRASER RIVER FOR_ STURGEON, AND SMALLER MESH IN MAIN STREAM FOR SALMON _ 37·CS

Figure 4. A trawl net used for catching fish in the Fraser (H. Stewart <u>Indian Fishing</u> p. 92).
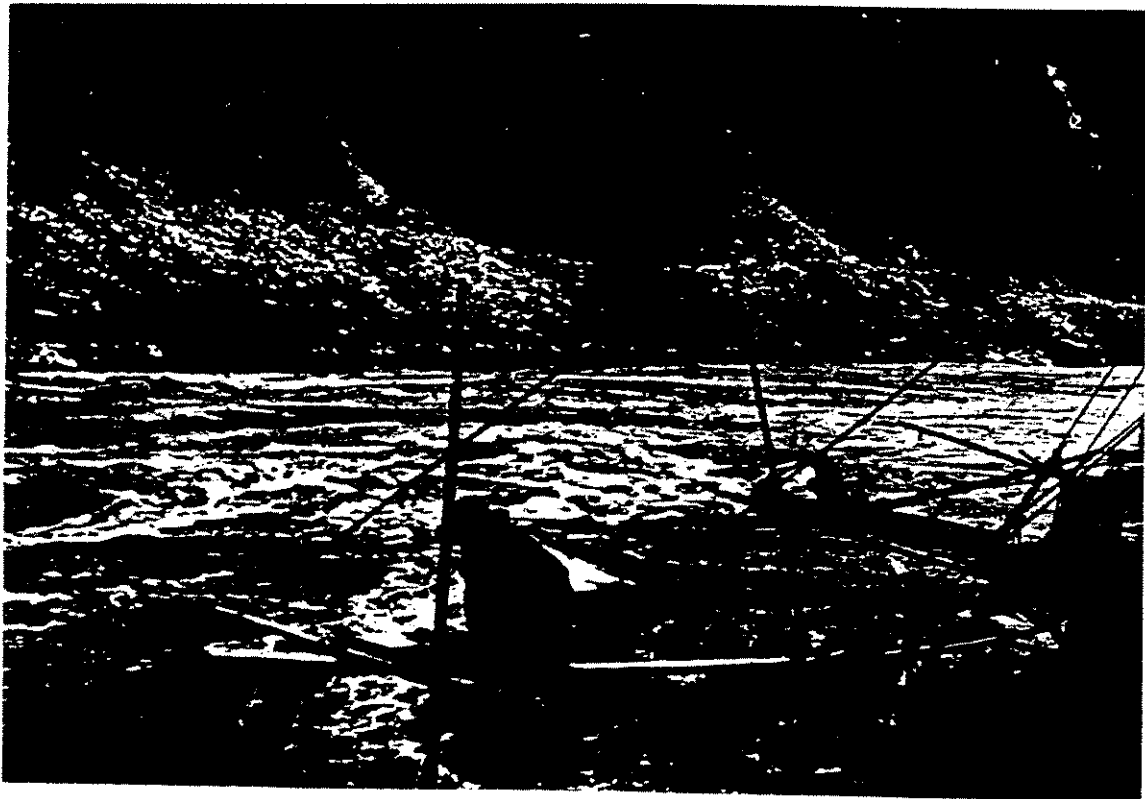
Figure 5. Fishing platforms along the Fraser River from which fishers dip-net salmon (RBCM photo).
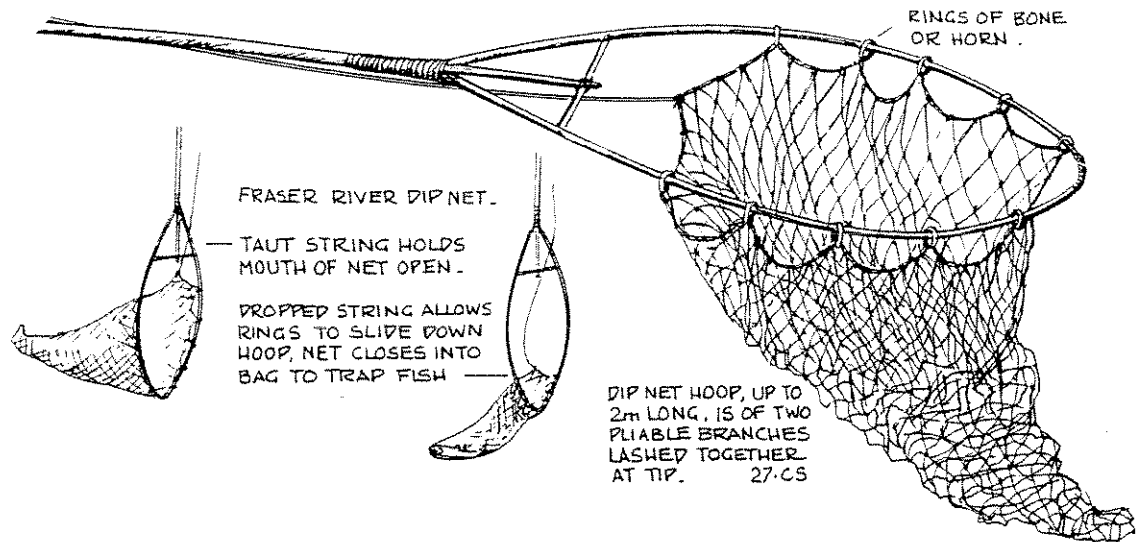
Figure 6. Dip-nets used by individuals to catch fish on the Fraser River (H. Stewart Indian Fishing p. 91).
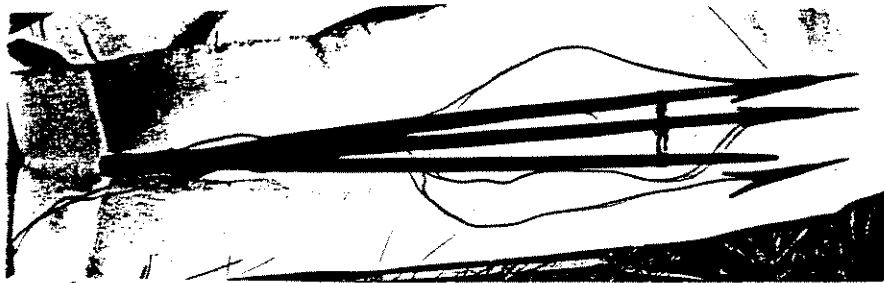
Figure 7. Three-pronged harpoon used to spear large fish on the Fraser River (RBCM photo).

Once the salmon were caught, it was either eaten fresh, smoked or dried. Drying the salmon involved removing the fish head and allowing the fish to bleed. After it had bled for about 10 minutes, it was cut down the back (not the belly),the spine removed, and the fish opened up exposing two fillets. The meat was then scored across the width of the fish for more efficient drying. These cut fish were then hung on the dry-racks for up to three weeks so that the fish would become preserved. The windy Fraser Canyon was ideal for drying salmon. Figure 9 shows a dry-rack with fish hanging on it.

Downriver where the weather was less suitable for drying in this manner, a combination of smoking and drying the fish inside a "smokehouse" was commonly used. A low-burning fire of alder wood was constructed inside a tightly sealed, small, cedar plank house. The fish were hung here to smoke and dry for up to 10 days. These fish took on a very smoky flavour. Figure 10 shows the inside of a smokehouse.
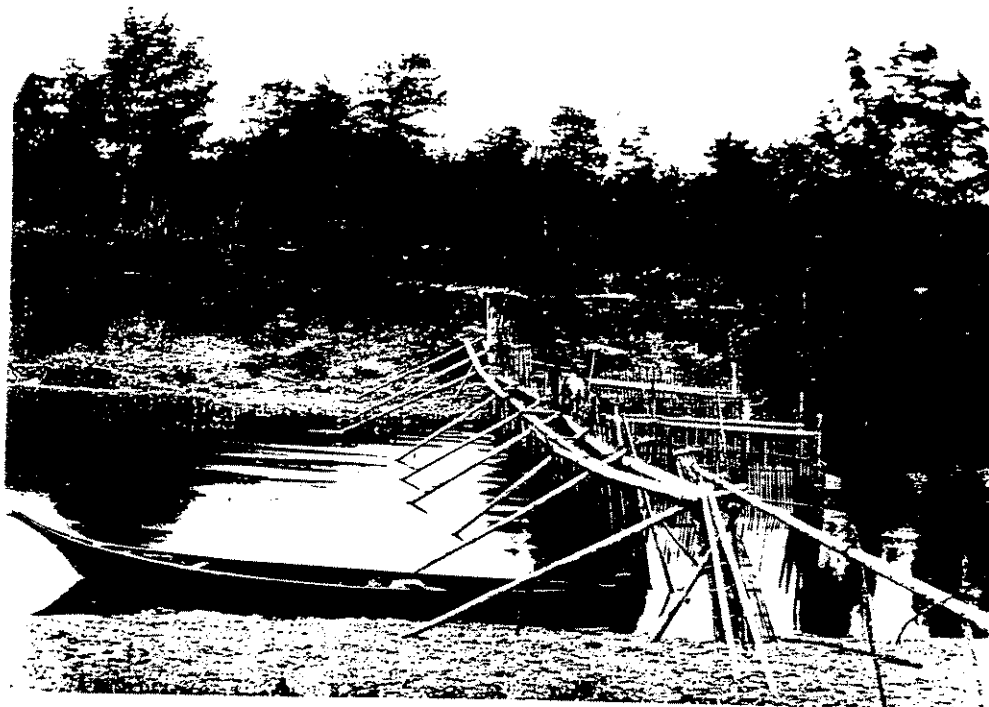
Figure 8. Salmon weir on the Cowichan River (from Dally Album p. 5, RBCM)
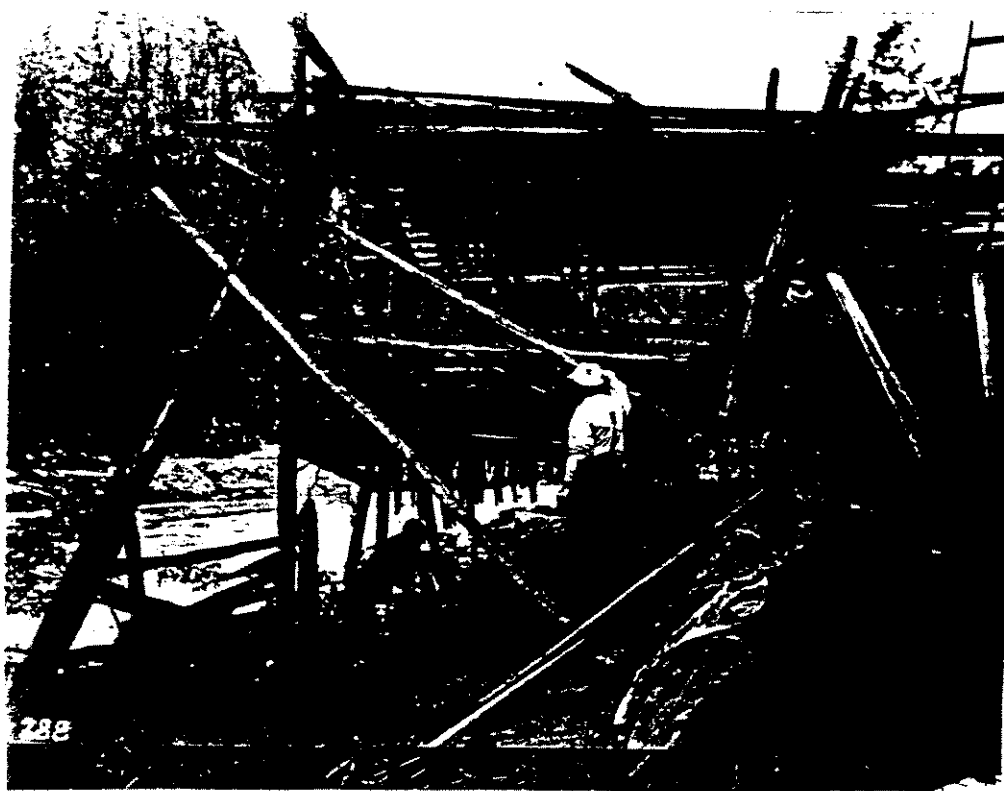
Figure 9. A dry-rack on the shore of the Fraser River where salmon were hung to dry (CMA)

The sturgeon was also a very important fish to the *Stó:lō*. It is an ancient and massive fish, that can weigh up to 1,800 lbs. (810 kg), and is only found in fresh water. The sturgeon was caught in the winter (while they are dormant), using very long spears. In the summer, these fish moved to shallower waters and were either speared or caught in nets or weirs. Sumas Lake was a particularly important location for sturgeon.
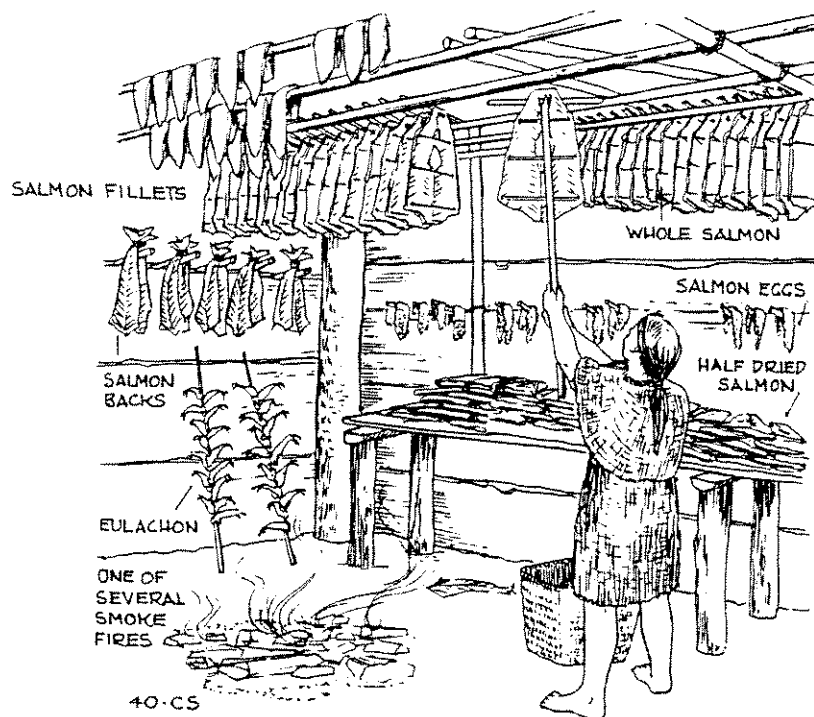
Figure 10. Interior of a smokehouse with fish drying & smoking (H. Stewart Indian Fishing p. 140).

Eulachons were also an important food fish. They were taken as the Fraser River was reaching its maximum flood peak in late March or early May. These fish seldom came past Laidlaw (just west of Hope), but were fished by all *Stó:lō*. The eulachon runs were so massive that the river seemed to boil alive when they ran. Men and women in canoes would take these fish with very small dip nets and preserve them by drying and smoking. Figure 11 shows a row of Eulachons drying on a hazelwood stick.

Some families who lived on or near the salt-water at the mouth of the Fraser River had access to important beaches where valuable inter-tidal resources such as clams and mussels would be harvested. Clams were a major subsistence item for the Stó:lō, particularly in the winter but, they would seldom be the sole source of animal protein. Stored salmon and fresh deer meat were always important staples through the winter months.
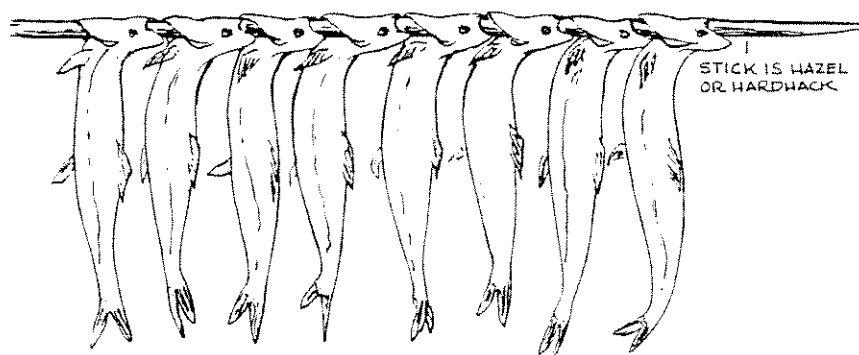
Figure 11. A row of small, dried Eulachons on a Hazelwood stick (H. Stewart Indian Fishing p. 139).

Gathering

Plant foods were also very important in the *Stó:lō* diet. Camas, brake ferns, wapato and wild carrots were the main vegetables that were gathered. Some productive vegetable locations were owned by the women in particular families. These items were very important for trading, as they were often only available in very small areas.

Berries, such as huckleberries, salmon berries, blackberries, salal berries, juneberries, elderberries, cranberries and saskatoon-berries were all collected, usually in the late summer. In order to help the abundant re-growth of berrying areas, fire was set to parts of the fores where berries were known to grow. The person responsible for setting fire to these areas had to also be able to predict heavy rainfall, so the fire would be put out before getting out of control.

Figure 12: Salish Woman digging roots, ca. 1900 (Langley Centennial Museum).

The berries were usually dried or mixed with fish eggs and made into cakes. These preserved berries would allow people to eat fruit throughout the winter months.

A great many plants were also taken for medicinal purposes. For example, the plant Labrador tea, grows in bogs and makes an excellent medicinal tea. A tea made from the wild strawberry plant was often used as a treatment for diarrhoea. Much of the knowledge about which plant to use and how to prepare it was (and is) carefully kept in the family as part of that families own "private knowledge." Elders continue to be consulted today for their knowledge of medicinal plants.

Hunting

Land mammals, birds and sea mammals were obtained by hunting. The *Stó:lō* hunter preferred the meat of the black bear, mountain-goat, deer and elk. Other animals were also taken, but in less quantity. These included groundhog, beaver, racoon, wildcat, squirrel and martin. Hunting techniques varied with each animal. Domesticated hunting-dogs which looked somewhat like a small wolf, were used to hunt deer and bear. These and other game animals including the elk and mountain-goat were hunted with bow and arrow. Deadfalls, which are traps set up to make a log fall on the animal when it takes the bait, were used for smaller fur-bearing animals and bear. A variety of other techniques were used in hunting, which like medicinal plants, were kept private by families that had specialized hunters. The animals which were hunted were sought out not only for their meat, but also for their hides (used for clothing), antler (used in making tools), horn (used for making rattles and other ceremonial items), mountain-goat wool (used in weaving) and beaver teeth (for making sharp carving knives).

Birds were caught in which were suspended from tall poles set in their migration paths, or shot with bows and arrows while in the water. Another method was to set planks across the sides of two canoes and paddle out into the water at night. A small fire was set on the planks, the light from which attracted birds. As the birds flew up to the canoes, the hunters would net them. Important birds obtained for food included ducks, geese, eagles, and grouse.

Seals which entered the Fraser River were hunted by harpoon, leister spear, and sometimes by clubbing. The hunter would take the animal from a position on the shore, in a canoe, or by stalking it on a rock or sandbar in the river.
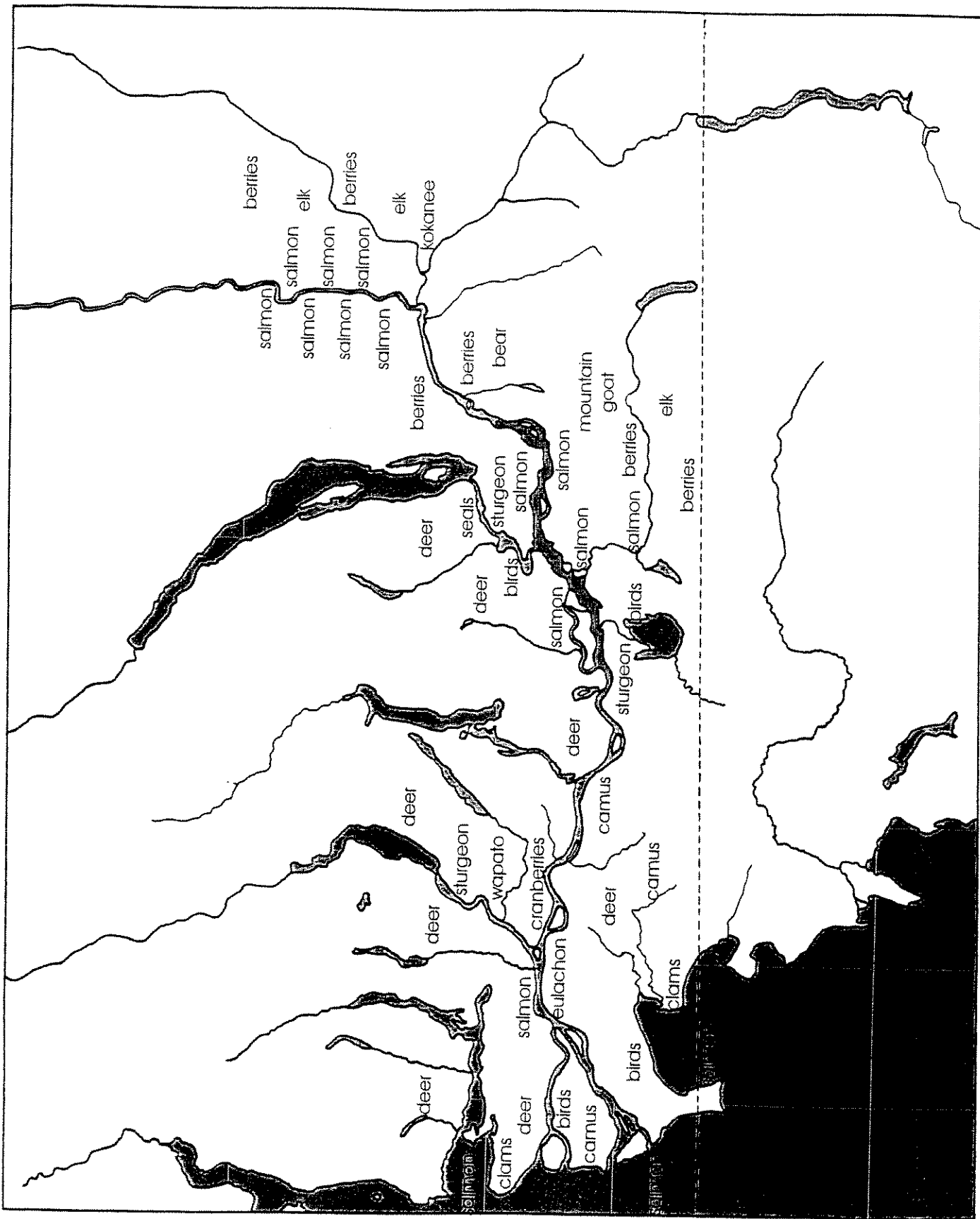
Figure 13.   Map of generalized resource locations in traditional Stó:lō territory (B. Thom, 1995).

1.	Harrison System	Birkenhead River	Aug. 6 - Sept. 1
2.	Sockeye	Weaver Creek	Sept. 11 - Oct. 9
3.		Harrison rapids	Oct. 6 - Nov. 3
4.	Main Canyon	Early Stuart	July 1 - July 28
5.	Sockeye	Bowron, Early Nadina	July 14 - Aug. 11
6.		Late Stuart, Stellako	
7.		Chilko, Seymour	July 29 - Aug. 25
8.		Adams River, Little River, S. Thompson	Sept. 16 - Oct. 14
9.	Harrison	Chehalis River	Oct. 1 - Oct. 27
10.	System Chum	Harrison River	Oct. 27 - Dec. 31
11.	Main Stream	Fraser River, below Hope	Nov. 17 - Dec. 31
12.	Lower Fraser	Chehalis, Harrison R.	Sept. 15 - Oct. 27
13.	Pink	Fraser, below Hope	Aug. 25 - Oct. 7
14.	Coho	Chehalis	Nov. 7 - Jan. 7
15.		Main Canyon	Oct. 6 - Nov. 17
16.	Chinook	Birkenhead	March - May
17.		Harrison River	Oct. 15 - Dec. 1
18.		Main Canyon, early run	Aug. 15 - Sept. 29
19.		Main Canyon, late run	Sept. 15 - Nov. 1
20.	Eulachon		April 24 - May 7
21.	Sturgeon		June 1 - July 15
22.	Steelhead (Coquihalla)		June 25 - Aug. 7
23.	Bracken		April - Aug.
24.	Sagittaria latifolia (wild Potato)		Sept. 22 - Nov. 1
25.	Wild onions		May - June
26.	Wild Tiger Lily - Cow Parsnip		May - June
27.	Camas, salmonberry and thimbleberry shoots		April - May
28.	Hazelnuts		Sept. 1 - Oct. 6
29.	Vaccinium membraneceum (huckleberries)		July - Sept. 1
30.	Vaccinium ovalifolium, parvifolium		Sept.
31.	Salmonberries		June 9 - Aug. 31
32.	Thimbleberries		July 7 - Aug.
33.	W.T. Blackberries		June 3 - Aug. 25
34.	Salal		Aug. 7 - Oct. 27
35.	Oregon Grape		Aug. 10 - Oct. 15
36.	Wild Crabapple		Aug. 18 - Oct. 27
37.	Black & Grizzly bear, summer range		June - Aug.
38.	Black & Grizzly bear, fall range		July - Nov.
39.	Bears hunted in hibernation		Dec. - Feb.
40.	Deer, elk, mountain goat (low elevations)		Oct. - Feb.
41.	Duck and goose migrations		Nov.
42.	Most steelhead runs		Dec. - April

Figure 14. Table of ecological resource variables (Hanson, 1973:37).

Figure 15. Potential nutritional resource variables over a one year period (after Hanson, 1973:39).

Food Preparation and Use

There were a variety of different ways of preparing food. Preservation of foods like fish, berries and animal meat was important for the winters, when less fresh food was available. Smoked and dried fish made up the staple of the diet. As discussed before, many different species of fish were caught, and all of the fish was eaten, including the heads, tails, backbones and roe. Other important preserves included dried deer, elk and bear meat, dried berry-cakes, and rotten "cheezy" fish-eggs. Some vegetable foods such as wild potatoes were eaten fresh all ear around. Others, such as berry shoots, could only be eaten when they were ripe and available.

During a large gathering like a funeral, wedding or naming ceremony, many people in the host's family would bring food to serve the guests. Enough food would be prepared so that everybody could take some home. Wealthier families were able to give out enormous quantities of food for people to return with.

Any family had access to a wider variety of foods than were available in their local fishing, hunting or gathering areas. Surplus food was taken to affinal relatives (family members by marriage) in exchange for other kinds of food or wealth items which would be paid back later at a future family gathering or at a public gathering such as a "potlatch." Thus, people did not only eat the food they were able to catch and prepare themselves, but they were a part of a larger exchange network. This network brought non-local or exotic foods into areas where that food was not available. For example, a family who lived at one of the Musqueam villages at the mouth of the Fraser River might have access to shellfish such as mussels or clams. They would bring these clams (fresh or dried) to their relatives, living, for example, at Seabird Island, who did not have access to clams. The shellfish would be accepted by their in-laws and another object would be presented to them in return. This food exchange was an important part of *Stó:lō* life, as much time and energy was spent visiting relatives or receiving guests with gifts of food.

Transportation

Canoes

Canoeing was the main means of transportation for the *Stó:lō*. Every community was linked by rivers, streams and sloughs. Children learned to canoe from an early age in small canoes (carved by their fathers or uncles). Canoes were used for transportation well into the middle of the 20th century. They were commonly taken on journeys as far away from the Fraser Valley as the Fraser Canyon, Harrison Lake, and the eastern coast of Vancouver Island. This last trip would take two days to complete travelling westward and three days for return.

A number of different kind of canoes were used by the *Stó:lō*, including the "*xwóqw'eletsem*" ("drags its own behind") (Salish-style), "*q'exwó:welh*" ("largest canoe made") (Westcoast)
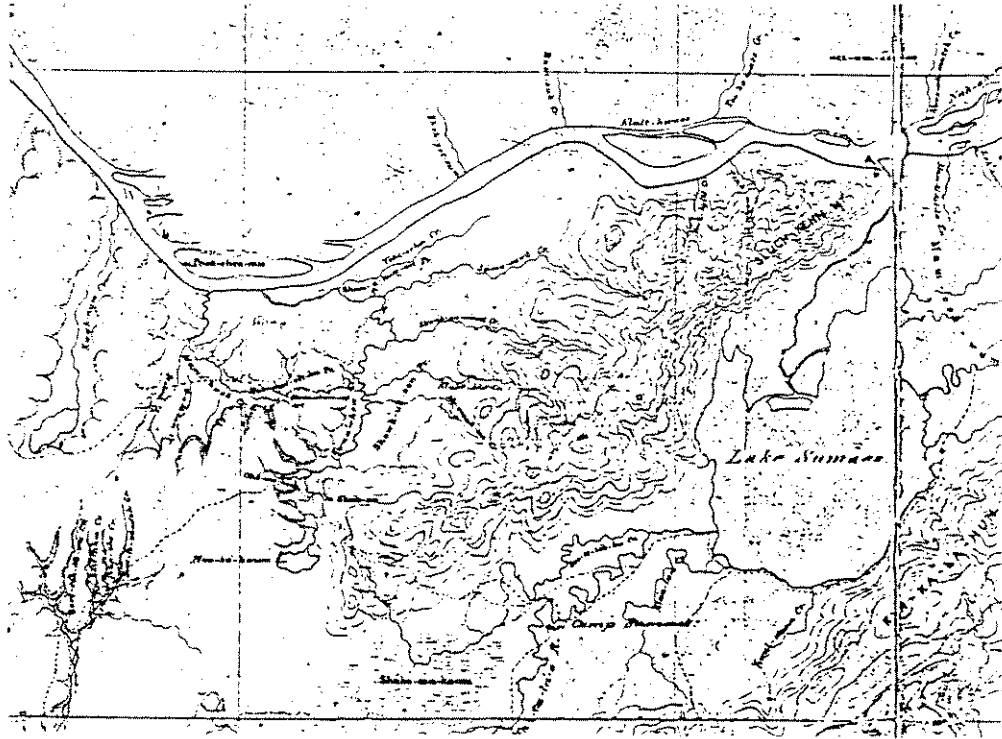
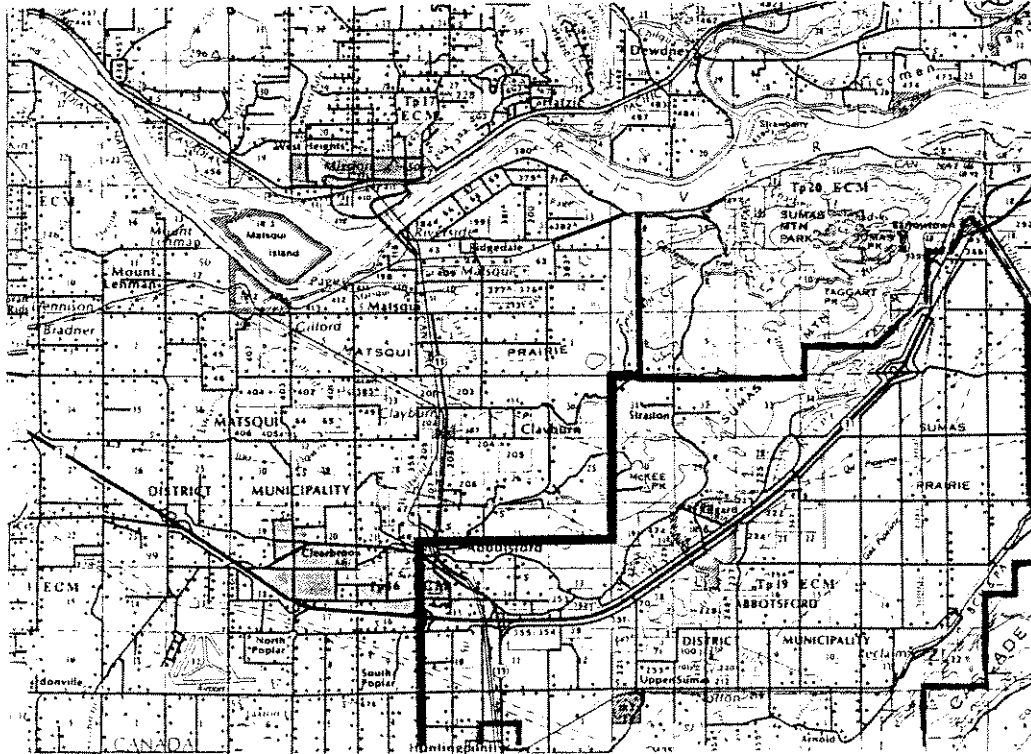*Figure 16. Map of Abbotsford/Sumas area in 1859. Waterways provided main transportation routes.*

Figure 17. Map of Abbotsford/Sumas Area 1995. Roads have replaced waterways for everyday transportation.

and "*tl'elá:y*" (refers to "its ability to shovel onto shore so travellers could step ashore") (shovel-nosed).[4]

The Salish-style canoe was constructed by digging out half a cedar log. This canoe was typically 25-30 feet (7.5 m-9 m) long and 3-4 feet (90cm-120 cm) wide. The bow of the boat was cut into a sharp "v" which extended down the bottom of the vessel, nearly forming a keel. The canoe was low and wide, making it suitable for the rough water of the Fraser River.

The Westcoast canoe was made by the *Stó:lō* and sometimes traded with groups on the west coast of Vancouver Island. This was an excellent ocean-going canoe with a high bow and a long body (up to 40 feet or 12m). Its long body allowed it to hold a great deal of freight and/or passengers.

The shovel-nosed canoe was made out of half a cedar log with a wide, flat bow and stern which projected out over the water. This type was usually 25 to 30 feet (7.5m-9m) long, and built with a low and narrow gunwale. It was ideal for poling over the swift current of the tributaries of the Fraser River.

Figure 18a. Photo of a tl'elá:y (Coast Salish shovel-nosed canoe) (RBCM).
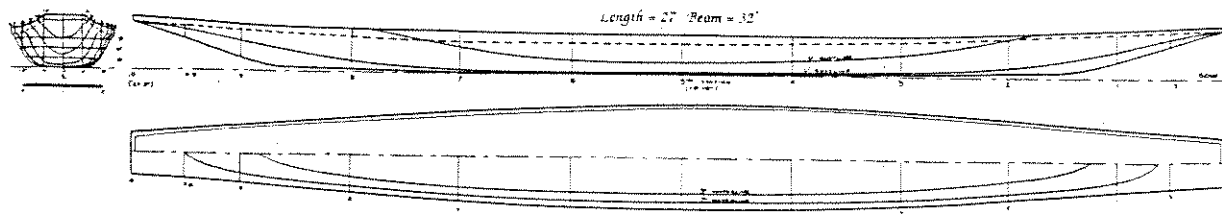
COAST SALISH SHOVEL-NOSE CANOE

Figure 18b. Illustration of a tl'elá:y (Coast Salish shovel-nosed canoe) (Lincoln 1991).
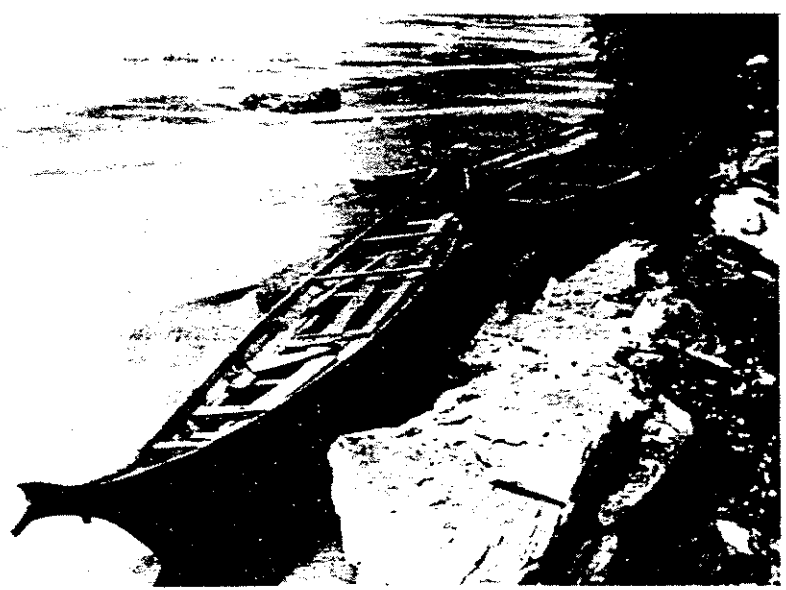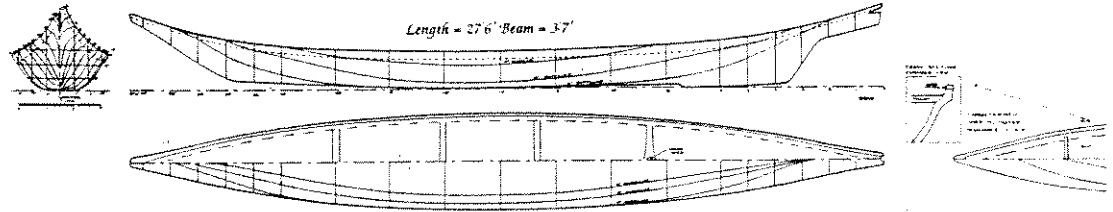

Figure 19a. Photo of a xwóqw'eletsem (Salish-style canoe) (RBCM).

COAST SALISH STYLE CANOE

This classic Coast Salish canoe is housed in storage at the Vancouver Centennial Museum, Vancouver, B.C. Lines taken by Duane Pasco and Leslie Lincoln. Drawn by Lincoln, 1988.

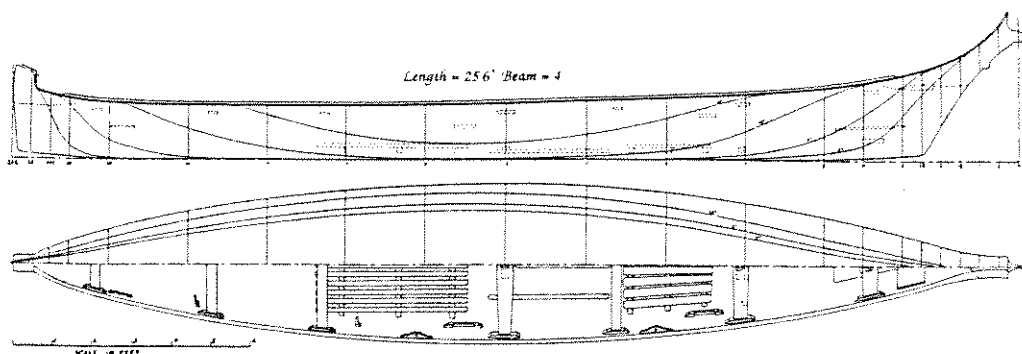*Figure 19b. Illustration of a xwóqw'eletsem (Salish-style canoe) (Lincoln 1991).*

Figure 20. Illustration of a q`eχwó:welh (Westcoast canoe) (Lincoln 1991).

Houses

Large, permanent houses are a distinctive feature of *Stó:lō* culture. Unlike most cultures based on fishing-hunting-gathering, *Stó:lō* people and their Coast Salish neighbours lived large, permanent homes. Winter houses such as the longhouse (*lalem*) and the pithouse (*sqémél*) could hold several families. Summer journeys to visit relatives and family resource locations often required people to stay in temporary, portable shelters. Villages located near excellent resource locations were often occupied all year round.

Longhouses

A wooden-framed, plank-walled house called *"lalem"* in *Halq'eméylem* was the main kind of structure occupied by the *Stó:lō*. In English, these houses are commonly called "shed-roof house" or "longhouse". They had a permanent frame of poles put into the ground and planks lashed to the frame to form a roof and walls. These houses were between 20 and 60 feet (6m-18m) in width and usually double the width in length. Occasionally, these houses were very large. In Simon Fraser's journals, he described a house that was 640 feet (195m) long, 60 feet (18m) wide and 18 feet (5.4m) high. The interior of these houses were divided by hanging mats or other temporary partitions. Elaborately carved houseposts were also frequently found within the buildings. The planks which made up the walls and roofs were owned by individual people and were often taken off the house in the summer, put lengthwise across two canoes, and carried to that person's summer camp.

People slept on benches which were constructed around the edge of the house and their dried food and possessions were stored on rafters above. Each nuclear family had a single fire-pit (hearth), around which they prepared their meals. The families who lived in the house were frequently related, often being a set of brothers or first cousins. The person who slept furthest from the door was the highest status, and people of lower status would be required to sleep closer to the door. Such positioning ensured that household leaders would be the last attacked during a raid.
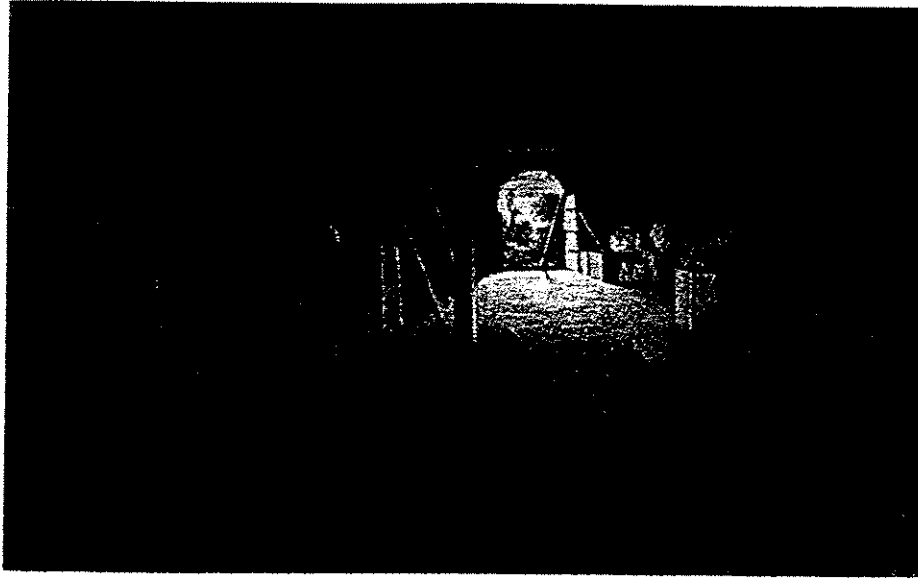
Figure 21. Oil painting by Paul Kane of the interior of a Coast Salish longhouse (Natnl. Gallery of Canada).
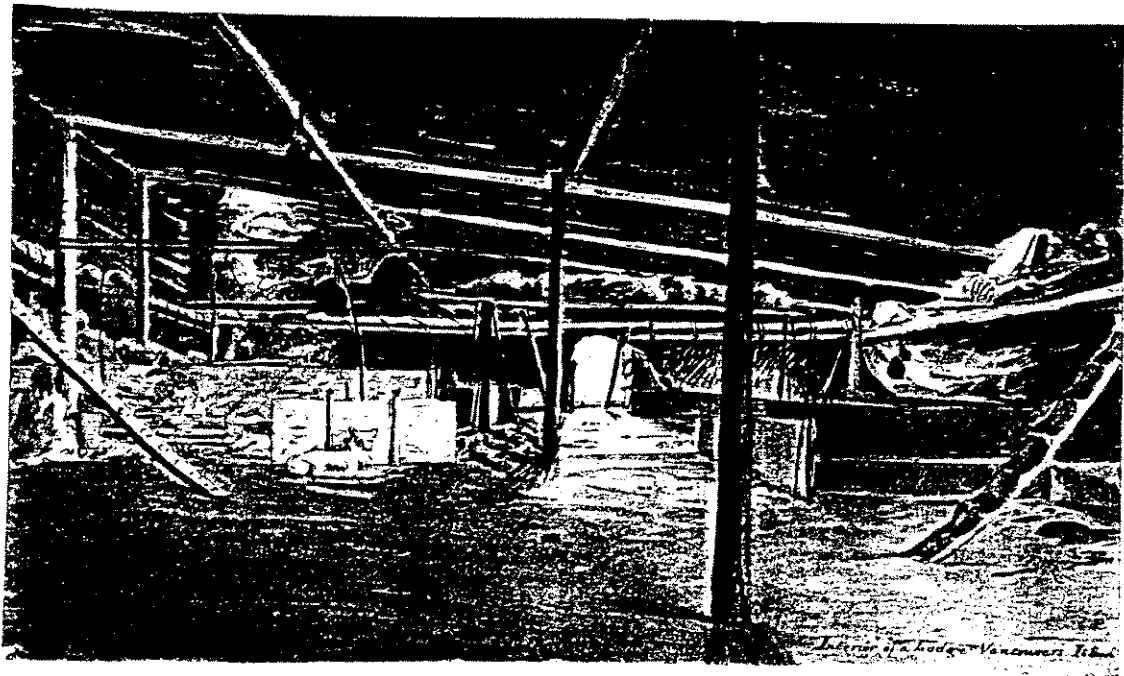

Figure 22. Watercolour sketch by Paul Kane showing the interior of a Coast Salish longhouse (Stark Found.)
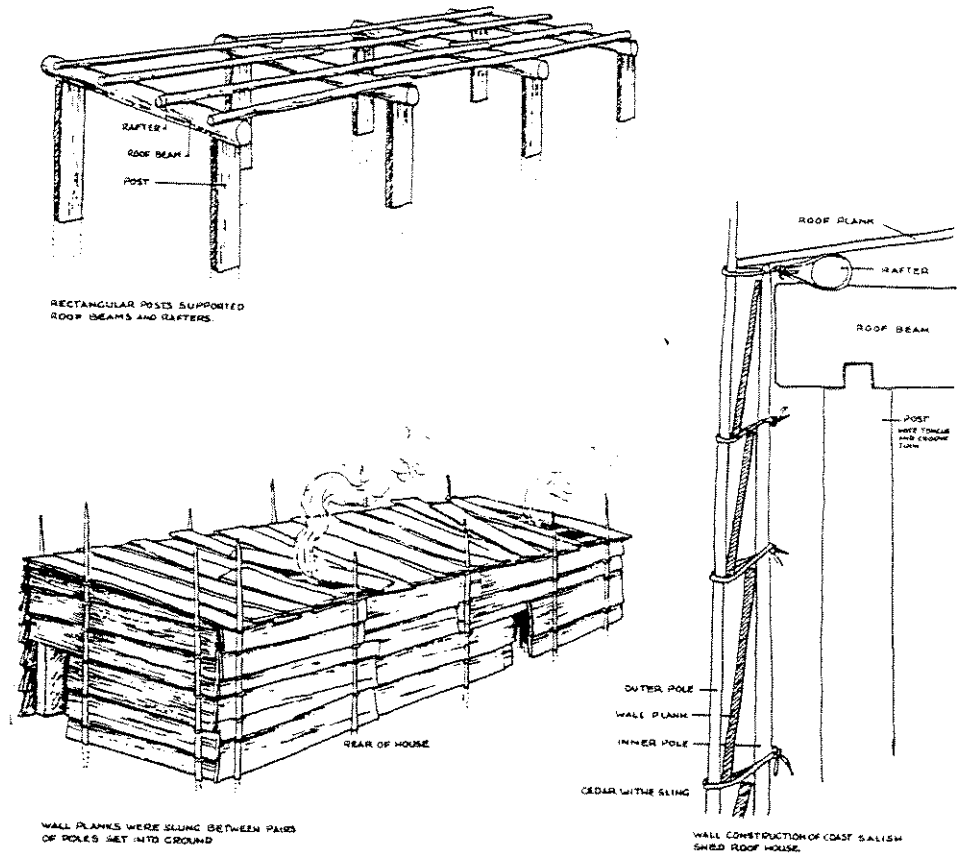
RAFTER
ROOF BEAM
POST

RECTANGULAR POSTS SUPPORTED
ROOF BEAMS AND RAFTERS.

ROOF PLANK
RAFTER
ROOF BEAM
POST
WALL TONGUE
AND GROOVE
TURN

REAR OF HOUSE

OUTER POLE
WALL PLANK
INNER POLE
CEDAR WITHE SLING

WALL PLANKS WERE SLUNG BETWEEN PAIRS
OF POLES SET INTO GROUND

WALL CONSTRUCTION OF COAST SALISH
SHED ROOF HOUSE.

Figure 23. Illustrations of a Coast Salish shed roof house (Stewart, 1984).

Figure 24. Housepost of warrior Qiyeplénexw from house at Musqueam (BCARS).

Pithouses

Another type of permanent winter dwelling was the "pithouse." The pithouse was a round structure, dug into the ground between 4 and 10 (1.2.-3m) feet and between 20 and 35 feet (6m-105m) in diameter. This provided greater warmth in the winter, and offered some degree of protection from raiding parties, as they were difficult to distinguish from the surrounding landscape. Around the perimeter of the pit were several (usually 6) large poles which were dug into the ground and angled up towards the centre of the house. Cross beams were put over these and then covered with branches, boughs and soil. A ladder led down from a hole in the top for the male entrance. Women and elders frequently had their own entrance on the side of the house. For women, this entrance was used because a woman was thought to have enormous spiritual power during her menses, which could be dangerous to other people who might come into direct contact with her.

A fire was constructed in the middle of the house and the smoke escaped through the hole in the top. Several nuclear families would live in the pithouse, but often less in number than in a longhouse.
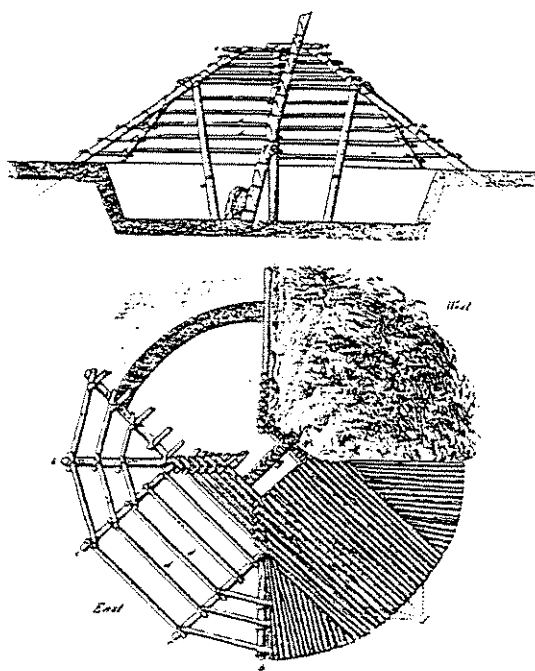

Figure 25. Drawings of a pithouse, similar to those found in the Lower Fraser River region (James Teit, 1900).

Figure 26. An old pithouse, partly uncovered, showing the upper part and traditional ladder (BCARS).

Summer structures

During the summer, *Stó:lō* people often left their winter villages go visit relatives and to take advantage of resource locations away from their winter village. During these times, small camp shelters were construed for each single family to live in. These summer structures were small, with a frame of pole with woven mats lashed to them for protection against the elements. Sometimes the longer planks from the winter longhouse were used instead of mats. These planks took a lot of time and energy to make, and were very highly valued. When these planks were used, they were set between two canoes and thus carried to the summer camp locations. These temporary summer shelters took very little time to make, and were always easily portable.
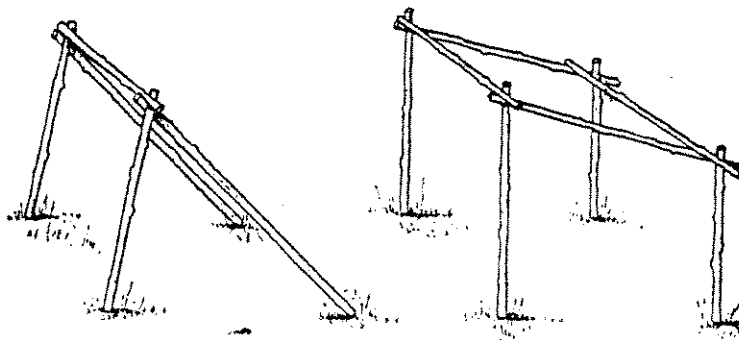
Figs. 5 and 6. Framework of lean-to and four-posted portable summer shelters. The shelter was covered by rainproof sewed rush mats.

Figure 27. Drawing summer shelters's poles. Shelter was covered by rainproof bulrush mats (Barnett, 1955).

Figure 28. Temporary summer shelters, constructed at resource procurement sites (RBCM).

Social Organization

The term "social organization" is used by anthropologists to describe the bonds of family, friendship, economy and politics that tie people together. In *Stó:lō* society there were are a number of different levels of social organization including the family, the household, the local group, the village, and the corporate kin group. The social status that people held in their community was stratified into high & low classes. Many people had particular expertise which they were able to pursue on a part-time basis, apart from their daily routine of acquiring food.

Family

The family was made up of a husband, wife (wives), unmarried children, and older parents (grandparents). This family lived together in the same house or part of the house and participated in many economic and ritual activities together. The extended family was as important as the nuclear family in *Stó:lō* society. The extended family included in-laws, aunts, uncles, cousins, and grandparents. Often several members of any one extended family lived in the same house or village, but people always knew who lived in other villages.

Household

Several related families made up the household and lived under one roof. These families cooperated economically and socially in hosting gatherings and spirit dances. Within the household, the different individual families lived in their own section, which was divided by partitions from other sections of the house. Each family had their own fire in the house around which they cooked their own meals and slept. At gatherings, these individual families would participate together to be hosts to visiting guests. There might be anywhere up to 25 or 30 individual people in any one household.

Local Group

The "local group" (which is a poor anthropological term for a rich feature of *Stó:lō* culture) is one of the most important parts of *Stó:lō* social organization. The local group is the set of people who consider themselves descended from a common ancestor or ancestors. These people often come from the same house or village, but are not necessarily members of the same family. The members of this group have the right to use names and tell stories which are connected with their ancestor. People who are not a part of that local group may not make claims to these names and stories.

This group is more important in another sense - as it connects people to the land. The ancestors who are spoken of in the stories were turned into one of many natural features in or around their ancestral village (like a prominent rock in a specific place, the cedar tree, the eulachon, and so on), by the Transformers *Xexá:ls* in the ancient ("mythical") past. People who see themselves as the descendants of these ancient ancestors also have a special relationship to the land, trees, and animals. This is part of what makes nature, history and legends inseparable from the *Stó:lō*. They are all related in a family sense.

Members of local groups do not regard themselves as having affinal or consanguineal relations with each other (relatives by blood or marriage) - even though they are descended from a common ancestor.

Village

Stó:lō villages dotted the Fraser River and its tributaries, right from the mouth of the Fraser at the village of Mále, to where Sawmill Creek enters the Fraser Canyon at the village of Lahits. These villages were made up of a number of houses and were occupied for most of the year when people were not out at their seasonal resource camps. Near the mouth of the river, the villages tended to be fairly large, with up to 10 or 12 houses in each. As one went up the Fraser River, the villages got somewhat smaller, but much more frequent. In the Fraser Canyon, there was a village in almost every place there was flat land, but there may have only been 2 or 3 houses at these places.

Both longhouses and pithouses were built in most villages, although the pithouses were less

common in villages below the Harrison River. During cold winters, people often left the longhouses to live in their warmer pithouses. However, some of the people lived in the longhouses all year long.

Villages were often located at the junction of two bodies of water, where resources were abundantly available. This way, people did not have to travel far to get the food they needed. Berries and other vegetable resources was often available in limited quantities directly behind the village, and good fishing grounds directly in front. However, the food needs of all the people were never satisfied locally, so camps had to be set up at certain times of year at other productive resource locations.

At some village locations, wooden fortifications with trenches around them were built. These often stood to one side of the village, where people would retreat to during a raid. One early record records a massive stockade at Musqueam (at the mouth of the Fraser River), where the entire village was surrounded by a wooden wall. These fortifications would have taken an enormous amount of labour to built.

The people who lived in these villages were often closely related by blood or marriage. Because of this, it was very common for people to marry someone from another village. This is called exogamy. Newly wed couples could move to the village of either the husband's family or the wife's family and often spent time in both. People could freely move from one village to another if they had relatives living in that village or became married into a family living there.

The people living in the village did not work together as a major social unit in many economic activities, but did so for spiritual activities. Spiritual gatherings like the winter dance were often hosted by people of an entire village.

Corporate Kin Group

The "corporate kin group" is another poor anthropological term for an important *Stó:lō* social feature. A corporate kin group is a number of people, regardless of where they live, who are related (or are "kin"). These people recognize each other as relatives and share rights to resources, names, ritual activities and privileges. In a sense, these people are part of an extended family, but at times the family connections are quite distant - up to third or fourth cousin. Many *Stó:lō* believed that a "good person" knows exactly who all of their kin are, up to forth cousin.

Wayne Suttles, a prominent anthropologist who has worked in this area for many years, has said that the corporate kin group is the most important "community" there is in for Coast Salish societies. Many non-*Stó:lō* people think of a community in terms of people who live together in the same place. In *Stó:lō* society, the most important community is not actually the people a person lives with, but those relatives that he or she recognizes and interacts with on a regular basis to share resources with. As such, a community in *Stó:lō* society is not so

much a place, but rather a family tree.

Social Status

Social status is the amount of respect, esteem, wealth, privileges and ultimately power that a person has in a society. In *Stó:lõ* culture, social status played a big role in peoples lives. There were definitely people of vastly different social status, some very high and others very low. The differences in status between people created three different social classes in *Stó:lõ* society, upper-class (*smelá:lh* - meaning "worthy people"), lower-class (*s'téxem* - meaning "worthless people") and slaves (*skw'iyéth*).

Upper-class families had a set of inherited rights and privileges to resources, names, and songs. These people were "worthy" in a sense because as children they were provided with "proper" moral training and advice. These were people who knew their family history, which connected them to resource locations, and allowed them to take on privileged names, songs and dances. These people got the training they needed to have successful relations with the spirit world, which in turn helped them in many aspects of their lives.

The leaders from high-class family were called <u>*siyá:m*</u>. Edmond Lorenzetto described the personal character traits of a *siyá:m* to Wilson Duff.

> A *siyá:m* was a good man who talked to his people to keep them
> straight and settle rows. He didn't really boss the people around,
> that is why they liked him, but all the people would take his advice.
> He talked to the people, telling them what they should do, when they
> should go hunting or fishing, and they did it. He had to be a good
> hunter and fisherman himself to be a leader. He was getting food all
> the time for his people. There might be more than one *siyá:m* at a
> place. They would talk things over. Long ago there was no jealousy
> in them.[5]

The lower-class families were people who were considered to have had "lost their history." They did not have access to inherited privileges, nor were given the proper moral training and advice needed to be successful. It was difficult for a lower-class person to achieve high status and become a *siyá:m*, although it was not impossible. If a lower-class person acquired the right spirit powers to become successful at hunting or fishing, he or she might gain enough wealth to hold a potlatch where claims to higher social status could be made.

Slaves were kept by upper-class people to do labour and menial tasks. The slaves were generally treated well by their owners. They were either captured during raids (which were seldom) or traded at a potlatch. Slave labour produced wealth for their owners who used the products of the labour, and slaves were considered wealth in themselves.

Social "Expertise"

All people in *Stó:lō* society participated in the day-to-day economic life of fishing, hunting, and gathering. Social and ritual roles were also, to a large degree, participated in by every member of the society - regardless of gender or age. Each person was expected to learn, in their youth, the knowledge and skills which made them a useful person in the community during their adult years. Elderly people concentrated much of their time on teaching the young people.
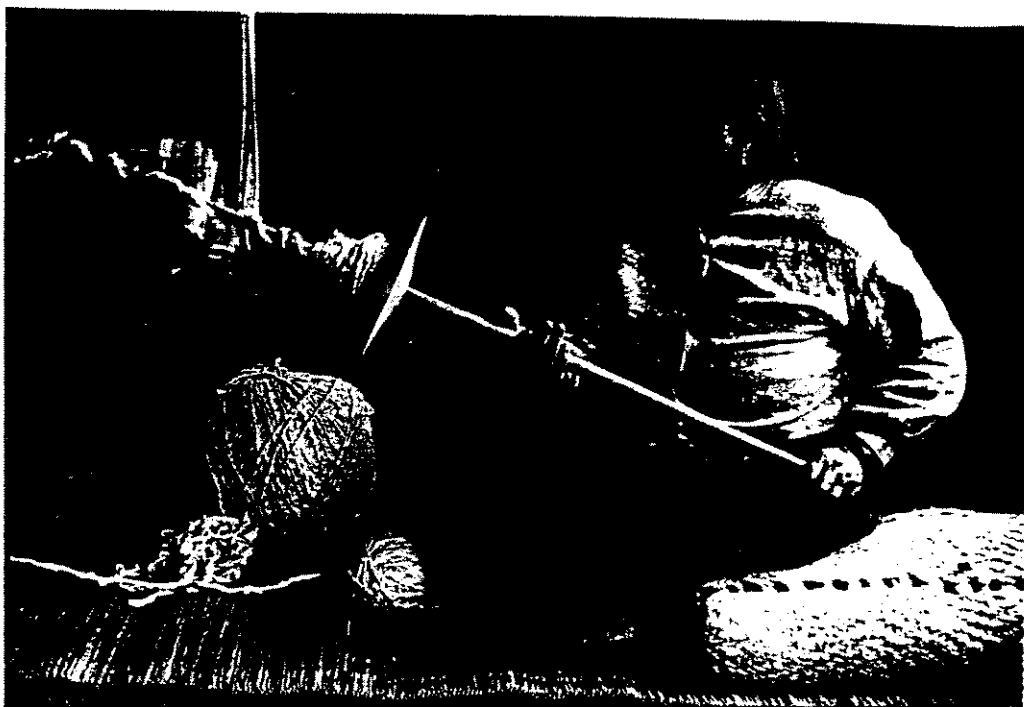

Figure 29. Certain members in society became specialists in activities such as spinning and weaving (CMA).

Although almost every member of society participated in virtually every aspect of social life, some people became "experts" in certain things. Whether through training or through the receipt of a spirit power, certain individuals were experts in one or more activities. Among these experts were: hunters, fishermen, basket-makers, artists, ritualists, shamen, healers, undertakers, weavers, canoe-makers, house-builders, story tellers, warriors and leaders, and others.

These positions were not occupations in the sense that a shoemaker or factory worker in contemporary Canadian society does one thing for their primary source of income. Rather, these positions of expertise were realms of special ability - in addition to the everyday things that they were able to do. A well respected person might be considered as having expertise in any number of these things. Upper-class people often received the training required to

gain these expertise. Age can also play a role in acquiring training or social expertise. For example, an older person could be an expert story teller, while a younger person would be a listener. Particular expertise were also often gender-specific. For example, women were most likely to be the basket-makers and weavers, while men were most likely to be hunters or warriors.

Neighbour Relations - Exchange and Conflict

Exchange

The *Stó:lõ* did not live alone and isolated on the Fraser River, but were rather a part of a much broader region of interaction. Marriage ties were sought with people from villages both within and beyond the traditional *Stó:lõ* territory. These marriage ties in neighbouring communities were important as they provided a broad network of family members. Not every *Stó:lõ* married out of the *Stó:lõ* area, but many of the upper-class people did. Having relatives in far-flung communities provided family members with access to resources that were unavailable locally. These non-local goods were often considered prestige items, and increased the status and wealth of people who had family connections to obtain them.

Many people were bi- or multilingual, being able to speak one or more of the languages spoken by their *Nlala'pmexw* neighbours on the Upper Fraser and Thompson Rivers, the *Stl'atl'imx* people on the Lillooet River, Sechelt people on the Sunshine Coast, Saanich people who speak *Lku'ngen* on Vancouver Island, Nooksack and Skagit people on the rivers which bear their names, and *Lushootseed* speakers on the shores of the northern Puget Sound.

Aside from the food and objects that exchanged hands through inter-village marriage ties, more formal trading also occurred. Archaeological evidence has shown that goods such as obsidian was traded from as far away as southeastern Oregon. Dentalia and abalone shells from the west coast of Vancouver Island and native copper from either northern Vancouver Island or the B.C. interior. Trading parties sometimes conducted this more formal trade, but family ties were almost always required. The Fraser River and it's many tributaries were, of course, the major artery of trade. However, trails were constructed through mountain passes, providing overland routes to neighbouring river valleys. The wide-spread trading networks were part of the reason that the first epidemics of smallpox struck *Stó:lõ* communities before contact with Europeans.

Conflict

The people who most often attacked the *Stó:lõ* during the early to mid 1800's were the *Lekwiltok* people from the northeast coast of Vancouver Island. *Lekwiltok* raiders came down in their large war canoes on slave raids, taking women and children from many *Stó:lõ* villages and killing or leaving the men for dead. The *Stó:lõ* used their intimate knowledge of the forests and mountains for defense.

Certain men acquired special vision powers to lead people in raids on villages. These raids were generally motivated by retaliation for an injury or death made by people from another village - or in the extreme case of the *Lekwiltok* raiders, to recover lost family members and items. Violent conflict ended in the mid 1800's because, as Wilson Duff states, the "Hudson's Bay guns finally stopped the raids [of the *Lekwiltok*] to the river."[6]

Figure 30. Dentalia shells obtained from the deep waters off the west coast of Vancouver Island, recently excavated in Stó:lō territory by UBC archaeologists working in the Stó:lō Nation (G. Mohs, 1992).
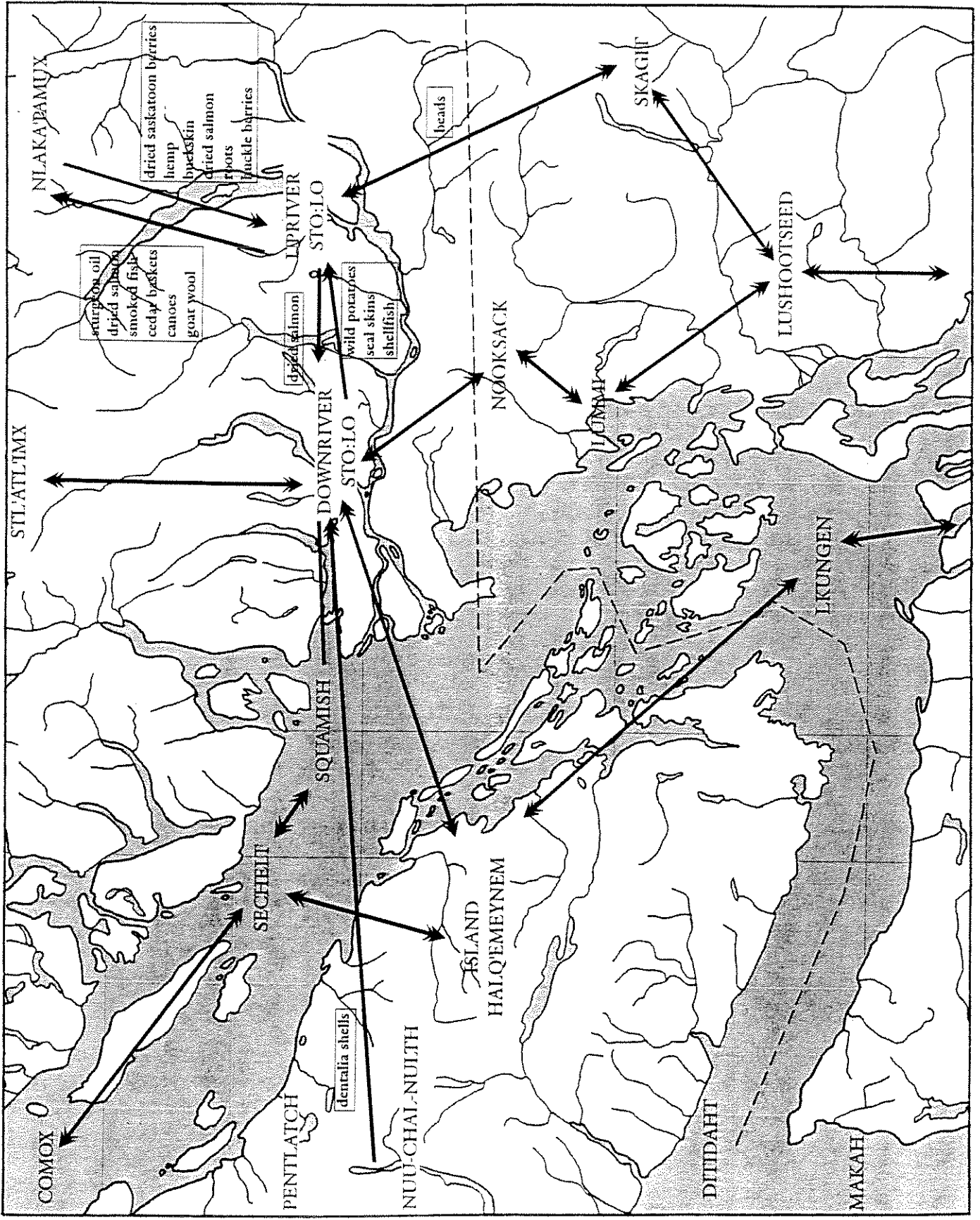
Figure 31. Map of Aboriginal exchange and trade networks (B. Thom & K. Carlson, 1995).

Life Cycle - Birth, Childhood, Adolescence, Adulthood, Death

The "life cycle" is the normal course of events which people in any culture go through. The specific life histories of individuals varies from person to person, but there are general trends which can be documented for any one culture at any given period of time. In modern Canadian society, most people are born in a hospital. They live their first years under the care of one of their parents or guardian at home or at a public facility while the parents work until the child is of school age. Children enter school, and by-in-large continue in school throughout their childhood and adolescence. Upon graduation, a person is generally thought to be a young adult and chooses to work, continue in school or in other ways explore the world. Typically in early adulthood, people become employed or married and begin raising a family. Work or family obligations usually continue until the adult becomes older, when economic self-sufficiency has been gained or children grow up. The later years of life are frequently spent exploring the world through travel, hobbies and relationships or sitting in front of the T.V. waiting for their children to call. The aged either remain self-sufficient or require the care of family or public institutions. People generally die in their old age either in a hospital or at home. Funerals are held where family and friends gather to commemorate the persons life.

This path which is followed by many Canadians has changed subtly over time and continues to do so. The traditional life cycle of the *Stó:lō* also continues to change from what it once was. The following is a general sketch of the *Stó:lō* life cycle in the early to middle 1800's.

Birth

Births occurred in the home with the aid of a trained <u>mid-wife</u>. No other family member stayed in the house while the woman was in labour. Babies were swathed tightly and placed in a cradle. Families who had high social status, held a special ceremony to mark the birth where *sxwó:yxwey* dancers performed and a large meal and potlatch ensued. A pet name was given to a baby, while a proper name was presented later in life.

Children began their "<u>training</u>" at an early age. They were made to rise early in the morning and bathed in cold water as a part of their spiritual training. Children spent many hours with their grandparents, who raised them while their parents were away fishing, gathering or hunting. They were taught who their relatives were, good behaviour, and given "advice" or moral training on becoming a good adult.

Adolescence

The passage from childhood into adolescence was formally marked for boys and girls with a puberty ceremony. Boys were given a ceremony at the first sign of their voices changing or when they made their first kill while hunting game. Girls were given a ceremony when they had their first menstrual period. These ceremonies involved seclusion with elder family members who gave them more formal training, and were followed by public recognition and

feasting with the corporate kin group.

Throughout adolescence, people were taught the skills needed in life, including fishing, hunting, gathering, tool making, basket weaving, carving and the like. It was towards the end of adolescence that people often went on their "spirit quest." This was a very important event in a person's life where he or she received a "guardian spirit" which would help them throughout their life.

Stó:lō marriages occurred at a young age, in comparison to contemporary Canadian society. Boys were sent by their parents to the house of the parents of a girl of equal status (often in another village). The boy sat outside the girl's home, while her family debated the marriage offer. If all were in agreement (including the girl), the boy was invited into the house for a meal. If not, the boy was sent home. Marriages were celebrated by a large gathering. Parents exchanged gifts at this time, including non-material items like the rights to names or fishing locations. A cleansing ceremony which often included masked *sxwó:yxwey* dancers, was held at a marriage ceremony.

Adulthood

A person became an adult when they received an adult name. Names were inherited privileges that were kept in the family. A high-status person would receive several names throughout their life, often being given a different name by relatives who live in different communities. Names could be taken from either the mother's or the father's side of the family. Receiving a name required a feast and the public distribution of gifts to validate the right to use it. At these gatherings other family members might occasionally contest the giving of a name, requiring the family of the person who is receiving the name to either give it up (in shame), or give out more gifts to the witnesses. Very high status names required a person to give out a great deal of wealth in order for that name to be claimed.

The lives of adults were rich and varied. The seasons of spring, summer and fall were spent engaged in subsistence activities while winters were spent engaging in ceremonial life and family responsibilities. Some people became specialists in various tasks such as carving, hunting, basket weaving, or as a warrior, shaman or medicine person. These people were not specialists in the sense of modern Canadian society where people often do work that is completely unrelated to subsistence activities. The *Stó:lō* did, however, increase their prestige and wealth by sharing the gifts and benefits of their special skills and knowledge with the community. Older upper-class people were treated with an a great deal of respect and were listened to for their knowledge and wisdom. They also had many responsibilities involved with the raising and teaching of their grandchildren.

Death

At the death of an individual the body was wrapped with blankets in a foetal or tightly flexed position and placed in the family grave-box. These tombs were set away from the village

and remained above ground (ie: the bodies were not buried). If the person died while away from the winter village and the family grave-box, the body was wrapped and placed on a platform in a tree until the bones could be placed in the box. Occasionally wealth items of use in the spirit world would be included in the grave-box. Only people who had the appropriate spiritual powers could handle the corpse. Large funerals were held to mourn the deceased. Ceremonies were held at these funerals where some of the deceased's possessions were burned and others were given to guests. A memorial feast was held and gifts given to the witnesses by the mourning family. The name of the deceased were not spoken for several years after their death.

Philosophies and Beliefs - Oral Traditions & Spirituality

Oral Traditions

The oral traditions of the *Stó:lō* expressed their understanding of the world. They were the vehicle for perceiving their history, culture and spirituality. They were the key to knowing who a person is and how a person fit into the physical, social and spiritual world.

Oral narratives were often associated with the names for places. Knowing the stories connected with the names for places in the lower Fraser River region provided the *Stó:lō* with a means of understanding their history and culture and provided a way of sharing it with each other and with other non-*Stó:lō*. These stories usually did not hold a set of "morals," but rather meant different things at different times in a person's life. When telling these stories, all or part of thhem may have been told at any given time, and elements from different oral traditions were frequently reworked depending on the situation and the message the teller wanted to convey.

Oral narratives took two distinct forms - *sqwélqwel* or "true story, news," and *sxwōxwiyám* or "story from Transformer period."[1] *Sqwélqwel* were frequently stories about a person's life. Other times they were recollections of recent historical events that they or people they knew would recall. *Sxwōxwiyám* are often referred to as "legends." Together, *sqwélqwel* and *sxwōxwiyám* form the "oral literature" of the *Stó:lō*.

Sxwōxwiyám relate a great number of stories from the time when the world was different and humans and animals transformed back and forth. These are the stories of the Mink, Raven, Beaver, Mouse, Frog, Skunk and other characters. During this age the *Xexá:ls*, the Transformers (referred singularity as *Xá:ls*) travelled through the land, transforming these legendary beings into rocks and animals, creating the world as it exists today[2]. The *Stó:lō* had a special relationship to these natural resources, as they considered them as their ancestors - their people who lived in a different time and who gave to those living today.

Spirituality

Stó:lō spirituality was a deeply personal and religious thing. *Stó:lō* culture taught people to respect their spirituality as well as that of other people. It held the belief that it is important to give respect to everyone's beliefs. *Stó:lō* spirituality revolved around the

winter ceremonial dance, where people spent the winter in a building called a "longhouse" or "smokehouse". During this winter season they were given spiritual and moral training by a respected _sxwalam_ (spiritual leader). A person spending their first season in the longhouse gain their spirit song. They work on their song and the dance which goes with it and help the other dancers in the house with them. The dancer was required to stay under the care of the _sxwalam_ for the winter season, abstaining from alcohol and drugs, and engaging in vigourous physical activity. The dancers performed their rites at their longhouse and others throughout the winter in private ceremonies attended by the dancers and their families. During these gatherings, some special functions also sometimes took place, such as game givings or memorial ceremonies. After the first season, the dancer returned to the longhouse to help new initiates through their spiritual training. The teachings learned in the longhouse guided people to live moral lives. Spirituality and the teachings off the long house are important parts of the lives of many _Stó:lō_ today, as many _Stó:lō_ continue to participate in the winter ceremonial.

Conclusions - A Brief look to the Future

This presentation of "traditional" _Stó:lō_ culture in the form of a historical ethnography does little to demonstrate the vibrant culture of people living today. One may ask, "are _Stó:lō_ people still living like they did 200 years ago?" or "have _Stó:lō_ people totally assimilated into Canadian society?" A visit to an Indian Reserve or a look through any local newspaper will provide an initial answer of "no" to both these questions. The culture is neither static and unchanged, nor is it lost to the mists of time. _Stó:lō_ society is strong and innovative. _Stó:lō_ cultural practices have shifted and changed over time. _Stó:lō_ oral traditions still provide a strong link with the land and with the past. The cultural traditions provide a way for _Stó:lō_ people to understand the world - providing a unique vantage point that non-_Stó:lō_ people may only ever partially experience. _Stó:lō_ leaders provide direction for the future that the ever-increasing _Stó:lō_ population can look forward to. _Stó:lō_ leaders are trying to create healthy communities, restore cultural values and promote the rights and freedoms that Aboriginal people have been guaranteed under the Canadian Constitution. They look to a future where the place of Aboriginal people in Canada will be more securely defined.

and remained above ground (ie: the bodies were not buried). If the person died while away from the winter village and the family grave-box, the body was wrapped and placed on a platform in a tree until the bones could be placed in the box. Occasionally items of use in the spirit world would be included in the grave-box. Only people who had the appropriate spiritual powers could handle the corpse. Large funerals were held to mourn the deceased. Ceremonies were held at these funerals where some of the deceased's possessions were burned and others were given to guests. A feast was held and gifts given to the witnesses by the mourning family. The name of the decreased were not spoken for several years after their death.

Philosophies and Beliefs - Oral Traditions & Spirituality

Oral Traditions

The oral traditions of the *Stó:lõ* express their understanding of the world. They are the vehicle for understanding their history, culture and spirituality. They are the key to knowing who a person is and how a person fits into the physical, social and spiritual world.

Oral narratives are often associated with the names of places. Knowing the stories connected with the places in the lower Fraser River region provides the *Stó:lõ* with a means of understanding their history and culture and provided a way of sharing it with each other and with other non-*Stó:lõ*. These stories usually do not hold a set of "morals," but rather mean different things at different times in a person's life. All or part of a story may be told at any given time, and elements from different oral traditions are frequently reworked depending on the situation.

Oral narratives take two distinct forms - *sqwélqwel* or "true story, news," and *sxwõxwiyám* or "story from Transformer period."[7] *Sqwélqwel* are frequently stories about a person's life or a particular history that they know. *Sxwõxwiyám* are often referred to as "legends."

Together, sqwélqwel and sxwõxwiyám form the "oral literature" of the *Stó:lõ*. *Sxwõxwiyám* relate a great number of stories from the time when the world was different and humans and animals transformed back and forth. These are the stories of the Mink, Raven, Beaver, Mouse, Frog, Skunk and other characters. During this age the *Xexá:ls*, the Transformers (referred singularity as *Xá:ls*) travelled through the land, transforming these legendary beings into rocks and animals, creating the world as it exists today[8]. Today, the *Stó:lõ* have a special relationship to these natural resources, as they consider them as their ancestors - their people who lived in a different time and who gave to those living today.

Spirituality

Stó:lõ spirituality is a deeply personal and religious thing. *Stó:lõ* culture teaches people to respect their spirituality as well as that of other people. It is important to give respect to the beliefs of all people. *Stó:lõ* spirituality revolves around the winter ceremonial, where people

spend the winter in a building called a "longhouse" or "smokehouse" where they are given spiritual and moral training by a respected _sxwalam_. A person spending their first season in the longhouse gain their spirit song which they sing and dance to during public performances. The initiate is required to stay under the care of the _sxwalam_ for the winter season, abstaining from alcohol and drugs, and engaging in vigourous physical activity. After the first season, the dancer will return to the longhouse to help new initiates through their spiritual training. The teachings learned in the longhouse guide people to live moral lives. Spirituality is an important part of the lives of many _Stó:lō_ today, as it has been in the past.

Conclusions - A Brief look to the Future

This presentation of "traditional" _Stó:lō_ culture in the form of a historical ethnography does little to demonstrate the vibrant culture of people living today. One may ask, "are _Stó:lō_ people still living like they did 200 years ago?" or "have _Stó:lō_ people totally assimilated into Canadian society?" A visit to an Indian Reserve or a look through any local newspaper will provide an initial answer of "no" to both these questions. The culture is neither static and unchanged, nor is it lost to the mists of time. _Stó:lō_ society is strong and innovative. _Stó:lō_ cultural practices have shifted and changed over time. _Stó:lō_ oral traditions still provide a strong link with the land and with the past. The cultural traditions provide a way for _Stó:lō_ people to understand the world - providing a unique vantage point that non-_Stó:lō_ people may only ever partially experience. _Stó:lō_ leaders provide direction for the future that the ever-increasing _Stó:lō_ population can look forward to. _Stó:lō_ leaders are trying to create healthy communities, restore cultural values and promote the rights and freedoms that Aboriginal people have been guaranteed under the Canadian Constitution. They look to a future where the place of Aboriginal people in Canada will be more securely defined.

ENDNOTES:

1.   Wilson Duff, *The Upper Stalo Indians of the Fraser Valley*, p. 11.

2.   Brent Galloway, *Wisdon of the Elders*.

3.   Duff, *The Upper Stalo Indians of the Fraser Valley*, p. 85.

4.   Brent Galloway, *A Grammar of Upriver Halkomelem*, p. 589.

5.   Duff, *The Upper Stalo Indians of the Fraser Valley*, p. 80.

6.   Duff, *The Upper Stalo Indians of the Fraser Valley*, p. 96.

7.   Brent Galloway, p. 96.

8.   A detailed discussion of oral traditions and an annotated index to published traditional stories is given in the *Stó:lō* Curriculum Consortium material for Literature 12.

Suggested Further Readings
for: *Stó:lō* Traditional Culture: A Short Ethnography of the *Stó:lō* People

Barnett, Homer G
1955 *The Coast Salish of British Columbia.* University of Oregon Monographs, Studies in Anthropology No. 4. Eugene.
1938 The Coast Salish of Canada. *American Anthropologist.* 40:118-141.

Boas, Franz
1894 Indian Tribes of the Lower Fraser. Pp. 454-463 in The Ninth Report on the Northwestern Tribes of Canada. *Report of the 64th Meeting of the British Association for the Advancement of Science.* London.
1895 *Indian Legends from the North Pacific Coast of America.* translated by Dietrich Bertz for the B.C. Indian Language Project. Edited by R. Bouchard and D. Kennedy 1980-1981.

Codere, Helen
1948 The Sxai'xwe Myth of the Middle Fraser River: The Integration of Two Northwest Coast Cultural Ideas. *Journal of American Folklore* 61:1-18.

Dewhirst, John
1976 Coast Salish Summer Festivals: Rituals for Upgrading Social Identity. *Anthropologica*, n.s. 18:231-273.

Duff, Wilson
1952 The Upper Stalo Indians of the Fraser Valley, British Columbia. *Anthropology in British Columbia, Memoir 1.* British Columbia Provincial Museum, Victoria, BC.

Elmendorf, William
1971 Coast Salish Status Ranking and Intergroup Ties. *Southwestern Journal of Anthropology* 27:353-380.

Feder, Norman
1983 Incised Relief Carving of the Halkomelem and Straits Salish. *American Indian Art Magazine* 8(2):46-55.

Galloway, Brent
1980 *Tó:lméls Ye Siyelyókexwa: Wisdom of the Elders. Halq'eméylem Classified Word List.* Coqualeetza Education Training Centre, Sardis.

Hill-Tout, Charles
    1902   Ethnological Studies of the Mainland Halkomelem Division of the Salish. Pp. 355-449 in *Report of the 72nd Meeting of the British Association for the Advancement of Science.* London. [Chapter 3 of *The Salish People, Volume 3*].
    1904   Ethnological Report of the StsEélis and Sk'aúlits Tribes of the Halkomelem Division of the Salish. *Journal of the Royal Anthropological Institute* 34:311-376. [Chapter 4 of *The Salish People, Volume 3*].
    1978   *The Salish People, Volume 3: The Mainland Halkomelem.* Edited by Ralph Maud. Talonbooks, Vancouver.

Jenness, Diamond
    1955   The Faith of a Coast Salish Indian. Anthropology in British Columbia Memoir 3. Victoria.

Kew, Michael
    1970   Coast Salish Ceremonial Life: Status and Identity in a Modern Village. PhD dissertation in anthropology, University of Washington.
    1980   Sculpture and Engraving of the Central Coast Salish. University of British Columbia Museum of Anthropology, Note No. 9.

Leacock, Elenore
    1949   The Seabird Community. Pp. 185-194 in *Indians of the Urban Northwest.* New York: Columbia University Press, edited by Marian Smith.

Mohs, Gordon
    1992   *Stó:lō Stories.* ms. on file at Stó:lō Nation, Sardis.

Schriver, Joanne and Eleanor Leacock
    1949   Harrison Indian Childhood. In *Indians of the Urban Northwest.* edited by Marian Smith. AMS Press, New York.

Smith, Marian
    1947   House Types of the Middle Fraser River. *American Antiquity.* 12:255-267.
    1949   [editor] *Indians of the Urban Northwest.* New York: Columbia University Press.

Suttles, Wayne
    1951a   The Economic Life of the Coast Salish of Haro and Rosario Straits. PhD Dissertation in Anthropology, University of Washington.
    1951b   The Early Diffusion of the Potato among the Coast Salish. *Southwestern Journal of Anthropology* 7:272-288 [Chapter 8 in *Coast Salish Essays*].
    1952   Notes on Coast Salish Sea-Mammal Hunting. *Anthropology in British Columbia* 3:10-20 [Chapter 12 in *Coast Salish Essays*].

Suttles, Wayne (continued)
  1955   Katzie Ethnographic Notes. *Anthropology in British Columbia, Memoir 3.*
  1958   Private Knowledge, Morality, and Social Classes among the Coast Salish.
             American Anthropologist 62:497-507 [Chapter 1 in *Coast Salish Essays*].
  1960   Affinal Ties, Subsistence, and Prestige among the Coast Salish. *American
             Anthropologist* 62:296-305 [Chapter 2 in *Coast Salish Essays*].
  1963   The Persistence of Intervillage Ties Among the Coast Salish. *Ethnology*
             2:512-525 [Chapter 11 in *Coast Salish Essays*]
  1987   *Coast Salish Essays.* Talonbooks, Vancouver.
  1990   Central Coast Salish. In *Handbook of North American Indians, Volume 7,
             Northwest Coast.* Ed. by Wayne Suttles. Smithsonian Institution Press,
             Washington.

Webber, Ellen
  1899   An Old Kwanthum Village - Its People and its Fall. *American Antiquarian
             and Oriental Journal* 21:309-314.

Wells, Oliver
  1987   *The Chilliwacks and Their Neighbors.* Talonbooks, Vancouver.

Appendix to *Stó:lō* Traditional Culture: A Short Ethnography

Halq'eméylem Place Names

The following appendix provides a map and a number of descriptions of the names for places in each school district in the *Halq'eméylem* language. These names for places in the land, carry many of the stories, history and culture of the *Stó:lō* people. It was felt that showing some of the place names would reveal, from the perspective of a *Stó:lō* person, not an anthropologist, some of what is important to the *Stó:lō* - their relationship with the world around them.

The names given do not give an atlas of all of the names known in each map area. They have been carefully selected to tell a range of stories about the culture and history of the *Stó:lō* people. All of the villages that people are from today are mapped, as are some (but not all) of the older villages. These villages are indicated by the small "longhouse" on the map. Names for some of the prominent geographical features in each area are also given. These names often appear in a different style of print on the map.

[Note: As of the time of the printing of this binder, only the names for the Hope School District have been compiled and mapped. This project is on-going, and new maps and descriptions will be sent out as they are completed. Our apologies for the delay, but we are trying to make the best possible quality product to be used in the schools.]

PLACE NAMES FOR HOPE SCHOOL DISTRICT REGION

Sonny McHalsie & Brian Thom
October 1995

Skw'átets

"water trickling through"
village

There is a slough here which runs behind the village which this name refers to. A creek used to run into the slough and kept the water fresh. The reserve which is located here is now called the "Peters" reserve. In the 1870s, one of the reserve surveyors mis-named the area "Squaw Tits", which in English is highly derogatory. The people renamed it "Peters" because this is the English surname of the contemporary family who lives there. All the Peters who live there from one family, this being a very small community.

Louis Squatets used to have a longhouse (winter dance house) right along the slough channel. His wife carried the rights to use the *sxwó:yxwey* mask and passed these rights on to Agnus Kelly. This longhouse was one of the few houses which operated "underground", during the oppressive period of the Potlatch Laws, where such ceremonies and gatherings were considered illegal. This longhouse was well off the main roads and waterways, making the ceremonial activities very difficult to detect.

Shxw'ōwhámel

"where the river levels and widens"
village

This name is used as the village name right now, but in the past it referred to the stretch of the river at this place. This name may not have been the original name of the village, but a stretch of the river near the village. The original name of this village may have been *Ówqw'éyles*, which is the area around the mouth of Hunter Creek.

This village was made up of three sets of houses, with one large longhouse along the Fraser River, a row of pit houses 1/2 way between the Fraser River and the rock bluff, and small refuge pithouses along the base of the rock bluff. The cemetery was located near the longhouse, close to the shore of the Fraser River. The pithouses were located along the old channel of Lorenzetto Creek. In the summer time people lived in the longhouse. In the winter, they lived in the pithouse. Angus Kelly said that they went to the refuge pithouses to get away from the winter raiders. The refuge pithouses were at the very back of the village area, along the steep vertical cliffs of the mountain side.

Some of the ancestors at *Shxw'ōwhámel* moved from *Xelhálh* (near the present-day town of Yale) in the late 1880s, after being encouraged by Missionaries and Indian Agents to become farmers, not fishers. One of the early white settlers blocked off Lorenzetto creek, changing its course away from the village. When the Department of Indian Affairs began building houses for the people on the reserve, the houses were initially located where the old longhouse formerly stood. After the Trans-Canada Highway went through, everyone moved

their houses away from the river and towards the road. This was largely due to more and more people using cars for transportation rather than canoes.

Spopetes
"blowing" or "always windy"
village

A nearby rock bluff has a rock formation that looks like a man with his chin raised and his mouth puckered, as if he were blowing. Many of the rock bluffs in this area look like people blowing, making all the wind in this part of the valley.

The cemetery behind Spopetes was the last place that burial figures were used. These figures were effigy carvings, which marked where the family was buried. Burial boxes containing the bodies were placed on the ground behind the effigies. When Missionaries introduced the use of crosses for headstones, they took the bodies out of the boxes and buried them Christian-style.

Some people from Xwoxelá:lhp (at the present-day town of Yale) to Spopetes in the 1880s. This move happened when Indian Agents and Department of Fisheries bureaucrats were trying to turn Stó:lō people into farmers. The land in this part of the valley was more suitable for farming then the rocky land near Yale.

Chawéthel
"land sticking way out"
village

This names originated from the gravel bar that extends out 1/2 way across the Fraser River during the low water in winter.

The ancestors of these people came from two villages, *Welqámexl* and *Ts'qó:ls*, near the present-day town of Hope. The people from these two villages moved to *Chawéthel* in the late 1800's.

The Chawathil Indian Reserve encompasses the old village of *Sxwóxwiymelh*, which means "where all the people died at once". The people referred to died during a smallpox epidemic. Evageline Pete's husband is a descendant of that village. She said that the epidemic happened in 1806. This epidemic took the lives of between 25-30 people each day. the corpses were put in a pithouse, which they then set fire to. Some of these pithouses were excavated in the 1970s by archaeologists. There were at least 26 pithouses recorded by them there. A good eddy and beach is also located here where people set their nets. When the railway and highway went through, these were destroyed. A petroglyph of a man was taken here and is now stored in the Royal British Columbia Museum.

Sqám
"calm water"
village

This village is adjacent to a large bay.

A log of people who live there now were originally from the villages of *Welqámexl* and *Ts'qó:ls*. The Department of Indian Affairs created reserves where the villages were. Sometimes they created larger reserves away from the original villages to get the Aboriginal people to move out of non-Native town areas. The five villages *Chawéthel, Sxwóxwiymelh, Sqám, Welqámexl* and *Ts'qó:ls*, were lumped together by the Department of Indian Affairs as one "Band" as an administrative unit with the same "Chief" and "Councillors". Prior to this amalgamation, each village represented one extended family and had their own people. They each had their own reason for existence and their own relationship to the area they lived in. They had their own relationships established to each other. This relationship was not one that required their political body to consist of one Chief and two Councillors. Each family has their own leaders and their own particular access to resources.

Ts'qó:ls
"bare" or "bald"
village

This name has to do with the trees in front of the village which are all bare on one side, cue to the strong wind.

Ts'qó:ls was a large village site that extended from the west end of the present-day Park Street, north and east to the mouth of what is now known as the Coquihalla River. Governor Douglas, according to oral history, went there and stood on the river bank at the west end of Park Street, facing east to Ogalvie Peak. He promised these people all the land north of that line. All of the land to the south would be for the Hope town-site. In the end, the Stó:lō only received a 10 acre parcel, which is the Hope 1 Indian Reserve.

Most of the people from this village were enticed by Missionaries and government officials to move to the larger *Chawéthel* reserve. The reasons given for moving to the *Chawéthel* reserve were largely because this new location had better land for cultivation. There was a concerted afford at this time by the Missionaries, Provincial and Federal governments to "assimilate" Stó:lō people, by encouraging them to give up their traditional life-ways and take up farming.

Welqámex
meaning unknown
village

An old village site that was abandoned in the 1880's when people were moved to the *Chawéthel* reserve. There are eight to nine large pit houses and a burial ground located on this island. Compared pithouses found in other villages in the Fraser Valley, the ones at *Welqámex* are larger. The burial ground was moved to *Chawéthel* in 1892 when a flood damaged much of the island.

This village was one of three in the immediate area, adjacent to *Ts'qó:ls*, and another village

called *Ayxel*. *Ayxel* is located on a bay on the south side of the Fraser River. This bay used to catch everything that came down from the Fraser Canyon. People would tie their sturgeon catches to a log an let it go down the Fraser river. They would be sure that those logs tuned up in that bay. *Ayxel* was a large pit house village. Today, this bay and eddy have been destroyed by the Freeway and CN Railway.

It is not known today exactly what the words *Welqámex* and *Ayxel* referred to. *Welqámex* may have been the name for the whole area, while *Ayxel* was the name for just a part of the site - such as a fishing spot. The island where the village *Welqámex* was located is where the fireworks are now launched for the Hope Brigade days.

Iwówes
"something that does not want to show itself"
village

This name refers to a rock that was a woman transformed to stone. This woman is laying on her stomach. If a person goes to that rock, and rolls her over exposing her front, she will roll back over when you leave. She rolls over because she does not want to show herself.

The village, *Iwówes*, is located on the eastern shore of the Fraser River and had pithouses and longhouses which were destroyed by logging activities this century. There is also an ancient village near this spot is on the island called *Lhilheltálets*, has pithouses and a longhouse. Nearby this ancient village site is the pond where the *sxwó:yxwey* mask originally came out of. At this pool, a young boy and young girl from *Iwówes* received this first mask. The *sxwó:yxwey* mask and the associated songs and dances are still part of very important ceremonies of the Stó:lõ people.

Peqwchõ:lthel
"river bank caving in"
village

The name for this village originates from the river-bank and bay located at the mouth of Puckat Creek. During high water, sand is deposited into this bay and as the water drops, the sandbar which is left caves in.

This is the main Indian Reserve of what is now known as the Union Bar band. The Union Bar band is an amalgamation of the old villages of *Peqwchõ:lthel*, *Sq'ewílem*, *Qetexem*, *Lexwyó:qwem*, *Qíqemqemel*, *Iwówes*, *Q'éwq'ewe*, and *Lhilhetálets*.

Lexwtl'ikw'elem
"place where there are lots of red knickanick berries"
village

This village is has been recorded on modern government maps as "Choate", which was a CP Railway station used in the late 1800's. Another name. "St'élxweth'" was given to the reserve by mistake by the Department of Indian Affairs, and actually refers to the village at

the mouth of Suka Creek.

Ó:ywoses
"on both sides"
village

A large village site on both sides of the river at the mouth of Qualark Creek and what is now known as Albert Flat.

Xwoxwelá:lhp
"willow tree place"
village

This village was located at what is now the town of Yale. This village was located near where the Hudson's Bay Company established Fort Yale in the mid-1800s. This is now the main Indian Reserve for the Yale Band, which is an amalgamation of the following 16 villages: *Lexwtl'ikw'elem, Ó:ywoses, St'élxweth', Hemhémetheqw, Sókw'ech, Xwoxwelá:lhp, Chelqwéylh, Skwokwílàlà, Q'aleliktel, Aseláw, Íyem, Lexwts'okwá:m, Lahits, Sxwótl'aqwem,* and *Kaykaip* [sic].

At the mouth of Ruby Creek, west of Hope, the *Spopetes* Reserve was also made a part of the Yale Band. The *Xelhálh* reserve, located about 2 miles upriver from Yale, was formerly a Yale Band reserve, but is now part of the Ohamil Indian Band.

Xwowelá:lhp is situated at the downriver end of the Fraser Canyon fishery, making this region very important for traditional salmon fishing. Stó:lō fishers from all over the traditional territory continues to return each year to these fisheries.

Íyem
"strong"
village

The strength of the place is in the excellent salmon fishing here. The fishing rock at this village was usually where the very first spring salmon was caught each year. The village, now virtually destroyed by the Cariboo Wagon Road and the CP Railway, consisted of a number of pithouses and likely a longhouse. The Eyam Memorial marks a number of burials which were moved when the construction of the Wagon Road and the Railway had disturbed them.

Lahits
meaning unknown
village

This is the uppermost village of the Stó:lō people, located at the mouth of Sawmill Creek. A pool in the creek near the village was the origin-place of the ground slate mask tradition, which is thought to be similar to the *sxwó:yxwey* tradition. No ground slate masks are

known to be remaining today. These masks were apparently made of smooth sheets of slate, ground down to a fine finish, with holes set for the eyes and mouth.

Tl'ítl'xeleqw
"ripped apart"
mountain

This name describes the top of the mountain, which appears to have been ripped apart. The peak of this mountain was cleft by glacial movement during the last ice age. Local non-Native residents know this mountain as "Holy Cross Mountain". This place-name is one example of many where English names have been given to places where meaningful Halq'eméylem place names already exist. The re-naming of the landscape was an important part of the colonization of British Columbia by Euro-americans, and the marginalization of the indigenous language, culture and traditions.

Qemqemó
"breast"
mountain

This name refers to the peak of the mountain, describing how it is shaped like a mountain goat's breast. The area to the north of this is well known for its mountain goat population. Mountain goat wool was gathered in the spring. When mountain goats "combed" their shedding wool on the bark and branches of trees. The goats themselves were hunted, but not specifically for their wool. This wool was used in weaving Salish bankets. These blankets are valuable because of the great time and effort put into making them. The blankets are often worn over the shoulders by respected people at gatherings. The blankets are still important in ceremonies today, even though mountain goat wool is seldom used.

Qemqemó is known to English-speaking residents as Mt. Ogalvie.

Lexwyó:qwem
"Always smells like rotten fish"
Alpine Meadow

This is an alpine meadow where many plant resources were obtained. In the fall people would climb up to this area to pick various berries and plants. The stench of the rotting, spawned out salmon on the river bar below was so strong that you could smell it way up on the meadow.

Teqwóthel
"-óthel" comes from the word "mouth"; "Teq-" meaning unknown
Cave

This is the cave where X̱á:ls met a medicine man who questioned his power.

X̱á:ls was a spirit who changed the people. This is a long story. When he began to change

things, he started at the Fraser River. I'll just start it at Spuzzum. X̱á:ls came to Spuzzum. He had many friends there. Kwiyutkl dig under the ground until he came up at Yale, while X̱á:ls walked underground to Spuzzum. When X̱á:ls got there, he changed every person there into rock. He took Kwiyutkl's sister, sank her in the river and let her stay there. Kwiyutkl was waiting in hiding for X̱á:ls at Yale. X̱á:ls knew he was hiding at Yale, so he came down to meet him. As soon as X̱á:ls went back to Yale, Kwiyutkl returned to Spuzzum and found his mother and father had been turned to rock, and his sister was in the water. X̱á:ls went back to Spuzzum again because he wanted to see Kwiyutkl to find out why he was dodging him. As soon as Kwiyutkl found out X̱á:ls was coming he went to Yale again. They kept on dodging that way. Kwiyutkl waited for X̱á:ls because he wanted to beat him because he saw that his mother and father were gone. Kwiyutkl thought he was smart, so he waited until X̱á:ls got to Yale. X̱á:ls said, "You must be smart because you're dodging me. I know you were coming. I know your every move." Kwiyutkl replied, "If I had a partner, I could dodge you. I want to be a real person, but I'm all alone. That's why I'm waiting for you. I saw my sister and the way you put her in the water. That's why I went away. I don't want to be all alone." X̱á:ls put him in the water and said, "When the next person comes by, then you and your sister will come up out of the water. If he's smart, he'll swim with you and beat you. Then he'll get your power. He'll be strong, like an Indian doctor. If he doesn't beat you, you'll all die." The old devil, X̱á:ls, said all this. When X̱á:ls was through with him, he left and came own the river, changing the people. (Lerman 1950/195:147)

This transformer story with all its detail and realism was told so that the listener would find it easier to believe in the power that X̱á:ls had. If one goes there today, they can see the cave and the rock with the hunter, his spear, his dog and the elk. Elders who tell the story today, but do not remember all the details, do remember being told the story with all the characters named.

The village site that the transformation happened at is called *Hemhemetheqw* - which was destroyed during the Gold Rush. The rocks which had the bowls in it for making sockeye oil were lost because the area was over-turned during gold panning. This was the richest gold-bearing bar on the lower Fraser River.

X̱óletsa
"many lakes"
lakes

This was a very important place for gathering blue huckleberries. This is a very important berry patch that was well taken care of. One of the leaders (Siyá:m) from X̱wox̱welá:lhp (Yale) had the responsibility of burning the berry patches each fall. This person had to have the ability to forecast, not just rain, but very heavy rain. This person would go up to the mountain and set fire to the berry patches and the heavy raid would put the fire out to prevent it from spreading into the forest. The berry patches were burnt to ensure that a plentiful growth of berries the following season. These berry patches were taken care of by members of an extended family network. Only members of this extended family were allowed access to it.

One of these lakes is known as "Frozen Lake". This lake is the home of a *stl'áleqem* - a supernatural being, or spirit-being that lives in the real world. Stó:lō people were taught to be very quiet when they were at this lake out of feat that the *stl'áleqem* would awaken.

Popelehó:ys
"rising up" or "growing"
mountain

This mountain is associated with one of the Halq'eméylem flood stories. It is one of the highest mountains in the district. During the time of the flood story, many people climbed his mountain to seek refuge from the rising water. People say that the mountain rose up to save the people. Stó:lō Elder Susan Peters told the story of this place as follows:

When the world was drowned, the Indians went up to the mountains to save themselves. They went to the highest mountains and *Popelehó:ys* was one of the highest mountains around. Some people went up to *Popelehó:ys* to save themselves and *Popelehó:ys* kept growing and growing to save the people that were up there. This is the reason it is named *Popelehó:ys*! It means like growing. When the water started to come down the mountain started to come down too. The people stayed on the top until there was no more water and they went down towards the big mountains to come around and to go down to the river. On this trip they found a little pond. The ones that were left all had a bath in the little pond because they'd gotten lousy. They had a bath and washed themselves before they came down. Every year that little pond always had lice.

This story was recorded by Brent Galloway, a linguist who has documented much of the Halq'eméylem language.

Kw'ikw'yá:la
"stingy container"
fishing rock

This is a rock point extending from the rock bluff at the juncture of what is now known as "Suckers Creek" and the "Coquihalla River". This point provided a natural platform from which to spear salmon. "Water-babies" or small, underwater people inhabited a deep pool at this place. They would swim underwater and grab the salmon off of a spear if they did not want the fisher to catch any salmon. Thus the name "stingy container".

This name refers specifically to this fishing location and associated pool. Stó:lō Elders have expressed their concerns for the name being "ruined" and "spread all over", referring to the Coquihalla River, Coquihalla Highway, Coquihalla Toll-booth, Coquihalla Lakes, Coquihalla Towing Company, Coquihalla Hotel and so on. The significance of the Halq'eméylem name is lost when it is used in places other than where it is specifically meant for.

Th'exelís
"gritting his teeth"
scratch-marked rocks

This spot is an important fishing area at the entrance to the Fraser Canyon. It is also a place where X̱á:ls did battle with an evil Indian Doctor named X̱eyx̱elómós. X̱á:ls sat on one side of the river and X̱eyx̱elómós sat on the other side of the river. Whenever X̱á:ls used his power against X̱eyx̱elómós he would be gritting his teeth and scratching the rock on both sides of where he sat. There is a depression in the rock marking where X̱á:ls sat and where his legs extended below him. when X̱á:ls was doing battle he cast a thunderbolt across to X̱eyx̱elómós. The thunderbolt missed X̱eyx̱elómós and went into the rock. X̱á:ls eventually won the battle, transformed the Indian Doctor into stone and placed him just down-river from this point. This rock can now only be seen in low water. The thunderbolt is marked by a vein of quartz crystal in the bedrock where it struck.

Stó:lō people intermarried with the Utamptq people at what is now called Spuzzum. Intermarriages such as these promoted the sharing of cultural traditions, including stories and legends. The Utamptq people have a different story of this same place. In this story, it is said that the people there at Th'ex̱elís did not know how to catch their salmon. The men would dangle the young boys by their ankles over the swift moving water, allowing the boys to catch salmon with their bare hands. The deity [sic] saw this and each time he scratched the rock, he put a thought or a teaching into the minds of those people that is how they learned to make the dip net platforms, dry racks and so on.
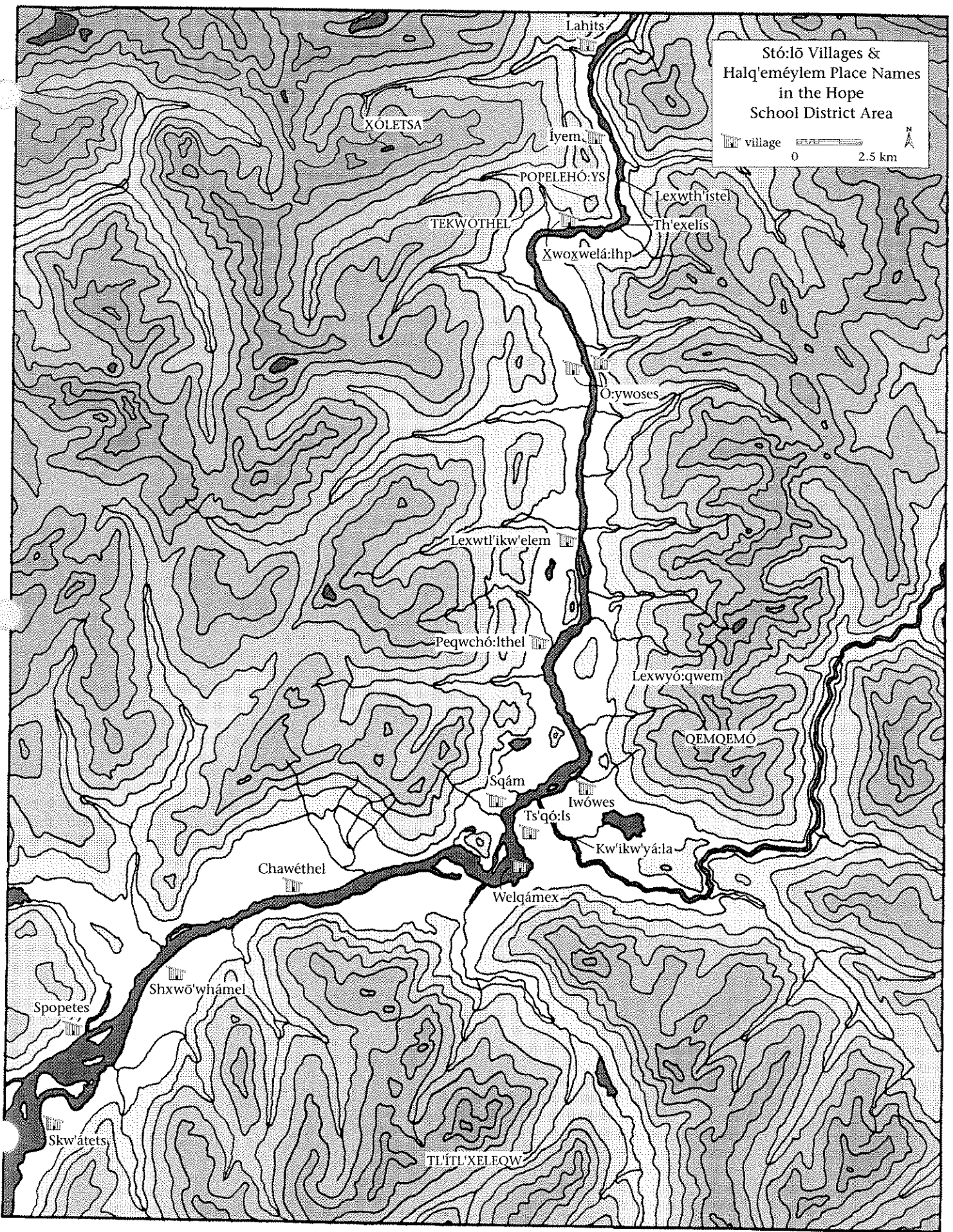
Lexwth'ístel
"always horns"
bay

This is a bay in the Fraser Canyon where the carcases of drowned animals come to rest. Many of these animals such as deer, elk, moose, and goat have horns. Thus the name, "always horns".

Stó:lō Villages &
Halq'eméylem Place Names
in the Hope
School District Area

village   0   2.5 km   N

Lahits

XÓLETSA

Iyem

POPELEHÓ:YS

TEKWÓTHEL

Lexwth'istel

Th'exelís

Xwoxwelá:lhp

Ó:ywoses

Lexwtl'ikw'elem

Peqwchó:lthel

Lexwyó:qwem

QEMQEMÓ

Sqám

Iwówes

Ts'qó:ls

Kw'ikw'yá:la

Chawéthel

Welqámex

Shxwō'whámel

Spopetes

Skw'átets

TL'ÍTL'XELEQW