



Introduction

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Why a Coast Salish Volume?

The late 1980s and early 1990s was a watershed period in the study of the peoples and communities of western Washington and British Columbia, who, following the name of the language family to which they belong, are known collectively as the Coast Salish.¹ During that period, Wayne Suttles' (1987) *Coast Salish Essays* was published, and in 1990 his edited *Handbook of North American Indians*, volume 7, *Northwest Coast*, appeared in print. As subsequent chapters show, Suttles has been enormously influential, and while he later published additional materials, including a massive grammar of the Musqueam language in 2004, the *Essays* and the *Handbook* are the high-water mark of his approach. Suttles' dissertation work, which he conducted in the 1940s, and his later publications reveal his interest in the anthropological "four-fields" approach (ethnology, linguistics, archaeology, and, with less emphasis, physical anthropology). The preface to his dissertation makes clear how he would go about understanding Coast Salish society:

In the summer of 1946 when the Anthropology Department of the University of Washington began archaeological work in the San Juan Islands, I spent a few days trying to get what ethnographic information I could from Indians living in and around the islands, information which would be of use to archaeologists. At the time my purpose was merely to determine who occupied the islands in most recent times and to get the location of village and camp sites. But as this work progressed, I came to realize the necessity for getting as full an account as possible of the specific activities that went on at each place. My interest extended first to subsistence and then to the relation of economy to the whole culture of the peoples of the area. (Suttles 1951, i)



His dissertation project led Suttles to pioneer in the emerging field of cultural ecology (described by David Schaepe in Chapter 8), but he retained a broad, holistic frame of reference, and his *Essays* reveals an interest in religion, art, adaptation to contact, and comparative studies of Northwest Coast peoples, among other topics. Of particular interest, though, is his emphasis on regional social networks – on understanding social organization through viewing the Coast Salish world as unified in several senses. “Affinal Ties, Subsistence, and Prestige among the Coast Salish,” first delivered as a paper in 1959 and published in 1960, for example, shows the connections between subsistence and prestige economic activities (including potlatching) and the kinship system as well as how Coast Salish people in one region are connected to those elsewhere (Suttles 1960). William Elmendorf, another major scholar in Suttles’ cohort, also embraced and developed this theme, particularly in his influential essay “Coast Salish Status Ranking and Intergroup Ties” (Elmendorf 1971). In Chapter 4, Chief Rocky Wilson employs this language of social networks, thus situating his own community within the larger Coast Salish world. Crisca Bierwert does the same thing in Chapter 6, where she discusses webs of kinship.

One could argue that Suttles’ work clearly established both the significance of the study of Coast Salish peoples and the relevance of viewing a set of communities under the rubric of “Coast Salish” (although this term did not originate with him) – a topic historian Alexandra Harmon considers in Chapter 1. Previously, the Coast Salish region had suffered as an area of academic interest, not receiving the same attention as did other areas of the Northwest Coast. The Aboriginal occupants of the region were thought to be of less importance than were the Aboriginal occupants of other areas because they had been subject to early and intense assimilationist pressures by the settler populations, which eventually created Seattle, Vancouver, Victoria, Tacoma, and other large communities. For many who worked within a salvage paradigm (which was based on the conviction that Aboriginal life and peoples would soon disappear and that, therefore, any distinctive socio-cultural features should quickly be recorded), the region seemed less than fruitful, although descriptive ethnographic studies were conducted for the Klallam, Snoqualmie, Lummi, Skagit, and others. Typically, these “recipe” books were organized around reporting on a range of topics – curing, kinship, material culture, technology, oral traditions, and so on – rather than around advancing theoretical notions regarding the region. Real, individual people were largely absent, and, in their place, we were presented with a normative culture.

In addition, the Coast Salish world suffered from being regarded as a “receiver area” – an area that received cultural developments that had



been created by supposedly “core” Northwest Coast groups such as the Wakashan speakers of the west coast and north end of Vancouver Island and the adjacent BC mainland. Suttles disputed this and theorized ways in which one might understand Coast Salish culture and the presence of dispersed, bilateral kin groups as a development related to local ecology rather than as the absence of a matrilineal clan system (which characterized groups further up the coast). The Coast Salish have commonly been depicted as the victims of raids by the more aggressive, better organized, and (implicitly) more important tribes to the north. In Chapter 9, Bill Angelbeck engages archaeological, ethnohistorical, and other materials to counter such claims and, in so doing, advances a more nuanced view of the Coast Salish. A final point, raised by Harmon (Chapter 1), is that the concept “Coast Salish” may be too narrow. In Chapter 3, for example, Sonny McHalsie reveals the extent to which he and his ancestors maintained important relations beyond the Coast Salish world. Nevertheless, Harmon concludes, and both McHalsie and Rocky Wilson confirm, that affiliations within what we now know as the Coast Salish world were significant.

One could argue that Suttles created an orthodox view of the communities that had long been viewed as comprising a subregion of the larger Northwest Coast culture area. My intention here is not to identify Suttles as acting alone – a number of others of his generation and the one before (e.g., Erna Gunther, Marius Barbeau, Homer Barnett, June Collins, Diamond Jenness, Sally Snyder, Helen Codere, Wilson Duff, Marian Smith, and William Elmendorf) focused specifically on the Coast Salish in at least some of their publications and had much to say on a variety of issues. By his own account, in his student days Suttles was but one among many who were part of a Boasian legacy in the anthropology department at the University of Washington and who made their mark in Coast Salish studies (Suttles 1990, 78). However, by virtue of his longevity and his influence on students, Suttles has arguably had a greater impact on the study of the Coast Salish than has any other scholar of his generation. He also provided much of the flavour of Coast Salish studies through having pioneered small but pivotal concepts. An example is the idea of “advice,” a metonymic reference to the set of information regarding kinship, family history, mythology, and so on that is necessary for claimants to upper-class status and that young people would obtain through engaging in spiritual training, listening to stories, and accompanying adults in their daily activities. Advice would, in theory, not be available to lower-class people. The power of this simple idea is that it drew connections between diverse areas of socio-cultural activity. In addition, Suttles’ continuing influence reflects the great importance of his detailed ethnographies of economic life in contemporary



tribal litigation – especially the landmark 1974 case, *United States v. Washington*, better known as the *Boldt* decision, in which Puget Sound tribes regained their treaty rights to half of the salmon catch.²

However, just as Suttles' legacy was firmly established, scholarship moved in another direction, as has Northwest Coast scholarship in general, in the period between the 1970s and the present (Mauzé, Harkin, and Kan 2004, xi). The turn of the millennium was yet another watershed in Coast Salish scholarship, with, in quick succession, the sudden appearance of several quite different monographs and edited volumes, including Jay Miller's (1999) *Lushootseed Culture and the Shamanic Odyssey: An Anchored Radiance*; Crisca Bierwert's (1999) *Brushed by Cedar, Living by the River* and her edited volume *Lushootseed Texts* (Bierwert 1996); Brad Asher's (1999) *Beyond the Reservation: Indians, Settlers, and Law in the Washington Territory, 1853-1889*; Alexandra Harmon's (1998) *Indians in the Making: Ethnic Relations and Indian Identities around Puget Sound*; and my own *The Problem of Justice: Tradition and Law in the Coast Salish World* (Miller 2001). These followed shortly after George Guilmet and David Whited's (1989) medical anthropology study of the Puyallup (*Those Who Give More*); Daniel Boxberger's (1989) now classic political economy study of tribal fishing, *To Fish in Common*; and even William Elmendorf's (1993) *Twana Narratives: Native Historical Accounts of a Coast Salish Culture*, a presentation of first-person narrative materials that had been mined for his *The Structure of Twana Culture* (Elmendorf 1960). The Swinomish, together with their research partners, published a powerful and fascinating account of their culture and history – aimed at service providers – entitled *A Gathering of Wisdoms* (Swinomish Tribal Mental Health Project 1991).

These and other works signalled a new era and brought in en masse, and for the first time, real, named Aboriginal people and more detailed and theorized considerations of historical change. The photographs accompanying this chapter (beginning on p. 17) make these points visually and themselves comprise a record of Coast Salish lives and the dramatic changes to their communities. Photo I.1 shows residents of Snauq, a community now encompassed by the Kitsilano neighbourhood of Vancouver, in various sorts of clothing and with distinct responses to the camera. A second photograph, I.2, depicts Upper Skagit people at work running cedar bolts downriver to sawmills sometime around 1900. Photo I.3, taken about 1920, shows current Upper Skagit elder Vi Fernando as a toddler and Jessie Moses, a woman known for her powers of precognition and a powerful influence on current elders. Behind these figures looms sacred Sauk Mountain. The final photograph, I.4, shows Tom Williams in hop fields. He is remembered



for bringing the Shaker Church to the Upper Skagit in the early twentieth century.

The Coast Salish peoples in most of the above-named works were shown in relation to other populations, particularly the settlers, rather than in isolation. Largely a stagnant field of study since the 1970s, Coast Salish research had come alive. No longer focused on salvage anthropology, strictly local issues, or assimilation (a genre perhaps best exemplified locally by Lewis' [1970] *Indian Families on the Northwest Coast: The Impact of Change*; and Hawthorn, Belshaw, and Jamieson's [1958] *The Indians of British Columbia: A Study of Contemporary Social Adjustment*), these books reveal the new connections between the larger scholarly fields and work conducted within the Coast Salish realm. The Coast Salish literature can again speak to larger scholarly and real-world issues. There are exceptions to this generalization, of course: significant research in the prior period included Pamela Amoss' (1978) *Coast Salish Spirit Dancing* and Michael Kew's (1970) dissertation concerning contemporary Musqueam. There was also the ethnobiological work of Turner (1975); a festschrift for UBC professor Wilson Duff, edited by Abbott (1981); Aboriginal leader Martin Sampson's (1972) brief study of Skagit history and ethnography; and the early, short writings of Kathleen Mooney (1976). Several others published valuable studies that included, but did not focus on, the Coast Salish, notably Rolf Knight's (1978) seminal work on Aboriginal peoples in the workforce and Paul Tennant's (1990) study of Aboriginal politics in British Columbia.

There has been, to date, no single volume that reflects the array of new topics, new interpretations, and new approaches to the Coast Salish, just as there had been no similar collaborative volume for the Northwest Coast since that edited by Tom McFeat (1966) and prior to the publication of Mauzé, Harkin, and Kan's (2004) *Coming to Shore*. Nor has there been an adequate reflection on how the legacy of early ethnographic studies influences our current scholarly understandings of the Coast Salish. These studies date back to the mid-nineteenth-century work of Horatio Hale (1846), the youthful ethnographer with the US Exploring Expedition of 1838-42; George Gibbs (1877), ethnographer with the US boundary expedition and other government projects; the work of the eccentric and eclectic George Swan (1857); and the work of the "father of American anthropology," Franz Boas (1889); and others. It is equally important to consider the viewpoints of Aboriginal peoples themselves and how Aboriginal peoples have influenced scholarly perspectives. With this in mind, I have pulled together work by contemporary scholars who can comment on a variety of substantive issues, particularly the state of research, and whose work



reflects both the influences of the Suttles generation of scholars and new ideas. Some of the contributors are now long-established scholars and others are of a newer generation.

History and Anthropology

Be of Good Mind has other aims as well as those mentioned above. Both the academic and popular literatures have commonly split the Coast Salish world in two, treating those living in Puget Sound and adjacent lands as constituting one world and those in British Columbia as constituting another. This practice fails to conform to the prior Aboriginal reality, before contact with whites and before treaties and borders. While it would be a mistake to argue that earlier scholarship failed to recognize the connections between peoples in what are now two separate nations, political factors have clearly influenced where people have engaged in fieldwork and what they have written about. For the most part, Americans have worked in the United States and Canadians in Canada. I want to make clear that there have been important exceptions to this observation: American Marian Smith, for example, conducted an ethnographic field school at the Seabird Island Reserve in British Columbia in 1945, as Crisca Bierwert points out in Chapter 6. Certainly, Suttles himself taught and researched in both countries and provided anthropological testimony on behalf of tribes on both sides of the international border. However, because much of the work during the period when Suttles got his start was descriptive salvage anthropology, it focused on discrete communities located in one country or the other. Meanwhile, political forces had pushed Aboriginal people to occupy reserves (the Canadian term) and reservations (the American term) whose borders had to remain within those of either Canada or the United States: there was to be no overlapping of federal borders. The Semiahmoo, for example, came to occupy only the Canadian portions of their territories, although they have maintained connections with their Lummi relatives in the United States. US and British/Canadian policy did not allow for recognized groups to have land in both counties (thereby creating a legal question now tentatively being approached in courts in both countries). The creation of reservations and reserves led scholars to study these communities as free-standing political entities. Since the establishment of the international boundary in 1846, differences in Canadian and American contact histories and public policies have created significant differences between historically connected Aboriginal communities. Not surprisingly, regional historians have tended to focus on Aboriginal peoples residing in their region alone. In brief, the connections between communities and individuals across the entire Coast Salish world have not been adequately explored. Several contemporary



scholars have explicitly concerned themselves with this problem and have sought to draw out the divergences and parallels. The chapters in this volume continue to address this shortcoming, including that of linguist Brent Galloway (Chapter 7).

I am also interested in pulling together the work of historians, anthropologists, other social scientists, and community intellectuals to create an emergent picture of the Coast Salish realm. As in the case of cross-border studies, it is nothing new for scholars from various disciplines to work together or to mutually influence one another's work. There is a long history of this, but there are now new twists to it. First, professional historians appear to be paying more attention to the developing histories of particular First Nations and American Indian Coast Salish communities and people, although, as Alexandra Harmon points out in Chapter 1, no one has yet produced a synthetic history of the region. Examples of these new histories include the biography of Esther Ross, a profoundly important woman in the twentieth-century history of the Stillaguamish (Ruby and Brown 2001), and Daniel Marshall's (1999) *Those Who Fell from the Sky: A History of the Cowichan Peoples*, a community history. It is probably fair to say that the scholarly production of histories concerning the Coast Salish of Washington State is considerably ahead of those for British Columbia. Most notably, Alexandra Harmon (1998) has written a now widely influential history of the Coast Salish of Puget Sound, *Indians in the Making*. The gap is closing rapidly, however, and exciting new regional histories by Keith Thor Carlson (2003) and others, including John Lutz at the University of Victoria, will continue to dramatically transform our understandings of the area.

There are other reasons why the rapprochement of historians, anthropologists, and community intellectuals is occurring and why it is significant, including the fact that, over the past twenty years, both history and anthropology have changed as disciplines. Americanist anthropology, once driven by functionalist and then assimilationist academic agendas, has moved toward a more thoughtful consideration of the ways in which historical forces act on culture and on local peoples. One might even make this claim regarding anthropologists of the Northwest Coast, most of whom have been heavily influenced by Franz Boas' version of historical particularism. History, for its part, has increasingly embraced minority and social histories. This is evident in new hiring strategies at universities. For example, in 2004-05 my own academic institution, the University of British Columbia (UBC), hired two young scholars whose primary interest is Aboriginal history. While an older generation of historians at UBC has played an important role in the production of Aboriginal history, this was not why they were brought to the university. Together, the two disciplines of history and



anthropology, and their Aboriginal collaborators, have created the field of ethnohistory, a discourse that sprang out of the problems associated with providing evidence for the US Court of Claims in the 1940s – a legal enterprise intended to speed up the resolution of land claims and treaty issues facing American tribes.

As Daniel Boxberger points out in Chapter 2, research among the Coast Salish has always been driven by concerns of public policy and litigation. This became evident following the *Boldt* decision, a large-scale legal proceeding in which Barbara Lane and many other formally trained researchers turned their attention to amassing various sorts of materials relating to the issue of treaty-period (i.e., mid-nineteenth-century) life. But academics have long worked for Aboriginal communities on legal matters. Sally Snyder, for example, carried out long-term fieldwork with Samish, Swinomish, Upper Skagit, Sauk-Suiattle, and other communities in the 1940s and 1950s, largely with litigation in mind. Later, she acted on behalf of these communities. As Boxberger describes in Chapter 2, Herbert Taylor of Western Washington University spent much of his career considering issues related to litigation. The intellectual problems presented in treaty, land, and other litigation have pushed scholars to more carefully consider questions of population size, the impact of contact on economic activities, the nature of social relations, the nature of private property, and many other issues. Litigation has also pushed scholars of different disciplines to create detailed and unified interpretations that are intellectually honest, that are in line with all available information (including Aboriginal viewpoints and oral documents), and that might be successful in court.

Most contemporary scholars of the Coast Salish have probably found themselves either producing materials for tribal litigation or testifying in court. Some have found this to be an onerous task and either refuse to participate or do so only once. Many contend that the demands of litigation – report production along with examination and cross-examination – provide greater scrutiny of academic ideas and arguments than does any other venue. The demands of litigation, in brief, have forced a newer, more carefully argued approach to a variety of issues about the Coast Salish area. As Boxberger indicates in Chapter 2, litigation may have profoundly altered the nature of scholarship as it relates to the Coast Salish. I might add that this appears to be largely for the good, in that it has precipitated new discussions and sharpened ideas, and it has also created a real-world forum within which to debate anthropological and historical ideas of very considerable importance. Problems have emerged too, including the ugly spectre of unprepared scholars testifying beyond their competence and/or being



unaware of the differences between legal and academic understandings of particular words and concepts (Miller 2004). In addition, scholars have testified against each other in ways that are not always attractive or helpful, and many, including Colin Grier (Chapter 10), remain wary of the relationship between law and scholarship. Academics have been accused of merely being mouthpieces for tribes/bands or for one or another government. Nonetheless, working together on litigation constitutes a third reason why history, anthropology, and Aboriginal forms of knowledge have usefully interpenetrated and why all are represented in *Be of Good Mind*. Boxberger (Chapter 2) cautions, however, that some forms of traditional knowledge are not common property and that they should remain community-controlled resources of the sort articulated by McHalsie (Chapter 3).

In Chapter 4, Rocky Wilson reveals more about the significance of legal engagement. His people, the Hwlitsum, are not yet recognized by the Canadian government, a circumstance that has caused his band to undertake litigation and that focuses his understandings of Coast Salish identity. He points out the participation of his band in Coast Salish social networks, the role of elders in creating internal recognition, and the importance of establishing one's place through honouring one's ancestors. His chapter also reveals the important and still unresolved issue of the existence of Coast Salish communities on both sides of the international border that lack official state recognition. Although this circumstance skews these communities' relationships with recognized tribes and bands, they rightly deserve to be recognized in this volume (see Miller 2003).

While historians are now making a big splash in Coast Salish studies, they are reading ethnographies, and anthropologists are reading histories. Beyond this, however, is the exciting development, at least from my perspective as an anthropologist, of a new generation of historians who have learned directly from community members themselves. This is not news for anthropologists; indeed, Valentine and Darnell (1999) suggest that Americanist anthropology is characterized by Aboriginal people's participating directly in theory making. Now, however, we have the prospect of historians trained in archival methods and informed by world-scale historical questions, who have added to their repertoire the insights of the community and a deep appreciation for Aboriginal epistemologies. This is a powerful combination. For historians, culture is never static, and they have challenged anthropological renderings in which culture appears to be so. Coast Salish culture (or, more aptly, cultures, there is no uniformity in the Coast Salish region) has seemed flat in the hands of anthropologists; the *Handbook* perhaps most thoroughly reflects this approach. While anthropologists have understood



that Coast Salish culture changed prehistorically, and while none would argue that life four thousand years ago, during a period of mixed economic activity and before that of the intensification of salmon fisheries, would have been similar to life in 1750, not enough attention has been given to transformations in more recent cultural practice. For example, in Chapter 10 Grier indicates the extent to which archaeologists have uncritically applied ethnographic understandings to archaeological questions. He argues for “side-by-side” research. Critics may quickly dispute my contention and might, for example, point to studies of the rise of the Indian Shaker Church, the transformation of religious practices and concepts in the late nineteenth century, or to Guilmet, Boyd, Whited, and Thompson’s (1991) study of the effects of disease on cultural transmission. But even these studies have not adequately dislodged the notion of an ethnographic present. The current dialogue with historians, however, appears to have begun to do this.

Simultaneously, histories appear more relevant and more respectful of community epistemologies and approaches to history. Keith Thor Carlson’s work is perhaps most developed in this sense. Now a tenured faculty member at the University of Saskatchewan, Carlson worked for more than a decade as a historian for the Stó:lō Nation. During this period, he attended community spiritual events, listened to community members and leaders of all sorts, puzzled through community politics, and began to form a new idea of how identities had come to be what they are and what an indigenous historiography might be like. This is reflected in Chapter 5 and in previous publications, including the impressive and award-winning *A Stó:lō Coast Salish Historical Atlas* (Carlson 2001). Carlson has taken community oral histories of several sorts seriously and has wedded them to archival and ethnographic accounts. The product, exciting and provocative, is arguably an altogether new hybrid scholarship. Chapter 3, by Stó:lō cultural advisor Sonny McHalsie, shows in detail how he has learned to work with academics such as Carlson and to incorporate and re-analyze materials from previous generations of non-Aboriginal researchers. McHalsie points to the mutual sharing of published and unpublished materials (and suggests that unpublished notes are often more valuable than are the worked-over published materials, a topic taken up by Crisca Bierwert in Chapter 6) and to the importance of mutual participation in spiritual life. For McHalsie, participant observation moves in both directions.

Carlson (Chapter 5) and David Schaepe (Chapter 8) point to another important feature of the post-1990 world and yet another reason to celebrate and encourage the new interdisciplinary scholarship – that is, the ability of communities to employ scholars directly. When I first began to



work among Coast Salish communities in the 1970s, they were only tentatively engaging in research and had not fully begun to figure out ways in which they might work with scholars for mutually productive purposes. The Puyallup, for example, had just seized a former tribal tuberculosis treatment centre and were beginning to create a tribal archive. The Stó:lō, too, on the Canadian side, had recently forcibly seized a hospital located in their traditional territories, also formerly devoted to Aboriginal tuberculosis patients, and had begun to develop a research program and archive. Much of the visible and dramatic infrastructure of the communities, including large and attractive tribal centres, gaming and public auditoriums, gymnasiums, shopping malls, and new winter ceremonial longhouses, was not yet present. The implications of the legal victory of the *Boldt* decision were just beginning to become apparent in Puget Sound, and the BC bands were coming alive politically in opposition to the federal government's policy of radical assimilation and termination, which was announced by the Trudeau government's 1969 White Paper.

In the 1970s Vi Hilbert, now an Upper Skagit elder and then a language instructor at the University of Washington, had just begun her own engagement with a group of scholars interested in helping her develop materials about the oral traditions and cultures of the Coast Salish. By the mid-1990s, Hilbert's research group, including both community members and academics Pamela Amoss, Jay Miller, Andie Palmer, Crisca Bierwert, and many others, had produced several volumes and audiotapes. These materials directly reflected Hilbert's own teaching, which she received from her elders, including her aunt Susie Sampson Peter and her father, Charlie Anderson. The publications have had a considerable impact on the work of both those in her group, particularly on Jay Miller's (1999) *Lushootseed Culture and the Shamanic Odyssey*, and those outside, including Carlson. In fact, one might argue that Vi Hilbert has created her own orthodox and spiritually informed view of the Coast Salish peoples and cultures – one that complements Suttles' more academic and ecologically based perspective.

BC bands have entered into their own direct encounter with academics as their governmental infrastructure has developed and their capacity for employing academics has grown. In 1991, for example, the Stó:lō Nation invited anthropologists from UBC to help them with their research. At this point, the nation employed a single academically trained social scientist, the archaeologist Gordon Mohs, and early meetings between Stó:lō staff and UBC professors were held in a small trailer. There were fewer than ten Stó:lō staff at the time of the birth of the UBC graduate ethnographic field school, initially organized by Professor Julie Cruikshank and myself, in



1991. Less than a dozen years later, the Stó:lō staff had grown to well over two hundred, and the nation now employs academics of various sorts, including anthropologists and archaeologists, historians, archivists, GIS specialists, as well as community culture experts. This powerful group came to be known, in jest, as Stó:lō University, reflecting how its members dramatically changed the landscape of scholarship concerning the Coast Salish in Canada, publishing a series of significant books, including the *Atlas* (Carlson 2001) and *You Are Asked to Witness* (Carlson 1996), just as had Vi Hilbert and her research group in the United States. It is because of the groundbreaking work of Gordon Mohs, Keith Thor Carlson, Albert McHalsie, and many others that a disproportionate amount of research about the Coast Salish concerns the Stó:lō communities. *Be of Good Mind* reflects that reality.

Academics on both sides of the border have been called on to produce studies of Aboriginal economic practice to support litigation and to establish Aboriginal rights. In the 1980s, for example, Puget Sound sacred sites were mapped and documented for the purpose of protecting them from intrusive non-tribal economic activities, particularly logging. Later, the re-licensing of Puget Power and Seattle City Light under the terms of the US Federal Environmental Regulatory Commission (FERC) called for the production of traditional cultural property (TCP) studies. In Canada, the requirements of documenting tribal practice under the emerging case law of the 1990s have led to the production of traditional use studies (TUS). This sort of work has had the effect of informing academics of the depth of Aboriginal thinking and has created a heightened sensitivity to the cultural landscape. As several of the chapters in this volume reveal, particularly that of Stó:lō leader Sonny McHalsie, understanding the cultural landscape is a critical feature of the new interpretations of the Salish world. And in Chapter 8, Dave Schaepe suggests that contemporary Coast Salish community heritage resource policies constitute significant articulations of identity.

In brief, the scholarship of the contemporary period reflects a new engagement with the Coast Salish people themselves. In many cases, scholars are directly employed by tribes and bands; in other cases, they are under contract to prepare materials for litigation for tribal interests. Scholars are also occasionally employed to provide answers to legal questions posed by non-Aboriginal litigants. The demands of litigation have led to a new look at the landscape and a new vigilance. Within this framework, new questions are being asked and new concepts developed. An interesting example is the effort by Schaepe, Berkey, Stamp, and Halstad (2004) on behalf of the Stó:lō Nation to document Stó:lō practices and beliefs regarding air and water. This is part of the Stó:lō Nation's attempt to protect threatened



sacred areas as well as the environment more generally, and it points directly to relevant, but poorly understood, features of Coast Salish identity.

For Coast Salish communities, all of this is occurring during a period of considerable political reawakening and tremendous cultural revival. For example, as recently as twenty years ago winter spirit dancing drew few new participants; today, there are many initiates from a number of Coast Salish communities, and hundreds crowd into longhouses for extended nights of watching and supporting the dancers. These forces, in addition to those internal to academic disciplines worldwide, have drawn together historians, anthropologists, archaeologists, linguists, tribal historians, and culture advisors. There remain issues that are particular to archaeology, and everyone is going to have to continue to rework his or her understandings of Coast Salish studies in light of new archaeological developments.

Archaeology, Anthropology, and History

The archaeology of the Coast Salish cannot be regarded as well-developed in comparison to the archaeology of some other regions of Aboriginal North America. Perhaps because of the rapid urban development in the region following white contact as well as compelling archaeological projects elsewhere, relatively few academic resources have been devoted to this subject. Even departments in large universities in the region, notably the University of Washington, the University of British Columbia, and Simon Fraser University (SFU), have done relatively little to follow the pioneering work of Charles Borden, Roy Carlson, and several others. Over the last decade and a half this has slowly begun to change. UBC established an archaeological field school in the late 1980s, working at several sites along the Fraser River and on the Gulf Islands, and has joined forces with SFU archaeologists to work on several projects. Some of these have the unusual feature of considering the archaeology of the Coast Salish across the international boundary (e.g., the study of the Chittenden Meadows in the Skagit region of both Canada and the United States). Tribes and bands have also come to rely on professional contract firms to obtain archaeological documentation. The resultant “grey” literature has frequently been entered as evidence in the legal record and has enhanced the overall understanding of the archaeology of the region.

Archaeology in the contemporary period is considerably transformed from what it was in earlier times. Now, neither academic nor contract archaeologists can proceed on their own accord in Aboriginal territory; community consent and participation is required, as it is with all forms of ethnographic research. In many cases, Aboriginal communities have created protocols for seeking permission and recording information for community use. In



some cases, these protocols have been prepared with the co-operation of archaeologists themselves. In Chapter 8, David Schaepe looks at the participation of professional archaeologists in the conception and creation of the Stó:lō Nation cultural resource management program – including archaeological sites. Arguably, archaeologists of the Coast Salish are among the most responsive to the new environment of scholar-Aboriginal relations and among the most progressive in developing useful and mutually satisfying relationships with Aboriginal peoples in North America.

In many other regions, archaeologists and anthropologists remain much more resistant to incorporating Aboriginal peoples into their thinking and practice. This may reflect the fact that most of these scholars live in the Coast Salish region and that Coast Salish Aboriginal peoples are members of the larger community as well as of the tribe/band. They attend the colleges and universities and participate in academic affairs. Academics teaching courses about Aboriginal peoples see them in great numbers in their classes in the Coast Salish area, and community members themselves teach or give lectures in many of the courses. They push to have their voices and perspectives heard, and they have generously given their time so that scholars may learn from them. This is less true in many other areas, where academics live “away” and the scholarly discourse remains largely distinct from community concerns and voices.

Aboriginal participation, then, includes more than simply issuing or refusing permission to excavate archaeological sites. Community leaders now carefully consider what types of sites, and which sites in particular, need to be studied. There is a new utility to archaeology for Aboriginal communities; archaeological findings can be used to demonstrate continuity of occupation, the range of subsistence activities, and other topics significant in making land claims or, in the case of British Columbia, in supporting bands during the treaty process. Communities, then, have a direct interest in selecting projects that are of utility to them.

Further, communities directly contribute to the interpretation of sites. This is not new, but contemporary archaeologists have built community contributions directly into the initial planning and conceptualizing stage, so that there is constant feedback going on. The long collaboration of tribal expert Sonny McHalsie, historian Keith Thor Carlson, archaeologists Dave Schaepe, Michael Blake, and Dana Lepofsky in Stó:lō territory, and Robert Mierendorf in the adjacent US National Park Service is one such example. Recently, a large-scale, long-term, federally funded “identity” project has been undertaken to examine the movements of Coast Salish people along the Fraser River, the point being to create a historical picture of the migrations, amalgamations, and fissioning that resulted in the contemporary Stó:lō



people. Pat Moore has joined several other academics in the project to add linguistic reconstructions to archaeological and historical materials. McHalsie and the elders with whom he has worked have been able to connect features of the landscape to oral records that reveal the significance of the sites. The results of this project are not yet fully in, although McHalsie's chapter in this volume reveals the nature and significance of his contribution.

In Chapter 10, Colin Grier discusses his work in the Gulf Islands and his interest in household archaeology. His previous work (Grier 2003) has helped refine our understanding of how the Coast Salish world (or Salish Sea, in Russel Barsh's terminology) functions as a region by pointing out how island resources relate to riverine occupation. Grier's work also sheds light on ethnographic and ethnohistorical studies of the political organization of the Coast Salish peoples, since the early 1990s an area of lively debate (Tollefson 1987, 1989; Miller and Boxberger 1994; Miller 2001). Notably, his research also requires significant band co-operation with regard to granting permission, identifying sites, thinking through the uses of a site, and establishing a logistical system for his research team. Finally, Grier's work illuminates the operation of temporal corporate groups, an idea that I believe is underplayed in the literature. Here he focuses on difficult issues in the relationship between archaeology and ethnography. He points out that an uncritical imposition of ethnographic conclusions regarding Coast Salish social organization can obstruct the development of an adequate archaeology of the region. He calls for a Coast Salish archaeology that is produced in conjunction with ethnography and, more broadly, with anthropology and that is independent of the ethnographic record. This would produce an archaeology that could contribute to ethnographic understandings and eliminate the teleological quality of Coast Salish studies, which have so strongly emphasized historically known peoples.

These examples of the integration of archaeology, linguistics, history, ethnography, and other disciplines reveal the significance of integrated, multidisciplinary research. Much more remains to be done, and the archaeology of the Coast Salish appears to be about to undergo significant revision. Robert Mierendorf's (1993) work in the US North Cascades shows eighty-five hundred radio carbon years (calibrated 14C years before present) of Aboriginal occupation in the Ross Lake area, and use of high altitude Alpine regions and recent research in Yale Canyon at the Xelhálh site suggest the development of rock-wall fortifications along the Fraser River and the construction of a "castle-like" stone defensive site protecting a rich storage area (Schaepe 2006). Working out these ideas will require interdisciplinary efforts and will certainly affect our understanding of the Coast Salish peoples.



Who Are the Coast Salish?

Much of the new literature focuses on the critical question, “who are the Coast Salish?” and the related issue, “what are the connections between the contemporary peoples and the historic and prehistoric communities and cultures?” Either directly or indirectly, these questions are reflected in the chapters in *Be of Good Mind*, and they are important for a number of practical and intellectual reasons. First, Coast Salish communities, as I have suggested, are continuing their struggle to clarify and extend their legal footing in both Canada and the United States. The details of this are the topic of another book, but they influence current thinking. For example, in the second phase of the landmark *Boldt* decision, the shellfishing phase, in my own testimony and report I asked: “Who are the successors in interest to the treaty-period people of the Skagit?” This is not an easy question, applied as it is to a people who have long practised exogamous marriage (at least among those of high standing). Coast Salish society has been characterized by kinship ties that stretch over a large area and, in some circumstances, by use-rights to resources in various locales. Today, tribes and bands struggle internally over what constitutes a community and who ought to have membership. For example, over the last decade, various bands have drifted in and out of membership in the Stó:lō Nation, and the Stó:lō Nation and Musqueam band continue to differ over whether or not the latter ought to be regarded as part of the former (the Musqueam argue against this). In the United States and Canada, non-recognized tribes struggle to demonstrate their separateness from established tribes that claim to have incorporated their interests and their people in the nineteenth century.

Anthropologists, for their part, and, more recently, historians, have advanced several competing theories in an attempt to understand the social organization and identifying features of the various Coast Salish peoples. Suttles (1987) emphasizes the importance of the local kin group, which operated within a regional social network and which was based on lineage and the management of resources. Smith (1940) emphasizes mutual identity along watersheds, without formal regional leadership. Jay Miller (1999) points to the importance of spiritual practice and the role of shamanic practitioners in forming regional systems. And Tollefson (1987, 1989) suggests that at least some Puget Salish were organized into chiefdoms. Responses to this work (Miller and Boxberger 1994) argue that colonial processes may have pushed communities into creating more formalized alliances, as commonly occurred with several other Aboriginal regions of Native North America. Yet others (Harmon 1998) emphasize how contact has altered, perhaps distorted, the ways in which Coast Salish peoples



PHOTO 1.1 Group near Jericho Charlie's home on Kitsilano Indian Reserve (Snaaq): Mary (Yam-schlmoot), Jericho Charlie (Chin-nal-set), William Green, Peelass George, Jimmy Jimmy, and Jack (Tow-hu-quam-kee). *Major Matthews Collection, City of Vancouver Archives, P28N11*

organize their identities. For his part, Carlson (2003) analyzes migrations and social class differences and their basis in cultural patterning in the early historic period.

It seems clear, however, that Coast Salish peoples have long constructed and maintained complex personal social identities that connect them to a variety of other groups. These include immortal beings regarded as ancestral kinfolk, immediate affinal and agnatic relatives, a larger set of more distant relatives, households, and fellow members of “villages” that are sometimes many kilometres in length but that have few structures. There are also patterns of affiliation based on common occupation of water systems; respect for particular regional leaders, use-rights, and resource procurement areas; and the common use of particular languages and dialects. In the contemporary period, the Coast Salish have some sense of common identity with fellow members of this Aboriginal language family, as is indicated by recent efforts to create a Coast Salish political network crossing the international border. To a great extent, though, patterns of identity and affiliations gain importance according to how they are deployed in daily life and, additionally, in times of great upheaval and change. Who the Coast Salish are depends upon the question being asked – a circumstance



that has not been sufficiently recognized in the academic literature. It is this flexibility with regard to personal and group patterns of identity that has enabled the Coast Salish to adapt to the devastating problems resulting from contact (Kew and Miller 1999).

Harmon (1998) has rightly observed that, though tribes and bands exist in a form that was determined by the administrative practice of the colonizers, they have nevertheless become the focus of personal and group identity. Washington State tribes are “treaty tribes” in the sense that political and economic rights flow from the language in which treaties encapsulated them in the 1850s. These treaties structure the lives of individual Coast Salish peoples and families. Similarly, as Schaepe points out, the responses of BC bands and tribal councils to the current treaty process and land claims have had a similar impact. However, individuals on both sides of the border also closely identify with kin relations, and these cross tribal/band political boundaries. My own work with contemporary communities suggests to me that the significance of the local kin group, the “corporate group” which is based in the idiom of kinship but that implicitly excludes many potential kinfolk, has not been sufficiently considered. Because my research has largely been concerned with contemporary tribal internal politics, service delivery, and justice systems, my approach to these communities is quite different from that of those engaging in salvage anthropology



PHOTO I.2 Running cedar bolts downriver to sawmills. *Ed Edwards Collection, Upper Skagit Tribe*



and attempting to reconstruct largely dismembered ways of life. My work has shown that contemporary patterns of identity and organization, although not identical with earlier patterns, are powerfully influenced by them. An interesting example of this may be found in the Upper Skagit community in the rapid re-creation of family fishing co-operatives along the Skagit River following the regaining of tribal recognition soon after the *Boldt* decision (Miller 1989a). In Chapter 6, Bierwert points to the significance of extended kin groups as well as to the problems in retaining this sort of social pattern under mid-twentieth-century pressure to assimilate.

My claim is that the Coast Salish continue to form themselves into named corporate groups, known locally simply as "families." Further, many significant issues of contemporary social life might be best approached from an analysis of the ways in which these families interact. What follows is a short sketch of how this approach works and the sorts of questions it might address concerning the core question: who are the Coast Salish? These groups organize many fundamental features of the lives of their members, which is to say that they have corporate functions, including, in many cases, those affecting fishing, ritual life, regular small-scale reciprocity (such as babysitting, care of elders, borrowing cash, the lending of cars). These corporate groups are the entities within which "advice" is shared and taught. Elders gather goods for distribution at ancestral namings held for group members and other important ritual events, and members are initiated during winter dances in the group longhouse (if they have one). Senior members teach or demonstrate important skills, such as basket weaving and storytelling, to junior members. "Magic" is kept private within the group, and group members attempt to restrict access to personal information about health status and other vital issues. In one study (Miller and Pylypa 1995), paraprofessional mental health service providers reported that they were largely unable to provide services to members of outside groups because of the prohibitions against sharing information across family lines. In another case, a tribal basket-making project floundered because elders were unwilling to teach members of other families.

From this viewpoint, tribes and bands can be thought of as being composed of competing families, whose members' loyalties lie more with the families than with the political units that contain them. One political leader reported her efforts to ensure that the families co-operate for the purpose of mutual success (Miller 1989b). Families compete over a variety of internal resources, which are available solely through common membership within the larger tribal/band structure. These resources include seats on tribal/band councils; in both the Canadian and American communities, voting patterns show strong evidence of family loyalties (Miller 1992).



PHOTO 1.3 Sauk Mountain, with Jessie Moses (looking down) and Vi Fernando (child).

Ed Edwards Collection, Upper Skagit Tribe

Further, families compete for available housing, access to health, social, and educational services, influence over community decisions, and tribal/band jobs. In one case in Canada, in recognition of the long-term practice of family leadership within the larger collective, the method of selecting band council members was adjusted to allow for the appointment of family leaders (Kew and Miller 1999). As is the case with many small-scale political systems elsewhere, families unite when necessary to compete with other tribes/bands, particularly regarding fishing allocations.

Unlike the northern matrilineal tribes in the northern Northwest Coast culture region, the Coast Salish have no clan system, with the result that distribution of members to family groups is not clearly channelled.³ This fact points to the importance of examining individual, household, nuclear family, "family," and even band-level processes of affiliation. Interview data show that many, perhaps most, individuals carefully scrutinize their life chances within the family and the political unit (Miller 1989b, 1992). In



many cases, individuals choose to move to a new location, sometimes to a new band or tribe, where, through bilateral kinship, they can claim membership in a different corporate family and where they might have either more resources available to them or a stronger position within the family. An individual's decisions are influenced by her stage of life, the stage in the life cycle of her nuclear family, her household, and the circumstances of the family she wishes to join.

For the most part, families gain members in two ways: birth and recruitment. While members are not necessarily co-resident and may not even live in the same community, they practise regular generalized reciprocity (Mooney 1976), and they depend on one or more leaders who can offer them significant resources. These resources may include spiritual knowledge, "advice," financial assets, control of ancestral names (which may be given to appropriate family members), mastery of local norms of speech making, and various publicly identifiable phenomena associated with high-class status. Other resources may include control of locations for fishing camps, ritual roles, knowledge of the non-Aboriginal bureaucratic world, seats on tribal council, chances at tribal employment, influence in housing policy, and so on. Followers might gain access to these resources through their ties to leaders, but the connections to family leaders vary, and some tribal members are more socially and genealogically distant than are others. Leaders, in turn, offer their resources to family members but may shape their following through strategic allocations. A family, however, always remains a "moral" group rather than an instrumental one (Bailey 1980, 73).

An important feature of the family is its size, and larger families are generally the most successful when it comes to competing with other families within a given polity. In tribal/band elections, for example, adult members can often be counted on to vote for family candidates. And, if a family is large, it is more likely than is a smaller family to have its members holding tribal/band jobs. But because families are not clans, they are not immortal: they follow cycles of birth, growth, and collapse. Families coalesce around able charismatic leaders, but they may splinter following the death of these leaders if there are no suitable candidates to take their place. Family leadership, then, is earned rather than ascribed. Over time, the named families in a community will change, and the presence of a particular surname is no more indicative of the existence of a corporate family group than is the presence of particular Anglo names in a Canadian telephone book.

The approach I suggest here is appropriate for examining contemporary internal political processes, for considering the lives of individuals, and for making sense of much of the confusion in the literature regarding how individuals identify themselves. It also provides insights into how and when



PHOTO I.4 Tom Williams (at left), founder of Upper Skagit Shaker Church, hop picking. *Ed Edwards Collection, Upper Skagit Tribe*

individual members of polities gain access to services, a point medical anthropologist Jen Pylypa and I made regarding medical service delivery (Miller and Pylypa 1995). However, this is not a historical approach *per se*, although it relies on time depth; rather, it emphasizes the life cycles of individuals and other social units, and it relies on regarding Aboriginal communities from the vantage point of local-level politics. Further, it emphasizes the differences in how tribal/band members are positioned within their own communities, and it points to the importance of the analysis of power in understanding contemporary lives – all of which are issues that have been insufficiently developed in the literature. But this approach must be paired with those developed by historians (and others) to account for the processes of (neo)colonialism as well as with the political economic approaches developed by anthropologists and other social scientists. The latter are represented by Daniel Boxberger in Chapter 6.

The question “Who are the Coast Salish?” must, of course, be answered by community members themselves; the chapters by Sonny McHalsie and Rocky Wilson are part of an attempt to do just this. In Chapter 3, McHalsie discusses the complex and evolving process involved as he learns about his community and how he is connected to the landscape and his ancestors.



He rejects shallow understandings of oral history, which claim that the use of outside sources constitutes a sort of contagion, and he reveals the complex relationship between oral and written materials. Showing how he has engaged scholars and scholarly writing, McHalsie points, as does Bierwert (Chapter 6), to the value of fieldnotes as sources. In particular, he elucidates how the interests of linguists, who are intent on recording, analyzing, and preserving language, may diverge from his own interest in examining the social context within which language is used and of places and names. In Chapter 4 it is clear that Rocky Wilson is also informed by both the narratives of his elders and academic understandings.

Meanwhile, there is a growing debate concerning the role of various academic approaches and how they might help communities represent themselves to the outside world. In Chapter 2, Boxberger observes that, in legal settings, postmodern and poststructural approaches are of little practical value: they don't clearly address legal questions, they appear to lack the authority that courts demand of experts, and they employ a different notion of fact than do the legal systems in both Canada and the United States. They undermine the legitimacy of community self-representations within legal settings because opponents can point to internal disagreement and differing perspectives. For all of these reasons, such approaches simply don't work well in court. He argues that the reality is that legal settings constitute the primary forum for public debate, whether inside or outside the courtroom.

The counter-argument appears to be that communities must make representations to both the outside world and their own members during a period in which community diversity is considerably greater than was the case in previous generations. Coast Salish communities are no longer culturally homogeneous, if they ever were. Now, some members belong to the Shaker Church, others are Seowyn winter dancers, and still others are Pentecostals or Roman Catholics. Many participate in several spiritual and religious traditions, but many do not. Access to wealth and formal education divides communities in new ways. In this argument, pressures to exhibit internal cultural uniformity to the outside world have the potential to silence internal disputes (e.g., with regard to nascent justice systems) (Miller 2001). For this reason, foregrounding the social complexity of communities, as does Bierwert's poststructuralist writing, may be constructive and may potentially allow communities room to manoeuvre in future self-representations. Both positions – the legalistic and the poststructuralist – make important statements, however, and the question of how academics ought to position their research and their contributions remains open.



Conclusion

Wayne Suttles' *Coast Salish Essays* reflects the words and concepts of a lifetime of careful, thoughtful, and sometimes inspired work. The result of a long, fruitful collaboration with Aboriginal people and communities, it reflects Suttles' abiding interest in contributing directly to communities while developing his own intellectual program. Sadly, Suttles died in 2005 as *Be of Good Mind* was being prepared. Now it is time for a new collection of essays – one that teases apart the received wisdom, incorporating several voices and addressing a wide range of topics. In this sense, *Be of Good Mind* might be regarded as a sequel to Suttles' *Essays* – a sequel in which orthodoxy is replaced by heterodoxy and in which anthropology is paired with other disciplines. It is also time for Coast Salish literature to better connect with the broader scholarship regarding Aboriginal peoples, colonization, and globalization as well as to incorporate new forms of scholarly analysis. Once the influence of Boasian-style anthropology diminished in North America, the Northwest Coast culture area was widely thought to have become a scholarly backwater. Until recently this was particularly true with regard to the Coast Salish. The Northwest Coast has entered the broader scholarly imagination primarily with regard to the potlatch and exchange theory. This is most notable in French anthropology, such as Marcel Mauss' (1967) *The Gift* and Lévi-Strauss' (1982) structuralist renderings, some of which relied on examples from Stó:lō communities along the Fraser River. The influence of Northwest Coast art and material culture on European aesthetics has been noted (Clifford 1988). More recently, the work of Sergei Kan (1989), particularly his classic *Symbolic Immortality*, has signalled that the Northwest Coast is again pushing beyond its own borders. The foci of Northwest Coast scholarship – once on myth, art, the potlatch, descent systems, social inequalities, and winter ceremonies (Suttles and Jonaitis 1990) – are now elsewhere.

In the 1970s and early 1980s, at least one major university in the region chose simply to dump anthropology faculty members whose area of research was primarily the Coast Salish in favour of those who worked in more exotic and supposedly more intellectually exciting regions of the world, such as Papua New Guinea. But this appears to have been short-sighted and to reflect a lack of concern for the relationship between the local universities and local peoples, along with the old, lingering notion that the Coast Salish lack authenticity and are too assimilated to be of interest. During the 1970s and 1980s, little attention was paid to promoting the education of local Aboriginal people and to attracting them to a university that took their lives and view of the world seriously, never mind to respecting



the fact that the universities themselves are built on Aboriginal traditional lands. In the 1970s, insufficient attention was paid to understanding how global trends are experienced or generated locally, and international indigenous concerns were yet to be articulated as a political force and the site of academic interest. These attitudes still persist in the academy and among contract researchers. To some, the Coast Salish world remains of little interest because, as I have been told (as were those many years before me), “There is nothing left to learn. They [members of some particular community] don’t know anything now.” The assumption is that the culture is preserved in recorded materials and best understood from written sources rather than from members of the communities themselves.

But anthropology has come to understand culture differently since the 1970s, and practitioners of the discipline now view culture as contested, as differently understood even in a single, apparently homogeneous community, and as best represented from several angles of vision. We can now appreciate more fully that culture is as it is lived and practised and that contemporary Coast Salish people *are* the bearers of culture as they know it and act on it. They are not simply lesser versions of their ancestors, even though community members themselves often articulate this viewpoint. Current scholarship recognizes the importance of describing and analyzing the ways in which the state and Aboriginal communities relate today, and the ways in which culture, however it might be thought of and represented, is brought to bear politically. More generally, we can now focus not on how Aboriginal people have been assimilated or exterminated but, rather, on how they have persisted, on how they have created hybrid forms of culture, and on how some forms of cultural practice have been sequestered from outside view. We can understand that some cultural practices have been discarded and others enhanced. We can now work with a broad and interesting range of Aboriginal responses to contact and colonization rather than with the limited vocabulary of assimilation and resistance.

A period is now beginning in which a heightened rapprochement between disciplines can generate exciting new possibilities and in which Aboriginal concepts can play a direct part. There are now much richer answers to the question, “Who are the Coast Salish?” than there were a generation ago, and there is a new literature that enhances our understanding of the humanity of the community through accounts of individual leaders, innovators, and oral traditions. Attention is now being paid to the diversity of communities that were previously seen largely in terms of social classes, or adaptive responses to change, or as simply disappearing into the white world. It is hard to imagine what the issues will be in another twenty-five



or fifty years. But the contemporary recognition of diversity allows for the development of insights into the growth of governance and community economic initiatives, as well as into the inequitable distribution of treaty rights to fishing and other resources. In addition, it sets the stage for contemplating what comes next in the Coast Salish world along the Salish Sea. I ask readers to “be of good mind” as they encounter the chapters herein. This is a phrase often heard in longhouse ritual, and, as Sonny McHalsie has said, it refers to the practice of avoiding bad thoughts (which can harm others) and of having faith that the work being undertaken together, in this case by scholars and community members, can continue.

Notes

- 1 Salishan is a language family comprised of languages and dialects spoken by Aboriginal peoples of British Columbia, Washington State, Montana, Oregon, and Idaho. The language family is divided into Coast Salishan and Interior Salishan (or, commonly, Salish), and there are social and cultural differences between the constituent groups, which often overlap within this division. Today, most but not all of the languages are threatened with extinction. This volume is not intended as a reader on the particular communities either in the United States or in Canada; rather it addresses them as a whole. Within the Coast Salish language grouping in Canada there are fifty current bands, some of which have changed their names in recent years. Most of the Canadian bands have small populations and are organized into tribal councils, umbrella organizations that provide an economy of scale in the provision of services. The membership of these councils varies as bands occasionally withdraw or join. Currently, the Hwlitsum are actively engaged in attempting to gain federal recognition.

There are twenty-four federally recognized Coast Salish tribes in Washington State, and several more are attempting to gain recognition. Among the prominent groups seeking recognition are the Steilacoom, the Duwamish, and the Snohomish. Some of the tribes are organized under the Small Tribes of Western Washington (STOWW), and most operate independently but participate in various intertribal consortia, such as the Northwest Intertribal Court system.

Concerning the question of terminology – communities in Canada are commonly known as “First Nations” and those in the United States are commonly known as “American Indians” or “Native Americans.” But terminology is complex and changeable. Many people continue to refer to themselves and others as “Indians”; some community members regard this term as disrespectful and colonialist. The term “Aboriginal people” is sometimes employed as a cover term and “indigenous people” is used to refer to groups worldwide. In practice, all of these terms are used in Coast Salish communities, although “Aboriginal” and “Native” are more commonly used in Canada than they are in the United States.

- 2 It was anthropologist Barbara Lane, however, who authored the major reports presented for the tribes in this litigation.
- 3 I do not wish to suggest that the presence of a system of clans fully determines the affiliation of individuals; indeed, research shows that there are many ways in which demographic anomalies can be addressed, people can be reassigned to a new clan, or clan membership can be manipulated.



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1

Coast Salish History

Alexandra Harmon

If there is one indispensable element of an ethnic identity, it is a collective history. Other characteristics – race, biological lineage, territorial concentration, language, religion, economic specialization, or unique customs – may set an ethnic group apart, but none is an essential “building block of ethnicity.” Every ethnic group, however, relies on depictions of a common past to express and foster the idea that it consists of a single people with a distinct role in historical events. As anthropologist Manning Nash (1989, 5) observes, shared history “gives the sense of shared struggles, shared fate, common purpose, and the implication that personal and group fate are one and the same thing.”¹

By this measure, there does not appear to be a unitary Coast Salish ethnic group. Granted, there are people today who identify themselves in certain contexts as Coast Salish, some of whom have adopted the name to indicate a specific cluster of Aboriginal communities in southwest British Columbia.² But the term apparently originated with anthropologists and linguists for the purpose of denoting a more widely distributed set of indigenous North American peoples who spoke or speak related languages.³ Although portions of the designated population have been the subjects of separate historical accounts, the many individuals and communities who fall within their own or others’ definition of Coast Salish do not publicly claim a collective history that embraces them all.

Nevertheless, the notion of a single, inclusive Coast Salish history is not outlandish. On the contrary, anthropologists’ concept of a Coast Salish people was inspired not only by linguistic similarities but also by evidence of past and persisting commonalities and connections of other sorts. The concept points to a useful way of framing a history – one that may be superior in some respects to the standard political frameworks. This chapter explains why that is so. Throughout the centuries for which we have written historical records, and probably for much longer, the people in



question have associated and identified with each other on several levels, including levels that bridge tribal divisions and current international boundaries. In various combinations, they have shared experiences not only as residents of local communities and constituents of particular tribal organizations but also as members of extended families, as long-time inhabitants of a distinctive geographical region, and as people called “Indians,” “Natives,” or “Aborigines.”⁴ No portrayal of these people is complete without an acknowledgment of the history they have in common.

If you look in conventional places for a general chronicle of Coast Salish experiences over time, you will look in vain. There are no comprehensive historical monographs or textbooks about such a group. Do a keyword search for “Coast Salish” and “history” in an electronic library catalogue, and a very short list of books will appear on the screen.⁵ None claims to tell a sweeping story of the Coast Salish past. Drop the term “history,” and your next search will yield a longer list that includes *Coast Salish Essays*, a much-cited collection of writings by the anthropologist Wayne Suttles. Most of Suttles’ essays are historical in nature; that is, they consider past and changing circumstances and habits of the people he has studied. Not one, however, purports to be an inclusive narrative of Coast Salish history. Suttles does not even define “Coast Salish.” He states merely that his essays “are concerned with the Central Coast Salish of southwestern British Columbia and northwestern Washington, the wider Coast Salish region, the whole Northwest Coast of North America, or in one instance, the Interior Salish of the Plateau” (Suttles 1987, xi). The only elaboration on this statement is a map that shows the locations of Aboriginal language groups along a stretch of America’s North Pacific coast, but it does not indicate which are Coast Salish languages.

To ascertain what Suttles and other anthropologists mean by “Coast Salish,” you might consult the magisterial encyclopaedia he edited, the *Handbook of North American Indians*, volume 7, *Northwest Coast*. There you will not see an explicit definition of “Coast Salish,” but you will read that the term designates a family of fourteen languages spoken in the nineteenth century by indigenous peoples who inhabited three contiguous areas outlined on an accompanying map. The delineated areas stretch north from the Columbia River well into southwestern British Columbia. Switch to a current political map of the same territory, however, and you will not find the phrase “Coast Salish” (see Suttles 1990, 11, 14-15).⁶

To locate published histories that encompass people in the *Handbook’s* Coast Salish category, you must search by other terms. Since most histories of Indians focus on a modern political jurisdiction, a region, a particular realm of human activity, or a combination of these, the obvious keywords



are place names and the word “Indians” or its equivalents. And sure enough, if you consult histories of Indians in a jurisdiction such as British Columbia or a region such as Puget Sound, you will read about Coast Salish Indians, among others, though not always by that name. The ethnologists’ Coast Salish are also among the people who get attention in books on law and governance, land policy, missionaries, and economic conditions affecting Indians of British Columbia or Washington State.⁷

On the other hand, to locate published histories that focus exclusively on Indians in the *Handbook*’s Coast Salish category, you need the names of smaller groups – usually identified as tribes or bands – or the names of geographical enclaves. You will not see those names in the *Handbook*’s Table of Contents. Instead, the encyclopaedia describes, in turn, the Aboriginal cultures of peoples it calls the Northern Coast Salish, Central Coast Salish, Southern Coast Salish, and Southwestern Coast Salish. Separate chapters cover Coast Salish experiences during the past two centuries and are also organized geographically, although by districts different from those selected for the chapters on Aboriginal cultures. Tribe or band names are sprinkled throughout these essays. Other possible sources for the names include publications of the Canadian Department of Indian Affairs and the United States Bureau of Indian Affairs or maps that show present Indian reserves and reservations within the historic territories of Coast Salish speakers (Carlson 1997; Hilbert and Bierwert 1980).⁸

At this point, you may protest that “Coast Salish” refers to people who have seldom had a hand in producing textbooks or scholarly histories; therefore, an inventory of such books is not the only or the best test of whether those people see themselves as a group with a common history. The point is a good one. Indian or Native societies have usually and necessarily told their histories in ways that do not depend on access to print media, including song and dance, the spoken word, and visual artistry (see McIlwraith 1996, 42, 62–64). On the other hand, a number of Indians have published their own written histories, especially in recent years. Among them are groups and individuals whose forebears match the *Handbook*’s definition of Coast Salish. Their publications, whether authored by Natives or by non-Natives working under Native direction, show how they wish to depict their history to outsiders as well as to each other. And none is a history *of* the Coast Salish *in toto*; rather, each is the story of a smaller group – a tribe or band. Typically, the term “Coast Salish” does not even appear in the publication (Carlson 1997; Hilbert and Bierwert 1980; Fish and Bedal 2000; Marshall 1999; Peterson 1990; Suquamish Museum 1985; and Sampson 1972).



This survey of historical literature might lead you to suspect that Coast Salish is solely an anthropological category, and one with dubious utility either for historians or for the people assigned to it. If so, you will be in thoughtful company. The Seminole historian Susan A. Miller (1998, 102), for example, knows of many “tribal thinkers” (including herself, apparently) who cannot “accept the grouping of ... tribal peoples by nontribal scholars into large categories according to esoterically perceived relations among their languages.” Even anthropologists now profess mistrust of the classifications they inherited from their predecessors because, as Julie Cruikshank (1998, 2) notes, “Ideas about history, about political processes ... sometimes seemed to be missing from early ethnographies [the bases for most such classifications], leaving an impression that small-scale societies could be represented as isolated, self-contained units, colliding and glancing off one another but clearly bounded in a timeless stratum designated ‘traditional.’”

Still, students of history would be unwise to repudiate the Coast Salish concept entirely. A close look at the anthropologists’ research reveals that their taxonomy is based on significant historical facts. By analyzing the recorded observations of early non-Native visitors and interlopers, probing the memories of Native people, and taking note of customs passed down to Natives’ heirs, anthropologists have determined that a region-wide system of intercommunity relations was a fundamental facet of Aboriginal life for Coast Salish speakers. Overlapping kin and social ties linked residents in each winter village directly or indirectly to residents of other villages. Wayne Suttles (1990, 15) summarizes his colleagues’ findings as follows: “Networks of intermarriage and cooperation in economic and ceremonial activities among neighboring tribes regardless of language made the whole Coast Salish region a kind of social continuum.” Because of such interconnections, which did not disintegrate when foreign trading ships and colonists arrived in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, there is reason to hypothesize that so-called Coast Salish peoples do indeed have a shared history.

Ironically, a good way to see the historical utility of the broad Coast Salish classification is to focus on the smallest possible unit of analysis: the individual.⁹ Not coincidentally, it is anthropologists who have collected many of the personal stories that reveal and explain the interlinkages of the various Coast Salish groups. Paul Fetzer recorded one such story from a man named George Swanaset. Swanaset’s narrative of his life, from birth in 1871 until Fetzer’s interview of him in 1951, depicts an Indian society whose geographical scope was determined not by jurisdictional lines but



by far-reaching networks of family ties and social relations. A person who identified with that society typically paired loyalty to fellow residents of a particular place with loyalty to relatives and friends in other “tribes” and places. He or she could belong to more than one “community” simultaneously, and the relative importance of those various affiliations changed with time and circumstance.

For George Swanaset, the proper way to begin a life story was to recite his lineage, in geographical as well as social and ethnic terms.¹⁰ Although his “high-born” paternal grandparents “were Langley people,” he said, his father bore a name that “was way deep in that Tsawwassen history” because he “was related pretty close to the Tsawwassen.” “On my father’s side,” Swanaset added, “I was related to Samish.” On his mother’s side, Swanaset had a white in-law and some half-siblings whose father was “a Spaniard.” George’s maternal grandmother, who was from Cowichan, married a “high-born” man from yet another community. George began life at Sumas Bar, the community his pregnant mother returned to after leaving George’s father. A few years later, “Long Johnny came up to Sumas and got her.” Long Johnny was from the Nooksack Valley in the United States, a country that Swanaset would ultimately refer to as home.¹¹

Over the course of a long life Swanaset resided, visited, and worked in divers places on both sides of the line between British Columbia and Washington. He had an assortment of companions in these peregrinations, most of whom he considered relatives. His travels started early. “When I was just a boy,” he told Fetzer,

George _____ asked Mother if I could go with him to Swinomish and she said alright, so I went with him to Swinomish where they were having _____ – the Samish from Guemes Is. were returning the Swinomish favor. The Lummis were joined with the Samish in this, and so my mother’s relatives, Patrick and Louie Geo. came down from Lummi, with a canoe-full of eats. During this time, Louie, who was living on Orcas Is., asked Geo. _____ if he could take me out there with him, so I went and stayed there for 3 years and I got acquainted with the way they went out there.¹²

George attended two residential schools for Indians, one in the Nooksack district and one on Vancouver Island. A Christian like his mother, he participated in Methodist “camp meetings … at Chilliwack [in Canada] and Ferndale [in Washington], where the whites and Indians would come together for a week.” Baseball games, weddings, and funerals also drew people from the various communities that constituted George’s world. At his own first wedding, he recalled, “there were people from Sumas, Matsqui, Lummi,



and Cultus Lake; and many Nooksack families.” He and his bride moved in with a friend on the Washington side of the border, but George “used to go across the line to the Fraser River to gill-net, working for different canneries.” During the fall and spring he found employment south of the border, cutting wood for steam engines, steamboats, and shingle mills in Bellingham. Widowed after a few years, George took a second wife from British Columbia; and for that reason, he later worked and lived a while at New Westminster and then at Katzie. When his second wife proved unfaithful, he went back to the Nooksack area.

By Swanaset’s account, his Nooksack friends pressed him into a leadership position in their Indian community. “In my early days,” he said, “Geo. _____ was regarded as the chief of the whole tribe in all serious matters. The Lyndens were not included in this, because they had homesteaded together.” By the early twentieth century, though, “whenever there would be a case involving one of our people in Bellingham, they’d come for either Jim Antone or me.” After Antone died in the great flu epidemic of 1918, the people made Swanaset their chief by acclamation at a big tribal meeting. Like groups “all over Puget Sound,” who had formed an organization called the Northwestern Federation of American Indians, Nooksack Indians were gearing up to sue the United States government for dispossessing and neglecting them. When federation officers asked the Nooksacks to name someone who could present their case for a bill to authorize suit, a committee chose George “on account of [his] understanding of the old boundaries and ... the nature of the claim.” But Swanaset confessed that he was uninformed about the tribe’s status under US law until the local government agent said “the Nooksacks weren’t treaty Indians.”

After the Court of Claims squelched Nooksack hopes for compensation, “there was trouble in the tribe,” George said. “Some thought that because I was not an offspring of this tribe I should be turned out. It was about 50-50 but I lost ... My friends ... thought it didn’t make any difference who was chief as long as he could carry on with the old customs.” George’s friends were numerous or influential enough that he subsequently served as a councilman in a reorganized Nooksack tribal government.

Immersing himself in Nooksack affairs did not mean neglecting the affiliations that had always facilitated Swanaset’s circulation within a wider social sphere. Far from it. Mingled with accounts of his political activities are reminiscences about visits to, favours from, and other bonding relations with friends and relatives scattered across southwestern British Columbia and western Washington. Those social ties took visible form, affirming George’s prestige and intricate lineage, whenever a loved one died. Mourners came to the funerals from all his familiar haunts. Naming



the communities represented at a funeral, as he did each time he told Fetzer about a relative's death, was Swanaset's way of declaring membership and claiming distinguished status in a far-flung, heterogeneous community that had time-honoured ways of recognizing its own.

Four interrelated themes run through Swanaset's narrative: his family members' diverse places of origin and residence; his pride in and cultivation of social contacts in myriad locations; his geographical mobility; and his identification as an adult with one local "tribe." Swanaset took pains to name his kin and friends throughout the region around the Puget Sound and the Strait of Georgia. By visiting, travelling to worksites, relocating, hosting visitors, taking two successive wives, arranging the marriages of younger relatives, participating in recreational and political activities, and sponsoring and attending ceremonial gatherings, he periodically confirmed, renewed, and expanded his and his family's social connections. From that perspective, the boundary between Canada and the United States had little or no meaning for George Swanaset. For some purposes, however, he claimed the rights of a US resident and a tribe that looked to the US government for patronage and redress. He saw no contradiction between his international kinship ties or mobility and his allegiance to Indians of the Nooksack Valley. And although he welcomed or accepted relations with non-Indians and embraced aspects of non-Indian culture from Christianity to baseball, he retained a strong sense of belonging to a different society – an Indian society. In fact, telling tribal history and his personal history to non-Indian outsiders, such as lawmakers or Paul Fetzer, served to confirm Swanaset's status as an Indian and Nooksack tribe member. With every individual and group name that he dropped into the conversation, he identified another filament in the net of social ties that defined who he was and where he belonged.

Not once in his narrative, as recorded, did George Swanaset say the words "Coast Salish." Yet, arguably, that phrase is useful shorthand for the principal social context of his life. In all but one of his anecdotes about Indians, the characters appear to fit ethnographers' conception of the Coast Salish. Referring to them as Coast Salish does no greater violence to Swanaset's way of thinking than does calling them Indians of southwestern British Columbia and western Washington or using the names of their different "tribal" communities. Swanaset himself did not name the extensive region he called home, although it was obviously important to his sense of self, and he identified people as often by their place of residence as by the tribal labels then in use.

The themes of George Swanaset's narrative are those that most of his ancestors, descendants, and Indian acquaintances (and their ancestors and



descendants) would probably have emphasized if induced to talk about their own lives. Swanaset's account lends animation and colour to a picture that appears in clear outline when we assemble other evidence of Native activities in the region during the past two centuries. Government reports, censuses, recorded reminiscences, and anthropologists' observations show a persistent flow and intermingling of people from and among the many pockets of Indian population around northwestern Washington and southwestern British Columbia.

For example, early in the 1900s, the US Office of Indian Affairs (OIA) made an effort to locate Indians of western Washington who had previously escaped its notice. A special OIA investigator learned and documented not only that Indians regularly married and moved across supposed tribal lines but also that the international border was no barrier to marriages and movement. Along with the information on the great number of Indians who moved among tribal enclaves in Washington, he collected data on dozens of people who had birthplaces, former residences, and relatives in Canada (Bishop and Roblin 1911-19; *Report of the Commissioner of Indian Affairs* 1854-55, 450).

Three decades later, the anthropologist June Collins heard from an elderly Native man about one reason for that cross-border fraternization: ceremonial gatherings. John Fornsby, an octogenarian from the Skagit River district of Washington, told Collins (who referred to him as a Coast Salish Indian) that "Victoria Indians" attended a "potlatch" his father gave during the late 1800s. An aunt brought her Nooksack relatives to the same event. The guest list reflected and facilitated relationships of other types between members of the different communities, which may explain why Fornsby had a grandson who became "chief" of "the Victorias." Many people in the grandson's generation made cross-border connections as well. About the time Collins interviewed Fornsby, another researcher in the Skagit community found that Indians from north and south of the border were periodically converging there for traditional religious ceremonies. As late as the 1970s, when Pamela Amoss studied similar religious practices among the Nooksacks, their ceremonies routinely drew Indians from multiple locales in British Columbia and Washington (Collins 1949, 316, 325; Wike 1941, i, 3; Amoss 1978, 27-28; Suttles 1963, 512-25; Galloway 1990, vii-viii; Nugent 1982, 75, 76; Mooney 1976, 325).

Relying on evidence of this kind, scholars have reached a strong consensus that wide-ranging social connections and multiple or layered group affiliations have characterized Coast Salish speakers and their progeny from precolonial to modern times. A diversity of local customs and circumstances has not kept people from forging chains of kinship between communities.



Individuals have associated and identified not only with nuclear family members, housemates, and village neighbours but also with assorted cousins and other shirt-tail relatives distributed in various coves and valleys kilometres away. Because of the Coast Salish preference for marriage outside the local community and their custom of reckoning lineage bilaterally, the webs of kinship have been extensive, especially among the well-to-do, most of whom have consequently had a choice of family affiliations. “At different times in ... life, depending on the circumstances,” June Collins (1979, 244) explains, a person might select “one or another of the many descent lines available.” Frequently, choosing a “descent line” has even meant choosing a new place to live. Thanks to exchanges of personnel, some individuals in virtually every local settlement have had relatives and personal experiences in other Indian communities. Along with the relocating people have come folklore and other knowledge, including the songs, dances, and stories that constitute a major part of family histories (see Allen 1976, 163–69; Amoss 1978, 27, 28; Collins 1974, 11, 118).

When we think about the history of people who have linked themselves to each other in this manner, it behooves us to think outside the box, especially the political or jurisdictional box. Why define our subject by such conventional parameters as the boundaries of Canada, the United States, British Columbia, the State of Washington, or specific Indian reserves or reservations when Indians have not defined themselves and their associations solely by those parameters? Political boundaries have provided many a historian with a default focus of study, but they have not limited Native people’s range of operations or self-images.

Historians’ habit of focusing on Indians in a particular political jurisdiction is a legacy of colonialism. After Britain and the United States agreed to divide the Pacific Northwest between them in 1846, the severed territories and their inhabitants were targets of differing government mandates and subjects of separate government record-keeping. The colonial powers proceeded as though the Aboriginal peoples within their borders could be corralled and grouped in convenient administrative units whose primary building blocks were village populations. Officials and bureaucrats then generated records that lend themselves to compartmentalized histories. But compartmentalized histories belie the fact that Native peoples were not so easily sorted and segregated.

Each colony – the United States and the Canadian province of British Columbia and its predecessors – asserted a legal right to all the land within its purported boundaries. Each tried to isolate Indians on small reserved tracts. In no case, however, did the colonial rulers confine all Indians to those tracts. Like the Nooksacks of George Swanaset’s story, many Coast



Salish speakers and their descendants never lived on the reserves. Those who did could usually leave without penalty, even during periods when they were the targets of oppressive government resocialization campaigns. They left, among other reasons, to continue customary subsistence activities or engage in new ones, often in the company of Indians from other settlements. John Fornsby, for example, supervised Indian crews who worked at off-reservation hop ranches. As Fornsby and Swanaset knew, Indians could also leave the nation-state that claimed jurisdiction over them. Uncounted hundreds crossed the international line to visit friends and relatives, earn money, attend school, find mates, establish new homes, or assume new legal identities (Miller 1996-97, 74; Collins 1949, 329).

Colonial officials declared a new order but could not unfailingly enforce their decrees. Years after Skagit headmen signed a treaty promise to restrict their intercourse with people in Canada, John Fornsby saw Indians from Vancouver Island at a Skagit potlatch. Moreover, the potlatch took place at a time when American and Canadian authorities were trying to suppress such “uncivilized” practices. Beyond the reach of reservation officials, Fornsby also participated in other forbidden ceremonies.¹³ And George Swanaset’s mother evaded Canadian officials’ watchful gaze when she joined her new husband in a community of Indians who had declined to live where US government officials expected them to live.

While seemingly subjected to colonial rule, then, people of Native ancestry continued to associate with each other in ways that hinged more on Aboriginal notions of kinship and respect for local customs than on government edicts. Granted, the proclamation of an international dividing line, the authorities’ allocation of Natives to specified Indian enclaves, and statutory definitions of “Indian,” “band,” and “tribe” eventually prompted Natives to recharacterize their local affiliations for some purposes.¹⁴ For instance, by middle age George Swanaset called himself a Nooksack Indian, at least when dealing with agents of the US government. Yet Swanaset’s initial reasons for joining his stepfather’s “tribe” in Washington State had little or nothing to do with colonial legalities. And he apparently paid no heed to colonial divisions when there were fish to catch in British Columbia. By Aboriginal custom, he could fish where there were people who regarded him as kith or kin.

Even after he became a spokesman for the Nooksack Tribe, Swanaset remained part of a larger Indian community that extended beyond the reach of American law. And why not? Law was a recent, foreign imposition. The United States and Canada, treaties between tribal “chiefs” and colonial sovereigns, written rules and centralized law enforcement, reservations and reserves, racial categories such as Indian and white – all were unknown



in Coast Salish territories until a generation before Swanaset's birth. It is hardly surprising that those alien impositions did not promptly replace indigenous ways of ordering the world. Few non-Indians, however, knew the extent or meanings of the social and economic patterns that linked Natives to each other in defiance of categories such as Canadian, American, Nooksack, Tsawwassen, status Indian, or treaty Indian. Moving much of the time on the margins of colonial society and motivated by values and loyalties invisible to officials, Indians often eluded jurisdictional radar.

Over time, most people of Native descent also resisted schemes intended to erase the cultural markers of their "Indianness," detribalize them, and meld them into colonial society. Many have identified as tribe members in spite of laws or racial ideology assigning them to a different category. For example, during the US government's search for unenrolled Washington Indians, a man named William Price presented himself as a Klallam Indian even though his father was Welsh and his mother was a "full blood" from "Bella Colla" or some other "Alaska tribe." Price apparently based his self-identification on his birth in Aboriginal Klallam territory, his residence as an adult at an off-reservation Klallam camp known as Boston, and his Klallam neighbours' confirmation of his history. "I was with the white people ever since I was four years old," he explained to the OIA investigator, "but these Indians in Boston know more about me than I do they all know me" (Bishop and Roblin 1911-19 [spelling error appears in original]).

By carrying on relations with each other according to precolonial custom, the Boston Klallam and other Indians throughout a large contiguous area have experienced a history that does not fit within jurisdictional lines drawn by non-Indians. The family affairs, travels, and intercommunity associations described by George Swanaset are fundamental components of that history, for they have promoted a shared sense of a collective past – a Native past. They have stitched innumerable lives together, one marriage or visit or other thread of kinship at a time, and thus fashioned a patchwork-quilt history that is arguably broad enough to cover most of the people whose ancestors spoke a Coast Salish language. Scattered across the quilt are pieces representing the histories of localized settlements; but attached securely to those pieces and running between them are dozens and dozens of interlaced family histories. In other words, because of their extensive interactions, Indians of northwestern Washington and southwestern British Columbia may have a common history after all. For lack of a better term, we might call it a Coast Salish history.

However, mixed with the evidence of a Coast Salish history is evidence requiring two caveats. Again, George Swanaset's narrative is instructive. First, his narrative contains an anecdote suggesting that ethnographers'



“Coast Salish” category is too narrow to encompass some important, shared Native experiences. During the Great Depression, Swanaset went to the Klamath Indian Reservation in southern Oregon “to see the country.” There he “got a job helping spray the timber for bugs” and “saw how they really carried their customs,” which seemed the same as his. “I told them the history of our struggles here,” he said proudly. In other words, Swanaset did not choose Native associates who fit the Coast Salish classification only; he felt an affinity for additional Native people and perhaps for “Indians” in general (Fetzer n.d., 26-27).

In this respect, too, Swanaset was true to ancestral tradition and representative of many of his peers. Even before colonization, the people who spoke Coast Salish languages did not plant an impassable fence around themselves. Their relations extended in some instances to nearby speakers of unrelated tongues. William Price was not the only Indian from beyond the Coast Salish pale who was integrated into a Coast Salish group. In fact, relations with members of more remote tribes increased after colonization because Coast Salish people encountered them at trading posts, boarding schools, seats of government, and other colonial venues (Harmon 1998, 36-37).¹⁵ By the early twentieth century, Natives in British Columbia as well as Washington State had established multi-tribal organizations that mirrored the white view of them as members of a single race. In succeeding decades, it became commonplace for the descendants of diverse indigenous peoples to think of themselves as Indians and to assume that Indians shared history and traditions distinguishing them from non-Indians (see Nagel 1996, 101, 116-17, 121; Cornell 1988, 126; Tennant 1990, 137-38).

Swanaset’s narrative requires a second, more significant caveat to the conclusion that the Coast Salish have a shared history. His story shows that categories narrower than Coast Salish – even or especially the small enclaves and administrative units favoured by colonial authorities – have by no means been irrelevant to Indians’ sense of their group membership and traditions. On the contrary, Indians in the Coast Salish region have had unique experiences at local levels, with marked consequences for their identities. In Swanaset’s case, the US government’s assertion of jurisdiction over Indians and its ways of grouping and dealing with them ultimately influenced him to attribute greater or different significance to his Nooksack affiliation than he might otherwise have done.

By the time he spoke with Paul Fetzer, Swanaset had a reputation as a leader of the Nooksack Tribe. His political career began when people in the community asked him to speak for them in American forums on questions of Nooksack legal status and property rights under US law. The tribe he spoke for was itself a political-administrative entity that had come to life



under laws of the United States. Later, Swanaset joined a more formal tribal government, organized as permitted by a US statute of 1934. The new tribal organization encompassed the “Lyndens” that Swanaset mentioned as well as other bands of Indians whose previous relationships with the Nooksacks had been more social than political. If, instead of remaining among the Nooksacks, Swanaset had permanently relocated to either of the communities where he took a wife, he would have owed the conditions of his political life, his property rights, and probably his tribal designation to laws and policies formulated in Canada rather than the United States. He would have lived among people whose experiences under Canadian governance differed in notable ways from the Nooksacks’ history.

The Nooksack chapters of Swanaset’s story thus reveal a paradox that complicates any attempt to view Coast Salish history in the aggregate. Indians from Coast Salish Aboriginal areas have often acted as though international and tribal boundaries did not matter to them, but those boundaries and their consequences have in some respects mattered a great deal. American jurisdiction resulted in legal institutions that eventually channelled Swanaset’s energies and influenced his self-image. Under different political jurisdictions, Indian populations have evolved differently. Laws have determined which people have been counted as Indians in particular circumstances, whether and where those people have had land and political privileges, which government services they have received, and who their associates have been for purposes such as resource use and self-government. New or redefined tribal groups have been the result. As the legal scholar Carole Goldberg-Ambrose notes, law has the power to promote or support “particular forms and scope of community” or a “particular focus of identity” for Indians. It “can create an official vocabulary for the discussion of group life that reinforces certain conceptions of political identity and excludes others” (Goldberg-Ambrose 1994, 1123-24). People of Coast Salish descent – for all their networking, mobility, and creative evasion of government directives – have not been immune to the law’s influences on their identity (see Barman 1999).

More specifically and especially, the 1846 division of Coast Salish homelands between the United States and Britain has had practical repercussions that figure prominently in and distinguish the histories of current local communities. On the south side of the border, the US government dealt with indigenous populations from the beginning as though they were landholding nations. During the 1850s, federal agents promised in treaties to compensate named tribes for ceding all but a few specified tracts of land between the Cascade Mountains and the Pacific Ocean above Grays Harbor. North of the international border, however, most colonial officials were



unwilling to take the same approach. At first the Crown delegated the supervision of Indian affairs to the Hudson's Bay Company, whose chief officer paid a dozen Aboriginal groups for some land on Vancouver Island and promised in written contracts that the groups would have continued use of their village sites and enclosed fields. A few years later, colonial governors assumed responsibility for dealing with Indians of British Columbia and explicitly eschewed such treaties, contending that the Aboriginal inhabitants had no compensable right to land or resources. Grudgingly and sometimes tardily, they just set aside scattered patches of ground for a few Native families each. These Canadian and American government actions differed significantly in their aims and, thus, in their long-term impacts on affected populations, although neither government achieved all its goals. Whereas the United States purported to create larger tribes by consolidating sundry communities on as few reservations as possible, the dominant policy in southwestern British Columbia was to keep Natives separated in small bands (Harmon 1998, chap. 3; Tennant 1990, chaps. 3 and 4; Harris 2002, chaps. 2-7).

Additional details suggest how the histories of Coast Salish communities diverged because of such dissimilar government policies. When American negotiators convened a treaty conference at Point Elliott in 1855, they thought they were dealing with more than ten named Indian tribes or bands, yet they agreed to reserve only four tracts of land for those groups. Vaguely aware that intermarriage facilitated relations between the supposed tribes, they expected each reservation to house multiple tribes, some of which would relocate. A reservation at the mouth of the Skagit River was supposed to attract not only nearby peoples on Puget Sound known as Samish, Swinomish, and Lower Skagit but also two or three tribes in the Cascade foothills. For Indians on the upper Nooksack River, the closest reservation was on a peninsula downstream, already home to people with whom Nooksack relations were historically edgy. Although the government never herded all Indians onto the reserved lands, its policies did eventually result in several reservation populations composed of two or more previously autonomous bands (Harmon 1998, chaps. 4-6).

Just on the other side of the international frontier, neighbours of the Nooksack contended with authorities who proceeded quite differently. In 1858, under siege by gold seekers rushing to their territory, Indians in the Fraser River Valley extracted a pledge from British Columbia's governor that he would secure their home and fishing sites. Because it was not a formal treaty, this vague promise was the governor's to break or reinterpret. He and his successors claimed the power to decide unilaterally whether and where to establish reserves. Eventually, they reduced the Natives' land



base to a string of small tracts administered as separate entities, despite the Fraser River bands' close affiliations (Carlson 1997, 59-82; Harris 2002, 141-44).¹⁶

Even within US or Canadian jurisdiction, the makeup and histories of Coast Salish groups have varied with differences in the degree and nature of government impact on their lives. For example, after the treaty signed at Point Elliott, both Indians and US officials took diverse tacks in managing Indian-white relations, with divergent consequences for the various Indian populations' cohesiveness and status under law. To those people who did settle on the reservations, federal employees provided assorted services, occasional material aid, and a modicum of protection from resentful non-Indians. But reservation supervisors also insisted on conformity to "civilized" mores and engineered changes in group leadership. Other Native people, including those on the upper Nooksack and Skagit rivers, remained off the reservations, farther from government surveillance but exposed to the machinations of land-hungry and intolerant non-Indian settlers. Federal officials vacillated between neglecting the off-reservation Indians and asserting the power to treat them as government wards. But in the 1930s, when Congress offered most Indians the chance to establish sanctioned tribal governments, administrators declined to apply the new law to several off-reservation groups, apparently because the groups lacked a federally protected land base. Within two or three decades, the Bureau of Indian Affairs had ceased to recognize the landless Indians as tribes, adding significantly to the difficulties those people faced as they tried to maintain enough group cohesion to safeguard common interests (Harmon 1998, chaps. 4, 5, and 6).

In sum, Indians of the so-called Coast Salish region may have a common history, but they also have local group histories so numerous and disparate that a masterful storyteller would struggle to fold them into a coherent, single narrative. This multiplicity and diversity of local histories partly explains why historians have not been able to see the Coast Salish forest for the tribal trees. But the overriding reason for the fragmentation of Coast Salish historical accounts is the allocation of Coast Salish territory between two nation-states. Nation-states have exercised a powerful influence not only on the lives of Indians but also on the vision of historians.

The historian David Thelen (1999, 965) points out that his profession evolved in tandem with modern national governments, "its mission to document and explain the rise, reform, and fall of nation-states." As a consequence, history scholars long overlooked or underrated the significance of many phenomena that span national borders. But recent developments



and scholarship – the collapse of powerful states such as the Soviet Union, persuasive historical analyses of nationalism, comparative studies of ethnicity by anthropologists and sociologists – have opened historians' eyes to the "fragile, constructed, imagined" character of nation-states. Thelen is one of many who now want to see more histories with a transnational focus. It is important, he declares, to understand how people, "moving through time and space according to rhythms and relationships of their own, drew from, ignored, constructed, transformed, and defied claims of the nation-state" (*ibid.*).¹⁷

Native Americans whose homelands and kin groups were bisected by nation-state boundaries are appropriate subjects for the studies Thelen has in mind.¹⁸ The peoples that ethnographers call the Coast Salish, reconceived as a transnational population with persistent interconnections, would fill the bill. By keeping all the presumed Coast Salish in our field of vision as we follow them through time, we could augment our understanding of the power of nation-states to reshape group identities in general and Indian identities in particular.

Formidable challenges await anyone who tries to do this. Some of the challenges are methodological and practical. Because the story encompasses people in two countries, not to mention several dozen diverse residential communities, the sources of information and events that must be covered are dauntingly plentiful. Defining and naming the subjects of the story is difficult as well. Deciding on a "Coast Salish" framework does not obviate the need to decide more precisely whom to focus on and what to call them. Over more than two hundred years, some Aboriginal groups have disbanded or merged, new groups have formed, existing groups have changed form and nature, and most groups have borne multiple names. Should the story begin with all the Aboriginal Coast Salish and, if so, as defined by whom or using a name or names supplied by whom? Do all descendants of the defined group belong in the story? If not, which ones do belong? To answer the last question, should a researcher identify current groups that claim a historical link to the Aboriginal Coast Salish and work backward? Or does such an approach beg a question that requires investigation?

Equally if not more daunting is the fact that a collective history of the Coast Salish peoples would buck a trend of great import to Indians today – a deepening preoccupation with the histories of specific present-day tribes. Aware that the power to tell their histories is inseparable from the power to determine who they are, Indians are asserting the right – even an exclusive right, in some places – to be their own historians (Miller 1998, 106-7).¹⁹ They are establishing museums and archives, recording oral traditions,



commissioning history publications, and conducting public education programs with historical content. And, in virtually every instance, Indians in the Pacific Northwest are choosing to tell – usually with fierce pride – the history of one tribe or band rather than all the tribes or bands in Aboriginal Coast Salish territory.²⁰

There are discomfiting ironies in this choice. For one, the impulse to focus on and exalt tribal or reservation histories arises in part because of policies, laws, administrative pigeonholing, and racialized classifications that originated with non-Indians. When colonial regimes made special promises to or provisions for “Indians” and Aboriginal tribes or bands – when they negotiated treaties, established land reserves, or awarded compensatory payments – they made it necessary to identify and define the intended beneficiaries. In many cases since then, people of Native ancestry have related their histories in order to show that they meet government definitions of “Indian,” “tribe,” or “band” and are therefore entitled to particular resources, eligible for certain services, or exercising an inherent sovereignty. Those objectives have given some of them reason to recast their historic group affiliations (Tennant 1990, 181-84; Harmon 1998, 238-39; Niezen 2003, 242-43; Harkin 1996, 7; Allen 1976, 169).²¹

For instance, during the 1920s, when Indians of western Washington asked Congress for permission to file legal claims stemming from treaty relations, spokesmen for several tribes (including George Swanaset) testified about their history. Legislators would authorize lawsuits only by successors to nineteenth-century tribes and lawsuits seeking monetary compensation for property losses. Understandably, rather than describing the tribes at treaty time as vague, fluid groups and emphasizing the custom of sharing local resources with visiting kin, the Indian witnesses described corporate bodies that had exclusive possession of well-defined domains. A representative of the “Suattle Tribe” insisted that its members, though located on the upper Skagit River, “were not a part of the Skagit Tribe ... were at all times enemies and were at war with the Skagit Tribe on several occasions.”²²

Since the 1970s, federal regulations have encouraged similar depictions of tribal history by western Washington groups who want the Bureau of Indian Affairs to recognize them as tribes named in treaties. Recognition brings economic and legal support for governmental status under US law. To succeed, a petition for recognition must include proof that group members have an unbroken history of association based on common descent, attachment to an ancestral territory, and allegiance to an enduring tribal polity, even though land loss and some federal policies during the past 150



years have worked to scatter the members, divide families, and frustrate meaningful self-government (Harmon 1998, chap. 7 and Epilogue; Castile 1996).

It is ironic, as well, that Indians have often had to rely on the writings and testimony of non-Indians to make a case for their tribes' historical continuity. Those non-Indians usually include anthropologists and government officials whose own cultures and objectives influenced them to describe the tribes as more static, homogeneous, and self-contained than they probably were.²³

At the same time, both intentionally and unintentionally, non-Indians have made it difficult for Indians to pass down Aboriginal traditions and memories of the distant past. Colonial rulers banned or discouraged "un-civilized" practices such as the ceremonial feasts and give-aways (commonly called potlatches) where guests were enjoined to remember and tell others about the accomplishments, lineages, and relationships that structured the Native world. Government agents put children in schools whose mission was to eradicate Indian culture. Colonists also carried germs and created conditions that caused Native people – especially the learned elders and their potential young pupils – to die in shocking numbers (Boyd 1990; Guilmet et al. 1991, 8). These assaults tore holes in the unwritten pages of most group histories. To fill the voids, Indians have turned at times to non-Indian scholars for information, particularly to ethnographers and anthropologists. The Suquamish Tribe, for example, based its historical museum exhibit in part on elders' reminiscences but also on early twentieth-century ethnographers' reconstructions of Aboriginal culture in the larger central Puget Sound area. Today, anthropologists warn that many such ethnographies reflect the writers' biases, including their concepts of social and political organization, at least as much as they reflect Indian worldviews. Nonetheless, contemporary Indians, hoping to identify their present organizations with robust Aboriginal societies, have embraced some ethnographies as tribal history (Suquamish Museum 1985, biblio.; Cruikshank 1998, 2; Harkin 1996, 1, 3).²⁴

For Indians who seek greater respect from outsiders and greater power to manage their own communities, tribal histories can be vital tools. A petition for federal recognition in the United States or a claim to land in British Columbia entails the identification of a current tribe or band with a precolonial society that was discrete and self-governing (Harris 2002, 296–97). When scholars complicate this picture of Indians' history by describing a fluid, supratribal society or arguing that tribal governments evolved in response to postcolonial conditions, they may seem to threaten Indians'



quest for power. Consequently, historians and anthropologists who contend that tribal identities have been ambiguous and variable do not always find favour with tribal leaders and history-keepers. As Julie Cruikshank (1998, 162) remarks, scholars began shining a light on the porous and dynamic nature of Native group boundaries “just about the time that indigenous organizations began to recognize the strategic value of using such concepts as ‘tradition’ and ‘boundedness’ as a framework to present their claims to collective rights and distinctive identity.” The scholars’ “emerging preferences for deconstruction may now be viewed as offensive or even as harmful to indigenous people’s struggles.”²⁵

A broad Coast Salish perspective on history may therefore seem of little practical use or even seem dangerous to individual tribes that are struggling for respect and resources. But tribes should not have to deny or apologize for the fact they are composed of people who can claim histories both as tribe members and as Indians belonging to a much larger distinctive group. Indeed, there is reason to rejoice that tribe members have multi-layered histories, including a layer of history that is as wide as ethnographers’ Coast Salish culture area. When explaining their current tribal associations, members may claim one kind of history, but that does not preclude them from claiming other histories to explain additional group affiliations. Their layered history can be a source of pride. It is the legacy of a sophisticated, far-reaching, and versatile social system that has helped its participants cope with change, giving most of them more than one possible place to belong. The history that links Indians in the present to the world of three hundred years ago, in which most people spoke a Coast Salish language, can be an integral component of a satisfying identity. It is a connection to the considerable power of *interconnection*.

In addition to revealing an important and empowering continuity in Native social traditions, a broad view of Coast Salish history can impart useful lessons about Indians’ history in general. It demonstrates that social, racial, and political categories – categories such as kin, Indian, and Nooksack – are not prescribed by nature and are neither universal nor eternal. As they were for George Swanaset, they are the evolving results of childhood learning and later experiences, of comparisons and contrasts among people, of interactions and negotiations in specific historical circumstances, of reactions to shifting power and incentives. Even the most basic assumptions – assumptions about the relationship of identity to birth or residence, for instance – are not universal but vary from person to person, group to group, and historical period to historical period. The governments of nation-states have had considerable power to reshape those assumptions. Accordingly, they have prompted changes in the ways that people of Aboriginal descent



have imagined and represented their group relationships. But the powers of nation-states to define or redefine “Indians” and their group identities have also had telling limits. Those powers and their limits are apparent from George Swanaset’s life story and, by extension, from the complex, multifaceted history of the Aboriginal people he knew – especially people whom anthropologists call the Coast Salish.

The quests of contemporary Indians for empowering histories are reminiscent of the quests for spirit power that were a central feature of Aboriginal Coast Salish life. Before non-Indians came and Aboriginal religious ideas diversified, virtually all members of respectable families sought power from immortal beings or spirits who wanted human partners. Without help from spirits, they believed, a human lacked the capacity to perform socially useful acts such as healing, acquiring wealth, making canoes, or speaking eloquently. But with power bestowed by spirits, individuals secured respected places in regional society. Like the Indians today who solicit information about their past from elders, young people then depended on elders to teach them how to secure power. In some groups an empowering partnership could even be inherited from an elder (Collins 1979, 247-48, 251). And, like the Indians today who wish to tell their histories publicly, individuals in the past depended on family, friends, and neighbours to help them when the time came to sing their spirit helpers’ songs.

Historical heritage now has a role similar to spirit power for many people in British Columbia and Washington State who identify themselves as Indians. Much as their indigenous ancestors expected respect for “having something” from spirit helpers, they hope to be respected for “having” history that links them to those ancestors. Much as families and house groups alluded to their members’ powers at ceremonies with multi-community guest lists, organized tribes today claim and enact the histories of their members at public commemorative events, in museums, at annual community festivals, and elsewhere. When Indians tell stories about the talents, wisdom, and accomplishments of Native ancestors, they are expressing pride in and requesting respect for their descent from people who commanded respect during their lifetimes because of the powers the spirits had bestowed upon them.²⁶ As their ancestors did, they can take pride that the names of those ancestors were known in households and winter villages far and wide. The ancestors could not have imagined some of the names by which people identify themselves today, such as “Indian” and even “Coast Salish,” but they would likely have rejoiced that their offspring have names that connect them to a wide array of thriving communities whose members cherish a shared heritage as the original people of their lush coastal homeland.²⁷



Notes

- 1 See also Roosens (1989, 16-17, 160), McIlwraith (1996, 49), and sources cited there. The historian Eric Hobsbawm (2000, 10) writes, “To be a member of any human community is to situate oneself with regard to one’s (its) past.” To say that members of an ethnic group share or claim to share a history is not to say that those members will not disagree about the facts and meanings of their history. See McIlwraith (1996, 46).
- 2 E-mail communication, William White, University of Victoria Aboriginal Liaison Office, to Wendy Wickwire, University of Victoria history department, 28 February 2003, distinguishing “Straits Salish” from “Coast Salish” and stating, “I have heard speakers at our own gatherings both traditional and secular sometimes using the term ‘Halkomelem Peoples.’ If addressing students who happen to come from and of the Saanich/Straits Salish region or from the Coast Salish then we have formally brought forward their respective FN [First Nations] tribal names.” See also the University of Victoria Aboriginal Liaison Office website at <http://web.uvic.ca/ablo/>, where there are links to “Salish” websites, including a site providing instruction in Coast Salish language, also referred to as Holkomelem or Hul’q’umi’num. The site identifies eight “Coast Salish” languages and eight First Nations in “Coast Salish territory” near Victoria.
- 3 In the *Oxford English Dictionary*’s entry for “Salish,” the earliest cited use of the term is from an 1831 publication by W.A. Ferris, *Life in [the] Rocky Mountains*, and refers to the language of the so-called Flathead Indians, whom anthropologists identify as Interior Salish. <http://dictionary.oed.com/entrance.dtl>.
- 4 Each of the common names for all indigenous Americans is problematic. Each has its advocates and its critics. The currently preferred names in Canada (“Aboriginals” and “First Nations”) are different from those preferred in the United States (“Indians” and “Native Americans”). Rather than choose a single term and defend my choice, I use “Indian,” “Native,” and “Aboriginal” interchangeably and hope that readers will understand that they refer respectfully to negotiated modern social identities and that many of the people so identified use the terms for themselves.
- 5 I searched the on-line catalogue for the University of Washington libraries.
- 6 Although the Bella Coola and Tillamook Indians spoke Salish languages, the editors do not count them as “Coast Salish” because their homelands were not contiguous to the territories of the groups so designated.
- 7 Books in these categories include Fisher (1977); Duff (1964); Harmon (1998); Tennant (1990); Harris (2002); La Violette (1973); Newell (1993); Asher (1999); Christophers (1998); and Knight (1978). The four most popular kinds of history books about Indians have chronicled wars, government policies, non-Indian ideas about Indians, and formulaic histories of particular tribes before their subjugation by non-Indian authorities. See Meyer and Klein (1998, 190).
- 8 For instance, Tennant (1990, 5-6) draws on Indian and Northern Affairs Canada, “Chiefs and Councillors, BC Region” (July 1988), for a list of tribal groups, including about eight “Coast Salish” groups.
- 9 Similarly, family narratives are an important basis of Neal McLeod’s (2000) argument that members of certain contemporary tribal groups also have a broader Plains Cree history.
- 10 My source for the summary and quotes that follow is Paul Fetzer (n.d.)
- 11 Except for Samish and Nooksack, the tribal communities that Swanaset names here were located on the Canadian side of the present international boundary, either along the Fraser River or on the southern end of Vancouver Island.
- 12 Fetzer (n.d., 4). This is the text as it appears in the original typescript, including the blanks, which represent words or names Fetzer did not transcribe, many of them presumably Indian-language terms.



- 13 See Collins (1949, 312). The Treaty of Point Elliott, art. 12, provides, “The said tribes and bands further agree not to trade at Vancouver’s Island or elsewhere out of the dominions of the United States, nor shall foreign Indians be permitted to reside in their reservations without consent of the superintendent or agent.” 12 U.S. Stat. 927. On the anti-potlatch law in Canada, see Cole and Chaikin (1990). The US government prohibited and penalized “uncivilized” practices by Department of Interior regulation rather than by statute (see Prucha 1984, 2:646-49). Efforts to enforce the regulations in western Washington were sporadic and often ineffective (see Harmon 1998, 116-18).
- 14 In Canada after 1876, a law authorized the Department of Indian Affairs to create tribal or band governments and defined Indians so as to exclude the wives and children of men who were not “registered” Indians (Tennant 1990, 9; Niezen 2003, 32).
- 15 Indians on the Sauk River, for instance, intermarried with Wenatchee and Chelan people, Plateau Salish speakers from east of the Cascade Mountains (Fish and Bedal 2000, 11, 24). Susan A. Miller (1998, 102) asserts that a “complex network of families and tribes ... has integrated this hemisphere since long before Europeans arrived ... Native scholars should be wary of relinquishing the network in its full complexity as a model for history.” But June Collins (1979, 246), writing about the Upper Skagit, emphasizes their preference for marrying into communities where they already had relatives and their reluctance to marry into distant groups, which they perceived as too different and as potentially hostile.
- 16 In other instances, the Canadian government did lump bands together. See Tennant (1990, 9).
- 17 See also Porter (2001, 357) and Meyer and Klein (1998, 198). Studies of nationalism and ethnicity include Anderson (1983); Barth (1969); Nash (1989); and Roosens (1989).
- 18 The number of similarly bisected indigenous peoples is substantial, but historical studies that focus on the consequences of bisection are comparatively scarce. See Adelman and Aron (1999) and Hogue (2002).
- 19 Some Indians concerned with defending their “traditions” object to the ways that professional historians depict their past “not only as a disciplinary domination, but a colonial domination that is both a reflection of and a constituent part of Europe’s colonization and domination of the world” (White 1998, 223).
- 20 See Suttles (1987, xi). Meyer and Klein (1998, 195) mention the popularity of tribal or reservation histories.
- 21 Meyer and Klein (1998, 196) note, “The unique status of Native Americans vis-à-vis ... the federal government makes diving into the past a prerequisite for understanding nearly every contentious issue.”
- 22 US House of Representatives, Subcommittee on Indian Affairs, *Indian Tribes of Washington*, 67th Cong., 2d sess., May 24 and June 5, 1922, H-320-7, p. 17.
- 23 For varying arguments by anthropologists regarding the attribution of political cohesion and structure of Aboriginal “tribes,” see Tollefson (1987, 1989); Miller (1989); and Miller and Boxberger (1994).
- 24 See also Comaroff and Comaroff (1992, 3-5); Meyer and Klein (1998, 186, 194). According to the anthropologist Colin Twedell, a witness in US Indian Claims Commission proceedings regarding the Snohomish Tribe, ethnographers have tended to apply group names to Northwest Indians on the basis of residence rather than on people’s actual sense of their group affiliations. See Transcript, Docket 125, Indian Claims Commission, 10-12 August 1953, in Reply Appendix L-2, p. 104, Petition for Acknowledgment of the Snohomish Tribe of Indians, 1988.
- 25 One well-educated tribe member told me of her fear that *Indians in the Making* (Harmon 1998), which examines changes over time in the structures and status of western Washington tribes, would jeopardize the tribes’ powers of self-government.



- 26 June Collins (1979, 252) asserts that the number of outstanding people featured in Skagit stories about ancestors is “sufficiently large that everyone is descended from at least one.” A history published by the Stó:lō Nation, referring to occasions when knowledgeable persons publicly recite stories from Stó:lō oral tradition, states, “Sharing ... stories ... allows the speaker and the audience to share in the communally held experiences, histories, beliefs, and philosophies of the ... people” (Carlson 1997, 195).
- 27 On names as a “living identity” and a claim to a family history, see Hilbert and Bierwert (1980, 18-19) and Collins (1949, 319, 335).

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