

**Where the Water Meets the Land:  
Between Culture and History in Upper Skagit Aboriginal Territory**

by

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## **Abstract**

Upper Skagit Indian Tribe are a Coast Salish fishing community in western Washington, USA, who face the challenge of remaining culturally distinct while fitting into the socioeconomic expectations of American society, all while asserting their rights to access their aboriginal territory. This dissertation asks a twofold research question: How do Upper Skagit people interact with and experience the aquatic environment of their aboriginal territory, and how do their experiences with colonization and their cultural practices weave together to form a historical consciousness that orients them to their lands and waters and the wider world?

Based on data from three methods of inquiry—interviews, participant observation, and archival research—collected over sixteen months of fieldwork on the Upper Skagit reservation in Sedro-Woolley, WA, I answer this question with an ethnography of the interplay between culture, history, and the land and waterscape that comprise Upper Skagit aboriginal territory. This interplay is the process of historical consciousness, which is neither singular nor sedentary, but rather an understanding of a world in flux made up of both conscious and unconscious thoughts that shape behavior.

I conclude that the ways in which Upper Skagit people interact with what I call the waterscape of their aboriginal territory is one of their major distinctive features as a group. Their approach to the world is framed by their experience of this space and the divide between land and water within it, which is permeable and constantly shifting. Community members understand the cultural salience of places within the waterscape, including places that are now submerged beneath lakes created by

hydroelectric dams. Oral narratives remain important in Upper Skagit culture today even though the narratives are accessed in changing ways, such as reading and listening to recordings or invoking parts of stories at carefully chosen times. The regulatory and legal regimes of the colonial process—examined as both broad strokes and fine grains—shape people’s consciousness and behavior in the waterscape. This case study both builds on and contributes to the literatures of Coast Salish ethnography, cultural constructions of place, cultural distinctiveness of indigenous groups, and the anthropology of water.

## **Preface**

This research was approved by the UBC Behavioural Research Ethics Board:

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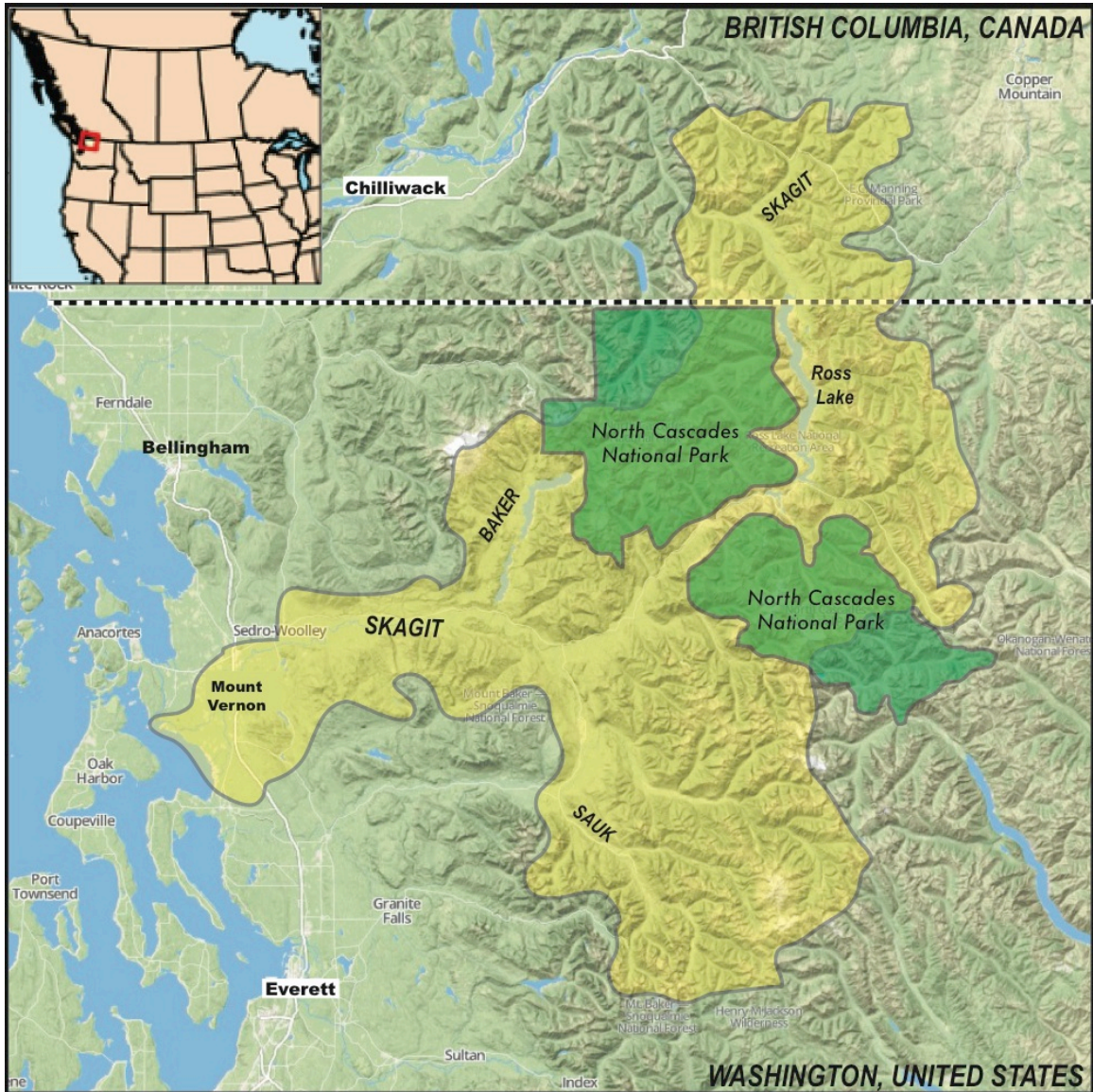
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## **Chapter 1: Introduction and Methods**

This dissertation is about culture, history, and aboriginal territory in the Native American fishing community of Upper Skagit Indian Tribe in western Washington, USA. Contemporary Native American people such as those at Upper Skagit face an interesting challenge: how do they remain culturally distinct while fitting into the socioeconomic expectations of American society? They must navigate this issue while also fighting to have a say in what happens to the territory in which their ancestors lived. One of the biggest consequences of colonialism is that most Native people today are either restricted within or completely removed from their aboriginal territory, and yet these territories and their histories within them remain among of the most important aspects of Indigenous cultures.

Upper Skagit's aboriginal territory (Figure 1.1) is stunningly beautiful. At its heart is the Skagit River, a massive river system originating in south-central British Columbia near the US border (see Figure 1.2). The Skagit, fed by tributaries flowing from the glaciers of the North Cascades mountain range, winds its way over 150 miles of terrain—from the high mountains to the foothills to the fertile delta—before emptying into the saltwater of northern Puget Sound. It has the iconic flora and fauna of the Pacific Northwest—Western Red Cedar and wild salmon being among the most recognizable—and thousands of tourists flock to the region every year to experience the natural wonders of the place.



**Figure 1.1 Skagit River Watershed (map by Bill Angelbeck)<sup>1</sup>**

Upper Skagit people have used and occupied this place for thousands of years. They recognize the natural beauty that draws people to their territory, but they also understand and engage with their aboriginal territory in complex ways that are unique to

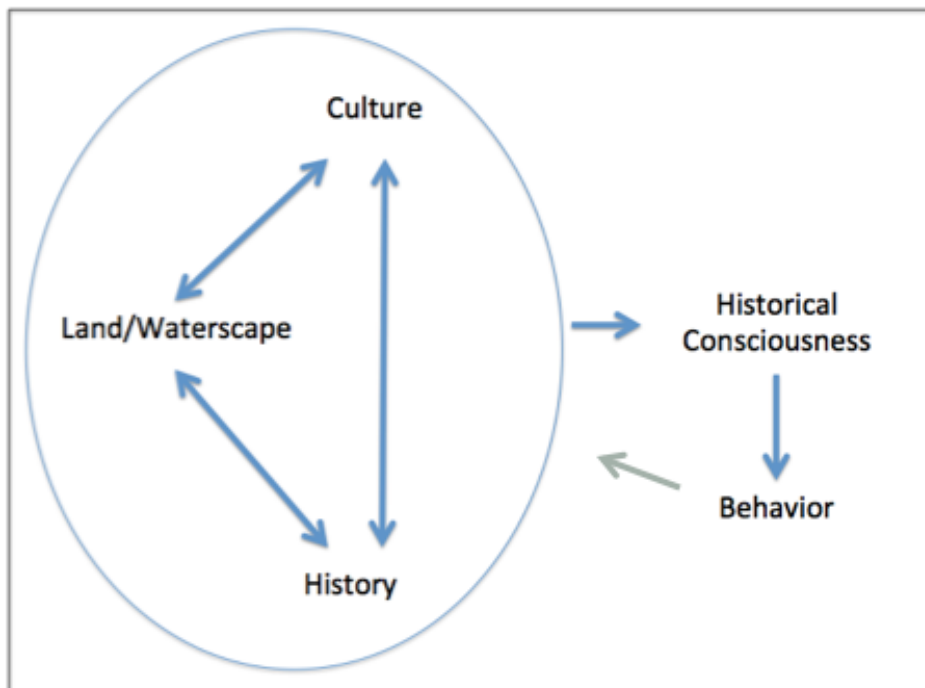
<sup>1</sup> Open source base map: <http://simple.wikipedia.org/wiki/File:Skagitrivermap.png>



contemporary Native Americans. To explore these issues I developed a twofold research question:

How do Upper Skagit people interact with and experience the aquatic environment of their aboriginal territory, and how do their experiences with colonization and their cultural practices weave together to form a historical consciousness that orients them to their lands and waters and the wider world?

What emerged from these questions, and what follows in this dissertation, is an ethnography of the interplay between culture, history, and the land and waterscape that comprise Upper Skagit aboriginal territory. For the purposes of this study I define culture as the practices that make Upper Skagit people who they are, the aspects of their lives that are uniquely Upper Skagit (or, regionally, Coast Salish; on a broader scale there is the umbrella category of Native American, or Indigenous). I view this interplay as the ongoing production of historical consciousness, which is neither singular nor sedentary, but rather an understanding of a world in flux made up of both conscious and unconscious thoughts that shape how people behave. I look at three levels of historical consciousness and behavior—individual, family, and tribal. These behaviors are Upper Skagit responses to the changing circumstances of settler colonialism. Figure 1.3 provides a simplified illustration of this process, but the reader should keep in mind that it is both cyclical and ever-changing and no diagram can do justice to its complexity.



**Figure 1.2 The ongoing process of historical consciousness**

I do not claim here to present a complete picture of Upper Skagit historical consciousness and their experiences with colonialism, because this is an ethnography of process. Rather, I present moments in the process, pieces of the interplay that I spoke with people about, observed ethnographically, and found in archival materials. These things weave together to form a glimpse of what it means to be Native American in the 21<sup>st</sup> century, maintaining cultural distinctiveness in the face of globalization. From this glimpse, I draw conclusions in three general categories: the ways in which Upper Skagit people interact with what I call the waterscape of their aboriginal territory, the continued importance of oral narratives in Upper Skagit culture today even though the narratives are accessed in different ways than “traditional” storytelling practices, and the ways the regulatory and legal regimes of settler colonialism shape people’s consciousness and behavior.

This is an ethnography of places, such as the high peaks of the Cascades where a young Upper Skagit man worked as a summer fire lookout on Sourdough Mountain in the 1950s, earning money as a Forest Service employee while he watched for lightning strikes and fires in the range through which he knew his ancestors had traveled. There are the fishing sites where families fish the same waters their ancestors have fished for generations. The Skagit River itself is a place, constantly moving and changing but also among the most constant factors in Upper Skagit life. Some places are actually beneath the water, such as the campsites where elders remember camping on hunting expeditions as children or the flint knapping sites where Upper Skagit ancestors shaped Hozomeen chert into tools. There are secret places too, where people dove, swam, and bathed to access powers as they traveled for their spiritual training. Water has always been a place of power for Upper Skagit people. And there are the places of today, like the house on the reservation that a family dreamed of living in before it was built, or the plot of land in the nearby town of Sedro-Woolley that another family bought when there was no reservation at all. The list goes on, but this is not a catalog of places.

This is an ethnography of a process in which these places play a role, and I aim to show how culturally significant places throughout Upper Skagit aboriginal territory remain important and alive in people's minds as they conceptualize their history. These places remain a part of Upper Skagit lives even when they are not visited or used in the same capacity as they were decades or centuries ago. This is also an ethnography about narratives—oral narratives in the traditional sense, and their continued relevance to Upper Skagit life today. There is a rich body of traditional narratives collected by scholars and community members, and these narratives shed light on how Upper Skagit

people thought about and interacted with the waterscape when they were told, as well as how people today think about and receive these narratives. Elements of these narratives are incorporated into contemporary Upper Skagit life in a variety of ways such as the presentation of stories about “old timers” during the annual Kids’ Fishing Day event sponsored by the tribe for local pre-school children, the invocation of a story a deceased elder used to tell when passing knowledge on to younger generations, and the desire tribal members have to read about and listen to recordings of old narratives to learn more about their own history. This is an ethnography about forces of colonialism and how people understand and react to, to paraphrase Fogelson (1989), both the broad strokes or “events” that we categorize as important from a Western historical perspective and the fine grains or “non-events,” which are the lived experiences of Upper Skagit life.

I am not the first anthropologist to work in this place, asking questions about these people, and indeed the area has been written about outside of anthropology as well. My work follows in the tradition of June Collins (1974), Sally Snyder (N.d., 1964), and Bruce Miller (1989, 2001, 2007), all of who worked with Upper Skagit (and, in the case of Miller, continue to do so). These anthropologists, along with their colleagues who work elsewhere in the Coast Salish region—Boxberger’s (1989) work on treaty law and fishing, Bierwert’s (1999) work on cultural landscapes, Jay Miller’s (1999) work on cosmology and spirituality, and Carlson’s (2010) work on historical consciousness being among the most important—have created an environment where research questions such as mine can be asked and answered as part of larger conversations about the past, present, and future of Native American cultures. To an outside audience, Upper Skagit territory is likely more recognizable as a place of wilderness and adventure, accessed through Fred

Beckey's mountaineering guidebooks (1977) or Jack Kerouac's (1958, 1965) search for Zen in the alpine areas shown to him by Beat poet Gary Snyder. It is also the location of the Ross Hydroelectric Project, which powers the city of Seattle. The lights are on in Seattle because of the Skagit, with thousands of years of human history submerged beneath waters holding millions of megawatts of potential power.

I came to this project from the outside, understanding the space only as it has been framed by a post-settlement perspective, but have now immersed myself in thinking about and describing what this place is to the people whose ancestors inhabited it for thousands of years. In addition to being a work in the Coast Salish ethnographic tradition, this dissertation engages with and contributes to the literature on cultural constructions of place as well as the literature on cultural memory and the processes by which indigenous groups develop and maintain cultural distinctiveness (Ebert 2005). Social science approaches to space and place tend to fall into two general categories—those tending toward the neo-Marxist tradition, and those tending toward phenomenology—and theorizations of relationships between place and cultural memory tend to follow suit. Neither category is all-encompassing, and this dissertation draws on both.

The neo-Marxist approach to place and memory is dialectical, employing a historical-materialist dialectical enquiry to “integrate themes of space, place, and environment,” emphasizing the understanding of “processes, flows, fluxes, and relations over the analysis of elements, things, structures, and organized systems” (Harvey 1996:46-49). Henri Lefebvre's conceptualization of “(social) space as a (social) product” shows that space is “neither a collection of things nor a void packed with various contents” (1991:27), but rather a multitude of intersections including spatial practice and

representations of space, both of which are concerned with production and reproduction of the order these things impose. This approach to processes of spatial production and reproduction also applies to memory, which it views as “constructed and reconstructed by the dialectics of remembering and forgetting, shaped by semantic or interpretive frames, and subject to a panoply of distortions” (Climo and Cattell 2002:1). I draw on this body of literature to account for the processes and materiality of colonial history.

In the more phenomenological literature, memory is part of what Doreen Massey (2005:151) calls “an ever-shifting constellation of trajectories” of spatial politics, as memories of places, particularly collective memories, are constantly being negotiated. Like Massey, Michel de Certeau is concerned with spatial trajectories and practiced places, but he also works within the phenomenological approach as he describes anthropological space as “an experience in relation to the world... There are as many spaces as there are distinct spatial experiences” (118). Edward Casey (1997) argues that memory does not exist without a bodily basis and that to be embodied is “to occupy a portion of space from out of which we both undergo given experiences and remember them” (182). Casey’s work draws on Heidegger’s *dasein*, or sense of “being-in-the-world,” and the concept of the dwelling perspective “that treats the immersion of the organism-person in an environment or life-world as an inescapable condition of existence” (Ingold 2000:153). Tim Ingold’s take on the dwelling perspective also defines the landscape as “an enduring record of—and testimony to—the lives and works of past generations who have dwelt within it, and in so doing, have left there something of themselves” (189). Keith Basso uses dwelling to highlight the “multiple lived relationships that people maintain with places,” arguing that “it is solely by virtue of

these relationships that spaces acquire meaning” (1996:106). The overall body of theory concerning place and memory has significant implications for our understanding of the relations between humans and the non-human domain, which is of particular interest in this work.

Scholars have dealt with human/non-human relations by drawing on both neo-Marxist and phenomenological approaches to place and memory. In Hugh Raffles (2001) “natural history” of Amazonia, the aforementioned co-production of people and landscape allows for human agency while accounting for the materiality of the non-human biophysical. His approach to memory and place is on an individual, phenomenological level, as he discusses interviews with village residents and “the stories people tell over and over that reinforce personal connections to this particular locale” (Raffles 2001:54). Cruikshank takes a similar approach in *Do Glaciers Listen?* (2005) as she looks at glaciers, a non-human domain, as social spaces. She describes how concepts of place and memory in Yukon elders’ oral narratives reveal the permeability of the boundaries “among humans... among human and non-human persons whose forms were interchangeable... among all those beings and the mountains, rivers, valleys, and glaciers” (220). This approach considers both colonial processes and individual experiences within these processes, drawing from both directions of theory as described above, and my work follows in this tradition.

This work also engages with the literature on the relationships between culture and water. Water is central to Upper Skagit understandings of themselves and their identity as a tribe.<sup>2</sup> I titled this dissertation “Where the Water Meets the Land” because

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<sup>2</sup> Even their official tribal name comes from their position in relation to the Skagit River.

that type of space—whether it be a riverbed, an ocean beach, the shores of an alpine lake, or any other of the myriad places where liquid and solid interact—draws attention to water’s role in cultural understandings of place. Anthropologists have recognized the importance of water as long as they have employed an ecological perspective to understand relationships between culture and nature (Orlove 1980). Scholars have shifted over recent decades to critique assumptions of environment “as a passive background to human interaction,” and develop new approaches to the “social, political, and economic aspects of environmental transition” (Blaikie and Brookfield 1987:xviii). Throughout the shift, the study of water has maintained a key position as researchers analyze “social forms of access and control over resources—with all their implications for environmental health and sustainable livelihoods” (Watts and Peet 2004:4).

Many scholars work in communities where fresh water systems are a fundamental component of the natural resource base (Johnston and Donahue 1998), recognizing water as a critical part of the overall ecosystems in which humans act and are sustained and including it in analyses of the production of place and natural histories (Raffles 2002). As scholarship currently focuses more on cultural landscapes and less on ecosystems (Hirsch and O’Hanlon 1995), anthropologists ask not only how humans use the land but also how their culture is tied to it through memory and history (Casey 1996, Gordillo 2004). This work goes a step further and introduces the concept of waterscape, a term emergent in the literature (Swyngedouw 1999) that I expand upon in chapter 3.

This ethnography begins with a brief description of my positionality as a researcher, to contextualize who I am and acknowledge the biases that inevitably shape any work of this nature. The remainder of this chapter outlines the methods of the study



and describes how three methods of inquiry provide data to answer my research question. In Chapter 2, I provide a full introduction to the Upper Skagit community as well as the historical context of colonialism in the region—the culture and the history of the aforementioned process. This is framed around the Upper Skagit family system (Miller 1989) and literature on communities of practice (Lave and Wenger 1991).

Chapter 3 looks at Upper Skagit aboriginal territory and conceptualizes it as a waterscape, revealing how tribal members' relationships with the aquatic environment are unique and how they impact the process. Chapter 4 defines historical consciousness and explores the various levels at which it emerges—individual, family, and tribal—while also discussing the production of local knowledge within the waterscape at specific sites.

Chapter 5 describes traditional Upper Skagit oral narratives and discusses what they reveal about Upper Skagit understandings of their history within the waterscape. The narratives I examine, recorded by Sally Snyder in the 1950s, provide a depth to the historical consciousness examined here by shedding light on how Upper Skagit people were thinking and acting in the past, and indicating elements of narrative that are still important in Upper Skagit culture today. Chapter 6 describes the narratives of two Upper Skagit families and their history within their aboriginal territory, putting the concepts of historical consciousness and waterscape to work.

The Conclusion ties all of this together to show how, through the process outlined at the beginning, Upper Skagit people continually adapt to changing circumstances while maintaining—and often strengthening—particular connections to their traditions and

practices, and how this is all inextricably linked to the waterscape of their aboriginal territory.

### **1.1 Situating Myself in the Work**

The first time I saw the Skagit River I actually didn't realize it. My mind was focused on the mountains. I was seventeen and it was the summer before my senior year in high school. I had flown from my home on the east coast to the Pacific Northwest, a place I'd never been before. I was with the Student Conservation Association (SCA), an organization that puts trail work crews of high school student workers and college-aged student leaders in national parks around the United States. It was a volunteer opportunity—critical for the ever-important college application process—and it was a way for me to spend a month living in the mountains, which was the realization of a dream for my teenaged self. I ticked off the boxes on the application of the places I preferred to be assigned—the Rockies, Alaska, Hawaii, and Washington state, a place I had never been but was intrigued about because of its proximity to British Columbia.

I got assigned to a trail crew working in North Cascades National Park, tucked into a corner of the country along the border with Canada (see Figure 1.2). I had never heard of this park. The internet, still young in those days, provided me with a little information but not much. The pictures I found through search engines were gorgeous, though, and that was enough for me. I was sad it wasn't Alaska, but there was snow on those peaks in the summertime, and to me that made these mountains seem more “legitimate” than the Appalachian hills I called home.

That is how, in the summer of 1999, I found myself living in North Cascades National Park (see Figure 1.2 for Park location), ten miles up the Thunder Creek trail,

rebuilding a four-mile section of trail to make it sturdier for horse-packers. I came to the Skagit River watershed with such a terrestrial mindset that I almost completely ignored the river. I was more concerned with moving up in elevation, climbing to the top of mountain passes like Park Creek Pass and hiking around the base of Jack Mountain. Water was something for drinking and, sometimes, for swimming. My friends and I bathed in a swimming hole in Thunder Creek, shrieking and shivering as the water, a rich greeny-blue in color from the minerals that melted out of the glacier that fed the stream, froze our skin but cleaned the dirt of the trail off of us.

Each night around the campfire we would read to each other. Our leaders had brought several books with them, some of which had to do with our location. This is the first place I heard of Gary Snyder, the Beat poet and scholar. He had worked on a trail crew in this very park, doing the same type of work as us, the heavy labor of digging trenches and laying riprap, and his writing about it was beautiful (Snyder 1990[1969]). He was friends with Beat author Jack Kerouac, which, as a moody teenager recently introduced to *On the Road*, I thought was totally awesome. Kerouac had been here too! He and Snyder and another Beat poet, Philip Whalen, had each lived for a time as fire lookouts on top of the peaks in this park, peaks with legendary-sounding names like Desolation.

Kerouac's (1965) Desolation Peak writings are haunting. He was in his Zen phase. He had quit drinking and, inspired by Snyder, was trying to live in solitude in nature, to tap into that essential source that the Chinese poets he and Snyder so revered had found far away on another continent and in another century. His particular location had him staring down Hozomeen Mountain, a double-horned peak that looks, in some

pictures, like the devil and in others is “Hozomeen, Hozomeen, the most beautiful mountain I have ever seen” (Kerouac 1965). When I got down from those mountains, back to reality, I wasted no time getting a copy of Kerouac’s *The Dharma Bums* (1958), which also involves the North Cascades and which is much more cheerful.

This is how I first came to know the Skagit River watershed as a place of wilderness and mountain-climbing adventure. It was a place of Zen Buddhism, with ties to San Francisco and China and all the people who ever followed Snyder and Kerouac into the hills. I spent my senior year of high school reading and re-reading their writings, transporting myself back out west, back to Thunder Creek and Jack Mountain, places where I felt at home. Like any teenager, however, this faded as I moved on to other things. I ended up in school in New Hampshire, exploring the White Mountains and making my way up to Canada and, eventually, to New Zealand. While my focus left the Pacific Northwest, however, it became very much water-based as I discovered a love of whitewater kayaking. I traveled around the country and the world doing it, risking life and limb for the adrenalin rush and the connection to the community of people who love rivers more than anything else in the world.

By the time I felt myself moving back towards the Pacific Northwest, for graduate school, I knew that I wanted to understand what it was about mountains and rivers that made people feel such passion. This passion drove my friends and me, but I was beginning to see, as I worked my way through anthropological theory, that our passion was particularly situated in the privileged world of upper-middle-class adventure-tourism. We came to these places as outsiders looking to conquer something. We hoped to connect with nature too, of course, but we mostly wanted to conquer—conquer our personal fears,

the inherent risks that gravity and moving water or steep rock cliffs possess, the challenge of life in the outdoors.

For the first time, I began to understand that these places I was so hell-bent on conquering weren't empty spaces of wilderness adventure. I began to explore the life of John Muir, whose words I remember reading as a child in an Ansel Adams autobiography (1985) filled with crisp, mesmerizing photographs of dramatic Sierra Nevada landscapes. I never thought at the time about how those landscapes never had any people in them, but I began to take issue with this. Muir is regarded by many as the father of modern environmentalism. He used his nature writing skills and his deft lobbying abilities to befriend Teddy Roosevelt and push for the establishment of a national park system in the United States. The Sierra Club, founded by Muir, remains today one of the most prominent environmental groups in the world, with a mission statement declaring its members' determination "To explore, enjoy, and protect the wild places of the earth."

Protect the wild places of the earth—from what? The rise of industrialization and intensive resource extraction was a threat even back then, and Muir is credited with bringing awareness to nature's plight. But indigenous people were also seen as things to be kept out of these wild spaces. When Yosemite National Park was being formed, Muir argued that the Yosemite Indians did not belong in the park because they ruined the pristine beauty of the landscape (Igoe 2003). Never mind that they had been living there for thousands of years. As Cruikshank says of Muir in Alaska,

[He] took the study of nature as his project and considered humans largely irrelevant to its workings and of little general interest... On the one hand, then, Muir is extolled as a visionary architect of protected lands and credited with the environmental ethic underlying the National Park system. On the other hand, he is faulted for constructing an

artifice of wilderness that eventually excluded Huna Tlingit from a bay he claimed to have 'discovered' after they guided him there. [2005:174]

Muir's modern definition of a "wild" place did not allow for any people, except those who came to "explore and enjoy" those places, which they were allowed to do as long as they left things as they found them.

Muir's attitude towards nature was echoed by fellow early conservationist George Bird Grinnell and embraced by aristocrats like Theodore Roosevelt and John D. Rockefeller, both of whom were instrumental in creating parks such as Yellowstone, the Grand Tetons, and the Great Smoky Mountains. Igoe argues that "wild" places became "stages for elite fantasies in which these magnificent features had been placed in the landscape since the beginning of time, awaiting the arrival of Anglo Americans to realize their true splendor." This teleological worldview, Igoe says, obviously precluded the possibility that these wildernesses were of previous importance to other groups of people, who were after all insignificant in the face of manifest destiny (2004:89).

This preclusion feeds into the erasure of Native Americans from the landscape, which is one of the major consequences of the production of "wild" space. It was already well underway by the time Muir and his friends got the first US National Park, Yellowstone, established in 1872, but the creation of actual park boundaries and the designation of spaces as "protected" made the erasure specific and official. In Yellowstone the US Army had to be called in to keep Native Americans from entering the Park for hunting purposes. Lefebvre (1991) and Harvey (1989) argue that "space is produced through social practices, science, planning, and technology, and space is lived and understood through symbols, language, and images" (West et al 2006). All of these

come into play in park production, as surveys lead to official park borders drawn on maps; signs, roads and interpretive centers tell visitors where to access and how to experience these protected places; and evidence of human occupation prior to the park's inception is given a voice, in some cases, through archaeology, while living native populations are kept on the "non-wild" side of the border. Park brochures often refer to Native Americans as "first visitors" (Igoe 2003).

But these places were not empty before environmentalism was invented. And they weren't places that had been empty before Kerouac and Snyder arrived either, waiting for them to inhabit towers and look for forest fires, writing poetry with their minds and hearts split between China and Washington State. People have been living here for thousands of years, fishing for salmon and hunting for elk, traveling over mountain passes and canoeing up and down the waterways (Mierendorf 2009). The peaks were there, but the Skagit River connected everything. Almost ten years after I first dove into the glacier-fed tributary and hacked a trail into the side of the hills in a place I thought I could conquer, I returned to the North Cascades and realized that I had been fooled by the Western idea of wilderness into seeing the space as empty and mine for the taking.

As I began to pursue these issues through research, a series of fortunate events led me to the Upper Skagit Indian Tribe. My initial scholarly ambitions were slightly further north in Squamish territory, where I was aware of a hydroelectric project that had raised the awareness of my whitewater kayaking friends and that happened to involve the traditional territory of Squamish First Nation. This plan didn't pan out, mostly because I didn't try hard enough to get in touch with the right people. The shyness I felt, that so many anthropologists feel, held me back and I took an easier path towards working with a

group in Vancouver. But while that work was temporarily held up, something happened. Upper Skagit wanted some work done, and a professor whose work I admired asked me to be his research assistant on the project.

And suddenly everything snapped into place: Upper Skagit Indian Tribe, Skagit River, North Cascades. I was aware, of course, that the place I had spent that time in high school was close by, but I hadn't thought that much about it—my attention was focused elsewhere. And then suddenly it wasn't—my attention was on the Skagit, on that place, and the decade of my life that had elapsed in between suddenly condensed and overlapped and I was back. The Upper Skagit people allowed me to enter their community and explore their aboriginal territory and their history, pursuing academic questions while simultaneously helping them fight for their rights. I developed this research project with their help and I hope to continue working with them for the remainder of my career.

## **1.2 Methods**

I used three research methods—interviews, participant observation, and archival research—during my sixteen months of dissertation fieldwork. Before this however, I initially began working with Upper Skagit in the spring of 2009 as a research assistant and I traveled to the reservation to introduce myself and discuss my proposed dissertation research with Steve Samson,<sup>3</sup> who heads the tribe's Natural Resources Department. During that summer and fall I wrote my research proposal, completed my comprehensive

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<sup>3</sup> Names have been changed to protect the privacy of research participants.



examination in November, and obtained ethics board approval in December. In January, I moved to my field site. From January 2010 through May 2011, I lived in Acme, Washington, a twenty-minute drive from the Upper Skagit reservation in Sedro-Woolley. This location allowed me to be close to the reservation, the fishing sites along the Skagit River, and the homes of Upper Skagit tribal members living throughout Skagit and Whatcom counties. Combined, I did sixteen months of fieldwork while living in the research area, then supplemented that work with three trips back to the area to complete interviews with research participants and discuss research findings with the tribal leadership.

My primary research method was the recording and collection of oral narratives. Oral narratives come in a variety of forms, the most useful of which for this project included semi-structured interviews about settlement patterns and life histories collected in multiple recording sessions. In February 2010, Steve Samson arranged for me to present my research proposal to the tribal council and worked with me to develop interview questions. Once the project and questions were approved by the council, I began conducting interviews with tribal members.

To select the people for interviews, I worked with two Upper Skagit families, as the family is “the core social organizational element,” in Upper Skagit life and family ties are based on access to and control of resources (Miller 1989:106, 245). I first began working with the Walters family, conducting semi-structured interviews with Suzanne Simon and Levon Henderson. In addition to formally interviewing Levon, I worked with him informally on fishing boats and at family and community events both on and off the reservation. His wife, Tonya, also participated in some of the interviews. I conducted

additional informal interviews with Andy Walters during fishery openings. The second family I worked with is the Marlowe Family. Situated upriver on an allotment property that has been in the family since the 1890s, I worked with Stanley Harrison and his friend, John Conrad, who grew up together and who remain close friends today. To learn more about fishing I interviewed Mark Flanagan, a cousin of Steve Samson's and a friend of Levon Henderson's.

These seven people were my main research participants, who I selected for reasons given below, and I worked repeatedly with them in both recorded and informal interview contexts. I developed an interview script in consultation with Upper Skagit tribal leadership to ensure that the questions I asked were appropriate and addressed both my own research concerns and those of the tribe. The script I used is as follows:

**Initial Questions:**

*These questions will establish the context of each participant's knowledge and clarify that the opinions expressed in the interview do not reflect Upper Skagit Indian Tribe as a whole.*

1. Who are you? [Name, age, address.]
2. Are you aware of your family's genealogy?
3. Are you familiar with the eleven Upper Skagit bands? If so, which band(s) are you from?
4. What are your sources of knowledge? (family, elders other than family members, books, etc)

**Settlement Questions:**

1. Can you tell me all of the places you have lived in your lifetime?
2. Where were your parents born, and where did they live throughout their lifetimes? [this question will be applied to ancestors as far back as the interview participant has knowledge.]

3. Is living in the Skagit River watershed important to you? Why?
4. What are important places that you visited for purposes like resource collection, visiting family members, etc?
5. Are there places outside of the Skagit River watershed that you consider important to yourself and to your family history?

*If the participant has ever lived outside of the Skagit River valley, the following questions may be asked:*

1. When you lived away from here, did you ever visit the Skagit River watershed?
2. When you lived away from here, did you ever want or expect to move back to the Skagit River watershed?
3. How has returning to the Skagit River watershed impacted your life?

*After the pre-planned questions have been asked, the participant will have the opportunity to share any additional information he or she feels is relevant to the conversation.*

This interview script was prepared to indicate exactly where each person's information was situated in Upper Skagit aboriginal territory and history.

The tribal council and I decided to keep the interview questions intentionally broad because I wanted the participant to determine what constitutes a life history rather than impose my own ideas on him or her, and the council knew broader questions would give informants—especially elders—more room to tell their stories. This approach is based on Crisca Bierwert's field work with Stó:lō<sup>4</sup> elders in the Fraser River valley of BC. After Bierwert asks an elder if she thinks of the mountains as landmarks for orientation, the elder responds with a story about Mt. Cheam's characteristics and the meaning of its name in the Halkomelem language. Bierwert writes of this encounter:

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<sup>4</sup> Stó:lō are a neighboring Coast Salish group.

[Her] response is typical of elders' teachings. She does not attempt to articulate the connections between my question and her answer. At first, I accept the response as a shift of reference (from my interest in "orientation" to her interest in Indian place names and mythology). Then, I realize that she has penetrated my question; she answers the underlying question, "What significance do the mountains have?" [1986:33]

As a result, each interview includes a wide range of stories about the informant and his or her family, and their choice of which stories to tell indicates what he or she finds historically salient.

I did not select participants based on their gender, but rather worked initially with the people suggested to me by the tribal council and later with connections I made through those people. The majority of my research participants are male, and this has implications for the gendered results of the study. In Bierwert's (1986) discussion of her research among the Stó:lō, a neighboring Coast Salish community to the north in Canada, she notes that her position as a married woman and a mother gave her a common ground with women in the community which helped her to research and write about the experiences of Stó:lō women. In my case it was the opposite. As a single woman with no children, I did not have those experiences to share with women in the community and did not become close with many women in the community until the final stages of my fieldwork. In addition, my work in the Natural Resources Department put me in a predominantly male domain. While both men and women fish, the tribal employees who regulate the fishery are all male with the exception of Donna McMahon, a councilwoman who heads the Fisheries Department. As a result, I spent more time with men in the community and most of my research participants are men. This dissertation does not deal directly with issues of gender, but that does not mean that gender is not a factor in the

study's execution and results. The traditional narratives I present in chapter 5 have gendered aspects to them; for example, the gender of certain characters and their actions in the stories reveals how Upper Skagit people think about gender, but I do not draw conclusions about this because it is beyond the scope of this dissertation. I ask that the reader bear this in mind and see Bierwert and other scholars' work on gender in contemporary Coast Salish communities (cf. Donaldson 1985, Miller 1992).

The second method of inquiry was participant observation. In addition to collecting oral narratives while living in the Skagit valley, I participated in activities with Upper Skagit community members and observed behaviors that provided more information about Upper Skagit historical consciousness. The Natural Resources Department gave me a desk at which to work on contract projects for the tribe, and this gave me a place to go each day and interact with the community even when I wasn't doing interviews. This allowed me to observe the everyday operations of the tribe and its many departments, and people were generous enough to invite me to participate in activities. I formed friendships with tribal members and employees, both Native and non-Native, and people were willing to work with me and share ideas and information.

One major activity to which I had access was tribal salmon fishing, and during salmon runs I worked with the Natural Resources Department and with the Walters family—a fishing cooperative working together to maximize the salmon catch (Miller 1989)—to learn fishing and fish processing techniques. I also explored boating activities on the river that are both related and not related to salmon fishing. These activities provided me with the opportunity to observe and talk with Upper Skagit people as they

interacted with the river while I simultaneously learned about the activities by participating.

Sixteen months of research allowed me to observe resource collection and other uses of the Skagit River valley through all of the seasonal changes. In addition to salmon, resources include Dungeness crab and other shellfish, berries and a wide range of other plant materials, and game—especially deer, elk, bear, and mountain goat. In addition to these resource use activities, while living in the Upper Skagit community I attended monthly Family Fit Nights at the tribal gym, elders’ luncheons in the tribal center, and other community events and ceremonies throughout the year including funerals and naming ceremonies. Many of these events served as settings for the telling of oral narratives, and watching the performance of these stories in front of an audience provided information about how narratives are presented and received within the community today.

While conducting interviews and participating in the daily life of Upper Skagit I also engaged in a third method of inquiry, which was archival research drawing on sources from two major categories: historical accounts and primary documents written by explorers, government officials, and settlers in the 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> centuries; and ethnographic field notes, oral narratives, and academic publications produced and collected by anthropologists working with Upper Skagit people from the 1940s through the present. This research helped me understand the history of Upper Skagit people and their aboriginal territory from a variety of angles allowing me to understand processes of historical consciousness and knowledge production in a colonial context.

The first set of sources encompasses the historical accounts and primary documents written by explorers, government officials, and settlers in the 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> centuries. The majority of these sources are located in two repositories: the University of Washington Special Collections and Sandpoint Federal Archives in Seattle. Accounts by explorers include the journals of George Gibbs, an explorer, scientist, and government employee, produced useful documents including a journal of his time working with territory governor Isaac Stevens during the treaty negotiations of 1854-56 and a report to the government on the *Indian Tribes of Washington Territory* (Carstenson 1954; Gibbs 1873, 1972). Another account is Henry Pierce's *Report of an Expedition from Fort Colville to Puget Sound, Washington Territory, by way of Lake Chelan and Skagit River, during the months of August and September, 1882*, a report and map documenting a major expedition through the North Cascades (Pierce 1883). Pierce's account describes an encounter between colonial forces and Upper Skagit people near what is today the town of Marblemount, at the confluence of the Cascade and the Skagit:

I sent Backus with the guide... to search for Indians, and, if found, to make arrangements for our journey down the Skagit... Upon reaching the mouth of the river (now known to be the Cascade) they had discovered a summer lodge, beyond the Skagit, occupied with their families by a gray-haired Indian and his son. Hearing the call, the old man and his wife crossed over, and as La Fleur could fortunately speak the language fluently, an agreement was soon made to bring two canoes, their only ones, to our camping place at daybreak, where a final bargain might be consummated... They also said that, a winter's supply of salmon laid in, they had intended to quit their temporary lodge and go down the river early the next morning... At daylight, true to promise, the welcome canoes appeared, and after some preliminary talk, the three ponies... were exchanged for a ride to the nearest steamboat... As we passed the summer lodge, the barking of a dozen wolfish dogs gave rude greeting on our way. [1883:22]

Other government documents include Correspondence and Accounting Records of the Puget Sound District Agency, 1854-1861 and the Tulalip Agency, 1861-1886, a microfilm collection of letters and reports written by Indian agents working in the area during the initial decades of Euro-American settlement. Combined, these and other, similar documents provide an outline of colonization along with specific accounts of Upper Skagit people and their actions and whereabouts in the 19<sup>th</sup> century.<sup>5</sup>

The second set of sources includes the ethnographic field notes, oral narrative transcripts, and academic publications produced and collected by anthropologists working with Upper Skagit people throughout the latter half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. Sally Snyder worked with Skagit people as a graduate student at the University of Washington. Her extensively detailed field notes are currently housed in the UW Special Collections and I also had access to a copy of the notes through my supervisor, Professor Bruce Granville Miller. Snyder collected data—what she refers to as “memory culture” in the form of oral narratives—on field trips in 1952, 1953, and 1954, with about twenty Skagit informants, some at the Swinomish Reservation and some “non-reservation Skagits” in the foothills and mountain towns of Concrete, Marblemount, and Everson. Snyder’s dissertation draws on these narratives to analyze patterns of social behavior in light of folkloristic projections about people’s roles in Skagit society. In particular, she looks at social conflicts and how they are resolved symbolically through oral narratives, writing in her conclusion,

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<sup>5</sup> This body of material provides a fascinating look at the 19<sup>th</sup> century settler colonial process in the Skagit area and beyond, worthy of a more thorough treatment than I am able to give in this dissertation.



I have tried to show [through oral narratives] how relationships between siblings, especially, and males and females in the family of procreation determined to a large extent the behavior and attitudes toward people in general, and reinforced certain institutions, of which I have treated religion, marriage, potlatching, and ones relating to hostile relationships and solutions for them more exhaustively than others. [1964:490]

Her field notes were a major data source for my research because they include not only transcriptions of the narratives but also documentation of behavior and other aspects of Skagit consciousness at the time of her research. Snyder's work with elders in the 1950s provides a glimpse of Upper Skagit life experiences reaching back into the 19<sup>th</sup> century, which is impossible to collect today.

I also draw on Bruce Miller's ethnographic work, conducted from the 1980s through the present and spanning both academic and applied realms. Because Dr. Miller is my supervisor, I had access to field notes and materials from his dissertation research as well as access, with tribal permission, to reports he has written over the years for traditional use studies (TUS, sometimes conflated with traditional cultural property or TCPs) with Upper Skagit (Miller and Angelbeck 2006, 2008). This material provides another set of oral narratives to compare with those collected by Snyder and those collected through my own fieldwork. The traditional use study materials are particularly relevant to my work, as they specifically address Upper Skagit people's relationships to physical features of the Skagit valley.

In addition to Snyder and Miller, the other anthropologist to work extensively with Upper Skagit was June Collins. Collins began research with Upper Skagit in 1942 and continued to make intermittent visits until 1969, ultimately producing her 1974 volume *Valley of the Spirits: The Upper Skagit Indians of Western Washington*. Collins'

work is a master narrative of pre-contact Upper Skagit life, and it is popular with contemporary Upper Skagit people interested in learning about their ancestors. Because my research examines Upper Skagit historical consciousness, Collins' book is equally important for understanding how Upper Skagit people perceive their history as it is for providing a historical portrait of pre-contact Upper Skagit culture. Collins' daughter gave some of Collins' field notes and slides to the tribe for research purposes and I spent part of my time in the field cataloguing these materials so they will be useful for future projects related to litigation and resource rights.

I tie these three methods of inquiry together to produce an ethnography of contemporary Upper Skagit life as it interweaves with various threads of history and knowledge to produce a culturally constituted waterscape that is a place of complex interactions and residual effects of the colonial encounter.

## Chapter 2: Ethnographic Background

This chapter introduces the people that populate this dissertation and provides background on the historical context in which my research was carried out. It also begins to introduce Upper Skagit aboriginal territory. It is difficult to know which to put first: as an anthropologist, people are the object of study, but in the case of Upper Skagit, the places of the Skagit River watershed are inextricably linked with the people who live in and move through them. Rather than giving a comprehensive description of all of the cultural elements that define Upper Skagit as a tribe,<sup>6</sup> a look at the Upper Skagit family system introduces the cultural context and the major players of this work. Some of these people are living, some are long deceased, but all are anchored to the Skagit.

### 2.1 Upper Skagit: An Introduction

The Upper Skagit are a Native American tribe of approximately 1150 members based in the Skagit River valley in northwest Washington state, where three parcels of land combine to form a reservation of 110 acres near the town of Sedro-Wooley (USIT Annual Report 2010). Upper Skagit are part of a cultural group of peoples and communities in western Washington and British Columbia called the Coast Salish, following the name of the language family to which they belong (Suttles 1987, Miller 2007).<sup>7</sup> Evidence of indigenous use and occupation in the Skagit valley can be traced back 9000 years and the river figured centrally as a source of food, corridor of

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<sup>6</sup> See June Collins' 1974 book *The Valley of the the Spirits* for a classic ethnographic summary of Upper Skagit.

<sup>7</sup> A note on language: Lushootseed Salish is the traditional language of Upper Skagit. While language undoubtedly an important facet of historical consciousness, I am not a linguist and the tribe has very few native speakers left. Therefore this dissertation does not look closely at Lushootseed Salish, but rather focuses on narratives in English.

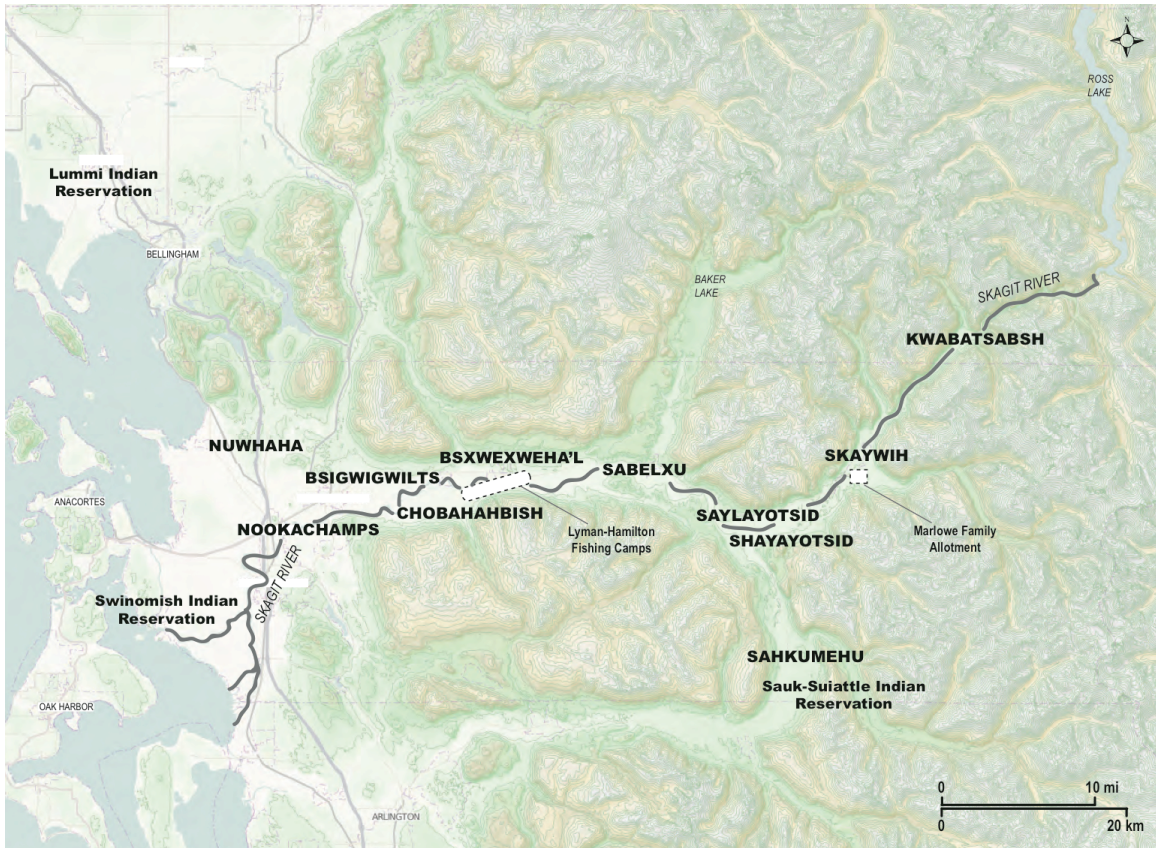
transportation, and site of spiritual interaction throughout the contact period (Mierendorf 2009). Upper Skagit is composed of eleven predecessor bands: the Nuwha’ha, Nookachamps, Bsigwigwils, Bsxwexwehwa’l, Chobahabish, Sabelxu, Saylayotsid, Shayayotsid, Kwabatsabsh, Sahkumehu, and Skaywih (see Figure 2.1).

Two major events shape the period of Upper Skagit history with which this dissertation is concerned: the 1855 signing of the Treaty of Point Elliot and the 1974 court case *The United States v. Washington* (384 F.Supp. 312[1974]), colloquially known as the Boldt Decision. They are important because of the changes they brought to Upper Skagit settlement patterns—especially the places in which people lived and fed their families.

The first of the two major shifts in settlement patterns occurred around the signing of the Treaty of Point Elliot in 1855, when representatives from most of the Upper Skagit predecessor bands signed a treaty with the United States government along with other tribes in the Puget Sound and greater Washington region.<sup>8</sup> At this time, the establishment of reservations and the market economy that came along with colonization forced Native people to abandon their seasonal movements and instead live in one place year-round while earning wages. The US government wanted Upper Skagit people to move to the Swinomish Reservation, near the mouth of the Skagit River, but most refused and after a short interval, returned to their homelands upriver.

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<sup>8</sup> See Appendix A for full Treaty text and list of signatories.



**Figure 2.1 Map of Upper Skagit predecessor villages and other key places (map by Bill Angelbeck)**

During treaty times (a term used by the tribe to describe this era), Upper Skagit people carried out fishing, shellfishing, hunting and gathering activities from the saltwater villages all the way to upper reaches of the Skagit headwaters and Cascade mountains, and traveling into Eastern Washington and north into BC for hunting, fishing, gathering, and trading purposes.<sup>9</sup> While some Upper Skagit families settled onto allotments in the Skagit valley under the Dawes Act in 1887, other people had to find ways to purchase property and settle in the area, choose to live on other tribal reservations, or leave the Skagit region to seek employment elsewhere.<sup>10</sup> Wherever people ended up, they all experienced a gradual shift in settlement patterns from pre-Treaty, resource-based mobility within Skagit traditional territory to settlement in permanent houses wherever jobs were available.

In 1915, descendants of the Upper Skagit predecessor villages gathered at Concrete to organize themselves and decide how to obtain a settlement from the federal government to pay compensation for the cession of land under the terms of the Point Elliot Treaty. They began holding regular fundraising events to raise money to pay their legal fees, and in 1926 brought suit with several other tribes in the *Duwamish et al v the United States* case (79 C. Cls. 530[1926]). In 1951 the group sought compensation through the Indian Claims Commission for 1,769,804 acres, and in 1968 they were awarded \$385,471.42 (or \$271 per capita) in a settlement from the federal government.

In 1974, Judge George Boldt, presiding over the case *US v. State of Washington*, ruled that treaty Indians of western Washington were entitled to fifty percent of the

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<sup>9</sup> There is a longstanding tradition of intermarriage between families from “east of the mountains” and Upper Skagit families, and these kinship ties persist today, as will be shown in subsequent chapters.

<sup>10</sup> For more on allotments, see Boxberger 1989.

harvestable salmon and steelhead catch each year.<sup>11</sup> The case required clarification of which tribes were acknowledged treaty signatories, and as a result Upper Skagit successfully made a claim as a collective group based on a 1913 Congressional Act through which the tribe purchased land for a cemetery to be held in trust for them by the government. The fact that the government held this land in trust established proof of prior Congressional recognition of Upper Skagit as an organized, collective group. With this established, the tribe organized a new constitution and Tribal Council as governing body under the terms of the Indian Reorganization Act of 1934 and obtained official recognition on December 4, 1974.

At this point, the settlement pattern shifted again. Upper Skagit people whose families had left throughout the previous century now had the opportunity to return to the Skagit valley and fish commercially for salmon and steelhead. Between 1977 and 1982 the tribe obtained land through federal grants to establish reservations at Helmick Road in Sedro-Woolley and a smaller place near the settlement of Bow. Tribal leadership established a tribal court system as well as fisheries management. Both tribal members returning from elsewhere and the people who never left Upper Skagit traditional territory began to participate in the commercial fishery, move onto the reservation or establish homes elsewhere within the area, and take part in tribal events and politics. Because legal commercial fishing was a new opportunity for them, most tribal members had come to rely on the mainstream community for employment and many continued to do so while fishing became a way to supplement their incomes.

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<sup>11</sup> For an ethnohistory of this case from the perspective of the nearby Lummi tribe, see Daniel Boxberger's *To Fish in Common* (1989).

Today, the center of Upper Skagit life is the reservation, which sits on a small plot of land east of the town of Sedro-Woolley on the north side of Highway 20, the main thoroughfare (see Figure 2.1). It is not directly on the Skagit River, but a Skagit tributary—Hansen Creek—runs through it to the main river. The small size of the reservation limits the number of tribal members who can live there. As of 2010, of the 372 tribal members living in Skagit County, only 143 lived on the reservation (USIT Annual Report 2010). The waiting list to get housing is lengthy, and those families who do have housing have mostly been there since the reservation's inception in 1980, passing their homes on to younger generations as they come along. The children who live on the reservation take the bus to school in Sedro-Woolley and their parents have jobs on the reservation or in town. This makes Sedro-Woolley, population 10,600 in 2010,<sup>12</sup> the primary town for tribal members.

Ten miles west of the reservation, where Highway 20 intersects with Interstate 5, are the towns of Burlington (on the north side of the Skagit) and Mt. Vernon (on the south side). The site of major stores like Wal-Mart and Costco, these two towns provide another important economic and residential draw for tribal members. Most people do their shopping here as the shops are more convenient and groceries are cheaper than in Sedro-Woolley. Some tribal members also live in Burlington and Mt. Vernon. Nine miles north on Interstate 5 is the small settlement of Bow, the location of the tribe's casino, Skagit Valley Casino Resort. There is one Upper Skagit family living here, and many more tribal members commute here daily to their jobs at the casino and hotel.

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<sup>12</sup> <http://quickfacts.census.gov/qfd/states/53/5363210.html>



Following the river west and downstream from Burlington and Mt. Vernon takes one closer to the Swinomish Reservation and the town of La Conner on Puget Sound. This place is also important to Upper Skagit people because it is here that they keep their saltwater fishing gear. The tribe also recently bought waterfront property in La Conner. In the saltwater territory they share fishing rights with other tribes and their interactions both on and off the water are complex. Many Upper Skagit people have family enrolled with nearby tribes Swinomish, Samish, Lummi, and Sauk-Suiattle. Prior to federal recognition of Upper Skagit as a tribe, some members were enrolled with these tribes. Because they compete today for fishing and other resources, the relationship between the tribes is both familiar and heated.

East and upstream from the reservation in Sedro-Woolley lies the North Cascades National Park, a 504,781 acre piece of land designated as a park in 1968 and encompassing the upper reaches of the river all the way to the Canada-US border (see Figure 1.2).<sup>13</sup> Several small towns dot the riverside along the way—Lyman, Hamilton, Concrete, Rockport, Marblemount, and Newhalem—and more tribal members live in these places. Several of these spots are former village locations from the pre-contact era, but most tribal members either bought property here over the years or obtained allotments from the government in the late 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> centuries. Members living in these locales are more remote than those based on the reservation, and they are known as “upriver” families. Some families who now live on the reservation still have allotments upstream where nobody resides year-round.

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<sup>13</sup> <http://www.nps.gov/noca/index.htm>

For an Upper Skagit individual, one or more of these settlements, apart from the upstream allotments, is the place where he or she lives more or less permanently. One may wake up in one place and go to work or school in another. In addition to the settlements, however, are the unsettled, “wild” places within the Skagit watershed, and these are places of existence too. For fishing practices, the water itself and the land through which it runs are key spaces of action. In subsequent chapters I will discuss how these places shape the historical consciousness of tribal members, but first I will address how tribal membership is regulated and how families are organized.

## **2.2 Who Belongs? Blood Quantum**

As the above summary shows, the federal government began attempting to regulate the lives of Upper Skagit people after the treaty was signed in 1855, and with federal recognition in 1974 that regulation became official. The same laws that helped the tribe organize required that tribal membership be regulated by measurement of how much Upper Skagit “blood” each person had. This happened throughout the Native American world. The term “blood quantum” refers to the measurement of an individual’s Native American ancestry in percentages or fractions. Most tribes require that a person have at least one-quarter or one-eighth blood quantum to be enrolled in the tribe. Ancestry is determined by tracing one’s lineage back to tribal rolls and census documents. This enrollment process is rooted 19<sup>th</sup> century treaty policy, including the Point Elliot Treaty. Treaties established specific rights to money, goods, and privileges for individuals and tribal members who were party to the treaty. The practices of creating formal censuses

and keeping lists of names of tribal members evolved to ensure an accurate and equitable distribution, in theory, of benefits (Thornton 1997:35).

These practices became widespread in Native American communities with the passage of the Dawes Allotment Act of 1887. Henry Dawes was a reformer who believed that American Indians could be civilized and integrated into mainstream American culture by transitioning from communal to individual land ownership. The government parceled Native land into allotments and used tribal rolls to determine who was eligible to receive them. Up until the Dawes Act, according to Ariela Gross, “Indian identity under US law had been a hybrid of ‘race’ and ‘nation’; after that time, Indian nations were shattered and individual Indians were forced to take their places in the US racial hierarchy” (2008:141).

Blood quanta became officially codified in 1934 under the Indian Reorganization Act or “Indian New Deal,” which required tribes to define membership in specific terms through their constitutions and by-laws (Strong and Van Winkle 1996:555). These criteria must be approved by the Bureau of Indian Affairs, which issues enrolled members a Certificate of Degree of Indian Blood (or CDIB). The enrollment process is commonly a frustrating experience for, in Circe Sturm’s words, “Native Americans whose identities are administered and verified through what are often rather haphazard paper trails leading to racially qualified ancestors” (2002:6). Sturm points out that many people’s ancestors “resisted formal enrollment because they viewed it as a tool of political, cultural, and social assimilation,” and therefore the already problematic paper trail is by no means an accurate representation of historical tribal populations (2002:6).

According to the Upper Skagit tribal code, to be enrolled one “must possess one-eighth (1/8) or more Upper Skagit Blood,” which is defined as “direct lineal descendancy from those Indian tribes and bands which occupied the Upper Skagit River area from aboriginal times until January 1, 1942 [the earliest official census date], and who were predecessors in interest to the present day Upper Skagit Tribe” (USIT Tribal Code). The enrollment application must include copies of birth certificates, “appropriate family trees, other genealogical information, and other competent evidence which may be of assistance in researching the application” (USIT Tribal Code). A tribal Enrollment Committee reviews the application and the Tribal Council makes the final decision.

The membership process is rigorous because of the many issues related to enrollment. According to Strong and Van Winkle, measurement of “blood quantum” or “blood reckoning is significant in the administration of federal laws relating to jurisdiction over crime, American Indian religious freedom, the adoption of Indian children, the marketing of Indian art, the repatriation of artifacts and human remains, economic enterprises on reservation lands, and the like” (1996:555). For Upper Skagit, a major benefit of enrollment is the right to fish commercially for salmon and shellfish in the tribe’s aboriginal territory. This right was initially established by the Treaty of Point Elliot, which included the following article: “The right of taking fish at usual and accustomed grounds and stations is further secured to said Indians in common with all citizens of the Territory” (see Appendix A). These terms went ignored by settlers in the region until the Boldt decision in 1974.

In the mid-1990s, the decision was expanded to include commercial shellfishing rights. Certain language from the Point Elliot Treaty plays a critical role in defining

exactly how these rights may be exercised: First, Boldt interpreted “in common with” to mean that tribes have a right to fifty percent of the total commercial catch for the entire state, a percentage that must be divided up between all of the treaty tribes. Second, tribal members may only fish at the “*usual and accustomed grounds and stations*” of the tribe in which they are enrolled. These places, referred to in short as “U and A,” had to be established and proven in court by each individual tribe. A fishing area is “U and A” if the tribe can prove that their ancestors were fishing in that place at the time of the Point Elliot Treaty in 1855.

Combined with tribal enrollment policies and fishing regulations, the structure of the Boldt decision ensures that Upper Skagit fishing is a practice highly regulated by colonial terms of access. Fishing may occur only at places where Upper Skagit ancestors fished at the time of the Treaty signing in 1855, and fishing may only be done by people who can trace direct bloodlines to the January 1, 1942, census. The restoration of fishing rights was a major victory for the tribes involved, but at the same time, by working through the US legal system and being administered by the BIA, these tribes are limited by the colonizing population’s definitions of history and identity. This discourse of “precise, objectified relatedness and distance articulates with discourses of authenticity, purity, contamination, and conflict to form an identity-creating apparatus—what Spivak (1993:4) calls an ‘identikit’—with tremendous potential for exclusion, stigmatization, division, and fragmentation” (Strong and Van Winkle 1996:554).

This “identikit” and the role it plays in determining who can access fishing resources make blood quantum a highly contested issue at Upper Skagit today. I began hearing about blood quantum almost immediately when I arrived at the reservation to do

my fieldwork, mostly in hushed terms. “The last time it came up at Tribal Council, things got really heated,” I heard more than once. There is a consistent push from part of the community to lower the requirement, especially as many tribal members marry outside the tribe. In Thornton’s words, “As the number of Native Americans have declined and Native Americans have come into increased contact with whites, blacks, and others, Native American peoples have increasingly married non-Indians,” with sixty percent of American Indians at the time of that book’s publication married to non-Indians (1997:38-39). This number has likely increased since then.

With blood quantum, however, the issue isn’t limited to marriage and procreation with non-Indians. Because Upper Skagit enrollment requires one-eighth Upper Skagit blood, marriage to a member of a neighboring tribe—part of the same ancestral fishing culture as Upper Skagit, but the competition for resources today—leads to the birth of children who may be more than one-eighth Native American blood, but less than one-eighth Upper Skagit (or other tribal) blood. With only a third of tribal members residing in the area, the chances of marrying a fellow member are small, and people realize it. People joke about how finding someone to date in the tribe, or even in a neighboring tribe, who isn’t too closely related is nearly impossible. But even though everyone is aware of the general trend of marrying outsiders, any real changes to the blood quantum requirement are still out of reach because of tribal politics.

In a conversation with a tribal fisher whose kids “aren’t enough to be enrolled,” we touched on this potential for change. “Hopefully someday they might drop ‘er down and then I would love to show my kids [how to fish],” he said. “My kids are at, I think, I don’t know, like an eighth below what the limit is. I’m sure someday they’ll have to

lower it down because you know all of the elders are, you know, they're gonna pass." This sense of the inevitable necessity of lowering the blood quantum requirements is shared by other tribal members, but those who had married in and whose offspring did meet the one-eighth minimum felt less strongly about the need for immediate change, some even expressing hesitation about letting in too many new members too quickly. As one Tribal Council member told me, the tribe's financial successes like fisheries, casino operations, and other business and real estate ventures like the purchase of apartment building complexes and self-storage units have established Upper Skagit as one of the most economically stable tribes in the region and a major employer and landowner in Skagit County. As a result enrollment has already gone up significantly in the last decade—there were 503 more members in 2009 than in 1999 (USIT Annual Report 2009:10)—as people have switched enrollment from other tribes to Upper Skagit, the wealthiest of their ancestral ties. The prospect of enrollment doubling overnight with the lowering of the minimum requirement is daunting to those who see themselves as protectors of the tribe's interests.

### **2.3 Family Organization and Communities of Practice**

While blood quantum defines tribal status in quantifiable terms, the Upper Skagit family system is much more fluid than this. I review previously published descriptions of family organization in the Upper Skagit community, discuss how these descriptions fit in the contemporary community in which I did my work, and introduce the two main families with whom I worked and whose stories I will tell throughout this dissertation. I finish by introducing the concept of communities of practice to frame the way these two

families participate in various tribal activities throughout Upper Skagit traditional territory.

I begin with Miller's description of the Upper Skagit family system as "the core social organizational element of life," in which he describes how social and economic relationships are built on these corporate groups (1989:107). His model of family organization is based on fieldwork done in the late 1980s, and he draws on June Collins (1974) to illustrate how families formed around sibling sets in contact and early historic periods: "Families fished together, supported each other in ceremonial life, and lived and moved together" (Miller 1989: 107).

Sally Snyder (1964) and Marian Smith (1940) both note that extended families enabled groups to access more fishing and resource collection sites. According to Miller, Joe Jorgensen's (1971) term "Indian collectivism," or simply "collectivism," which involves reciprocity and assistance between members of networks, is still at the heart of Upper Skagit family ideology (1989: 107). Families act as economic units in the form of fishing cooperatives, and membership in families is negotiable as people have a wide net of relations (Miller 1989: 108). This negotiability or indeterminacy "belies the general assertion by Upper Skagits themselves that family membership is determinate," and Miller draws on Sally Falk Moore's (1975) model to analyze this gap between community ideology and social reality (109) and presents a cyclical model of family formation, maturity, and deterioration (termed "fissioning") (120). Family groups have been fishing cooperatives since the 1974 Boldt Decision and function to pool resources for equipment and labor (114).



My own research at Upper Skagit commenced 20 years after the publication of the family organization model presented above, and I found that, while it functioned in essentially the same way, Upper Skagit families had adapted to changes in salmon catch numbers, additional sources of income such as work at the tribal casino, and the same forces of modernity encountered by the rest of the Pacific Northwest at the time. Of the two families I worked with, one remained a fishing family in the sense of collectivism described in the Miller model while the other had come to rely over time on the timber industry to support itself, allowing fishing practices to fall by the wayside.

Miller describes the Walters family as one of “two major corporate Upper Skagit families... These families are large and politically powerful and have dominated the political life of the tribe since 1980” (1989:135). I found the family’s level of political influence to be much the same in the 2010s. The major players within the family had shifted with time, most significantly with the deaths of two of the most influential figures in both the family and the tribe: Fred Walters in 2007 and Sam Walters in 2008. The family currently has a council seat held by Suzanne Simon, who is one of the women profiled in Miller’s dissertation.<sup>14</sup> They have a fishing camp where they fish with family members, and have formed alliances through marriage with the Jackson family and the Robertson family.

The Walters family member with whom I worked most closely is Levon Henderson. Levon is in his mid-thirties and has three young children with his wife Tonya, who is from the Robertson family. Levon’s mother is a Walters, and is the younger sister of Fred and Sam Walters. Their mother and father, Elaine and Charles Walters, were

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<sup>14</sup> Her name has been changed here.

important Upper Skagit people in their time and they are frequently referred to by their descendants in stories about the past, as are Fred and Sam.

Levon currently works for the tribe in the Natural Resources Department. His job requires that he spend much of his time outside, both on and off the water. He works closely with Steve Samson, a member of the Phillips family, who used to be married to Levon's sister Tina. This marriage tie remains important as it connects Levon to the Phillips family, who are currently the most powerful family in the tribe under the leadership of Steve's mother, Donna McMahon (née Phillips), who has sat on the tribal council for nearly three decades. Levon used to fish with Steve but now fishes with other members of the Walters family and their Jackson and Robertson family connections.

I met Levon and his family early in my fieldwork when he and Steve would take me on various fishing boats around the area to give me a taste of the work they do. Sometimes their children would join us and I would watch with them as the men hauled in crab pots and sent Dungeness crabs skittering around the deck or pulled in gillnets filled with king salmon. Levon learned salmon fishing techniques from his uncles, Fred and Sam, but he learned how to crab with Steve. Upper Skagit fought for and won its shellfishing rights twenty years after the salmon fishing rights, so in the mid 1990s when crabbing became legal, few tribal members had the financial resources to participate in the commercial crab fishery (see my discussion of the fishery in Chapter 3). Steve was one of the few, and he brought Levon on as his partner for a while before Levon had the money to buy his own equipment and crab with another relative.

Levon's education as a fisher and his subsequent participation in commercial fisheries with members of the Walters family as well as the Phillips family (through Steve) and the Robertson and Jackson families (through his wife Tonya) demonstrates how "membership in families is negotiable, and individual Upper Skagits can align themselves with one of several corporate family networks" (Miller 1989:108). Levon identifies first and foremost as a member of the Walters family. Fred and Sam are the ones who taught him how to fish for salmon, and today he fishes from the Walters camp. However, at times in the past he has also fished for salmon with Steve, and Steve taught him how to crab. At these times Levon exercised his ties by marriage (of his sister and Steve) to the Phillips family, and they continue to work together even after the end of that marriage in 2008. Levon's own marriage to Tonya ties him to the Robertson family, and he and his brothers-in-law share resources at the Walters camp during salmon fisheries. Tonya's oldest brother, now head of the Robertson family, is married to a woman from the Jackson family, and Levon considers this an important family connection as well. These connections don't happen all at once, however. People form and exercise their connections over extended periods of time.

All of this demonstrates the simultaneous fluidity and permanence of family connections in the Upper Skagit community. At any given time, the names of the major families seem to hold such power that it is hard to imagine them in times of less influence. But the cyclical nature of the family as described by Miller is a reality, and the other family with which I worked is an example of a family in the fissioning phase.

According to Miller, in this phase,

Families collapse or recombine to form new families...  
Disillusionment and withdrawal from the tribal government

may occur here, as the family loses influence with the community at large. Leadership of the family declines, and instead of emphasizing family ties, members begin to emphasize their relationships with household members, friends, or perhaps the outside communities. [1989:134-135]

A family in this phase is difficult to spot at first, because its members are not as involved in tribal events as the more powerful families and therefore they are less visible. Their family name may still retain some of its significance, but in reality their influence has waned.

The family I observed in this phase is the Marlowe family. My primary contact was the current head of the family, Stanley Harrison, and I first encountered him as a speaker at a feast celebrating the First Salmon Ceremony and Blessing of the Fleet in the spring of 2010, held each year to prepare fishers for the upcoming season. Stanley stood at the feast and recalled memories of fishing with his grandparents on the Cascade River, a tributary of the Skagit, back when fish were more abundant (a recurring theme in Upper Skagit narratives). I wanted to talk to Stanley because of descriptions I'd heard of improvements his grandfather had made to the riverbank on his property to reinforce it against annual flooding.

I eventually spent time with Stanley on his property in Marblemount, on the banks of the Cascade River, where his family has lived since the late 19<sup>th</sup> century. It is the site of two important pieces of Upper Skagit history: an old house where Upper Skagit people used to gather for Indian Shaker Church religious meetings and a family cemetery. The allotment is known as the Marlowe homestead to other Upper Skagit people. The significance of the Marlowe homestead indicates the powerful role the Marlowe family used to play in tribal organization and politics. The names of Henry and Jeanie Marlowe,

Stanley's grandparents, remain important in Upper Skagit narratives even though they are both long deceased. In the 1980s, Stanley sat on the tribal council and wielded his family influence. But as he grew older, his participation in tribal politics lessened. While there is undoubtedly a political backstory to which I was not privy, there is also the question of proximity: the Marlowe homestead is forty miles upstream from the Upper Skagit reservation, and traveling that distance both directions on a winding highway is taxing on anyone, let alone a man in his seventies like Stanley.

Stanley is also involved in the Pentecostal church in Marblemount, and he devotes much of his time to worship, charity work, and church social events. While he does acknowledge the importance of the Indian Shaker Church to his grandparents and the role that it played in bringing together Upper Skagit people at a time when they did not have federally recognized tribal status, he does not himself believe in that religion. The Indian Shaker Church was founded in the 1880s by John Slocum, a Squaxin man, and spread throughout Native American communities in the Pacific Northwest. Combining Native American and Catholic beliefs, the Church plays a major role in communities throughout the region (Collins 1950). Given the importance of both the Shaker Church and the winter ceremonial (also known as "smokehouse") religion to Upper Skagit as a tribe, it makes sense that Stanley's increased participation in the Pentecostal church has led to him participating less in tribal activities, particularly spiritual ones.

Another reason for the decline of Marlowe family influence at Upper Skagit may be the family's lack of participation in the salmon fishery. While Henry and Jeanie Marlowe knew how to fish as well as any Upper Skagit person of their generation, they were also involved in the booming timber industry that was particularly active in the 20th

century. Young Stanley and his brothers learned to drive horse teams and drag logs around the property as well as how to operate a small sawmill and count board feet, and they carried these skills beyond their childhood home into the work force. Stanley spent his adult life working throughout Washington and Oregon, eventually returning home to the Skagit River and the Marlowe homestead in the 1980s a very skilled logger but an unskilled fisher. When so much of the tribe's economic and social life revolves around salmon fishing, a family's lack of participation in the fishery can lead to a lack of relevance.

What I hope to do in the pages that follow is tell some of the stories of families like the Marlowes and the Walters. It would be impossible to tell them comprehensively. Each family carries with it not only decades but centuries of history, and I will attempt to focus on sources at two levels: the individual, as told by Stanley and Levon; and the ancestral, told through transcribed stories and interviews collected by anthropologists working in previous decades. These levels frequently overlap; indeed, you will find the names of Sam and Fred Walters and Jessie and Henry Marlowe almost as often as those of Levon and Stanley. Levon and Stanley orient themselves today based on their understandings of the roles their ancestors played in the past, and I hope to show that an individual voice is not really individual at all, but rather carries the echoes of those who came before. Who each individual chooses to echo, and also where these echoes are heard, will show how these formations of history function in Upper Skagit culture today.

I finish by drawing on Jean Lave and Etienne Wenger's work on communities of practice to frame the directions Levon and Stanley's lives have taken, and how these

trajectories fit into Upper Skagit historical consciousness. Lave and Wenger draw on Bourdieu (1977) to set up a theory of social practice, stating the following:

A theory of social practice emphasizes the relational interdependency of agent and world, activity, meaning, cognition, learning, and knowing. It emphasizes the inherently socially negotiated character of meaning and the interested, concerned character of thought and action of persons-in-activity. This view also claims that learning, thinking, and knowing are relations among people in activity in, with, and arising from the socially and culturally structured world. [Lave and Wenger 1991:50-51]

The authors use this framework to examine how participants in various apprenticeships—midwives, tailors, naval quartermasters, butchers, and nondrinking alcoholics—transition from newcomers to old-timers<sup>15</sup> as they learn how to participate in the social world of these practices.

Lave and Wenger define a community of practice as follows:

A community of practice is a set of relations among persons, activity, and world, over time and in relation with other tangential and overlapping communities of practice. A community of practice is an intrinsic condition for the existence of knowledge, not least because it provides the interpretive support necessary for making sense of its heritage. Thus, participation in the cultural practice in which any knowledge exists is an epistemological principle of learning. The social structure of this practice, its power relations, and its conditions for legitimacy define possibilities for learning. [1991:98]

For this dissertation, there are several communities of practice in which the people I discuss participate. The two communities of practice I consider for the two families introduced above are commercial fishing and the timber industry. As one of the most skilled tribal fishers, Levon is a member of the community of practice as well as a leader.

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<sup>15</sup> Upper Skagit people also use the phrase “old timers” to refer to their ancestors; see chapter 4 for further discussion.

Stanley's experience in the timber industry makes him a leader in that community of practice. By specializing in timber, Stanley and his family moved away from the fishing community of practice. While Levon's uncles participated in the timber industry, Levon himself did as a young man but he no longer does. Each man's identity is tied into this.

Lave and Wenger "conceive of identities as long-term, living relations between persons and their place and participation in communities of practice. Thus identity, knowing, and social membership entail one another" (1991:53). As this dissertation explores Upper Skagit historical consciousness and connection to places within the tribe's aboriginal territory, the individual, family, and tribal levels of consciousness are tied to the communities of practice in which people participate. There is no one Upper Skagit perspective; these communities of practice combined form the larger community of Upper Skagit within the tribe's aboriginal territory.



### **Chapter 3: Waterscape**

Upper Skagit people approach their aboriginal territory—conceptualized here as a waterscape—in ways shaped by centuries of lived experience in the watershed. The “colonial encounter” (Cruikshank 2005:9) has been inscribed in the waterscape in the form of dikes, log jam removal, and the hydroelectric dams found throughout the Skagit watershed. Ongoing negotiations over these industrial transformations reveal the ways Skagit people view the waterscape in contrast to the mainstream Western (or settler) perspective. In this chapter, I introduce the terminology and the emergent literature that inspired it, as well as discussing how it can be useful to think about Upper Skagit relationships with their aboriginal territory. This chapter also provides an ethnographic introduction to the Upper Skagit fishery.

#### **3.1 Waterscape: Origins of the Term**

My definition of “waterscape” emerges from both my fieldwork and the theoretical background I bring to my analysis of Upper Skagit people’s relationships with their traditional territory. Using the proper terminology to describe the area significant to Upper Skagit people is important, not just from an academic standpoint but from a legal standpoint. In order to contend with the contemporary demands of local, state, and federal governments as well as neighboring tribes, Upper Skagit must consistently define who they are and where they live within the confines of the private land ownership system imposed on them by the settler population. Because their rights to resources depend on the definition of where they live and the extent to which their ancestors used it, the tribal leadership is adamant about the use of proper terminology and the inclusion of all

territory. The tribe had a negative experience in the past when their fishing territory was limited by the testimony of a member of the Jackson family who, although accurately describing his own family's fishing practices, failed to include the downstream and saltwater fishing locations of other tribal families.

Coast Salish scholars typically frame cultural waterways in the Coast Salish world using Marian Smith's watershed model of social unity, published in her 1969 book *Puyallup-Nisqually*. In this model, she argues that the natives of this region were "completely aware of its character as a great water shed. From the geographical concept of the drainage system they derived their major concept of social unity. Thus, peoples living near a single drainage system were considered to be knit together by that fact if by no other" (Smith 1969:2-3). She reviews classifications made by George Gibbs: "river and Sound," "equestrian," and "salt water" Indians (Smith 1969:29), but has her own terms for ethnic units that "disregard drainage systems and show cross-country affiliations which slice the country north and south in a manner not possible to describe by simple up- and down-river terms": salt water, river, prairie, and inland (Smith 1969:31).

In my early discussions of this project with tribal leadership, we agreed that the phrase "Skagit River watershed" was more inclusive than "Skagit River valley," and that even beyond the Skagit watershed itself we had to acknowledge that the tribe's traditional territory included the saltwater locations beyond the mouth of the river at La Conner as well as areas high in the mountains that may fall outside the scientific boundaries of the Skagit watershed itself. The term "watershed" is itself an ambiguous one; according to the US Geological Survey, a watershed is:

[t]he divide separating one drainage basin from another and in the past has been generally used to convey this meaning. However, over the years, use of the term to signify drainage basin or catchment area has come to predominate, although drainage basin is preferred. Drainage divide, or just divide, is used to denote the boundary between one drainage area and another. Used alone, the term "watershed" is ambiguous and should not be used unless the intended meaning is made clear. [USGS 2013]

The Environmental Protection Agency cites early American geologist and geographer John Wesley Powell's definition of a watershed as "that area of land, a bounded hydrologic system, within which all living things are inextricably linked by their common water course and where, as humans settled, simple logic demanded that they become part of a community" (EPA 2013). Smith's logic is along the same lines as Powell's.

When I discussed terminology with the Upper Skagit leadership, we assumed a definition of the Skagit watershed as the drainage basin of the Skagit River and all of its tributaries and noted that Upper Skagit traditional territory goes beyond the watershed into the saltwater and other non-Skagit rivers, including the Samish River, which is the first watershed north of the Skagit. For my project, an official map was drawn based on the map by June Collins from her 1974 book [GET PAGE #] and a disclaimer was added to the bottom right corner stating the following: "This map represents only a portion of the Upper Skagit usual and accustomed areas and traditional villages within its Aboriginal territories." With the disclaimer in place, should this map and the work associated with it ever end up being used to define the tribe's territory and resource rights, it will not limit the tribe by excluding anything.

In order to establish itself and its resource locations, the tribe uses a definition written by Miller and printed in the annual report that outlines where the predecessor village groups had settlements and camps:

The Nuwha'ha had winter villages just above the Skagit delta, along the Samish River and adjacent territories. Bsigwigwilts upriver winter village locations extended along the Skagit River in the vicinity of Sterling and the Nookachamps were located along Nookachamps Creek. All of these bands either had winter villages and/or summer fishing and shellfishing locations and camps on the saltwater and the Bsigwigwilts also had villages on the saltwater. Predecessor bands harvested on saltwater locations including Skagit Bay, Deception Pass, Whidbey Island, Camano Island, Padilla Bay, Samish Bay, and Chuckanut Bay. The largest predecessor group was the Sabelxu, located in the vicinity of Concrete, but, importantly, controlled the intersection of the Skagit and Baker Rivers. The last band on the Skagit River was Kwabatsabsh, including a winter house at Newhalem. [USIT Annual Report 2009:6]

The process leading up to this definition of Upper Skagit traditional territory revealed much to me about how the tribal leadership and their legal team understand who Upper Skagit are and what places are important to them, but my aim was to go beyond that facet of Upper Skagit identity. I needed a way to think about Upper Skagit traditional territory that emphasized the fundamental ways in which Upper Skagit people interacted with the physical environment, both in the past and today. I settled on the term “waterscape.”

I build on the term originally used by Eric Swyngedouw, a geographer, who uses it to talk about the “hybrid character of the water landscape, or waterscape” (1999:443) in Spain, focusing on the period between 1890-1930. Swyngedouw examines waterscape flows both physical and metaphorical:

These flows... narrate many interrelated tales, or stories, of social groups and classes and the powerful socioecological processes that produce social spaces of privilege and exclusion, of participation and marginality; chemical, physical, and biological reactions and transformations, the global hydrological cycle, and global warming; capital, machinations, and the strategies and knowledges of dam builders, urban land developers, and engineers; the passage

from river to urban reservoir, and the geo-political struggles between regions and nations. [1999:445-446]

The term waterscape allows for the consideration of all of these factors as they interact with one another on a socioecological plane. The Skagit waterscape is filled with complex interrelations, and approaching Upper Skagit traditional territory from this perspective allows for the inclusion of all of these in my analysis of how Upper Skagit people interact with the waterscape.

Swyngedouw draws on Bruno Latour to highlight the hybridity of the waterscape: “If I were to capture some water in a cup and excavate the networks that brought it there, ‘I would pass with continuity from the local to the global, from the human to the nonhuman’ (Latour 1993:121)” (1999:445). In the Skagit waterscape, I push this further and use the term to explore the hybridity between two dichotomies within that space: land and water, human and non-human. Waterscape as a perspective puts aquatic and terrestrial elements of the physical environment on an equal level with one another while examining the boundary between them. It focuses on the interactions between human and non-human entities within the space and the ways they shape both each other and the waterscape itself. In this particular case, the waterscape has been shaped both physically and culturally by colonial encounters.

At the heart of the Upper Skagit waterscape is the Skagit River itself, a massive river winding over 150 miles from southern interior British Columbia to the coast of Washington (see Figure 1.2). It drains an area of 1.7 million acres, including the western side of the North Cascade mountain range and its foothills. In his book about the Amazon River in Brazil, Hugh Raffles writes, “Rivers themselves are both guardians and betrayers of places. And, what’s more, despite often being themselves the borders that make places,

they are places too, as mobile as can be,” somehow “local at all points” while being “immanently translocal” (2002:181-182).

This is how the term waterscape frames the Skagit River, its depths viewed as places just as significant to humans as the riverbanks on which they can stand. It is a massive, churning corridor of water that moves over and through the land on its way to the sea, carrying with it water that has fallen from the sky as rain or snow, trickled down a slope into a mountain stream or lain frozen for thousands of years in a glacier. The water molecules pick up elements from around them, chemicals in the air and minerals in the ground, as they move down toward the main channels of the Skagit. Some of the water gets drawn inside the roots of plants as it moves over and through the ground, injecting life into a tree or a bush. All animals large and small drink the water to sustain themselves. When it flows through a stream channel it is the space through which the salmon swim, from their early days as fry to the days when they return to spawn upstream against the powerful current to the place where they originated and, hopefully, give life to the next generation.

In the waterscape, the water running through the Skagit River at a fishing camp, upon which boats move and in which gillnets are set out and drawn in, teeming with aquatic life, is just as important as that water when it was in glacier form, or running over rocks in a tiny mountain stream, or when it has flowed out to sea. The waterscape is also a place where water and land interact. As Raffles writes,

We have been wading in *terra anfibia*, an amphibious world of mobile porosities where land and water become each other, and where humans and non-humans are made and unmade by those same sediments that bring histories and natures flooding into the immediacy of now. [2002:182]

The waterscape reveals that space where the water meets the land and they interact, one slowly carving out a path as the other guides it and gives it direction. The land through which this water flows has been shaped by it over millennia. In the Skagit waterscape, the mountains are among the most picturesque on the continent. Dormant volcanoes capped in snow like Mt. Baker, or sheer walls of rock, edged with knife-sharp spines like Mt. Hozomeen. Rolling foothills and fertile delta farmland reach out to the sea, with the Skagit flowing through and shaping the land as it goes.

In addition to the dichotomy between land and water, there is the dichotomy between human and non-human. To frame the way Upper Skagit conceptions of this dichotomy differ from mainstream understandings, I draw on Crisca Bierwert's assertion that the difference between Coast Salish and Western intellectual traditions is that for Coast Salish people, "the chronicling and commentary of social life involves—wholly and unequivocally—relationship to other sacred beings that have agency in and of themselves" (Bierwert 1999:7). This applies to the waterscape. For Upper Skagit people, relationships with the non-human elements of the world in which they live are social relationships. An animal, a plant, a rock, a pool in the river—all of these things possess agency, just as a human being has agency, and they are understood as such. In the Upper Skagit waterscape epistemology, the human cannot be removed and put into a completely separate category from the non-human elements of landscape such as salmon or cedar trees. More of this will emerge in subsequent chapters.

Friction is a useful term when thinking about the spaces where land and water meet, and I mean this to include both the scientific definition wherein water erodes land through friction, and the social science definition popularized by Anna Tsing: "As a

metaphorical image, friction reminds us that heterogeneous and unequal encounters can lead to new arrangements of culture and power” (2005:5). There are several types of metaphorical friction up for discussion here, but I focus on two: the new physical arrangements that occur when humans live in an environment and use it to sustain themselves; and the new cultural arrangements that occur when two societies meet in the context of colonialism.

Humans and their cultural relationships with the waterscape are also shaped by the friction of the colonial encounter. I view human lives as moving through time much like water moves through the waterscape. They are simultaneously shaping and shaped by the culture in which they live, with external forces of power providing constant upheavals and the physical environment playing a major role in fueling (both literally and figuratively) the resulting conflicts. I find this metaphor of waterscape as the space in which life occurs, an anchoring of history to place that is and is not a fixed point, to be an effective way of understanding the fluidity of Upper Skagit culture over time—but one that is not without friction. This is a particularly effective metaphor for examining major changes in Upper Skagit settlement patterns that occurred around the Point Elliot Treaty signing in 1855 and the Boldt decision in 1974 because it encompasses both cultural change and changes in the physical landscape.

The metaphor also puts water at the forefront of understanding the non-human elements that have shaped these people. Upper Skagit people have occupied the Skagit waterscape for thousands of years (Mierendorf 2009). For most of their history, water was the primary mode of transport through the region and beyond. Today they drive cars



like the rest of modernized America, but they also continue to travel on water and feed their families with the resources they find within it.

To look at how Upper Skagit people interact with the waterscape, I draw on Ingold's premise that "ways of acting in the environment are also ways of perceiving it" (2000:9). An ethnographic study of Upper Skagit fishing practices shows the Upper Skagit fishery as a community of practice in which people learn and perform skilled fishing practices and perceive the Skagit waterscape. Ingold argues that scholars should adopt "a 'dwelling perspective,'<sup>16</sup> according to which the landscape is constituted as an enduring record of – and testimony to – the lives and works of past generations who have dwelt within it, and in so doing, have left there something of themselves (2000:189). He defines landscape as "the world as it is known to those who dwell therein, who inhabit its places and journey along the paths connecting them" (2000:193). By using the term waterscape instead of landscape, I apply a dwelling perspective to Upper Skagit practices within their aboriginal territory.

### **3.2 The Fishery**

Before going on to describe how the Skagit waterscape is tied to the historical consciousness of Upper Skagit people, I will describe a primary area of interaction with the waterscape today: the fishery, specifically salmon and steelhead in the freshwater of

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<sup>16</sup> Ingold has since updated his argument in response to criticism, but the elements I have cited above remain useful for this dissertation. According to Ingold, "I now prefer to speak of life in the open as a process of inhabiting rather than of dwelling, and somewhat regret my emphasis in earlier work on what I called the 'dwelling perspective' (Ingold, 2000, page 189)... the concept of dwelling carries a heavy connotation of snug, well-wrapped localism. The concept of habitation is not so loaded, and is therefore less liable to misinterpretation" (2008:1808)

the Skagit and its tributaries, and Dungeness crab and farmed shellfish in the saltwater. This will give a picture of how Upper Skagit people interact with the waterscape when they fish and how the post-Boldt-decision legal developments described in the last chapter impact these interactions.

Coast Salish people have harvested aquatic resources for thousands of years (Suttles 1987), and the Skagit waterscape has been a land of abundance for its human inhabitants. In *Valley of the Spirits*, Collins writes that the importance of fish in Upper Skagit people's diet could be seen from the location of their villages, which "were situated where residents could obtain the maximum amount of fish during a run" (1974:45).<sup>17</sup> Species of salmon fished in the Skagit include King, spring, or Chinook (*yubec*)<sup>18</sup>; humpback or pink (*hedu*); sockeye (*s.cil*); chum or dog (*slub*); and coho or silver (*s.qecqs*) (Collins 1974:45). Steelhead is also fished. Salmon runs begin in May and continue into the late fall. Prior to and during the early days of the settlement period, Upper Skagit fishers used several types of nets (made from stinging nettle and other plant fibers), weirs, hook and line, and spears to catch fish in the river. According to Collins,

One of the most successful kind of net was called *sebed*. This was a large net which could stretch across most of a river. The corners of the net were attached to two poles so that when these poles were placed in vertical positions in the river, the net served to catch fish swimming upriver. This kind of fishing was done at night with torches attached to the canoe. Four men manned the canoe, two to hold the net and two to paddle or pole the canoe. [1974:46]

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<sup>17</sup> The current town of Mt. Vernon is one such place, where a logjam made the river and surrounding land along—and on top of—that stretch rich in wildlife until it was removed, as I explain the next section.

<sup>18</sup> Names in italics are the Lushootseed Salish names for each type of salmon.

In addition to this net, fishers used set nets that were placed in shallow water near a riverbank and left for several hours, catching fish as they swam upstream. Dip nets made of vine maple and wild cherry bark were also popular (Collins 1974:46-47).

Fish weirs were elaborate structures built along the banks of the Skagit and its tributaries. Comprised of a vertical wooden fence and supports to hold it in place, the purpose of a weir was to keep the salmon from moving upriver in all but one part of the fence, so that fishers perched on a platform above the weir could easily dip their nets into the water and catch fish. The main channel of the Skagit was too strong and wide for weirs, but tributaries and narrow side channels made ideal weir sites. The structures were built to operate in the summer months and then be taken down or washed away by spring flooding and rebuilt the following summer (Collins 1974:48).

While some of the fish was eaten fresh daily during the fishing season, much of it, including the salmon eggs, was preserved by drying and smoking to be stored for the winter. Clams and shellfish from the saltwater were also smoked and preserved for winter and for trade with people from the eastern side of the mountains, where they had no saltwater access. For thousands of years leading up to the settlement period, Upper Skagit people moved throughout the waterscape with the seasons to live and harvest resources when they were abundant and sustain themselves throughout the winter months. Access to fishing sites was determined by family precedence: a family maintained its right to a fishing site by continued use, and relatives by marriage could ask permission to fish there as well (see my discussion of family organization in Chapter 2).

Fishing was so central to Upper Skagit life and the lives of their Coast Salish neighbors that when the Point Elliot Treaty was drawn up in 1855, fish were at the heart

of the agreement in Article 5, which stated: “The right of taking fish at usual and accustomed grounds and stations is further secured to said Indians in common with all citizens of the Territory” (see Appendix A for full text). In the early settler period, Coast Salish people continued to fish as they always had, but change began soon after the treaty was signed and settlers imposed the commercialization of salmon as a commodity that could be bought and sold. According to Boxberger’s work with Lummi, as the commercial salmon fishery grew the government encouraged Native people to learn how to farm and become agricultural peoples instead of fishing, hunting, and gathering to sustain themselves (1989:35). Coast Salish people were excluded from the commercial fishery and salmon stocks began to decline. In 1934, the Indian Reorganization Act limited the areas in which Native peoples could exercise treaty rights to their reservations, and local laws outlawed Native fishing off-reservation. As a result, within a period of less than one hundred years, Upper Skagit people and their Coast Salish neighbors went from freely practicing fishing techniques as they had for thousands of year to being deemed “outlaws” and “illegal” for fishing in the same places as their ancestors (Boxberger 1989).

During this period, Upper Skagit people continued to fish the Skagit and its tributaries, but they had to do so quietly and on a small scale. According to my informants, people developed techniques for dropping nets in the water in shady parts of the river where they would be less visible to game wardens. Upper Skagit people were unable to participate in the commercial fishery without applying for and purchasing expensive commercial licenses, so fishing was primarily done in secret to feed themselves and their families. During this time many people moved away from the area

to seek work elsewhere as they were unable to earn an income fishing and employment opportunities in the Skagit watershed were limited to the timber and mining industries as well as hops and berry picking. Some people were more defiant than others, staging “fish-ins” where they fished traditional spots on the Skagit in protest and got arrested to raise awareness of the injustices of fishing regulations that excluded Native people (Cohen 1986). This resistance helped fuel the determination of Upper Skagit and their neighbors to begin using the legal system to fight for their treaty rights, eventually leading to the *US v. Washington* case and the resulting Boldt decision in 1974.

After the victory of the Boldt decision came the hard work of organizing tribal fisheries for both commercial and ceremonial and subsistence purposes. Throughout the entire Boldt process the tribes put much time and energy into researching where and how their ancestors fished in their aboriginal territory, referred to as “Usual and Accustomed” areas or “U and A.” Anthropologists performed much of the research and expert testimony that led to establishing U and A, including Collins and Suttles in the salmon phase, and Miller and Boxberger in the shellfishing phase.

Once Upper Skagit established its usual and accustomed places, its newly-formed Fisheries department had to decide how to administer fishing within these places. Some places along the Skagit and its tributaries are better for certain salmon varieties than others. Many families returned to the same fishing spots traditionally used by their families throughout the settlement period while others, particularly those returning to the Skagit waterscape after years elsewhere, had to establish new fishing sites. The family system, wherein fishing sites are held by families through continued use, was written into the tribal code (see my description of family organization in Chapter 2). There was and

still is some animosity between the families who remained in the Skagit region throughout the settlement period and those who left to seek employment before returning to the Skagit after the Boldt decision made commercial salmon fishing a viable trade for tribal members. Those who stayed sometimes refer to those who left and came back as “Boldt Indians,” and this resentment is particularly palpable when a “Boldt Indian” family has a better catch than the other families.

Between the Boldt decision and the time I began my preliminary fieldwork in 2009, the Upper Skagit salmon fishery had been through several up-and-down cycles and the tribe had gained a saltwater fishery in the 1990s with phase two of the Boldt decision. When I arrived at Upper Skagit and began my work I was immediately taken on two boating expeditions—one on the saltwater of Samish Bay to see where people fish for Dungeness crab, and one on the Skagit itself near Lyman to see where they fish for spring Chinook salmon—so that I might get a sense of how this type of fishing worked (and to taste the delicious catch after the fact). After this introduction I experienced the Upper Skagit fishery from two angles during the fishing seasons of 2010 and 2011: that of the Natural Resources and Fisheries Departments, which monitor fish numbers and determine how much each tribal member can catch, and that of the Walters family at their fishing camp at Lyman Ferry and Loretta Creek. I discuss the Walters family camp in detail in a later chapter, but I will use my experiences with the Natural Resources Department to give an overview of how the Upper Skagit fishery operates today (2009-2012).

The Upper Skagit Natural Resources Department is run by Steve Samson, who works closely with his mother, Donna McMahon, the fisheries manager for the tribe since

1978. Steve's office is in a building on the reservation up the hill from the main tribal office building, where his mother's office is located. Steve has several employees working under him: Cindy, an office manager; Jason, the head biologist; Kurt, a shellfish biologist; and a rotating cast of four or five "fish techs," including Levon Henderson and Steve's nephew, Rick. Collectively, the department is responsible for monitoring and maintaining the health of the tribe's natural resources. While their duties often involve restoration of game habitat and other land-based projects, the employees, especially the fish techs, spend much of their time on the water. In the months leading up to the spring salmon fishery, Jason and one or two of the fish techs will conduct multiple "test fisheries," a process in which they go out on the Skagit or the saltwater for a certain amount of time and fish to see what they catch. The data from the species and numbers caught, combined with data collected by neighboring tribes and the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA), helps predict what the salmon run or Dungeness catch will be like during the open fishery. As tribal employees, they are allowed to do this fishing when nobody else is allowed to fish, including sport fishers.

The fish caught during test fisheries are put into one of two walk-in freezers at what is known as "the compound," a fenced-in area where the Natural Resources Department stores their equipment—everything from boats and boat trailers to knives and nets—and operates two hatchery tubs. The fish will be eaten at a later date, either given whole to elders or served at elders' luncheons or tribal functions. The compound is also the setting of the fish buying process, which occurs after each commercial fishery opening, and Kids' Fishing Day, an event organized yearly to bring in preschool children from Upper Skagit and neighboring communities and teach them about the history of

Upper Skagit fishing in the area. Children look at crabs in saltwater tanks and fish for rainbow trout from the hatchery tubs with child-sized fishing poles, and then listen to stories about the “old timers” from Donna McMahon and Levon Henderson while passing around artifacts like animal pelts and rattles made from mountain goat hooves.

Commercial fishing begins in May. In late April of each year, the tribe holds an official First Salmon Ceremony and Blessing of the Fleet to prepare for the upcoming season. Fishers and other community members gather at a piece of riverfront property beneath the Highway 9 bridge in Sedro-Woolley named after Fred Walters.<sup>19</sup> Tribal members perform the First Salmon Ceremony, in which the first fish caught that year is fed back to the river. The fish must be caught and handled by tribal members only, from the initial catch through the cooking and then the feeding back to the river. In 2010, the fish was caught by Steve and Levon, cooked by Steve, and fed to the river in the ceremony by Levon’s wife, Tonya. This ceremony is performed in Coast Salish communities throughout the region and has been for many years (Cohen 1986:xix-xxi; Ebert 2005). The Blessing of the Fleet component is performed by an Indian Shaker Church priest, who takes a bowl of water from the river and brushes it with a cedar bough over the heads of the fishers, who gather around the priest, to ensure a safe and prosperous season. After the ceremony everyone returns to the tribal community center for a feast and speeches from various community members, particularly elders.

The fishing season begins when the spring Chinook salmon start to spawn up the Skagit River. Tribal members are permitted to fish only during fishery “openings,” which are typically a 24 hour period in which they may fish as much as they want until they

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<sup>19</sup> The property name uses Fred Walters’ traditional or “Indian” name, which I omit here to maintain anonymity.



catch their limit. Fishery regulations, for both finfish and shellfish, are communicated through paper handouts produced by the Natural Resources Office and made available at the tribal office building. Each handout is known as a “regulation,” and each regulation gives the dates and times open to fishing, gear and enrollment rules, and a description of the “open area” where people are allowed to fish. For salmon fishing, these areas are segments of the Skagit River and its tributaries. A fishing regulation for spring Chinook salmon from May 2010 had the following description: “OFF RESERVATION AREAS OPEN: SKAGIT RIVER AREAS 1,2,3 (78C &78D2-4) Skagit River 78C-1- That portion of the Skagit River from the mouth of the South Fork upstream to the fork in Mount Vernon thence upstream to Memorial Highway Bridge, 78D-4 open to east shore of Baker River.”

The numbered and lettered areas of the Skagit are used by the tribe as well as the state Department of Fish and Wildlife and NOAA to consistently monitor salmon catches and communicate about portions of the river to one another. The areas are described as follows:

*Skagit River Area 1 (78C):* That portion of the Skagit River Area 1 from the river fork, upstream to Mt. Vernon Memorial Highway Bridge in Mt. Vernon. The south fork of the Skagit River beginning at the mouth of the river upstream to the point where the north and south fork intersect.

*Skagit River Area 2 (78D-2):* Mount Vernon Memorial Highway Bridge upstream to Gilligan Creek.

*Skagit River Area 3 (78D-3):* Gilligan Creek upstream to Hamilton boat launch.

*Skagit River Area 4 (78D-4):* The portion of the Skagit River from Hamilton boat launch to east shore of Baker River.

*Skagit River Area 5 (78D-5):* That portion of Skagit River from Baker River to Faber Ferry landing.

[Source: Upper Skagit Tribe Steelhead Fishing Regulation 2010/11]

Tribal enforcement officers are responsible for making sure everyone is following the fishing regulations, including fishing within the defined open areas and using the proper size and quantity of gillnets—defined in the above regulation as “6-inch maximum stretch net. 2 nets per fisher.”—as well as being registered with the tribe as an official Point Elliot Treaty fisher. Every year, tribal members must register with the tribe if they plan to fish, and once registered they have a sticker placed on the back of their tribal membership cards that indicates they have registered. Enforcement officers will check these cards from time to time to make sure fishers are registered. If any of the rules are broken, tribal members are subject to a fine and could potentially have their fishing rights revoked. These decisions are made in the Upper Skagit tribal court.

Upper Skagit fishers base their activity out of camps, which are places where people can park their vehicles, back their boat trailers down to the river to get their boats on the water, and set up places on shore to eat and rest when they are not on the water. All of the family fishing camps fall within the open areas and people tend to fish from these camps unless they are setting nets elsewhere or fishing for sockeye. The sockeye fishery is different because the best place to catch them is where the Baker River meets the Skagit River near the town of Concrete. Rather than fishing from family camps, all of the families drive their boats on trailers to the Baker-Skagit confluence. They line up in the order they arrived and take turns fishing at the same spot no matter which family they are from.

Fishing order at family camps operates in a similar way. Family members arrive at the camps before the opening time, typically eight in the morning. Some people arrive the night before and camp there in order to ensure that they get the “first drift” of the

opening. A drift is a term referring to the act of driving one's boat upriver to a certain spot, feeding the gillnet out into the water, and letting the net and boat drift together downstream for a distance of about fifty yards before pulling the net back in and removing any caught salmon from it. This is typically performed by two or three people on a 14 to 20 foot aluminum river skiff, but some fishers prefer to do it alone if they have the skills to work the net and steer the boat simultaneously. After each drift, or sometimes every few drifts, the boat will come back to shore and the fishers put any caught fish into a plastic tote full of ice to keep them fresh. Fishers compare how many fish they catch in each drift and sometimes change spots if they hear someone is having better luck elsewhere.



**Figure 3.1 Upper Skagit fishers on an aluminum river skiff (photo by M. Malone)**

While all of this is happening, the non-tribal employees of the Natural Resources department drive around to each family camp with a tote of ice in the back of their trucks in case any fishers need more ice. The biologists and fish techs perform what is known as “sampling” when they visit each camp so they can get an idea of how many fish are being caught and also to collect data for various purposes. Their sampling equipment includes a plastic board with ruled measurements on it for determining the length of each fish and a metal detector for determining if a fish has a tiny metal piece—about the circumference of a pencil lead—embedded in its snout by a hatchery. To sample a fish, the fish is laid flat on the measuring board and measured before the metal detector is swept around the

fish's body and inside its mouth. If the metal detector goes off, the fish tech cuts the snout of the fish out with a sharp knife, inserts it into a bag with a piece of waterproof paper indicating where (which segment of the river) and when it was caught, and tosses it into a pile with the rest of the collected snouts. These will be stored in the walk-in freezer at the compound until a later date when the snouts are sent to a lab where the metal pieces are removed from the fish snouts and read for the piece of information they carry—which hatchery the fish originally came from and where it was released back into the Skagit River. These data help biologists figure out how many of the fish being caught came from the hatchery, and how many of the fish are wild, allowing for an assessment of the health of both hatchery and wild populations. The healthier the populations, the more fish the tribal fishers will be allowed to catch in the future.

Tribal fishers understand that this process is necessary to ensure that they may continue to fish, but as fish are sold by weight, they often look on skeptically as the snouts of their fish are removed. “How much do you owe me for all that fish you cut out of there?” I heard one fisher say to the Natural Resources team, who laughed along with him but told me later that the amount removed—and therefore taken from the fishers—is negligible. The Natural Resources team also told me about a time they put all the snouts in a barrel and weighed them just to prove to one of the more vocally critical fishers just how insignificant the amount was. The fish techs want to be liked, and the successful ones are able to joke with fishers while establishing a relationship of mutual respect. There is some bitterness amongst tribal members towards non-member employees because some people feel that tribal jobs should be reserved for tribal members, and fish techs must be able to handle criticism in this area while continuing to do their jobs.

Fisheries are typically open for a twenty-four hour period. At times some people will take naps in their vehicles or their boats while others continue to fish. Family members keep a fire going on the shore, especially at night when temperatures drop, and provide meals for the fishers as they work. When fishing at night, fishers rely more on the sounds the river makes to navigate than on eyesight, preferring to use their headlamps only when pulling in the net after a drift. Vi Hilbert, who I will introduce properly in the next chapter, remembered in an interview with Miller and Angelbeck how her father navigated on the river at night:

Old timers knew their land like it was the back of their hand. I was on the Skagit River many many times... the river in the nighttime in the dark and I would think to myself how does he know where he is going? How can he tell where he is going? And I thought I'd ask him that one time and he said, look at the hills, daughter. I look at the hills... always there. He said he memorized the silhouette of the hills. He didn't speak English, the vocabulary didn't say silhouette, but I knew that's what he meant. He memorized that you know where you are anytime, anytime. How do you know when you are in the middle of the river or when you are too close to bump into something? He said, you see this sound? Ya. You tell by the sound that comes back to you from the land from where you are. They knew how to use everything, use the sky, use the land, the way the land looks, the way the land smells. [Miller and Angelbeck 2008: 119]

Upper Skagit fishers today still navigate the river at night using these techniques. As the fishery closes the next morning, fishers begin heading back to the reservation to sell their fish to the fish buyer at the compound. If a fisher is too tired after being awake and working on the water for twenty-four hours, a family member will take the fish to the buyer while they go home to bed.

The fish-filled totes are backed into the compound and each fish is pulled out of the tote and documented with an official piece of paper that indicates who caught it and what type of salmon it is so that the tribe can monitor the numbers of fish being caught under the Point Elliot Treaty terms. After each fish has been documented, the fisher can choose to retain a number of fish for his or her family, known as ceremonial and subsistence or “C and S” fish, while the rest of the fish are placed in the fish buyer’s tote, weighed, and paid for by the buyer at a previously fixed price per pound. The fishers are paid in cash, and after they have sold their fish they drive out of the compound and the next fisher backs his or her tote in to sell.

The Upper Skagit saltwater fishery operates on a much smaller scale than the salmon fishery. The startup costs for equipment, including pots and a 19 to 32 foot crab boat with associated marina fees, are prohibitively expensive for most people. Fewer than ten tribal members participate in the saltwater fishery and the saltwater is not the domain of Upper Skagit alone. Upper Skagit are the dominant tribe on the Skagit River itself, but in the saltwater, their usual and accustomed fishing grounds overlap with those of other tribes who also have treaty fishing rights. When Upper Skagit fishers go out to work on the saltwater, they must be aware at all times of invisible lines in the water and a complex, constantly shifting set of regulations outlining who can fish where and when. If people were to fish over the wrong line at the wrong time, they may be threatened by members of another tribe, fined by Upper Skagit’s fishery enforcement officers, have their gear impounded, or even be put on trial in the tribal court where a “guilty” ruling could strip them of their fishing rights for years at a time.

The boundaries indicating usual and accustomed fishing areas in the saltwater are much less clear than those on the Skagit River. Here is an example of an open area description from a Dungeness Crab fishery regulation from September 2010:

MFSF [Marine Fish/Shellfish] Catch Reporting Areas 21B, and 22B in those waters, tidelands and bedlands easterly of a line drawn from Clark Point to Governor Point across the mouth of Chuckanut Bay, and those waters, tidelands and bedlands easterly of a line drawn on the shore directly north of Whiskey Rock, thence southwesterly across Samish Bay to Point Walters, hence westerly and southerly around Samish Island until a line can be drawn southerly to the westernmost point on Hat Island in Padilla Bay, thence westerly and southerly around Hat Island at extreme high tide until a line can be drawn southerly and easterly to a point on the shore on the mainland approximately one mile east of the eastern mouth of the Indian slough draining from Whitney to Padilla Bay.

This description is confusing, but luckily for everyone involved there is a map provided along with this wordy text. But even with a map, the line descriptions are not always easy to find on the water, with its changing tides and ever-shifting landmarks on the shore. And even in this modern age of GPS technology, everyone from the fishers to the enforcement officers understands that it is impossible to be one hundred percent sure about where these boundaries are.

The lines are established more by a mutual understanding on the part of the crabbers and enforcement officers than they are by any written or mapped descriptions—oral communication is the main method of dissemination. Most of the time the printed copies of the fishing regulations remain untouched in the tribal office. In an interview with an Upper Skagit crabber, I asked how he knew where the boundary lines were. The crabber said,



I asked Jimmy [an Upper Skagit fisheries enforcement officer]... I've asked where we can fish to, and honestly, sometimes I've got one or two pots over on accident, you know, they just kinda drift out. Some guys like to just make up their own, you know, they say this is where they can fish, but that's not the case. You just gotta go by what they tell you. I mean, Rocky [Point] is a little hard to figure out, but Snaetlum [Point], there's a green can, you can just fish a little to the south of that green can. It's fairly easy I think. But yeah, I was slipping a little bit there in the spring, I was over, so, I don't know, I thought it was good, but it wasn't.

The number of fishery openings each season and how many fish may be caught during each are determined by a long line of federal, state, and tribal governing bodies that are all working under the terms of the Boldt Decision. It begins with all of the countries on the Pacific coast, the two biggest players being the US and Canada. Each government's environmental branches examine their fisheries data and determine the total amounts of each species that can be fished in a given year without threatening the longevity of the species. In the US, this body is the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA). Once these numbers are determined, a meeting is held with representatives from the department of fisheries from the states of California, Oregon, Washington, and Alaska, and the province of British Columbia. The fishable amount is divided between these five coastlines and the rivers that flow from them (Pacific Fishery Management Council 2013). The allotment for the state of Washington is divided in half—fifty percent to non-Native commercial fishers, fifty percent to the tribes with treaty rights. A final meeting is held with representatives from each of these tribes who come to negotiate with one another and determine each individual tribe's allotment for the year. According to comments made to me by those who have attended, these meetings

get very heated and verbal altercations often break out as the tribes fight for their right to the allowable catch.

The Upper Skagit fishery catch totals for the 2009 season are as follows:

Sockeye: 1139 lbs  
Chinook: 42,567 lbs  
Pink: 158,117 lbs  
Steelhead: 3109 lbs  
Coho: 41,806 lbs  
Chum: 22,093 lbs  
Dungeness Crab: 134,658 lbs  
[Upper Skagit Annual Report 2009:34]

Now that I have provided an overview of the Upper Skagit fishery, I move on to describe manmade changes to the Skagit waterscape that have happened throughout the colonial period and discuss how these changes impact Upper Skagit relationships with the waterscape.

### **3.3 The Colonial Encounter Inscribed: Dikes, Dams, and Logjams**

Physical manifestations of colonialism, or the colonial encounter, can be viewed as “the dynamic co-production of people and landscape” (Raffles 2002:38). Several examples of this can be found in William Cronon’s *Changes in the Land* (1983), in which he argues that the shift from Native American to European control of New England involved changes in both socio-cultural organization and the natural environment. Cronon demonstrates the conflict between Native and Euro-American views of the land (e.g. seasonal mobility vs. fixity and private property) and shows how one of the biggest transformations brought about by the colonists was deforestation (1983:169). Colonists saw clearing the forests as progress and a move toward life more like England, whereas

Indians were faced with an entirely new ecological order as the trees were felled and ecosystems were affected in myriad ways (Cronon 1983:126).

Richard White provides similar examples in *Land Use, Environment, and Social Change* (1980), looking specifically at Island County, Washington, which is at the western end of the Skagit waterscape. Deforestation also greatly altered this landscape, both initially in the mid-19<sup>th</sup> century as land was cleared for agricultural purposes and then again in the 20<sup>th</sup> century as commercial logging took over. In both Cronon's and White's accounts, colonists viewed forests initially as impediments to progress and later as resources to be exploited. Both Cronon and White also discuss how Native American populations changed the landscape prior to colonization; burning to clear areas for hunting and plant gathering was common (White 1980:20). However, the scale of landscape change that came with colonialism was much larger due to factors such as the introduction of entirely new species of plants, animals, and microorganisms. The diseases and invasive species that came with the colonization of North America by Europeans led to extensive landscape changes beyond those intended by the settlement populations. Diseases drastically lowered human population numbers, affecting the ultimate number of Native peoples who would remain on, and therefore use, the landscape (White 1983).

More insights about the physical manifestations of the colonial encounter can be found in the Amazon waterscape. Raffles (2002) shows how the effects of global capitalism, such as the demand for timber, reached upriver to remote Amazonian villages and caused physical changes in the landscape as people cut channels through the riverbanks to extend the reaches of the river and allow boat access to ever-more-remote stands of valuable timber. The higher the demand for timber, the more the villagers had

to log, and the farther back the channels had to be cut. Throughout the world, colonial encounters are also inscribed in the landscape as water resources are managed by dam construction and irrigation. Sylvia Rodriguez (2008) and Knack and Stewart (1990) each show how water laws, established and enforced within global environmental discourses, impact both Native populations and the form (e.g., a river is transformed into a lake by the construction of a dam on it) of the lakes, rivers, and irrigation ditches—along with the quality of the water—within their traditional territories. The waterscapes are physically changed, and people’s access to them is changed as well.

From the mid-19<sup>th</sup> century onward, settlers in the Skagit waterscape have worked to control the river as a means of making the region accessible for agriculture, logging, mining industries, and hydroelectricity generation, and the increased populations that come with such ventures. According to historian Linda Nash,

Upon settling the Skagit Valley, Americans began to clear the riparian forest and to dike the lower reaches of the river to curtail the flooding of potential farmland. The river's channel was cleared of downed trees and branches, and portions were dredged and straightened to facilitate navigation by steamships. Deforestation all along the river's banks altered its stream-flow patterns, increased erosion, and decreased fish habitat. The installation of fish hatcheries on a tributary stream in 1912 and on the main channel in the 1940s further altered ecological relationships in the river. [2000:1603]

The diking has been in place for so long that by the time I arrived in the Skagit waterscape it was taken for granted in the delta area, which is currently filled with productive farmland and home to the annual Skagit Tulip Festival, which takes place throughout the month of April.<sup>20</sup> Further upstream, however, there are more controversial

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<sup>20</sup> <http://www.tulipfestival.org/>

dikes that have been diverting the river from its natural floodplain for decades. The Skagit is a very large and powerful river, flooding frequently and refusing to be controlled by humans. But that doesn't mean humans won't try to control it.

Upper Skagit and their Coast Salish neighbors did little to alter the waterscape in the pre-settlement period. For Upper Skagit people then and now, the division between liquid and solid, water and land is not an impermeable line. Rather, their understanding of the waterscape is that of a cyclical flow involving precipitation, snow and glacial melt, and the course these melting waters take as they move through the sand, rocks, and soils of the terrain that carries them out to sea. The river cannot exist without the bed over which it flows; the sand and rocks on the bottom shape the channels through which the salmon make their way upstream, and form the rapids through which fisher navigate their boats to set nets and drift, carried downstream by the water that moves over the solid ground beneath. The river also cannot exist without the glaciers and snow of the mountains from which it originates. Each part of the waterscape is dependent on every other part.

The understanding of flooding is important: a yearly event stemming from a combination of melting snow in warmer temperatures and spring rainfall, high water flows impact the fishers' ability to catch fish; when the water is too high, the salmon can swim too far below the nets and evade the efforts of even the most skilled men and women. Flooding also has the ability to change the course of the river. By going over the banks with enough force, floods can wash out sandbars, move rocks, push large trees into snags that may stay in place for years at a time, and submerge man-made structures that

were built in the floodplain in spite of the knowledge that yearly flooding would threaten them.

The town of Hamilton and its surrounding structures are an example of colonial attempts to settle on the banks of the Skagit River in a floodplain that refuses, time and again, to be settled. Several Upper Skagit fishing camps sit downstream from Hamilton, and to get to them one must drive over an allegedly illegal dike that protects the farmland. These camps sit in places where families have traditionally fished since 1974, with ties back to where their ancestors fished before Indian fishing was outlawed. While flooding may submerge these boat launches or move the sandbars, by the time the water subsides each year and the fishery opens up, people are able to get their boats to the water and do their work. The fact that fishing camps are not permanent structures allows them to exist in places that endure what the Western environmental discourse refers to as “natural disasters” and come out none the worse once the water goes down. This resilience to seasonal changes is part of Upper Skagit people’s historical consciousness. Their ancestors would set up fishing camps along the riverbanks in the summertime and move back away from the shore in winter to more substantial cedar plank housing that, while sturdy enough to shelter people through the winter months, could be dismantled and moved if needed (Collins 1974).

The idea of permanent settlement, of living in one place year-round in a house built to stay in the same place, was a concept imposed on Upper Skagit people by settlers who moved into the area in the 19<sup>th</sup> century. It came with missionaries and the establishment of reservations onto which the US government hoped to move all Native people, thus freeing up their territory for non-Native settlement. Upper Skagit people

resisted settlement onto the reservations, but settlers moved up the Skagit River valley anyway, establishing towns like Hamilton close the edge of the river. Hamilton sustains major floods on a regular basis that require the town to be evacuated as water floods—and occasionally tears apart—homes and other buildings.

While driving to and from the fishing camps near Hamilton, fish techs both Native and non-Native joked about how the people of Hamilton stayed there in spite of orders from the government to relocate. “They know that if they stay and their house gets flooded, they’ll get a big check from FEMA. It’s just another way to make money,” one of the fish techs told me. The dike itself is another source of joking. “This thing is here illegally,” I was told. “The government figured out that it disrupts the natural flow of the river because it’s in the middle of the floodplain.” According to the fish techs, the local government had been ordered to remove the dike but refused to do so as local farmers—including an organic blueberry farmer—claimed they would lose their livelihoods to the yearly flooding if the dike wasn’t there to keep the water out.

These conflicts between local, state, and federal governments over how to manage a constantly changing landscape demonstrate the contrast between settler and Upper Skagit conceptions of the waterscape. To Upper Skagit people, flooding is part of the yearly cycle that cannot be controlled, nor should it be. Certain oral traditions were told during the time of year when the rain was needed and the water expected to rise (see my discussion of oral narratives and water behavior in Chapter 5). During that time, people lived away from the riverbank. Today Upper Skagit people live year round in permanent homes just like the rest of the population, but the Upper Skagit reservation sits a mile from the bank of the Skagit River so flooding is not an issue for the homes of those who

reside there unless Hansen Creek, the Skagit tributary that flows through the reservation, floods. The tribal allotments upstream sit primarily along tributaries of the Skagit, such as the Marlowe homestead on the Cascade River. These allotments, established in the late 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> centuries, experience some flooding, but the properties are managed in ways that homes are protected and flooding is anticipated. One example of how Upper Skagit people adapt to flooding is the reinforcement in the form of cables along the bank of the Cascade River on Stanley Harrison's allotment. According to Miller, these cables were installed by Stanley's grandfather, Henry Marlowe, to help prevent erosion (personal communication, 2013).

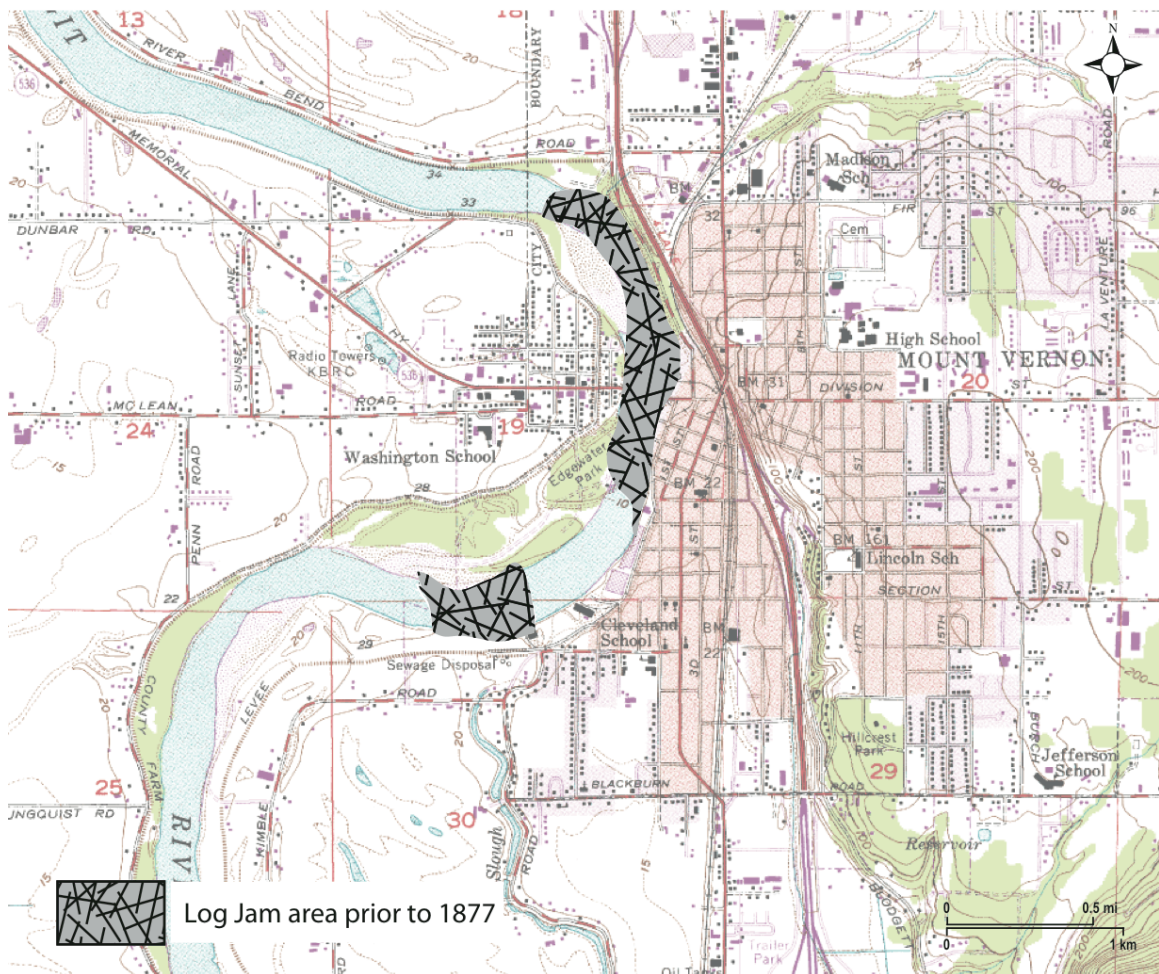
By contrast, the town of Hamilton sits on the floodplain in spite of the consistent reminders, in the form of major floods that evacuate the population and damage property, that people cannot fight nature, no matter how well they construct dikes and try to change the course of the river. The families of Hamilton have their own reasons for staying. Their connections to their ancestors who settled the town in the 19<sup>th</sup> century are strong and their insistence on staying is rooted in that. But Upper Skagit people, who have been using the area for much longer, can't help but shake their heads at the stubborn attempts of this town to remain where the water insists it cannot.

In addition to flood prevention, Skagit settlers in the pre-railroad days were concerned with navigability of the river. Steam ships were able to make their way north from Seattle through Puget Sound and to the mouth of the Skagit, leading to the settlement of Skagit City in 1869. Settlement was limited to the Skagit delta, however, because of two log jams, about three quarters of a mile long each, blocking the river bank to bank for nearly two miles, near the site of the present-day city of Mt. Vernon. The



river was approximately one thousand feet wide at the upper jam and narrowed down to approximately five hundred feet at the head of the lower jam before expanding back out to around eight hundred feet. It was impossible to get a boat of any size through the jam, and the only option was to portage around it.

Below is a map based on a drawing of the log jam from a surveyor's map of the Skagit River made between 1866 and 1885. According to local historian Larry Kunzler, the men who made the map were paid a dollar a day for their work and had to provide their own horses (personal communication, 2013).



**Figure 3.2 Skagit River Log Jam (map by Bill Angelbeck)**

In the early days of settlement people who wanted to get upstream beyond the log jam had to do so by foot. But the increasing population and demand for resources pushed local settlers towards making a move. According to an April 29, 1876 article in the *Washington Standard*,

The jam is the great bar to an extension of settlement and the progress of civilization to the head of the [Skagit] river... All of the settlements are crowded within the delta or along the forks of the river while a magnificent country along a fine navigable stream for over sixty miles above the jam is by this means prevented from being opened to settlement and cultivation, to say nothing of the numberless mines of the best coal found on the Sound, or the great amount of the timber that this obstacle prevents coming into market... Perhaps no river in this Territory offers greater inducements than this for settlement, provided this jam was removed. [1876: no page numbers]<sup>21</sup>

The US Army Corps of Engineers had examined the jam it in 1874 and declared that it would take at least \$15,000 to finance the removal project. Unwilling to wait for government assistance, in 1876 five local settlers began working to clear a channel through the jam, a project that eventually took over two years to complete.

Clearing the jam was arduous work. An article in the *The Northern Star* dated June 12, 1878 describes the removal process used on the first of the two jams:

A channel had to be cut one-fourth of a mile long, through logs wedged in as tightly as possible for water to wedge them, from the bottom of the river to the surface, and many twenty feet above the surface, and from bank to bank; with mud and sand in many places on the surface of the jam ten feet deep, and trees growing on it ten inches in diameter. They had to slash the forest of young trees on the jam before they could commence sawing and getting out the

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<sup>21</sup> This article and more information on the log jam can be found at <http://www.stumpranchonline.com/skagitjournal/WestCounty/MV-SW/Pre-1900/JamsMV2-Articles1.html>

logs and rubbish of the jam proper. [Morse 1878: no page numbers]<sup>22</sup>

Using this method, the men eventually cut a quarter-mile long channel one hundred and fifty to two hundred feet wide through a solid mass of logs averaging from thirty to forty feet high. They used the same technique on the upper jam and in 1878 the first steam ship passed through the channel and continued upstream. As a result, the upper reaches of the river were accessible by boat and settlement could expand at unprecedented rates.

The opening of the Skagit valley to settlement was a key moment in the history of the region. The town of Mt. Vernon was established almost immediately following the removal of the first jam and the towns of Sedro and Woolley (which later merged into Sedro-Woolley) soon followed, as did settlements farther upstream like Lyman, Hamilton, Concrete, and Rockport. The timber industry thrived and miners began prospecting for gold in the higher reaches of the North Cascades (Nash 2000).

During this period, Upper Skagit people were still living throughout the Skagit waterscape and the wider Coast Salish region, either on reservations like Lummi, Swinomish, and Tulalip or on their own property, which could be obtained through the allotment process from the 1890s to 1934.<sup>23</sup> The people who remained in their upriver homes became part of the settlement process as they helped loggers and miners and their families move their belongings in their dugout canoes. One family, the Howard family, operated a ferry across the Skagit at Rockport. Some Upper Skagit women, including Jeanie Marlowe and Annie Conrad, knit socks and sweaters they sold to the settlers.

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<sup>22</sup> Ibid

<sup>23</sup> See my discussion of the Dawes Act in Chapter 2 and Chapter 6.

Some Upper Skagit people feel a sense of pride in having helped the settlers (I discuss this further in Chapter 6).

The Skagit waterscape was settled during this period, but the biggest changes in the waterscape were yet to come in the form of hydroelectric dams. According to Nash,

The most significant changes... took place between 1919 and 1949, when a series of dams and powerhouses were built on the upper river to supply electricity to the city of Seattle. The dams dramatically altered the river's flow and destroyed salmon-spawning grounds as they made Seattle's growth possible. [2000:1603]

The impact of the dams on Upper Skagit people over time is an important part of their history. The dams are collectively known as the Skagit Hydroelectric Project (the fourth dam is on the Baker River and is part of a separate project). These dams provide electricity for the city of Seattle and are run by the City's publicly owned utility, Seattle City Light. The United States government oversees all hydroelectric projects in the country through the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission (henceforth referred to as FERC).

During my fieldwork I participated in meetings between the Upper Skagit tribal council and representatives from Seattle City Light as they negotiated a change to the current FERC license pertaining to the Gorge Dam. To operate the Skagit Hydroelectric Project, Seattle City Light must have a license from FERC; to obtain and renew this license, it must comply with, among other things, FERC's policy on Indian tribes. The work between these parties is ongoing as long as the Skagit Hydroelectric Project is running—for example, biologists from both the tribe and Seattle City Light work together on salmon habitat management and restoration projects. But the conversation intensifies around the times when Seattle City Light must re-apply for its FERC license or apply for

an amendment to the existing license. The most recent license was obtained in 1995, and will be up for renewal in 2025. In addition to re-licensing procedures, the tribe and the City also meet to discuss amendments to the current license—for example, if the City wants to make any changes to the current dam infrastructure, it must consult with the tribe before applying for the license amendment.

The conversation between the parties revealed the gap between each party's epistemological approaches to that Skagit waterscape. I was immediately reminded of Cruikshank's concern about "The consequences of what Bruno Latour calls this 'Great Divide' differentiating nature from culture," which "continue to cascade internationally through debates about environmentalism, biodiversity, global climate change, and indigenous rights" (Cruikshank 2005:11). Cruikshank is interested in the "anthropocentric implications of these historical understandings" of the nature/culture divide, and I found that Seattle City Light's epistemology effectively removes humans from the waterscape in question.<sup>24</sup> The human is not moved far; his activity still sits near the waterscape, for example categorized as "history," "archaeology," or "resource use." But this division of the cultural human and the natural environment does not reflect Upper Skagit approaches to waterscape, and the gap between these government understandings leads to challenges when these governments must come to an agreement about how that waterscape should be managed.

According to its website, FERC "is an independent agency that regulates the interstate transmission of electricity, natural gas, and oil. FERC also reviews proposals to build liquefied natural gas (LNG) terminals and interstate natural gas pipelines as well as

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<sup>24</sup> See my discussion of "wilderness" in Chapter 1.

licensing hydropower projects” (FERC 2012). FERC is run by five Presidentially-appointed commissioners—typically people with extensive experience in the energy industry—who serve five year terms. In order for a utility to operate a hydropower project it must apply for a license from FERC, and the license will only be granted if the utility meets all of the requirements. FERC summarizes its Policy on Consultation with Indian Tribes as follows: FERC “articulate[s] its commitment to promote a government-to-government relationship between itself and federally recognized Indian tribes. The policy statement recognizes the sovereignty of tribal nations and the Commission’s trust responsibility to Indian tribes” (FERC 2003:1). Furthermore, FERC “recognizes the unique relationship between the United States and Indian tribes as defined by treaties, statutes, and judicial decisions,” and acknowledges that “Indian tribes have various sovereign authorities, including the power to make and enforce laws, administer justice, and manage and control their lands and resources” (FERC 2003:1).

FERC puts this theory into practice by requiring utility companies to consult with Indian tribes on whose traditional territory their dams are built and operated as part of the licensing process. Seattle City Light was founded in 1910 and in 1917, under superintendent J.D. Ross, it began construction of the Skagit Hydroelectric Project. The first dam, Gorge Dam, was completed in 1924. Diablo Dam was finished in 1936, and the largest, Ross Dam, in 1952 (Seattle City Light 2013b). Plans to raise the Ross Dam were stalled when Canada objected, and the High Ross Treaty between the United States and Canada was signed in the early 1980s (Liebow et al 2003).<sup>25</sup> Upper Skagit were not consulted until the 1990s.

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<sup>25</sup> This treaty relationship is monitored by the Skagit Environmental Endowment Commission, see more at <http://skagiteec.org/>.

Today these three dams provide approximately twenty percent of Seattle's electricity. Based on the Seattle City Light website and ethnographic observation of non-license-related work between the utility's representatives and the tribe, I observed that the utility claims to view environmental protection as a major priority. According to a fact sheet on its Environmental Policy, City Light vows to "Comply" by meeting or exceeding "the requirements of all applicable environmental laws, regulations, and policies." It promises to "Conserve" by promoting the efficient use of materials and resources, to "Protect Natural Resources" to minimize impact on ecosystems and enhance resources when possible, and to "Lead" by collaborating with "customers, agencies, tribes and other organizations to promote sound science and achieve common objectives" (Seattle City Light 2013a). Other portions of the website emphasize the City's commitment to healthy salmon populations and spawning grounds and a comprehensive wildlife program that involves the purchase of lands in the watershed to enhance habitat for elk, bear, eagles, and other species, especially those that are endangered (Seattle City Light 2013c).

All of this demonstrates how the City's understanding of the Skagit waterscape emphasizes the environment as a space of wildlife. They acknowledge that the construction and operation of hydroelectric facilities has significant impacts on the environment, and they explain how collaboration with tribes on environmental restoration projects can be used to minimize these impacts. This happens in practice when tribal biologists work with City Light biologists on various projects. Overall, Seattle City Light is highly conscious of its environmental impacts in the area; what is missing from this consciousness is an understanding of how the aboriginal people of the Skagit waterscape have been and are still being impacted by the presence and operation of the Skagit

Hydroelectric Project.

This absence of the human in the City government's approach to the Skagit waterscape is the precise location of the epistemological gap between the Upper Skagit tribe's approach and the City's approach. As Coast Salish people, Upper Skagit tribal members view their aboriginal territory as a space in which nature and culture are not so sharply divided. Latour's warning about the nature/culture divide stems from his argument that "nature" and "culture" as diametrically opposed categories are the product of Western thought (Latour 1993). This ties in with Bierwert's assertion, mentioned previously in this chapter, that Coast Salish people view the land as a place of interaction with non-human beings that possess agency.

When one approaches the Skagit waterscape from the Aboriginal perspective, the impact of the Skagit Hydroelectric Project, both historically and ongoing, is on a whole world of beings to which Upper Skagit people are tied in ways that are impossible to measure with Western science and chronologies of time. In spite of the fact that the upper reaches of the watershed have been dammed and set behind National Park and Forest boundaries for nearly a century, that territory still plays a crucial role in Upper Skagit life, with tribal members using the land and water for spiritual training purposes or remembering the role those places played in personal, family, and tribal histories. Miller and Angelbeck produced two comprehensive reports documenting these important places in the waterscape for the tribe in the mid-2000s, which I draw on elsewhere in this dissertation (Miller and Angelbeck 2006, 2008). The Skagit waterscape—deemed so wild and remote by the non-tribal epistemology—remains a living part of Upper Skagit health



and spiritual well-being, and any impact on that landscape also has a direct impact on Upper Skagit people.

Upper Skagit, like all Native American tribes and First Nations involved in such negotiations about their aboriginal territories, face the challenge of participating in the Western scientific realm of environmental protection and restoration while simultaneously asserting an understanding of cultural presence in the landscape that is not readily accessible to non-aboriginal people. In his work on similar issues in the Yukon, Paul Nadasdy says that “by accepting and adapting to governments’ bureaucratic approach to Aboriginal-State relations, [native] peoples also tacitly accept the assumptions about the nature of land and animals that underlie the rules and foundations of that bureaucracy,”(2003:8). In order to manage their lands and resources—a sovereign authority recognized by FERC in its tribal policy—Upper Skagit has no choice but to employ the state’s assumptions about nature and culture; the language of the Endangered Species Act is biology and ecology, and the language of the National Historic Preservation act is archaeology. Upper Skagit leaders know how to speak these languages to fight for their rights because that is the contemporary bureaucratic reality. But deployment of such knowledge does not mean abandonment of aboriginal understandings of the world.

The conversation between the two parties is, as a result, complicated. No matter how well-intentioned City Light may be in its commitment to comply with FERC’s tribal policy, there is no way the two governments can approach the conversation with mutual understanding, and this makes a satisfactory mitigation settlement—the expected outcome of consultation in such a case—difficult to achieve. Both governments share an

understanding of the importance of wildlife and the health of the natural environment—they both speak this language, and are already working together on these issues. The imbalance, the gap in understanding, is where the Upper Skagit epistemology views the waterscape as a socially vibrant realm in which nature and culture are intermeshed. A person raised in the Western scientific tradition will likely view this concept as foreign and difficult to understand at first, and therefore much of the conversation between tribal and non-tribal governments about this topic must be devoted to educating the non-tribal government about the tribal epistemology before any negotiating can occur.

The gap also includes differing senses of impacts that have already occurred. FERC's tribal policy has only been in place since the early 1990s, and anything that occurred before then—like the construction of the dams in the first place, which has radically changed the Skagit waterscape—was done without any tribal input whatsoever. To borrow Cruikshank's wording, the “consequences of the Great Divide” in Upper Skagit and Seattle City Light understandings of landscape and its history in this situation include not only past damages to tribal cultural properties, but also the ongoing impacts of the dams and their operation. Achieving effective mitigation for these damages is impossible when the sides cannot communicate effectively about what, precisely, is being damaged.

In this chapter I have defined the term waterscape by highlighting two dichotomies within that space—land and water, human and non-human—and examining the boundary between them. Friction, both physical and metaphorical, shapes the waterscape and the lives of those living within it. Upper Skagit people fish within this waterscape in ways defined by both contemporary legal issues and family history.

Physical changes in the waterscape have been inscribed by the colonial encounter through the building of dikes, the removal of logjams, and the construction of large hydroelectric projects in the upper reaches of the river. Having set the scene of the Skagit waterscape, the next chapter examines Upper Skagit historical consciousness.

## **Chapter 4: Historical Consciousness and Local Knowledge**

Historical consciousness refers to the conscious and unconscious thoughts that emerge from the interplay between Upper Skagit culture and history within the tribe's aboriginal territory, and I examine this at individual, family, and tribal levels. This chapter explores the process introduced in Chapter 1 (see Figure 1.2) and shows how consciousness emerges at multiple levels. At times I refer to a tribal level of historical consciousness, which represents the relationship with history at the collective level, typically represented by elected leadership. At other times I refer to individual and family historical consciousnesses, and it is key here to note that I use the plural. This concept is useful because it allows the researcher to consider the multifold levels of historical consciousness that play a role in how a Native American tribe represents itself and acts within the larger context of American society. Part of this consciousness is a periodization of Upper Skagit history that comes from both my interviews and archival data. Local knowledge can also be examined at specific sites in the waterscape as a product of individual, family, and tribal historical consciousnesses of that those sites and their place within the broader Skagit waterscape. Varying levels of knowledge shape and are shaped by the regulatory and legalistic regimes of the colonizing government, demonstrated here in the form of the US legal system's definition of "usual and accustomed fishing grounds and stations" and by fisheries science management regulations. The chapter closes by applying the above conceptual framework to an Upper Skagit family fishing site to demonstrate how sites within the waterscape can be analyzed.

#### 4.1 Historical Consciousness

History and culture are valuable to Upper Skagit people, but those vague terms do little to describe how people conceptualize their personal and family histories. There is no one type of history. In Braudel's *On History*, the term is pulled apart into several types: "traditional history," or the history of events; "social history," or the history of civilizations, economies, and other "gentle rhythms" of man; and the "*longue duree*," which is measurable in centuries and encompasses the history of man in relation to his surroundings (1980:3;12). By defining these different types of history, Braudel demonstrates how history is socially constructed. According to Fogelson, Euroamerican history is comprised of events, which are defined as minimal units in historical discourse and classified into historical and natural categories; events and their recovery and reconstruction are key to the form of historical consciousness in the West, relying on written documents (1989:134). As stated in the introduction, this ethnography of Upper Skagit life is concerned with both the broad strokes and fine grains of colonial influence—both the "events" and the "non-events."

Historical consciousness is the way people socially construct history. According to John and Jean Comaroff,

Consciousness is best understood as the active process—sometimes implicit, sometimes explicit—in which human actors deploy historically salient cultural categories to construct their self-awareness. Its modes...may be subtle and diverse; and it is as crucial to explore the forms in which a people choose to speak and act as it is to examine the content of their messages. [1987: 202]

I use this definition to describe how Upper Skagit people conceptualize their history on the basis of several influences. I also draw on Keith Thor Carlson's definition of

Indigenous historical consciousness as a journey through “what happened, and how people understood what happened, and how, over time, they came to reinterpret what happened in light of new experiences and understandings” (2010: 31).

Historical consciousness occurs at many levels and is influenced by many factors, and it would be impossible to cover all of those things in this dissertation. To explore the processes that shape Upper Skagit historical consciousnesses, I draw on interview data, participant observation field notes, and archival materials to show three specific levels of Upper Skagit historical consciousness: individual, family, and tribal. To compare and contrast each of these levels I look at how various factors influence consciousness at all three levels: the American school system, external histories of the tribe, family education, community education, and legal issues. I describe the individual experience of these influences through Levon, the family experience through Levon’s family and Stanley Harrison’s family, and Upper Skagit as a tribe based on my work with the Natural Resources Department and the tribal leadership.

To frame my discussion of Upper Skagit historical consciousness, I build on Ned Blackhawk’s assertion that,

In the current nomenclature of Northwest historiography, there are no tidy distinctions between First Nations studies and the processes of Euro-American settlement. Unlike in any other North American region, the two have become conceptually integrated, crashing asunder the familiar and often dichotomous paradigms of “Indian-white relations.” [2011:322]

These paradigms are indeed blurred lines in Upper Skagit history. The narratives I encountered in my research conveyed individual, family, and tribal understandings of a complex post-colonial world where Native American and settler histories are

intertwined.<sup>26</sup> The various levels and threads of Upper Skagit historical consciousness must be understood as elements in flux, part of the dialectical processes that shape the contemporary Skagit waterscape and its inhabitants.

#### ***4.1.1 Individual Historical Consciousness***

To explore how individual Upper Skagit people conceptualize historical consciousness, I draw on multiple interviews I did with Levon Henderson and participant observation data accumulated while accompanying Levon as he worked with the Natural Resources department. Levon is in his late thirties. He was born in Auburn, WA, the son of a Skokomish<sup>27</sup> man and an Upper Skagit woman, Sandy Walters. Levon took his father's last name of Henderson, but his mother remained a Walters. Sandy is the daughter of Elaine and Charles Walters, and the sister of Fred and Sam Walters. After an early childhood in Skokomish territory near Seattle, Levon moved with his mother and sister back to the Clear Lake, a small settlement about seven miles from the contemporary reservation in the vicinity of the predecessor village of Chobahabish (see Figure 2.1). They moved in with Elaine after Charles' death and then moved to the reservation when it opened in the early 1980s.

Levon attended school in Sedro-Woolley until he was seventeen and then dropped out for a few years (which he describes as “wild”) before obtaining his General Educational Development (GED) degree. He and his wife, Tonya, began dating while Tonya was still in high school and today they have three children together aged eleven,

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<sup>26</sup> In some ways this is an updated version of the New Western History movement (cf. Cronon 1983, White 1980, 1983, and others).

<sup>27</sup> Skokomish are a Coast Salish tribe in the Hood Canal area.

nine, and four. They live on the reservation where Levon works for the Natural Resources Department and Tonya works for the Education Department. Part of Levon's historical consciousness comes from the education he received in the American public school system. In order to obtain a GED, one must pass a social studies subject test comprised of fifty questions about American history, world history, civics and government, economics, and geography. Every person who goes through the American school system must be proficient in this area of study in order to graduate, and the methodology of linear history and interpretation of historical documents is standardized in this way.

The American education system teaches people to view and interpret history in a certain way, emphasizing certain events and downplaying others, and people carry this framework into adulthood. According to Thomas Bender, "The professional practice of history writing and teaching flourished as the handmaiden of nation-making; the nation provided both support and an appreciative audience," and this practice is at work in American classrooms (2002:7). Bender continues,

History in Christian, Jewish, and Islamic cultures has always been linear, always beginning with a beginning. Both this linearity and the emphasis on origins has a cost... Such histories are almost inevitably teleological, with a beginning and an ending (the present, or, sometimes, and envisioned future). The work of aligning the beginning and ending tends to screen much out, to narrow the history, to reduce the plenitude of stories. [2002:8]

This linear history education impacts Upper Skagit individuals like Levon. As a nation-making tool, it teaches students to identify important historical events with national (American) pride. The erasure of Native American history in the classroom until recently means that American nationalism did not acknowledge the role Native Americans played in history unless they were portrayed as a group conquered en route to settling the West



through manifest destiny (R. Miller 2011). While today's American history curricula include more balanced portrayals of Native Americans, the linear model—which frequently portrays Native American cultures as fading or dying out—is still present.

This continues today as Levon's own children, and the other children from the reservation, attend the same public schools he did in Sedro-Woolley. Levon is particularly proud of his daughter's accomplishments at school. She is an avid reader, has grades among the top of her class, and her family hopes she will go to college one day. But school is not the only place of learning for a child, and American history is not the only framework for understanding history for an individual. For Upper Skagit people, much education occurs in the home and with family members. When Levon was not at school as a young child he was with his grandmother Elaine. He described being with her while she worked: "She did cedar bark baskets, cedar root baskets, she knitted, she crocheted. She was old school. She fried bread, baked bread, baked pies, canned, you name it. I was at her feet always helping her."

He also spent a lot of time with his uncles, Fred and Sam: "I remember hunting and fishing and I think my uncles were so used to poaching that we'd go out, it was just like we were poaching. It was, 'hurry, get the deer in the car,' it was. I did all that with my uncles because they grew up doing that." His grandmother and his uncles told him stories about their own lives, stories about the family and ancestors, and traditional stories (to be discussed in more detail in Chapter 5). Levon remembers parts of these stories but he wishes he could "hear my grandma Elaine's voice again." He frequently expressed regret that he had not listened more carefully to her.

Outside of the immediate family, the tribal community also shapes Levon's historical consciousness. The tribe has remained intact since the settlement period, but the establishment of the reservation in Sedro-Woolley provided a place for Upper Skagit people to call their own, and this influenced people's experiences of place. When Levon and his family moved to the reservation in 1980, they were joined by several other Upper Skagit families, and today there are three circles of houses (people give their address based on which "circle" their house is in, e.g. "third circle"), a community center for ceremonies and large events, a tribal center with offices, a council room and tribal court, and buildings for education, health, and recreation. Children ride to and from school in Sedro-Woolley on a bus and participate in youth activities after school at the gym or one of the education buildings. Those adults who work on the reservation see each other frequently in the offices and around the reservation.

Community events like elders' luncheons, the Blessing of the Fleet and First Salmon ceremonies, and ancestral burnings (in which plates of food are offered to ancestors by a fire at the cemetery on-reservation), and smokehouse meetings bring people together. Naming ceremonies and funerals also give a sense of collective identity. In the community setting, Levon identifies primarily as a member of the Walters family, but he has relationships with people from other families as well as more distant Walters relatives, and community events are often where interactions happen. The community also extends beyond Upper Skagit to relatives who belong to other tribes or who are non-Native. From this place, Levon orients himself as an individual within the broad context of Coast Salish consciousness. Community events give him a sense of belonging to a group with a collective history.

The community historical education for individuals is partly connected to several outside influences including scholarly publications. Anthropologists have worked at Upper Skagit since the 1940s, when June Collins began her fieldwork. Her 1974 book, *Valley of the Spirits*, remains a classic text. Many Upper Skagit people, including Levon, have read the book, and many households own a copy. Steve Samson collects used copies and keeps them in his office for tribal members to borrow if they want to read it. The text describes Upper Skagit culture as it would have been in the early settlement period, drawing on archaeological interpretations of artifacts found in the area and stories collected by Collins during her work. When Upper Skagit people today read this book, it gives them insight into tribal history through an accessible text. Other scholarly work written about the tribe—including Sally Snyder’s dissertation (1964), Miller’s dissertation (1989) and subsequent works, reports and articles by Lynn Robbins (1986), Bob Mierendorf’s archaeological data (2009), and works by Jay Miller (1999)—is not as accessible to tribal members primarily because scholarly journals and dissertations are accessed through library subscription services aimed at university students. The tribe has commissioned a historical atlas, modeled after the *Stó:lo Coast Salish Historical Atlas* (Carlson et al 2001), that will draw all of this work together into one text that will clearly tell Upper Skagit history, aimed at both community and public audiences.

The last major influence on individual historical consciousness that I consider here is that of the legal definitions of history. Over the many decades of legal action by the tribe, from *Duwamish et al* (79 C. Cls. 530[1926]) to the Boldt decision (384 F.Supp. 312[1974]), Upper Skagit has been defined in court proceedings as a tribe comprised of eleven predecessor villages with rights to fishing, hunting, and gathering at “usual and

accustomed grounds and stations” within the Skagit waterscape. At the individual level, these usual and accustomed grounds and stations determine where a person may fish, hunt, and gather. While the hunting and gathering rights are still being worked out with the state of Washington, fishing rights have been in place since 1974. For Levon, the legal definition of “usual and accustomed” means that he and his family members have a right, established in the tribal code, to fish where their family ancestors fished traditionally. The boundaries of “usual and accustomed” determine where people can fish, and as a result each person’s movements throughout the Skagit waterscape—both on and off the water—while partaking in fishing activities are dictated by that language.<sup>28</sup>

Levon’s historical consciousness is produced by multiple factors: his identity as a member of the Walters family is tied to the education he received from his grandmother and his uncles when he was a child, and he aspires to teach his children in similar ways. He fishes at the Walters family camp and hunts in the same places his uncles taught him to hunt as a child. Levon is also being groomed to take over part of Donna McMahon’s role as keeper of tribal history. Every year at the Kids’ Fishing Day Event, held in the spring for local preschool children, Donna tells stories to the children about how life would have been for Upper Skagit ancestors. She now has Levon tell some of the stories to the children, and confessed that she looks forward to the day when Levon can do all of the storytelling and she can stay in her office and work on tribal affairs. Levon has read *Valley of the Spirits* and he has also worked with Miller on multiple research projects, including one in the 1980s doing interviews with elders and going through local newspaper archives. Levon also participated in a traditional cultural property (TCP) study

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<sup>28</sup> See my discussion of fishery regulations in the previous chapter.

with Miller and Angelbeck in the mid-2000s, driving a boat around the Baker Lake area and assisting with elders. As a result, he understands how the anthropological data collection process functions and the role that anthropology plays in recording Upper Skagit history. He encourages his children to succeed in the American school system while also educating them at home about their family history, and he hopes this combination will lead them to both successful careers and awareness of who they are.

#### ***4.1.2 Family Historical Consciousness***

At Upper Skagit, extended families are identifiable by name, and members of these families orient themselves as members in order to interact with other Upper Skagit people. Miller has shown there is no one established head of each family, but rather a family structure that is in constant flux. Families operate as corporate groups who pool resources and vote for family members in tribal elections, and they are in a constant cycle of rising to power, dominating tribal politics, and fissioning into less powerful subgroups (Miller 1989).

Much of Upper Skagit people's historical consciousnesses are forged at the family level. When I met people at tribal events they frequently introduced themselves as members of certain families, either by naming the family or by identifying a relative whom I would know or who held a powerful position within the tribe. For example, Rick Samson, employed as a fish tech in the Natural Resources department, introduced himself as Steve Samson's cousin and Donna McMahon's grandson, orienting himself with the branch of the Phillips family headed by Donna and distinct from another branch of the Phillips headed by Jack Phillips, Donna's brother. By invoking the family in which he

includes himself when introducing himself to me, Rick associated himself with that particular family branch's history and distinguished himself from other, sometimes competing, family histories.

Historically, families had methods of teaching children at home, as Stanley Harrison described to me:

Looking back, it was remarkable, their teaching. Grandma gave instructions: this is who you are, this is how you'll be, this is *who* you are, this is how you do, you gotta be good, you gotta be ambitious. And all us boys, except for those that got into alcohol—alcohol ruined a lot of family members. But for the most part these instructions were perfect. When you paid attention to granddad, he said, by the hours, day after day, sit in his lap at night, he'd talk, go over the Bible, talk about how to be good.

People like Stanley learned much at home in this way. Stanley's family experience highlights the transition from the traditional Upper Skagit belief system<sup>29</sup> to Christianity. Stanley's family was active in the Indian Shaker Church (Collins 1950), but they became more Christian over time and today Stanley is a devout member of the Pentecostal Church in Marblemount. As Stanley put it,

You know, one thing about religion, granddad learned how to speak English in the CCC days. Well, he was introduced to the Bible. And his words to me, sitting by his lap in the house, after school at night, he says to me, "Don't be like those..." I forgot already... like those Indian powers? Spirits. Don't believe in today's spirits, that's worldly. Those were his very words, "that's worldly." In our religion then, there was good and there was bad amongst all that, and the spirits that were good, he pointed it out. He said, "But don't, it's not like this, it's not like God's word." And so I never did learn how to speak Upper Skagit completely. I knew some of the words, but I couldn't carry

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<sup>29</sup> For more on this subject, see Pamela Amoss's 1978 book "Coast Salish Spirit Dancing: the Survival of an Ancestral Religion" as well as my discussion in chapter 6.

on a conversation. You're having a hard enough time learning English [laughing].

Stanley's experience shows both his and his grandparents' awareness of their changing culture. They encouraged him to be Christian and discouraged his learning of the Upper Skagit dialect of Lushootseed Salish. He understands the value of his family history and respects his ancestors, but he does not see the old belief system as a viable way to exist in contemporary society, a view he learned from his elders.

Stanley's family, the Marlowes, played a big role in 20th century Upper Skagit history, but today they figure less prominently. The Walters family remains one of the largest and most influential Upper Skagit families today. Levon was the first member of the family I worked with, and I later interviewed Suzanne Simon, who works for the tribal health clinic and serves on the tribal council. When I asked them about their family history, both Levon and Suzanne talked about Elaine and Charles Walters as among the most important ancestors in the Walters family. Elaine and Charles had many children, including Fred, Sam, and Levon's mother, Sandy. Suzanne was married for a time to Sam Walters' son Sam Jr. Through this marriage she began participating in Walters family meetings and eventually became one of the powerful members of the family, even after her marriage ended and she took back her maiden name.

Suzanne described to me in an interview how Sam Walters Sr. and his family defined their territory:

All the bands used to have an annual meeting... All the bands and the representatives of different family bands would stand up and be acknowledged at that meeting. He always talked about the Nuwhaha band, that's the band that his grandfather was connected with, that's from the Bow-Edison area all the way over the pass to, uh, he always called it the, over, you know, the band that territory was

from the Bow-Edison area all the way up over the mountain to, over to the Colville area. And the different bands of the tribe at that time, the Bsigwigwils and the Sbalexu, all of the bands had their own territories. They all had identified chiefs that represented the different bands. And when his father, his grandfather, first, that he remembered, his grandfather was the representative that would stand up for the Nuwhaha. And then his father, Charles Walters, would stand up.

The history of the Walters family and their associated predecessor village, Nuwhaha, is influenced by similar factors as those that influence Levon's historical consciousness at an individual level, but with more emphasis on the family and community history.

Today, most of the adult members of the Walters family have at least some education within the American school system, but the primary level of education about family and tribal history occurs in the home and on the reservation. As Suzanne says above, certain family members—in this case Charles and his son Sam—played leadership roles in the days before the tribe was federally recognized. While Suzanne describes meetings in the saltwater part of the Skagit waterscape, other people talk about tribal meetings at the Shaker church in Concrete and at the Marlowe property in Marblemount. Suzanne also shows the Walters family awareness of connections to the eastern side of the mountains. People know the history of how their families remained organized throughout the settlement period.

It is important to remember that there is no one history of each family. Depending on which family member is telling the family story, different ancestors and events are discussed. For both Suzanne and Levon, the main characters of their stories are Elaine, Charles, Sam Sr., and Fred. These names came up multiple times in my interviews with Suzanne and Levon, with most of the anecdotes being about Sam Sr. and Fred. By the



time I began work at Upper Skagit, both men had passed away, but their personalities and the influence they had over the tribe were still clearly remembered by their families and other community members. I discuss this more in Chapter 6.

Levon also described how his grandmother Elaine would remind him about his family history, and how he tries to do the same thing for his children:

Grandma Elaine used to holler at us, “You’re Duwhaha [Nuwhaha], and it’s Skagit that’s way over there.” And what that meant was you could hear “way over there.” So when they talked, they didn’t know how to talk, they only knew how to yell and be real loud. So my mom was a Duwhaha, she said. And that’s funny because that’s where my family comes from is that area.

I, as a parent I try to teach my kids who they are, where they come from. Just as a people, Native American people, I try to teach them, “This is where you come from, this is what you come from.” My grandma used to instill that in me, that this is who you are, this is your family. Our Native American people, I believe we have the strongest family values. You don’t see us moving away. We always come home.

This shows Levon’s awareness of his family history and how he works to instill the same awareness in his children, along with an awareness of their identity as Native Americans. It also shows connection to place. Levon’s perception of where he and his family “come from” is tied to the Skagit waterscape and his family’s places within it.

#### ***4.1.3 Tribal Historical Consciousness***

The tribal level of historical consciousness is influenced by the external pressures put on the tribe to assert its identity and claims within the bounds of the US legal system and under the administration of the Bureau of Indian Affairs. While there is little written about Upper Skagit in school textbooks, the structure of the tribe’s history, as outlined in

its annual report and other documents, fits within the linear historical framework of the American school system. The school system, legal system, and BIA all frame tribal history using a discourse of Native American history from a European settler perspective. This discourse begins with the archaeological record, which establishes which tribes were in which places and from what approximate date (often measured using radiocarbon dating of organic artifacts and other remains). The discourse then moves on to the settlement period and describes the “colonial encounter” based on when European settlers first came into contact with members of the tribe in question and includes the description of claims to land and resources, often within a treaty context. All of the history is divided into “before” and “after” European settlement.

Upper Skagit must present its history in this format in order to be understood by the US legal system and the BIA. A summary of the history is printed each year in the tribe’s annual report while a more extensive tribal history is being compiled in the aforementioned atlas. The atlas will allow the tribe to present its history while asserting its claims on traditional territories and resources. This project transcends any one family’s historical consciousness. It will tell the story of the eleven predecessor bands and how they came together to become what Upper Skagit is today. While there is much conflict between families over political matters, representatives of the families on tribal council voted to go forward with the atlas project as a means of further strengthening Upper Skagit’s claims to the Skagit waterscape. All Upper Skagit members and families have the option of contributing historic artifacts and photographs to the project, and the tribe hopes to soon build an archival-quality facility that can house artifacts and archival materials on the reservation.

Another influence on Upper Skagit historical consciousness at all three levels is Vi Hilbert, an Upper Skagit elder and storyteller who published several books of stories and co-taught Lushootseed Salish language classes at the University of Washington for many years. Hilbert occupies an interesting place in Upper Skagit history. She was born in 1918 near Lyman and received the Indian name *Taqseblu*. She learned Lushootseed and English as a child and her parents, Charley and Louise Anderson, told stories in the home. She describes this in her book, *Haboo*:

My parents told stories and historical information to each other all the time, just to remind and refresh themselves. They also sang our ancestral songs to remember them, often when we were driving or alone in the mountains. They told me stories at home whenever I coaxed one or both of them. I understand that among some groups, storytelling took place only in the winter time. They were told to me anytime, but then I was away at school all winter. [1985:xii]

Because Hilbert attended boarding school, she did not spend much time as a child among other Upper Skagit children, and as her collaborator Thom Hess describes it, school took her “away from her own people and began to weaken her contacts with Lushootseed language and culture” (1985:v). She finished her education in Portland, Oregon and then married and had several children while working various jobs, including running a restaurant, owning a hair salon, training as a telegrapher, and being secretary to the director of nursing at a Seattle hospital. She reengaged with the Lushootseed language in 1967 when she heard about Hess’s dictionary of Lushootseed and contacted him. After learning to read and write Lushootseed, “she then threw herself head long into the task of recording and translating as much Lushootseed oral tradition as possible” (Hilbert 1985:vi).

Hilbert's contribution to the documentation of oral tradition in the Coast Salish world is invaluable and her legacy lives on through her books, Lushootseed language classes at the University of Washington, and her digital video and audio archives, available online.<sup>30</sup> Her personal papers are now in the Special Collections at the University of Washington, and I have gone through these for the tribe. Many of the people she worked with and trained in storytelling practices are still working as academics at major universities in the US and Canada.

Hilbert is one of the best-known Upper Skagit figures in recent history, but her fame has a different kind of prevalence outside the Upper Skagit community than within it. By working with linguists to publish stories and going on to train storytellers from outside the community, Hilbert became famous in the Coast Salish world and particularly among anthropologists and other scholars who learned from her. However, I rarely came across her name or her work in my interviews with Upper Skagit people. While she was a respected elder (she passed away in 2008), many people had complicated opinions about her. As one person told me, his grandmother felt that Hilbert had betrayed the community by publishing Upper Skagit stories for the general public to see (I keep his name anonymous as I do not want to make disagreements between these families public). Other Upper Skagit people feel she did not represent them as a community. She spent much of her life outside the Skagit waterscape, and by training outsiders in storytelling rather than Upper Skagit community members, she broadened the gap between herself and the tribe. She justifies this choice in the introduction to her book *Haboo*, a collection of stories published in 1985: "To my sorrow, the art of storytelling among my people is nearly

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<sup>30</sup> <http://www.music.washington.edu/ethno/hilbert/>

forgotten. Television and books have supplanted the role of the Lushootseed raconteurs. Hopefully, this collection will preserve something of their knowledge and verbal artistry” (ix).

For the people I worked with, Hilbert is a known figure, but her portrayal of Upper Skagit history in publications—primarily through traditional stories—plays a larger role in shaping outsider perspectives of Upper Skagit history than it does in shaping the historical consciousness of Upper Skagit tribal members today. The information Hilbert provides is useful for any student of Coast Salish culture, particularly students of traditional Lushootseed storytelling. But it is telling that Hilbert refers to her culture as “Lushootseed” rather than “Upper Skagit.” By invoking Lushootseed identity, Hilbert relates her work to all of the Lushootseed Salish-speaking groups in the Puget Sound area. This generalization of her work means more people have access to it, but the Upper Skagit leadership today does not consider her to be a representative of the tribe’s collective history, just that of her own family.

It is important to note that I use Hilbert as a source throughout this dissertation, particularly in the next chapter, and my reasons for doing so require explanation. Hilbert’s stories represent her family’s experience in the waterscape, and they are useful for understanding that particular family’s perspective and where it fits in with the rest of the Upper Skagit community. She is also recognized as an important scholar in the Coast Salish world, and her methods for collecting stories and her ways of sharing these stories through both publication and pedagogy are respected by other scholars exploring Native American narrative, culture, and history. Therefore it is important to view Hilbert as both

a member of the community that I am studying, and a member of the scholarly community with which I engage.

## 4.2 Historical Periodization

In this section I describe the periods of history most frequently discussed by Upper Skagit people in interviews and archival materials as well as current tribal documents. I look at how other scholars have organized Coast Salish oral narratives and present an outline of the eras of history that people frequently talk about. This framework emerged from my data as I worked on other parts of this dissertation.

Historical periodization, according to Jerry Bentley,

...ranks among the more elusive tasks of historical scholarship. As practicing historians well know, the identification of coherent periods of history involves much more than the simple discovery of self-evident turning points in the past: it depends on prior decisions about the issues and processes that are most important for the shaping of human societies, and it requires the establishment of criteria or principles that enable historians to sort through masses of information and recognize patterns of continuity and change. [1996:749]

While Bentley is addressing the periodization of world history, his words are also useful when considering Upper Skagit history. The choices I make here regarding the periodization of Upper Skagit narratives are based on prior decisions made by other scholars of Coast Salish and Northwest Coast Native American history. The periods are not chosen arbitrarily; they are based on observations of narrative patterns. But neither are these categories bounded entities; they remain flexible, and remembering this is crucial in the study of historical consciousness.

In the introduction to *Haboo*, Hilbert writes the following:

We do not know how long it has taken for these stories to come down to us, for we did not use the kind of calendar everyone uses today. My people marked time by referring to especially remarkable occasions, such as the year of the solar eclipse, or the period when the big log jam still blocked the Skagit river, or when the longhouses at *slux* (Lyman-Hamilton) still stood, or the time before the King George (British) people came. All of our culture had to be committed to memory. To this end, our historians developed excellent memories in order to pass on important information to later generations. [1985:ix]

This is a telling description of how Upper Skagit people of Hilbert's parents' generation may have understood history and the passage of time, but it also carries a note of nostalgia for the past when people had to memorize stories rather than relying on the written word. Hilbert's observations here point out that her parents "did not use the kind of calendar everyone uses today," but at the same time she indicates that events (cf. Fogelson 1989) could be placed in order based on "remarkable occasions."

One way scholars have divided Coast Salish history into periods is by categorizing different types of oral narratives. In *Haboo*, Thom Hess describes the area he and Hilbert worked as follows: "Many Lushootseed speaking people divide their oral literature into two categories, history called *lele?uleb* and Myth Age stories known as *sxwi?ab* in the south and *syeyehub* (or simply *syehub*) in the north. In addition to these two genres, there are also personal accounts which fall under the general term *syecceb* which refers to any sort of news or non-traditional story" (1985:xviii). This is similarly done by McHalsie et al in (1997) an essay about Stó:lō oral narratives, dividing oral histories into two categories: *sxwoxwiyam*, which are myth-like stories set in the distant past, usually involving the Transformer coming to Stó:lō territory to "make things right";

and *sqwelqwel*, which are true stories or news, describing experiences from people's lives (182).<sup>31</sup>

These categorizations are useful when discussing traditional Coast Salish oral narratives, and I address these kinds of stories in the next chapter. At Upper Skagit today, however, people have additional ways of categorizing their history. This categorization is a product of Upper Skagit historical consciousness. As I discussed above, the Upper Skagit people with who I worked all went to American public schools at some point in their lives. The bulk of my informants graduated from high school and several more have some college experience. This standardized education, combined with consumption of media such as television and Internet, means Native Americans are taught from an early age to view history in a linearized Western framework, just like most of their non-Native classmates. While the argument could be made that in some situations (such as an on-reservation school where the students are all Native) things might be different, the reality is that the curriculum on reservations is the same as those off-reservation, and unless students have teachers dedicated to incorporating traditional education about tribal culture into their teaching methods, Native Americans today are learning about history in classrooms in the same ways non-Natives are.

The result is a periodization of history shaped by both the linear American history model and the family and community history model. The non-school-related historical education for Upper Skagit people happens at the family and community levels, as I described in the previous section. Other opportunities for learning come in situations where elders speak in front of crowds. Based on my data, I found several major periods

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<sup>31</sup> See also Rudy Reimer's (2003) discussion of archaeology and oral history in Squamish territory.



of history that Upper Skagit people talk about. These periods provide context for the stories I will review in the next chapter as well as for the family narratives I discuss in Chapter 6. Here I briefly describe each period and give examples of where I heard about these various periods in my fieldwork.

*Myth Age*: The earliest histories of how the world was created, how light came to the world, how seasons came to exist, when animals walked and talked, etc. This period is often discussed by elders who are telling stories in a community context (e.g. feast, smokehouse religious meeting, funeral, naming). Younger people refer to this at times, but usually only in reference to a story they heard from an elder rather than telling it themselves. This period of history runs from the beginning of the world to the arrival of the Transformer. According to Suttles,

The central figure in Coast Salish mythology is the Transformer. He is called *xels* in the Halkomelem and Straits languages, *dúk<sup>w</sup>ibəl* in the Puget Sound and Twana languages; both terms contain the roots meaning “to change.” The Coast Salish Transformer appears as the purposeful creator of a new order; he transforms dangerous beings into stone; he transforms some of the “first people” of the myth age into animals that will be useful for the people to come; and to the “second people,” man, he teaches the basic arts. [1987:185]

*Pre-contact Indians*: After the Transformer came and changed everything into what it is today, Upper Skagit ancestors were figuring out how to live in the world. This period is often referred to when people lament the impacts of colonization on their culture. The nostalgia for the way things were frequently enters discussions of landscape and culture, particularly when assessing the impacts of colonial society on the natural environment.

This period is also important in discussions of archaeological research as that research provides insights into where and how people were living prior to contact.

*Contact-era “Old Timers” aka “Treaty Period” or “Treaty Days”*: This period of history begins with initial European contact (the fur trade began impacting Upper Skagit people early on, even though they didn’t have much, if any, direct contact with fur traders) and extends through the settlement period, the height of which was the Treaty of Point Elliot in 1855 and subsequent white settlement of the Skagit watershed in the late 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> centuries. Upper Skagit people frequently talk about this period when discussing their grandparents, great-grandparents, and beyond. There is a widespread sense among Upper Skagit people that these earlier generations were, as Stanley Harrison put it, “the best kind of people,” who had to work hard to survive and change while their territory was taken over by outsiders. In an interview with John Conrad, a friend of the Marlowe family, he said “Stanley and I will never hold a candle to them old timers. I mean, like his and my dad and my mother, they were all the same, they were just really good people. And I don’t know what this new generation’s coming to, I don’t know, they couldn’t hold a candle to us then I guess.” Each of the families I worked with had revered figures who lived during this time, and they were often the focal point when discussing history.

*Contemporary*: This period begins around the time Upper Skagit people began working to assert their rights as Native Americans. In 1926, the case *Duwamish et al* (79 C. Cls. 530) marked the first time Upper Skagit people tried to fight for land rights. This, along

with other cases involving tribes around Washington State, picked up momentum that eventually led to the Boldt Decision. When I initially started this project, I hypothesized that people would talk about history as pre- and post-Boldt Decision, while in fact that distinction is not the isolated as the only important event. While everyone, especially fishers, is aware of the Decision's affirmation of Upper Skagit's treaty rights, it falls within a broad understanding of legal battles in the 20<sup>th</sup> century that led to the way things are today. Because many of my informants were either directly involved in the Boldt case, or were close to people who were directly involved and have since passed on, discussions of its impact are incorporated into their understandings of their lives today.

### **4.3 Local Knowledge**

Upper Skagit historical consciousness shapes contemporary interactions with the Skagit waterscape, and influences how the different levels of historical consciousness—individual, family, and tribal—interact with two other spheres of knowledge—fisheries science and law—to produce different scales of local knowledge. If historical consciousness is a process, then local knowledge is what can be found at a specific time and place within that process. Predecessor villages became places to which families remained tied during the settlement period, and continue to remain tied today. Each family has local knowledge, and within each family there are branches with their own individual local knowledges as well. Alliances between families (through marriage, usually) allow people to share local knowledge. The fact that it is local, however, means that it cannot be applied to the waterscape as a whole. No one person or family has a history and set of knowledge that represents the entire tribe. As a tribe, Upper Skagit

faces the challenge of tying together multiple layers of local knowledge to assert its claim to resources within its aboriginal territory. In the past, when one family's perspective was used to represent the tribe as a whole, resource rights were limited.

Local knowledge as an anthropological concept became popular with the publication of Clifford Geertz's 1983 essay collection *Local Knowledge: Further Essays in Interpretive Anthropology*. In that text, Geertz looks at the term by comparing law and anthropology:

Law... is local knowledge; local not just as to place, time, class, and variety of issue, but as to accent—vernacular characterizations of what happens connected to vernacular imaginings of what can. It is this complex of characterizations and imaginings, stories about events cast in imagery about principles, that I have been calling a legal sensibility. [1983:215]

This definition is useful when considering the case of Upper Skagit local knowledge as it is shaped by historical consciousness of legal terminology. This section is also a “thick description” of the place (Geertz 1973).

In Cruikshank's *Do Glaciers Listen?*, the term local knowledge “refers to tacit knowledge embodied in life experiences and reproduced in everyday behavior and speech” (2005:9). She makes a key point about how local knowledge has “become a commonsense term, couched in acronyms like TEK (traditional ecological knowledge)<sup>32</sup> or IK (indigenous knowledge), gaining new visibility in management science studies, but too often depicted as static, timeless, and hermetically sealed” (2005:8-9).

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<sup>32</sup> TEK and its growing popularity within environmental and resource management circles in the Skagit waterscape is important to note; I touch here on some of the problems associated with TEK, but other scholars explore the issues much more thoroughly, such as Paul Nadasdy (2003) and Charles Menzies (2006).

I am concerned here with the production of local knowledge in the Skagit waterscape. Cruikshank looks at the production of local knowledge through “encounters,” starting with the “colonial encounter” and finishing with a look at “how recent discoveries and collaborations among scientists and First Nations investigating these melting ice patches are reinvigorating discourses surrounding memory, science, politics, and how local knowledge is being produced in such encounters” (2005:57). The encounter in the Skagit waterscape is between levels of Upper Skagit historical consciousness, Western scientific knowledge of fisheries, and the US legal system during and after the Boldt decision. The knowledge produced by this encounter determines where and how people interact with the waterscape and is reproduced by tribal code and interactions between tribal members and other parties.

To demonstrate how local knowledge is produced in the Skagit waterscape I look at family fishing camps. In her book *Brushed by Cedar, Living by the River*, Bierwert uses a Stó:lō fishing site to explore “five ways of looking at a place.” Drawing on phenomenological theories of place (Casey 1997) and the application of such theory to Native American landscapes (Basso 1996, Brody 1992, Hunn 1990), Bierwert outlines her five-layered sketch to have the following purposes: “(1) describing the physical place; (2) noting Stó:lō uses of the place, its socially generative powers; (3) revealing the danger of the place, its destructive powers; (4) deconstructing its historically ascribed name; and (5) recollecting its mythic persona” (1999:46). These layers combine to form “an ethnography of place, playing the ironies of competing names and uses against the physicality of the place” (1999:46).

Bierwert's method of looking at a fishing site in a Coast Salish waterscape evokes the multifaceted nature of place-making in this context, but to do the same for an Upper Skagit fishing site would not answer my questions about how knowledge is produced. In order to understand the specific process of local knowledge production in the Skagit Waterscape I use a model of overlapping consciousness. This model of local knowledge production allows for analysis of three layers of knowledge—historical consciousness, fisheries science, and law—at specific sites within the waterscape. These places are sites of direct interaction between Upper Skagit people and the Skagit waterscape. Local knowledge is produced at the same scales as historical consciousness discussed earlier in this chapter: individual, family, and tribal. Each of these levels of historical consciousness overlaps with the other two, and a family fishing site ties all three together: individual people participate in tribal-administered fisheries at family-owned sites. Two other spheres of influence shape knowledge production here: fisheries science and law. In theory, this model could be applied to any place within the waterscape, but I demonstrate it here by looking at one place within the waterscape.

The site I examine is the Walters family fishing camp. I look first at how individual and family historical consciousness frame the site, and then discuss how tribal-level historical consciousness of the site is shaped by the legal definitions of usual and accustomed fishing grounds and stations, and how the practice of fishing at all three levels is shaped by fisheries science research and policy.

The Walters family fishing camp is located on the banks of the Skagit River near the town of Lyman, WA (see Figure 2.1). I first visited the site, called Lyman Ferry, in early May 2010 when I traveled with the Natural Resources Department team during a

Spring Chinook salmon fishery. We turned off the road by the grubby sign for Lyman Ferry, a public boat launch, hidden in the trees on the left. The road immediately turned to dirt, which was still muddy and full of leaves that had spent the winter soaking on the ground. Lyman Ferry at mid-day was sunny, slightly overcast but clearing. As we drove up I noticed a few cars parked in a loop off to the side, a few closer to the water, and then, as we neared the bank, I saw several trucks and a large white van parked seemingly on top of the water. Coming out of the truck I noticed a ramp covered in the wet, grey-gold sand of the Skagit, full of fresh tire tracks.



**Figure 4.1 Vehicles parked on a sand bar at Lyman Ferry (photo by M. Malone)**

I learned that the fishers drove their trucks into the river and parked on a shallow sand bar so that they could park and easily pull their boats off the trailers. Some were able to drive their boats right up to their trucks and unload the fish into the plastic, ice-filled totes in the bed. During the fishery, which was open from 8:00 a.m. on that day until 8:00 a.m. the following day, people took turns driving their boats upstream, feeding out their gillnets, drifting down for about fifty yards, and pulling their nets back in while removing any salmon they had caught. When they weren't fishing, people took naps in their trucks or in their boats, came on shore to get food from family members and stand by the fire, or drive into the town of Lyman to get cigarettes and energy drinks. This activity would continue through the night until the next morning when people took their fish back to the reservation to be weighed and sold.

When I arrived at Lyman Ferry, the only people I knew were the Natural Resources Department employees and Levon Henderson, who was out fishing on a boat with his cousin. While the biologists set up their equipment to sample the fish I walked to the water and struck up a conversation with Andy Walters. Andy had arrived during the night and slept in his truck, somebody said, in order to get the first drift of the day, and sure enough he was the most successful fisher so far that day. Andy is one of the few Upper Skagit fishers skilled enough to fish alone; most work in pairs on the boat, splitting steering and net-minding duties. I introduced myself and we began talking. Andy is in his 50s, the kind of person you can carry on a long conversation with while there is something else going on, in this case all the fishing and sampling activity around us.

When I told him about my research he said, "Well, the first thing you gotta do is get in that river." He was joking; everybody laughed and I laughed too. But soon I took



off my shoes and socks and put my feet in the river and we sat together, talking and watching the water flow past. The water here appears to be flat across a wide stretch of river but, as Andy pointed out to me; “Look at that river out there. It may not look like its going that fast, but really there’s a lot of water moving out there. It’s really powerful.”

Andy’s uncle was Sam Walters. He told me about spending time with his uncle before he passed away, and all the old stories Sam used to tell him. Gesturing across the river to where we could see a car driving along the far bank, he told me about Sam’s memories of the days before there was a road along the Skagit River and how different things were back then. “I could just imagine what it was like,” he said, visualizing the way it would have looked with huge cedar and Douglas fir trees. “None of that second growth stuff everywhere. It would be so different.”

After the fish techs finished sampling Andy’s fish, he headed back to his boat for another drift. I overheard him and the other fishers talking about “the Purr,” which is the name for a part of the river at this point, in the middle, where fishers are likely to catch fish when they drift down it. I watched as Levon and his cousin came into shore to allow their fish to be sampled. Levon had almost as many fish as Andy, and would later overtake him in the final counts as the “highliner,” a name bestowed upon whoever catches the most during a fishery. Levon joked with his Natural Resources colleagues and answered my questions about fishing, and invited me to return later in the evening when his wife Tonya would be coming by with their children and a hot dinner for the fishers.

After visiting several more family camps along the river with the fish techs, I returned to my own vehicle at the reservation and drove back to Lyman Ferry to await Tonya. The atmosphere in the evening was much more relaxed, and the temperature had

dropped so everyone was bundling up in layers and spending more time inside their vehicles or beside the fire when they weren't out on the water. I had noticed earlier that a few boats were gathered on the far side of the river, and there appeared to be a fire burning there too. When Tonya arrived, several of these boats crossed over to the Lyman Ferry side, carrying two of Tonya's brothers and their fishing partners. Levon and his cousin came in with their boat and Tonya opened the side door of her minivan to reveal a heating dish with three separate containers in it, holding rice, stewed meat, and vegetables. Everyone took one of the ceramic plates and a set of metal cutlery and served him or herself dinner, chatting a bit with each other and Tonya. The kids played along the riverbank and then, when it got too chilly, went back inside the van. After eating, Levon got a fresh energy drink and headed back out to his boat while Tonya's brothers did the same.

I did not understand until later why there had been a fire on both sides of the river. It had to do with a combination of history—traditional use of both sides of the river at this spot—and the influence of the regulatory regime on people's actions. When I interviewed Suzanne Simon about the Walters family history, she told me about the place: “Up there, on the south side at Loretta Creek, that's [the] Landing, that's the Indian name<sup>33</sup> for Sam Walters Sr. So the Walters family pretty much had traditionally fished at Loretta Creek, the drifting up there.” Suzanne showed me Loretta Creek on a map and I

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<sup>33</sup> I omit the place names to protect the Walters family. Also, regarding “Indian names”: in the Coast Salish world and beyond, some people receive traditional names through ceremonial processes. Several Upper Skagit people today have Indian names, especially those from more traditional families and those who have been initiated into the smokehouse religion. While these names are an important aspect of Upper Skagit historical consciousness, I do not discuss them in this dissertation for both brevity's sake and the protection of my research participants' identities.

realized that the place it met the Skagit River was the place where I had seen the fire and the collection of boats across the river from Lyman Ferry.

I asked Levon about this place, which is now owned by the tribe, and he talked about his childhood memories of fishing:

I remember, that was called “The Landing” at that time. There would be as many as twelve boats there at one time. I sit and I talk and I remember, I talked to all my uncles and stuff and they remember my oldest aunt Evelyn, we used to have spousal rights. So if you were legally married their mate can fish with you, even if they’re not a tribal member. But they had a boat, a lot of the Davenports [another branch of the Walters family] fished, they all had a lot of boats. Uncle Lou, Uncle Jerry, my mom had a boat with Andy. God, you name it, everybody’s fished at the Landing.

Fishing wasn’t always profitable, however, and after a time the Landing fell into disuse.

As Levon explained,

There used to be a store on that side, so when you would go and launch it was a gas station, it was food, everything there right within a little ways. So you could go and stay up there. But when that store shut down, it shut down when our fishing slowed down. So they kind of kept each other afloat.

This happened in the 1990s, when farmed salmon was gaining in popularity and the Chinook salmon fishery was closed due to low fish count numbers. Levon said he swore off fishing at the time but later came back to it when he learned to crab and when salmon prices went up again.

The tribe purchased the land where the store used to be and named it after Sam Walters’ traditional name, along with a few other waterfront properties near traditional fishing sites, including another landing named after Fred Walters, in Sedro-Woolley.

Suzanne described this to me:

The Walters also fish at the Sedro-Woolley Highway 9 bridge, for the set-netting. And when the Boldt decision was passed, my husband and his uncle, they were fishing all of the piers when the Boldt decision was passed. And so it has pretty much stayed in the family because after he passed away, that's when Aunt Evelyn started fishing and the piers is where her brother was fishing before he passed away. Because my husband and his uncle, they were partners fishing together in the beginning of fishing time.<sup>34</sup>

By purchasing these places, the tribe honored these two important Upper Skagit men, Sam and Fred, while simultaneously ensuring that Upper Skagit people will always have access to the river at these historically important places.

Once I had this information, I asked Levon about where people fish from today. He explained that the boats I had seen across the river from Lyman Ferry at the Landing were there because earlier in the day people had seen the tribal fisheries enforcement officers at Lyman Ferry checking people's fishing registration cards. I recalled how earlier in the day one officer had asked Levon's fishing partner for his card, to check if he had a current Point Elliot Treaty Fishing sticker affixed to the back. He did not. He explained to the officer that he was going to register his name, he just hadn't had time to do so yet. The officer told him he wasn't supposed to fish until he had done so, but he let him off with a warning instead of writing him a ticket. This exchange was observed by other fishers, some of who had also not yet registered, and so some people chose to bring their boats across the river and set up a camp at the Landing because the fisheries officers would have to go all the way downriver to Sedro-Woolley to cross over the river and drive up the south side to reach that spot, something they were unlikely to do with so

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<sup>34</sup> For Suzanne, "fishing time" refers to the period after the Boldt Decision when Upper Skagit people could legally fish again.

many other camps on the north side of the river to check. This explained the fires on both sides of the river.

The people at the Landing had been a mix of Walters, Robertson, and Jackson family fishers. While the area is primarily a Walters family fishing site, Levon's marriage to Tonya forms a connection between the Walters and Robertson families that manifests itself in their collective fishing efforts. The Jackson family is connected by the marriage of Tonya's brother to a Jackson woman. After the registration check incident, these families chose to set up a separate camp across the river at the Landing, where they had privacy from the crowds at Lyman Ferry but still had access to the same drifts and could bring their fish across for sampling as needed. Lyman Ferry is a popular site because it is easily accessible by vehicle from the reservation, but because the extended Walters family has claims to the site, some people chose to spread across the way to have more space.

Above I have presented a narrative of individual and family historical consciousness of the fishing site. Levon and Suzanne each have their own understanding of the history of the place, including their own experiences there. At the heart of the site is the Purr, agreed upon by the fishers as the best drift and the one they line up to take turns fishing. The Purr can be accessed from either side of the river. In the years immediately following Boldt—"early fishing time" according to Suzanne—the Landing was, as Levon remembered, fished by everyone in the Walters family. In the 90s, when fishing dropped off, the site, accessed by vehicle via the South Skagit Highway, fell out of use. Today people access the site by driving on Highway 20 to Lyman and then turning off at Lyman Ferry, where a public boat launch allows for easy access. Some

people chose to set up a fire and use the woods on the south side, at the Landing, when the boat launch became too crowded and they wanted to avoid interacting with fisheries enforcement.

At the tribal level of historical consciousness, law and fisheries science shape the regulations that determine where, when, and how the Walters family may fish at their site. When the Boldt decision opened up commercial fishing on the Skagit to the tribe in 1974, the tribe had to do two things: demonstrate where Upper Skagit usual and accustomed fishing grounds and stations were, and decide how to administer the use of these usual and accustomed places by Upper Skagit fishers. The tribe demonstrated usual and accustomed grounds and stations in a report by Robert and Barbara Lane titled “Indians and Indian Fisheries of the Skagit River System,” published in 1977 by the Skagit System Cooperative. The Cooperative was formed by Upper Skagit, Swinomish, and Sauk-Suiattle tribes after the Boldt Decision to help the three groups manage their new fisheries. Upper Skagit left the Cooperative in the 1990s and now works independently while the other two tribes continue to work together.

Once the usual and accustomed grounds and stations had been determined, Upper Skagit produced a Fishing Ordinance to go in the tribal code, establishing a set of rules to run the fishery. The rules regarding fishing site priorities read as follows:

- a. Traditional Use of Sites—Priorities to set net fishing sites shall be on the basis of tribal custom, each fisher having a preferred right to his or her own traditional or accustomed site or sites. If such sites are not used in a June through December harvest season they shall be presumed to be abandoned by these users, and new users may be substituted by arrangement between fishers upon a first come, first serve basis.

- b. Registration of Sites—A fisher who has registered a site with the Fisheries Committee shall be presumed to have a preferred right to use that site. Registration of a site requires approval of the Fish Committee. If more than one fisher seeks to register a site the site will be registered based on proof of traditional or accustomed use of that site according to tribal custom.

[...]

- e. Drift Net Priorities—Priorities in the use of drift nets shall be determined as follows: fishers using drift nets shall have access to a stream on a first come, first serve basis. To make maximum use of the resource, persons wishing to drift a specific area may take turns and follow one another in doing so, provided that when there is a conflict between fishers that party who was first in the water during that particular drift shall have priority. To provide efficiency and avoid conflict, drift net fishing shall be subject to Fisheries Committee regulations to insure fair and orderly use of the resource. [Upper Skagit Tribal Code]

The use of terms like “tribal custom” and “traditional or accustomed” demonstrate how the legal interpretation of the Point Elliot Treaty language used in article five has been made permanent in the tribal code and is now inscribed in the Skagit waterscape at fishing sites.

In addition to tribal code and case law, fisheries science impacts the fishing site in several ways. After the Boldt Decision, 50 percent of the commercial fishing catch each year went to treaty tribes, and the process of dividing that 50 percent between all of the tribes had to be regulated. Treaty tribes like Upper Skagit are designated as co-managers of the fisheries resources, and each year all of the tribes renegotiate the percentage of fish their members are allowed to catch. Their partner in co-management is the state of Washington.

To exercise their treaty rights, Upper Skagit must operate within the bureaucracy of the government that created the treaty—the United States and the state of Washington. Like the Kluane people of the Yukon in Nadasdy (2003), they are asked for management input in the form of Traditional Ecological Knowledge (TEK), which is the resource management industry’s way of categorizing Aboriginal knowledge about the environment in which said resource is being extracted. While initially the inclusion of TEK was a breakthrough for Aboriginal groups who were finally being included in management processes after decades of neglect throughout the colonial process, the execution of TEK and its inclusion in management decisions is problematic. Nadasdy focused on the Ruby Range Sheep Steering Committee—which included Kluane people, biologists, and non-Aboriginal hunters and hunting outfitters—and concluded that the outcome was not successful because once the biologists possessed “the artifacts of TEK, it is no longer necessary for them to include actual First Nations elders and hunters in the process” (2003:221).

The Upper Skagit Tribe is in a different situation than the Kluane First Nation. It shares its co-management duties with nineteen other tribes, and the resource is aquatic rather than land-based, and an important commercial revenue generator (whereas Ruby Range sheep hunting only generates revenue for those First Nations people who work as hunting guides for non-Aboriginal hunting outfitters). The co-management process is orchestrated by the Northwest Indian Fisheries Commission (NWIFC), whose website states the following:

*US v. Washington* (the “Boldt Decision”) in 1974 reaffirmed tribes as co-managers, along with the State of Washington, of fisheries resources. Co-management means that the tribes and the State of Washington, through the



Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife (WDFW), are jointly responsible for managing fisheries and hatchery programs, and that they collaborate in regional efforts to recover depleted fisheries resources.

Co-management involves the co-managers agreeing every year on salmon fishing seasons and on hatchery production objectives in Puget Sound and the Washington coast.

The fundamental principle that emerged from *U.S. v Washington* was assurance to tribes of the opportunity to catch half of the harvestable surplus of each run passing through their usual and accustomed areas (U&A). In most places the run comprises salmon returning to a single watershed (such as the Skagit River). In some places runs were aggregated into regional units as the basis for sharing (like South Puget Sound, Hood Canal, and the Strait of Juan de Fuca). [NWIFC 2013]

To prepare for the yearly meeting in which the tribes and the state determine salmon fishing seasons, each tribe employs a team of biologists to collect data through test fisheries (discussed in the previous chapter) and to work with biologists from the NWIFC and the Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife (WDFW).

At Upper Skagit, the Natural Resources department employees refer to the annual meeting as “North of Falcon.” When I asked where this term came from, one of the biologists, Kirk, pointed to a map in the office: “So this is Point Falcon. Falcon Point is basically Astoria [Oregon]. And so north of it is everything in Washington. So that’s what they call the big salmon meetings, North of Falcon.” Kirk was referring to the division of the Pacific coast fishery into management sections. Because salmon are anadromous, they move from the watershed where they hatch out into the Pacific Ocean and then back to their original watershed to spawn, making all of the aquatic areas where they live part of the management area for salmon as a resource. The Pacific Fishery Management Council has jurisdiction over the coastal waters of California, Oregon, and

Washington (from three to 200 miles offshore). While the PFMC meets to determine ocean fishing seasons, each of the Pacific coast states has its own meetings to determine the seasons for fishing within three miles of the coastline and in freshwater rivers and streams.

Each tribe goes into the meeting armed with data and the process of allocating fish begins. The process is never easy. Natural Resources directors and fishery managers attend the meeting with tribal lawyers and biologists, and each tribe fights to get the best allocation of salmon for their fishers. Fisheries biologists for NOAA and the WDFW determine the health of each salmon species that year. If spawning numbers are healthy, that fishery—commercial and recreational—is allowed to take place and numbers of fish are allocated. If spawning numbers are not healthy—as was the case for Chinook salmon in the 90s when the fishery collapsed—the numbers of fish are limited or the fishery is closed altogether for the year.

The entire process relies on the practice of fisheries biology. The idea behind co-management is to incorporate aboriginal understandings of how salmon and their habitat change over time. This knowledge, packaged as TEK, is not always easy to find. For Upper Skagit, traditional knowledge of salmon and salmon habitat can be found in family knowledge of fishing sites, and in the designation of usual and accustomed grounds and stations. But at the North of Falcon meetings, the discourse focuses primarily on fisheries science. The danger of TEK is that traditional knowledge is reified as an artifact that can be used by the state when it needs to prove that it is taking aboriginal perspectives into account in the co-management process. The reality is that in order to fight for their fishing rights at the North of Falcon meetings, the tribes must speak the language of

fisheries science and law in order to be heard. TEK may be referenced, but it is rarely valued equally with Western scientific knowledge when management practices are being determined.

At the Walters family fishing camp, historical consciousness meets legal and scientific discourse to produce local knowledge. At the camp, people exercise aboriginal rights to resources within the Skagit waterscape, and their access to these resources is determined by Western legal and scientific interpretations of treaty rights and resource numbers. Levon and the other fishers must operate within a “legal sensibility” (Geertz 1983:215) that regulates where, when, and how they can fish. The Natural Resources department spends time at the site collecting data that will influence the fishery openings and catch allotments for future years. Levon and his family work together with other Walters family members and members of the Jackson and Robertson families. Levon is aware of the history of the site; he remembers how fishing happened when he was a child, but today he has his own methods for efficiency, accessing the site at a different point and working with families who were not as connected to the Walters in the past. This is an illustration of the family cycle and its contribution to the production of local knowledge.

#### **4.4 Implications for Tribal Understandings**

Upper Skagit local knowledge emerges from the waterscape at many places: predecessor village sites, family allotments, fishing camps, and hunting and gathering places in addition to the reservation and the homes where Upper Skagit people live today. There is overlap between these places. The history of the tribe as a collective entity does

not eclipse family knowledge, but a collective history is necessary for the tribe's survival in the contemporary legal situation. Each person and his or her family have places within the waterscape that they know well because of their interactions with the place as well as their ancestors' interactions. An upriver family like the Marlowes has its family allotment and the places nearby where family members fish and hunt. They also have knowledge of sites downstream from their home, such as Baker River where the tribe fishes for sockeye, and places on the reservation where they go for community events. But Stanley Harrison, head of the Marlowe family, does not know the saltwater territory well, and spends little time near the mouth of the Skagit River.

When discussing this, Donna McMahon drew a diagram to describe to me how individual and family historical consciousness is situated within the Skagit waterscape. It was a series of circles or spheres indicating places that people might be familiar with. An upriver person like Stanley would have spheres of knowledge around his family's allotment and the places where he learned to hunt and fish as a child and where he continues to spend time as an adult. But his spheres of knowledge stop mid-river. The Walters family has spheres of knowledge at its fishing camp and other places within the waterscape where members fish. It also has spheres at the reservation where many of the members live today, and in the saltwater territory by the predecessor village of Nuwhaha. Their knowledge does not extend all the way up to where the Marlowe family resides. However, both families have ties to "east of the mountains," and some of their knowledge therefore extends over the Cascades to the plateau. As I mentioned earlier, no one Upper Skagit person has local knowledge of the entire Skagit waterscape but rather has spheres of knowledge at sites they know well. Collectively, the Upper Skagit tribal membership

knows the entire waterscape well, and this historical consciousness, when combined, forms the tribe's local knowledge of sites throughout Upper Skagit aboriginal territory. This knowledge gives them the right to continue fishing, hunting, and gathering within their territory, and to be party to decisions made by outside groups about how the Skagit waterscape should be managed.

## **Chapter 5: Traditional Oral Narratives**

In this chapter, I introduce a selection of Upper Skagit oral narratives recorded with elders in the mid-20<sup>th</sup> century that come from a larger body of work collected by Snyder and later Hilbert. These stories provide a glimpse into how Upper Skagit people of this generation—born in the late 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> centuries—understood their connections to the waterscape of their aboriginal territory. These narratives and their social context remain important to Upper Skagit people today even when they are not being told on a regular basis.

### **5.1 Approach to Oral Narratives**

My approach to aboriginal oral narratives and place draws on similar studies by Cruikshank (1998, 2005), Basso (1996), and Thomas Thornton (2008), all of which address questions of how Native people use stories to understand the physical environment in which they live. Cruikshank’s take on oral narratives in the Yukon draws on Michel de Certeau’s discussion of narrative’s function of authorizing and founding a legitimate theater for practical actions or experience of the world (de Certeau 1984:124-125). My approach uses this while also drawing on Lefebvre’s (1991) concepts of spatial production through contradictions (cf. Harvey 1996) and on Casey (1997), who argues that “to exist at all... ‘is to be implaced,’ that is to say, put in a space that is concrete and particular” (Thornton 2008:11). To explore the temporal and experiential aspects of space, I draw on Ingold’s “dwelling” idea, discussed in chapter 3, wherein time is what one “spends” as he or she has a synesthetic experience in a space (Ingold 2000). After experience, that space becomes a framed, meaningful place. Renato Rosaldo points out

that this mapping of experiences in a place over time is a way of marking excursions into the past on the landscape (1980), and as Upper Skagit oral narratives mark their places in the watershed they reveal both relationships with the landscape and the understanding of Upper Skagit history with the landscape.

My main source of data in this chapter is a collection of 113 Upper Skagit stories recorded by anthropologist Sally Snyder in 1954 (n.d.). I also draw on a Traditional Cultural Property (TCP) study by Miller and Angelbeck to show Vi Hilbert's version of a story she heard from her aunt, Susie Sampson Peter. I use these data to outline major connections between the oral narratives and Upper Skagit conceptions of waterscape and historical consciousness in the mid-20<sup>th</sup> century as well as today. Connections will be demonstrated through examples of the following types of stories: stories from specific places within the Skagit waterscape, Transformer stories, how land/waterscape features came to exist, movement across land and water, and behavior of weather and water levels.

I look at stories told by four of Snyder's informants who she describes as "non-Reservation Skagits," differentiating them from the Lower Skagit people she worked with on the Swinomish Reservation (she doesn't use the term "Upper Skagit," likely because the tribe was not federally recognized at that point and the phrase would not have been common outside the community). She describes Louise Walters and Charlie Anderson as "gold mines for all kinds of information and stories" (1965:ix). Louise Walters was married to Don Walters, brother of Charles Walters and uncle to Fred and Sam Walters. She and her husband lived in Concrete and Snyder refers to her as "a principal source of

myths and tales, as well as data about women and children” (1965:ix). Vi Hilbert comments on Louise Walters in *Haboo*, calling her,

One of the favorite storytellers of Dr. Sally Snyder... quiet, soft-spoken, and helpful. She was married to Dick [Walters], my uncle. We sometimes visited them in Concrete when they lived near the Shaker Church. She was often one of the cooks for the Shaker meetings. Her bawdy stories came as a surprise to me... She spoke Skagit well and was good natured, but stayed mostly in the background in deference to her husband. [1985:xiv]

Hilbert’s family connection to the Walters family indicates the close family relationships Upper Skagit people maintained with each other throughout the settlement period, particularly in places like the town of Concrete. Another of Snyder’s informants lived in Concrete: Annie Conrad whose age was estimated between ninety and one-hundred years and who spoke to Snyder through an interpreter. I interviewed Annie’s great-grandson, John, who is not enrolled at Upper Skagit but who lives in Rockport and is close friends with Stanley Harrison.

Snyder also worked with Charlie and Louise Anderson, who were Vi Hilbert’s parents, establishing a direct connection between Snyder’s work and Hilbert’s as Hilbert was trained by her parents in storytelling. While Hilbert trained several storytellers in her work as a teacher at the University of Washington and through various mentoring relationships, she did not train anyone in the Upper Skagit community. The stories are available to the community through *Haboo* and Hilbert is a known figure in the community (see my discussion in the previous chapter). Through this genealogy of stories, we can trace waterscape connections in Upper Skagit oral tradition back over 150 years—linking to Charlie Anderson who was born in 1880.



My approach to the 113 stories collected and transcribed by Sally Snyder began with an overview of the stories and the details of storyteller and origin provided with the titles. Using her field notes (housed at the University of Washington archives) I outlined each story as follows:

**Story:** [Number and Title]

**Source:** [Storyteller's initials, e.g. CA, additional details about where the storyteller heard the story including both names of other storytellers (often relatives) and geographic locations about the story's origins or where it is told.]

**Location:** [Details of where the story took place, if available]

**Summary:** [A shortened version of the story to facilitate indexing]

Doing this for each story allowed me to create a record that allowed me to easily trace the geographical locations of both the storytellers' family histories and the geographical details of the stories themselves.

I present select portions of each story as needed in my discussion here, and the full text of the stories as transcribed by Snyder is available in Appendix B.<sup>35</sup> After each story in this chapter, I briefly summarize the meaning while making connections to Upper Skagit consciousness of waterscape. The level of detail in the stories varies, often depending on the time in which the story took place, the storytellers' practices, and the context in which the stories were recorded. Stories from the "myth age" period before the Transformer came and people were still animals are often geographically generalized. They tend to occur near an unspecified river or unspecified body of saltwater, with

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<sup>35</sup> I analyze these stories for waterscape content and spatial data, and so I work with summaries here. A close analysis of the original text of these stories is outside of the scope of this dissertation.

unspecified mountains and islands. Stories that take place after the animals had changed into people tend to be more geographically specific, although there are exceptions to this such as when a story demonstrates how a geographic feature came to exist in a certain way. As I discussed in the previous chapter, according to Hess, Lushootseed oral narratives are divided into two categories: history (*lələʔuləb*) and myth age stories (*syəyəhub* or *syəhub*). In addition, “there are also personal accounts which fall under the general term *syəcəb* which refers to any sort of news or non-traditional story” (Hilbert 1985: xix). All three are discussed here.<sup>36</sup>

One detail of location that is often specified is the part of the Skagit where the stories were told—Upper Skagit or Lower Skagit. The Lower Skagit stories are sometimes referred to as “salt-water” stories. This distinction is recognizable in contemporary Upper Skagit life as many people have relatives from Swinomish and Samish. In Snyder’s usage, the designation of a story as Lower Skagit or saltwater does not preclude it from being an Upper Skagit story; it simply defines the origins and location of the story itself, and may indicate where it was more frequently told. One example of a distinction between Upper Skagit and Lower Skagit stories is the cast of animal characters involved in the action. Lower Skagit stories involve animals that live only in saltwater: Devil Fish, Octopus, Seal, Whale, etc. They also tend to cast Raven as the main trickster. Upper Skagit stories, by comparison, have both Raven and Coyote as

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<sup>36</sup> While I outlined a historical periodization for Upper Skagit in the previous chapter, that periodization is based on my work with contemporary tribal members. For the purposes of these older stories, I use the older classification system.

trickster characters, indicating a closer connection between Upper Skagit and the groups east of the mountains, where Coyote is the primary trickster.<sup>37</sup>

## 5.2 Stories from Specific Predecessor Villages

Many of the stories take place in the general area of the Skagit River, the mountains, and the saltwater, and could be interpreted as occurring anywhere. In this way, storytellers and their audiences could envision these stories happening wherever they happened to be. But several stories from the Snyder collection occur at specific places within the Upper Skagit waterscape. This is typically indicated in the storyteller's introduction or in Snyder's notes about the storyteller's ancestry and from whom he or she heard the story. The following factors of location are important in this discussion: location of the actions in the story, storyteller's location (where he or she grew up, where he or she resided as an adult, or both), and location of the person from which the storyteller originally heard the story. All of these factors together weave a fabric of spatial authorship that incorporates individual identity, family identities and marriage connections, places of residence, places of resource use, and places of spiritual practice.

Stories that include the above information are generally traceable to one or more of the eleven predecessor villages of Upper Skagit, with more stories coming from the villages that sustained higher populations into the settlement period. While all of these village sites maintain significance in Upper Skagit historical consciousness today, some of them—particularly those closer to the reservation in Sedro-Woolley—are better known

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<sup>37</sup> For more on the trickster figure in indigenous narratives, see Deana Reder and Linda M. Morra's (2010) edited volume *Troubling Tricksters: Revisioning Critical Conversations*.

to Upper Skagit people than others. Some villages are known better than others because they were larger and because there are settlements in their locations today. This includes Nookachamps, near present-day Mt. Vernon and Burlington, and Bsigwigwilts near present-day Sedro-Woolley, and Sabelxu at present-day Concrete (see Figure 2.1).

The Snyder collection includes stories from the following villages: Sakhumehu, Sbalexu, Nookachamps, Nuwhaha, and Skaywih. To demonstrate how these stories are attached to their locations I will summarize one story from each village with the notes from Snyder about storyteller ancestry and location. Each story includes specific references to the village and surrounding area.

*Story #6: “Mountain Legend”*

Story #6 takes place near Sakhumehu (near what is present-day Darrington, WA) and is a “mountain legend” told to Snyder by Annie Conrad. In the story, Sauk Mountain and Hazel Mountain were sisters. Sauk Mountain was a strong person from east of the mountains and the other sister was from Lower Skagit territory. Whitehorse Mountain, near Darrington, was their husband and the two women fought over him. According to the story, Hazel Mountain has streaks on it that you can see when you look at it today. Sauk Mountain won because she was strong, and she threw Whitehorse Mountain into its current location so she could see him all the time. Because she was defeated by her sister, Hazel Mountain is down below with a scratched face and a swollen head on one side. Conrad ends with an explanation: “That is why Indians from east of the Cascades come over here and marry—because Sauk Mountain was an ‘East of the Cascades Woman,’” (Snyder n.d.:Box 108-3).

This story does several things at once: it explains marriage ties between Skagit people and Okanogan people and explains the physical locations (Whitehorse) and physical appearances of mountains (Hazel). It also establishes the general landscape of the Sauk valley. While Sauk-Suiattle Indian Tribe, located in Darrington, are not part of Upper Skagit today, historically and prior to contact the Sahkumehu village site was tied to the other villages and there are numerous family ties between the two tribes that continue today. For example, Stanley Harrison's grandmother, Jeanie Marlowe, was from Sauk-Suiattle.

*Story #42: "Grouse (sesək<sup>w</sup>)"*

This story comes from Sabelxu. It was told to Snyder by Louise Walters, who heard the story from her mother's mother, *sasal*. In this story, Grouse, a woman, had a bunch of eggs. She packed her eggs and went all over with her husband. Her husband told her, "You have to lay an egg for each tribe. Later on the next world will be coming out." Grouse's wife was to leave one egg at Sabelxu and another at Cascade (the predecessor village of Skaywih, or what is today Marblemount), and one on each of the mountains "so that all the world would have that kind of egg." Her husband said, "There will be too many grouse if you leave all the eggs at one place," so she went around and laid eggs all over the Skagit valley (Snyder n.d.:Box 108-3).

This story explains how grouse, an animal traditionally hunted by Upper Skagit people, came to be in Skagit territory, and also how the animals chose to disperse themselves throughout the region at each Upper Skagit village and on each of the mountains. While Grouse and her husband's original location is unspecified, the

storyteller anchors the story at Sabelxu and Cascade, indicating an upriver emphasis that falls in line with how the storyteller attributes the story to her grandmother and specifies her grandmother's identity as "Upper Skagit."

*Story #19: "Indian power story"*

This is a Nookachamps story from Louise Walters, who heard it from her father. The story opens by declaring, "The Nookachamps were strongest for power" (Snyder n.d.:Box 108-3). A man had three boys and a wife and they lived at *b<sup>w</sup>əcalals*, a part of Nookachamps. The father mistreated his youngest son because he was the smallest. At night, the youngest boy would get up, run outside, and go swimming while the others were sleeping. Then he would come home and sleep hard until morning. He lay there after the others were up because he was tired from swimming, and they hassled him about getting up and washing up to go and swim. They had no idea what he'd been doing all night, while he was out accessing his spirit power.

One night the father and his sons went to the river to fish with a net between two canoes (see more about this technique in Chapter 3). They came to Sedro-Woolley when it was evening and dark. They put the net in the water and got a fish and it wiggled, but as soon as they pulled it into the canoe they saw it was the hind leg of an elk. The smallest boy was stooped down in the canoe, and he knew that the elk was his. They continued to pull in the net and got the ribs of an elk and put it in the canoe. They all looked at the little boy and he said nothing. They dipped again and got the arm of an elk. Soon they had almost the entire elk in the canoe.

One brother asked the little boy, "Who is giving us this meat? I suppose you!"

The little boy turned around and said, “That’s my meat! I’m going to clean the house and sing my power song and invite all the Indians.”

The other boys were ashamed of their treatment of their brother. The little boy told his mother to clean up the house and cook the elk meat and call friends to help him pound the stick so he could sing. The mother was glad that her son had a power and she worked hard. The brothers went out to invite the people.

They finished the first elk and the boy said, “An elk will come down to the house and a certain man will kill it.” The people ate all the meat from the river. Soon, on another day, an elk came down and they killed it and had another feast. The creek at Nookachamps filled up with fish. The power brought it to the little creek and the Indians there had lots of food (Snyder n.d.:Box 108-3).

This story explains how certain animals came to Nookachamps as a result of the boy’s power. It explains how he got his power—by swimming and running at night—and how his family, who had treated him poorly before, ended up valuing him and feeling remorseful about their previous actions. This trope of the youngest, smallest sibling turning out to be the most powerful is frequent in Upper Skagit oral history (Hilbert 1985). It also describes how people canoed from Nookachamps to Sedro-Woolley, to fish in the Skagit.

*Story #94: “Mink and West Wind”*

This story comes from Nuwhaha. It was told to Charlie Anderson by Jack Walters from Nuwhaha. Mink had heard about this West Wind (*stu?č’a’k<sup>w</sup>*). West Wind had a dog and he had a cane with rattles in it, and when he walked he made a lot of noise.

Everywhere he went he had his dog with him. Mink also had a dog. His dog was very smart, small, and went with him everywhere. Mink walked towards West Wind with his little dog, and soon he heard West Wind coming with his cane rattling as he got close.

When West Wind saw Mink, he yelled, “Oh friend, you better keep your dog away from my dog. My dog will kill your little dog.”

Mink replied, “My dog is a great dog. It’s going to kill your dog.”

When West Wind’s big dog got a hold of Mink’s little dog he swallowed the little dog whole.

Mink said, “Oh friend, your dog is going to die. My dog is a great, great dog and will kill your dog.”

Not long after that, the big dog’s stomach burst open and Mink’s little dog ran out. The big dog died. So West Wind started to blow at Mink, a strong wind coming, and just blew him away. Mink had no chance to get a hold anywhere. The strong wind just blew him away and carried him. Mink never got killed or hurt, he just went with the wind and landed back somewhere.

The last two lines of the story say, “This happened at Duwhaha between Blanchard and Chuckanut Drive. West Wind’s track is on a point of rocks down there” (Snyder n.d.:Box 108-3). This story is given a specific location in Duwhaha territory, with a reference to a certain landscape feature. It explains the characteristics of West Wind as well as some of Mink’s cunning personality.



*Story #86*

This story takes place at Skaywih (Marblemount) and according to Snyder is a “true story told to Charlie Anderson by his father’s cousin’s husband who lived at the head of the Skagit.” It is about people from Marblemount who traveled upstream on the Skagit to a place called the Portage to fish for steelhead during their spawning season and stayed at that fishing site to get “all the dry salmon they could want and need.” They lived on an island up there when they were fishing called *sáx<sup>w</sup>sax<sup>w</sup>il* (“it’s all grass”; *sax<sup>w</sup>* is “grass”). One of the men had a son who was blind and had crooked legs he couldn’t straighten. While working, the man spoke roughly to his son. He said, “You’re always in my way and you’re never any help to me.”

When his father walked away to work, the son felt around and got a big, wide board. He dragged it down to the river because he wanted to get away from that place. He got the board to the water, got on it, and made it across the river. He heard a noise in the water across the river and headed for that. When he landed he couldn’t stand up so he just crept along with his buckskin blanket. The flat where he landed was about a quarter mile from the foot of the big hill *lalawá?səd* (“bed platform”). When the father returned to where his son had been he found him gone. He didn’t know where he had gone, so he assumed he had drowned. He didn’t care very much, but his wife felt bad about her son.

The boy crept along the big hill, following the stream of water he’d heard running. He did this for four days, not making it very far each day. Soon he heard someone’s voice. The voice said, “There’s a person coming, and he’s blind.” He heard another voice say from inside a house, “Bring him in! Bring him in!” So the man brought him inside. The person who owned the house told the man, “I’m going to work on him so

his eyes will be open.” When the boy opened his eyes, it was Big Snake that lived in the side of the hill and had a house. Big Snake worked on the boy’s legs until they straightened and he was able to walk. When he left the house he used his eyes and his legs and walked around.

This happened towards the end of May. The boy walked to the top of the hill and stayed there for many days. Eventually he moved down toward where his people lived. By October he made it down to Marblemount. His parents lived on the north side of the river and he came in on the south side, late in the evening. He called for his parents to come after him. They went over in their canoe and when they got there they boy told them, “I’m coming home now, coming home to stay.” He was a different person altogether from when his parents had seen him last. He told his father, “I’m going home but I’m not going to your house. I don’t want to go into any house that anyone lived in before. It has to be a new house.”

His father went back to the village and told everyone that his son had come back but wouldn’t come over. “He wants a different house built before he comes over to this side.” His father got to work and had all his friends help split boards. Before long they had a house built for his son. When the son got to this house, anything he wished—animals like deer and bear—came in close to where those people lived. They didn’t have to go far away to get all the food they wanted. It was the boy’s power, the Snake power, that brought prosperity to this place (Snyder n.d.:Box 108-4).

This story shows how people from the village at Marblemount traveled upstream for fishing purposes and then returned to their homes with dried fish. It demonstrates how one can obtain Snake Power by going up on a certain hill, and how that power is a good

power (even though the teller notes that many people think it comes from the devil). It also contains the trope of the weak young man becoming the strong figure who brings prosperity to his village in spite of poor treatment by his family.

### 5.3 Transformer Stories and Waterscape Features

In this section I discuss Transformer stories and stories that explain how features of the waterscape came to exist. A major factor in Upper Skagit stories, and in the stories of the Northwest Coast region in general, is the transformation of the world from the time long ago when there were no humans as we know them, to the time when humans came to exist as we know them today. Stories take place either in the time before or the time after, and the change itself was brought about by a Transformer character who moved through the landscape changing things (see my discussion of this time period and the Transformer in the previous chapter).

Hess describes the Transformer shift in the Lushootseed Salish world as follows:

Long ago, before the change, there were no humans as we know them. All of the beings of this age shimmered among humanoid, animal, and spirit forms; but they always had the same emotions and sensibilities as humans. When people did arrive, the world had been prepared for them by the Transformer, who had arranged for all of the beings to take on the fixed forms of animals, plants, and geological features. [Hilbert 1985: xix]

The Transformer in the Snyder stories is known as *dúk<sup>w</sup>zbəłš*, and tends to appear when people are behaving badly.

*Story #10: “Raven (koks) and dúkʷzbəlš”*

This story was told to Snyder by Annie Conrad. This story, a *syəyəhub* story, takes place long ago when, according to the storyteller, “it was mostly the birds and animals who were the people, and this country was so full of them that they didn’t know where to stay.” (In this story, “people” refers to animals). The animals used to talk about and wonder why there were so many of them. It was so crowded that people were sitting around on the ground, and always getting children, and they would have meetings about what they were going to do. Mink and Coyote always took part in the doings, like big tribal members who always wanted to have something to say. Raven wanted to be a ruler and make rules and have them passed. No one ever died and the country was crowded and they were wondering about this problem. Raven wanted to be the leader in that discussion but they knew he wasn’t a good man. All of these people—Bears, Mink, Coyote, Elk, Goats—were the bigger people trying to fight Raven because he wanted to make it so that there would be death. And the rest wanted to have all the people live forever.

After these people tried to tell Raven that there would be no such thing as death, and Raven wouldn’t give in, they planned to let Raven find out for himself and see. He would be the first to have death in his family. After that the people gave up and let there be death. *dúkʷzbəlš* (Transformer) said that Raven would have the first death in his family, and he fixed it so there would be death. After Raven’s child got sick and died, Raven didn’t know what to do. He was falling around, crying, and said that he was sorry and he wanted people to come alive again. He would call around and put his head on the ground and somehow he turned black. After that, young and old people started dying. But

people were getting kind of bad, and *dúkʷzbałš* changed them into what they are now—birds, animals, some even turned to rocks—the ones that were not doing the right things (Snyder n.d.:Box 108-3).

This story demonstrates Upper Skagit understanding of how things were “before” as all of the characters are animals referred to as “people.” They act like humans, but remain animals until the Transformer comes through to change them. It is important to note that after Transformer changed these myth age characters into animals, plants, and geographical features, they retain some of the characteristics from before the change. In this way, Upper Skagit people understand certain non-human forms as sentient. In Western scientific classification, we categorize things as either living (animals and plants) or non-living (geographical features such as rocks), and within the living category we ascribe sentience to animals but not plants. These categorizations are foreign to the Upper Skagit myth-world, both pre- and post-Transformer. The major change after the Transformation, in addition to the physical, was the establishment of a hierarchy in which humans became the major players. This does not relegate the animals, plants, and rocks to inaction. Upper Skagit people today continue to regard these things as sentient. This was made clear to me as I spent time on the land and water with them. Upper Skagit people training to find spirit powers still bathe in pools and seek out geographical features that will imbue them with these powers.

*Story #13: “How the Indians were raised on the Skagit”*

This story uses the transformation to explain the existence of certain landscape features that exist today. The main plot of the story is stated in the introduction: “This is

how these Indians came to have Indian power.” It tells of four brothers who came to the Skagit “from way, way off someplace.” The oldest brother was named *sk<sup>w</sup>dilič*. He made a man and a woman and showed them how to find deer meat on the mountain. One brother was a Knife (*stədók*) power, and he showed the people how to cut the deer meat. Another brother, Fire (*ha·dʔ*), showed them how to cook it. *sk<sup>w</sup>dilič* also showed the man and woman where to find berries and how to find fish in the river. He told them how to prepare themselves to receive power by being clean. The fourth brother came from the Okanagon and watched all of this as it happened.

After they were finished, *sk<sup>w</sup>dilič* sat down in the river facing downstream and turned into a rock, called *sk<sup>w</sup>dilb*. His brother is *x<sup>w</sup>əskédib*, a large rock in the middle of the Skagit at the head. *sk<sup>w</sup>dilič* is *sk<sup>w</sup>dilb*’s power and he sang his power song after he sat down and told the people, “You’ll hear me before daylight. Those that are raised here and clean will find me, and will have a strong power to get fish, to get meat, to get food.” To obtain that power, people must camp near the rock and dive into the water early in the morning (Snyder n.d.:Box 108-3).

In addition to explaining how these four brothers helped the first people obtain power and feed themselves, the story describes the formation of two particular rocks in the river and the actions necessary to obtain power at those places. In my experiences, people keep particular power sites is very secret—they may allude to where they go, but they will not provide specifics, and this is in line with the secrecy of the smokehouse religion (see Chapter 6 for further discussion of Upper Skagit religious practices). This particular story provides specific information because it is not about a person alive

today—the secrecy is somewhat lessened after a person has passed away. This story also shows that power is situated in and associated with water and water features, a theme that recurs throughout the waterscape.

*Story #70: A s·bïau (Coyote) story*

While the *sk<sup>w</sup>dilič* story is about people and powers (in the form of people), other stories explain landscape features as results of actions by animals. In a story Charlie Anderson told to Sally Snyder, #70, Coyote frequently traveled back and forth between Wenatchee<sup>38</sup> and the west side of the mountains. On one trip back to Wenatchee he encountered two little children on the trail. He asked who their parents were, but they children couldn't talk, so he killed them. He started singing, and when he got to the top of a hill he looked back and saw that two women were following him. These women were Basket Ogresses (*a'x<sup>w</sup>adas*), women who carried baskets and captured children to take home and eat. He was close to Wenatchee on the east side of the mountains when he saw them, so he ran ahead and called out to everyone that the Basket Ogresses were coming. He was scared.

All the strong animals gathered together—Wolf, Elk, Grizzly Bear, Black Bear—and went over to a large rock. They got rocks the size of their hands and tried throwing the smaller rocks at the big rock to crack it open and see who would be strong enough to kill the Basket Ogresses. They couldn't do it, the smaller rocks kept bouncing off the big rock. They thought of Mallard, a strong animal who can go from sitting to flying very

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<sup>38</sup> Upper Skagit narratives frequently refer to “east of the mountains” as “Wenatchee” because Wenatchee, WA (situated on the Columbia River) is one of the main places they visited and where they had (and continue to have) relatives.

quickly. Mallard got a rock and threw it at the big rock and it burst into pieces. He went ahead of everyone on the trail and threw a rock at each Basket Ogress. The rocks went through the Basket Ogresses' heads and killed them. There is a big rock near Wenatchee that has holes in it, and that rock used to be one of the Basket Ogresses before she was killed. After Mallard killed her, she turned into the rock (Snyder n.d.:Box 108-4).

This story explains the formation of certain rocks, as Snyder notes at the end: “Charlie Anderson heard that the woman, the big rock there somewhere around Wenatchee, is a *a'x'adas* woman which turned into a rock (or rocks) with holes in it.” This story and other stories about Coyote's travels from “east of the mountains” to the Skagit River and back demonstrate a connection between Upper Skagit people and the central Washington tribes dating back thousands of years. The major trail used to cross the mountains went along the Cascade River and over Cascade Pass to the eastern side of the mountain range. Archaeologists have found evidence of human use of this trail dating back nine thousand years (Mierendorf 2009), and Upper Skagit stories—both myth age and historical—show familiarity with the trail and travel conditions. Many Upper Skagit families have marriage ties east of the mountains, including the former hereditary chief Conrad, whose son is currently enrolled with Colville Indian Reservation east of the mountains. The trail is popular today with hikers in North Cascades National Park.

*Story #24: (Coyote)*

Another example of this kind of story is #24, told to Snyder by Louise Walters, who notes that the story originally came from Art Marlowe, brother of Henry and uncle to Stanley Harrison. The Marlowe family has an allotment property on the banks of the



Cascade River and, according to Stanley Harrison, the trail that went up to Cascade Pass used to run right through their land. The first line explains that Coyote (*s·biau*) was walking along a trail, “going back to Okanogan<sup>39</sup> country, because he was half from there.” Coyote’s ancestry is frequently described this way, with him being half Skagit, half Okanogan. This demonstrates Upper Skagit bilateral kinship practices (Suttles 1987). Marriage ties between the two sides of the Cascades date to pre-settlement times and continue in the present. In the past, that ensured people from both groups could travel back and forth to visit family and participate in resource gathering; this travel continues today.

In story #24, Coyote was walking along the trail going back to Okanogan country. When he was far along the trail he found a little bird, Chickadee (*čiskákəd*), with a bow and arrow in its hand. Because Chickadee was so small Coyote was sure the bow and arrow belonged to the little bird’s father, and he decided he would retrieve them and give them to the father.

When Coyote reached Chickadee he said, “You’d better take that bow and arrow back to your father. You might lose them.”

Chickadee just stood and looked at Coyote. Coyote repeated his statement and this time Chickadee answered him, “It’s mine!”

“I don’t believe you made that,” Coyote said. “Still, take it home to your father and leave it. You’re too small to make that kind. You’re just a little boy.”

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<sup>39</sup> “Okanogan” is another phrase Upper Skagit people use to refer to “east of the mountains.” Okanogan, WA is a town near Lake Chelan, a key part of the waterscape on the east side of the Cascades. Canadian readers will be familiar with the “Okanagan” as part of interior BC, located on the northern side of the border from the Okanogan area in the US. The spelling is different in each country, but the area is contiguous.

Chickadee was, in fact, a grown man, and he said to Coyote, "I'm not a child. I made them."

Coyote gave up and decided to pass Chickadee on the trail, but Chickadee was annoyed and decided he would kill Coyote. He followed Coyote up the trail. Coyote was halfway home, dancing and singing on the trail, when he came to the top of a mountain. He was very happy. Chickadee came along and aimed his bow and arrow at Coyote's back while he was standing at a narrow part of the trail. Chickadee said, "*Wex!*" and shot Coyote. Coyote rolled down to the bottom of the mountain. He lay there for a long time.

Coyote's cousin, Fox (*sxóxo*), didn't know where Coyote was. He thought to himself, "He's going back to the home country." Fox was a powerful man who kept an eye on Coyote because he knew his cousin was "kind of crazy." Fox went to the Okanogan to look for Coyote and couldn't find him there, so he went to the mountain and looked around. He saw Coyote's bones and skin at the bottom of the mountain and thought to himself, "He must have bothered someone and gotten killed." Fox gathered the bones and skin and put them all in one place. He jumped back and forth over the bones, saying, "He's going to come alive." Coyote moved, and Fox continued to jump back and forth.

Soon Coyote lifted his head and looked around. Fox asked him, "What was it you were doing that got you killed?"

Coyote yawned and said, "I must have slept a long time."

Fox said, "You were dead."

Coyote yawned again and said, "I was just sleeping."

Fox said, "No, you died. I found your bones and skin."

Coyote said, “You spoiled my sleep.”

Fox just advised Coyote to take care of himself and not bother people again, and they walked away together down the mountain. (Snyder n.d.:Box 108-3)

This story demonstrates kinship across the mountains and knowledge of the trail between the Skagit and the Okanagon. There are also several stories, not included in this dissertation, of Coyote getting food by trapping animals inside a house and using Skunk to fill the place with odor and kill everyone. Coyote is a trickster character who is frequently held up as an example of bad behavior. He is also a humorous character. Transcriptions of Coyote stories often indicate laughter and lightheartedness.

#### **5.4 Water Features and Behavior**

Upper Skagit narratives also explain why certain water features exist. In Snyder’s dissertation, she writes about tidal currents in the saltwater area:

The spirit power is also an inhabitant of the deep [water], the son of the wealth power, He’yada. He charms away the girl to become his bride, and she leaves with him to live with his people for one year. In this time she transforms to become a water-dweller like her husband, and her natal village prospers because of her union with the He’yada. But when she returns for a visit, her family cuts her hair (to sever the in-law tie) and keeps her there. Now when canoes travel through Deception Pass<sup>40</sup> their occupants must repeat the bride’s name lest they be drawn down into the whirlpools there. The marine danger and avoidance of it arose out of the He’yada’s wrath over the kidnapping of their daughter-in-law. (Snyder 1964:223)

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<sup>40</sup> Deception Pass is located at the northern tip of Whidbey Island, south of Anacortes, WA (see Figure 2.1).

While this references awareness of dangerous currents and whirlpools in the saltwater, the stories I worked with also show awareness of changes in water levels on the Skagit River and its tributaries.

*Story #37: (about Snake and Beaver)*

One of these stories, #37 in the Snyder stories, comes from Louise Walters, who learned it from her maternal grandmother. In this story, Snake (*bəzác*) was Beaver (*stəkx<sup>w</sup>*)'s brother and he lived on top of Beaver's house. Beaver's house was a hole by the river. Mouse (*x<sup>w</sup>átad*) and Frog (*waulís*) were girls who lived across the river from Beaver's house. One evening Beaver said to Snake, "I'm going to get Mouse for a wife and you'll get Frog for your wife." He thought it was a good time to get married, and Snake agreed.

They got ready and crossed the river to talk to the girls. Mouse was "a great, mouthy girl" who spoke her mind and told everyone everything. When Beaver asked her to marry him and suggested that Snake marry Frog she got angry and said, "I wouldn't marry you, Big Stomach! You make a bad noise when you sit down! And I don't want my sister to marry that funny tall guy that stinks at the same time!"

Beaver said, "Oh, it's all right with me. My brother stinks and is a tall guy." He and Snake prepared to go back across the river and Beaver said to his brother, "I'll fix them. They'll change their ways. I'll make the river rise and get a Chinook wind and their house will be flooded and Mouse will drown."

When they got home, Beaver called for the clouds and the rain to come. He called for the river to rise high so Mouse's house would be flooded. It rained and the river raised

high and fast. When the flood came to Mouse's house she called across to Beaver, "I'm willing to marry you, and my sister is willing to marry Snake."

Beaver got angry. "My stomach's too big for you and it makes noise, and my brother's too tall and stinks. We can't change now."

Mouse's house began to float down the river and she called out that she was going to drown and was willing to marry Beaver. Beaver replied, "You float down and my brother will eat Frog and that will be his food now." That's why snakes live on beavers' houses, because in the story they are brothers. And that's why snakes eat frogs (Snyder n.d.:Box 108-3).

This story shows an understanding of aquatic animals and their behavior, as well as the impact of rain on water levels and flooding.

*Story #51: hihat*

Another story involving water levels is a historical tale, #51 in the Snyder stories, a power story told by Louise Walters. She heard it from the main character in the story, *hihat*, who told it as an old man. According to Snyder's notes, "It is all right for a person to tell his power in this way as long as he is an old man. But a young person's power is still too good and so that's why they hid it."

*hihat* went up the Baker River and then up Swift Creek *duxázab dsliux* (*duxázab*, 'swift' and *dsliux*, 'water' or 'creek'), a tributary of the Baker, to look for power. He went for a long time and camped, cleansing and fasting until he heard *síalkab*, a power that comes in a female form. *hihat* got his power on the side of Mt. Baker where *síalkab* lived. After getting his power, he went home to Hamilton, where the people had a

great smokehouse for winter spirit dancing. *hihal* got sick, and his power told him to sing, but he wouldn't do it. For a whole year he lay down and ate nothing.

After a year, someone came to visit *hihal* and see if he still had his power. The visitor sat down and *hihal* said to him, "I'm very sick, but no one can help me sing that power. I can sing my power but no one can help me."

The visitor, happy to hear this, replied, "I'm going to gather the Indians and this evening you're going to sing the power."

He got the Indians together and they went to the smokehouse with their sticks ready to pound.<sup>41</sup> *hihal* tried to sing, but he couldn't get his voice to come out. All the people came in close as the visitor sat down and sang loudly for *hihal*, and before long everyone joined in singing the *stálkəb* power. On the third night of singing, the *stálkəb* power said to *hihal*, "I'm going to feed my people fish now."

*hihal* thought he was sick and poor and that he couldn't sing because he couldn't feed all the Indians who were helping him sing. When the *stálkəb* power said, "I'm going to help now," the side of Mount Baker slid down and the water began to come up. The lake was full of timber and the river was full of mud, and it was big and flooded and Swift Creek was coming down. That night it flooded all the way down to Hamilton and killed all the salmon and trout in the river.

By noon the next day the floodwaters had passed. *hihal* said to the Indians, "You go down to the river with baskets and get the fish lying there." One old fellow had a little house above Hamilton, and the people told him to get busy gathering the fish because he

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<sup>41</sup> See J. Miller (1999) for a description of Lushootseed shamanic practices.

was close to the river. All of the fish were lying on a beach and people picked them up until they had enough to take home. Thanks to his power, *hihal* was able to heal and feed all the people who helped him sing (Snyder n.d.:Box 108-3).

Flooding is common on the Skagit River and this story demonstrates one way of explaining the forces behind a flood in a historical narrative. For Upper Skagit people today, flooding is understood as a result of rainfall, snowmelt, and changes in dam release levels (see my discussion of flooding in Chapter 3). Fishers monitor water levels for optimum flows—described to me as a level at which “everyone will have a good fishery, both experienced guys and greenhorns [beginners].” The fisheries department schedules fishery openings for times when the flows will be at such levels. If weather conditions raise the levels, the fishery is postponed until a later date. The above story also shows an awareness of what water looks like in flood—full of timber and mud, starting up high in the mountains and working its way through tributaries down to the main Skagit.

### *Sockeye Marriage Story*

The Sockeye Marriage story, which demonstrates awareness of changes in the waterscape over time, takes place in the Baker River watershed like story #51. Vi Hilbert published this story, told in 1954 by her aunt, Susie Sampson Peter, in *Haboo* (1985:137-144). In Miller and Angelbeck (2008) she explains the provenance of the story as follows:

My main story of course is the Sockeye in Baker River, it was the story that was told by my aunt Susie and she was the historian in the old time, knew stories and knew history and was a very powerful lady. She was a medicine woman.

She and my dad [Charlie Anderson] were first cousins, their fathers were brothers. That's how she came to be my aunt Susie. She was tape recorded... and I was fortunate enough to get copies of it so I could hear her, transcribe and translate her. Because she didn't speak English, she only spoke Lushootseed. [Miller and Angelbeck 2008:115]

Hilbert also published a book of Susie Sampson Peter's life history narratives and traditional stories with Jay Miller in 1995, *ḵəčusədəc? g<sup>w</sup>eqwulce?: Aunt Susie Sampson Peter; The Wisdom of a Skagit Elder*. The book includes transcriptions of recordings with Sampson Peter made by Leon Metcalf, a Seattle Pacific University music teacher, in the 1950s.

In one of the stories, Sampson Peter talks about her training to become an Indian doctor, citing the following experiences of bathing in the Skagit River:

I am not sure of my age, however old I was.

Maybe I was ten years old at that time...

When the West Wind blew, I was told, "Take off your clothes and run (as fast as you can)..."

You need only to keep on your small undergarment (for modesty).

Alright, you go, run upriver."

Toward there at *sḵadḵad<sup>z</sup>adis*...

I removed my skirt, placed it beside the river, weighted it down with a rock, and I swam out into the current, away from shore.

Out into the stream I floated in the pitch black night.

[an aside] I was not afraid.

Nothing was allowed to scare me. [1995:2]



This description shows how Sampson Peter derived her healing powers from the Skagit River through traditional spirit questing practices. This method of spirit questing was practiced by Upper Skagit people until the early 20<sup>th</sup> century, when Christianity became more popular—particularly through the Indian Shaker Church—and traditional questing fell largely but not entirely by the wayside. However, the religion has persevered in modified forms. Upper Skagit people still bath in spiritually potent places in the waterscape, but they do not do it at as young an age as Sampson Peter did (see my discussion of religion in Chapter 6). The above passage demonstrates the relationship Sampson Peter had with the waterscape—she derived her power directly from it—and this relationship impacts her perceptions of the waterscape, which are apparent through her storytelling.

What follows is the transcript of Hilbert’s version of Sampson Peter’s “Sockeye Marriage” story as told to Miller and Angelbeck at Baker Lodge in 2003:

This is a story that was told by my Aunt Susie and she said, *quidáqi* lived there. Now *quidáqi* and his brothers, his younger brothers lived with their mother in Sabelxu territory. Now *quidáqi* and his brothers must have been bachelors, unmarried and living with their mother up here in Sabelxu territory. It’ll come back to me, who these people were but they were somebody that didn’t actually live here, in my mind they didn’t live here.

No, *quidáqi* heard about a very industrious woman who lived in Point Roberts<sup>42</sup> area down in the Fraser country.

*Quidáqi* said, “I’m going to go after that very industrious woman. She does have a husband.”

His mother thought very very bad... “That would be a bad thing for you to do to go after a married woman. You better not go and do that.”

*Quidáqi*: “I’m going to go anyway!”

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<sup>42</sup> Point Roberts, WA, is located near Tsawassen, BC, where the Fraser River flows into the Strait of Georgia

So *quidáqi* started on his trip to get this poor woman who was so industrious, had a reputation for making many things with her hands. His brothers asked his mother after a while, "Where is *quidáqi*?"

The mother said, "Your older brother is doing something very very bad. That is why I'm feeling so bad. He went after a woman who has a husband."

*Quidáqi*'s brothers decided to tag along to see if their brother stayed out of trouble. They stayed out of sight to follow their brother.

So *quidáqi* gets there, to the Point Roberts area. And he saw this woman bathing, she had very long hair. This woman looked up and she saw this strange man looking at her unclothed body. This was not ever something we allowed our women to show their unclothed body to anybody.

So she tried to cover herself with her hair so he wouldn't see her, but he said, "I have come after you, I want to take you home." And she said "No no, I can't go, I'm a married woman." He said, "It doesn't matter, I've come to take you home with me. I heard your reputation as a very hard working good woman."

So she thought to herself for a while, "My husband 'Selltuks' is always running around chasing other women, I don't seem to have a husband anyway. I just as well go with this man who seems to value me."

So she told her own people, "This man has come to take me with him and I think I'm going to go with him. And her people said, "No, you can't leave us, you have to stay and take care of us" and she said "No, Selltuks doesn't stick around he's always out chasing other women." Selltuks is a Martin, and you know down where the Martins come from. Both those people defied their families by not listening to their advice, by going after someone who is already married.

She said "You'll have to wait, until I separate my husband's things from my things and then I will go with you.

*Quidáqi* said, "Alright, I'll step off from your clothing if you're going to do that." So he stepped away from her clothes so she could put her clothes on and they left together.

In the meantime, his brothers had been following him, they were flying above so they couldn't be seen. They watched their brother and this woman start out on their journey and the woman decided that even though her

family didn't appreciate her maybe they would want to know where this man was taking her. So she was trying to leave a trail for them to follow.

So she'd tear off little bits of her undergarments and lay them along the trail that *quidáqi* was traveling with her. And the brothers saw what she was doing after they passed way ahead. They'd pick up the pieces so that her people couldn't find the trail she was leaving.

So *quidáqi* got his wife home to his mother and he took her to his mother and he said, "This is my wife, she is going to live here forever and ever. I am going to put her behind the falls here at Baker River, this is where she is going to live, behind the falls.

So that's where this woman lived as the wife of *quidáqi*. For many many years she lived there and she spawned in that place. And the story says that forever and ever and ever there would be sockeye in Baker River and Baker Lake because *quidáqi* stole this woman who was sockeye and brought her to our river.

And for years that was true and my people remember coming to Baker River falls and gathering their whole winter supply of sockeye salmon plus other species of salmon would come there, to the foot of the falls. And they'd load their canoes full of salmon for their winter supply of food, it happened every season, every season, every season until they built the dam and they disrupted the legend and disrupted the story that had been historically been created because of the sockeye in Baker River.

But then after they created this artificial man-made lake which is now Baker Lake, why they found a way to lift the sockeye salmon over the dam so they could find their natural spawning grounds and go back to those creeks and spawn where they used to live centuries ago.

But the legend lives because people have paid attention to the need for a resource to remain a healthy true story. So that is the Sockeye in Baker River story told by my aunt Susie. And you can find it written in its complete version someplace, I have the transcription and the translation, I can't put my fingers on it right now but I will.

But it's a beautiful story and it was told for a reason, to let anthropologists and historians know that things our people did was in order for our young people to know the history of the land and its story. That's why I continue to tell Sockeye in Baker River." [Miller and Angelbeck 2008: 121-123]

I chose this version of the story because it shows Hilbert's storytelling skills as well as her awareness of the changes in the landscape that have happened in the time since the story originated. The major change is the damming of the Baker River and the creation of Baker Lake, "this artificial man-made lake," which covers a significant portion of the land in the waterscape formerly used by Upper Skagit people. The Sockeye story is also an explanation of how a specific resource came to exist in a particular place: sockeye salmon spawning in the Baker River and its tributaries. Hilbert's knowledge of this story through her aunt shows how stories were passed down over time—she heard this story from her aunt in person, but she later had the opportunity to transcribe a version of it from a set of recordings made in the 1950s.

### **5.5 Oral Tradition in Contemporary Upper Skagit Culture**

During my time at Upper Skagit I did not hear any of the stories above told in a traditional setting where a storyteller and audience interact in the way Snyder and Hilbert describe. But traditional stories are important to Upper Skagit people and play a role in shaping their historical consciousness. I frequently heard reference to traditional stories and sometimes a few lines of them summarized at community events. At the luncheon following the first salmon and blessing of the fleet ceremony in May 2010, Stanley Harrison told a story about Wren and Raven and how they learned to make canoes and hunt for elk. He told this story in the context of sharing the teachings of his elders, and he couched it in a request for fishers and hunters to respect the river and the land in exchange for safety.

Another example of Stanley's awareness and use of oral narratives attached to a place is found in an interview he did with Miller about Bacon Creek, a Skagit tributary in 2001:

Up Bacon Creek there is a rock on the south side of the Skagit that has water spirit under water. There is a story that I was told about that and I wish I could remember the story. It had to do with why you should respect your elders. It was a great story and it had to do with the proud people, the salmon people and that is associated with that rock at Bacon Creek where the deep water is. [Miller and Angelbeck 2006:177]

Stanley is aware of this in spite of not being involved in the traditional smokehouse religion. His recollection of this story is an example of how contemporary Upper Skagit people engage with oral narratives. He remembers that the story exists, and what it was about, and the place to which it is attached.

I also heard references to oral narratives at a smokehouse gathering, on the river during fishery openings, at Kid's Fishing Day when Donna McMahon told stories to the children, and in interviews with tribal members. Levon frequently asked me if I had access to recordings of his grandmother Elaine telling stories. I gave Levon and his wife a copy of some of the transcribed Louise Walters stories from the Sally Snyder notes and they enjoyed reading them, talking about her as their great aunt. Levon would like to play tapes of his grandmother Elaine telling stories so he can hear them again and so his children can hear her.

The action in many of the stories moves frequently from on land to on or in water and vice versa. Characters frequently make use of canoes to hunt for food, travel to visit friends and family, and escape from enemies. Other characters live underneath the water or are able to move through the water to travel (such as Salmon, Beaver, and other

aquatic animals). The ease of movement between both land and water mirrors Upper Skagit use and understanding of the water today. For example, as discussed in chapter 4, during the fishery opening at the Walters family camp, people drive their trucks into the river to park on a rock bar and ease the loading and unloading of equipment and fish throughout the twenty-four hour period (see Figure 4.1). Fishers navigate their boats upstream through rapids (class II on the whitewater rating scale<sup>43</sup>) and drift down through them, indicating knowledge of the water and skill honed by years of experience and teachings from older family members.

Storytelling contexts change with each generation. We can only speculate as to the rate of change in context in the pre-contact period, but by examining Snyder's work we can glean information about how her informants told their stories and compare this to Hilbert's methods (including publication and teaching outsiders) and the situations today. Snyder's interviews were done for research purposes over a three-year period, and she used only a fraction of the information she collected in her 1964 dissertation. Today the tribe uses these stories, along with the abundant place-name information and other ethnographic details, to demonstrate where and how their ancestors were living during the settlement period. Because the people Snyder worked with were born in the late 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> centuries and their knowledge came from their elders, the information contained in the stories extends back at least 150 years.

Elements of the stories are passed down through generations, and this continues today, but methods have changed now that stories are written down and accessible to anyone who can read. Charlie Anderson told Sally Snyder where he heard each of his

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<sup>43</sup> [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/International\\_Scale\\_of\\_River\\_Difficulty](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/International_Scale_of_River_Difficulty)

stories, and so a connection can be drawn as follows: Charley Anderson's sources (his father, his uncles, Chief Moses from east of the Cascades)—>Charley Anderson—>Sally Snyder/Vi Hilbert—>Snyder dissertation and reports/Hilbert's publications (including *Haboo*) —>contemporary audience. These stories remain important today because they represent history and traditional lifestyles to Upper Skagit people. Families like the Walters family remember talented storytellers like Elaine and Louise, and they want to pass that legacy on to their children. People are aware of the stories because they are accessible in printed and audio recording formats. The tribe draws on the stories for legal and political purposes, giving them life in this context that will continue as long as Upper Skagit is required to demonstrate its history and culture in formal written style.

## Chapter 6: Family Narratives

The stories of two Upper Skagit families draw together the ideas from the preceding chapters to demonstrate how multiple levels of historical consciousness emerge from and are anchored to the Skagit waterscape. These stories are by no means comprehensive; rather, I aim show how various narrative threads—stories told to me in interviews, teachings orated in public settings, stories recorded for research purposes to strengthen the tribe’s assertion of its history, stories recorded by Sally Snyder and Vi Hilbert—weave together to form a fabric of historical consciousness and local knowledge that Upper Skagit people use to position themselves in their aboriginal territory, the Coast Salish world, and American society.

I chose these two families because their histories encompass a variety of experiences shared by Upper Skagit people during the settlement period. They are also spatially diverse. Each family identifies with culturally salient and historically important places throughout the watershed, and through the settlement period multiple generations have maintained their relationships with these places while being “settled” in a fixed place by the colonizing powers.

The telling of these stories also demonstrates the way culture—in the form of tribal history—is operationalized today by Native American tribes who must assert themselves and their culture as a means of fighting for their rights. For Upper Skagit, these rights are ensured by the Point Elliot Treaty of 1855, but in order to get these rights the tribe has had to prove repeatedly in court exactly where and what their ancestors were doing in terms of resource collection at the time the treaty was signed. As a result, Upper Skagit historical consciousness is often focused on the treaty period. Individual tribal



members engage in this assertion of culture by working with researchers to document tribal history. Interviews with elders provide much of the data used to demonstrate to outside parties—e.g., governments and corporations—where and how Upper Skagit people have engaged with the natural environment over the past two hundred years.

Some of these stories appear earlier in this dissertation. Here I will expand these narratives and give voice to people from multiple generations of each family. I begin by reintroducing the main informants I worked with and describing our interactions in their homes as they told me their stories. Beginning with their homes, I explore places in the Skagit waterscape (and in some cases beyond) that are important to them. I describe how their family and social networks are situated and how religious and employment choices have shaped their interactions with the waterscape and led to them to join different communities of practice. While doing all of this I will reintroduce some of the key ancestors who influenced the way these people understand their history and their place in the Skagit waterscape. Together, these stories will show how multiple generations of historical consciousness and multiple sites of waterscape interaction weave together to form a fabric of historical consciousness that can be pulled apart to examine the various threads. In contrast with one another, they demonstrate how historical consciousness is localized and how tribal history comprises multiple overlapping spheres of waterscape knowledge.

### **6.1 Marlowe Family**

This section tells various stories from the Marlowe family and highlights important places in the waterscape from Stanley Harrison's perspective. His awareness of

his ancestors, primarily his grandparents and their contemporaries, impacts his historical consciousness. I draw on my interview with Stanley as well as a group interview I did with him and his friend, John Conrad, both at Stanley's home in Marblemount, in addition to Sally Snyder's transcripts of stories told by Stanley's grandfather, Henry Marlowe.

Stanley lives on an allotment with his wife, his granddaughter, and his granddaughter's children (see Figure 2.1 for the location of the Marlowe family allotment). His social network includes both the family members that live with him as well as those who live elsewhere in the area who drive to the allotment property to see him. It also includes the Conrad family, primarily John and his relatives who live at Rockport (located near the predecessor village site of Shayayotsid), a short drive downriver from Marblemount. They are relatively isolated in the upper river area, which is accessible only via Highway 20. This highway, also known as the North Cascades Highway, is only a through-road in the summer; in the winter it is closed from milepost 134 (near the village of Diablo) to milepost 178 (near Mazama, a town on the eastern side of the mountain range).<sup>44</sup> Marblemount is at milepost 103.

I first drove up the Cascade River Road to see Stanley Harrison in mid-winter. The day was overcast and I could see a layer of snow on the trees before the low-hanging clouds covered up the tops of the mountains. To access the other side of the river one must drive across a metal bridge over the Skagit right by its confluence with the Cascade River. The road, which turns quickly to dirt after the bridge, goes all the way back to

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<sup>44</sup> Highway 20 is not immune to closure in the summer months, either; recent mudslides forced a six-day closure in August. For more information on the North Cascades Highway see <http://www.wsdot.wa.gov/traffic/passes/northcascades/>.

Cascade Pass, a popular hiking destination in the North Cascades National Park and the site of an ongoing archaeological research project that has thus far shown human use of Cascade Pass as a corridor of travel to the east side of the mountains dating back over 9000 years (Mierendorf 2009).

Stanley's allotment has been in his family, the Marlowe family, since the late 19<sup>th</sup> century. His grandfather, Henry Marlowe, came with his mother and brothers over Cascade Pass from the east side of the mountains and settled near the mouth of Irene Creek in the Cascade Mountains. It is the site of two very important pieces of Upper Skagit history: an old house where Upper Skagit people used to gather for Shaker religious meetings and a cemetery. The allotment is known as the Marlowe homestead or Marlowe allotment to other Upper Skagit people.

According to Stanley, the allotment came to his family as follows:

Back when the settlers were getting land grants, the Bureau of Indian Affairs, in those days said that you're eligible to apply for these because there's not a reservation here... So [my grandfather] went down. A lot of the families that lived in this area went down and applied for it. So there's tracts of 60 acres here, 60 acres there, all up in the Skagit Valley. It's called Indian Trust Land. I'm on Indian Trust Land. And it's governed by the Department of Interior.

Henry Marlowe was able to apply for this allotment because of the Dawes Act. Passed in 1887, the Act, also known as the General Allotment Act, was part of Henry Dawes plan to assimilate Native Americans into American society (see my discussion in Chapter 2). He and the supporters of the act believed that owning land individually would help Native people learn how to live like other Americans, building houses in permanent places and farming their land. Marlowe saw this as an opportunity to obtain property in

the same place he and his family had made a home after crossing over Cascade Pass from the east side of the mountains.

Stanley came to live on the allotment in 1935 when his grandparents, Henry and Jeanie Marlowe, brought him and his brother there from Neah Bay, where they were born, after their parents separated. Jeanie Marlowe was from the Sauk-Suiattle tribe in Darrington, WA, who are located on the Sauk River, a tributary of the Skagit. Sally Snyder interviewed Henry Marlowe in 1954 in Concrete and her notes include nine of his stories. The notes Snyder makes along with her transcriptions of the stories reveals much about Henry Marlowe's family history and the sources of his stories. Story #59, Daylight, is labeled in the transcript as "Skagit story told to HM by his uncles at Concrete and his mother." At the end of the story text, Snyder puts another note:

This story was also told by HM's "uncles," his father's cousins from part "east of the mountains and part from here," at Big Eight, *jīkcšid*, where HM's step-father had a big house. He was Old Moses, *káiyaxad*. HM's real father was *wilámetkəd* from Antiat. So this story might be either Upper Skagit, as HM says, or from the southern Okanogan. [Snyder n.d.:Box 108-4]

The story is likely from both places rather than being just from one. Marlowe's attributions of these stories to family members from both Upper Skagit and east of the mountains demonstrates how Upper Skagit historical consciousness goes beyond the Skagit waterscape to include other places, and that "east of the mountains" is particularly important to this family. It shows how mobile people were in the time before modern transportation, traveling over high mountain passes to go between the Skagit and Columbia River watersheds. Studies of Puget Salish groups like Smith's Puyallup-Nisqually tend to emphasize aquatic mobility and organize people by watershed (Smith

1969:31) (See my discussion in chapter 3). While watershed is a useful way to group people, watersheds should not be seen as closed systems. As Upper Skagit history shows, people were moving back and forth over high mountain passes and forming marriage connections and trade relationships with other groups. These places that fall outside the Skagit waterscape still play critical roles in the historical consciousness of Upper Skagit people, living on in family ties, enrolment statuses, and traditional stories from both sides of the mountains. This is a common pattern throughout the Northwest Coast and the Plateau.

When Henry was grown and went to apply for his land grant, he knew exactly where he wanted his allotment to be. He already had a cabin built next to the Cascade River. According to Stanley, Henry's name is on the original surveyor's report of the area: "He's in the notes: Henry Marlowe is clearing land. It even says how many fires he had going." He wasn't married at the time, but after marrying Jeanie he lived with her in Darrington at Sauk-Suiattle while he was building his house on the allotment. He settled onto the allotment with all of his siblings except for Charlie, the oldest, who settled farther up the Skagit River at Bacon Creek.

Stanley speaks with pride about the history of his family's land:

Granddad lived and worked right out of here. Let's see, now that's the other part, what happened. When he applied for this place, he had a little cabin set up over here next to the Cascade River... And then when he had his house built, the house for his family was right on this part of his property. In fact this house right here is, let's see, one, two, three, four...this is the fifth house! When granddad passed away he willed the place to me. I grew up with a house full of cousins. We were all boys. We helped farm. We were so helpful to granddad, and me being the oldest of the boys, he says, "I'm gonna will this to you when I pass away so it

stays in the family.” So I have to take care of the rest of the family.

Here Stanley demonstrates his pride in his family’s independence and his grandfather’s foresight in obtaining the allotment. Stanley feels responsible for the place now as head of his family.

In the aftermath of the Great Depression, Henry got a job on a Civilian Conservation Corp crew. According to Stanley,

He worked on that crew, building a bridge at Bacon Creek. And he learned how to speak English on that job, and he became the teamster for that job. He was an awesome guy, he never had a harsh word for any of us boys, it was always direction, always guiding, “This is how you do this.” When he was head of family at that time, learned how to speak English, and then of course he had this place, and they cut [logs]. In the shingle bolt days... he took on some shingle bolts here. That’s another part of the tribal history, of course, the shingle bolt drive. They were naturals.

I would hear this occasionally from people, about how Upper Skagit people were “naturals” at certain types of work, particularly that involving navigation of the natural environment, whether it be river or mountainside. The “shingle bolt drive” refers to the period when the timber industry in the upper reaches of the Skagit transported pieces of wood—intended for manufacture into shingles—downriver by floating them directly in the water. Upper Skagit people helped with this, and there is a photo of an Upper Skagit person standing on a large piece of timber in the water hanging in the tribal center today. As Stanley put it, “Yeah, they were naturals at the timber and the river.”

### ***6.1.1 Waterscape Awareness: Ancestral Travel Routes and Beyond***

Stanley's historical consciousness includes an understanding of how his ancestors moved through the Skagit waterscape and how they lived their lives in the region. The Marlowe family's location in the watershed put them in the center of settlement activity when mining and logging interests began drawing people to the upper reaches of the Skagit (Nash 2000). His recalls stories about how his ancestors helped bring settler's belongings upriver in dugout canoes:

It was the old way. They brought, they did a lot... for the settlers in the valley. There was another one, a family...it was settlers they brought up. The father, he would come up, build a home, and his family would follow him. Well they would move off the boats, a piano was the biggest. Old man Larsen, his wife had a piano, and they brought a piano up on the dugout canoes. So you can imagine how that was like, bringing a piano on a dugout canoe.

He ties this in to his ancestor's skills on the river: "Those guys on that Skagit River, how to bring that stuff up, they just knew the river so well, knew when to cross over so that they, they had to be in slack water the whole way because you wouldn't have enough power to pole up."<sup>45</sup>

Stanley is aware of places in the waterscape that were important to his ancestors. In his work with Miller and Angelbeck on a Traditional Cultural Property study in 2001, Stanley talked about tribal history in the Marblemount area as well as other important cultural sites nearby:

The tribe was basically in the Marblemount area. They winter camped at Hamilton, Lyman area and went up the valley in the summer time for berries, that part of the country they just traveled through by the river and they

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<sup>45</sup> This refers to pushing wooden poles against the riverbed and banks to move the canoe upstream.

went up for hunting. They went to Sheep Hill<sup>46</sup>, there was a great huckleberry picking area... Huckleberries, a place for bear. My granddad was not involved a lot with Indian powwow, Indian power, but he did mention that if you wanted the spirit of the bear you would go to Sheep Hill because that is where the bears were. (TCP 2006:177)

This shows awareness of spirit questing sites within the waterscape, but Stanley himself never subscribed to those beliefs. I discuss Stanley's own religious views later in this section. Stanley is similar to other Upper Skagit people in this regard; while he may not participate in traditional Upper Skagit religious practices, he remains conscious of which places in the waterscape are spiritually powerful.

I asked about how his ancestors traveled back and forth across Cascade Pass, because his land sits directly in the path of the old trail:

When the west coast families would go to the east side, what they went over the east side for was to trade. Because they had herbs and clams and, oh, I don't know, garments, flintstone, there was a real trade from over there. And on this side they wanted berries and fish, and then of course they would intermingle, family members over there, family members on this side. It would be a time for gathering. And the following year they would all come and meet up at the pass, for huckleberries.

I mentioned in our conversation that archaeologists have found evidence of people traveling over the pass nearly 9,000 years ago (Mierendorf 2009). Stanley was aware of this: "Yeah! You know, it's awesome that they're able to go back that far." I mentioned the story of the expedition from Ft. Colville over Cascade Pass, when the group's horses fell off cliff sides and they barely made it to the Skagit (Pierce 1883). Stanley laughed. "It was strictly a human trail. That trail, it was well-used, a well-used pass." His memories of the trail from the 1940s and 50s was of a trail used by loggers to reach old growth forests

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<sup>46</sup> I have changed the place names of spirit questing sites to maintain secrecy.



and by livestock to move along the riverbank. Stanley said he didn't realize he was on the trail at first, but later understood the significance of the path: "They helped, they did it, otherwise I probably would have never known I was on the old, old trail."

People also traveled north-south along the Skagit riverbanks through the Cascades before the dams flooded the valley, and I asked if he knew of this:

Yeah, there was a well-used trail up the Skagit. Even though, I'm not so sure about the path as a path, but mostly a way to get through some of the rocks, cliffs, you know they had different ways, everybody had. To me, what I've observed, and just visualizing it when I was in that country, that each one had his own way of getting up there, each family had its own way. So it was not a trail as a trail would be, so it would be just tracks, more like a wild animal going where it wanted to go, same patterns, a little bit here, a little bit there, as they were getting through the rocks. Some places would be perfect, you know, because a guy would have a better route getting into it and stuff. For the most part all of 'em just stay on that side of the river and go upstream, that was the directions, so that's what they did.

Stanley had ample time to visualize what this trail would have looked like during his time as a boat operator on Ross Lake, which covers the upper reaches of the Skagit watershed. His family was involved in the building of the dam that created this lake, which began in 1919: "Now granddad, when Seattle City Light come in here, he and his brothers were down valley on the Skagit, and they did a lot of transporting for Ross, the engineer for Seattle City Light, the hydraulic engineer. They brought in a lot of equipment for him. In a canoe. Dugout canoe."

I asked Stanley about his observations of the Skagit River as the series of hydroelectric dams were built on it throughout the 20<sup>th</sup> century and how it had changed. In response, he said:

The Skagit River became more settled. Not as much debris coming off of the upper tributaries. All the sediment settled in on Ross Lake. And Diablo Lake was basically the same thing, there was a lot of debris coming off of Thunder Creek in that one. So for the most part, the most part, the Skagit River was more clean. Not near the debris that would have come.

Upper Skagit people I spoke to about the dams are so used to the project that there are few memories left of what the waterscape was like before the dams went in. This relates to flood control attitudes, which I discussed in Chapter 3. About flooding, Stanley said, “But the thing that’s scary about it, you can’t control the river once it starts coming and moving stuff. You really gotta [laughing], you gotta know how and when to handle it.”

Stanley refers to stories about his grandparents as “Indian” stories. For example, he tells this story about fishing on Cascade River with his grandfather:

Oh, now there’s an Indian story... As a little guy, we’d be getting hungry you know and need some fish. Granddad took his pole, or his spears, and walked up to the Cascade. Not quite at the falls. The Cascade River come across like this [using hand gestures], this direction and there was a rock wall over that side, far side? Well the Cascade River come down offa some ripples like this [gesture] and hit, and when the Cascade River hit that rock wall, it would churn. So it backed into a deep hole that was a turn right there. Then the water would turn around like this [swirling gesture with hands] and deep, deep. And on this side was a big flat rock that granddad stood on and deep, deep, deep water. He had his pole up and when we got there, he looked for the longest time, looked and looked, and then next time, he took his pole up like this [gesture] and up to the fast moving water, and he come down like this over [gesture]. I don’t remember how many times he did that, but, one time, one time he come down like this and he put it just like this [gesture], right there [whispering]. So he pulls it out, and come down like this again, [whispering] right there. You know, so he come up and went up like this [gesture] same spot, pulled his pole out, and dragged in the pole, and that pole was right close to ten foot, eight, ten foot. Real narrow. Almost went to the end of that, into, into the water.

He hit that, and he started pulling this thing up and it got to the top of the water the fish come, really kickin', and it almost pulled him in he said "I got it." It was a big king!

His designation of this story as "Indian" shows that he associates the term "Indian" with traditional fishing practices like those of his grandfather. This story also shows his knowledge of a specific place in the water, the way the water moves there, and the way the fish behave in that particular pool. His reenacting of his grandfather's movements shows how he embodies the history.

Stanley gained experience on the water by helping his grandmother set nets on the river during salmon runs:

It would be in still water, the lee parts of the river, slackwater. And then they would put, the net had to be put in just right, to unfold, and I was up front. My job was to throw out, help, kind of steer up front, and grandma she would go up along the river bank, and the bow would go out [makes motion with his hands to show a bow moving with current], and then she would follow that bow as it went out, and say "Ok, now drop it, now drop it," so I would drop the net and she would settle back down and when I dropped that there was an anchor, a big boulder for an anchor, I'd drop that anchor and then of course the net would naturally anchor in and just drift back into shore.

He talks about this experience often, including in public at a feast following the Blessing of the Fleet and the First Salmon ceremony. While he learned to fish as a child, however, Stanley admits that today he no longer has those skills. He laughingly told me, "When we grew up we went to work in the logging industry. And I'm a poor fisher because of that, I'm a poor hunter because of that."

### **6.1.2 Working Life**

Stanley has lived in the Skagit valley full time since the 1980s, but prior to that he and his family moved around Washington and Oregon following his jobs in the timber industry. Before this, however, his story connects to American literary history. After graduating from high school in Concrete, he spent a summer as a fire lookout on Sourdough Mountain in the North Cascades, coincidentally putting him in the range at the same time as Beat Generation writers Gary Snyder, Philip Whalen and Jack Kerouac (Suiter 2002). He describes his experience as follows:

Well I was talked into that job, because through the spring there, we were going to guard school,<sup>47</sup> and old Blackie Burns says, "Harrison, we got this job up on Sourdough [Mountain], but the lookout didn't want to be up there, didn't want to be that isolated." And I don't know, I'm not a cook, I don't know if I could do that. So two or three weeks went by, and then we had to go to guard school, and Blackie Burns said, "Well, Harrison, this is your last chance. Do you want that job?" So I either had to take the lookout job or I wouldn't have one. So here I go, my first day away from home, very first days away from home, from grandma's cooking, I had to be my own cook!

Nineteen years old, away from home, top of a mountain, nobody. Yeah, that was crazy, I'll never forget, the instructor at guard school says in his opening statements, "You guys are gonna be up at the top of the mountain," and shows us the equipment we're gonna be using, and he says, "A lot of these lookouts, you're gonna be on top of a mountain, but don't feel like you're going to be alone, because there's all kinds of tourists coming by." Well, lo and behold, Sourdough Lookout, Desolation Lookout, if you can imagine that name, up next to the Canadian border, we were so isolated, I never saw a soul! The only thing I saw was hundreds of chipmunks, and a deer every now and then would come over and take food, bears, and that was it.

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<sup>47</sup> The US Forest Service fire guard school trains employees in wildland fire suppression.

Not a fan of being isolated for so long, Stanley spent the next few summers working as a boat operator on Ross Lake, where he could live closer to home. His experience as a fire lookout connects him to an interesting part of both American literary history (Suiter 2002) and the history of the national park and forest systems.

Before he started working for the Forest Service, Stanley learned how to work in the timber industry from his grandfather, who logged his allotment property. According to Stanley,

Growing up here, granddad had a mill. He logged and sold cedar poles, doug fir, pine, with his horses. His horses were, to begin with, used for plowing, and then the mills came in and mills needed logs, so he would log. And then he learned how to log with a team of horses. He learned how to run a team of horses when he helped build the bridge across Bacon Creek [with the CCC]. He knew he had to have one [horse], to farm this place. And when he did that, that became the beginning of granddad's logging experience. And then as time went on the timber industry, building industry had to have loads of logs and stuff. He learned how to skid logs with that team of horses. And I'd become the teamster, when I was old enough to guide the horses, I was the family teamster.

Stanley's experience working for his grandfather put him in a position to gain employment when the timber-clearing phase of the Baker River hydroelectric project began. He describes how he transitioned from his work for the forest service into the timber industry:

I'm working for the federal government then as seasonal work. And the ranger at Concrete... he says, "Harrison, we're gonna build another [dam], Puget Sound Power and Light's gonna build a dam up... Baker River. And the log scaling bureau don't have enough scalers to handle the volume that's coming down, and we want you to be a scaler." He says, "I know your background in timber, you know about board foot," and I says, "Yeah, I know about timber." He says, "We're gonna train you to be a log

scaler.” So when that happened, I jumped at the chance, because I knew about measuring logs and stuff, so I spent a couple weeks training... I was on Civil Service since I was, let’s see, what was I, 22? I retired when I was 52 years old. So 30 years of service. So that’s been my whole career, right outta high school.

Stanley spent the remainder of his career working in the timber industry, and he remains interested in this line of work today. When we discuss several places in the Skagit waterscape, he marvels at how much virgin timber was potentially in some of these places, and how much money this timber would be worth. This shows how his understanding of his aboriginal territory has been shaped by the resource extraction industry. Because of the economic benefits associated with logging, Stanley thinks of certain places in economic terms in addition to its cultural and historical aspects.

### ***6.1.3 Sites of Spirituality***

In this section I look at the spiritual activities of the families on the upriver allotments and the continued importance of these places to Upper Skagit people. I look at how Stanley Harrison and John Conrad understand the place, how they feel about traditional Indian religious practices, and how they reconcile their own Christian faith with their ancestors’ beliefs.

John Conrad told this story about Willie Stone, an important Indian doctor from his parents’ generation:

Well that Willie Stone, I’d go up there and take wood to him. I had four or five big wood logs like that and I’d cut it up, I’d take that up to him. And one time, at night time, it was getting to be about five, six o’ clock at night, I’d take it up to him, and next week I’d have to go get another load. And he’d be so hot in there you’d be down to your t-shirt! [laughing] And when I was heading home he said, “John,

you be careful, now, there's Indians coming up in a canoe." This is a spirit. And he said, "You know, don't know what they're coming up for, just keep Him in your mind and heart all the time." Oh, he was a good one to talk, he knew all this old time, he was a good Indian doctor. He was a good... he helped me out a lot of times when I'd get up there.

One time I got in there and he was down Tulalip, down there by Marysville? The church down there, their one Indian doctor from over my reservation [Colville], I had my vest and I hung it up on the wall and this guy, the Indian doctor seen me hang my vest up, I guess. Getting ready to go, this is, what, one, two o'clock in the morning. And my wife was with me, and I reached in my pocket like that, what the heck's this? And the spirit made me grab a hold of it just like that. Here it was, this guy's pet rattlesnake. And [how] he done that was beyond me. But we got home and my wife had to drive, my dad had a little bell to ring, you know, like the Shakers do. And he, that calmed him down. I had that snake, all the way from Marysville in my hand like that, and hold it. And we called Willie Stone up and he said, yeah, bring it up, we'll get rid of it for you. He had a good, hot fire and he threw that in there, and this guy, this is a good, I don't know how they do all that stuff, I've never have figured it out yet. But anyway we got rid of it, out and out, that took care of that guy's pet snake. Funny how they do that.

Willie Stone had an allotment just upriver from the Marlowe property and he lived there for many years, with Upper Skagit people coming to him for his healing abilities on a regular basis.

Conrad seems to have reconciled his understanding of Willie Stone's traditional spiritual abilities with his own Christian beliefs. When I asked about Willie Stone's healing abilities he said, "Yeah, yeah, they had it. But he knew, Willie knew that somebody was coming from down below, come up to visit. He knew that before they got there. And he had a wonderful gift, what got from the Lord." Conrad sees Willie Stone's powers as being a blessing from a Christian God, even though he and Stanley both view

traditional Indian powers as being non-Christian. Stanley agreed with this and said, “Grandma had that same intuition. She could tell when somebody was coming. She could almost tell you what you’re thinking, what’s on your mind.”

This led to a discussion about the older generation’s Shaker Church activities, many of which took place on the Marlowe property. According to John Conrad,

When Henry was here, mom and dad and them come up and they’d have a Shaker meeting here in the old house and, what, they’d shake til three, four, five o’ clock in the morning. Either they’d sleep here, sleep over there somewhere on the floor. They were just old, tough Indians. And then they’d get up and have breakfast or go home or whatever, maybe spend, they’ll spend the night here. And we used to come up here and we’d go to the meetings and that’s the way it was, they’d go up to Jimmy Price’s, to Leo Brown’s down in Darrington over there, go somewhere else, they’d go down, mom and dad’s place, they’d have it right in the white man’s area, they’d have a Shake. You’d hear the bells ringing and stomping the floor. They didn’t care [laughing]. They go to Canada, they go to Yakama, or White Swan, or wherever they decided to go. That was the old timers’ way. They might have ten dollars in their pocket, well “I’m going anyhow.” Lord make sure they get there and back.

John and Stanley both admire their elders for their commitment to their faith. According to Stanley, however, his grandparents did not want him to be involved with traditional Upper Skagit religion (see Chapter 2). Stanley followed his grandfather’s advice and is now a practicing Christian. Both he and John are involved with the Pentecostal Church in Marblemount and they spend a lot of time volunteering there and meeting with faith groups in addition to regular worship services. But while they do not themselves practice traditional religion, their description of their elders’ participation—in both spirit questing and the Indian Shaker Church—demonstrates the respect they have for those who did so at the time.



## 6.2 Walters Family

The Walters family history is as extensive as the Marlowe family's and equally important to the history of the tribe. The various narrative threads that emerged in my work with the Walters family come together here. I worked with Levon Walters in many places throughout my time with Upper Skagit, but we conducted our interviews at his house on the reservation. The Walters family has lived on the Upper Skagit Reservation since it was first created in the early 1980s. Levon remembers going to see the place his house would be: "I remember [my uncle Levon] driving us up here, he had a really nice car. The roads were just really crappy and he didn't care, he was so happy that he drove us up here and he parked us, I remember he parked us right on where my mom's house is and he said, "This is where your house'll be."

The location of the reservation is historically meaningful to Upper Skagit people because of its location on a hillside where tribal members used to hunt and gather berries. Levon remembers his grandmother's stories about the travelling from her home in Clear Lake (near the predecessor village of Nookachamps) to the place where the reservation is located today:

The highway wasn't there yet. My grandma used to tell me, every time we'd come up to the reservation, we'd get close to the train tracks there and she was, "I used to ride that train, they called it the Silver Bullet. And I used to get off right here." And she pointed at the end of Helmick Road and she said, "I used to walk on this hill and pick berries all day. And then I'd come back and I'd hop on the train again and go back home."

The fact that the place his grandmother picked berries eventually became the reservation gives Levon and his family a connection to the place that extends beyond recent history.

Levon and his wife, Tonya, live in a house on the third circle of the reservation, and I would spend time there with them and their children. Their house used to be Tonya's father's house, but he passed away in the summer of 2010 and they moved from a house across the cul-de-sac into his house. Levon's mother lives in a nearby house with his sister, and Tonya's brother and his wife also have a house on the reservation. Their children spend a lot of time running around between each other's houses, the bond between cousins being strong. Because the houses are located close together, the community is very tight-knit; it is easy for people to visit friends and family. Levon's social network is made up of these family members as well as family and friends who live off-reservation.

Several ancestors play a major role in shaping Levon's historical consciousness, most notably his grandparents, Elaine and Charles Walters, and his uncles, Fred Walters and Sam Walters, Sr. I often heard this refrain during my research: "You should have talked to Fred and Sam." Because these elders had passed away only a few years before I worked in the community, the sense of loss was still palpable when I spoke with members of the Walters family. But even though they had passed away, I had permission from the tribe to access transcripts from interviews that Miller and Angelbeck (2008) had done with Fred, Sam and their sister Evie in 2003. I draw on these transcripts to bring their voices into this narrative.

It is very common for people, when asked about their family history, to say that they don't know that much and it would have been more informative to talk to the previous generation—in this case Fred and Sam. This phenomenon is not unique to Native American communities, but is instead embedded in many people's historical

consciousnesses. There is a sense of feeling, “We don’t know as much as our elders knew.” This is part of their consciousness. They rank their own knowledge below the knowledge of their elders, and as anthropologists we have to decide what that means about both sets of knowledge. In chapter 4 I provided a thick description of the Walters family fishing site. In this section, I continue the narratives by drawing on multigenerational voices of the Walters family to describe important places in the Skagit waterscape, explore how they moved throughout the region, look at how the Walters family is connected to Sally Snyder’s work, and briefly touch on their views toward traditional spirituality.

### ***6.2.1 Places and Movements in the Waterscape***

I will focus first on the Baker Lake area, a place very important to the Walters family (see Figure 2.1; Baker Lake is situated north of the predecessor village of Sabelxu—today called Concrete—and southeast of Mt. Baker). It is an interesting layering of histories, an overlapping of multiple traditions, to trace the lines from my own interviews and participant observation experiences with the Walters family back to recorded field interviews done with Fred, Sam, and Evie ten years ago. Levon Henderson was also present as the boat driver on those research trips, taking the party around Baker Lake. Levon’s presence is important here; he made his elders feel comfortable while suggesting different stories they could tell to the interviewers. His involvement in this process shaped his historical consciousness by teaching him how his family history is useful for the greater tribal good, in this case by recording stories that help the tribe assert its claim on traditional territory.

Baker Lake, which is actually the dammed Baker River, is located north of the town of Concrete, upstream from the reservation and the Lyman Ferry fishing camp. The people I worked with had never known this place without the dam and the lake in place. But the previous generation knew otherwise. On the banks at Lyman Ferry one day I had an interesting conversation with Fred's son Ted Walters about the power companies that operate dams on the Skagit. "They cut a deal with us," he says, but he doesn't think the deal was fair. "We should get free power." When I spoke with Ted further, he mentioned the dams on the Skagit, specifically the Baker, and how he felt the company owed something to the Upper Skagit people for building the dam in their territory. Seven years before my conversation with Ted, Fred Walters spoke with Miller and Angelbeck about his family being involved in the building of the dam itself:

They were just starting to build that dam here. A lot of those, my uncles and our elders just before us, they all worked in here in the woods you know, logging. Getting these trees out, and getting ready for the dam. I know my dad used to come up here and they used to work by setting the logging camp here, some place up here, when he used to come up. That's all I know, they said they were building another dam because they were going to log that area off up here. [Miller and Angelbeck 2008:70-71]

There was some discussion of where the old road was, where they accessed hunting sites from the road, and what was now underwater. Levon asked about where the natural river was and Fred answered: "The natural river was over this way more kind of the bottom of this side and there used to be some flat areas, a lot of them on this side here, right where our boats are now there were some flat areas you could park anytime and camp you know" (Miller and Angelbeck 2008: 72).

Memories of how the river was in the time of the ancestors came up frequently in both my own interviews and the interviews for the TCP study. Sam described how the Baker River used to be: “In our ancestor’s time this wasn’t like this, this is all different now you know... Running straight through, the water” (Miller and Angelbeck 2008: 75). In my 2011 interview with him, Levon remembers this as well: “My uncle Sam used to talk about how he walked Baker Lake area before there was roads. He remembers being a kid up there and he used to tell me the story about that ranger that lived up there. He remembered her name but I don’t remember it. They tried to adopt him, because they thought he was an abandoned kid.”

Levon experienced his uncles’ memories of the waterscape as he spent time with them throughout his life. I discussed this with Levon when I spoke with him in 2011 and he told me about driving around the area with his uncle:

I used to drive, before my uncle Sam passed away, I used to pick him up and we’d go for rides in the woods and I’d drive him up that way. He used to say, “oh, I remember this.” I used to, when I’d get back from work I’d stop in and visit him and he’d ask where I was and go, “I remember that area.” But it was, “they had a logging camp there.” They talked a lot about Hamilton, they talked about Marblemount, Concrete, Rockport. They, my uncles used to tell me they used to travel in Model T’s and they had to carry plank boards... to put down in front in case they got stuck, they could use them to pry the car out or drive across. They used to tell me where the old road was. It was down by the river.

This demonstrates Levon’s family’s knowledge of many places in the waterscape. While Concrete and the Baker Lake area are featured more prominently than most in these narratives, the entire waterscape was important to them. When discussing his family’s movements through the Skagit valley, Levon mentioned a Coyote power story:

I remember him and my other uncle they would sit together and they'd talk about how they just moved around a lot. So they didn't have a permanent house. I mean, they remember, their uncle, I think it was uncle Johnny or I can't remember which one it was. But they would tell us stories about him going up to take down this house, which was a cedar plank house, and he'd take it, he was going up to take it down to move it back downriver. He used to tell that story because that story had a big thing with our family because the Coyote showed his face. That's, that was a warning to them, Coyote looked at him and one of them got hurt somehow, right away. They used to tell stories on all that.

This relates to pre-settlement Skagit lifestyles, where people would move around the valley according to where the food was, and the weather. It also shows awareness of the coyote as an animal that represents certain spiritual powers, the significance of which can be seen in the Coyote stories in the previous chapter.

In the interview transcripts from 2003, Sam briefly mentions this incident where their uncle was taking apart the plank house: "That's where he got hurt. That whole building, that old shack fell down on him..." Levon then prompted his uncle, "That Coyote warned him." Sam Sr. responded, "Yeah, but I don't want to get into that part of it." Levon replied, "Ok, it's ok" (Miller and Angelbeck 2008:99-100). This exchange shows Levon's awareness of the stories he had been told throughout his life, as well as his sensitivity to the fact that his elders might not feel comfortable sharing all of their stories, particularly those concerning dangerous spirit powers.

Sam and Fred's generation moved seasonally throughout their aboriginal territory for wage-paying jobs like hops picking and berry picking<sup>48</sup>. As Levon described it,

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<sup>48</sup> They also followed seasonal resources for subsistence purposes, hunting, fishing and gathering to supplement the food they bought with their wages.

My family was, I think they, it's funny because I always said they took turns. My grandpa and them. We have family that lives in eastern Washington too, and so when they used to travel with the work and they'd go over there and pick hops and then make, it was like a big circle they'd follow, and then they'd come back home for fishing. And it was always just a big circle. They wouldn't move very far away, but they would, I remember my grandma talking about picking hops over there. And I remember talking about berry fields and down towards Auburn [near Seattle, WA] and that area.

Their movements around the area gave them extensive knowledge of the waterscape. In another interview, Levon spoke again about driving around with his uncle:

You know what, that's what I talk about it is, I'd pick up uncle Sam in my truck and we'd go for rides in the hills and he'd point out places. "This is where I logged, this is where I lived, this is, um," he just pointed out places. And it was a lot, all over Marblemount, Baker Lake area, we'd go up Illabot, Illabot Creek, the road system up there. He used to talk about Sauk, too. He used to talk about way up there, there's a forest service road up there that he used to talk about. He remembered catching coho up there. Mmm, they used to talk about, they knew somebody who had a cabin on the mouth of the Baker River, where it came into the Skagit, before they changed it. I don't remember who, but they knew who, somebody had a cabin there. And they'd stay there, and they said, um, they remember going out there and they could just grab a fish out of the water, that's how thick they were, those sockeye. I remember they talked about, called it The Little Skagit. It was lower Phinney Creek. My uncles used to call it the Little Skagit because it had all of the salmon species in it at one point. And they remember going in there and that was the same thing they remember, that was a easy, easy spot to gather fish.

Levon's memories of his uncles' stories shows how knowledge of the waterscape is passed down from generation to generation. Levon spends time in many of these places for his job with the Natural Resources Department, but his historical consciousness

frames these places as more than just sites where he works. He understands his family history and how it is attached to these places.

In some cases, Levon had the chance to interact with these places in traditional way. His uncle Fred knew how to make traditional dip nets and spears and Levon remembers helping him gather the materials for them:

When I was growing up I got the luxury of making dip nets with my uncle Fred. He made some of the last spears that our tribe has made and I gathered some of the material for him from Baker Lake. I found a piece of cedar for him, I just happened to be working in an area where lightning had struck this tall cedar stump and it shattered it. And it was really a straight piece of cedar and I brought it to him. So from that point on I was deemed “The Gatherer” for him. He had a project and I had to get tree sap. He knew I worked in the woods for a long time and so he put a bug in my ear. He said, “If you ever come across tree sap you get me some.” And I thought to myself, “Where am I gonna get tree sap? What possibly can I do that’ll find that?” But it just so happened that I went to work for Steve on an archaeological site up at Baker Lake and it was in the drawdown, so there was great big stumps out there. And when I was walking around out there I noticed that the sap was still there, pooled at the bottom of the tree [that had been underwater]. So I gathered a whole bunch of that and I brought it to him and he was really happy with that. It was pretty neat. That was their tar, or glue, that held the sinew in, that held the spear, which was a deer antler. Um, he remembers spearing fish up at the Cascade River falls<sup>49</sup> before they were taken out. He used to tell me, “You go up that way where them falls were, he says, you look around there, he says, you look in all them stones. That’s where the old timers used to keep their spears. They didn’t pack ‘em home, they left ‘em there.

This story demonstrates Levon’s knowledge of traditional skills and the pride he feels at having participated in the making of the spears. Levon sees individual and family

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<sup>49</sup> See Stanley’s memories of his grandfather spear fishing on the Cascade River in the previous section.



specialization in particular skills as tied to places within the waterscape. Origin locations determined which skills family members might cultivate. According to Levon,

There were certain families that were fishers, there were certain families that were hunters. The Jackson family, from my knowledge, has always been hunters. They came from upriver, they know the mountains, they're hunters. My family has always been a little of both, uh, but leaning more towards fishing, saltwater and all that. Because we came from Baker Lake on down to the saltwater.

This shows Levon's understanding of how the area where people's families come from partially determines which communities of practice they join.

The Walters family connection to Concrete and the Baker Lake area is also demonstrated in Sally Snyder's (n.d.) papers. One Walters family ancestor in particular worked extensively with Snyder during the story collection process in mid-1950s. This was Louise Walters, wife of Don Walters, who was brother to Charles, Levon's grandfather. Louise and Don lived in Concrete and influenced Fred and Sam. Forty-four of Snyder's stories came from Louise Walters, and I discussed nine of them in the Oral Narratives chapter. Louise had several sources for her stories, including her parents, grandparents, aunts and uncles from throughout the Skagit waterscape and the east side of the mountains. As her mother was born a Marlowe, Louise had access to that upriver family knowledge. Her father, who was from Nookachamps, gave her access to the mid-river area. She spent much of her adult life living in Concrete, the location of the village of Sabelxu, and her paternal grandmother came from there.

### ***6.2.2 Spirit Questing and Contemporary Smokehouse Practices***

Much of the Walters family connection to the Baker Lake area is spiritually based because the Baker watershed was a route of access to locations where Upper Skagit ancestors traveled to find their spirit powers. These powers are part of the winter ceremonial or “smokehouse” religion, the traditional spiritual practice of Coast Salish people. According to Amoss, the winter ceremonial is one of three ceremonial systems that integrate the Coast Salish world, the other two being the Shaker Church and secular summer ceremonials (1978:39-40). Jay Miller’s 1999 text, *Lushootseed Culture and the Shamanic Odyssey: An Anchored Radiance*, examines “how the vitality of Lushootseed culture has coped with the very real and continuing concern with spiritual loss or damage” (8-9) by focusing on the winter ceremonial complex and the specific role that shamans played in that religion. While both of these texts are useful, they focus more on past incarnations of Coast Salish spiritual practice than on contemporary practices. In this section, I look at how Walters family members discuss their involvement in these ceremonial systems today, and how those systems are connected to places within the Skagit waterscape.

Upper Skagit spirituality—and the historical consciousness thereof—plays a role in determining which groups comprise the tribe and what territory should be included in the tribe’s traditional territory. Levon summarizes this in the following excerpt from our interview:

I remember meeting, I remember that, I don’t even know if it was before we were a tribe or not but I remember before we had our own reservation we had I think it was a clinic in Burlington. We had offices in Burlington, and I remember we, they rented... a community center or whatever it was in Burlington. And I remember as a kid going over there and

they had a great big general council meeting over there a couple of times. And my uncles used to talk about a place up, up, I like to think it was Stanley's allotment area, where they'd meet up there before that. My grandmother was a strong believer, Shaker believer. She talked about having meetings up there too. She grew up in the Shaker religion. All of my family did. All my grand-uncles were very powerful Shakers.

Levon refers here to the Marlowe family property where his ancestors used to meet with the Marlowes and other Upper Skagit people to practice their Shaker religion. Their continued practice of this religion later gave Upper Skagit the means to demonstrate the cohesiveness of the tribe throughout the contact era.

The Shaker Church remains important today, but some Upper Skagit people participate in the winter ceremonial along with, or instead of, the Shaker Church. The winter ceremonial, known as the "smokehouse" to the people who discussed it with me during my fieldwork, is a religious system in which people are initiated by attending smokehouse gatherings at Upper Skagit and other area reservations where they are educated by the "teachings" of those who are already initiated. Initiates, known as "babies," go through a secretive process of bathing for cleanliness in pools throughout the waterscape and sweating in lodges as they find their spirit power, manifested through a dance and a song. These powers can be healing powers, indicated by the wearing of red face paint during smokehouse ceremonies, or warrior powers, indicated by the wearing of black paint.

Traditionally, one would obtain one's spirit power by going out into the waterscape on a quest. This highly secretive process was not meant to be shared with others, for fear of the power diminishing if one spoke of it. Today, people who participate in the smokehouse religion are still secretive about their powers, but they don't always

travel to the same remote places in the waterscape to acquire them. Sam was one of the last Upper Skagit people to actually go out on his own to find his power. In one exchange from the TCP project, Sam, Fred and Evie talked about spirit power sites. Sam said, “See my territory is over this mountain... We’re not supposed to be telling you guys all that but I am.” Fred added,

That’s why they’d come up here and stay. That was one of our main purposes to go to these different types of places and receive their power, so there’s a kind of spiritual place where they’d come and get their song and everything and stay there a week at a time. They used to hike over these places and go camp way back in there by themselves, three or four days at a time until they received something then they’d come back to the camp you know. [Miller and Angelbeck 2008: 73]

Louise’s Walters’ husband, Don Walters, was a powerful man who obtained his powers from near Baker Lake. During the Traditional Cultural Property study, Levon remarked that “The stories that were told were probably because they were for themselves.” Sam replied, “Yeah, they never talked about it very much,” and Levon continued, “And because it was their spiritual quest that they spoke real vague about it” (Miller and Angelbeck 2008: 87). This exchange shows Levon and Sam’s understanding of the importance of secrecy. Discussion of spirit questing locations is taboo. Levon expanded on this later in the interview: “That’s probably why a lot of the history of the Baker area up here was vague because you know people just didn’t tell. What you see on your own vision quest is yours and not to be told” (Miller and Angelbeck 2008: 93).

These remote areas are labeled as spiritual because of their “untouched” qualities. In 2003, Levon remarked, “I guess that’s why this was such a spiritual area up here, because not very many people made it up in here. It was kind of natural, untouched. The

untouched part of it is a real key part of it, because it was untouched.” But many of these places did not remain untouched once non-Native settlers came into the area. Sam and Fred discussed these changes. Sam said, “That area, I can remember going up it when I was 7 or 8 years old, then I came back and logged it [as an adult].” Fred added, “It was completely different since me and Sam were boys you know. This is completely changed from what it used to be.” Levon explained how the pre-logging qualities of the area are part of the spirit questing process: “That’s why this is such an untouched area and why they came up here because you went on a spiritual quest for [the power] Uncle carries” (Miller and Angelbeck 2008: 89)

The winter ceremonial religion is still practiced today by Upper Skagit people. In the 1980s, practitioners built a smokehouse on the reservation, led by an elder named Ollie James. The story of how the shed was built is a humorous tale shared by many Upper Skagit people. According to Levon,

I heard my uncle Dougie, he’s one of the last elders we have, he talked about it. He told the story one time, Ollie, when he got his place he went down to council and he asked, “Well I wanna build a woodshed.” [They said] “Alright, alright, go ahead.” [laughing] He said, “Well, I wanna build a net shed.” “Alright, alright.” Well he said, “I wanna add onto my net shed.” And it grew from a net shed to a smokehouse. And it took a lot of years. You’d be surprised at how many people had volunteered to help build that.

Levon was initiated into the smokehouse in the late 1990s, but out of respect for the secrecy of the faith I did not ask him directly about his own experiences. I did ask, however, the direction he sees Upper Skagit spirituality going in the future, and he describes his family as follows:

Most of my family now belongs to the Powwow [smokehouse]. I have a few Shakers. Some of my extended family is, what is it, Pentecostal. They don't partake in Shaker or Powwow. They consider it the devil's work... It's a changing time, it is. It is a changing time for both Powwow and Shaker church. It's a pretty tough religion to stay in right now, to keep up with. Elders, our elders, they stood by it all the way... They didn't doubt it. Younger folks today, they doubt it.

I had a chance to visit the smokehouse at the invitation of Suzanne Simon, who seconded Levon's assessment that fewer people participate now than in the past because it is a difficult commitment. In spite of the changing times, however, Upper Skagit people remain aware of the winter ceremonial system and they understand how it has shaped their culture.

### **6.3 Discussion**

Having presented two multigenerational family narratives and how they are tied to places in the Skagit waterscape, I will shortly move on to draw conclusions about this ethnography as a whole. It is important to note, however, that these narratives are ethnographic illustrations of the emergence of historical consciousness from the ongoing interplay between land and waterscape, culture, and history (see Figure 1.3).

## Chapter 7 Conclusion

At the outset of this dissertation, I asked the question:

How do Upper Skagit people interact with and experience the aquatic environment of their aboriginal territory, and how do their experiences with colonization and their cultural practices weave together to form a historical consciousness that orients them to their lands and waters and the wider world?

I have answered these questions with an ethnographic portrayal of their fishing practices, their relationship with the waterscape, and the historical consciousness that emerges from the interplay between culture, history, and the land and waterscape that comprise Upper Skagit aboriginal territory. By looking at how historical consciousness is produced at individual, family, and tribal levels, I show that it is neither singular nor sedentary, but rather a multifold understanding of a world in flux made up of both conscious and unconscious thoughts that shape how Upper Skagit people behave. Upper Skagit people have responded to and continue to respond to the changing circumstances of colonization while maintaining their cultural distinctiveness.

Upper Skagit are people are people of the water—*their* waterscape—in a way that is persistent and remarkable in the face of the colonizing process that has acted against them for hundreds of years. Their cultural practices—fishing and oral narratives being the two primarily examined here—have transformed over time out of necessity, but they remain central to their identity as a Native American people. To close this ethnography, I briefly summarize each of the preceding chapters before looking at both the theoretical conclusions pertaining to the concept of waterscape and the attachment of historical consciousness to aboriginal territory, and the ethnographic conclusions about how this

particular group of people at this point in time are navigating the challenges of maintaining their cultural distinctiveness while succeeding in American society.

## **7.1 The Preceding Chapters**

I opened this dissertation by situating myself in the work and introducing my methodology. The data behind this ethnography came from three different research methods—oral narrative interviews, participant observation, and archival research. These methods allowed me to explore my research questions from multiple perspectives and gather an understanding of the ethnohistorical background of the place while learning from people today about their lives and their engagement with the waterscape and their history.

Chapter 2 introduced Upper Skagit as a Coast Salish fishing community and described two major colonial events that impacted the tribe: the Point Elliot Treaty and the Boldt decision. These events influenced how people arrayed themselves throughout their aboriginal territory. Events like these are the broad strokes of colonization and settlement, but there are also the finer grains of it as seen in the communities of practice and the social tensions that emerge from where people live. When people live in different places but are under the same leadership, they have different interests and they do not always agree, leading to social tensions. Blood quantum and the politics of tribal membership also emerge as a tension, particularly in relation to tribal fishing policy. This will be a major issue for the tribe in the future, because if the tribe doesn't change the blood quantum requirements it will not be able to continue as a political entity.



The spatial arrangement and different communities of practice support my conclusion that Upper Skagit knowledge of traditional territory is a combined effort, the amalgamation of multiple individual and family perspectives on the area and varying terms of access. Upper Skagit are able to maintain a controlling interest in their aboriginal territory because of multiple communities of practice within the broader tribal community.

Chapter 3 introduces the concept of waterscape, which I discuss in more detail below, and gives an ethnographic description of the Upper Skagit fishery. It shows how colonialism is inscribed on the landscape through dams, dikes, and removal of logjams, and also how it extends its influences through regulations that impact daily behaviors. Meetings with Seattle City Light and FERC show how differing epistemological approaches to space shape interactions between the tribe and non-tribal entities, demonstrating the ways Upper Skagit must assert themselves within their traditional territory.

Chapter 4 describes historical consciousness as the conscious and unconscious thoughts that emerge from the interplay between Upper Skagit culture, history, and aboriginal territory. Using previous efforts at understanding historical periodization in Coast Salish scholarship, I develop a set of categories useful in the Upper Skagit context: Myth Age, Pre-Contact Indians, Contact-era “Old Timers” (also known as the “Treaty Period” or “Treaty Days”), and Contemporary Upper Skagit. I show how the regulatory and legalistic regimes shape people’s actions as they fish. Drawing on Cruikshank’s understanding of local knowledge as “tacit knowledge embodied in life experiences and reproduced in everyday behavior and speech” (2009:5), it closes by applying the above

conceptual framework to an Upper Skagit family fishing site to demonstrate how sites within the waterscape have layers of history and culture attached to them.

Chapter 5 presents a selection of traditional oral narratives to give background and provide cultural context for the contemporary ethnographic material of the dissertation. Stories attached to specific predecessor villages show how factors of location are important in weaving together a fabric of spatial authorship that incorporates individual identity, family identities and marriage connections, places of residence, places of resource use, and places of spiritual practice. Stories about the Transformer and features within the waterscape that came about as a result of certain narrative events show Upper Skagit understandings of the landscape as a sentient place, along with stories about water features and behavior. Together, these stories provide insight into previous generations' ideas about the waterscape and the figures that moved throughout it that helps shed light on what Upper Skagit people today think and how they act towards these things.

Chapter 6 presents two family narratives, set up by the preceding chapters to be read and understood in light of my claims about historical consciousness and waterscape. These family narratives are part of the process and articulations of historical consciousness and its emergence from culture, history, and waterscape. The chapter weaves together multiple threads of family narrative to form a fabric of historical consciousness and local knowledge, and shows how members of those families use that consciousness to position themselves in their aboriginal territory, the Coast Salish world, and American society. Giving voice to multiple generations, these narratives demonstrate how people are arrayed in the waterscape, how they engage with it, how they feel about

themselves as a collective group and their history. In contrast with one another, they demonstrate how historical consciousness is localized and how tribal history comprises multiple overlapping spheres of waterscape knowledge.

## **7.2 Elders, Events, and the Continued Importance of Narrative**

One of my conclusions is that oral narratives continue to be important to Upper Skagit people today, even though the ways in which these narratives are told have changed over time. People are aware of them and their cultural significance, and they continue to value recorded narratives, written version of the narratives, and the stories still told in a variety of forms by tribal members today.

As I demonstrated in chapter 5, there is a rich body of Upper Skagit oral tradition. Collected by Snyder, Collins, and Hilbert, these stories shed light on how Upper Skagit people in decades (and centuries) past engaged in storytelling. For the purpose of this ethnography I chose to highlight stories that demonstrate connections to the waterscape, but a more thorough look at the full body of Upper Skagit stories would reveal much more about the culture—see, for example, Snyder’s assessment of how storytelling was used to symbolically resolve social conflict that was unresolvable in other ways (1964:490).

No matter what aspect of Upper Skagit culture one chooses to study through their oral narratives—waterscape relationships or social conflict—this study finds that these narratives remain important to Upper Skagit people today even though they are not being told in the “traditional” ways described by Snyder and Hilbert. Elements of these stories appear in many aspects of contemporary Upper Skagit lives. They are accessible in

printed and audio formats. Stories are told at public events such as feasts as well as at private smokehouse functions. Elements of stories are invoked in narratives about other events, as Levon does when he mentions Coyote in stories about his uncles. Stanley references Wren and Raven when he shares his teachings with the fishermen at the beginning of the season, and laments that he can't remember the details of a story about a powerful pool in Bacon Creek.

As I concluded in Chapter 5, connections between stories from decades past are made to the present. I used this example: Charley Anderson's sources (his father, his uncles, Chief Moses from east of the Cascades)—>Charley Anderson—>Sally Snyder/Vi Hilbert—>Snyder dissertation and expert report/Hilbert's publications (including *Haboo*) —>contemporary audience. Lines like this can be traced for other families,<sup>50</sup> but they all indicate the same thing: stories remain important, and storytelling figures of the past are revered and continue to be known for their talents and knowledge.

This also indicates another important aspect of Upper Skagit historical consciousness. Cultural memory is maintained through elders—knowledgeable people within families and within the community as a whole are viewed by others as knowing more about traditional Upper Skagit culture than other people (Fred and Sam Walters, Henry and Jeanie Moses). Their knowledge is regarded as particularly valuable and critical, and a resource which can be lost. When these people pass away, they still occupy a place of significance within the family and the community, which is evident in the way people talk about them, invoke their names and stories at times.

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<sup>50</sup> It would be particularly interesting to examine this process from a sociolinguistic perspective, or a literary perspective, both of which are unfortunately outside the realm of this study.

This can be described using O’Neill’s “empty center” concept: “Informal talk about Indian identity is structured by an idea of the "empty center," in which the "real Indians" comprise an esteemed but elusively defined group” (1996:18). The definition of this group is one of the aspects of Upper Skagit historical consciousness, in which they are typically described as “old timers.” For Levon, this group includes his uncles and his grandmother, and his uncle who he describes as “one of the last” elders. Levon’s memories of his uncles’ stories shows how knowledge of the waterscape is passed down from generation to generation. Levon spends time in many of these places for his job with the Natural Resources Department, but his historical consciousness frames these places as more than just sites where he works. He understands his family history and how it is attached to these places.

For Stanley, the group is his grandparents and uncles. According to O’Neill, the "empty center" is an idea that seems to withhold from people “a sense of an ‘authentic’ Indian identity” (1996:18), and in some ways this is true at Upper Skagit. People express regret that they did not spend more time listening to elders when they were still alive, or talk about how they should record the stories of the remaining elders while they are still alive. It is one of the reasons that anthropological research is well-received in the community.

It is important to note, however, that the way Upper Skagit people engage with traditional narratives today is not less “authentic” than the ways their esteemed elders did in the past. The narratives remain central to Upper Skagit cultural distinctiveness, and people have changed the way they engage with narratives as the world around them has changed. Upper Skagit people live busy lives with the same trappings of modernity as

other, non-Native Americans, but there is still a place in their world for the stories and the teachings of the previous generations. These, while physically gone, are still culturally present through the knowledge and stories they passed on to younger generations and recorded with researchers. Upper Skagit have figured out ways to maintain their cultural distinctiveness by drawing on the surviving knowledge. Today the tribe uses narratives and other knowledge (e.g. place-name information and other ethnographic details) passed down from these elders to demonstrate where and how their ancestors were living during the settlement period for a variety of purposes, discussed in the next section. People have multiple levels of identity, including predecessor village ties and tracing their ancestry back to prominent historical figures. The empty center is, in this case, not completely empty; the cultural knowledge remains and sustains the community.

### **7.3 Tribal Cohesion and the Regulatory and Legal Regimes**

Another conclusion is that Upper Skagit have managed to remain together as a cohesive unit throughout the colonial period in spite of several attempts to settle them onto nearby tribal reservations and assimilate them into other groups, and that they succeed as a group while navigating the path laid out by the regulatory and legalistic regimes of settler colonialism. They've managed to create a social union through this vehicle of the tribe, drawing on historical consciousness at different levels—individual, family, and tribal. Even though they have different family histories and stories, they collectively identify as Upper Skagit and they maintain their presence in their aboriginal territory. Social conflict and contradictions still exist in the community today—the distinctions between fishing families and logging families, the divide between rich and

poor, and the contrasts between modern and traditional ways of engaging with cultural practices, to name a few—but these contradictions do not threaten the cohesiveness of the community. Despite all the pressures of modernity, ethnic collectivities haven't withered away. Upper Skagit are more focused on their sovereignty—both political and economic—than ever before.

Upper Skagit local knowledge emerges from the waterscape at many places: predecessor village sites, family allotments, fishing camps, and hunting and gathering places in addition to the reservation and the homes where Upper Skagit people live today. There is overlap between these places. The history of the tribe as a collective entity does not eclipse family knowledge, but a collective history is necessary for the tribe's survival in the contemporary political situation. No one Upper Skagit person has local knowledge of the entire Skagit waterscape but rather has certain types of knowledge attached to places he or she knows well. Collectively, the Upper Skagit tribal membership knows the entire waterscape well, and this historical consciousness, when combined, forms the tribe's local knowledge of sites throughout Upper Skagit aboriginal territory. This knowledge gives them the right to continue fishing, hunting, and gathering within their territory, and to be party to decisions made by outside groups about how the Skagit waterscape should be managed.

These outside forces can be categorized as the regulatory and legalistic regimes of state power that exercise the ongoing forces of settler colonialism, and an understanding of these regimes reveals more about how Upper Skagit people behave. Represented by the government bodies that regulate fishing and hunting practices (the state Department of Fish and Wildlife, the National Forest Service, and the National Park Service) and that

oversee tribal affairs in general (the Bureau of Indian Affairs), these regimes represent major pieces of Upper Skagit colonial history: the Point Elliot Treaty, the Boldt decision that subsequently restored fishing rights, the establishment of the reservation. These pieces are the broad strokes of the colonial process, but this dissertation shows the fine grains of that process—how people live the legacies of colonialism in their daily lives. To paraphrase Fogelson (1989) again, the broad strokes are the “events” that we categorize as important from a Western historical perspective, while the fine grains are the lived experiences and the “non-events” that play a role in the process of Upper Skagit historical consciousness.

This can be seen on the water. Contemporary Upper Skagit experiences with water at individual, family, and tribal levels are produced by interactions between historical consciousness and legal consciousness, with pre-contact knowledge determining where and how these experiences happen via a long line of court cases, environmental bureaucracy, and inter-tribal negotiations. As chapter 3 showed, lines in the saltwater that determine where and when people can set crab pots lead to confrontations between law enforcement and tribal members as well as inter-tribal conflicts. Similar circumstances arose when the tribal cops came to the Walters family camp and checked fishing IDs, leading to the exodus of several people to the other side of the river where the cops were unlikely to go.

These day-to-day actions are the lived realities of the colonial legacy. Upper Skagit have the right to fish, but that right is regulated by the terms of the settler government. By examining both the broad strokes—the political and legal history that led to fishing rights in their current form—and the fine grains—regulations and the actions



people choose because of them—we get a rich pictures of how the colonial process is ongoing, and how Native American people today deal with the realities of this regime while simultaneously asserting their cultural distinctiveness.

#### **7.4 Deep History: Waterscape Connections**

I also conclude that the Upper Skagit approach to water is one of the major distinctive features of Upper Skagit as a group. Because their aboriginal territory encompasses an entire watershed and the surrounding mountains and saltwater, the Upper Skagit approach to the world is framed by their experience of this space and the divide between land and water within it, which is permeable and constantly shifting. Prior to contact Upper Skagit people had ways of dealing with flooding and changing of the river channel, and they continue to do so today. They maintain their place in the region as a powerful fishing tribe, fighting for their allotted catch and working to provide tribal members with the opportunities to fish both commercially and to feed themselves and their families.

A key aspect of how Upper Skagit people connect to the waterscape is how places within Upper Skagit aboriginal territory continue to be culturally significant even when people are not visiting those places on a regular basis. History evokes their cultural importance. The Marlowe homestead is one example of this. Its remote location, forty miles up the highway (and the Skagit River) from the reservation in Sedro-Woolley, means that it is rarely visited by tribal members other than Stanley and his family and friends who live nearby, such as John Conrad Who lives in Rockport. However, the homestead remains an important place to the tribe. Levon references it when he talks

about the old Shaker practices and the meetings held there that his grandparents and uncles attended. Sheep Hill is another culturally significant place. Accessible only by a steep trail that starts near the ranger station in Marblemount, not many tribal members visit this place on a regular basis. And yet if you mention the place to Upper Skagit people, they know that it is important as a berry-picking, hunting, and spiritual site. Levon also mentions that “untouched” places are more spiritually salient because of the fact that they have remained outside the influence of settlement.

One of the most unusual variations of this conclusion is that people remember and attach cultural significance to places that are currently underwater. The river valleys flooded by the Baker and Ross hydroelectric projects contain major archaeological sites that are studied when the lakes are drawn down, but there are also memories attached to places beneath the reservoirs that played a role in their ancestors’ lives. Hilbert’s telling of the Sockeye Marriage story invokes one such place—the falls that no longer exist due to the flooding. Fred and Sam Walters’ memories of places they used to camp and hunt before the Baker Dam went in are also examples of this. Beneath Ross Lake lies the Skagit riverbed along which people traveled north-south before the flooding; as Stanley remembers from the stories told to him by his grandparents, different families had their own ways of making their way along that route, which is evidence of the family level of consciousness and local knowledge in the pasts. According to Miller, when he and Angelbeck took Fred and Sam Walters and Vi Hilbert out onto Baker Lake for a research trip, Hilbert had a moment where she sensed that their boat was positioned above a waterfall where she used to come with her family before it was flooded by the reservoir. This is the same waterfall she talks about in her Sockeye Marriage story, presented in

chapter 5. Miller describes a similar experience with Levon, who was driving the boat for the research trips, when he found a type of pumice stone that he recalled his ancestors used to source from that particular place (personal communication with Bruce Miller, 2013).

The memories of these places—and their continued importance to Upper Skagit people—play a critical role in Upper Skagit historical consciousness and its connection to waterscape. This is literally deep history—deep beneath the waters of a reservoir that exists because of the settler population. The waterscape concept facilitates analysis of these places the history attached to them because it accounts for the fact that water features are not permanent. Water is constantly moving, and water features are constantly changing over time, as a result of both human influences and forces of hydrogeomorphology. The colonial encounter has been inscribed in the landscape in the form of these dams that flood river valleys through which people used to move, but there is history inscribed beneath the water as well. By thinking of Upper Skagit aboriginal territory as a waterscape, we can see the human and the nonhuman, the past and the present, and the various ways they are conceived of within people’s historical consciousnesses.

The concept of waterscape is emergent in the literature. Scholars have grappled with terminology to talk about this—Raffles uses *terra anfibia*, Swyngedouw uses waterscape—and so I use waterscape with the understanding that this is still a relatively new issue that is still being determined in the literature. As I discussed in chapter 3, I build on Swyngedouw’s use of it to talk about the “hybrid character of the water landscape, or waterscape” (1999:443), examining flows both physical and metaphorical.

The Upper Skagit case examined here shows how thinking of a fishing community's aboriginal territory as a waterscape allows us to examine the space in which they exist while accounting for physical and cultural change over time. The Skagit waterscape is filled with complex interrelations. People engage with a physical environment that is not purely physical to them, as is demonstrated by the traditional narratives and the ways people use them today—for example, when the Shaker priest brushed the fishermen with cedar boughs dipped in water from the river, and elders told stories about respecting the river and the metaphysical elements within it. The waterscape is alive and sentient.

In addition to exploring how Upper Skagit people engage with the waterscape, the concept is useful in understanding how history has determined where people live on the waterscape. The ways in which a community is arrayed on the landscape affect and shape how people think. Because they had no reservation or fishing rights until the 1980s, people had to choose whether to stay in the area or move elsewhere to find work. Those who stayed had to choose where to live—on allotments upstream like the Marlowe family, or in houses closer to the saltwater like the Walters family. When the reservation was created, some people moved there while others remained in the places their families had been for generations.

The result is the Upper Skagit people are spread throughout their aboriginal territory and beyond. They differ from neighboring tribes like Lummi and Swinomish, whose reservations are larger and were established around the time of the Point Elliot Treaty. Upper Skagit people are spaced widely throughout the territory, but as the previous section demonstrates, people still identify as a cohesive unit, and they have maintained this unity over a century in which the pressures to disband were many. They

stayed together, and they remember the names of those who held them together in the past. These names persist, as do the names of the eleven predecessor villages, whose names adorn the street signs on the reservation. While Upper Skagit people may not visit the old village sites on a regular basis, they read the names each day when they move around the reservation. Even the tribe's name reflects their place in the waterscape: "Upper" Skagit.

### **7.5 Coast Salish Literature and Implications for Future Research**

This dissertation both responds to and builds upon work by other scholars who have worked in the region. My approach is more phenomenological than most other approaches to the contemporary Coast Salish world, which I touched on earlier in this dissertation, but it also builds on the tradition established by the scholars who came before me. Smith's watershed model, which argues that "peoples living near a single drainage system were considered to be knit together by that fact if by no other" (1969:2-3), still has some utility, within limits, when applied to Upper Skagit. The contemporary situation must be evaluated slightly differently, however, due to different modes of transportation. In pre-contact times, Upper Skagit people were able to move around to different watersheds throughout the Coast Salish world by canoe. Today, this mobility remains but the traveling happens in motorized boats on the water and motorized vehicles on the land. Upper Skagit people travel by car throughout the year to visit family and engage in Coast Salish regional events. Some people visit family on the Columbia River each year, others travel to visit smokehouses during the winter ceremonial season. Summer events like powwows and canoe races bring Coast Salish people from different

watersheds together. Patterns of bilateral kinship allow people to be affiliated with more than one waterscape, or aboriginal territory, if they so choose. I use Smith's model to show that the waterscape is central to the cultural distinctiveness of Upper Skagit people while reinforcing that they are not limited by their affiliation to the waterscape.

Jay Miller draws on Smith's model, outlining group affiliations within watersheds and four "notions": of person (combining body, mind, and soul with spirit allies); of house (including locals and distant kin); of canoe (transport across time and space, distinguished as forest, prairie, river, or sea); and of world (the drainage linked both to resident immortals and to more remote peoples through marriage, ritual, and trade) (1999:19). His concept of anchored radiances in which shamanic and other spirit-based power and energy were acquired from distant locales and brought back to tribal or personal homes is useful in understanding Upper Skagit relationships to places and social networks both within and beyond their aboriginal territory. Miller refers to the culture under discussion as Lushootseed, much in the same way Hilbert does, as I discussed in chapter 4.<sup>51</sup> He responds to a similar issue discussed in this dissertation, namely "how the vitality of Lushootseed culture has coped with the very real and continuing concern with spiritual loss or damage" (1999:8-9). He does this by using the shamanic odyssey as an example, drawing on his work with Hilbert and others to understand how Lushootseed people would have performed ritualistic aspects of their spiritual lives. My work draws on this, but instead of reconstructing practices as they were done in the past, I look at how Upper Skagit people live their lives and practice their culture today, in contemporary North American society.

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<sup>51</sup> As he worked closely with Hilbert for much of his career, this makes sense.

I build on Boxberger's work in which he strives to "overcome the bias that views Indians as 'decultured', instead viewing Lummi society as a continuum" (1989:10) and exploring how it is shaped by the legalistic and regulatory regimes. His ethnohistoric work differs from mine in that he reconstructs the history of Lummi fishing over time while I provide an ethnographic glimpse of how Upper Skagit works at a very specific moment in time, emphasizing fishing today in light of historical events that shape the practices people carry out on the water. These practices will continue to shift and change over time as regulations change, as the environment changes, and as any other number of factors come in to influence the ways people work and act on the water. Boxberger was the first to say how public policy influences the way Native Americans in this region act. I follow his lead and show how people understand the process that leads to those actions.

I also build on Carlson's (2011) work on power, place, and historical consciousness in Coast Salish culture. He looks at two domains, tunnels and reserves, which "are particularly illustrative because each represents identity-shaping forces that certain people on opposite sides of a cultural divide either refuse to accept or are incapable of appreciating" (2011:8). He argues that they represent cosmologies thrown together in the cauldron of colonialism—"with all the power imbalance inevitably found in such contexts" (2011:9)—and this idea is useful when thinking about Upper Skagit places and the different threads of historical consciousness that weave together to form local knowledge at a particular moment in time.

My approach also draws on Bierwert, whose analysis of Stó:lō culture "focused on local epistemologies...on ways of knowing that are imbricated with colonial transformations rather than being in the grasp of state power" (1999:4). She criticizes

Gupta and Ferguson's (1992) understandings of place, arguing that it is incompatible with seeing agency in narratives affixed to place; in response she cites Basso (1996) and Sarris (1993) as authors who show this (1999:280), and I have found this to be a useful way of looking at place. History, narrative, and the living waterscape interact with one another in ever-shifting ways, and Upper Skagit people are in a continuous relationship with the places, defining and redefining them over time.

The three authors whose work I build on most heavily are Sally Snyder, June Collins, and Bruce Miller, whose research in the Upper Skagit community has provided me with insights into the history of the people and places that are invaluable to my research. Collins (1974) wrote what is currently the definitive ethnography of Upper Skagit. I draw on her for ethnographic data while understanding that her work is a reconstruction of past ways of life. The last chapter in *Valley of the Spirits* is called "The Upper Skagit in Recent Times" (Collins 1974:237-243) and here she gives the reader a brief sense of what Upper Skagit life was like at the time she worked in the community. Viewed from the lens of anthropology today, that last chapter indicates that Collins had many valuable insights about Upper Skagit life in the mid-20<sup>th</sup> century that were unfortunately put aside (or, in this case, at the end) in favor of writing about "ethnographic present." She did this because that was the culture of academic anthropology at the time she was writing, but her insights into daily life inspire this work.

Snyder's collection of the stories provided me with data, but her analysis is also important. As I mentioned before, Snyder saw oral narratives as a way for Upper Skagit people to resolve conflict and contradictions. Conflicts and contradictions remain, and they emerge from the historic experience—upriver-downriver, logging-fishing, rich-poor,



modern-traditional. People respond to these tensions with culture in the form of both conscious and unconscious lived behavior. Tensions are resolved in particular ways: for example, people have adapted the family system to meet contemporary demands. My analysis looks instead at the role narratives play in people's historical consciousnesses, and how they remain a part of Upper Skagit cultural distinctiveness that allows them to assert their rights in the contemporary world. Miller's work on the role of women in politics provides me with a model of families as corporate groups that fish together and vote together, and this model remains important today. The shifting in power over time from family to family, and the different roles people take on as they succeed in technocratic and traditional ways, were both evident during my time at Upper Skagit. Miller's subsequent work (2001, 2011) on indigenous legal practices and the use of culture and oral history in legal settings also greatly influenced this work. I build on this by showing how what happens in courtrooms and at negotiation tables filters down to influence the daily actions of Upper Skagit people—a comment about “the Treaty” while they fish for sockeye, a reference to a Coyote story when talking about a place that is now underwater.

Finally, my work builds on these scholars and their ideas and uses them to craft an ethnography of a contemporary Native American community facing the challenge of remaining culturally distinct while fitting into the socioeconomic expectations of American society. Upper Skagit people navigate complex waters—both literally and figuratively—while maintaining their rights to be in and influence what happens to their aboriginal territory. Studies of Native Americans still run the risk of focusing too much on the past and freezing people in an ethnographic present, discounting or

downplaying the aspects of their lives that they have in common with non-Native North Americans. At Upper Skagit, cultural resilience is found in the ways people engage with tradition in new ways—fishing the same stretch of water their ancestors fished but with motorized aluminum river skiffs instead of dugout canoes, or references traditional narratives at Family Fit Nights that aim to teach community members how to exercise and eat a healthy diet. These ways are ever-changing, and I hope this dissertation encourages future research in contemporary Native communities to pay attention to present behaviors and how they are shaped by the historical consciousness of the past.

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## **Appendix A: Point Elliott Treaty, 1855**

Articles of agreement and convention made and concluded at Muckl-te-oh, or Point Elliott, in the territory of Washington, this twenty-second day of January, eighteen hundred and fifty-five, by Isaac I. Stevens, governor and superintendent of Indian affairs for the said Territory, on the part of the United States, and the undersigned chiefs, headmen and delegates of the Dwamish, Suquamish, Sk-kahl-mish, Sam-ahmish, Small-kamish, Skope-ahmish, St-kah-mish, Snoqualmoo, Skai-wha-mish, N'Quentl-ma-mish, Sk-tah-le-jum, Stoluck-wha-mish, Sno-ho-mish, Skagit, Kik-i-allus, Swin-a-mish, Squinah-mish, Sah-ku-mehu, Noo-wha-ha, Nook-wa-chah-mish, Mee-see-qua-guilch, Chobah-ah-bish, and othe allied and subordinate tribes and bands of Indians occupying certain lands situated in said Territory of Washington, on behalf of said tribes, and duly authorized by them.

**ARTICLE 1.** The said tribes and bands of Indians hereby cede, relinquish, and convey to the United States all their right, title, and interest in and to the lands and country occupied by them, bounded and described as follows: Commencing at a point on the eastern side of Admiralty Inlet, known as Point Pully, about midway between Commencement and Elliott Bays; thence eastwardly, running along the north line of lands heretofore ceded to the United States by the Nisqually, Puyallup, and other Indians, to the summit of the Cascade range of mountains; thence northwardly, following the summit of said range to the 49th parallel of north latitude; thence west, along said parallel to the middle of the Gulf of Georgia; thence through the middle of said gulf and the main channel through the Canal de Arro to the Straits of Fuca, and crossing the same through the middle of Admiralty Inlet to Suquamish Head; thence southwesterly, through the peninsula, and following the divide between Hood's Canal and Admiralty Inlet to the portage known as Wilkes' Portage; thence northeastwardly, and following the line of lands heretofore ceded as aforesaid to Point Southworth, on the western side of Admiralty Inlet, and thence around the foot of Vashon's Island eastwardly and southeastwardly to the place of beginning, including all the islands comprised within said boundaries, and all the right, title, and interest of the said tribes and bands to any lands within the territory of the United States.

**ARTICLE 2.** There is, however, reserved for the present use and occupation of the said tribes and bands the following tracts of land, viz: the amount of two sections, or twelve hundred and eighty acres, surrounding the small bight at the head of Port Madison, called by the Indians Noo-sohk-um; the amount of two sections, or twelve hundred and eighty acres, on the north side Hwhomish Bay and the creek emptying into the same called Kwilt-seh-da, the peninsula at the southeastern end of Perry's Island, called Shais-quihl, and the island called Chah-choo-sen, situated in the Lummi River at the point of separation of the mouths emptying respectively into Bellingham Bay and the Gulf of Georgia. All which tracts shall be set apart, and so far as necessary surveyed and marked



out for their exclusive use; nor shall any white man be permitted to reside upon the same without permission of the said tribes or bands, and of the superintendent or agent, but, if necessary for the public convenience, roads may be run through the said reserves, the Indians being compensated for any damage thereby done them.

**ARTICLE 3.** There is also reserved from out the lands hereby ceded the amount of thirty-six sections, or one township of land, on the northeastern shore of Port Gardner, and north of the mouth of Snohomish River, including Tulalip Bay and the before-mentioned Kwilt-seh-da Creek, for the purpose of establishing thereon an agricultural and industrial school, as hereinafter mentioned and agreed, and with a view of ultimately drawing thereto and settling thereon all the Indians living west of the Cascade Mountains in said Territory. Provided, however, That the President may establish the central agency and general reservation at such other point as he may deem for the benefit of the Indians.

**ARTICLE 4.** The said tribes and bands agree to remove to and settle upon the said first above-mentioned reservations within one year after the ratification of this treaty, or sooner, if the means are furnished them. In the mean time it shall be lawful for them to reside upon any land not in the actual claim and occupation of citizens of the United States, and upon any land claimed or occupied, if with the permission of the owner.

**ARTICLE 5.** The right of taking fish at usual and accustomed grounds and stations is further secured to said Indians in common with all citizens of the Territory, and of erecting temporary houses for the purpose of curing, together with the privilege of hunting and gathering roots and berries on open and unclaimed lands. Provided, however, That they shall not take shell-fish from any beds staked or cultivated by citizens.

**ARTICLE 6.** In consideration of the above cession, the United States agree to pay to the said tribes and bands the sum of one hundred and fifty thousand dollars, in the following manner - - that is to say: For the first year after the ratification hereof, fifteen thousand dollars; for the next two year, twelve thousand dollars each year; for the next three years, ten thousand dollars each year; for the next four years, seven thousand five hundred dollars each years; for the next five years, six thousand dollars each year; and for the last five years, four thousand two hundred and fifty dollars each year. All which said sums of money shall be applied to the use and benefit of the said Indians, under the direction of the President of the United States, who may, from time to time, determine at his discretion upon what beneficial objects to expend the same; and the superintendent of Indian affairs, or other proper officer, shall each year inform the President of the wishes of said Indians in respect thereto.

**ARTICLE 7.** The President may hereafter, when in his opinion the interests of the Territory shall require and the welfare of the said Indians be promoted, remove them from either or all of the special reservations hereinbefore made to the said general reservation, or such other suitable place within said Territory as he may deem fit, on

remunerating them for their improvements and the expenses of such removal, or may consolidate them with other friendly tribes or bands; and he may further at his discretion cause the whole or any portion of the lands hereby reserved, or of such other land as may be selected in lieu thereof, to be surveyed into lots, and assign the same to such individuals or families as are willing to avail themselves of the privilege, and will locate on the same as a permanent home on the same terms and subject to the same regulations as are provided in the sixth article of the treaty with the Omahas, so far as the same may be applicable. Any substantial improvements heretofore made by any Indian, and which he shall be compelled to abandon in consequence of this treaty, shall be valued under the direction of the President and payment made accordingly therefor.

**ARTICLE 8.** The annuities of the aforesaid tribes and bands shall not be taken to pay the debts of individuals.

**ARTICLE 9.** The said tribes and bands acknowledge their dependence on the Government of the United States, and promise to be friendly with all citizens thereof, and they pledge themselves to commit no depredations on the property of such citizens. Should any one or more of them violate this pledge, and the fact be satisfactorily proven before the agent, the property taken shall be returned, or in default thereof, of if injured or destroyed, compensation may be made by the Government out of their annuities. Nor will they make war on any other tribe except in self-defence, but will submit all matters of difference between them and the other Indians to the Government of the United States or its agent for decision, and abide thereby. And if any of the said Indians commit depredations on other Indians within the Territory the same rule shall prevail as that prescribed in this article in cases of depredations against citizens. And the said tribes agree not to shelter or conceal offenders against the laws of the United States, but to deliver them up to the authorities for trial.

**ARTICLE 10.** The above tribes and bands are desirous to exclude from their reservations the use of ardent spirits, and to prevent their people from drinking the same, and therefore it is provided that any Indian belonging to said tribe who is guilty of bringing liquor into said reservations, or who drinks liquor, may have his or her proportion of the annuities withheld from him or her for such time as the President may determine.

**ARTICLE 11.** The said tribes and bands agree to free all slaves now held by them and not to purchase or acquire others hereafter.

**ARTICLE 12.** 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.

**ARTICLE 13.** To enable the said Indians to remove to and settle upon their aforesaid reservations, and to clear, fence, and break up a sufficient quantity of land for cultivation, the United States further agree to pay the sum of fifteen thousand dollars to be laid out and expended under the direction of the President and in such manner as he shall approve.

**ARTICLE 14.** The United States further agree to establish at the general agency for the district of Puget's Sound, within one year from the ratification hereof, and to support for a period of twenty years, an agricultural and industrial school, to be free to children of the said tribes and bands in common with those of the other tribes of said district, and to provide the said school with a suitable instructor or instructors, and also to provide a smithy and carpenter's shop, and furnish them with the necessary tools, and employ a blacksmith, carpenter, and farmer for the like term of twenty years to instruct the Indians in their respective occupations. And the United States finally agree to employ a physician to reside at the said central agency, who shall furnish medicine and advice to their sick, and shall vaccinate them; the expenses of said school, shops, persons employed, and medical attendance to be defrayed by the United States, and not deducted from the annuities.

**ARTICLE 15.** This treaty shall be obligatory on the contracting parties as soon as the same shall be ratified by the President and Senate of the United States.

In testimony whereof, the said Isaac I. Stevens, governor and superintendent of Indian affairs, and the undersigned chiefs, headmen, and delegates of the aforesaid tribes and bands of Indians, have hereunto set their hands and seals, at the place and on the day and year hereinbefore written.

Issac I. Stevens, Governor and Superintendent. (L.S.)

Seattle, Chief of the Dwamish and Suquamish tribes, his x mark. (L. S.)

Pat-ka-nam, Chief of the Snoqualmoo, Snohomish and other tribes, his x mark. (L.S.)

Chow-its-hoot, Chief of the Lummi and other tribes, his x mark. (L. S.)

Goliah, Chief of the Skagits and other allied tribes, his x mark. (L.S.)

Kwallattum, or General Pierce, Sub-chief of the Skagit tribe, his x mark. (L.S.)

S'hootst-hoot, Sub-chief of Snohomish, his x mark. (L.S.)

Snah-talc, or Bonaparte, Sub-chief of Snohomish, his x mark. (L.S.)

Squash-um, or The Smoke, Sub-chief of the Snoqualmoo, his x mark. (L.S.)

See-alla-pa-han, or The Priest, Sub-chief of Sk-tah-le-jum, his x mark. (L.S.)

He-uch-ka-nam, or George Bonaparte, Sub-chief of Snohomish, his x mark. (L.S.)

Tse-nah-talc, or Joseph Bonaparte, Sub-chief of Snohomish, his x mark. (L.S.)

Ns'ski-oos, or Jackson, Sub-chief of Snohomish, his x mark. (L.S.)

Wats-ka-lah-tchie, or John Hobtsthoot, Sub-chief of Snohomish, his x mark. (L.S.)

Smeh-mai-hu, Sub-chief of Skai-wha-mish, his x mark. (L.S.)

Slat-eah-ka-nam, Sub-chief of Snoqualmoo, his x mark. (L.S.)

St'hau-ai, Sub-chief of Snoqualmoo, his x mark. (L.S.)

Lugs-ken, Sub-chief of Skai-wha-mish, his x mark. (L.S.)

S'heht-soolt, or Peter, Sub-chief of Snohomish, his x mark. (L.S.)

Do-queh-oo-satl, Snoqualmoo tribe, his x mark. (L.S.)

John Kanam, Snoqualmoo sub-chief, his x mark. (L.S.)

Klemsh-ka-nam, Snoqualmoo, his x mark. (L.S.)

Ts'huahntl, Dwa-mish sub-chief, his x mark. (L.S.)

Kwuss-ka-nam, or George Snatelum, Sen., Skagit tribe, his x mark. (L.S.)

Hel-mits, or George Snatelum, Skagit sub-chief, his x mark. (L.S.)

S'kwai-kwi, Skagit tribe, sub-chief, his x mark. (L.S.)

Seh-lek-qu, Sub-chief Lummi tribe, his x mark. (L.S.)

S'h'-ch eh-oos, or General Washington, Sub-chief of Lummi tribe, his x mark. (L.S.)

Whai-lan-hu, or Davy Crockett, Sub-chief of Lummi tribe, his x mark. (L.S.)

She-ah-delt-hu, Sub-chief of Lummi tribe, his x mark. (L.S.)

Kwult-seh, Sub-chief of Lummi tribe, his x mark. (L.S.)

Kwull-et-hu, Lummi tribe, his x mark. (L.S.)

Kleh-kent-soot, Skagit tribe, his x mark. (L.S.)

Sohn-heh-ovs, Skagit tribe, his x mark. (L.S.)

S'deh-ap-kan, or General Warren, Skagit tribe, his x mark. (L.S.)

Chul-whil-tan, Sub-chief of Suquamish tribe, his x mark. (L.S.)

Ske-eh-tum, Skagit tribe, his x mark. (L.S.)

Patchkanam, or Dome, Skagit tribe, his x mark. (L.S.)

Sats-Kanam, Squin-ah-nush tribe, his x mark. (L.S.)

Sd-zo-mahtl, Kik-ial-lus band, his x mark. (L.S.)

Dahtl-de-min, Sub-chief of Sah-ku-meh-hu, his x mark. (L.S.)

Sd'zek-du-num, Me-sek-wi-guilse sub-chief, his x mark. (L.S.)

Now-a-chais, Sub-chief of Dwamish, his x mark. (L.S.)

Mis-lo-tche, or Wah-hehl-tchoo, Sub-chief of Suquamish, his x mark. (L.S.)

Sloo-noksh-tan, or Jim, Suquamish tribe, his x mark. (L.S.)

Moo-whah-lad-hu, or Jack, Suquamish tribe, his x mark. (L.S.)

Too-leh-plan, Suquamish tribe, his x mark. (L.S.)

Ha-seh-doo-an, or Keo-kuck, Dwamish tribe, his x mark. (L.S.)

Hoovilt-meh-tum, Sub-chief of Suquamish, his x mark. (L.S.)

We-ai-pah, Skaiwhamish tribe, his x mark. (L.S.)

S'ah-an-hu, or Hallam, Snohomish tribe, his x mark. (L.S.)

She-hope, or General Pierce, Skagit tribe, his x mark. (L.S.)

Hwn-lah-lakq, or Thomas Jefferson, Lummi tribe, his x mark. (L.S.)

Cht-simpt, Lummi tribe, his x mark. (L.S.)

Tse-sum-ten, Lummi tribe, his x mark. (L.S.)

Klt-hahl-ten, Lummi tribe, his x mark. (L.S.)

Kut-ta-kanam, or John, Lummi tribe, his x mark. (L.S.)

Ch-lah-ben, Noo-qua-cha-mish band, his x mark. (L.S.)

Noo-heh-oos, Snoqualmoo tribe, his x mark. (L.S.)

Hweh-uk, Snoqualmoo tribe, his x mark. (L.S.)

Peh-nus, Skai-whamish tribe, his x mark. (L.S.)

Yim-ka-dam, Snoqualmoo tribe, his x mark. (L.S.)

Twooi-as-kut, Skaiwhamish tribe, his x mark. (L.S.)

Luch-al-kanam, Snoqualmoo tribe, his x mark. (L.S.)

S'hoot-kanam, Snoqualmoo tribe, his x mark. (L.S.)

Sme-a-kanam, Snoqualmoo tribe, his x mark. (L.S.)

Sad-zis-keh, Snoqualmoo, his x mark. (L.S.)

Heh-mahl, Skaiwhamish band, his x mark. (L.S.)

Charley, Skagit tribe, his x mark. (L.S.)

Sampson, Skagit tribe, his x mark. (L.S.)

John Taylor, Snohomish tribe, his x mark. (L.S.)

Hatch-kwentum, Skagit tribe, his x mark. (L.S.)

Yo-i-kum, Skagit tribe, his x mark. (L.S.)

T'kwa-ma-han, Skagit tribe, his x mark. (L.S.)

Sto-dum-kan, Swinamish band, his x mark. (L.S.)

Be-lole, Swinamish band, his x mark. (L.S.)

D'zo-lole-gwam-hu, Skagit tribe, his x mark. (L.S.)

Steh-shail, William, Skaiwhamish band, his x mark. (L.S.)

Kel-kahl-tsoot, Swinamish tribe, his x mark. (L.S.)

Pat-sen, Skagit tribe, his x mark. (L.S.)

Pat-teh-us, Noo-wha-ah sub-chief, his x mark. (L.S.)

S'hoolk-ka-nam, Lummi sub-chief, his x mark. (L.S.)

Ch-lok-suts, Lummi sub-chief, his x mark. (L.S.)

Executed in the presence of us - -

M. T. Simmons, Indian agent.

C. H. Mason, Secretary of Washington Territory.

Benj. F. Shaw, Interpreter.

Chas. M. Hitchcock.

H. a. Goldsborough.

George Gibbs.

John H. Scranton.

Henry D. Cock.

S. S. Ford, jr.

Orrington Cushman.

Ellis Barnes.

R. S. Bailey.

S. M. Collins.

Lafayettee Balch.

E. S. Fowler.

J. H. Hall.

Rob't Davis.

S. Doc. 319, 58-2, vol 2 43

Ratified Mar. 8, 1859.

Proclaimed Apr. 11, 1859.



## Appendix B: Sally Snyder Stories

This appendix includes the stories referenced in this dissertation. For the complete set of stories, see Snyder's papers in the University of Washington Special Collections.

Formatting note: Snyder typed all of the English words and handwrote the Lushootseed words in her transcriptions. Here I have typed the Lushootseed words using the Lushootseed-Puget Salish font from:

<http://www.languagegeek.com/salishan/lushootseed.html>

**Story:** 6. (mountain legend)

**Source:** AC

**Location:** Sauk Mountain, Hazel Mountain, Whitehorse Mountain

**Summary:** Sauk Mountain and the Mountain above Hazel were sisters. Sauk Mt. was called *tuq<sup>w</sup>id* and was *tobšadad*, a strong person from east of the mountains, “east mountain lady.” The other sister was from the Lower Skagits. White Horse Mountain, *sobáli-ali* at Darrington was their husband. In the early days these two women were fighting over their husband and that is why Hazel Mountain is all streaked up from the other mountain fighting her. Sauk Mountain won because she was strong, and she threw *sobáli-ali* up there where he is now so that she could see him all the time. And the defeated woman is way down below with a scratched face and a swollen head on one side. That is why the Indians from east of the Cascades come over here and marry—because Sauk Mountain was an East of the Cascades woman, a *tobšadad slá dai* (lady).

**Story:** 10. Raven (*koks*) and *dúk<sup>w</sup>zbəlš* (Transformer)

**Source:** AC

**Location:** general

**Summary:** Long ago it was mostly the birds and animals who were the people, and this country was so full of them that they didn't know where to stay. They were in the people line then. After the things got changed from that by *dúk<sup>w</sup>zbəlš*, people thought that he was God's son. He wasn't exactly really bad, but he was a person or bird, that changed things.

Then they use to talk about and wonder why there were so many people. It was so crowded that people were sitting around on the ground, and always getting children, and they would have meetings about what they were going to do. *Báščzb* (Mink) and Coyote always took part in the doings, like big tribal members who always wanted to have something to say. *Koks* wanted to be a ruler and make rules and have them passed. No one ever died and the country was crowded and they were wondering about this problem. *Koks* wanted to be the leader in that discussion but they knew he wasn't a good man. All of these people—Bears, Mink, Coyote, Elk, Goats—were the bigger people trying to fight *koks* because he was wanting to make it so that there would be death. And the rest wanted to have all the people keep going. After these people tried to tell *koks* that there would be no such thing as death, and *koks* wouldn't give in, they planned to let *koks* find out for himself and see. He would be the first to have death in his family. After that the people gave up and let there be death. *dúk<sup>w</sup>zbəlš* said that *koks* would have the first death

in his family, and he fixed it so there would be death. After *koks*' child got sick and died, *koks* didn't know what to do. He was falling around, crying around, said that he was sorry and he wanted people to come alive again. He would call around and put his head on the ground and somehow (AC does not recall) he turned black. After that, young and old people started dying. But people were getting kind of bad, and *dúk<sup>w</sup>zbəš* changed them into what they are now. They came to what they are now—birds, animals, some even turned to rocks—the ones that were not doing the right things.” (Snyder notes, box 108-3)

**Story:** 13. How the Indians were raised on the Skagit

**Source:** LW (heard this from her grandfather) (from LW's mother's father from Cascade River, Upper Skagit)

**Location:** Skagit River, *sk<sup>w</sup>dilb* rock, *x<sup>w</sup>əskédib* rock (in the middle of the Skagit at the head; characters come to Skagit “from way off someplace,” including Okanagon.

**Summary:** This is how these Indians came to have Indian power. There were four brothers from way, way off someplace. The oldest brother was *sk<sup>w</sup>dilič*, the head of the power, and he would work hard for the Indians in here. The brother of all the powers was walking up this way on the other side of the River. He made one man and one woman and put them down. After that he took them to look on the mountain. They twisted and looked. Deer meat came down and this power showed them and he said, “This is your food right here.”

The youngest brother of the powers was Knife (*stədók*) power. Knife showed the people how to cut and cook the meat. Fire (*ha·d*), his brother, showed them how to burn. He showed them the Indian matches, dry roots of willow—real, real dry. He took a stick with a hole and twisted another stick in this hole and made the roots burn. He showed them how to make fire to cook the meat. Then *sk<sup>w</sup>dilič* showed the man and woman all the berries on the mountain. “This is good to eat. You are going to get it.” *sk<sup>w</sup>dilič* told the Indians this that he made at this one little village. Next, the fire was burning, and he told the Indians to look at the river. Soon all the fish came in and laid down by the Indians. “That's for you to eat, too. But you can't have them for nothing. You have to work hard and be clean. That's what you are going to tell your children. You are going to get the trouts and bring them home. After you have children you have to be clean and wash up and get the power. You can't have anything in the stomach, and go way up in the mountains and lay down and stay for maybe ten days or even more.” This was same for the woman; to be clean and go out and learn to make blankets and baskets easy.

That power came and put the two people in one village to be raised there and to teach them by Knife and Fire. The oldest brother was Fire. (?)

The fourth brother was *səwádx* who was an Okanagon. He was a power and song belonging to the Okanagon, an the youngest brother (?). He was just watching all the time because he was working for other people, the Okanagon. All of this story goes to Skagit Falls (includes people up to here), all the same story to teach them the same. They made for the people the meat and berries and fish. The first food was made by the Skagit.

The *sk<sup>w</sup>dilič* sat down in the River facing down(stream) after the end of his job. It's a rock now, called *sk<sup>w</sup>dilb*. Hi brother is *x<sup>w</sup>əskédib* (a large rock in the middle of the Skagit at the head). *sk<sup>w</sup>dilič* is *sk<sup>w</sup>dilb*'s power, and he sand his power song after he sat

down and told the people, “You’ll hear me before daylight.” Those that are raised here and clean will find me, and will be (have) a strong power and be easy to get fish, easy to get meat, easy to get food.” The people camped there and heard the song early in the morning, about three o’clock. He was singing the song when they dived.

**Story:** 17. (an Indian power story. 17, 18, 20 are told as ‘true stories.’)

**Source:** LW (from LW’s father. A Nookachamps story. His father was from Nookachamps and his mother *sbalix*”, Upper Skagit)

**Location:** Lake McMurray

**Summary:** Two men were diving in Lake McMurray for power together. One had the power of *sxaus*, Fishy-duck. The other had Otter power. They went to *kabálat* (Lake McMurray) for some days and cleaned up their stomachs. They didn’t eat, just weeds to make them puke everything and ate things for physics. They did that. Lake McMurray has a tunnel to the salt-water. The Indians roasting clams on the salt-water strung them on sticks and sometimes the tide in the tunnel sucked sticks with clams strung on them from the saltwater up to the lake. They found two or three sticks for roasting clams on the beach at Lake McMurray. There is a snag in the Lake that moves back and forth when the tide changes. That’s why people know there’s a tunnel to the salt-water. These two men made a rope to fasten around a rock to sink down into the lake. They had power. But they wanted stronger power. At night they got on a raft and took their rocks tied to ropes. One said that he would roll his rock and go down. The Otter rolled his last. Duck power went first and sunk his power into the tunnel. The Otter saw this man going down fast, with his arms spread out and his feet out, like flying. When he was half-way he heard a lot of noise, like a wind, and he was going fast. Otter saw and let loose his rock and went back because he saw the swift water and his partner going fast. He let go and swam back. He thought his partner would get a good power and have a good time down there but he would never come back and would die. He went to shore and looked around and thought that the man would die. He sat down on the beach and waited and waited until it got dark, and knew that guy had died, this man who went to get Fishy-Duck power. Otter heard that noise down there and knew that it was the tunnel to the salt-water making the noise. That other man just kept going and got smashed up in that tunnel to nothing. He went back to the camp and told them that the other man was dead and went just like the ducks fly.

**Story:** 18. JW’s (LW’s father-in-law) story (Story 18 is the story of how LW’s father got his power.)

**Source:** LW (LW’s father in Law, JW) (from JW, LW’s father-in-law, from *duhwaha* (nuwaha), Upper Skagit)

**Location:** a lake (unspecified)

**Summary:** Two men were looking for power together at a lake, walking together. They cleaned their guts, puking all around, swimming around, and washing up. It was a big lake. Everyone went into that lake backwards; they never dove because it was rough and looked like that it was eating someone. These men made a raft and sinkers of big rocks to go down. They fixed everything real good to dive. This was just after dark

One wanted to go last. They were just in the middle of the lake. The water bubbled up like something was in it. They thought, “We’ll have a good power. There’s

big things down here.” The second man didn’t want to go down. But the other went. He wanted his power real bad. Still the water was rolling around the bad things down there. He was gone for about ten minutes and then the second man saw blood in the water. Something had eaten him up. He rushed to the shore, paddled back to shore.

**Story:** 19. (Indian power story)

**Source:** LW (from LW’s father, Nookachamps story, Upper Skagit)

**Location:** Nookachamps, *b<sup>w</sup>ácalal*, Sedro Woolley

**Summary:** The Nookachamps were strongest for power. A man had three boys and a wife. He lived at *b<sup>w</sup>ácalal*. All one morning and night he talked to his boys. But one boy they treated mean because he was the smallest. His mother didn’t treat him good. The other boys they put down on good blankets on good beds. But the little boy, they treated mean. The little boy just sat by the fire all the time on a dirty little blanket. He had no nice bedding. At night he would get up and run out while the others were have a good time sleeping in their nice beds. This little boy went way off swimming every night. And then he would come home and sleep hard until morning. He laid there all the time, after the others were up, because he had been swimming. They got after him, “When you going to get up and wash up, and you lay down in that bad dirt? Why don’t you get out and swim?”

The mother cooked good things for the older boys and they ate everything. They kicked the little boy and the time and made him get up and go to the river and wash his face while they ate everything. He would come back and pick up just little things after them. The boy had a good power which told him he would sing as a little boy.

The father and the brothers said that they were going to the river and fish with the *s·ábid* (net between two canoes). They came to Sedro Woolley and it came evening and dark. They dipped that net down and got a fish, and it wiggled. As soon as they put it in the canoe, it was the hind leg of an elk. The little boy was just stepping down in the canoe, and never looked back. He knew that it was his. They went up a little ways and got another leg of elk and put it in the canoe. They went farther and got ribs of the elk and put it into the canoe. The brothers looked at the little boy, and the mother never said a word. They dipped again and caught the arm of an elk and put that in the canoe. My goodness, the pretty near had the whole of an elk in the canoe. They put the net down again, and caught another one, the neck of the elk, and put it in the canoe. The brother was asking the little boy, who was the bow man, “Who is this giving us the meat? I suppose you!” The little boy turned around and said, “That’s my meat. I’m going to clean the house and sing my power song and invite all the Indians!” The boys were so shamed. They had kicked that little boy every morning. The little boy told his mother to clean up the house and cook the meat in the canoe, and call friends and help him pound the stick so he can sing. The mother was glad that he got a power, and worked hard. The brothers went from house to house and invited the people.

They had finished the first elk and the boy said, “An elk will come down o the house and a certain man will kill it.” The people ate all that meat from the river. Soon, on another day, the elk came down and got killed and they had another feed. All the creek of Nookachamps is just fish. The power brought it to that little creek and the Indians had a lot of food.

**Story:** 24. (Coyote)

**Source:** LW (from AM, from Cascade, Upper Skagit)

**Location:** trail between Skagit and Okanagon country

**Summary:** Coyote was walking along in a trail, going back to Okanagon country, because he was half from there. He was far along and found a little bird, *čiskákəd*

(Chickadee) with a bow and arrow in his hand. He was on the trail that Coyote was walking on. Coyote saw him and thought that the bow and arrow must belong to that little bird's father. He thought, "When I get close to him, I'm going to get that which belongs to his father." So Coyote got after that "small little boy." He said, "You'd better take that bow and arrow back to your father. You might lose them!" The little bird just stood and looked at Coyote. Coyote said again, "You'd better take that bow and arrow back to your father. You might lose them." This time the little bird answered Coyote, "It's mine!" Coyote said, "I don't believe you made that. Still, take it home to your father and leave it." Coyote thought that *čiskákəd* was just a little boy, but he was a grown-up man talking. Coyote said, "You're like small, and you're too small to make that kind. You're just a little boy." Then he told him to take it home to his father. *čiskákəd* said, "I'm not any child. I made them." So Coyote just passed him on the trail. *čiskákəd* thought, "I'm going to kill Coyote. He bothers me!" So he followed Coyote way up the mountain to kill him.

Coyote was half-way home now and was dancing and singing, real loud now, on the trail. He came to the trail where it went way up to the top of a mountain, and was real hungry. The little bird was at the same place, and was going to shoot Coyote. Coyote was right at the narrow part of the trail, and *čiskákəd* lifted his bow and arrow and aimed right at Coyote's back and just said, "WEX!" and Coyote rolled down to the bottom of the mountain. He laid there for a long time.

*Sxóxo* (Fox), Coyote's cousin, kind of missed Coyote and didn't know where he was. He thought in his mind, "He's going back to the home country." *Sxóxo*, Coyote's cousin, was a powerful man and he always watched Coyote whenever he wanted because he knew that Coyote was kind of crazy. "Where's *s-biau*?" he said. He went to the Okanagon country and looked and looked, no *s-biau*. He thought, "He might have gone to the mountain and gotten killed." So *sxóxo* went to the mountain and looked around and looked around. Then he saw bones and skin at the bottom, "He must have bothered someone and got killed." He looked again and saw little white bones, "He must be dead a long time now. Just bones and skins, and all the meat's gone." So Fox picked up the bones and gathered and gathered and got them in one place. Then he jumped back and forth over the bones and skin. He kept going. He looked, "It's coming all right." He kept jumping, "He's going to come alive." He kept going back and forth. Coyote moved. Fox jumped back and forth, and back and forth. Pretty soon Coyote lifted his head and looked around. *Sxóxo* asked him, "what was it you were doing and got killed? You must have rolled from the top of that mountain. I have been looking for you for a long time and never found you there until down here." Coyote was yawning now, "*axca, axca*, I must have slept a long time, I must have slept a long time." *Sxóxo* said, "You were dead." Coyote yawned again and said, "I was just sleeping." *Sxóxo* said, "No, you died. I found just your bones and skin." Then Coyote said, "You spoiled my sleep." *Sxóxo* just advised Coyote to take care of himself and not bother people again. So they walked away.

**Story:** 37. (about Snake and Beaver)

**Source:** LW (U. Skagit) (from LW's mother's mother, Upper Skagit)

**Location:** Skagit River (general)

**Summary:** Snake (*bəzác*) was Beaver's (*stəcx<sup>w</sup>*) brother and lived on top of Beaver's house, lying down all the time. Beaver had his own house, a hole by the river. Snake lived on top and had bedding there. Mouse and Small Frog were young girls who lived across the river from Beaver's house. Beaver, one evening, told his brother, "I'm going to get Mouse (*x<sup>w</sup>átad*) for a wife and you get Frog for your wife. Come on, let's go talk." He thought it was time to get married. Snake said, "All right, let's try. I'll go with you." They were ready to go across the river, and Small Frog (*waulís*) and Mouse were home, to ask them to be married. Beaver asked *x<sup>w</sup>átad* first to marry him. She was a great mouthy girl, like a mouthy woman who said everything and told everyone. Old Beaver said, "What you think if we get married, Mouse, and Snake marries *waulís*?" Mouse just got mad, "I won't marry you, Big Stomach! I won't marry you! You make a bad noise when you sit down! And I don't want my sister to marry that funny tall guy that stinks at the same time!" Beaver said, "Oh, it's all right with me. All right, my brother stinks and is a tall guy. All right with me." They were going across back home in their canoe and Beaver told Snake, "I'll fix them. They'll change their ways." He hollered across the river, "I'll make the river rise and get a Chinook wind and it'll be flooded and the house will be flooded and Mouse will be drowned after a while." Beaver got home and called for that cloud and rain to come. He called and called for the river to rise real high so the Mouse's house would be flooded. He called "*təbs bzlwá, təbs bzlwá, təbs bzlwá, təbs bzlwá*" (*təbs*, "rain", *bzlwá*, "river rise"). Oh, it rained after that and the river raised and raised fast. And Beaver did that because Mouse had said bad words. It was pretty close to Mouse's house and they hollered to beaver, "*stəcx<sup>w</sup>, stəcx<sup>w</sup>*, I'm willing to marry you *stəcx<sup>w</sup>*. I'm wiling to marry you, *stəcx<sup>w</sup>*. And my sister's willing to marry your brother, *bəzác*!" Beaver got mad, "My stomach's too big for you and it makes noise, and my brother's too tall and stinks. We can't change now." Mouse hollered and hollered. But Beaver just said, "My stomach's too big for you and too noisy for you, and my brother is too stinky and tall a guy for you." Mouse's house was floating down the river and she was going to drown, still hollering for Beaver, "*stəcx<sup>w</sup>*, I'm willing now." He just hollered back, "My stomach's too big for you." Then *stəcx<sup>w</sup>* said "You just float down, and my brother will eat *waulís* and it will be his food now." Snakes live on beaver's houses because in the story they are brothers. And that's why snakes' food is frogs now.

**Story:** 42. Grouse (*sesək<sup>w</sup>*)

**Source:** LW (from LW's mother's mother, *sasal*, Upper Skagit)

**Location:** *s·bálix<sup>w</sup>*, Cascade, two mountains [unspecified]

**Summary:** Grouse, a woman, had a bunch of eggs and packed her eggs and went all over with her husband. He told her "You have to lay an egg for each tribe. Later on the next world will be coming out." He knew there was going to be a change later. Grouse's wife was to leave one egg at *s·bálix<sup>w</sup>*, another at Cascade, and one on each mountain so that all the world would have that kind of egg. The woman packed her eggs and her husband got tired but he kept telling her. They kept walking around so that all the tribes would get that

kind of bird. Grouse said, “There will be too many *sesək*” if you leave all the eggs at one place. She did that and went and laid eggs for all this world.

**Story:** 51. (a power story, a ‘true’ story)

**Source:** LW (from *hihal*) (story from *hihal*, because it was his own power. It is all right for a person to tell his power in this way as long as he is an old man. But a young person’s power is still too good and so that’s why they hid it.)

**Location:** Baker River, Swift Creek, Mt. Baker, Hamilton, the Dalles

**Summary:** A long time ago there was a fellow called *hihal* who was looking for a power. He went way up on Baker River and then went to Swift Creek, *duxzázab dstiux* (*duxzázab*, ‘swift’ and *dstiux*, ‘water’ or ‘creek’). He went for a long time to look for power. He cleaned up over there, this old guy. He was young then. He stayed there and stayed there and camped there and camped there. Pretty soon he heard *stálkəb*, a power that is a woman (this is not a woman’s power, but a power that is female itself. Another name for it is *h<sup>w</sup>uladiti*, a ‘stronger sounding name’), this old fellow. He was young then. They had to look for powers when they were young. He got the *stálkəb* power up the side of Mount Baker where the *stálkəb* lived. He came home and never said anything. You’re not supposed to tell if you get a power. He lived at Hamilton, *slíqəqe*, and there was a great big house there and they powwowed there in winter. Pretty soon he got sick. Oh, he was sick, real hard. The power told him to sing but he wouldn’t do it. If someone gave him something to eat he wouldn’t take it. For a whole year he laid down, and ate nothing. He was just bone now.

Well, someone came along and visited him to see how he looked now. Maybe he had the same power. This man thought *hihal* had a power and thought he wanted to sing. He sat down by *hihal*. Old *hihal* couldn’t talk anymore. He could hear but he couldn’t talk anymore. He was going to die. The man visiting couldn’t hear what he said. *hihal* said, “I’m bad works (?) but no one can help me sing that power.” Not one could hear him. The man went close to hear in his ear. *hihal* said, “I can sing my power, but no one can help me.” The man was glad to hear it, “I’m going to gather the Indians and this evening and you’re going to sing the power.” He got the Indians to help pound the sticks. *hihal* tried to sing but it wouldn’t come out his mouth. They went close to hear it. All the people sat down and the men sat down and sang loud for *hihal* and all the people sang. All the people sang this *stálkəb*. It was a mean power because it made *hihal* sick. *hihal* thought that he was poor, had nothing to feed the Indians and that’s why he thought he couldn’t sing. The third night the power told *hihal*, “I’m going to feed my people fish now.” That was told to it’s master now, his ‘dog’ told him that. The side of Mount Baker slid now and water came right up. *stálkəb* said, “I’m going to help now.” The lake was full of timber and the river was full of mud and it was big and flooded and Swift Creek was coming down. That night it just flooded down at Hamilton and the flood killed all the salmon and trouts in the river. Came at noon and all the water was past. *hihal* said, “You

four guys go down with baskets to the river and get the fish lying there.” He didn’t know it himself but his power told him (about the fish).

One old fellow had a little house above Hamilton. The people told him to get busy with the fish and he got lots because he was close to the river. He was home and not singing the power. That’s why he found out early about the fish. The four fellows that *hihal* chose to get the fish were close busy picking all those fish off the beach—steelehead, dollies, and real trout—until they had enough to pack and take home. All down the river the fish just laid around. *stálkəb* helped *hihal* do this. The people cooked those trouts for a feed. *stálkəb* told *hihal* that clams were going to be at the Dalles. He didn’t believe it. He would be going to look at the Dalles but never saw anything but shells. He thought, “My power lies to me. I just see the shells there but that’s all.” It was all right about that fish.

**Story:** 70. A *s·biau* (Coyote) story

**Source:** CA, Told by the Upper Skagit and Wenatchi. Told to CA by *təlólbiḡ* from above Rockport, an Upper Skagit, and not of ‘E. of the Mts.’ ancestry.

**Location:** Wenatchi, Nisqually, trail in between.

**Summary:** This *s·biau* from Wenatchi, he always came and visited around Nisqualli [sic].

And on the way going back home now he found two little children on his trail. Now Coyote asked these children, “Who is your mother, your father?” Well, the children never talked. They tried to talk but they were babies (CA does not remember whether they were boys or girls.) Well, Coyote got mad, this *s·biau*, and killed these two children. Oh, Coyote kept on going, heading for home, and was walking a long ways. Well, he was talking to himself, “I’m kind of lonesome and quiet. I killed those two children. I’d better sing a song.” Well this Coyote was singing a song. And he was walking and singing a song, and he would shout. And he got on top of the hill, and he was just staring around and he looked back and two women were following his track—running as fast as they could come. Well, these women were *a’xʷadas* (Basket Ogresses. It means “she has a basket.” They are women who when they saw children picked them up and took them home and ate them up.) Coyote recognized the *a’xʷadas* and he started running and got scared of the two *a’xʷadas* women. Yeah, this *s·biau* ran and got on top of the hill and looked back and the two women came up on that other hill way behind, and he ran. And when he got close up on the hill going to Wenatchi he hollered to the people that lived down in there and they heard him running around. And they gathered up all the strong men around. The tribe got Wolf, Elk, Grizzly Bear, Black Bear—all those strong fellows—gathered together and took them over to a big sized rock. The leader told them, “You get a rock big enough for your hand to hold and hit that rock and see if you can bust it.” It was a good sized rock. Well, these fellows tried and that rock that they threw just bounced back and never bust that big rock.

Well, the kind of leader had to give up hope to kill these two women. His people weren’t strong enough, he thought.

Well, they thought about Mallard. He was a strong person and he started where he is sitting and flies right up, that’s a strong person. “Let’s call him to come here.” Well, this Mallard came. He told him what they were trying to bust, so Mallard went over there



and stood there and got a good sized rock and threw it into that rock and that big rock just bust to pieces. That's a man, that's a strong man. So they went up on the trail where the women were going to come over the hill. This Mallard was ahead of all the people lined up along the trail. And when the two women came, Mallard had the rock and threw it at the women and it went right through one's head, and he threw another and it went right through her head, and killed her too.

(CA heard that the woman, the big rock there somewhere around Wenatchee, is a *a'x'adas* woman which turned into a rock (or rocks) with holes in it.)

**Story:** 86. A 'true story'

**Source:** CA, a true story told to CA by his father's cousin's husband who lived at the head of the Skagit and 'from those people from way back.'

**Location:** Marblemount

**Summary:** This is about the people from the homes at Marblemount who went above Portage to get steelhead when it was spawning there on those creeks. And they stayed there and got all the dry salmon that they would want and need. And this man told his wife and the other people, "We better move down back home." They lived on an island up there where they were fishing. (This island was *sáx'wax'wil*, "it's all grass"; *sax'* is "grass"). Well, this man had a son, and his son was blind and his legs, he couldn't straighten them. They were just doubled. Well, this man loaded up that dog salmon on the canoe and brought it down to the head of that Portage and unloaded and went back again where they were camping and got some more stuff. Before he went down on that trip, he was talking kind of rough to that son, that blind and crippled, and told his son, "You're always sin my way; to have a son that's never any help to me is always in my way." When his father started down he felt around and got a big wide board and dragged it to the water. He wanted to get away so he could creep away from that place there. Well, he got this board and he rode it and made it across. He heard a noise in the water across the river and headed for that. Well, he landed all right. He made it. And he couldn't stand up—just creep along. He had his buckskin blanket. He had it with him. And the flat where he landed was about a quarter mile to that big hill, *lalawá?səd*, its foot.

(*lalawá?səd*, "bed platform"). And he had this stream of water on that side and he crept along that water he heard. When his father came back, his son was gone. He didn't know where he went. He thought he just drowned himself. He didn't care very much, but his wife felt bad about her son. And he crept along up the hill along the stream of water he heard running, right up for four days. And he didn't go very far in the day. And he heard somebody's voice, somebody talking. This fellow said, "There's a person comes, and he's blind," and he heard another voice holler from inside a house, "Bring him in! Bring him in!" So this fellow brought this young man, blind and his legs all double, in the house. So this person who owned the house told the other people who lived with him, "I'm going to work on him so his eyes will be open." (This man was not an Indian doctor, however). When he opened his eyes, it was Big Snake that lived in that side of the hill and had a house. That's why these other snakes brought him in. And he worked on his legs and got his legs straightened. When he got out of that place he used his eyes and used his legs and walked around. Nothing wrong with him after that Snake worked on him.

This was some time toward the last of May. And he walked, kept on going on top of the hill he was going on. He got on top of that hill and he stayed in one place many days, maybe a month. But he never heard, it (the story) never told what he had to eat. He stayed from that time up on that hill and he moved down toward where his people lived. He just moved so far and he would stay. That was about October when he got down to where his folks lived in Marblemount. And his folks lived on the north side of the river, and he came in on the south side of the river, late at evening, dark. He hollered to his folks to come after him. And they went over on the canoe and his father got there and he told him, “I’m going home now, come home now to stay.” And he was a different person altogether from when his father saw him last. Now he told his father, “I’m going home but I’m not going in to you folks’ house. I want to get in no house that anyone lived in before. I won’t get in your own house. It has to be a different house.” So his father got over to his house and told all the people that his some came back but won’t come over, “He wants a different house built before he comes over on this side.” Well, his father went working and got all his friends to split up boards. It didn’t take long and they got a house put up for his son. And when this son got in this house, everything he wished—to get all those animals like deer or bear—came in close to where those people lived and the people didn’t have to go out and very far away and get all the food they wanted. It was his power, the Snake power. The Snake opened his eyes and straightened his legs.

n. This Snake power was a good *skəlálatud*. Not many people like to have Snake for a power because they thought it was from the devil. Also, no one would stay out as long as this man in the story did for a power. (although the informant maintains that this story dates after the coming of *dókibəłš*.)

**Story:** 94. Mink and West Wind

**Source:** CA, a *duh<sup>w</sup>a<sup>?</sup>a* story probably told to CA by JW from *duh<sup>w</sup>a<sup>?</sup>a*

**Location:** *duh<sup>w</sup>a<sup>?</sup>a*, between Blanchard and Chuckanut Drive

**Summary:** This Mink, he heard about this West Wind (*stu?ča<sup>w</sup>k<sup>w</sup>*)—and *bə<sup>?</sup>ščəb* heard about this *stu?ča<sup>w</sup>k<sup>w</sup>*. When *stu?ča<sup>w</sup>k<sup>w</sup>* came, oh, he made a lot of noise. He had a cane and when he moved his cane he made a lots of noise, and he had a dog. When he walked, oh, his cane made a lot of noise—lot of rattles in it. And everywhere he went he had his dog with him. And Mink heard about this. And Mink had a little dog. Well, he got his little dog well-trained, a really smart little dog. Well, Mink was walking over towards this *stu?ča<sup>w</sup>k<sup>w</sup>* who was coming. Oh, this Mink was going and he had the little dog with him. And pretty soon he heard that *stu?ča<sup>w</sup>k<sup>w</sup>* coming. Oh, he was making lots of noise, getting close. He heard his cane making lots of noise rattling and when *stu?ča<sup>w</sup>k<sup>w</sup>* saw Mink come he hollered to him, “Oh friend, you better keep your dog away from my dog. My dog would kill your little dog.” Mink said, “Oh, my friend, you take your dog away. My dog will kill your dog.” Well, they said that to one another and when they got close to one another, well Mink said, “My dog is a great dog. Going to kill your dog.” West Wind had a big dog and Mink had a little dog. Well, when this big dog of *stu?ča<sup>w</sup>k<sup>w</sup>* got hold of this Mink’s little dog he just swallowed it whole—never even chewed. And Mink said, “Oh friend, your dog is going to die. My dog is a great great dog and will kill your dog.” Wasn’t long after that, the big dog, his stomach bust open and Mink’s little dog ran out

and this big dog died. So *stu?ča'k<sup>w</sup>* started to blow Mink—a strong wind coming—just blew him away. So Mink had no chance to get hold anywhere. The strong wind just blew him away and carried him. And Mink never got killed or hurt. He just went with the wind and landed way back somewhere. That's the end of the story.

(N. This happened at *duh<sup>w</sup>a'ʔa*, between Blanchard and Chuckanut Drive. *stu?ča'k<sup>w</sup>*'s track was on some point on those rocks down there, there he was met by Coyote.)