

# Overview of the Social and Political Organization of the Secwépemc

by Marianne Ignace, PhD  
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presented at SNTC Aboriginal Law Conference  
February 1, 2007

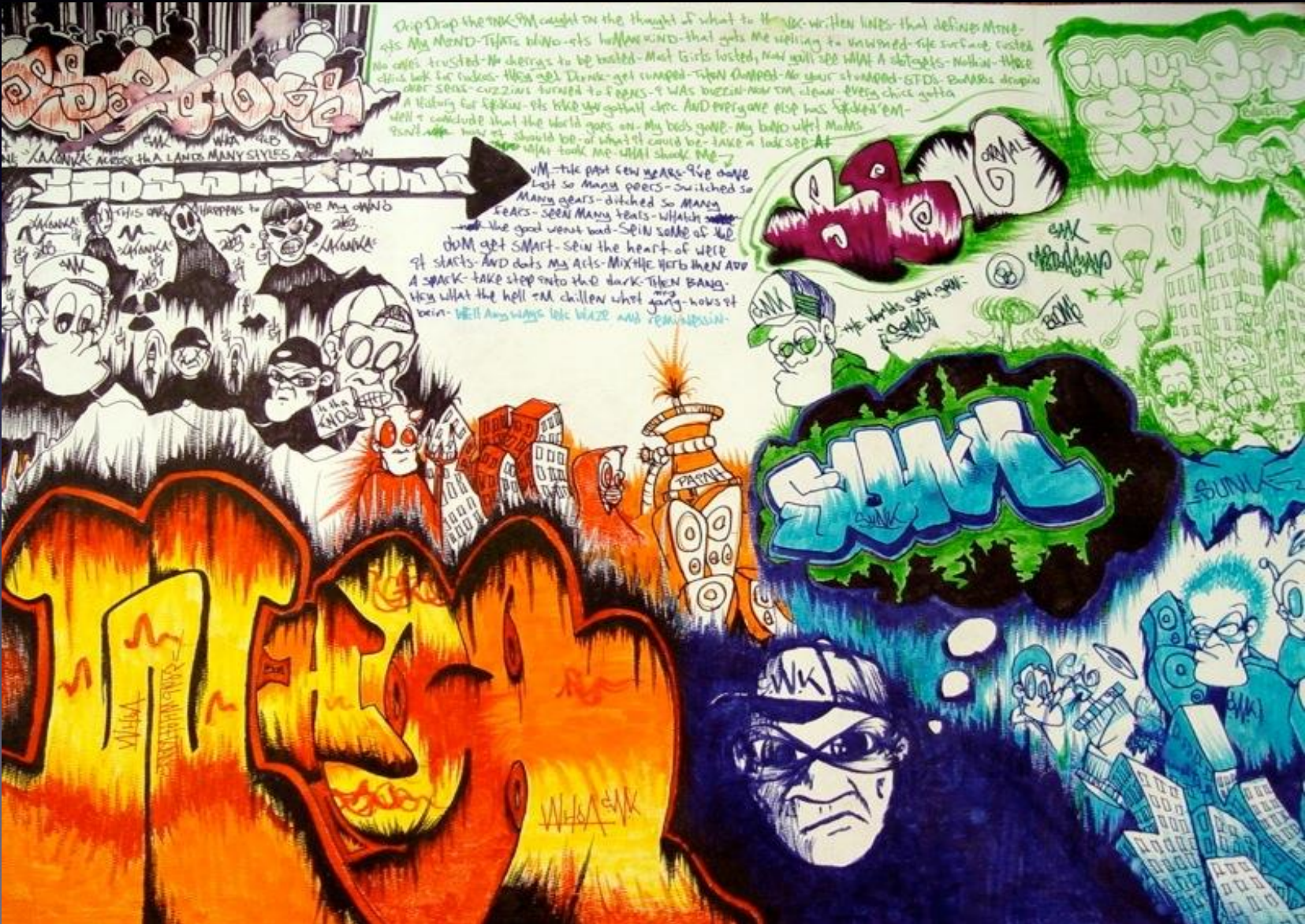
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“Stet'ex7ém-kt, Kukúkwpi7,  
tkw'enm7íple7ten, xwexwéyt re kw'séltkten-  
kt ell re tsqwétsten-kt,

Yiri7 re skukwstsétselp es tsxlitentselp  
ne7élye ne secplul'kw'-emp es lexéyectlmen  
le q'7es te stsq'ey's ell re tsuwet.s re  
Secwepemc. Tsutst-ken es súscwen ell es  
xyemstéten le q'7es-uw'i te stet'ex7ém-kt te  
tsun'mect.s-kuc re stsq'ey's re Secwépemc.  
Yiri7 re sxyemstéten ell pyin te stet'ex7ém-  
kt ell le llwélentels te stet'ex7ém-kt es  
ts'lilct.s re tsúwet's ell re stsq'ey's le q'7es te  
Secwépemc.. Yiri7 re skukwstsétselp!”

Marianne Ignace



[illegible]

## Reminding ourselves how the past is connected to present and to the future:

The previous slide is an acrylic pencil drawing made in 2003 by George (“Geo” Ignace), son of Ron and Marianne Ignace. It shows the Secwepemc youth’s perspective on the environmental destruction and urbanization affecting Secwepemcúlecw:

The green space on the top right shows how our lands are affected by pollution and “biohazards,” the blue space on the bottom left shows the growing impact of cities, crime and urban violence, and the bombs and destruction of cities in the wake of 9/11, with the graffiti “whoa!” asking to put a stop to this. The self-portrayal of our youth is in the top left corner: in black and white, with downcast eyes they have become “inner city bandits and kids with cans.”



# As an anthropologist and linguist, I carry/carried out:

- ethnographic, linguistic and ethnohistorical research in Secwepemc communities since 1984 (kinship, political and social organization, oral histories, ethnobotany, resource management Secwepemc language)



# Anthropological Expert Witness Work:

- Jules v. Harper (Scheidam Flats case)
- R. v. Deneault and Lebourdais v. Deneault (fishing cases)
- Six-Mile Settlement (Skeetchestn/Kamloops)
- Haida Nation (logging case)

# I thank my Secwepemc teachers:

The late Nellie Taylor from Skeetchestn, who taught me Secwepemctsin, the fine art of tanning buckskin, and shared her vast knowledge of Secwepemc plants, history and kinship knowledge.





The late Ida William from Simpcwul'ecw (Chu Chua/North Thompson) who shared her wealth of traditional stories, plant knowledge and who taught me what animals say in Secwepemctsin





The other elders and teachers from all 17 communities in the Secwepemc Nation, including Chris Donald, Selina Jules, Theresa Jules, Aimee August, Adeline Willard, Daniel Seymour, Christine Simon, Sam Camille, Ida and Louis Matthew, Lina Bell, Cecilia DeRose, Victorine Alphonse, Nancy Camille, Bridget Dan, Mary Thomas, and many others. Wenécwem yiri7 re skukwstsetself!





Working with the Secwepemc curriculum elders group - 1995-99

## Le Q'7ésés...

**We don't have much information about the time before 8,000 years ago, as to its human dimension**

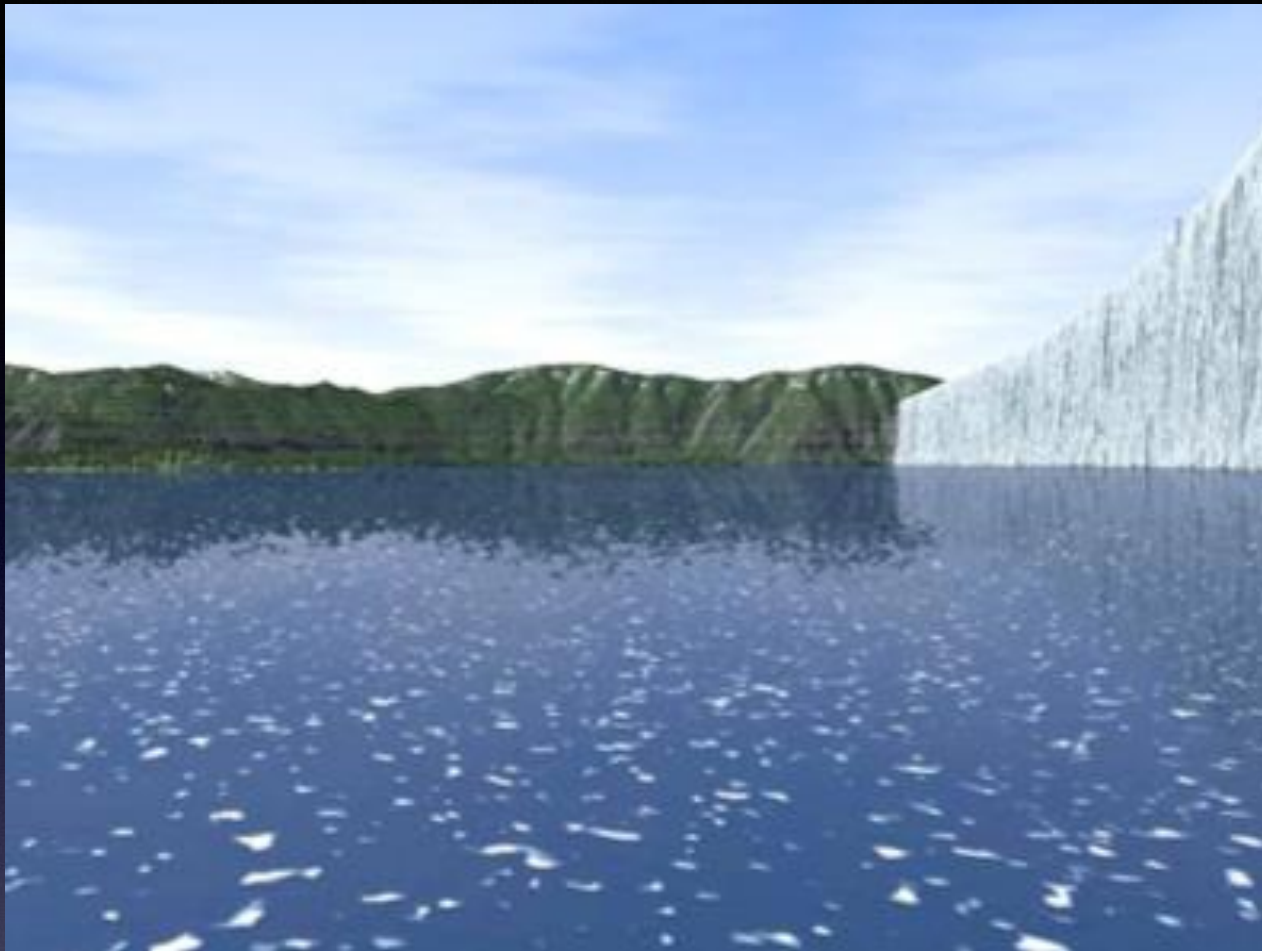
- The Interior Plateau of BC has often been described as an “ancient landscape” because much of it was put into shape many million years ago...
- The Coyote People came here some time in that long ago past. We don't know when. Maybe they originally came across Bering Strait, then went south of the Interior of BC as times got colder... at some point they came back and were here when the ice melted.



# Map below adapted from Johnsen and Brennand 2005



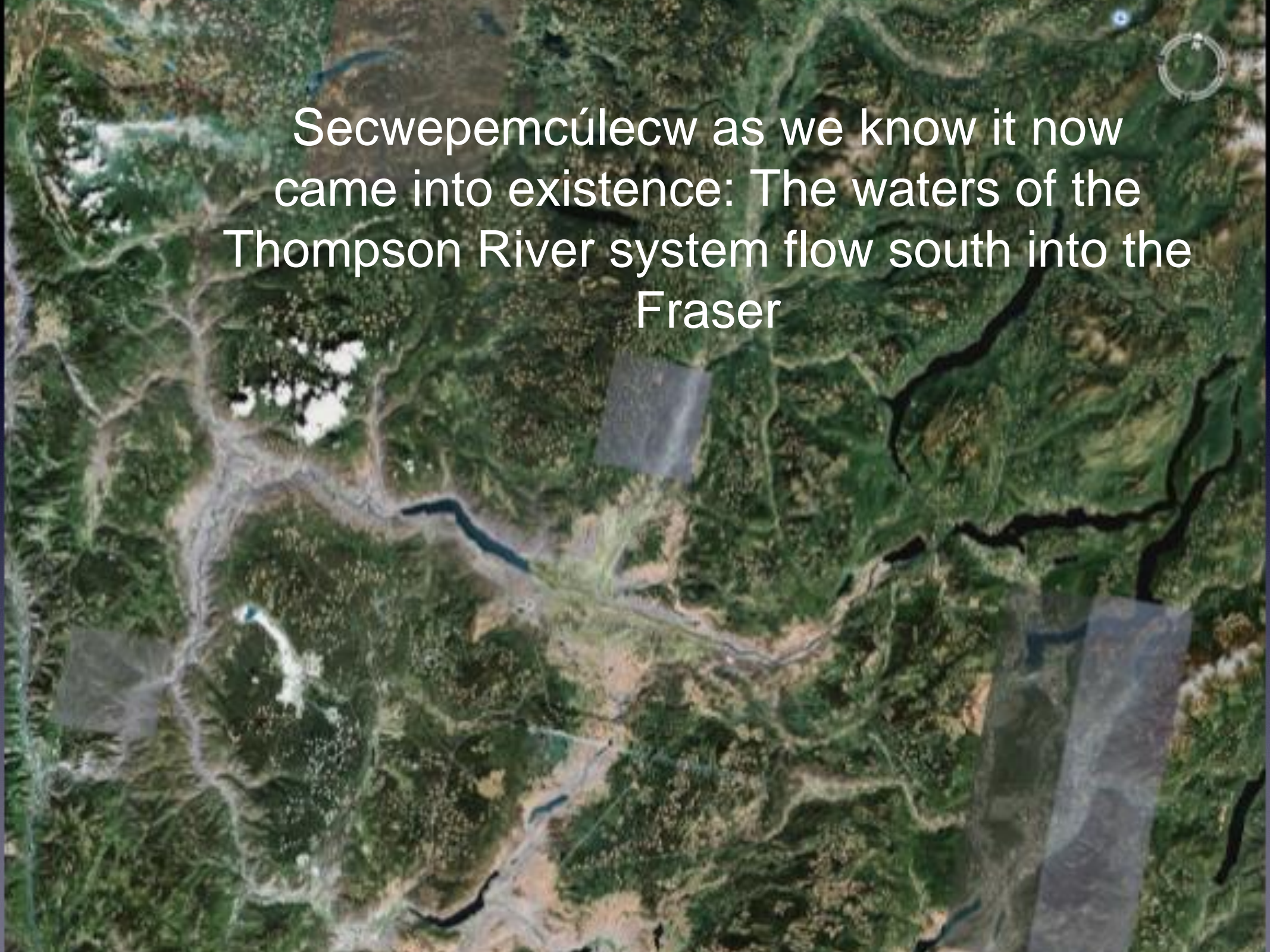
At the end of the Wisconsin Ice Age, about 10,000 years ago, large glacial lakes existed in the valleys of the Interior, held up by an ice dam near where Spence's Bridge is now, and the waters flowed East into the Columbia.



“An estimated 20 cubic km of water drained catastrophically into the Fraser River system when the ice dam in the lower Thompson Valley failed, some time before 9,740-10,210 BP...This event resulted in the regional drainage reversal of the Thompson and South Thompson rivers and the capture of the Thompson Basin by the Fraser River system” (Johnsen and Brennand 2004). -

*The above image shows an artist's rendition of Glacial Lake Missoula, a much larger lake with a 2000 ft. ice dam which flooded Eastern Washington forty times at about the same time. see [www.pbs.org/wgbh/nova/mega/flood/lake.html](http://www.pbs.org/wgbh/nova/mega/flood/lake.html)*



A satellite map of a mountainous region, likely in the Pacific Northwest. The terrain is rugged with green forested slopes and brownish-grey rocky or cleared areas. A network of rivers and streams is visible, flowing generally from the north and west towards the south and east. A prominent river system, identified as the Thompson River, flows southwards and then turns eastwards, eventually joining a larger river system, identified as the Fraser. Several semi-transparent grey rectangular boxes are overlaid on the map, highlighting specific areas of interest. In the top right corner, there is a small circular icon with a compass rose and a magnifying glass.

Secwepemcúlecw as we know it now  
came into existence: The waters of the  
Thompson River system flow south into the  
Fraser





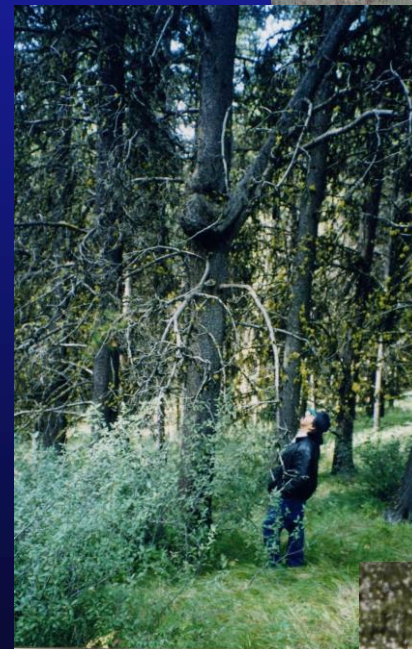
The current landscape took shape as the Thompson River and Fraser River dug their trenches through the sediment deposited by the melting glaciers



# The Paleo-Environmental Record

## *3 periods of environmental change in the last 10,000 years*

- 11,500 - 7,500 BP: warm and dry weather; dry grasslands with abundant sage, few trees
- “dramatic climate change” around 7,500 BP (R. Mathewes 1985) - still warm but moist climate: Douglas-fir and pine forests establish
- since 4,500 BP - cooling trend: modern grassland distributions develop; in higher elevations, Engelmann Spruce - Subalpine Fir forests develop since about 2,500 BP
- “Little Ice Age” - 1300 - 1850 AD
- 1990s-2000s - global warming trend



# What archaeologists say:

- The oldest record of human habitation in Secwepemc territory dates back some 8,400 years- a single male skeleton found at Gore Creek east of Kamloops; he ate mainly land-based protein. His remains were repatriated to Neskonlith in the early 1990s
- Human remains from the Clinton area dated at 4,550 B.P. show that they consumed about 37% marine based protein during their life-time , i.e. more than a third, and perhaps nearly half of their protein intake derived from salmon!



# Archaeological Phases:

- Lehman phase (8,300+ to 5,500 B.P.): Plateau inhabitants were oriented to highland hunting
- Lochnore phase (5000 BP): inland movement of Salishan-speaking peoples from the coast up the Fraser River system into the Northern Plateau to exploit increasing salmon resources near the onset of cooler climatic conditions
- Around 4,500-3,500 years ago, the Lochnore phase developed into the Plateau Pit House tradition.

- “Salish-speaking ancestors of the contemporary and historic Secwepemc lived in the south-central Interior since at least 5,500 years ago, and ... between 4,500 and 3,500 years ago they established cultural patterns similar to what was described in the ethnographic literature by Teit and others as Secwepemc culture” (Pokotylo 1998)



# Salient traits of the pre-historic Pithouse Tradition on the Northern Plateau

- dwelling in pithouses (semi-subterranean underground houses) during the winter months
- pursuit of game at mid elevations and in montane parklands
- extensive use and management of root plant crops, along with the intensive and controlled harvesting of numerous species of berries, green vegetables, seeds, nuts, lichen and mushrooms at different elevations (Turner, Ignace and Ignace 2000; Ignace 1995; Turner and Peacock 1998)
- extensive use of anadromous fish, including four species of Pacific salmon, as well as steelhead, different species of trout, supplemented by miscellaneous river and lake fish





# Historical Linguistics - estimates

- The Interior Salish branch of the Salish language family diverged from Coast Salish and Nuxalk (Bella Coola) some 6,900 to 5,500 B.P.
- Internal divergence within Interior Salish (Northern Branch from Southern Branch) estimated at 4,500-3,500 years ago
- Linguistic split of Secwepemctsin (Shuswap) from Nlakaɣmxcin (Thompson), its closest neighbouring language, occurred about 2,000 years ago (dates from Elmendorf 1965)

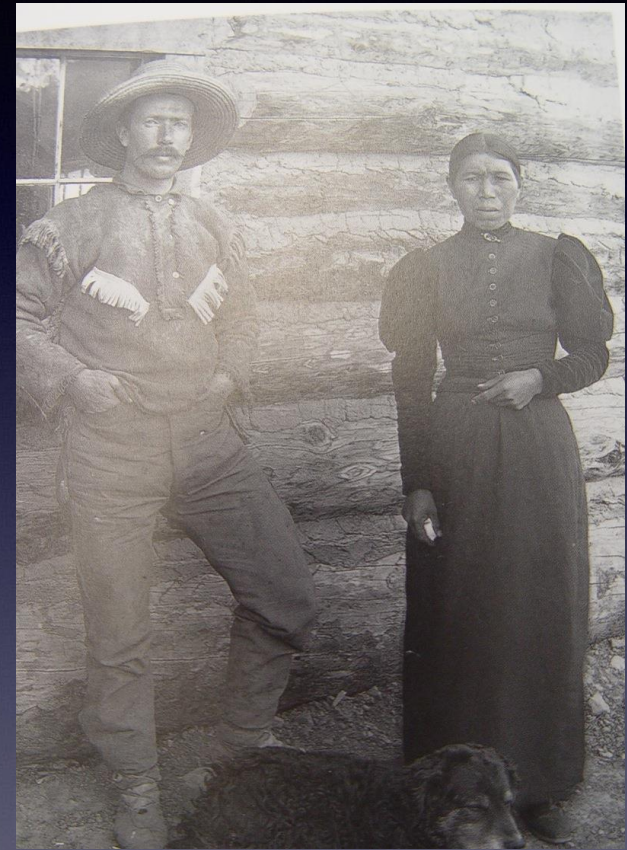
# Glimpses into the past through linguistics

- tmicw = land - a word shared in all Salish languages!
- kukwpi7 - “chief” in Interior Salish, “grandfather” in ItNuxalkmc (Bella Coola)
- Interior Salish languages all share some words for features in the land and plants in their environment (e.g. Rocky Mountain Juniper, subalpine fir - see Turner, Ignace and Compton 1995)
- besides words, all Salish languages retain certain distinct features of speech (lexical suffixes, deictics, subject-object marking)

# Ethnographic studies: People who recorded cultural information and oral histories from Secwepemc people in the late 19th and early 20th century



Franz Boas, the “founding father of North American anthropology” - he travelled through the area and recorded some information in the late 1880s



Most importantly: James Teit: settler, husband, ethnographer, “secretary” to the Indian Rights Movement



# Le q'7éses te stsptékwll-kt (Our Ancient Stories)

Ancient oral histories can provide us with clues about events in the long-ago past also documented in the archaeological, geological and paleo-environmental record!





# Sk'elép

“In the beginning there were no lakes and rivers. They originated after a deluge, which also carried fish into the ponds. Only Coyote and three men escaped the deluge. “ (Teit 1900:338)

“The Coyote’s house is said to be in a glacier; according to others, in the upper world. The latter is described as a prairie occupying the top of a plateau with steep sides” (Teit 1900:341; c.f. Teit, Traditions, p. 23)



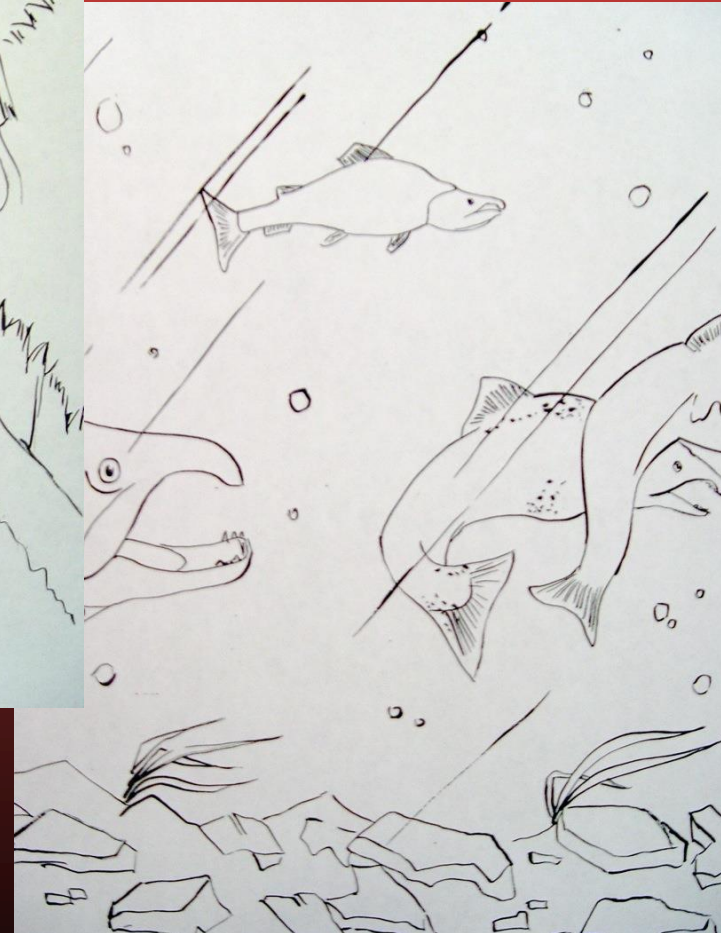
Long time ago, Coyote was living in Secwepemc country, and he was hungry, as usual. He had heard that there were salmon running way down in the river, but they never made it up the Thompson and Fraser Rivers into Secwepemc country. So he figured he'd go down and check it out.

To get down the river, he changed himself into a leaf, but it blew away. Then he tried to get downstream by changing himself into a rock....but he sank. Then he tried changing into a reed, but it got stuck in a back eddy. Finally, he changed himself into a wooden stick, and he floated down the Thompson River, past the mouth of the Bonaparte, and all the way past Lytton, where a big fish weir was built across the river, preventing the salmon from running upstream. Two big women T'kwilc (Indian doctors) were guarding the fish weir. When they saw the stick that had become snagged in the fish weir, they pulled it out, thinking it would make a good piece of firewood. When they threw it on the fire, however, the stick changed into a young boy, a baby. The women thought, "what a cute baby!" and one of them said right away, "pull him out, quick!" They took the boy in, feeding him and sleeping with him in their tent. During the next four nights, Coyote changed himself into his own self, and had sex with the women, making them each a baby. Early in the morning after the fourth night, when the two women were still asleep, he snuck out, ran to the fishing weir and broke it. All the salmon started running up the river, and made their way into Secwepemc country where they spawned in the creeks running into the river, including right here in the Thompson, by the mouth of Deadman Creek, where it is written on the rocks. And Coyote said, "From now on, every year this time, the salmon will run up the rivers, and the people will catch them." And because he had made children among the Nlakapmx with those two women, the Secwepemc and Nlakapmx had become in-laws who kept marrying among one another and shared one another's fish, deer, roots and berries. (as retold by Ron Ignace)

# Sk'elép and the Fish Dam







# “Transformer” Stories

“at that time it was very hot and windy, and according to the [Nlakapmx], very dry”  
(Teit 1900:337)

- Nlakapamux stories of 3 brothers named QoaqLaqL [from root q'wit'= smile] , and Kokwela (Qweqw'ile) who came from the Lower Fraser territory and “travelled up the Thompson River, “where they found the country inhabited by the Coyote people” (Teit 1898:42). They travelled up the Fraser and Thompson, then up the Similkameen River, back to the Thompson, Bonaparte River, Hat Creek, Pavilion Lake. On their way to the Fraser River, at Pavilion Mountain, they were turned to stone by a young girl in puberty training.



# Lillooet Transformers

- “A number of transformers gave the world its present shape, and transformed the beings of the mythical period into real people and real animals. These transformers travelled all over the world for this purpose. None of them was born in Lillooet country” (Teit 1912:289)
- Lillooet stories about A'tse'melh - 4 brothers who came from the mouth of the Fraser, up Harrison River, Lillooet Lake to Lil'wet, creating the boundary between the Lil'wet and the Upper St'at'imc)

# Qweqw'íle

A girl in Secwepemc country first refuses to get married, then can't find a husband and thus marries the qweqw'íle root (*Lomatium macrocarpum*), and has a son who is ashamed of his father and begins to train for power...he begins to travel over the country, transforming bad people and others who offended him, and curtailing the powers of those who did injury to their neighbours. He travelled from Secwepemc country near Kamloops down the Thompson River at Lytton, where he met the Qoa'qLaqaL, and they had a power contest. He then turned around and travelled up the Fraser to its headwaters and down the North Thompson. "The [qweqw'íle] root grew wherever he went." (Teit 1909)





The role of the qweqw'ile root in this story is no coincidence, given its shape!

Note also that among Interior Salish First Nations, qweqw'ile is a medicine that helps women with infertility, and is also used as a “prenatal vitamin”



This map shows the distribution of Qweqw'ile in BC - note how it is concentrated in the Interior Salish Nations!

# Tli7sa and his Brothers

- Tli7sa and his 3 brothers lived near Tk'emlups. "Many of the present-day animals were at that time human beings with animal characteristics, and all of them were cannibals...Tli7sa at last decided that he would try to rid the country of these evil beings." (Teit 1909:645)
- In a version recorded by Franz Boas in the late 1880s, Tli7sa and his brothers came from Eastern Secwepemc country (Boas 1895)
- Tli7sa and his brothers obtained arrow-stone from the four Grizzly Bear sisters at Arrowstone Hills; travelled through Pesmemenc (Tobacco Mountain near Deadman Creek), killed a monster elk at the outlet of Kamloops Lake, went up the Bonaparte Valley, Marble Canyon, Pavilion Mountain and to near High Bar, where a pubescent girl transformed them into Rocks.
- Numerous rock formations, like the hoodoos in Deadman Creek Valley, the rock imprints at Cuwi'wesqen (St'uxtews), and rock paintings near Savona attest to the brothers' travels and deeds.



# Re Secwépemc re stsq'ey's ell re tsuwet.s (Secwepemc Laws and Customs)

*How do we know about the Secwepemc  
past, cultural and social practices, extent of  
territory, traditional laws?*



# **Ethnohistorical Information: written information of Secwepemc people provided by white people who came among them**

- **The journals and correspondence of explorers from the late 17th and early 18th century (Alexander McKenzie, Simon Fraser, David Thompson, Alexander Ross, etc)**
- **Hudson's Bay Company Records from the 1820s to 1860s**
- **Missionaries' letters, correspondence and records (1850s - 1920s)**
- **surveyors, tourists, settlers (1870s to 1910s)**
- **Colonial agents, Reserve commissioners, Indian Affairs (1858 to 20th century)**



# In the Memorial to Sir Wilfrid Laurier (1910) the chiefs of the Interior give their own testimony of 19th century history and Aboriginal law and protocol:

"The "real whites" we found were good people. We could depend on their word, and we trusted and respected them. They did not interfere with us nor attempt to break up our tribal organizations, laws and customs. They did not force their conceptions of things on us to our harm. Nor did they stop us from catching fish, hunting, etc. They never tried to steal or appropriate our country, nor take our food and life from us. They acknowledged our ownership of the country, and treated our chiefs as men." "Just 52 years ago (1862), the other whites came to this country. They found us just the same as the first or "real whites" had found us, only we had larger bands of horses, had some cattle, and in many places we cultivated the land. They found us happy, healthy, strong and numerous. Each tribe was still living in its own house, or in other words on its own "ranch". No one interfered with our rights, nor disputed our possession of our own "houses" and "ranches", viz, our homes and lives."

# Elders' Oral History reach back into the 19th century



Ida William's and Josephine Wenlock's grandfather was George Sisylecw who told stories to Teit!



Francis Ignace knew stories from his grandmother, Cecile Melmenetkwe, born in the 1830s

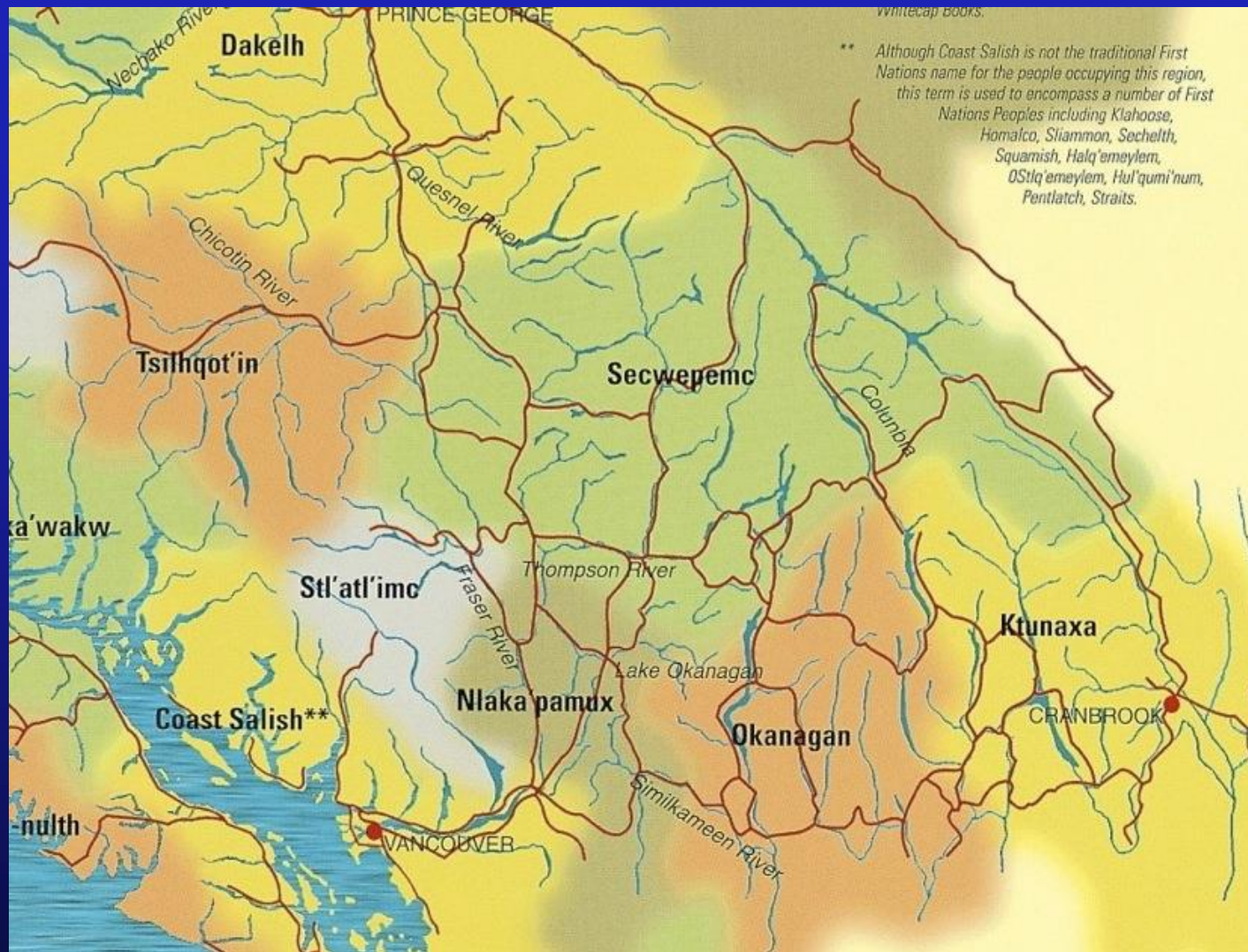


Louisa Basil knew stories about Tli7sa and his Brothers

and many others...



# Secwepemc - “the spread-out people”



How can we determine Secwepemc  
“traditional territory”?

source: [www.bced.gov.bc.ca/abed/images/map2.jpg](http://www.bced.gov.bc.ca/abed/images/map2.jpg)

# Historical Maps

- David Thompson's "Map of the North-west Territory of the Province of Canada, from actual Survey during the Years 1792 to 1812."
- Archibald McDonald 1827 "A sketch of Thompson River District"
- A.C. Anderson's map 1832-51
- George M. Dawson's "Map showing the Limits of the Shuswap people of British Columbia (1891)"
- Teit's Map (1909) - based on information recorded in 1900 from Secwepemc people about "hunting grounds" and recognized boundaries.

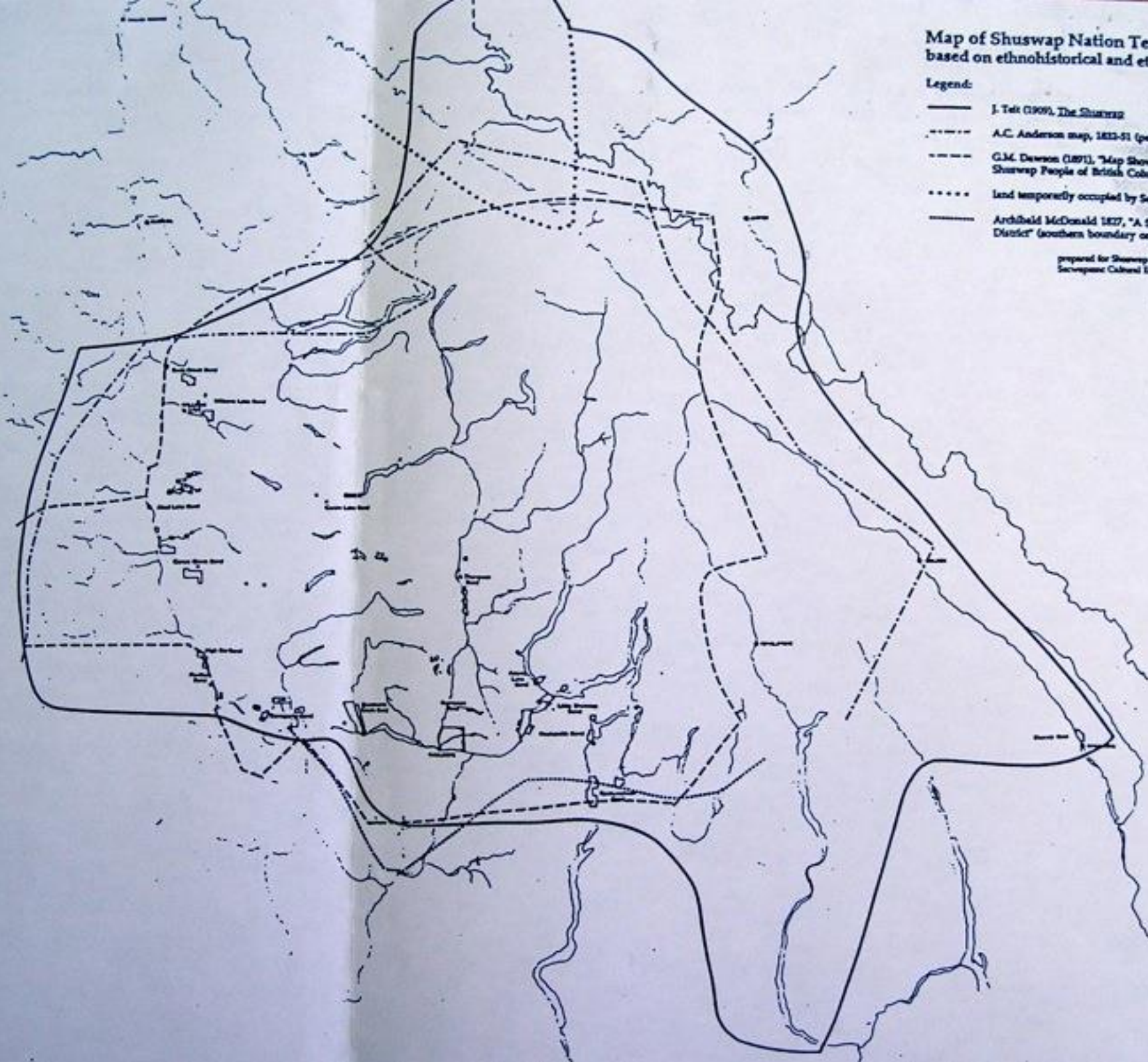


# Map of Shuswap Nation Territory based on ethnohistorical and ethnographic sources

## Legend:

- J. Tait (1909), *The Shuswap*
- A.C. Anderson map, 1812-51 (partial boundaries only)
- - - - G.M. Dawson (1891), "Map Showing the Limits of the Shuswap People of British Columbia"
- ..... land temporarily occupied by Sekani (Tait 1909)
- Archibald McDonald 1827, "A Sketch of Thompson River District" (southern boundary only)

prepared for Shuswap Nation Tribal Council and  
Sawapam Cultural Education Society by Marlene Stelcher





# Bottom Line:

- early explorers, traders and ethnographers attributed a distinct territory and definite boundaries to the Shuswap/Secwepemc Nation. These boundaries were marked by watersheds, creeks and rivers, and sometimes by distinct boundary markers, such as prominent “coyote rocks” or other land marks
- different maps slightly vary whether they make reference to territory exclusively occupied by Secwepemc or shared with other nations (Teit vs. Dawson)
- In the Memorial to Sir Wilfred Laurier (1910) the Chiefs state that when the first Whites came into the Interior, "they found the people of each tribe supreme in their own territory, and having tribal boundaries known and recognized by all."

# The Secwépemc and Aboriginal Nationhood

- "a body of people recognized as an entity by virtue of their historical, linguistic or ethnic links, a body of people united under a particular organization and usually occupying a defined territory..." (Webster's Dictionary 1988 p.666)
- "a sizeable body of Aboriginal people with a shared sense of national identity that constitutes the predominant population in a certain territory or collection of territories." Aboriginal Nations usually contain numerous First Nation communities within the same nation" (RCAP vol. 1 1996:xiv).

# Boundary Maintenance

- Indigenous Warfare around control over territory and resources - documented in Teit 1909, Dawson 1891, recorded from contemporary Secwepemc elders (1980s): Teit's data shows overwhelmingly that warfare was with OUTSIDERS, not among Secwepemc communities





# Intermarriage

- research of hundreds of Secwepemc marriages from the 17th to 19th century shows intermarriage within and between communities, and also frequent intermarriage with outside nations in “border communities” and in chiefly families (see Teit’s genealogy of intermarriage of Nk’wala’s family and with Secwepemc and many other groups; data from Baptisms and marriage, Oblates of Mary Immaculate)

- At the northeastern boundary, the Secwepemc frequently intermarried with the Cree. In the Northwestern boundary area, the Fraser River Secwepemc intermarried frequently with the Chilcotin and Carrier.
- At the southwestern boundary (Splat sin and Kamloops), the Shuswap intermarried with the Okanagan and Nlakápmx.
- At the western boundary (Bonaparte and Pavillion), the Shuswap intermarried with the St'at'imc [Upper Fraser Lillooet].
- At the southern, Thompson River boundary, the Shuswap (Stells[Ashcroft], Bonaparte) intermarried with the Nlakapmx.

# Indigenous Treaties

Following two centuries of warfare, Pelkamulox, the Chief of Douglas Lake was visited by Chief Kwolila of Kamloops, and, acknowledging that they were (half) brothers, that made a peace treaty:" Here at Fish Lake

Kwolila made a lasting agreement with Pelkamulox, giving him the perpetual use over all the Shuswap territory of the upper Nicola Valley, south, east and west of Chaperon Lake, comprising Douglas Lake and Fish Lake... Kwolila said, 'You will have the country for yourself and your people as your own. I will live as your neighbour at Toxoxitcen (Chaperon Lake) and will retain all the country from there north. You will make Fish Lake your headquarters in the summer and I will summer at Chaperon Lake so that we may be close neighbors part of the year. You will give me your daughter, Kokoimalks, to be my foster child, and she will always live with me, but your son you will keep with yourself." (op.cit.265ff).



What do we know about  
Secwepemc Social Organization  
from the ethnographic and  
ethnohistorical record and from  
elders' oral histories?

# Named “Divisions”:

- 1. St'emcúlecwemc - people of the Fraser River - Those inhabiting the Fraser River from High Bar to Soda Creek, including the people of Clinton.
- 2. Set'emc - people of the Chilcotin River Canyon (Alkali Lake people also refer to them as Pestewtemc, people on the other side of the Fraser River; note that St'atimc is a derivation of this)
- 3. Styétemc - Canim Lake and Lac la Hache people
- 4. Tqéqeltkemc - people of the North Thompson
- 5. Sxstélnemc - people of Upper South Thompson, Shuswap Lake and Spallumcheen River, including the Neskonlith area
- 6. Tk'emlúpsemc - including people from Kamloops and Skeetchestn
- 7. Sextsínemc - people of the valleys of Bonaparte River and Main Thompson to near Ashcroft and including Pavilion



# **Indigenous “Bands” - people associated with villages and localities**

- some 30 such indigenous “bands.” - designated by a historical village community and the suffix -emc
- after small-pox epidemics, 16 or 17 bands remained, designated as Indian Bands under the Indian Act
- Some bands were legislated into “extinction” or “disappeared” - Canyon bands, Upper North Thompson, Arrow Lakes...
- increasing “Lillooetization” of Ts’kw’ay’lecw (Pavilion)

# Land Ownership

(Teit 1909: 572)"All the land and hunting grounds were looked upon as tribal property all parts of which were open to every member of the tribe. Of course, every band had its common recognized hunting, trapping and fishing places, but members of other bands were allowed to use them whenever they desired ...Fishing places were also tribal property, including salmon-stations....At the lakes every one had the privilege of trapping trout and erecting weirs."

"When [the first whites] first came amongst us there were only Indians here. They found the people of each tribe supreme in their own territory, and having tribal boundaries known and recognized by all. The country of each tribe was just the same as a very large farm or ranch (belonging to all the people of the tribe)....Fire, water, food, clothing and all the necessities of life were obtained in abundance from the lands of each tribe, and all the people had equal rights of access to everything they required" (Memorial to Sir Wilfrid Laurier, SNTC 1989: 33)

# Memorial to Sir Wilfrid Laurier, 1910

"When [the first whites] first came amongst us there were only Indians here. They found the people of each tribe supreme in their own territory, and having tribal boundaries known and recognized by all. The country of each tribe was just the same as a very large farm or ranch (belonging to all the people of the tribe)....Fire, water, food, clothing and all the necessities of life were obtained in abundance from the lands of each tribe, and all the people had equal rights of access to everything they required."

*Signed by the Chiefs of the Shuswap, Okanagan, and Couteau or Thompson tribes, per their secretary, J.A. Teit*



# Elders' voices:

Before the Europeans came, where was the boundary between Kaskwapa and Shuswap territory?

They didn't really have any boundary. The land belonged to all the Shuswap and a man could hunt where he wanted. But each band had its own fishing places and villages where it stayed in the winter.

David Johnson, Alice Belleau, Pierre Squinahan et al., interviewed by James B. Brow, 1972

“In 1985, when the Skeetchestn Chief and Council were developing their fishing by-law to be implemented in Skeetchestn, they had recommended that all persons except members of Skeetchestn had to get a permit from the Band to fish in Skeetchestn waters. The elders would not approve the fishing by-law unless it recognized that all Secwepemc people had the right to fish in Skeetchestn without a fishing permit.” - Chief Ron Ignace



“We travelled a lot. There was no such thing as private property. The whole territory of the Secwepemc Nation was shared by all the Secwepemc dialect people. Nothing was private property: we always shared. “

*In: The Wisdom of Dr. Mary Thomas.*

"Among the Spence's Bridge and Nicola Bands any member of the Shuswap and Okanogan tribes who was related to them by blood was allowed full access to their hunting-grounds, the same as one of themselves; ...If, however, a person who was not related to a Thompson Indian were caught hunting trapping or gathering bark or roots, within the recognized limits of the tribal territory, he was liable to forfeit his life" (Teit 1900: 293)



# Plateau Resource Ownership:

- Primary access to one's own Nation's (i.e. Secwepemc) resources through kinship and descent to/from the Nation - *Access to the resources of the nation and to those of a particular band within it, was provided by kinship, descent and affinal relations, as well as residence and socialization. Since residence patterns were usually - but not always - patrilocal, most individuals took their primary sense of belonging to an Aboriginal nation and community within it from their father's side.*
- Secondary access to other Nations' (e.g. Nlaka'pamx, St'at'imc, Okanagan) resources through relatives and ancestors from those Nations - *Access to other nations' territories and resources was thus enabled by virtue of tracing kinship with people from that place.*

# Principles of Land Tenure

- Secwepemcúlecw jointly owned by all Secwepemc
- stewardship or caretakership of certain tracts of Secwepemculecw by the local indigenous band or community:  
yucwmin'men

# What about individually owned fishing rocks?

- they were man-built contraptions and thus respected by others as to the first right of use by the person who built it.
- In the same way, deer fences and deadfalls were considered as “first dibs” by the person(s) who built them



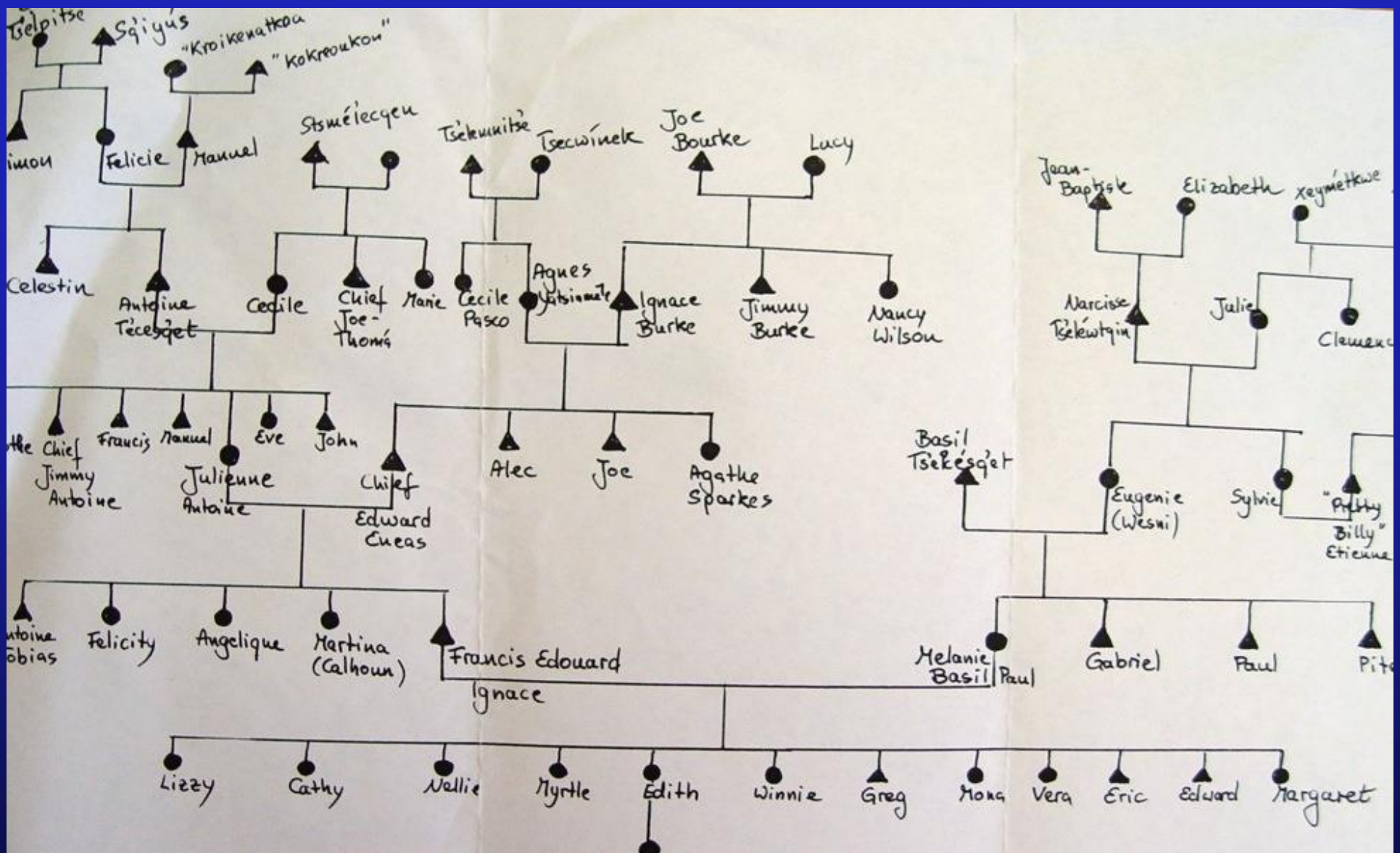
# How did someone get access to the resources of the Secwepemc Nation?

- kinship and descent
- marriage with members of other Nations  
(as secondary access)

Ren kw'séseltkwten “my relatives”

**- The importance of knowing  
who you are and who you come  
from**

- kinship links establish a person as Secwepemc and as a member of a particular community, and as related to other communities within the Nation, and to communities beyond the Nation.



Genealogies compiled from Church records, Indian Affairs documents, graveyards, elders' memories, allow us to trace back kinship and marriage patterns to individuals born in the late 1700s (i.e. "first contact")



FAMILY GROUP

SEX

DATE

Clemas

Widow

Edward Jules

Male

Maggie

Wife

Ellen

Female

Rosie

"

Mary

"

Edward

M

Kellie Jules

Male

Mary Jane

Wife

Rose Maryatka nulle veuve age d'environ 55 ans  
 a tous ces baptêmes Inyauam parrami marraam

Pendre o.m.i.

Le vingt octobre mil huit cent soixante sept je soussigné  
 prêtre o.m.i. ai baptisé à St Marie Survas Ferry  
 Hyacinthe Sissiaske age de 40 ans fils légitime de Louis D. Lou  
 Abraham Koukoultenals age de 45 ans fils de Roch D. Septkanema  
 Andre Olman age d'environ 50 ans fils de Skalopouk D. Peyeatka  
 Simon Slentaous age de 50 ans fils de Skious D. D'ne Angeyten  
 Luc Kekreoukan age de 35 ans fils de Leyessa D. de Semerakka  
 Joseph Mroumaski age de 40 ans fils de Roch D. Septkanema  
 Inyauam parrami marraam

Pendre o.m.i.





The diagram illustrates the components of traditional ecological knowledge and their relationships. It features four large, overlapping circles, each containing text. To the left of these circles is a spiral line that passes through a series of five smaller circles, each labeled with a letter: T, I, N, E, and E. An arrow points from the bottom of the spiral towards the bottom right.

The four large circles contain the following text:

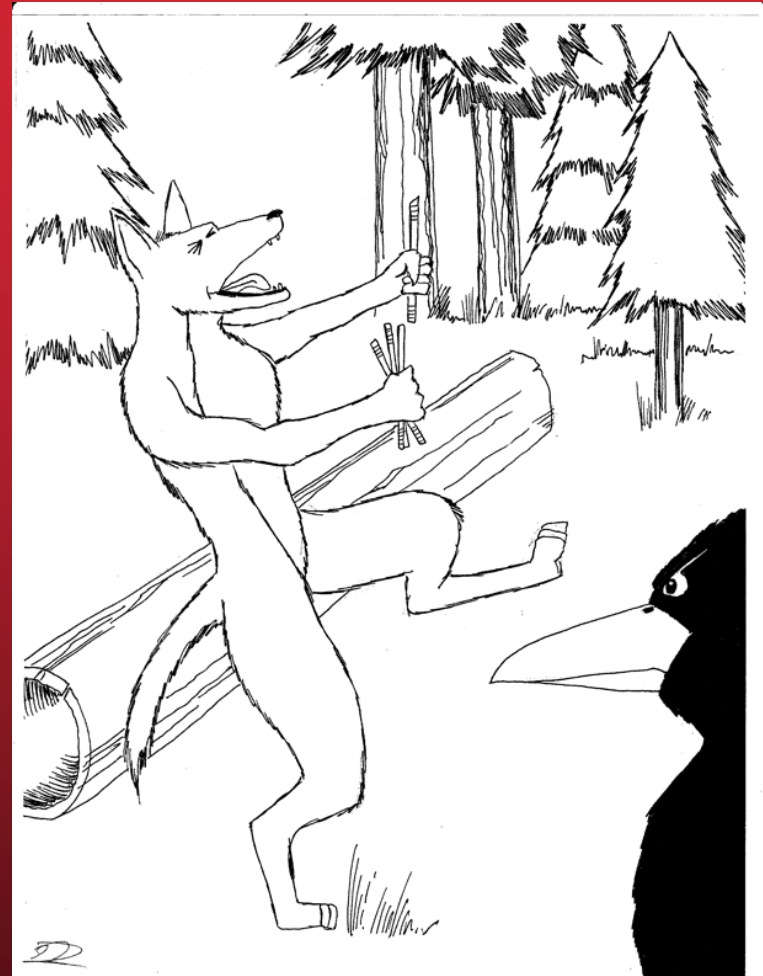
- Communication and Exchange of Knowledge**
  - Oral Stories, Customs and Traditions
  - Language, Dialects and Oral Arts
  - Trade
  - Domestic Knowledge
- Philosophy**
  - Epistemological Frameworks
  - Relationality
  - Existential Beliefs
  - Experiences, Teaching and Learning
- Worldview**
  - Knowledge of the Environment
  - Relationality
  - Existential Beliefs
  - Practices and Strategies for Sustainable Living
- Practices and Strategies for Sustainable Living**
  - Adaptability
  - Harvesting Strategies
  - Environmental Management

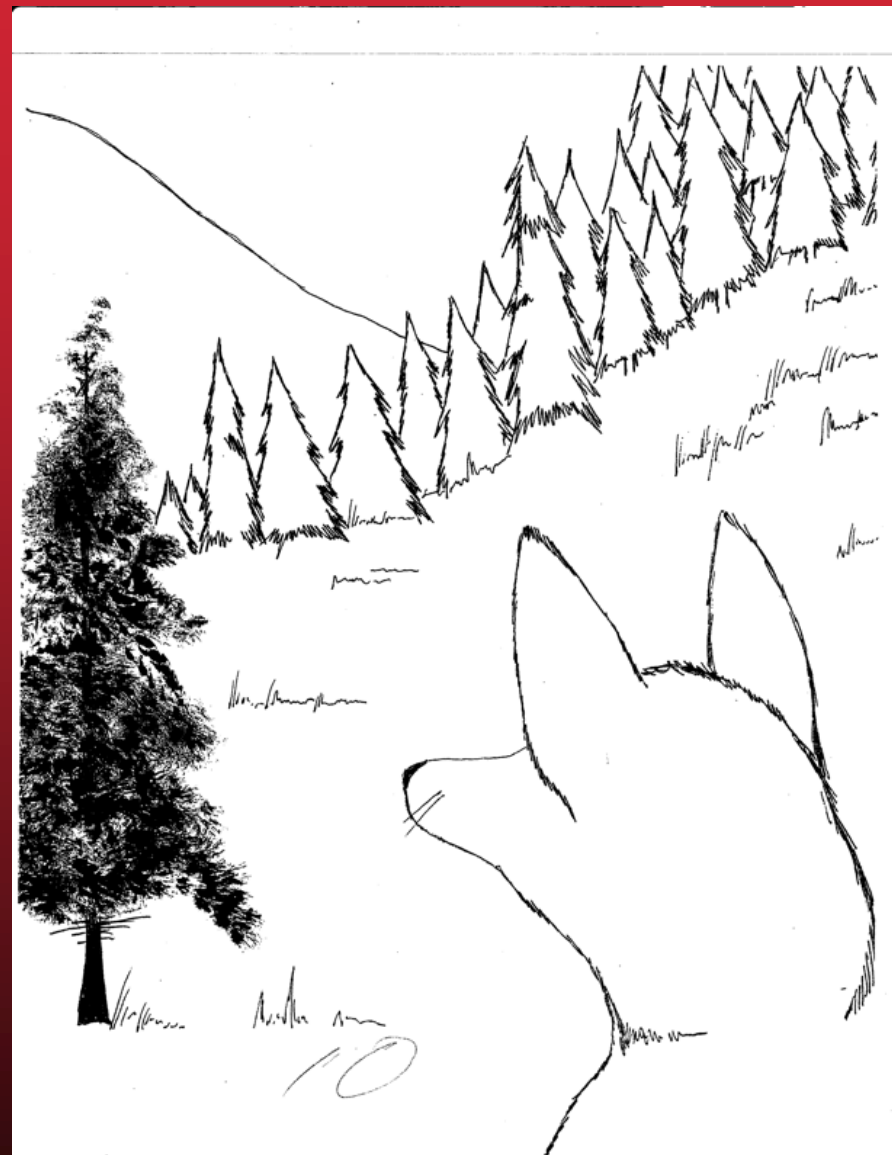
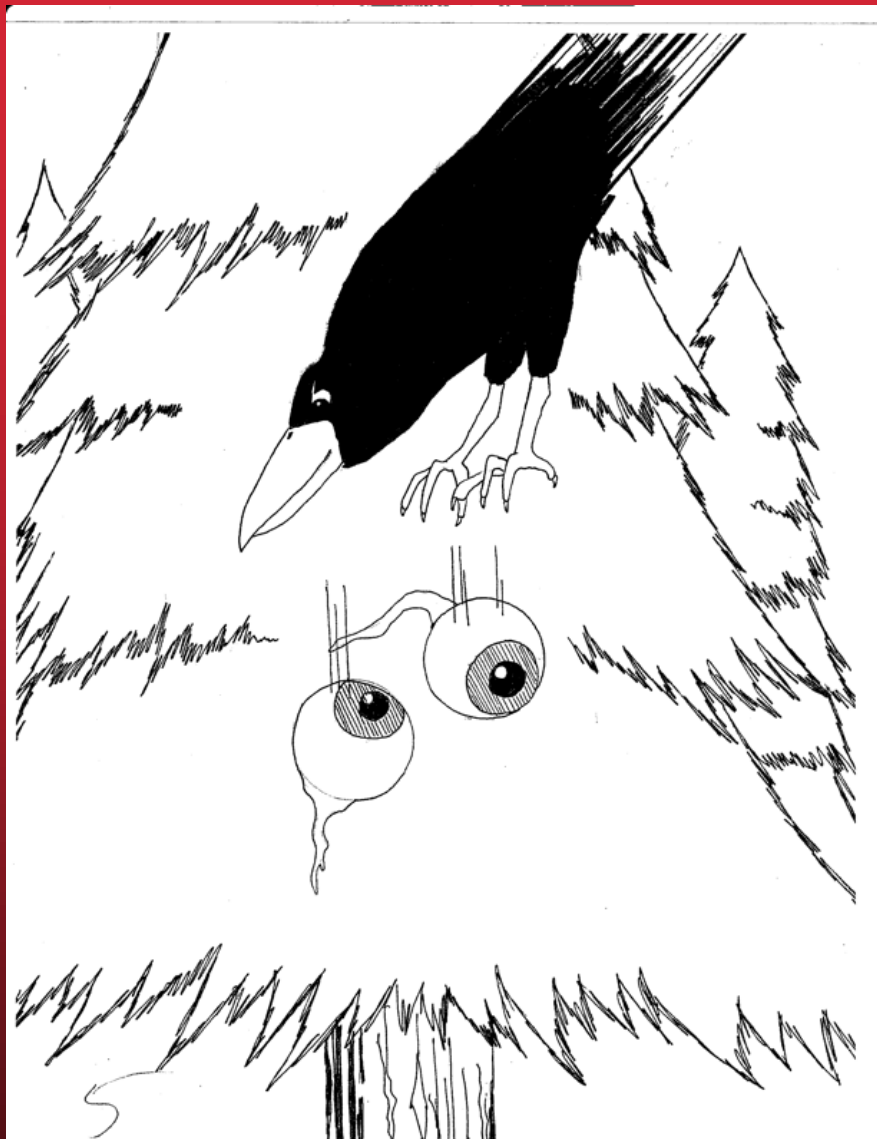
osophy and worldview, laws, social practices and knowledge  
for an integrated system of resource management over

**Traditional Ecological Knowledge is embedded  
in stories and  
passed on from generation to generation:  
Example: Coyote Juggles his Eyes -**

**“how Sk’elep lost his eyesight by being a braggard  
in gambling, then put his knowledge of  
biogeoclimatic zones to work and was rewarded by  
getting his eyesight back”**



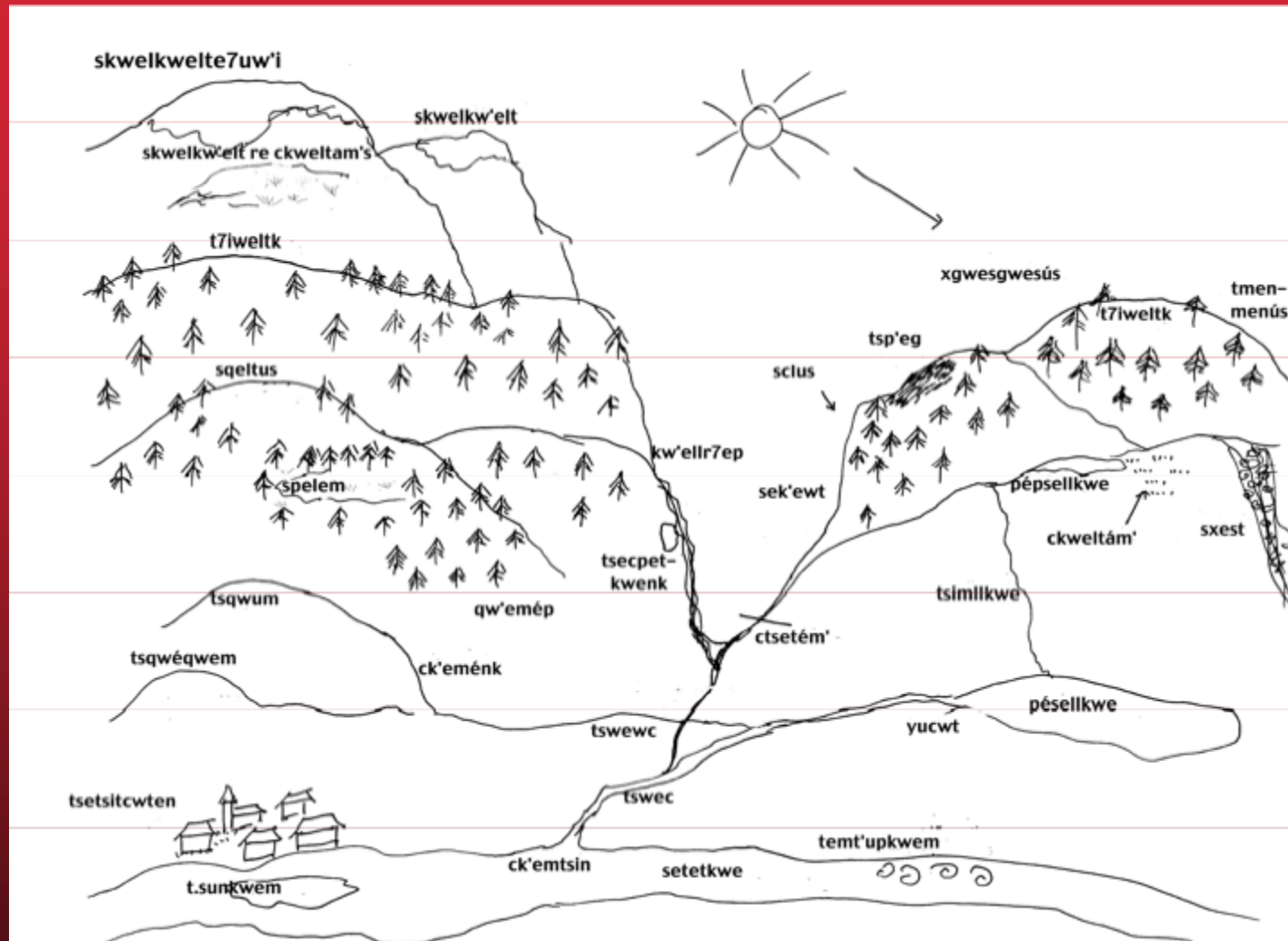








# Knowing the Land



Over generations, the way the Secwepemc language inscribes knowledge of shapes and forms into the physical landscape has guided people's use of resources and travels through the land

# Seasonal Rounds: The Secwepemc Calendar

1. Pell7ellcw7úllcwten - "entering month"
2. Pelltetéq'em - "cross-over month"
3. Pell7emtmín' - "stay at home month"
4. Pelltsípwenten - "cache-pit month"
5. Pellsqepts - "spring wind"
6. Pesll7éwten - "melting month"
7. Pell7é7llqten - "digging month"
8. Pelltspántsk - midsummer month
9. Pelltqwelqw'él'temc - "getting-ripe month"
10. Pesqelqlélten - "many salmon month"
11. Pelltemllik't - "spawned out"
- 12/13. Pesllwélsten - "abandoning month"

# Political Organization:

How were decisions made for the benefit of the collective?

- Traditionally, no paramount chiefship at the level of the Nation - an inconceivable system for the White folks
- The Secwepemc Nation was an “amalgamate” or “confederacy” of its communities



# Chiefship - sweti7 re7 kúkwpí7?

- "The Secwepemc had one hereditary chief for each band, the office descending in the male line" (Teit 1909:569)
- "Sometimes all the immediate male relatives of the deceased [chief] held a meeting and elected the son considered best fitted to occupy the position, and he was announced by them to the band as chief. Soon afterward he gave a small feast to all the members of the band, to which visiting strangers were invited. At this feast the people addressed him as chief, and henceforth recognized him as such until his death"(Teit 1909:569).

- chiefly succession was not automatic; instead, the successor was established as a candidate by his descent (e.g.. being the son of the previous chief) and was then selected or verified by a council of band members/elders. The feast the chief gave to his band and "visiting strangers" (ostensibly chiefs and elders of neighbouring bands) constitutes an act of publicly announcing and thus officializing the new chief. In the absence of a written statement of succession, announcing the new chief in front of the witnessing public constituted the inauguration of the chief.
- According to case histories of Secwepemc succession to chiefship during the nineteenth century which I recorded with elders of various bands: the succession by selection and appointment rather than automatic patrilineal succession occurred very often, and in my opinion did not harm the legitimacy of a newly appointed chief.

# Reasons:

- following the smallpox epidemic and other epidemics, it often occurred that no sons existed to take their father's place.
- In other cases, the elders of the community selected a person deemed fit to be chief instead of the son of the previous chief. In some of these cases a son-in-law or a nephew of the previous chief was selected.
- For example, Chief Andre Tinemesq'et of the North Thompson Band appointed his son-in-law David Casimir, Cucwell, as his successor;
- Skeetchestn Chief Hyacinth Sisyesq'et's successor was a niece's husband, Joe Tomma, rather than his own son Jules Sisyesq'et.
- The St'uxtewsemc selected Chief Basil Dick to succeed Chief Seynsut, apparently because of his oratorical and negotiating abilities.





Hyacinth Sisyesq'et - 1817 -1894

# Roles of Chiefs

- "Chiefs had no special privileges, and their only duties were to look after the general welfare of the band, regulating, when necessary, the gathering of food supply, so that all could have an equal chance, and admonishing the lazy and quarrelsome. They also gave their advice on all important matters, and were the agents of the band in dealing with strangers. The chief was looked upon as a kind of father and leader of the people, and was expected to set a good example, and to act fairly in all matters "(Teit 1909:569).

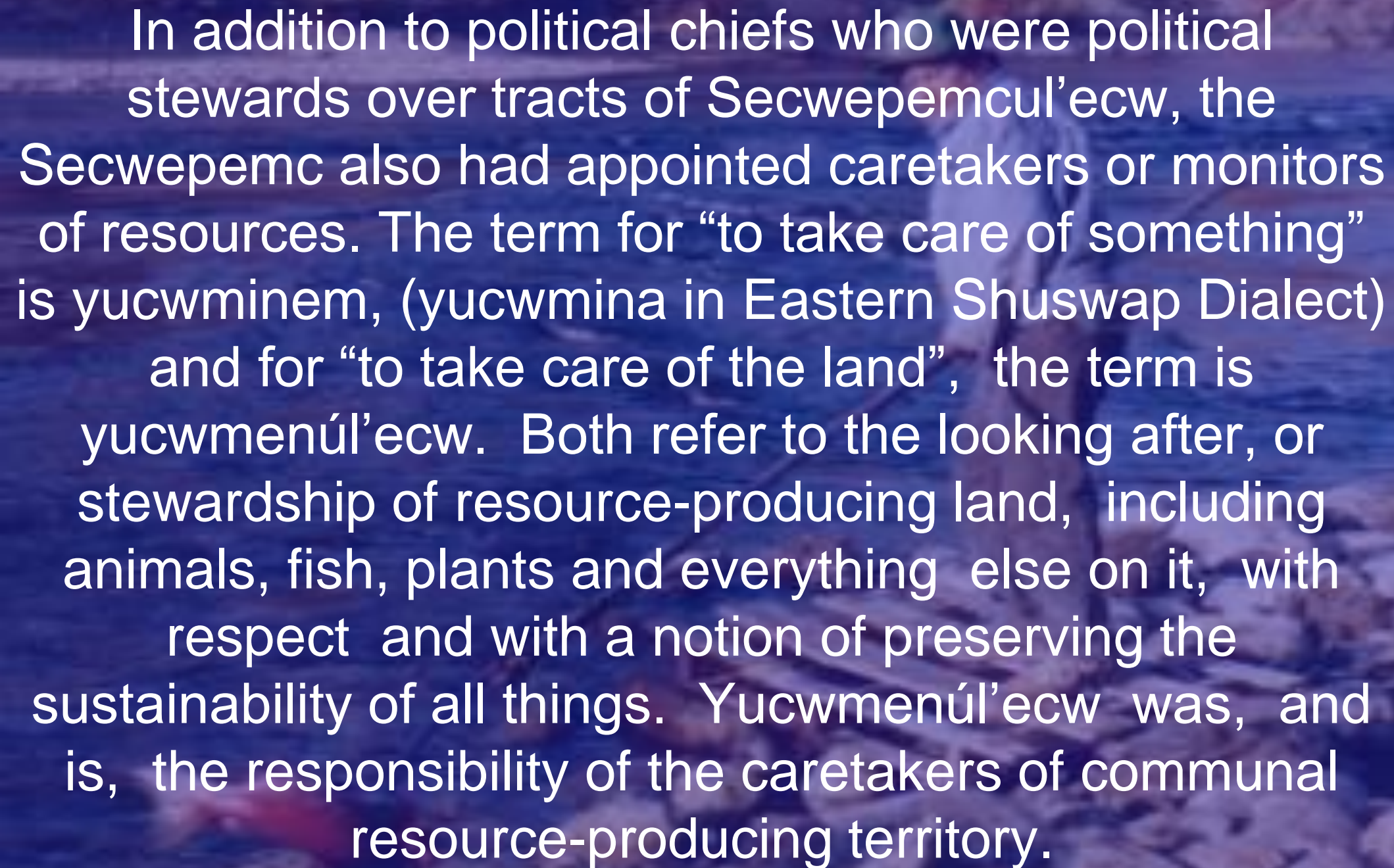
# Interference and Resistance

- In the early 20th century, Indian Agents quite frequently tried to depose the local Band chief, but usually the people would elect him back in the next election
- During the late nineteenth century, Oblate missionaries installed the Durieu system on reserves in the Secwepemc Nation, which imposed a secular and religious order of command onto Indian reserves (Furniss 1997). Records of chiefship and oral histories by elders during the late nineteenth century, however, reveal that the Secwepemc appointed whom they considered fit for these positions according to their own value system, but gave them titles and names within the Durieu system.



# What about continuing assertion of ownership during the fur trade period (1810s - 1850s)?

- In a recent article in BC Studies, myself and Duane Thomson from University of British Columbia/Okanagan (formerly Okanagan University College) have made the point that the laws and protocols of the Interior Salish peoples were left intact and respected by fur traders and others who entered their territories during the time up to and including 1846 (Thomson and Ignace 2005):
- ...in the on-going scholarly debate regarding which party held power on the Pacific slope during the fur trade era, the answer is clear, at least in Salish territory in the interior of Oregon country: It was the Aboriginal groups who exerted control and power. Secondly, from the perspective of aboriginal rights, Canadian courts are much interested in questions surrounding the proof of exclusive occupancy of land, and the control of resources and laws in 1846, when British authority was established in British Columbia vis-à-vis her European and American competitors. Based on our limited examination, we conclude that Aboriginal nations' control and exclusive occupation of lands, and control of laws, was largely undiminished by fur traders before the gold rush initiated significantly changed conditions and circumstances.

A person wearing a blue long-sleeved shirt and dark pants is walking across a rocky, uneven landscape. The person is seen from the side, moving towards the right. The ground is covered with various sized rocks and patches of dry vegetation. The background is slightly blurred, showing more of the same terrain.

In addition to political chiefs who were political stewards over tracts of Secwepemcul'ecw, the Secwepemc also had appointed caretakers or monitors of resources. The term for “to take care of something” is yucwminem, (yucwmina in Eastern Shuswap Dialect) and for “to take care of the land”, the term is yucwmenúl'ecw. Both refer to the looking after, or stewardship of resource-producing land, including animals, fish, plants and everything else on it, with respect and with a notion of preserving the sustainability of all things. Yucwmenúl'ecw was, and is, the responsibility of the caretakers of communal resource-producing territory.

Yirí7 re stsukws

Kukwstsétselp!



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Secwepemc story artwork by Mason Ouellette. I thank the Canadian Journal of Earth Sciences for giving permission to reproduce T. Johnsen and T. Brennand's map of glacial lakes.

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