BE OF GOOD MIND

Essays on the Coast Salish • Edited by Bruce Granville Miller

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Toward an Indigenous Historiography: Events, Migrations, and the Formation of "Post-Contact" Coast Salish Collective Identities

Keith Thor Carlson

Between 1945 and 1965, Robert "Bob" Joe spoke frequently with non-Native interviewers about the origins and history of his tribal community, the Chilliwack. Like most Coast Salish origin stories, Joe's accounts included discussions of heroic ancestors with marvellous powers. But, for Joe, these were not necessarily the most important components of the narratives, let alone the most significant forces in the history of his people's collective identity. From his perspective, what most shaped and gave meaning to contemporary Chilliwack identity was a relatively recent historic migration that resulted in the transformation of his ancestors from high-elevation Nooksack speakers to Fraser Valley–dwelling, Halkomelem-speaking Stó:lō, or "River People."

Though largely overlooked, historical events and large-scale human migrations have played a major role in the process of Coast Salish collective identity formation. An examination of those post-contact migrations associated with tribal ethnogenesis inevitably casts Coast Salish cultural identity and history in a new light. Moreover, such analysis provides historical context for certain contemporary tensions – tensions that exist not only between Coast Salish First Nations and the Canadian state but also among and between variously constituted Coast Salish communities themselves as they struggle to establish viable economies and governing systems within a system of global capitalism and Indian affairs administration.

The following ethnohistorical investigation is not meant to be explicitly political, but it is informed by a contemporary indigenous political discourse that is often heated. Among the Coast Salish people of the lower Fraser River watershed, various conflicts exist over who has the right to regulate and benefit from a limited and rapidly dwindling supply of land and resources. These tensions are typically portrayed in the media as "intertribal" in nature; however, in reality, the expression and composition of the collective units remain largely undefined and debated. At their core,

these disputes engage a fundamental question: where do Aboriginal rights reside and at what level are they operationalized? That is to say, what collective unit holds Aboriginal title and has the right to regulate and benefit from a region's (or location's) natural resources: the band (first nation), the tribe, the nation (super-tribal affiliates), or the smaller extended family groupings? And where, within these groupings, does political authority reside?

At the local level, contemporary indigenous conflicts over land and resources tend to be cast within a historical discourse where invocations of "tradition" imply much more than simple continuity. For example, a group will often assert that its claim to a particular resource is superior to another's because it is more "traditional." Tradition and historical knowledge are invoked to mark authority.[1] Both the validity of the collective group's makeup and the validity of its relationship to resources are substantiated through historical arguments: my band/tribe/nation/family's claim is more legitimate than yours because it is more traditional. History, therefore, is regarded by Salish people as an important arbiter of both identity and political authority.[2]

European contact and colonialism, broadly defined, have been incredibly disruptive forces acting both upon and within Coast Salish society. Together, they have created situations rife with the potential for sociopolitical change. The direction of these changes, and their expressions, however, has seldom been what European observers anticipated. Even within academia, interpretive models and methodologies have obscured as much as they have revealed about the nature of post-contact identity reformations. By alternatively assessing post-contact change in terms of either the benefits of European technology to indigenous cultural expressions or against a balance sheet of demographic decline, the adherents of the "enrichment" thesis and its counterpart the "culture of terror" thesis (a contemporary manifestation of the old "degeneration" thesis) have focused primarily on the impacts of newcomers on Natives and have overlooked the dynamics sparked within indigenous societies. Likewise, structural functionalism and the legacy of ahistorical salvage ethnography are largely responsible for the inordinate attention the process of assimilation has been given in relation to adaptation. Taken together, such factors have largely prevented scholars from looking for significant examples of early contact-era shifts in Coast Salish collective identity and political authority.[3]

Examined here are indigenous histories describing significant change within Coast Salish collective groupings in the first century following the smallpox epidemic of circa 1782. These stories have been largely ignored, despite their centrality to indigenous concepts of the collective self. An

analysis of their content and structure demonstrates that the nature of change within Coast Salish collective authority and political identity was driven by indigenous concerns and agendas, even on those occasions when it was precipitated by outside colonial forces. What is more, such analysis contributes to an old academic debate over whether European contact led inevitably to a consolidation or to an atomization of indigenous political authority and collective identity.[4] It is argued here that contact could and did have different results on indigenous identity and authority even within a single cultural group and, what is more, that such changes were not necessarily unidirectional.

In short, this study seeks to historicize the collective identity and affiliations of Coast Salish people by reinjecting indigenous voice and interpretation into a discussion of five separate event-inspired, large-scale migrations and indigenous resettlements. The first involves the origins of the modern central Fraser Valley Chilliwack Tribe. This story is particularly indicative of the role pivotal punctuating forces played in setting in motion the phenomenon of identity reformation. The accounts of this community's arduous migrations from mountainous uplands to the valley lowlands, and its establishment as a genuine Fraser River–oriented collective, illustrate the many complicated social mechanisms a Salish people employed to facilitate a new community's integration into existing social and physical geographies.

The second example discusses the abandonment of settlements at Alámex and analogous tribal clusters along the Fraser River near present-day Agassiz, and the subsequent geographical readjustments to new tribally defined spaces. These stories are indicative of the complex nature of identity politics in the early post-smallpox era, for they document the process through which the participants in these migrations struggled to reconcile tensions that emerged between the pull of their older identities, which were nested in their former homelands, and the need to establish and legitimize their claims to the land and resources of their new territories.

Not all of the movements and collective identity reformations occurred within established tribal systems, however. Stories of class mobility and the establishment of independent, though stigmatized, tribal communities consisting of people who were formerly of the lower and slave classes constitute an important chapter in the history of post-contact Coast Salish identity reformations. Following the first smallpox epidemic in the late eighteenth century, the established elite experienced difficulty regulating the behaviour, as well as the identities, of their former subordinates. Ancient oral accounts illustrate that class tensions have a long history among the Salish that predate European arrival and smallpox. Accounts of the social and political readjustments within Coast Salish society following the

first epidemic have provided subsequent generations of Coast Salish people of all classes with precedents to follow as they adjusted to change. In many instances slaves and serfs alike took advantage of the pockets of unoccupied space left between newly reconfigured tribal cores to forge increasingly autonomous collective affiliations of their own. And yet the stigma of lower-class ancestry continues to plague the modern-day descendants of these people.

A third case study is especially useful in revealing that the process of collective identity readjustment was neither swift nor a one-time event. As recently as the late nineteenth century, Coast Salish people seeking to maximize the benefits of a new colonial economy reconstituted their tribal affiliations following a series of migrations designed to allow Fraser Canyon people to gain access to Fraser Valley farmlands. The oral history describing the emergence of the rather loosely defined and somewhat enigmatic Teit, or "upriver," Tribe is particularly useful in demonstrating the extent to which external colonial initiatives assumed a life of their own within Aboriginal society and how the Aboriginal responses were not necessarily what the colonial architects desired or anticipated. Moreover, the emergence of the Teit Tribe represents the first modern expression of a supratribal political identity of a sort that helps explain the forces behind such broad contemporary identities as those associated with the Stó:lō Nation and Stó:lō Tribal Council.

This chapter seeks to elucidate the historical forces that allowed all of these identity networks to become operationalized as such knowledge is essential to understanding the subsequent tensions that appeared between and among variously constituted indigenous collectives as well as those between Coast Salish groupings and different colonial institutions.

The Chilliwack

Robert "Bob" Joe is widely regarded as the foremost mid-twentieth-century Stó:lō tribal historian. His various recorded accounts of the Chilliwack origin story, in particular, stand apart from those shared by other lower Fraser River informants of his generation in terms of their comprehensiveness and detail as well as for the sheer extent of their coverage. Fortunately, Joe was interviewed a number of times over a more than twenty-year period, and so multiple accounts of particular narratives of his are available for review. He co-operated first with the anthropologist Marian Smith in the mid-1940s and then with folklorist Norman Lerman and anthropologist Wilson Duff in 1950. During the 1960s he was repeatedly tape-recorded by his friend and local ethnographer Oliver Wells. As well, during that same decade, he shared aspects of his traditional knowledge with

linguist Jimmy Gene Harris and a number of radio and print journalists. Regardless of what topic his interviewers wanted to discuss, Bob Joe always ensured that they heard the story of the migration of the Chilliwack people from the upper regions of Chilliwack Lake to the Fraser Valley.

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

Reflecting the divergence of interests between informant and ethnographers, Bob Joe's accounts of the mountain-to-Fraser-Valley migration have never featured prominently in any of the publications resulting from his interviews. Moreover, the edited accounts of the Chilliwack migration story that have made it to print tend to be somewhat jumbled and confused, a fact more attributable to his interviewers' lack of familiarity with the local geography than to inconsistencies in Joe's narrative.[5] Wilson Duff, for example, in *Upper Stalo,* erroneously assigns the location of the landslide that precipitated the Chilliwack migration to a settlement site referred to as Xéyles, roughly three-quarters of a kilometre upstream from Vedder Crossing. Duff's own fieldnotes, by way of contrast, clearly record the location as "Below Centre Creek,"[6] which is thirty-eight kilometres farther upriver, a site in keeping with the facts as presented in other recordings of Joe's narrative, where the location is given as "just above Slesse Creek,"[7] as well as with Elder Albert Louie's corroborating assertion that Xéyles translates as "side" and not "slide."[8]

As Bob Joe explained, the Chilliwack people formerly lived in a series of settlements along the upper reaches of the Chilliwack River and at Chilliwack Lake. The tribe was led by four brothers, the most prominent and influential being Wileliq, whose ancient origins, as Joe's contemporary Dan Milo related, involved the transformation of a black bear with a white spot on its chest.[9] The Chilliwack settlements were not equal. Wileliq and his influential brothers originally conducted and co-ordinated the tribe's political and social activities from Sxóchaqel, a settlement Joe referred to as the group's "main headquarters" on the north shore of Chilliwack Lake near the river's entrance. (See Map 5.1.) The word "Chilliwack" *(Ts'elxweyéqw)* literally translates as "head," meaning either the headwaters of a river or the

head of a person or group of people.[10] One day a young hunter was traversing the series of trails that ran along the ridges of the region's mountains and noticed a crack in the rocks. When he returned to the site sometime later, the crack had grown wider. Fearing that there was "going to be great trouble, or disaster," he warned the people living in the settlement below the fissure that they were in imminent danger of a landslide.[11] However, instead of thanking the hunter, the people "started razzing and laughing at him, saying 'where did you ever hear of a mountain cracking in two?'"[12] The next morning, people living in the neighbouring settlements heard a "rumble." As a result, as Joe explained, "When daylight came, the families that were warned were no more. They were all buried under half of the mountain-slide."[13]

While Joe's narratives do not detail the social and emotional reaction of the remaining Chilliwack people to the tragedy of the slide, it is clear that the avalanche became the pivotal event in their modern collective history. With the slide, Joe asserts, "the main history starts," for it was then that Wileliq and his brothers began moving the Chilliwack Tribe "farther down" the river, embarking on a process of migration and, ultimately, the displacement and slow integration with a number of neighbouring groups.[14] In addition to burying the village near Centre Creek, the landslide also likely temporarily blocked the river's main channels, severing the migration route of salmon trying to reach their spawning grounds near the tribal headquarters a few kilometres upriver on the shores of Chilliwack Lake. Without salmon, and suffering the grief associated with the loss of their kinspeople and the spiritual dangers inherent in living near the site of such massive human tragedy, the Chilliwack could do little else but begin the process of relocation.

According to Joe, after the slide, Wileliq and his brothers moved the tribal "headquarters" twenty-four kilometres downstream from Chilliwack Lake to Iy'oythel, a settlement straddling both sides of the Chilliwack River. Over time, as the population grew, Iy'oythel became crowded, and so the headquarters was again shifted approximately twelve kilometres farther downstream to the open prairie at Xéyles, located a little less than one kilometre upstream of Vedder Crossing. Each time the headquarters moved, the satellite villages followed. By the time Wileliq established himself at Xéyles, other Chilliwack were living in the adjacent settlements around what is now the Soowahlie Indian Reserve. Not too long after their arrival at Xéyles, the brothers decided to move the headquarters again, this time a mere couple of hundred metres farther downstream to Tháthem:als (Lerman and Keller 1976). Joe points to the significance of the move: "At Tháthem:als was born a man who was to become a great leader of the Chilliwacks and to
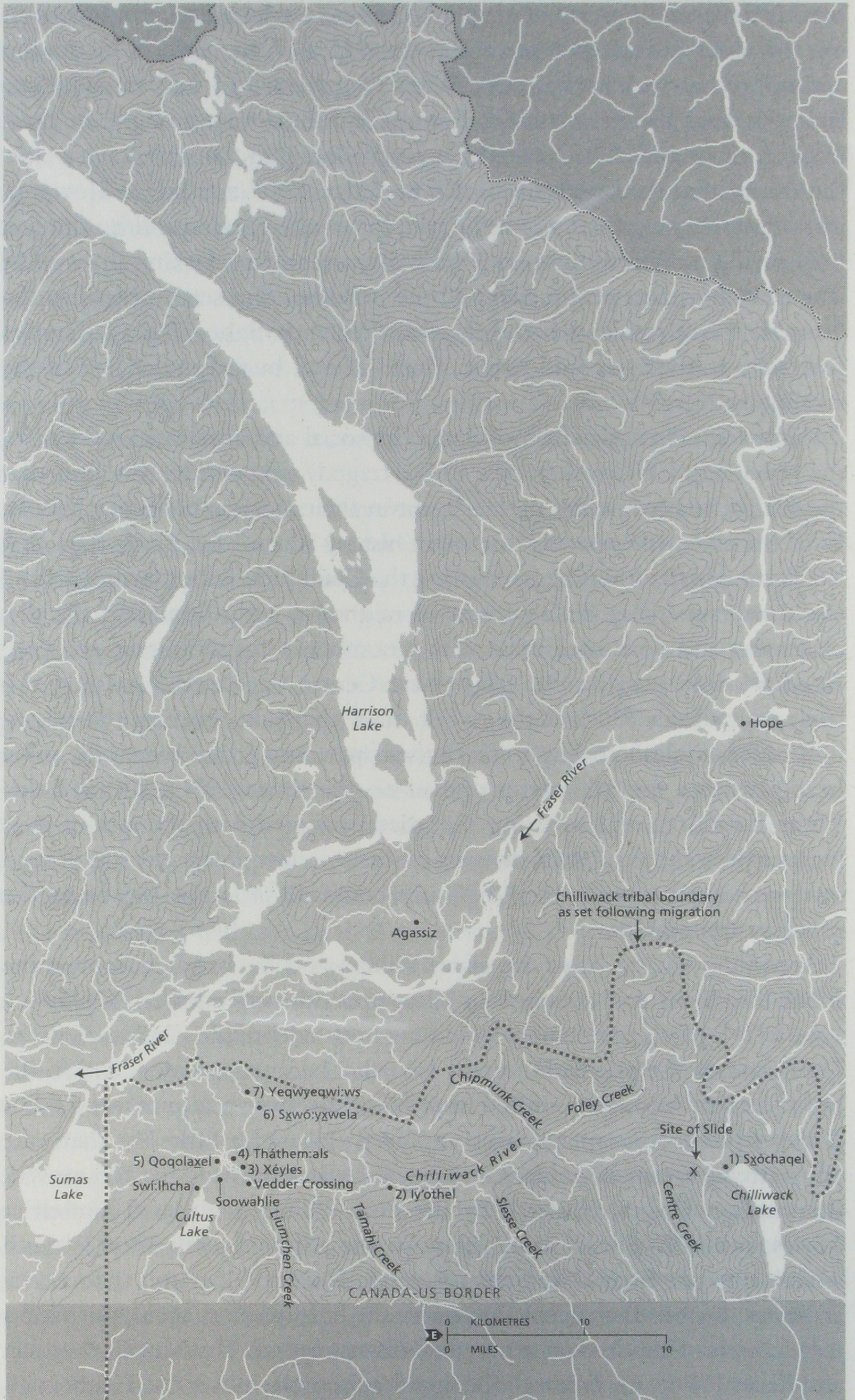
MAP 5.1 Chilliwack tribal migration. *Cartographer: Jan Perrier*

bear the name Wileliq – the fifth man to bear that name since time began" (Duff 1952, 43).[15]

The fifth Wileliq was destined to become a notable leader not only because of his noble bloodline but also because of the remarkable circumstances associated with his birth: Wileliq was a twin, and, what is more, his twin sister was not born until he was a month old. Moreover, Wileliq V's birth occurred at the climax of the era of Chilliwack migration, and he was therefore apparently regarded as special by virtue of his being a product of his antecedents' excursion to a distant location. His birth might best be considered within the context of the Salish spirit quest. Just as prominent individuals ritualistically travel to remote places to acquire spirit helpers, the people of Chilliwack Lake had collectively travelled to Vedder Crossing and acquired a new hereditary leader. Thus, it is not surprising that, under the leadership of Wileliq V, the Chilliwack consolidated their position as a community no longer oriented to the mountainous upper reaches of the Chilliwack River and adjacent Nooksack and Skagit watersheds to the south and east but, rather, to the mighty Fraser River itself. Indeed, until their appearance on the Fraser floodplain, Halkomelem was not even the mother tongue of the Chilliwack people; rather, according to tribal traditions, they spoke a dialect of the Nooksack language called "Kluh Ch ihl ihs ehm."[16]

The arrival of the Chilliwack was a disconcerting development for those already living at and near the junction of the Chilliwack and Fraser rivers. Oral narratives collected in the mid-twentieth century record that, prior to the Chilliwack people's downriver migration, the territory drained by the streams flowing into and out of the body of water now known by the Chinook jargon name of Cultus Lake was occupied by the now "forgotten tribe" of Swí:lhcha people. Like their upstream Chilliwack neighbours, the Swí:lhcha people spoke a dialect of the Nooksack language, reflecting that their social orientation was primarily southward, through the network of trails connecting Cultus Lake to the upper reaches of the north fork of the Nooksack River, and not through what was then the boggy marshland leading from Vedder Crossing to the Fraser River. Another version of the Swí:lhcha people's story, related by Chilliwack elder John Wallace in 1967, explains that the Swí:lhcha were nearly wiped out by smallpox. According to Wallace and others, the settlements at the south end of Cultus Lake and on the flat near Xéyles were completely depopulated by the virus, and the few survivors consolidated themselves in a village at the entrance of Sweltzer (Swí:lhcha) Creek.[17]

The arrival of the Chilliwack people in Swí:lhcha territory did not result in the immediate merging of the remnant population with the new. In 1858, one of the earliest Europeans to visit the area, Lieutenant Charles

Wilson of the British Boundary Commission, described the Swí:lhcha as still a separate community.[18] A century later, Mrs. Cooper remembered that, during her childhood in the early twentieth century, though by then united on the single Indian reserve called Soowahlie, the remnants of the Swí:lhcha population retained a collective identity that was sustained by both physical and social isolation from the Chilliwack:

> Those people never associated with the Soowahlie [Chilliwack]. They were Swí:lhcha. They were a separate people. There was a line there that they couldn't cross; and these people never talked to them ... Not unless they had to. And you couldn't go and hunt on their side, and they couldn't hunt on your side ... They kept to themselves and there's very few of them left that belonged there ... See the Band of Soowahlie [Chilliwack people] is different from the Swí:lhcha. They were different people all together. (Mrs. Cooper in Wells 1987, 106)

So entrenched was the feeling of distinctiveness between the two groups occupying the single reserve, and so bitter the animosity, that, as recently as the 1920s, the descendants of the original Swí:lhcha and Chilliwack communities refused to collect drinking water from the same spring – the Swí:lhcha of west Soowahlie preferring (or being compelled?) to walk a considerable distance and take their water from an inferior location rather than drink from the main Soowahlie source with the Chilliwack people. So entrenched were the animosities between the two sides that friendly fraternization between members of the younger generation often provoked a violent physical reaction from adults.[19]

While relations between the recently arrived Chilliwack and the displaced Swí:lhcha took a long time to harmonize, those between the Chilliwack and the various Fraser River Stó:lō tribes proper, though initially often violent, were more quickly rationalized. Albert Louie, an old man in the 1960s, had learned from his elders that the Chilliwack advance to the Fraser River had not been entirely peaceful. Reportedly, as they edged ever nearer the Fraser River, the Chilliwack warriors engaged in a series of largely successful conflicts with the Pilalt Tribe over territory and resources considered of central significance to the latter group.[20] *The Fort Langley Journals* corroborate that, at least during the late 1820s, violent clashes more frequently occurred between the Chilliwack and the older Fraser River (or Stó:lō) resident communities than between the established Stó:lō themselves (Carlson 2001, 48-49).

This suggests that, during the early Hudson's Bay Company (HBC) fur trade era, the Chilliwack presence on the Fraser was not yet fully solidified or accepted by neighbouring communities. Indeed, Chilliwack visitors to

Fort Langley made known to the HBC traders that their homeland was in the upper reaches of a "river that comes in from Mt. Baker" – that is, along the upper Chilliwack River – and an exploration team from Fort Langley that ascended the lower "ten miles" (sixteen kilometres) of the Chilliwack River in the winter of 1828 mentioned seeing cached canoes but no people or settlements (see Maclachlan 1998, entries for December 1828).

Violence, of course, was not the only tool available to the Chilliwack. Wileliq V in particular was especially adept at consolidating both his own personal position and that of his tribe among the Fraser River communities. One of the continuing characteristics of Coast Salish society is that interpersonal relationships operate within a range of possibilities rather than according to a series of fixed rules. Put another way, in a society where authority was not backed by a permanent professional military or judiciary, cultural options existed. These options enabled leaders to choose from among a series of potentially applicable rules, thus enabling them to behave in different legitimate ways. The point was not to pick the correct rule as opposed to an incorrect rule but, rather, to be able to convince others within one's own vaguely defined community or group that the rule one chose to follow and apply was the best and most appropriate for the given circumstance. Historical contact and precedent, of which genealogy was a central component, provided additional legitimacy to any interpretation.

Wileliq V chose as one means of gaining acceptance of his leadership and his community's place on the Fraser floodplain the forging of marriage alliances with some of the more prominent established Fraser River Stó:lō families. On one occasion, an important family from the Katzie Tribe near what is now Maple Ridge invited Wileliq V and his brothers to a young girl's puberty ceremony. During the celebration, the Katzie hosts, impressed with Wileliq, suggested that he "should take" the girl as a wife. Wileliq already had a wife and child waiting for him back at Vedder Crossing, likely a Swí:lhcha woman from an earlier diplomatic marriage, but polygamy was common at the time and so he accepted the offer. What is perhaps more significant is that Wileliq chose to remain at Katzie with his new in-laws until his second wife had a child – a daughter. By living in his newest in-laws' home, Wileliq publicly demonstrated the paramount situational importance of his Katzie connections, and, although he ultimately lost his first wife and child (they eventually grew tired of waiting for him and moved back to the Swí:lhcha settlement at Cultus Lake), his new alliance resulted in his acquiring ownership of certain resource sites within his second wife's family's territory (Bob Joe in Smith 1945, 5:5:10). Wileliq V is undoubtedly one of the "two men from other tribes" Wayne Suttles learned of who "had married Katzie women" and came to be the recognized owners

(*sxwsiyá:m*) of valuable sites and "their neighbouring streams, berry bogs, etc." (Suttles and Jenness 1955, 10).

With his regional status much enhanced, Wileliq V eventually returned to Tháthem:als, where he gathered his people and again moved the headquarters of the Chilliwack Tribe, this time a few hundred metres downriver to a small flat immediately upstream from Vedder Crossing.[21] At this site, he began construction of a remarkable longhouse that was to secure for him immediate recognition and lasting fame. The edifice he built was unique in that it had an inverted gabled roof. Perhaps the best way to visualize the structure is to imagine two classic Coast Salish shed-roofed longhouses butted up back-to-back. The building and the settlement where it stood came to be known as Qoqolaxel, or "Watery Eaves," for running down the centre of the inverted gable was a massive hollowed-log ridgepole designed to catch rainwater like a giant eavestrough. Through an ingenious system of gates and levers, the log could be manipulated during ceremonial occasions, causing hundreds of litres of stored water to burst through an ornately carved opening at the back of the building.[22]

This tremendous structure – which, according to Bob Joe, required a pole over ten fathoms long (roughly 20 metres) to lift the roof planks to allow smoke to escape – became a focal point for central Fraser Valley ceremonial life. As a reflection of Wileliq's growing stature, the building was constructed through the co-operation and with the assistance of prominent families from the neighbouring tribes of Katzie, Kwantlen, Whonnock, Sumas, Matsqui, Leq'á:mél, Pilalt, Chehalis, and Scowlitz.[23] The participation of such a broad spectrum of the region's elite undoubtedly sent a clear message that the Chilliwack Tribe was an established presence in the area.

At some point, Bob Joe explained, not too long before the construction of Qoqolaxel, the Chilliwack River changed its course. Instead of running west after passing through Vedder Crossing and flowing into Sumas Lake, it swung east and then north, running along the base of the mountain and then out to the Fraser River. Branches of this river slowly emerged to the west, and, as a result, the marshy land between Vedder Crossing and the Fraser River rapidly became dryer and suitable for year-long habitation. Onto this land Wileliq V, as an old man, moved the majority of the Chilliwack people to a settlement called Sxwó:yxwela, and there he constructed a second, less distinctive house, with fewer carvings on the interior house posts. After Wileliq's death his relatives established further settlements at Yeqwyeqwi:ws, Sq'ewqéyl, Athelets, and a few other downriver sites (Bob Joe in Smith 1945, 5:5:12).

Before his death, Wileliq V chose to pass the name and all its invested prestige and power to his grandson[24] (who came to be known in English as

Jack Wealick), though the heir was only a boy of ten to fifteen years at the time.[25] Jack's uncle Siemches, who, as an adult, also acquired the additional ancient name Tixwelatsa, actually exercised leadership until his nephew came of age and had demonstrated his worth and ability.[26] Wileliq V gave Siemches "$20.00, the acceptance of which was [a] sign he'd accept [the] responsibility of leadership." The agreement also included acceptance that the line of leadership would remain with the Wileliq boy's descendants (Bob Joe in Smith 1945, 5:5:10). In 1900, at the age of seventy, Jack died and the Wileliq name appears to have been transferred to his grandson George Wealick. George died at age sixty-one in 1951.[27] In the 1970s, the Wileliq name was transferred to Ken Malloway (born 1953) who has carried it ever since.[28]

This genealogical evidence, coupled with a reference by Bob Joe (Smith 1945, 5:5:101) in which he stated that he knew an old woman who died about 1925 who told him that she remembered seeing the Watery Eaves building still standing when she was a girl, suggests that Wileliq V built the inverted gabled home about 1800. This date is consistent with a Chilliwack migration associated with the smallpox epidemic of 1784. That the HBC expedition of 1828 makes no reference to the structure can be explained if the traders turned back at the rapids approximately three-quarters of a kilometre downriver from the settlement of the inverted gabled home. Corroboration of a circa 1800 date is also provided in the oral history passed to Bob Joe from his elders, who explained to him that Tixwelatsa was the acting chief when the first Europeans arrived in Stó:lō territory. The date Tixwelatsa assumed this role is relatively easy to calculate, given that Jack Wealick was an adolescent at the time. Given Wealick's 1900 death at the age of seventy, Tixwelatsa must have taken over the leadership of the Chilliwack Tribe in the 1820s, just as the HBC was establishing Fort Langley.[29]

Significantly, none of the narratives about the Chilliwack migration makes reference to sudden depopulation other than that associated with the Centre Creek landslide. Possibly, aspects of the story have been neglected, or perhaps the avalanche is meant as a metaphor for smallpox. If, however, the oral tradition is accepted at face value, then, with the exception of the Chilliwack settlement crushed by falling rocks, the majority of that tribe escaped the demographic disaster that so affected their neighbours. Given the relative isolation of Chilliwack Lake vis-à-vis other known habitation sites, and the memories emphasizing the tribe's social insularity (both Hill-Tout and Duff recorded that the Chilliwack were supposed to have been endogamous prior to the migration to Vedder Crossing), it is not unreasonable to assume that perhaps the Chilliwack escaped the first epidemic.

The time of year in which the epidemic reached the lower Fraser River would have affected its ability to spread to relatively isolated communities on the headwaters of tributary river systems like the Chilliwack, given that, at certain times, Coast Salish people spend less time travelling and visiting neighbours. The Chilliwack's resulting numerical superiority, and the fact that they would not have been suffering from the same psychological stress as would smallpox survivors throughout the rest of the lower Fraser River watershed, would undoubtedly have facilitated their migration and territorial expansion.

Bob Joe reports that, during the time of Wileliq VI and VII (circa 1830s and 1840s), the Chilliwack Tribe "split up"; that is, certain families moved to different camps and came to be associated with particular settlements along the lower Chilliwack River and Luckakuk Creek, where the two waterways run through the Fraser Valley floodplain. This physical separation appears to have been accompanied by a degree of socio-political atomization among the Chilliwack Tribe, a process no doubt further accentuated by the colonial government's subsequent efforts to transform each settlement into an autonomous administrative community under the auspices of the British, and then later Canadian, government. According to Joe, this diffusion did not happen all at once; the "scattering had been slow; took years." Meanwhile, under the leadership of Wileliq VI, the tribal headquarters moved a short distance downstream to Yeqwyeqwi:ws.

While this long series of relocations was clearly important to Bob Joe's sense of Chilliwack collective history, perhaps the more important development in terms of significance to the creation of spheres of exclusion and the shaping of collective identity was the establishment of a clearly demarcated and strictly enforced boundary between the Chilliwack and their Stó:lō neighbours from the Pilalt, Scowlitz, Leq'á:mél, and Sumas tribes. It was during Wileliq VI's leadership that "the [tribal] boundary lines were set." As Joe explained, "Before that, lines [which had previously been] only back in mountains now extended to what had been waste land" (Smith 1945, 5:5:5) (see Map 5.1).

The demarcation of these boundary lines represents a significant development in Coast Salish political history. As Wayne Suttles has explained, the standard Coast Salish concept of tribal territories appears to have conceived of jurisdictions not as areas of distinct delineated space but, rather, as an ever-decreasing interest in lands the farther one moved from the core of a tribe's territory. My own research confirms that people from one tribe did not claim exclusive territory; rather, the tribal elites' sense of control of a territory gradually diminished the farther they moved from the tribe's

principal settlement and resource sites. Under this system, people from a variety of tribes felt varying degrees of intensity of interest in vast expanses of overlapping territory. Elite polygamous males, for example, felt especially strong proprietary interests over resources near their home settlement, but they retained an active interest in those associated with their wives' parents' territory. This system of recognized shared interest, however, appears to have applied only to Xwélmexw ("people of life" whose lives centred around – but who did not necessarily permanently live along – the Fraser River). Outsiders – different people *(latsumexw)* – who lacked sacred histories linking them to the region, or who had not developed sufficient or appropriate economic and political relationships to allow them access to the same, were simply outside the system.

Fortunately for groups like the Chilliwack, being Xwélmexw was somewhat fluidly defined. In the eyes of the Fraser River–oriented Stó:lō tribes, the Chilliwack had not been Xwélmexw prior to their migration, but they did become so subsequently. Previously, their lives had centred around the upriver transitional zone between the Chilliwack and the Skagit watersheds. Their movement down to the Fraser Valley and into core Xwélmexw, or Stó:lō, space required an adjustment and clarification of their place in the Xwélmexw universe. In practical terms, the migration meant the establishment of formal alliances with the older Fraser River elite as well as the adoption of the Halkomelem language. Once established, the Chilliwack under Wileliq's leadership were keen to consolidate and protect their position along the lower Fraser. To accomplish this, the Chilliwack – or, more likely, the Chilliwack in concert with their new neighbours – carefully defined their territorial boundaries to ensure that they included the lands adjoining the recently diverted Chilliwack River and through to where that water system joined the mighty Fraser. Once it was defined, the Chilliwack fiercely protected their newly consolidated territory. According to oral traditions still circulating, other Stó:lō people caught trespassing in Chilliwack hunting territory were summarily executed.[30]

Thus, through a shrewd combination of violence, strategic marriage alliances, and astute political manoeuvring, all precipitated by a devastating epidemic among their neighbours and a landslide among themselves, the Chilliwack established themselves as the occupants and regulators of a large tract of land and resources stretching from Chilliwack Lake to the Fraser River. Their newly defined tribal territory, as reported by Bob Joe, ultimately included an important communication centre, fishing and salmon-processing sites, and even a profit-generating local HBC fish weir and salmon saltery.

The Abandonment of Alámex

Within Stó:lō history, epic movements loom large not only as a means of forging new collective identities but also as ways of severing existing ones. Not all disputes could be resolved through increased community integration and amalgamation or the definition of strict boundaries. Sometimes, the cultural obligation to reduce conflict and restore balance could be discharged only by community fracture, or what was more commonly referred to in the academic literature as "fission" or diaspora.[31] Such was the case for the families of the Stó:lō Tribe formerly living on the flatlands known as Alámex (the present-day town of Agassiz).

Interviewed by Oliver Wells in the fall of 1964, Chief Harry Edwards of Cheam explained that, within this tribe, a dispute arose over the appropriate placement of a house post within a longhouse. In the early nineteenth century, Coast Salish settlements often consisted of a series of interconnected longhouses, stretching together as a single structure sometimes for hundreds of metres along a river's bank or ocean shoreline. In 1808, Simon Fraser observed one such house in the central Fraser Valley that was 210 metres long and others at Musqueam behind what appears to have been a half-kilometre-long palisade (Lamb 1960, 103, 106). Within these structures, place and space were apportioned according to status, the most prestigious families (or segments of families, given that extended families were not homogeneous by class) occupying the largest and most defensible quarters. Carved house posts depicting family leaders' spirit helpers or the heroic deeds of prominent ancestors anchored certain individuals and families to designated places within the longhouse. Moving a house post was not only a laborious task but it also signalled a change in the status of the family living beneath such monumental carvings. According to Edwards, among the families living at Alámex, "One party was always moving the posts. Well the other party, the other party would move it back again. So they split up, they split up without getting into a fight, you know; they just split up. Part of them went to Ohamil, and the other party moved over to what you call Cheam now. They split up without any quarrel [violence]."[32]

Fourteen years earlier, Wilson Duff recorded from August Jim, a descendant of the people who relocated to Ohamil, a more detailed version of the story of the abandonment of Alámex. His version provides an explanation as to why a certain man's house post might have been unwelcomed within the communal longhouse:

One day the women and children of Siyita [Sí:yita, a village in Alámex] went to a camp 3 or 4 miles north of the village at the foot of a mountain to dig roots. The

women went out to dig, leaving the children in camp. One woman had left her baby in the care of her small brother. The baby cried and cried despite all the boy's attempts to quieten it, and finally ... [the boy] got angry, made the fire bigger and pushed the baby into the fire. The other children ran to get the mother, but when she returned, baby and cradle had been reduced to ashes.

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

> The boy grew up to become a large strong man, but a troublemaker. Several times, in fits of anger, he killed people, even visitors from salt water. The people of Alámex (Agassiz, the whole area) got tired of him and wouldn't speak to him. Finally, in fear of reprisal raids from down-river, and to get away from this man, they decided to move away.
>
> All of the people from the village of Pilalt [Peló:lhxw, adjacent to Sí:yita] moved across the river to Cheam [Chiyó:m]; the rest moved up-river. Some went to Popkum; the Siyita people, led by Edmond Lorenzetto's great-grandfather, moved upriver to Ohamil; Old Louie's people from Axwetel moved up to Skw'atets. The trouble maker himself moved up-river to Restmore Caves near the mouth of Hunter Creek,[33] and living there alone continued his murderous deeds. (Duff 1952, 42)[34]

(See Map 5.2.) Thus, it came to pass that what had once been a densely populated region of the central Fraser Valley quickly came to be abandoned. The abandonment, however, was not the result of disease or natural disaster but, rather, the concerted efforts of people seeking to both socially and physically distance themselves from a psychopathic member of their community.

While disease may not have caused Alámex's residents to leave the site, sickness may have indirectly facilitated the move. Contemporary oral histories date the abandonment of Alámex at shortly after the HBC established Fort Langley (1827). Three years later, Chief Trader Archibald McDonald conducted an informal census of the Aboriginal population. Analysis of McDonald's report suggests that, in 1830, approximately 1,100 people lived at Alámex (McDonald 1830; Yale 1839).[35] In 1839, a second census compiled by McDonald's successor, James Murray Yale, records that only 427 people were living in the same region. In assessing the ethnographic significance of the HBC records, Wayne Suttles recently concluded that such inconsistencies were indicative of the census' flaws. Given this,
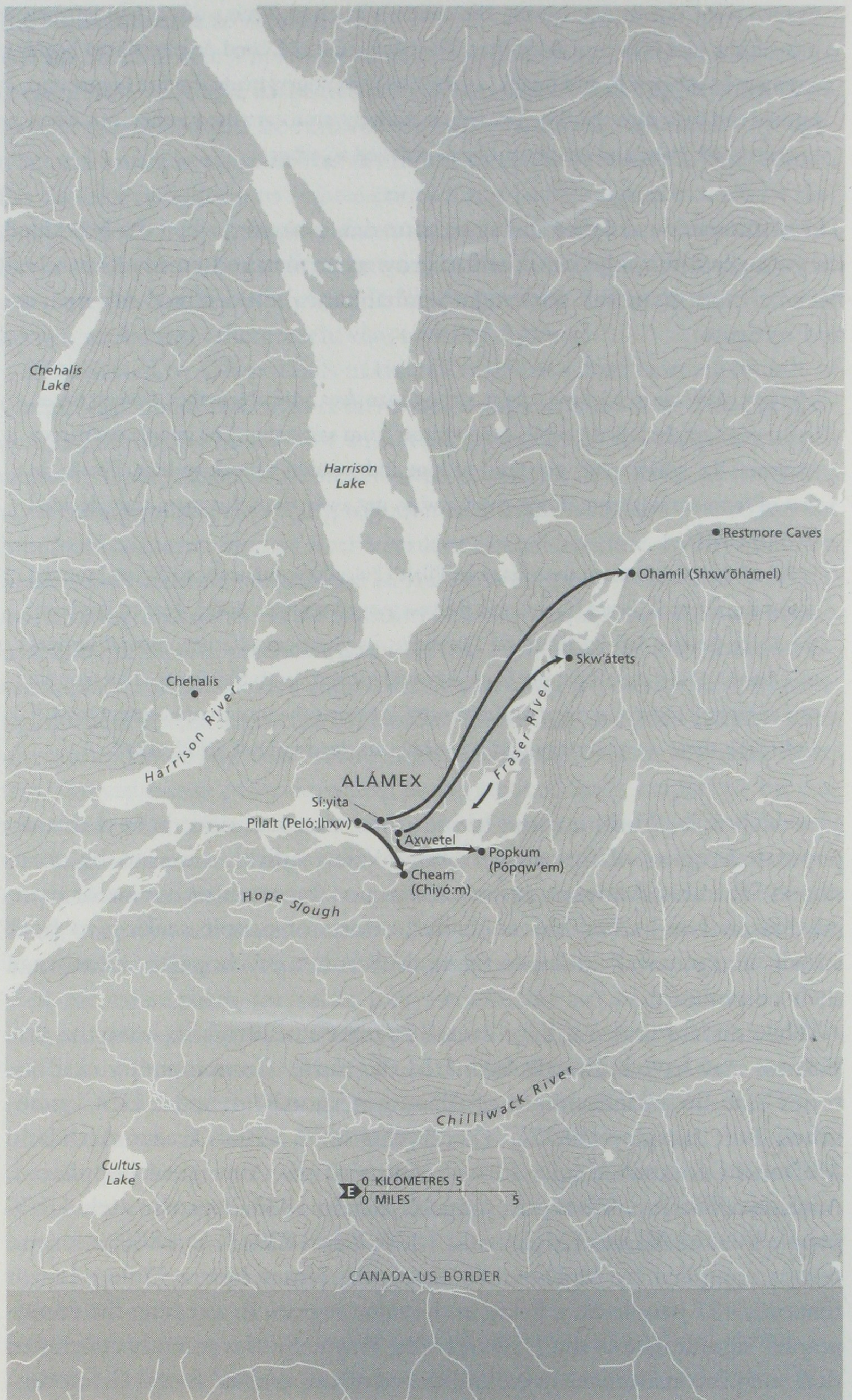
MAP 5.2 Abandonment of Alámex. *Cartographer: Jan Perrier*

he was "strongly inclined not to take McDonald's figures seriously" (Suttles 1998, 258n5). But perhaps Suttles was too hasty in his dismissal. In his accompanying report, McDonald noted his own concerns over the population figures and distribution pattern but assured his superiors that "it is however the fact proved by the repeated examination of the Indians themselves and in particular ... [Sopitchin] who is mostly a resident here, and on whose acct. of the lower Indians we knew to be correct."[36] As no evidence exists for an epidemic in the intervening years, the most likely cause of this large depopulation is migration. It is likely that the abandonment described in the oral histories was well under way by the time Chief Trader James Murray Yale took his census in 1839 and that it was completed shortly thereafter, leaving the settlement sites throughout Alámex empty, or nearly so, by about 1840.

August Jim explained that the people who left the village of Pilalt resettled largely in Cheam near the entrance to the Hope Slough on the Fraser's adjoining southern bank. From there they later dispersed to occupy additional sites along the Hope Slough system leading to the mouth of the Chilliwack River. These people's descendants, still living primarily in the two sites at either end of the Hope Slough, regard themselves as the modern "Pilalt Tribe" and as rightful inheritors of the earlier Alámex occupants' property rights. Those who left the settlements of Sí:yita and Axwetel and relocated to Ohamil and Skw'átets, respectively, had, by the mid-twentieth century, largely transferred their former identity affiliation from the Alámex area to the new region in which they lived. As Duff (1952, 43) learned in 1949, they considered themselves, and were regarded by others, not as Pilalt or Alámex, but as Teit or "upriver" people. These attitudes have proven rather intransigent.[37]

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

Xá:ls the Transformer [the youngest of the Xexá:ls siblings] wanted to help the people so he transformed one of the village men into a sturgeon. The man's wife was very lonely without her husband, and so was told to stand by the edge of the river. She carried her lunch – a small piece of deer meat tied in a pouch – on her wrist. As she stood there in the snow, her husband called her to join him. She dove into the ice-cold river. She was suddenly transformed into a sturgeon herself. Because she had lunch tied to her wrist, all sturgeon today have dark tasty meat right behind their gills.[38]

Though the sturgeon transformation story ostensibly refers to the current location of the Ohamil settlement, Franz Boas learned a slightly different version of the story more than one hundred years ago from the chief of Chehalis. According to Chief George, the transformation narrative described events that occurred prior to the people of Alámex's early nineteenth-century migration. Moreover, in this version, although Sí:yita was still located at Alámex, the name was not used to describe a single village; rather, Sí:yita was used to describe the collective tribal grouping of associated settlements. According to Chief George, the primary Sí:yita village was Squha'men, which, significantly, is the Downriver Halkomelem dialect pronunciation of the word "Ohamil," or as it is known in its fuller form, "Shxw'ōhámél." Boas learned that at Squha'men there lived a bear who had been transformed into a man and had assumed the name Autle'n. This man had a daughter who was receiving mysterious erotic nocturnal visits from unknown strangers. News of his daughter's multiple anonymous relationships threatened to bring disgrace on Autle'n's family's good name. After due investigation the father and daughter together discovered to both their shame that one of the visitors was the father's own dog. The second was Sturgeon, who, when confronted, insisted that he had been having relations with the girl for a longer time than had the dog and, that if she were pregnant, surely the child was his:

[The girl's father] remained completely silent but the girl was very much ashamed. When she gave birth to a boy, Sturgeon took him and carried him to the water. He threw him into the river and he was at once transformed into a small sturgeon. Old Sturgeon caught him, killed him and cut him up. Then he served him to the people saying, "Don't throw away any of the bones, but give them all to me." This they did. Then he placed the bones in a bowl and carried them into the water. They came to life immediately and the boy stepped unharmed from the water. He grew up and became the ancestor of the Siyita [Sí:yita] (Boas 1977, 40).

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

The Sí:yita people, led by August Jim's ancestor, were doing nothing exceptional in relocating their settlement. Following the precedent of their Sturgeon ancestor they simply relocated their home to another part of their Stó:lō (River) territory. What might appear to outsiders as discrepancies between the Agnes Kelly version of the story and that provided by Chief George do not appear important to Stó:lō people. For the Ohamil people's collective identity, what matters is not so much the original, or "correct," location of Ohamil but that their ancestor was Sturgeon.

Class Tensions and Tribal Identity

St'éxem

The decision to resolve tension within a collective group by way of community fracture was not unique to the people living at Alámex, nor are narratives explaining how certain people chose, or were forced, to assume new identities as a result of social tensions and through the process of relocation. References to settlement fractures as a result of what were portrayed largely as personality clashes among elite males are found in many standard Coast Salish ethnographies. What have been less well documented and interpreted are the fissions and migrations that occurred as a result of tensions between different social and economic classes among the Coast Salish – as a result of internal indigenous efforts at boundary maintenance – and yet, these form a significant chapter in the story of how many Coast Salish people constructed and discussed their own historical narratives and identity.

Within Coast Salish historical memory, class tension is a common and prominent theme, yet it is one to which scholars have devoted scant attention.[39] Academic analysis of the question of Coast Salish class has revolved

around three issues: documenting and analyzing the nature of the three-tiered Coast Salish socio-economic structures, differentiating the Coast Salish "class-based" system from the "ranked" strategy of their northern Wakashan neighbours, and, especially, explaining the function of the rhetoric of class within contemporary Coast Salish status maintenance.[40] In addition, some recent archaeological analysis explores the question of the antiquity of Coast Salish class divisions (see Thom 1995; Schaepe 1998). Thus far little effort has gone into appreciating the role of class tension in the unfolding of Coast Salish history and historiographical developments over the past 250 years.

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

The Katzie elder known as "Old Pierre" described to Diamond Jenness how his original Halkomelem namesake, Thelhatsstan ("clothed with power"), performed many wonderful deeds of transformation, improving the world and helping put it in the order it assumes today. An important aspect of this work involved transforming people into forms for which they were most suited – that is, assigning them identities appropriate to their nature. Some of these transformations were targeted at individuals, while others affected groups of people collectively. He transformed his own daughter, for example, into a sturgeon because, despite his admonitions, she spent all of her days playing in the water and at night rested by the shore. Likewise, Thelhatsstan transformed his son, who mourned inconsolably for his sister, into a special white owl-like bird, stating that "Hereafter the man who wishes to capture your sister the sturgeon, shall seek power from you." This bird, Old Pierre explained, was visible only to Thelhatsstan and his descendants. In terms of collective transformations, Pierre explained that some of the people who lived around Thelhatsstan "were so stupid that he made them serfs *(st'éxem)* and divided them into three groups." The first
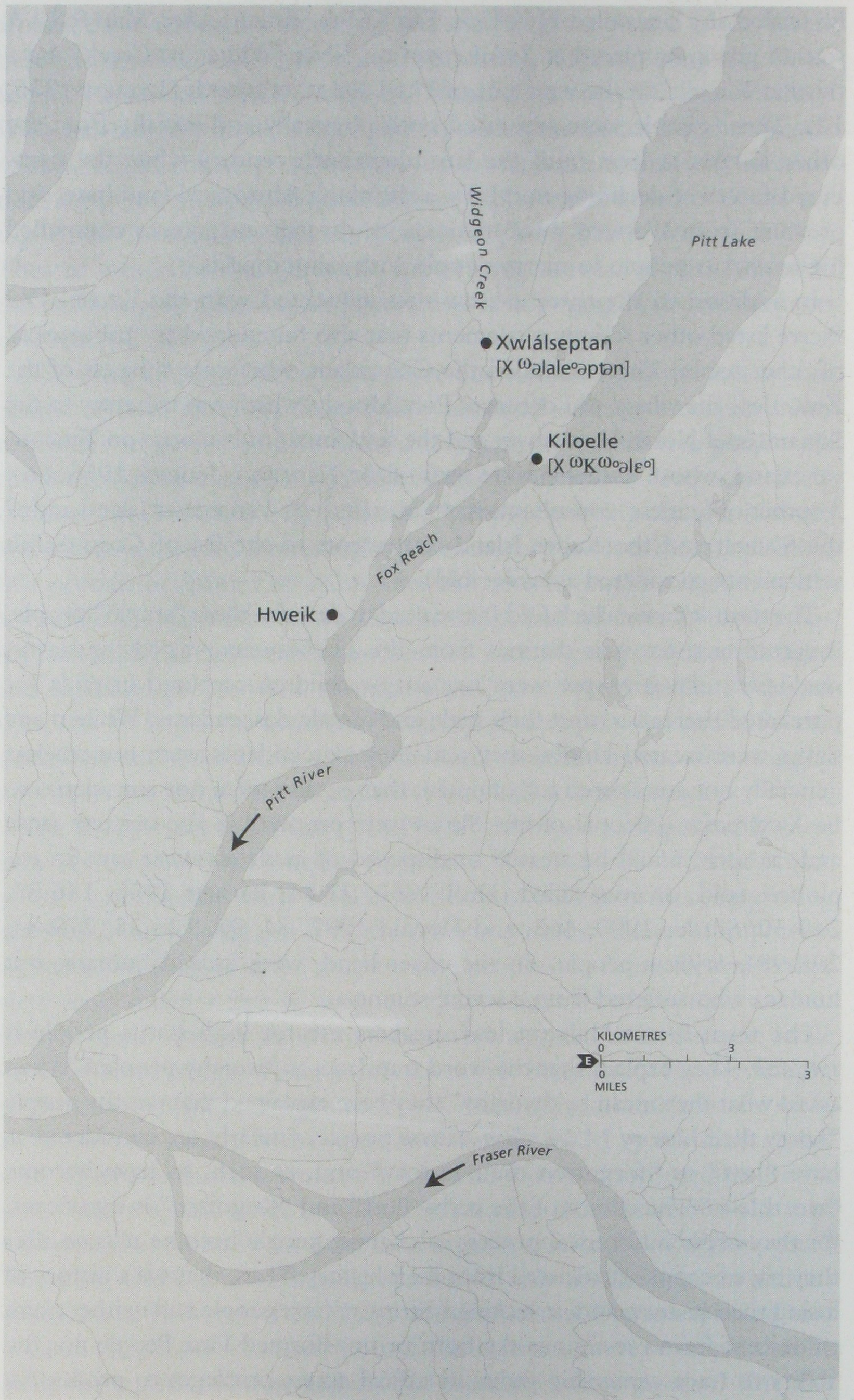
he settled at a site called Hweik on Fox Creek (Reach). (See Map 5.3.) A second group he placed at Xwlálseptan on Silver (Widgeon) Creek, and a third at Kiloelle on the west side of Pitt Lake at its mouth (Jenness 1955, 12). These people were separated both physically and socially from the other Katzie, at least until the late nineteenth century when the combined forces of declining numbers, a shrinking Aboriginal land base, and pressure from Western missionaries and government agents compelled higher-status people to marry people with tainted pasts.

In addition to the three *st'éxem* sites associated with the Katzie, Old Pierre listed other *st'éxem* settlements that also functioned as "tributaries" of other tribes. These included the Coquitlam, who were subjects of the Kwantlen; the village at Loco near Port Moody, which was tributary to the Squamish of North Vancouver; and the settlement of Nanoose on Vancouver Island, whose residents were serfs of the Nanaimo (Jenness 1955, 86). Another of Jenness' consultants from Nanaimo on Vancouver Island added the Sechelt and the Kuper Island settlements to the list of Coast Salish settlements considered *st'éxem* (ibid).

The term *st'éxem,* which Old Pierre used to describe these "stupid" people, is significant, for it is distinct from the Halkomelem word for slaves, *skw'iyéth*.[41] Slaves proper were women or children captured in raids (or purchased thereafter) and their male and female descendants. While many slaves were treated kindly, they and their descendants were nonetheless generally not considered fully human; that is, they were not considered to be Xwélmexw – people of life. Slaves were property in the strictest sense and, as such, could be treated or disposed of as their owner saw fit: exploited, sold, or even killed (Duff 1952, 92-84; Barnett 1955, 136-37, 249-50; Suttles 1990, 465; and Donald 1997, 34, 91, 126-28, 279-84, 295-98). *St'éxem* people, on the other hand, were indeed humans, but humans who suffered from a severe stigma.

The term fluent Halkomelem speakers use for high-status people is *smelá:lh*. They explain that the word translates as "worthy people." When asked what they mean by "worthy" they have explained that worthy people "know their history." Low-class *st'éxem* people, similarly, are considered to have "lost" or "forgotten their history" and, as such, to have become "worthless." The choice of the verbs "lost" and "forgotten" is significant, for they imply a historical process of change: people become *st'éxem* after they have become dissociated from their history. Thus, theirs is a history of losing their history; and, in lacking history, *st'éxem* people had neither claim to descent from prestigious sky-born or transformed First People nor the ability to trace ownership rights or affinal access privileges to productive

Pitt Lake

Widgeon Creek

● Xwlálseptan
[X^ωəlale°əptən]

Kiloelle
● [X^ωK^ω°əlε°]

Fox Reach

Hweik ●

Pitt River

KILOMETRES
0   3
0   3
MILES

Fraser River

MAP 5.3 **Class and identity among the Katzie.** *Cartographer: Jan Perrier*

property sites. In this regard, Old Pierre's use of the term "serfs" to describe *st'éxem* people is rather appropriate for, as Jenness learned, *st'éxem* villages "enjoyed their own communal lives without interference, but the overlord villages could requisition from them supplies of firewood, salmon, deer-meat, or whatever else they required ... Apparently the tributary villages accepted their position and obeyed their overlords without question" (Jenness 1955, 86). *St'éxem* people were, in the strictest sense, "worthless."

Given that the historical narratives of *st'éxem* people always place them in separate settlements, or in separate dwellings within the settlements of high-status people, it is clear that, within Coast Salish society, status and identity have long been intimately and inescapably linked to spaces and places. While Old Pierre explained the permanent status of *st'éxem* communities generally as the work of the Transformers *Xexá:ls,* who at the dawn of time elevated the humble and reduced the haughty to permanent subordination (implying that there is a long history of class segregation and mobility in Salish society), he nonetheless acknowledged distinct developments in the *st'éxem* settlements' histories. As "semi-independent" villages they had their own leaders, healers, and family names; as well, they held their own winter dances, suggesting that the people could at least forge relations with the spirit world distinct from their overlords (Jenness 1955, 86).

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

References to these developments are found in numerous indigenous historical narratives. One of Jenness' Nanaimo consultants explained that

the above listed *st'éxem* communities emerged "about four generations ago ... [after] an extraordinary severe winter gripped the land and nearly half the population died of starvation" (Jenness 1955, 86). According to this particular narrative, the winter was so devastating that many families were completely wiped out. Among the survivors were many orphaned infants and children who were raised among the surviving adults' own children. But because the survivors were without true parents of their own, and without recognized or acknowledged blood relatives to train them, "people of established families would not marry them."

> They therefore intermarried among themselves, and for protection built small houses close to the big houses that sheltered a number of closely related families, in return for whose protection they assisted in various tasks such as hunting and gathering of berries and firewood. They received the name st'éxem (low people) because they could not marry into established families, yet they were not slaves; they could not be bought and sold, but were as integral a part of the community as the families they served. (Jenness 1955, 86)

St'éxem people were, therefore, creating separate community histories outside of the dominant paradigm of ethnogenesis metanarratives used by the hereditary elite, who justified their status in terms of claims of direct descent from heroic ancestors.

Assuming Jenness' unnamed Nanaimo consultant was at least seventy years old in 1936 (placing his birth around 1860), assuming twenty-five years between generations, and also assuming that the people discussed in the story who lived four generations earlier were in the prime of their lives (their mid-twenties), we can roughly date the devastating winter of starvation to sometime in the late eighteenth century, or to approximately 1785. It is likely, therefore, that the devastating winter that caused the creation of entire communities of *st'éxem* people was associated with the smallpox epidemic of the same era. Even if the devastating winter is not a metaphor for smallpox itself, it is reasonable to assume that the smallpox survivors would have faced a series of harrowing winters as they struggled to cope with the physical and social ramifications of the disease. It is probable, in other words, that smallpox survivors may have faced winter starvation as a result of not being physically, socially, or psychologically capable of gathering and preserving adequate winter food supplies.

Charles Hill-Tout's Kwantlen consultants likewise linked the emergence of the *st'éxem* communities, and especially the Coquitlam settlement (located just upriver of New Westminster), directly to the calamity of a devastating winter. It was during the time when Skwelselem IV was leader of the

Kwantlen (four generations before the siya:m-ship of Chief Casimir, who was chief when Hill-Tout conducted his investigations) that "a severe and prolonged famine ... caused by a great snowstorm of unusual duration ... decimated the tribe." At that time the Coquitlam, who had apparently until then been living in separate houses within the main Kwantlen village at New Westminster, "were sent away ... to the marshy flats opposite, across the river," where they were compelled to fill the marsh with stones and gravel and convert the site into a fishing ground (Hill-Tout 1978, 70).

Franz Boas' consultant Chief George also related the story of the Coquitlam servitude to the Kwantlen in terms of forced movement across the river to prepare fishing grounds and in terms of their subsequent freedom. What is more, he, too, dated this change in *st'éxem* status to roughly the turn of the eighteenth century, saying that the Coquitlam gained their autonomy "five generations ago, when wars were raging on this part of the coast" (Boas 1894, 455). Perhaps most significantly of all, Chief George also explained that the Coquitlam were originally subordinate people because they were descendants of the Kwantlen chief's slaves. From a relatively early and obscure piece of linguistic analysis conducted by Hill-Tout (1978, 33), we learn that the literal meaning of *st'éxem* is "offspring of female slaves sired by their masters." If this is the more accurate description of the Coquitlam people's history, then we can perhaps best understand *st'éxem* peoples' otherwise odd status as neither free-born people of wealth nor slaves as a product of their birth: illegitimate children of high-status men, they were denied the right to claim hereditary prerogatives and privileges through their father due to their mother's slave ancestry. Coast Salish extended families, as a rule, were not homogeneous by class. But *st'éxem* people could neither claim their father's noble birthrights nor gain access to the specialized training of the upper classes, both of which were required to demonstrate good pedigree. As such, they were people without history, for their father's history was *lost* to them and their mother's (as that of girls typically captured in raids as children) *forgotten*.

It appears, therefore, that within immediate precontact Coast Salish society a distinction existed between (1) people who traced slave descent through both the maternal and paternal lines and (2) those who traced descent through slave mothers but noble men. This is significant, for if it is correct it explains, and goes a long way toward historicizing, the class distinctions documented and discussed by Wayne Suttles and Homer Barnett, among others, who identified a three-tiered social structure that was demographically weighted to an upper class but who do not fully explain the rationale behind the lower (non-slave) status of certain people (Suttles 1987, 3-23; Barnett 1955, 239-71).[42] Suttles described the demographic expression of

Coast Salish social classes as resembling an inverted pear, with a great number of upper class and a smaller number of lower class and slaves. From Hill-Tout's analysis it appears that the lower-class people, whom my own consultants also identified by the term *st'éxem*, were likely people of mixed slave and master ancestry. They constituted, therefore, a social middle ground: free but simultaneously subordinate and dependent. Perhaps these make up the majority of the 30 percent of Coast Salish people listed as "followers" in James Murray Yale's 1839 Hudson's Bay Company census, a portion no doubt also being full slaves.[43]

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

Freedom Village

If the late eighteenth century witnessed the social, political, and economic advancement of *st'éxem* people, there is evidence to suggest that, by the mid-nineteenth century, similar opportunities were presenting themselves to the lowest status members of Coast Salish society – the *skw'iyéth*, or slaves.

In 1949, Bob Joe told Wilson Duff a fascinating story of the separation and subsequent migration of slaves from a community on an island near present-day Hope. According to Joe, the island's occupants had accumu-

lated a relatively large number of slaves through raids against various coastal and interior communities.[44] The population of slaves was also continually augmented by births until it became so large that the owners "wouldn't let them live in [their] houses," and they were compelled to build and "live in their own houses on this little island." It would appear that, over time, the "slave village grew, multiplied and mixed," and the owners found it increasingly difficult to compel obedience and servitude from the increasingly autonomous slaves. Rather than try to impose their will through violence, the owners "held a council over it and decided to leave them alone on the island." In fact, the owners determined to abandon their settlement and leave their slaves behind on the island while they "moved across [the river] to our own home." The slaves, now effectively without masters but living within the gaze of their former overlords, decided to migrate themselves. By joining canoes together with planks from the walls of their cedar longhouses, they created catamarans upon which they loaded their possessions, including (according to the version of the story shared by Mrs. and Mr. Edmond Lorenzetto) a copy of the sacred high-status *Sxwó:yxwey* mask, which they stole from their former owners (Duff 1950, 5:30, 58). As the slaves undertook this historic action, their "owners ... just watched" and sent word to the downriver tribes "not to interfere." The former slaves then permitted the currents of the mighty Fraser River to sweep their makeshift rafts over forty kilometres downstream until they reached the flats at Alámex, immediately downriver from the abandoned villages of Axwetel, Sí:yita, and Peló:lhxw. There they landed and "rebuilt" a home for themselves at a settlement they called Chi'ckim, but which is more commonly referred to by the English name "Freedom Village." And "from there they scattered through relocation and marriage."[45] (See Map 5.4.)

Bob Joe insisted that, subsequent to their migration, the slaves not only became free but they, like the community of *st'éxem* people known as Coquitlam farther downriver, acquired the status of an independent "tribe." Even more than that of the Coquitlam, however, their territory was very restricted, stretching only a few kilometres "along the bank [of the Fraser River] from Mountain Slough, which skirts the mountain west of Agassiz, to Haha'm, a rock in the river a short distance above Scowlitz" (Duff 1952, 21). Significantly, their territory, carved out of what had formerly been considered the lands of the Steaten (who were wiped out by smallpox) and the Sí:yita (who had migrated both upriver and across the river as described earlier) did not include any of the valuable berry-picking sites in the mountains behind Freedom Village, nor did it include any of the productive marsh lands of Alámex. Its extent, interestingly, much more closely resembled the sort of land base the BC colonial government later assigned as
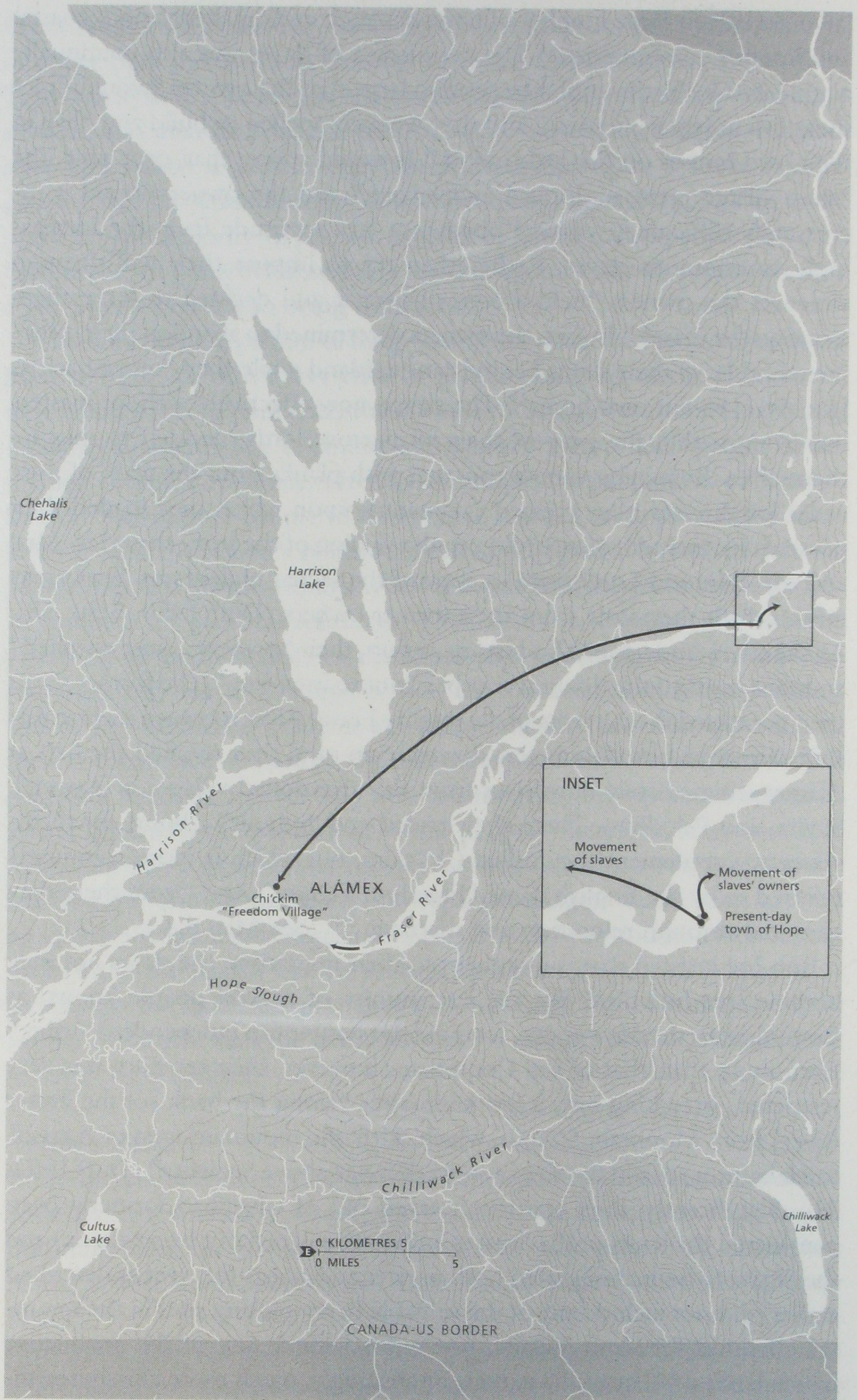
MAP 5.4 Freedom Village. *Cartographer: Jan Perrier*

reserve lands to all lower Fraser Coast Salish settlement communities: a small tract of land immediately adjacent to a settlement site.

Agriculture and the Creation of the "Teit"

Of all the Stó:lō tribes, the Teit stand out as somewhat of an ethnographic enigma. Wilson Duff was unsure whether the Teit should even be called a tribe, for they appeared to lack some of the fundamental traits associated with that class of collective grouping. Unlike other Stó:lō tribes, whose settlements tended to be clustered in tight geographical proximity, the Teit were scattered along the Fraser River from Popkum all the way to Yale. In addition, Duff reported, and in his eyes, more importantly, the Teit did not have traditions of descent from mythical ancestors and, as such, lacked the strong sense of association with a particular place that characterized other Northwest Coast groups. It was for these reasons, he concluded, that his Teit informants experienced no genuine feeling of internal unity and, therefore, felt free to move about into the territory of neighbouring tribes "with no thought of tribal identity" (Duff 1952, 12, 19-21, 30-37, 40-43, 85-87).

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

It bears restating that the upper reaches of Stó:lō territory, where salmon can be caught and processed with greater speed and ease than anywhere else on the Northwest Coast, have contributed much to the general social cohesion felt by all indigenous people whose lives revolve around the lower Fraser River and its resources. So valuable and important was the salmon fishery that it resulted in a modification of what is generally the standard Coast Salish practice of clustering the largest population centres at the mouths of rivers emptying into salt water or main tributaries. Given that the Fraser River below Yale was generally considered an extension of the open travel routes of the Pacific Ocean (as opposed to the tribally claimed rivers flowing into Puget Sound or the Strait of Georgia), this is perhaps less surprising than it might otherwise be. Nonetheless, the population density of the Fraser Canyon was remarkable.

According to the 1830 HBC census, slightly more than one-third of the total Aboriginal population residing along the lower Fraser River lived in a cluster of settlements along the seven-kilometre stretch of river between Lady Franklin Rock and Sailor Bar Rapids (approximately 2,574 people in the canyon compared to roughly 4,928 along the river's lower reaches).[46] And yet, by 1878, the Department of Indian Affairs listed only 267 Stó:lō living in the Fraser Canyon (Canada, Department of Indian Affairs, 1878), and by 1882 there were a mere 222 (compared to 2,276 living between Yale and the Pacific Ocean) (Carlson 2001, 80). Who were these canyon people, and where did they go? Clearly, something was happening to seriously alter the geographic expression of Stó:lō demographics.

According to Franz Boas' informants, when ascending the Fraser River the last Coast Salish tribe one encountered before reaching Nlaka'pamux territory at Spuzzum was the now all but forgotten Ts'okwám (lit. "skunk cabbage") people. It was from a member of the Ts'okwám Tribe that HBC trader Joseph Mckay acquired a marvellous ornately designed woven goat's-hair blanket in the decade prior to the 1858 gold rush (Orchard 1926).[47] And yet, a generation later, nobody lived permanently in the heart of Ts'okwám territory. The unique canyon geography occupied by the Ts'okwám facilitated not only the economic prestige derived from the salmon fishery but also the ability for effective multi-settlement military defence. As Stó:lō Nation archaeologist David Schaepe has recently documented, each settlement site within the seven-kilometre-long river frontage of Ts'okwám river territory was defended by a massive rock wall (Schaepe 2001, 52). These stone palisades, apparently unique on the Northwest Coast, were more than just extremely effective defensive fortifications: preliminary analysis suggests that they were also connected by a line-of-sight, making the region a truly integrated socio-political unit. Though by eighteenth-century indigenous standards, the Ts'okwám real-estate was among the most coveted in Salish territory, it lacked a feature that Native people had come to consider essential to their survival in the rapidly changing colonial world of the late nineteenth century: flat, irrigable agricultural land.

The fact that the region between present-day Agassiz and Hope was abandoned by the survivors of the late eighteenth-century smallpox epidemic suggests that this stretch of the Fraser, with its relatively small and non-navigable tributary rivers, limited slough and side channel system, and relatively mediocre fishing opportunities, was not especially coveted in pre-smallpox times. That is not to say that this stretch of the Fraser was undesirable, except in strictly relative terms. The archaeological record clearly demonstrates that the area was densely occupied throughout antiquity.

Indeed, the people living there were quite possibly divided into as many as eight small tribal communities, likely similar in scale to the downriver community of Whonnock. If this was the case, the first (in ascending order) was likely clustered around the present-day site of Popkum and around the southern passage between Herrling Island and the mainland. The second would have been centred around a main settlement at the northwest corner of Seabird Island. The third, centred at the mouth of Ruby Creek, might have had satellite hamlets along the upper reaches of both Ruby Creek and Garnet Creek as well as across the Fraser River at the mouth of Jones Creek (although the latter may have been yet another separate tribe). Archaeology sites near the mouths of Silverhope Creek and the Coquihalla River indicate large precontact settlements, and both Emory Creek and American Creek are prime locations for similar finds (David Schaepe, personal communication with Keith Thor Carlson, May 2001). Whatever the makeup of this region's immediate precontact population, oral histories explain that whoever survived the 1782 epidemic probably abandoned the region in favour of taking up residence with relatives living either farther up or down the Fraser River. By the end of the eighteenth century, the region was all but vacant of permanent human occupants.

Thus, while the area between Agassiz and Yale had been partially repopulated by the mid-nineteenth century with emigrants from Alámex, the area above Yale remained the most densely populated in Coast Salish territory. However, as Wilson Duff noted, and as other historians have commented elsewhere, the establishment of Fort Hope and Fort Yale in 1846 "acted like magnets to the Indians, [and] at Fort Yale, which the Indians pronounced Puci'l, a large Indian population gathered, and the canyon villages came to be abandoned in winter" (Duff 1952, 41).[48] The 1858 gold rush and subsequent construction of the Cariboo Wagon Road and Canadian Pacific Railroad accelerated this process, providing canyon fishers with new wage-earning employment and other economic opportunities (see Marshall 1997; Lutz 1992; Carlson and Lutz 1997). Even more important was the government's reserve allocation process, coupled with Western society's general insistence that Native people adopt European-style agricultural pursuits as evidence of their advancement in civilization. These pressures both drove and attracted the canyon people to seek permanent new settlements in the Fraser Valley below.

Within the mid- to late-nineteenth-century Western mind, agriculture and concepts of European civilization were tightly interwoven. Certainly this was the case with those devising and implementing Canadian Indian policy in Ottawa. In 1898, Deputy Superintendent General James A. Smart spelled out clearly the Department of Indian Affairs' position when he

specified that the adoption of fixed residency and Western-style agricultural pursuits were prerequisites to taking further steps in the evolutionary process from savage to civilized citizen:

> Increasing acquaintance with Indian affairs can hardly fail to strengthen the conviction that *the initial step towards the civilization of our Indians should be their adoption of agricultural pursuits,* and that if the red man is to take his place and keep pace with the white in other directions, he will be best fitted to do so after a more or less prolonged experience of such deliberate method of providing for his wants. For the transition of nomadic denizens of the forest or prairie, or of such of them as under changed conditions have become vagrant hangers on about the outskirts of settlement, *the first essential is fixity of residence,* and the formation of the idea of a home. Without that neither churches nor schools nor any other educational influence can be established and applied. *Cultivation of the soil necessitates remaining in one spot, and then exerts an educational influence of a general character.* It keeps prominently before the mind the relation of cause and effect, together with the dependence upon a higher power. It teaches moreover the necessity for systematic work at the proper season, for giving attention to detail, and patience in waiting for results. It inculcates furthermore the idea of individual proprietorship, habits of thrift, a due sense of the value of money, and the importance of its investment in useful directions. (Smart 1898, xxi, emphasis added)[49]

Deputy Superintendent Smart's statement illustrates that fixed residency and agricultural pursuits were regarded as essential prerequisites to becoming "civilized." But as historian Sarah Carter (1990) has demonstrated in her examination of the way in which these attitudes were applied to the Aboriginal peoples of the Canadian Prairies, evolutionary models of development could be used to justify holding enterprising Native farmers back from engaging in what was regarded as the more advanced form of profitable commercial agriculture. Popular theories of social evolution demanded that people pass through each evolutionary stage in due course. Adopting fixed residency followed by subsistence farming was equated with proof of Indian people's progress toward being civilized, which, in turn, was seen as essential to surviving in the new world order ushered in by the arrival of European settlers.

As early as the late 1860s, responding to the Western rhetoric and the economic opportunities agriculture provided, many Ts'okwám had taken up private farms near the mouths of creeks between Hope and Yale (Duff 1952, 42) and at the junction of other major tributaries below Hope, especially at the mouth of Ruby Creek across the Fraser from the Alámex
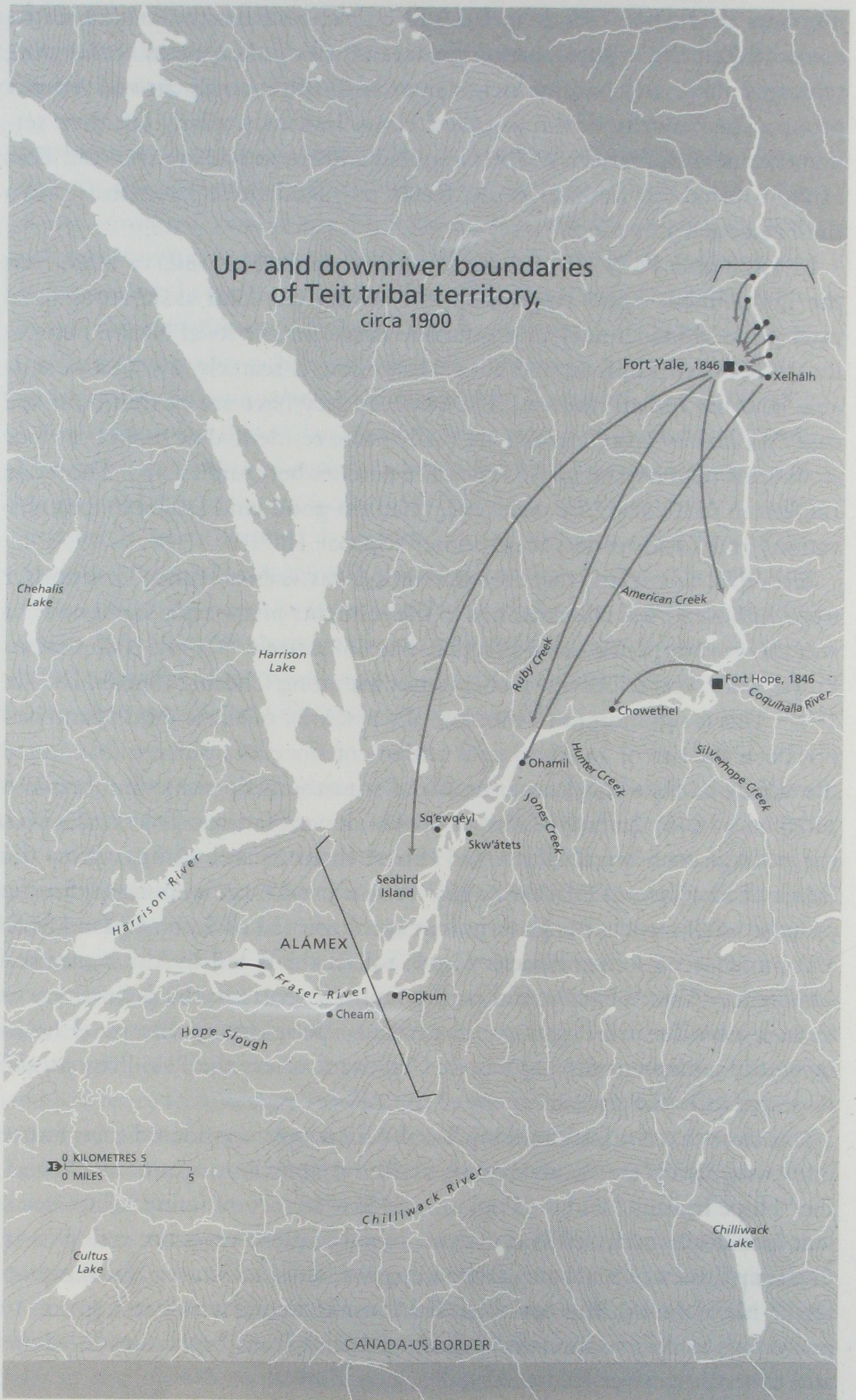
migrants at Ohamil. (See Map 5.5.) Five brothers from the canyon settlement of X̱elhálh, whose mother's ancestral ties linked them to Ohamil, relocated there and became neighbours with the recently arrived Alámex group. The majority of the so-called Hope Indians similarly left their settlements near the mouth of the Coquihalla River and adjacent to old Fort Hope to establish themselves on fertile farmland three kilometres down the Fraser at Chowethel.[50]

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

The replacement land that the agent found was Seabird Island,[51] just upriver from Agassiz. It was allocated not to the residents of a specific settlement, as was the government's usual practice, but collectively "for the Yale Indians Proper and other tribes down to, but not including Cheam" (Sproat 1879b, 19).[52] This is significant in a number of ways. First of all, Seabird Island had not been the site of an Aboriginal settlement since its residents abandoned the village of Sq'ewqéyl near the island's northern tip sometime between 1820 and 1845. Raids by Lillooet people down Harrison Lake and across the portage to Seabird Island had driven them to seek refuge across the Fraser at Skw'átets (Duff 1952, 40). Second, and more important, for the purpose of this study, the government agent learned of Seabird Island from a committee of six prominent Coast Salish chiefs led by the renowned Liquitem of Yale.[53] Finally, and perhaps most important, the reserve was to exclude non-Teit tribal groups, in particular people from Cheam (Cheam being the settlement site just east of Chilliwack where the Peló:lhxw people relocated after the abandonment of the Alámex region).

It is clear that the high-ranking Ts'okwám people considered their future intertwined with the more recently arrived Alámex immigrants at Ohamil, the "Hope Indians," and the Popkum and Skw'átets community. Why Cheam was specifically excluded is not clear. In subsequent years the residents of Cheam played a central role in defending the island from non-Native squatters.[54] Nevertheless, the new Teit Tribe worked consistently as a group to protect its collective interest in Seabird Island from both outside whites and other downriver Coast Salish.[55]

Map labels:
- Up- and downriver boundaries of Teit tribal territory, circa 1900
- Fort Yale, 1846
- Xelhálh
- American Creek
- Ruby Creek
- Fort Hope, 1846
- Coquihalla River
- Chowethel
- Silverhope Creek
- Hunter Creek
- Ohamil
- Chehalis Lake
- Harrison Lake
- Jones Creek
- Sq'ewqéyl
- Skw'átets
- Seabird Island
- Harrison River
- ALÁMEX
- Fraser River
- Popkum
- Cheam
- Hope Slough
- 0 KILOMETRES 5
- 0 MILES 5
- Chilliwack River
- Chilliwack Lake
- Cultus Lake
- CANADA-US BORDER

MAP 5.5 Agriculture and defining Teit tribal boundaries. *Cartographer: Jan Perrier*

The migration to Seabird Island of the lower Fraser River's highest-ranking figure, Yale's Chief Liquitem, signalled an important change in regional identity politics. This is because Liquitem and other prominent Ts'okwám personalities who chose to relocate to the Fraser Valley brought with them the sense of tightly knit identity that their ancestors had nurtured in the confined canyon geography and superimposed it on the dispersed and tribally mixed settlements between Yale and Popkum. For these "upriver" Teit people, collective identity became a product of supratribal amalgamation rather than exclusive site-specific mythical genesis. Thus, as the Fraser River tribe whose collective origins are most extensively caught up in post-contact colonial developments, Teit tribal identity has, as Duff observed, often assumed a less well-defined expression than has that of other older tribes.

The migrating Ts'okwám people brought with them a sense of unique canyon identity as well as a certain notion of economic and cultural pride derived from their ownership of the river's richest fishing and salmon-processing sites. Their upriver Canyon identity was superimposed on the various and diverse community identities below. Among the newly merged upper class, which included not only the Ts'okwám elite but also ranking families among the previous generation's Alámex immigrants, a nascent sense of broader collective "upriver" Teit identity emerged that was modelled, it would seem, on other older tribal collectives, but with even greater emphasis on the forces of regional social cohesion that cut across localizing nodes of collective identity. This Teit identity, when conceived within the cumulative context created by the uplands-to-the-valley migration of the formerly more remote Chilliwack ultimately did much to foster the maturation of an even broader sense of Stó:lō collective identity – an identity that encompassed the entire lower Fraser River system. This trend was reinforced by the disruption of status boundaries associated with the increased independence of the various *st'éxem* and slave communities, who likewise took advantage of open spaces created by smallpox-induced depopulation. Thus, although a shared Fraser River Stó:lō identity has been couched in a historical discourse of even older economic and mythic (or metaphysical) historical relationships (McHalsie 2001), in truth it assumed a socially meaningful form largely as a result of specific contact-era historical events. Although Stó:lō communities had been linked through shared regional resource ownership and access protocols and overlapping stories of ancient tribal creation long before European contact, it was the post-smallpox migrations that ultimately tipped the balance and resulted in the broader identity eclipsing the more local ones.

Conclusion: Toward a Coast Salish Historiography

As outsiders, our understanding of Coast Salish collective identity has long been a prisoner of powerful academic and institutional forces. The presentist concerns of an earlier generation of salvage ethnographers and the intellectual legacy of structural functionalism resulted in collective affiliations being interpreted almost exclusively in terms of kinship and lineage, identity being cast as ahistorical and cultural change regarded as unidirectional. Likewise, historians' propensity to view the past through the lens of either the enrichment thesis or its counterpart the degeneration (and "culture of terror") hypothesis fostered the impression that assessments of advances or tragedies in material culture or demographics could alone sufficiently account for the indigenous response to contact pressures. Meanwhile, running parallel to the scholarship were the Canadian government's efforts to craft "band" and "tribal" identities so as to facilitate effective administration and paternal control, all the while reifying popular impressions about how Indian people were traditionally grouped.

Beneath, and before, these externally imposed interpretive models lies a history of collective identity reformation that Salish people have both negotiated and interpreted for themselves. By paying closer attention to the narratives that Salish people emphasize as they explain their history, we are offered glimpses into not only their past but also their indigenous means of processing and interpreting history. We approach, in other words, an indigenous historiography.

Within Coast Salish society, collective identity, like political authority, is situationally constructed. Thus, it has a history. It is neither frozen in time nor a passive passenger on a journey whose trajectory was firmly set by non-Native agents. Each time the deck was shuffled (be it by smallpox depopulation, the introduction of new economic opportunities associated with the fur trade, or government policy designed to facilitate a Western agricultural agenda), Salish people were compelled to relegitimize their collective affiliations. Many, as we know from the extant scholarship, found ways to re-establish existing affiliations. Others, however, seized the opportunity to recast their identity in a new mould. Historical events caused the deck to be reshuffled, and from this state of flux, migration appears to have been the preferred means of facilitating changes in identity. Migrations, and the events that inspired them, provided Salish people with opportunities for adjusting and redesigning social political relations and, through them, collective identity and affiliation. They precipitated amalgamations as well as fractures. They disrupted deeply entrenched class and status structures, providing opportunities for social mobility as well as for

the consolidation of political authority. They provide us with insights into the way in which history occurred, was internalized, and subsequently used by Aboriginal peoples. They suggest an event-centred indigenous historiography where identity is fluid, though anchored.

Notes

1 The relationships between tradition and authority are examined in Phillips and Schochet (2004).
2 I discuss the role of tradition and innovation within Coast Salish conflicts over resource ownership in Carlson (forthcoming).
3 Recently, in response to an article arguing the existence of formal precontact Coast Salish chiefdoms, Wayne Suttles, Bruce Miller, Daniel Boxberger, and Keith Thor Carlson, among others, have begun creating a model of Coast Salish identity that recognizes the situational nature of political authority and the historically contingent factors shaping Coast Salish collective identity. This chapter builds directly upon these earlier studies. See Suttles (1989); Miller and Boxberger (1994); and Carlson (2001).
4 Charles Bishop (1974), for example, tackled the question of whether contact had an atomizing effect on Canadian Ojibwa clan structures or whether it caused increased clan solidarity and a new sense of shared collective identity. He concluded that, while there was clear evidence of increased centralization, the inherent biases of both oral and written records could be used to support either position.
5 In addition, audio recordings in the Stó:lō Nation Archives, Stó:lō Nation, Chilliwack, BC (hereafter SNA), reveal that Bob Joe spoke softly and had a deep voice, sometimes making it difficult to understand him.
6 See Duff (1950, 50). I have personally visited the area below Centre Creek and identified the sites of two major landslides. The first involved boulders of more than three metres in diameter, whereas the second was made up of small rocks and talus debris.
7 Lerman (n.d.) recorded Joe as stating that the slide occurred "just above Slesse Creek," which is consistent with the site also being "below Centre Creek" as described in Duff's notes.
8 Albert Louie, interview by Oliver Wells. See Wells (1987, 160). Duff's translation of *Xéyles* as "slide" rather than "side" may have been a simple typographical error. The fact that Wells and subsequent ethnographers, as well as certain Stó:lō people, have accepted the error is indicative of the problems associated with particular ethnographic accounts coming to be accepted as authorities on given subjects.
9 Dan Milo, interview by Oliver Wells, July 1964, compact disc audio copy, SNA.
10 Bob Joe, interview by Imbert Orchard, 2 April 1963, transcripts, CBC Archives, Toronto, copies at SNA. Linguist Jimmy Harris, who conducted research with Dan Milo in the early 1960s, recorded Milo providing a translation of "Chilliwack" as being "back water," referring to the point on a river that was "as far as you can go [in a canoe]." Milo, however, admitted to Harris that he was guessing at the meaning, whereas Bob Joe was confident of his translation. Jimmy Gene Harris, personal communication with Keith Thor Carlson, July 1996.
11 Bob Joe, interview by Lerman, in Lerman (1950-51, 269).
12 Bob Joe, interview by Orchard. See also Dan Milo, interview by Wells, in Wells (1987, 90).
13 Bob Joe, interview by Lerman, in Lerman (1950-51, 269).

14   Bob Joe, interview by Oliver Wells, 8 February 1962, compact disc audio copy, track 2, 4:55, SNA.

15   While Joe describes this Wileliq as the "fifth," five years earlier, when speaking with Marian Smith, he provided an even greater genealogical history in which he explained that the Wileliq born at Tháthem:als was actually the seventh man to bear the name since the beginning of time. Joe himself never referred to any of the Wileliqs by numbers, instead referencing them in relation to one another, as in "the third Wileliq since such and such." In this way the discrepancies in numbers between Smith's and Duff's notes reflect the emphasis assumed by the ethnographer and not that implied by the narrator. See Smith (1945, ms 268).

16   Bob Joe and Billy Sepass both provided Oliver Wells with this as the name of the language spoken by the Chilliwack people prior to their movement downriver and their adoption of the Halkomelem language.

17   John Wallace, interview by Oliver Wells, 3 October 1967, audiotape and transcript, SNA.

18   Wilson refers to them as "Schweltya." See Stanley (1970).

19   Mrs. Cooper, interview by Oliver Wells, 31 March 1968, audiotape copy, SNA.

20   Albert Louie, interview by Oliver Wells, 5 August 1965, audiotape copy and transcript, SNA. See also Wells (1987, 390).

21   Some accounts collected by Wells place the headquarters and principal longhouse right at Vedder Crossing, at the site of the current River Side Café.

22   See Albert Louie, 5 August 1965, audio copy and transcript, SNA. Also, Andy Commodore, personal communications with Keith Thor Carlson, summer 1993.

23   This full list of the tribes who assisted in the building of the inverted gable house is found in Duff (1950, 2:68) and differs from the edited list found in his published material.

24   The various recorded genealogies are confusing on this point. The Halqemeylem word for "grandson" is the same as the word for "grandnephew" (as well as grandfather and grand-uncle). An account of this genealogy collected by Duff records that Wileliq V passed his name on to his grandnephew by his younger brother. Both accounts concur that Jack Wealick became Wileliq VI.

25   Bob Joe in Smith (1945, 5:5:12). Duff's fieldnotes and published accounts contradict what is found in Smith's records. Duff records that Wileliq V had no sons and so passed his name to his nephew, the son of his younger brother. This man, in turn, passed it to his grandson, who was an old man in 1950. I believe Duff was confused. See Duff (1952, 44) and Duff (1950, 1:65).

26   Again, there is some confusion here. Tixwelatsa may have been a different uncle (another brother or possibly even a cousin of Siemches and Wileliq) since the Halkomelem language does not distinguish between such relationships. Additionally, it is important to note that Siemches is the name of one of the original black-bear-with-a-white-spot-on-its-chest brothers who was transformed into a founder of the Chilliwack Tribe at the beginning of time. The name is currently carried by Chief Frank Malloway of Yeqwyeqwi:ws. In a potlatch naming ceremony in the late 1990s, Chief Malloway clarified that the name and all its associated prestige and privileges will eventually be transferred to his nephew Dalton Silver, who will "carry it" so long as he continues to act in a way that brings honour and not shame to the name and his ancestors.

27   Joe explained to Marian Smith that his wife's oldest son by her earlier marriage to Wileliq VI's son carried the Wileliq name in 1951. Wileliq VII was also known as George, who, in addition to being Bob Joe's stepson, was also his cousin. In other words, Mrs. Bob Joe was the great-great-granddaughter (niece?) of Wileliq V's second wife (the Katzie

woman). Wileliq VI was Bob Joe's grandfather's older brother. See Duff (1952, 44). See also Duff (1950, 2:67).

28 In 1992, Bob Joe's grandson, Wesley Sam, told me that his grandfather had quietly and informally transferred the Wileliq name to him. Prior to his death in 1997, Wesley Sam arranged for the name – pronounced "Wi-ley-lug," which Sam explained was the older and more correct Nooksack-style pronunciation of Wileliq – to be transferred to his infant grandson. Sam's family later arranged a naming ceremony, where it was explained that the name was to be "shared" between the grandson and Wesley's own son Bruce.

29 I am grateful to genealogist Alice Marwood, who drew my attention to Jack Wealick's grave marker, and who patiently provided guidance as I struggled to make sense of the complicated Wileliq family tree. I am also grateful to Sonny McHalsie, who spent at least two full days with me as I struggled to plot and understand the information on Wileliq genealogy found in the various oral histories recorded by Oliver Wells, Wilson Duff, and Marian Smith.

30 Patrick Charlie and Robert Joe, in Duff (1950, 4:37). More recently, Ken Malloway (Wileliq) has often told audiences of Natives and non-Natives alike how the Chilliwack formerly killed trespassers.

31 Community fission was not an unusual process in societies with social organization like that of the Coast Salish. Fission, without much historical context, is described in most standard Coast Salish ethnographies. It occurred for a variety of reasons, some as mundane as sanitation or to gain access to new sources of firewood, although both these concerns were typically met by seasonal rounds and the steady supply of wood, which was deposited along the sides of the Fraser River and its tributaries in yearly floods and freshets. One of the most sophisticated discussions of the social tensions and mechanism used to facilitate community fission is found in Sally Snyder's unpublished doctoral dissertation, wherein she describes how new leaders occasionally arose among the Skagit and challenged the existing elite by forging their own settlement community. She also documents how these new communities attempted, often unsuccessfully, to legitimize themselves through the hosting of potlatches and other ceremonial activities. See Snyder (1964).

32 Chief Harry Edwards, interview by Oliver Wells, 8 October 1964, compact disk audio copy and transcript at SNA, 283.

33 These caves were destroyed by the construction of the Trans-Canada Highway in the 1960s.

34 Likewise, Dan Milo, in 1964, provided additional details about the reasons behind the abandonment of Alámex. According to Milo, there were "a lot" of people living there at the time "And the head man of those people ... had a little son, a small little kid, and that kid gets so rough and killed other kids. And he could do nothing [to stop] this little child. He told his friends, 'the only way we can do it is to leave my kid. We'll leave him. We'll move away from here.'" As a result, the headman told the other boys to take his son behind the little mountain in the woods and to abandon him there. According to the story, "He called, and they answered him at different times, then they just played dumb." The boys came back and the rest of the people were "ready to move." "They took off and came way up to Cheam ... They went to Cheam and they began to get that name [the people of] 'Lexwchiya:m' [always strawberries]." See Dan Milo, interview by Oliver Wells, July 1964, SNA.

35 For the 1830 and 1839 census I have combined the Pilalt and Teiton population figures as both tribes dwelled at Alámex. For the 1830 census, McDonald provided figures for "men" only. I have therefore multiplied his totals by 4.4, the ratio of men to other family members found in the 1839 census.

36 McDonald's report is presented in full in Maclachlan (1998, 221).

37 Indicative of this is the reaction of certain people living in Ohamil and Skw'átets to the "Map of Pilalt Territory" produced in 2000 by the Cheam band. This map included as "Pilalt" those upriver lands associated with the Ohamil and Skw'átets settlements. People in these upriver communities did not necessarily interpret the map as a gesture of their shared and common interest in land and resources but, rather, more as a provocative move by the people of Cheam to assert control over "Teit" resources. For some contemporary politicians of the upriver settlements, it was a "wake-up call that all us Teits need to start working together more" (personal communication, May 2001, with a band councillor from Seabird Island who asked not to be identified by name).

38 This is a commonly told story among the people of Ohamil. Sonny McHalsie recorded the version related here in Keith Thor Carlson with Sonny McHalsie (1998).

39 Leland Donald's excellent and provocative *Slavery on the Northwest Coast* is one of the few studies to confront the issue of class tension within Northwest Coast society and history. Unfortunately, due to what he refers to as a lack of sources, his analysis is particularly thin on the Coast Salish. See Donald (1997).

40 For an overview, see Suttles (1990, introduction).

41 Jenness (1955, 86) also noted the distinction between the term for serf communities and the common expression for slaves.

42 Sally Snyder, however, does attempt to provide a more interpretive discussion of the significance of class distinctions within Coast Salish society, and she does this by looking at the symbolic associations between class, property, and gender. See Snyder (1964, esp. 72-100).

43 While 30 percent of the total Coast Salish population are listed as "Followers of all descriptions," only 12 percent of those living along the Fraser River proper are so identified. See Yale (1839, 30-53).

44 In his fieldnotes Duff (1950, 2:56) lists Sechelt, Vancouver Island, and the BC interior as the sites from which the slaves were taken.

45 All preceding quotes relating to the story of Freedom Village were taken from Duff (1950, 2: 56-58), which provided a slightly richer account than the block quote found in Duff (1952, 21).

46 Plottings of place names here differ from those found in Harris (1997). I believe my map more accurately reflects actual Aboriginal settlement sites, but for this all credit goes to Sonny McHalsie and the elders who translated the HBC orthography into proper Halq'emeylem.

47 See William C. Orchard, *A Rare Coast Salish Blanket,* Leaflet of the Museum of the American Indian, Heye Foundation, No 5. (New York: Vreeland Press, 1926).

48 The phenomenon of Native people moving to live nearer European outposts and settlements was repeated numerous times in British North America. See, for example, Ray (1974, esp. chap. 7, 125-36).

49 I am indebted to Amber Kostuchenko for this citation.

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

51 Named after a steamboat that ran aground on the island.

52 I am grateful to Hillary Blair for drawing my attention to this document.

53 See Chief James of Yale, testimony before the 1913-16 Royal Commission, SNA.

54 In 1891, twenty-seven white squatters built rudimentary houses on the Seabird reserve and attempted to have their claims to the land recognized. See A.W. Vowell to

Superintendent General, 19 May 1891, RG 10, reel C-10139, vol. 3795, file 46607-1, Indian Affairs, Library and Archives Canada, Ottawa. See also LAC, F. Passingham to P. McTiernan, 21 February 1891, RG 10, reel C-10139, vol. 3795, file 46607-1.

55 In 1958, the various bands making up the Teit Tribe succeeded in having Seabird Island officially designated as an independent band with its own local chief and council. See the excellent local history of Seabird Island by Blair (1999).

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