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1975

A HISTORY OF THE SWINOMISH TRIBAL COMMUNITY

by

NATALIE ANDREA ROBERTS

**A dissertation submitted in partial fulfillment
of the requirements for the degree of**

DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

UNIVERSITY OF WASHINGTON

1975

Approved by _____

James B. Watson
(Chairman of Supervisory Committee)

Department _____

Anthropology
(Departmental Faculty sponsoring candidate)

Date _____

6 March 1975

UNIVERSITY OF WASHINGTON

Date: February 20, 1975

We have carefully read the dissertation entitled _____

A History of the Swinomish Tribal Community

_____ submitted by

Natalie A. Roberts

_____ in partial fulfillment of

the requirements of the degree of Doctor of Philosophy

and recommend its acceptance. In support of this recommendation we present the following joint statement of evaluation to be filed with the dissertation.

An historical study of the Swinomish Reservation community of the State of Washington, the dissertation recognizes in the small, autonomous Coast Salish-speaking groups of the Skagit Valley and its vicinity the pre-contact beginnings of a modern American Indian identity. Drawing upon archival material, newspaper files, interviews, and the findings of previous researchers in the area, the author traces trends at first favorable to the continuation--even intensification--of independent local groups but later progressively leading to the creation of a single collective identity in which the original ethnic elements were to become indelibly absorbed. Relations with early traders and missionaries, frontier hostilities, the heavy impact of imported weapons and of introduced diseases, the rise of local strong men, the effect of treaties in reassigning lands and regrouping peoples, and always the unifying influence of a congeries of traditions that, by contrast with those of the immigrant Euro-Americans, were closely related--these factors and contingencies are detailed, their relevance to the modern social and cultural reality of the group evaluated.

The broad purposes of the dissertation are twofold: that of a piece of scholarship and that of a history intended for use by the community whose records and recollections it synthesizes. In the first guise, the dissertation may be judged according to its criteria for selecting, assessing, organizing, and reporting historical data in narrative form. Here the author uses concepts from anthropological and sociological studies of ethnicity and intergroup boundaries. We judge that in this respect the work is a contribution worthy of a doctoral candidate.

In the second guise, the dissertation is a local history, a version of the record of the founding and emergence of a Native American group who may now themselves, in need of a "usable past," draw upon and make use of the study--for example in the schools attended by their children. Time and judgment of others will attest the success of the work in that respect. We hope, with the author, that she has succeeded in returning to the community that helped her and sponsored her work a contribution of lasting value to them.

DISSERTATION READING COMMITTEE:

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Doctoral Dissertation

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Signature Natalie A. Roberts
Date April 2, 1975

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PREFACE

This paper is intended to serve anthropologists, ethnic historians, and those who are interested in the Swinomish Reservation. The material contained in it will be selectively used for a companion volume appropriate for pedagogical purposes of the Swinomish Tribal Community.

The orthography of Skagit words used in Chapter II follows the style of T. M. Hess of the University of Victoria Department of Linguistics. The symbols used are shown on the following page. Hess has studied both Skagit and Snohomish (as well as Muckleshoot), members of a group of mutually intelligible dialects which formerly extended through the area between the Cascade Range and Puget Sound from Mount Baker in the north to Mount Rainier in the south, and comprising a language known as Puget Salish. In some cases, earlier anthropologists recorded Indian words using less complete systems of writing. An attempt has been made to convert all such Skagit words to Hess' system of phonemic transcription, to eliminate the need for describing all systems. Inaccuracies are inevitable, however, because the original anthropologists who recorded them did not hear all the native distinctions, and the interested reader should check the original sources. Words in the Straits language, presented by Suttles, have been left as he wrote them.

Many people have contributed their help to this work. I am deeply grateful to them all, especially to Dr. James B. Watson, Dr. Harold Amoss, Dr. David Spain, Dr. Sally Snyder, and Dr. Marshall Newman, my academic advisors and sponsors; Dr. Wayne Suttles, Dr. Pamela Amoss, Dr. Sonja

Segmental Phonemes of Lushootseed

STOPS AND AFFRICATES:

Nonglottalized

Labialized

Glottalized

ʔ

Voiced

FRICATIVES

RESONANTS:

Nonlaryngealized

Laryngealized

VOWELS

Labial	Alveolar	Lateral	Palatal	Velar	Uvular	Glottal
p	t c		ç	k kʷ	q qʷ	
ɸ	ɬ ɬʷ	ɬ	ç	k kʷ	q qʷ	
b	d dʷ		ɟ	g gʷ		
	s	ʃ	ʃ	xʷ	x xʷ	h

i(ɨ) u(ʉ)
e
a(ɶ)

Solland, Dr. Thom Hess, Astrida Onat, and Aileen Satushek, my fellow researchers and friends; to Chuck McEvers and Annabell Bitterman, formerly of the American Friends Service Committee; and Tandy and Laura Wilbur Sr., Richard and Melinda Peters, Raymond Paul, Landy and Doreen James, Blanche Edge, Shirley Cassimere, Ivan and Agnes Willup, George and June McLeod, Joe Willup, Irene John, Rosemarie Williams, Dewey and Winnie Mitchell, Al and Lizzie Sampson, Henry and Marion Cladoosby, Irene Siddle, Arelia Stone, Agatha Irving, Elmer and Bessie Cline, Morris and Bertha Dan, August Day Sr., Mike and Marylou Cladoosby, Russell and Alfreda Edwards, Isabel Paul, Pete and Lois Fornsby, Myrtle Bailey, Tandy and Shirley Wilbur Jr., Claude and Marie Wilbur, Nancy Wilbur, Doug Wilbur, Francis and Beverly Peters, Edith and Arnie Bob, Norma Johnston, Charley and Diane Paul, Willie Shoemaker, Nellie Charles, Tedo and Wanda Edge, Kenney Edge, Rose Thomas, Reggie and MaryAnn Edwards, Buddy and Laura Edwards, Maxine Williams, Bernadette James, Rosie James, Ina Cayou, Gus Stone Jr., Helen Ross, Cary Bob, Helen Lewis, Eva Olson, Vandy and Diane Vendiola, Clara Kiley, Alfreda and Ernest Bailey, Bernice Billy, Mark Joe, Herbie and Dolly Bill, Rodney and Phyllis John, Norman and Charlene Rice, Vernitta Bobb, Martin and Cecelia Sampson, Theresa Sampson Willup, Ray and Agnes Charles, Liddie Charles, Greg and Lisa Edwards, Lorraine Wilbur, Lee Bobb, George and Arlene Villaluz, Allen "Lollie" Franks, Barbara McDonald, Cindy Smetana, Lucinda Joe, David Joe Jr., Bob Joe, Ernie John, Richard Moses, Joe Dunn, Sister Barbara Bieker, Sister Irene Mandin, Elsie Stone, Emma "Margie" Williams, Vi Hilbert, and other members of the Swinomish Reservation community. Thanks are also due to members of my own family who have provided support and encouragement, Allan and Millie Leberg,

Hildur McLeod, Eva Bergquist, Herbert Ziebarth, and Virginia S. Roberts.

Joseph Roberts, my husband, has been an unfailing source of inspiration.

This research was supported by grants from the University of Washington Graduate School Agnes Anderson Fund and the Ford Foundation Ethnic Minorities Program, in 1970-71 and 1971-72, respectively, to whom grateful acknowledgement is made.

DEDICATION

While many people have contributed to this work, one played an instrumental part from its inception. To him it is dedicated in loving memory:

Tandy A. Wilbur, Sr.

January 30, 1904 - March 24, 1975

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

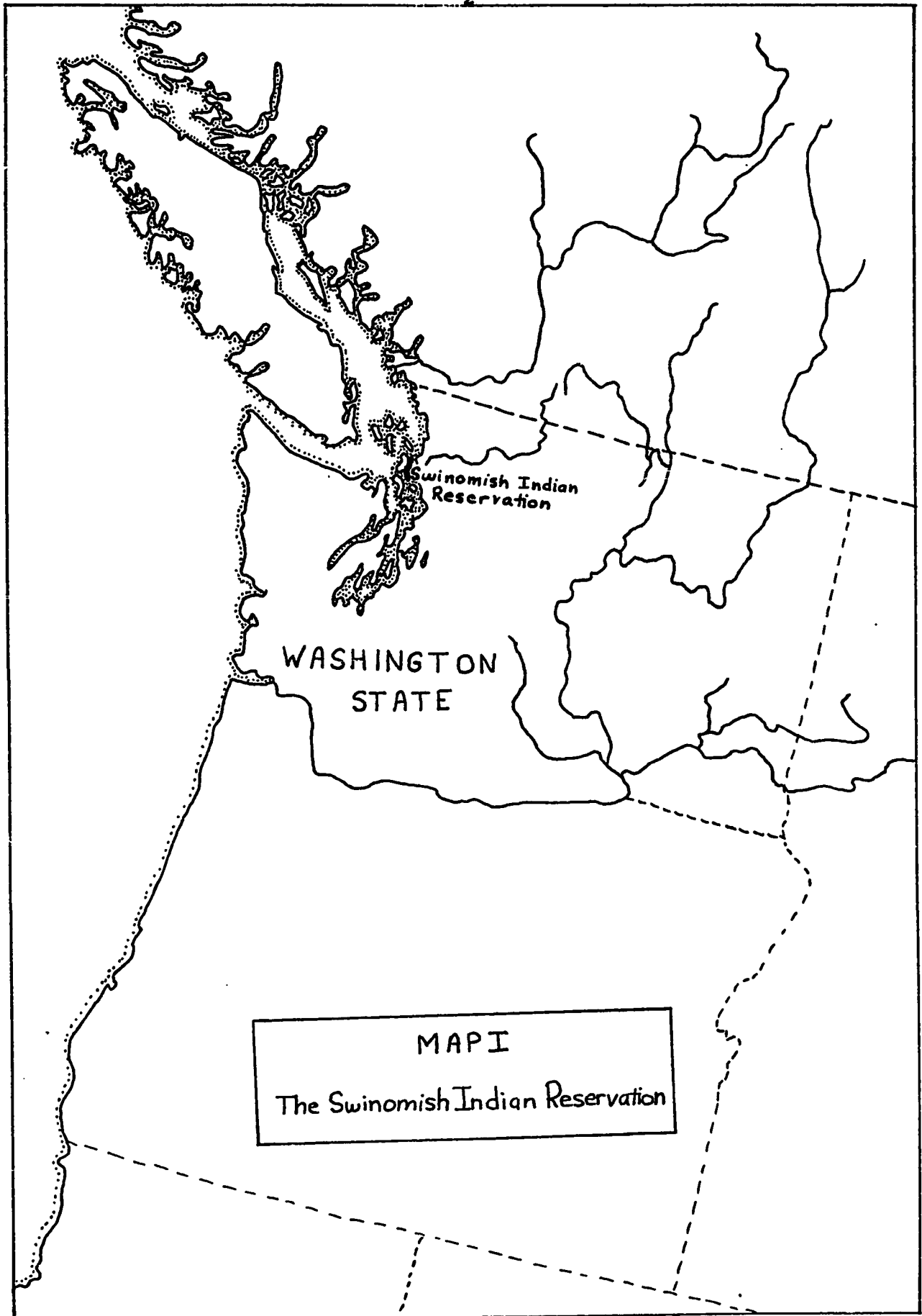
THE SWINOMISH RESERVATION

On Fidalgo Island, close to the mouth of the Skagit River in northwestern Washington State, lies the Swinomish Indian Reservation.¹ Swinomish is the home of approximately 350 American Indians whose forebears lived in the Skagit River Valley and on the coastline and islands around the river's mouth. The residents of the Swinomish community inherited a culture centered around salmon fishing and cedar long-houses.² Their ancestors built large cedar canoes and travelled around Puget Sound in the summer, gathering up stores of food for the winter. The cold, rainy winter seasons were spent in permanent villages, located along rivers and coastlines. Feasting and dancing, games and ceremonies enlivened the long, dreary months.

Located in quiet inland waters of Puget Sound on the western coast of the North American continent, the Skagit Region was one of the last parts of the United States to be settled by Whites. Only Alaska and some of the desert and mountainous regions of the interior have been settled later. Puget Sound was first reached by Spanish and British

¹See Map I.

²See Erna Gunther and Herman Haerberlin, The Coast of Puget Sound (1930), for a complete description of their traditional lifeways.



explorers in 1792, but not by great numbers of settlers until eighty years later. The Treaty of Point Elliott, known by the Indians as the Muckilteo Treaty, was negotiated in 1855, a time when settlers had arrived only on the fringes of the Skagit Region. In this treaty, the native people of this area agreed to give up their lands and move to the Swinomish Reservation. The United States Government guaranteed them this homeland and a number of special benefits and rights. Migration to their new home took place gradually over the next twenty or thirty years. The exact boundaries of the reservation were finally specified in the early 1870's.

During the next sixty years the Indians formed a new community around a small village named La Conner at the southeast end of the Swinomish Reservation. Younger generations altered many of the old traditions to conform better to the new circumstances. Ethnic boundaries and leadership patterns changed. Most important of all, the residents of the reservation formed a community government and tribal council.

Faced with worsening poverty, reservation leaders decided in the early 1930's to incorporate the Swinomish community according to the legal procedures of the Indian Reorganization Act of 1934. In a democratic election, the members of the Indian community voted almost unanimously to adopt the provisions of the act. Legal corporate status allowed the Swinomish to explore a new relationship with the federal government, obtaining loan funds to develop tribal resources.

Compared to large Indian reservations in other parts of the nation, the Swinomish are a small tribe, poor in economic assets. They have suffered from the same problems as other American Indians--poor health, inadequate housing, and ineffective education, as well as

unemployment, alcoholism, and racial discrimination. From the beginning reservation life has been marked by a struggle to improve their living conditions and hold the government to its treaty obligations.

Yet the Swinomish have been more successful than many other American Indian groups. This is probably because of a combination of factors, notably, their location, the foresight of their leaders, and their progressive attitude about community development. They have established a vigorous community organization with experienced leaders. Programs have been designed for all their internal needs. Tribal services have been instituted for every member of the community. The Swinomish have even begun to chart their future in order to direct and control growth along desirable lines.

Because of its success, the Swinomish Reservation community is an interesting case study in ethnic history and community development. The following report was based upon the author's fieldwork on the Swinomish Reservation from September, 1970 to May, 1972 and upon archival and library research at the Sand Point National Archives and Record Center, the University of Washington Archives, and the Northwest Collection of the University of Washington Library, as well as the archives of the Puget Sound Mail in La Conner and many other libraries and newspapers. In carrying out this project, the author made every attempt to include Swinomish community members in the research by recording their testimony faithfully, by providing ample opportunity for them to check information recorded for accuracy, and by making information available to their schools and proposed tribal museum. This report was intended to be merely the beginning of research that will be carried on by future Swinomish historians, perhaps from the Indian

community itself.

A THEORETICAL GUIDE FOR ETHNIC HISTORY

In researching Swinomish history it was necessary to develop a theoretical guide to locate and organize relevant data. Useful for this purpose have been several anthropological sources¹ focussing on the nature of ethnic groups and boundaries, systems of ethnic stratification, and the long-term transformation of ethnic fields.

An important analytical distinction between cultures and ethnic groups was drawn by Frederik Barth (1969:9-15). He emphasized that while ethnic groups are bearers of cultures, they are not merely cultural units. No simple one-to-one relationship obtains between ethnic units and cultural similarities and differences. Ethnic groups are created when aggregates of people, usually having a similar origin and background, ascribe to themselves a common identity. Members of a group frequently define their boundaries by adherence to a few selected cultural traditions. Their choice of diagnostic cultural features may ignore radical differences between members of their group as well as strong similarities with members of other groups.

Anthropologists have focussed much attention on the differences between cultures, their historic boundaries, and their connections but have not until recently investigated the constitution of ethnic groups and the nature of the boundaries between them (Barth 1969:9). The ethnography of the Skagit Region with few exceptions follows this

¹Barth (1969); Shibutani and Kwan (1965); Paden (1970); and LeVine and Campbell (1972).

tradition.¹ Most studies have offered reconstructions of aboriginal Coast Salish culture or Skagit culture and the early changes it underwent. None has given the history of the actual ethnic groups in the Skagit Region from aboriginal to modern reservation times.²

This difference is significant, though the data are largely the same for aboriginal and early contact times. By recasting Skagit Region ethnography in ethnic terms, the history is changed from a tale of the loss of aboriginal culture -- a dreary and depressing theme³ -- to an account of the survival and adaptation of the most central feature of Indian culture, its ethnic organization (the ethnic groups, their patterned interaction, and their creative response to contact with White intruders).⁴ Furthermore, it is then possible to confront questions of cause and effect in the adaptation of a cultural feature which has undergone numerous complex changes. It is not possible to fully understand the modern Swinomish community without investigating its former conditions.

¹The following sources deal with cultural groups and boundaries: Snyder (n.d.); Collins (n.d.a.; n.d.b.; 1951) and Suttles (n.d.). These additional sources pay some attention to ethnic groups and boundaries: Suttles (1963), Smith (1941), and Collins (1974), to a certain extent.

²Suttles (1954) has produced a brief historical account of the Lummi Indians, who reside north of the Skagit Region.

³Such a theme, when developed beyond simple stocktaking, chronicle, or historical reconstruction, typically shows little analytical concern for what is adaptive about the changing cultures as opposed to what is "lost." The latter is the very point that is apt to be central in an emphasis upon the means by which tiny groups coalesce into larger ones in order to survive--of course in altered form.

⁴Concern for the creative aspect of acculturation, as opposed to the melancholy process of cultural disintegration, was shown by the Social Sciences Research Council Summer Seminar on Acculturation (1954: 985).

While boundary maintenance of ethnic groups is the primary concern of Barth (1969), Shibutani and Kwan (1965) draw special attention to ethnic stratification and the long-term transformations of systems of ethnic stratifications. Such transformations include the establishment and maintenance of systems of ranking among ethnic groups in early contact and the protest and reordering of systems of ranking by lower status groups. The span of time these authors customarily deal with is several hundred years, or longer. Their perspective is readily adaptable to the study of Indian-White relations in the Skagit Region.

Both the above sources were relied upon to inventory the data with probable relevance to Swinomish history. Barth was used to select concepts or variables for investigation. Shibutani and Kwan augmented understanding of a most important concept--ethnic stratification--and shifted the focus from boundary maintenance to boundary transformation, making it possible to view long-term historical changes. A third source, Paden (1970), increased understanding of the phyletic process of fusion, or the merging of ethnic groups.

A fourth source was discovered in the later stages of writing and consulting with other anthropologists. This was Le Vine and Campbell's volume on ethnocentrism (1972). It contributed the important consideration that the concepts of ethnicity and group boundaries have undergone theoretical evolution since the time of Malinowski and that many of the assumptions of early structural-functionalists are now being taken as hypotheses to be tested. Care must therefore be taken to phrase questions for research in an unbiased way. Rather than asking, "How did the people do this?" one asks, "Did the people do this, if so how?"

At this point it becomes necessary to develop a definition of an ethnic group suitable for the needs of the Skagit Region, and to explain the parts of the definition. For our purposes, an ethnic group is the largest operating socio-political unit in an area that is recognized by the people themselves as something they belong to by virtue of how they live and what their origin is. This means:

1. It is an operating socio-political unit (personnel, polity, or community), as distinguished from an ethno-linguistic category or "phyle," which does not necessarily operate except with respect to sharing a language and perhaps an origin myth or a few cultural features. By operating we mean the people themselves do things together, have some kind of activity, as members of it.
2. It is a coordinate unit in a conceptual scheme recognized by the members and given a name or a label. This distinguishes it from a culture or society, which may sometimes be seen as a unit by the anthropologist alone. The boundary of an ethnic group is not a territorial borderline, but an analytical distinction made by the people themselves between who is in their group and who is not.
3. Members of an ethnic group distinguish themselves from other groups by their active participation in group activities and/or by a number of diacritica which help reinforce a feeling of group identity. The diacritica may be cultural features or places of residence, peculiar features of home environment or history, possession of cultural objects or specialized knowledge. These may appear insignificant to the anthropologist. If a group is young, members may be in the process of creating these. Members

of one group may not be able to specify the diacritica for all other groups, nor be particularly concerned about what they are. There may even be disagreement among themselves about what precisely they themselves share.

4. An ethnic group is an "origin group." This means that members usually have a tendency to think of themselves as sharing a geographic or spiritual "home" (though not necessarily exclusively) and/or a common genealogical origin (though they may actually be of mixed origins). This is meant to distinguish it from mere occupational groups, such as the American Anthropological Association, which meets the first three aspects of the definition. Given survival over a long enough time, an ethnic group will exhibit members of all ages and both sexes. It is a biologically reproducing unit.

Recent research has revealed some additional things about ethnic groups. These should not be seen as definitional aspects, but as empirical findings that have resulted from investigating ethnic groups around the world.

5. The size of ethnic units may be very small, as small as the extended family. Villages certainly qualify (LeVine and Campbell 1972:251).
6. Ethnic groups may have highly fluid personnel. Some are exogamous. Their boundaries are usually maintained despite the flow of individuals across them. It can be deductively argued that change of ethnic identity requires an individual to undergo a process of incorporation. Empirical findings reveal this may be difficult and require years or generations of effort and changing of cultural values, resulting in the phenomenon of borderline

individuals who are in the process of changing their affiliation, or it may be as easy as getting married, changing one's residence, and participating in the activities of and learning the microculture of one's distant relatives.

7. Ethnic groups may be fragile and subject to recurrent dissolution and reconstitution in the guide of new personnels with new names, the smallest groups being the most unstable (Watson n.d.:29).
8. The more mobile or fluid their elements, the less ethnic groups develop sharp or profound cultural differences from one another (Watson n.d.:29). This is, however, no insurmountable problem for the people in maintaining or recreating an identity of their own. In the absence of gross cultural differences, the people themselves are satisfied with more subtle differences.
9. Over a period of time, ethnic units may undergo transformations, taking in new members, redefining their boundaries. Some of these are fusion, or the joining together of two or more groups and sharing of a common identity, and fission, or the splitting of a single group into two or more groups.
10. Ethnic units may be found in sets of increasing inclusiveness, especially when fusion of several small coordinate units is occurring. In that case it is proper to specify the nature of unity at each level.
11. Ethnic units usually interact with each other. In studying their interaction from a particular point of view, we speak of an ethnic field. This is a selection of particular groups out of the whole network of ethnic relations that spreads across the globe, the selection suiting the analyst's purposes.

12. Relationships between ethnic groups take many different forms.

Sometimes the relationships between members of an ethnic field are profoundly altered by the intrusion of a new ethnic group with a very different culture.

The question of the universality of ethnic groups should be decided on the basis of the first four criteria. Did the people have operating socio-political units that they named and identified themselves with, that they participated in group activities on behalf of, that they tended to attribute special features to, one of which is that the members of the group shared a common origin? If so, you have an ethnic group or groups. I believe that so far, anthropologists have discovered no people who don't do these things, at least minimally.

The questions of the size of ethnic groups, the fluidity of their personnel, their persistence through time or their fragility, their territoriality, their transformation, and their relationships with each other can be expected to receive a wide variety of answers as anthropologists study the problem with more and more empirical cases.

Key Variables or Concepts

Study of the four theoretical sources mentioned above generated a list of thirteen concepts with special relevance to Swinomish history. Attempting a fuller description of each variable, I derived a series of questions addressed to the historical data. The following list guided the inventory of data from a variety of historical sources.

Mode of organization of the ethnic units. What social units did the native people identify with? What forms of integration did these units have? Which unit was the largest and most inclusive?

Ethnic labels. What terms did members of ethnic units use to refer to themselves? What terms were used to label others? Did folk taxonomies ordering these labels exist in their native language? What is the historical origin of the group labels?

Criteria of membership. Did members of an ethnic group use features of culture, language, behavior, and lifestyle to categorize insiders and outsiders? Did members overtly display their ethnic identity? How were diagnostic features selected for emphasis out of the whole cultural inventory? Did members of one group invoke stereotypes to refer to members of another group?

Restriction of interaction. How frequently did members of different ethnic groups interact? Was their interaction restricted? Were interactions direct and personal or did they take place through middlemen and institutions?

Ecological relations. Did the ethnic groups under study occupy separate territories? Did they exploit similar ecologic niches? Did they trade goods or services? Did they have military confrontations over territory? Have environmental changes affected ethnic relations?

Demographic relations. What was the relative size of the groups in contact? Was there long-term growth or decline of their populations? Did migration or epidemic diseases play a part? Did identity change by individuals play a part? Did the balance or imbalance of relative sizes affect power relations between ethnic groups?

Areas of articulation and functional interdependency. Were there cultural contexts that brought members of different ethnic groups together? Did economic and social dependencies exist between the groups?

Ethnic stratification. Were individuals ranked within their groups? If so, were high and low classes present? If so, what characteristics were exhibited by members of high and low classes? How much mobility existed? Were groups ranked with respect to each other? Did they compete for status? Were there processes that maintained differential control of assets and inequalities of status? Were there processes that facilitated reordering of the system by lower status groups?

Rules governing ethnic interaction. Was there a legal code governing ethnic interaction? Was there a ritual code comprising ethnic etiquette? Were ethnic conflicts resolved according to a pattern? Were there mediators? Did one group dominate rule-making? Could a person from one group gain status recognition from members of another group? Were major avenues of achievement closed to members of a subordinate group? Were they required to conform to dominant values in public, hiding those features of their contrasting ethnic background?

Leadership strategies. Did ethnic leaders employ specific strategies to raise their people's status? Did they accept subordinate status and accommodate their minority disabilities? Did they attempt to leave their group, passing into a higher status group in order to improve their personal position? Did they emphasize their ethnic identity, carrying the battle flag for their people? Did generational changes affect their choice of strategies? Was there ever disagreement about the best choice?

Change of ethnic affiliation by individuals. What frequency marked the crossing of ethnic boundaries by individuals? What attracted them? Did they go by particular avenues? Did they experience value conflicts?

Value range differences. Were there observable differences between ethnic groups' standards of morality and excellence in judging personal performance? Were particular values selected as essential symbols of ethnic identity? Were any susceptible to change with no consequences for ethnic boundaries?

Phyletic processes. Were there observable processes of boundary transformation? In the case of fission of an ethnic group, how did the internal cleavages develop? In cases of fusion, how was the internal unity of the newly-formed unit built up? Did ascription of common identity by outsiders play an important role? What processes facilitated the emergence of ethnic consciousness among members of a new unit?

The concepts of the preceding list were employed primarily to organize the relevant data from historical sources. This general terminology was intended to facilitate comparative research in different geographic areas as well as different historical periods. After recording data on edge-punched cards, the thirteen concepts were used as sorting categories for each period of Swinomish history. The intent was to write a similar format for each period, inspecting the changes in each variable each time.

Major Historical Periods

After deriving the categories necessary to study ethnic history, it was imperative to divide the stream of events into manageable segments

of time. A major criterion for periodization was the importance of events to the Indian informants themselves. In conversations, interviews, and public speeches Swinomish elders made repeated reference to several important happenings. First was the fact that before the coming of the Whites, the Indians dwelt all throughout the Skagit Region and lived a very different life from the one they live today. Then the White Men came -- explorers, traders, missionaries, miners and settlers. That was the first major change. The second major event was the negotiation of the Muckilteo Treaty in 1855, in which the Indians from all over Puget Sound got together and decided to conduct business with representatives of the U.S. Government. Third was a series of gradual changes beginning around 1870. The Skagit Region Indians migrated to the southeast peninsula of Fidalgo Island and began to establish new homes on the Swinomish Reservation. Fourth was the collective decision of the members of the Swinomish Reservation Community in 1934 to accept the provisions of the Indian Reorganization Act, passed by the U.S. Congress, and legally incorporate themselves.

Further study revealed that each of the events mentioned above by Swinomish elders signalled a significant change in the kind of social organization which the native people possessed, and in the way they saw themselves. The Skagit Region Indians had collectively experienced five different modes of local ethnic organization: the winter village community of aboriginal times; the extended village cluster of early contact times; the band or tribe of treaty times; the informal reservation community of early reservation times; and the legal corporation of modern times.

It then became clear that Swinomish history could be divided into

five periods, each the subject of a separate chapter in the following study.

Chapter II The Skagit Region People Before the Nineteenth Century

Chapter III The Meeting of the Skagit Region People with the White Men
(1792-1850)

Chapter IV The Negotiation of the Treaty of Point Elliott (Muckilteo)
(1850-1870)

Chapter V The Formation of the Swinomish Reservation Community
(1870-1930)

Chapter VI The Incorporation of the Swinomish Tribal Community
(1930-Present)

Ethnic Fusion

Looking into Skagit Region history one can see several different processes affecting the boundaries of ethnic groups at various times: boundary maintenance, fission, fusion, and intrusion. Boundary maintenance may be defined as the process in which ethnic identification is clarified and the ethnic units composing a field are set off by contrast with each other. Fission is the splitting of a single ethnic unit into two or more units, the members of each group taking on separate ethnic identities. Fusion is the merging of two or more ethnic groups whose members take on a common identity. Intrusion is the migration of a new group into an ethnic field when it results in the establishment of a new level of contrast and fundamentally alters the identities of the original groups composing the field.

After identifying these boundary-transforming processes, one could ultimately investigate their relationship to ethnic stratification,

the process in which ethnic groups vie for political power and social status. This might lead to the question whether fission always results in a temporary lowering of the status of one of the new groups. Another way of looking at the same phenomenon would be to assess the conditions under which fission lowers status and those under which it might raise status. One might also be led to the question of whether an intruding group is always dominant in an ethnic field, or how it becomes dominant. However, a full discussion of all the boundary-transforming processes and their relationship to ethnic stratification is beyond the scope of the present work. Only the ones most important to Swinomish history can be dealt with here.

The most prominent process affecting ethnic boundaries in the Skagit Region was ethnic fusion. During each successive historic period a mode of organization emerged more encompassing than that of the previous period. Ethnic consciousness among the Indians expanded conceptually and intensified in the sense of an increasing number of symbols. People who previously shared only vague sentiments of commonality based on the absence of marked cultural differences among themselves felt strengthened unity as time passed. New, more inclusive units became the object of their loyalty. The objective of this paper is to assess the factors contributing to this expansion of ethnic consciousness in Swinomish history. In addition, observations will be made, where possible, on the relationship of ethnic fusion to stratification. Growth of the ethnic group among Skagit Region Indians may be seen as their response to the intrusion of the Whites, and the imposition of an alien system of allocating social status and political power.

CRITERIA FOR INCLUSION OF TOPICS

The document resulting from the research described above is lengthy. The reader therefore deserves to know why it must be so long, whether anything at all was omitted, and what criteria were used to judge whether an item should be included.

A primary factor accounting for its length is the selection of a long time span of Indian history for discussion. The author's motivation has been partly the desire to be complete -- showing the transformation of Skagit Region ethnic organization through five successive stages during more than two hundred years. This necessitates informing the reader of the primary historical events within each period which contributed to transformations, or impeded them. While to an anthropologist the result may seem lengthy, to a historian the result may seem barely adequate. Several Indians commented upon the magnitude of the task during the early stages of research, saying, "Why, that will take at least five years."

Another aspect of the author's motivation has been the desire to balance the Swinomish Reservation's history against the voluminous pioneer histories, and the historical society and museum materials of Skagit County and La Conner White society. Whites have sometimes in the past misconceived Indian history as being a simple tale of conquest or an idyllic tale of unchanging rural life that in no way matches the account of illustrious White achievements. Accompanying the attempt to balance has been the author's attempt to counteract anecdotal accounts of Indian history frequently containing unconscious assumptions unflattering to native people.

A third aspect of the author's motivation has been the desire to

use the dissertation as the basis for a briefer, more simply-worded document on Swinomish history for the Swinomish Tribal Community Summer School; this form of the research will probably be about one quarter the length of the present dissertation.

A considerable amount of historical information has been omitted from the present document. Indeed, a document many times as long as the present one could have been written from material collected. All information on aboriginal culture not pertaining to ethnic organization and contact was left out. Information which could have expanded the list of aboriginal villages threefold was left out, after noting where the reader should go to find it. Information on the locations of hunting, fishing and gathering sites was not collected, though it is of great value to the Indian people today. Information on the aboriginal form, early history, and twentieth century manifestations of the guardian spirit cult, Shaker religion, Full Gospel, Pentecostal, and Catholic churches has been severely abbreviated, despite recent research projects by others in this area. Data on the activities of the Bureau of Indian Affairs, available at the Federal Records Center in Seattle, is so voluminous that it would take a single researcher five years to read. They may contain valuable evidence to support legal action against the government by the tribes in Northern Puget Sound. In this work, only the barest outlines of BIA involvement has been given. Legal case materials for many suits involving the Skagit Region people have only been briefly summarized, nor have they been followed thoroughly through the system of court reports. The whole field of Indian law as it impinges on the Swinomish Reservation community has received only cursory, non-professional treatment, though it lies at the crux of ethnic relations between Whites and Indians. The history of

the Upper Skagit community off the reservation has been omitted, and the reader is referred to Collins (1974) for an account of it. The testimony of my Swinomish informants on the economic life of the 1920's and 1930's around the Swinomish Reservation was extensive, but was included in only one brief section of the present document. A myriad of documents in the offices of the Swinomish Tribal Community covering the operation of government programs since 1934, and some before that time, were left for future tribal historians to read and analyze. Many aspects of modern reservation life were omitted, even though they pertain to ethnic relations -- Indian health, education, and recreational life, interaction between Indians and Whites on an informal basis on and around the reservation, matters of internal politics and factionalism, and many other topics.

The following criteria were used to decide whether an item or topic of historical interest should be included. First, does it pertain to the theoretical variables derived from an analysis of Barth's "Introduction" (1969). Second, is it a topic which the Swinomish themselves have shown some concern for.¹ Third, is it a topic which will provide interesting comparison with Native American history developed for other parts of the nation. All of these criteria argue in favor of including a piece of information in the foregoing work. On the other hand, some points argue in favor of omitting it. First, does it lie in the realm of private, non-public history. Does it contain unnecessary details about living persons or their families. Second, does it repeat

¹Consultation with tribal elders who had read an early draft of the dissertation revealed their concern about a few topics. See Appendix I.

a point already made elsewhere in the dissertation. Third, is it a technical detail that would be of interest not to the general student of anthropology or Indian history, but mainly to the lawyer, linguist, folklorist, administrator, or Indian family member. Fourth is the practical consideration; would it require substantial additional research that the author is unable to make this late in the writing process. This merely means that additional work can be done on the dissertation, but a cutoff point for data-collection has been necessary.

It might have been possible to shorten the present work by discussing only the two most recent time periods, or by discussing only one or two variables, or by omitting the general descriptive parts of each chapter and writing mainly analysis. Each of these would have meant sacrificing part of the story which is valuable to the general reader. Many writings of professional anthropologists are not of interest to the general reader. There are, however, a few areas in which they are, or can be. It would be a tragedy for anthropologists not to respond to expressions of popular interest and willingness to accept a thorough, well-documented, and theoretically-grounded piece of historical research. While it may not be possible to have one document serve both a professional and a general audience, or an Indian audience as well, it may be possible to provide a basic outline serving more than one audience so that revisions are minimized.

CHAPTER II

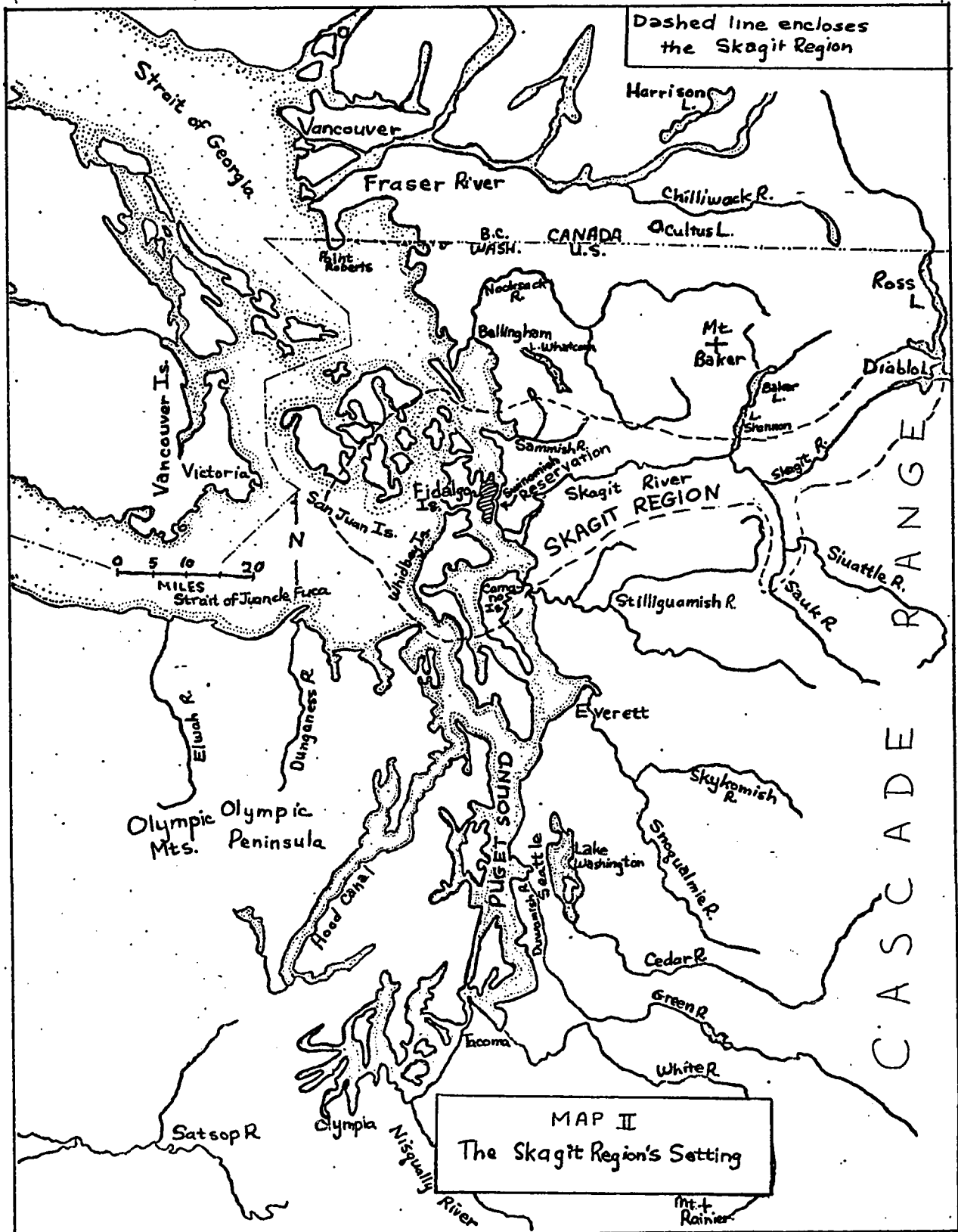
THE SKAGIT REGION PEOPLE BEFORE THE NINETEENTH CENTURY

INTRODUCTION

The ancestral homeland of the members of the Swinomish Reservation community was the Skagit River Valley and the islands adjacent to the river's mouth.¹ It is convenient to refer to this homeland as the Skagit Region, meaning, all the land that eventually sent people to live on the Swinomish Reservation. The primary sense of the term, as used here, is historical. The Skagit Region is not a naturally discrete nor bounded unit although it loosely approximates the Skagit River Valley and the islands around its mouth and certain geographical features channelled ethnic contacts through it. In aboriginal times it was fairly culturally homogeneous and similar to the regions north and south of it. Nor was it the territory of a single large ethnic group. Within it were located no fewer than thirty-seven small, autonomous villages, forming separate ethnic groups. These villages were as politically independent as nations are today. Their social relations extended beyond the bounds of the Skagit Region, as defined here. Each village was part of a network of alliances spreading outside the Skagit Region in all directions.

The aboriginal villages located in the Skagit Region may be

¹See Map II.



referred to as the ethnic field under study. The field concept is useful because it allows the analyst to draw boundaries according to the process being observed--here, the historical contribution of people to the Swinomish Reservation community.¹ The neighboring villages to the north and south, east and west compose a larger ethnic field whose descendants went to live on other Indian reservations in Washington State and reserves in British Columbia. The near neighbors of the Skagit Region followed similar cultural practices and were intimately involved with the groups chosen for study. They could have been included in the present study with little consequence until the periods of treaty negotiation and reservation formation. Their history differs after 1870 because they went to different reservations.

The Skagit Region represents a special case for Barthian analysis. Recalling that cultural variation is analytically independent from ethnic variation, we may derive four ideal types of ethnic fields: a region controlled by a single ethnic group with little cultural variation across it; a region with many ethnic groups of different cultures; a region with a single ethnic group exhibiting a wide range of cultural variation; and a region populated by many ethnic groups whose cultures vary only slightly. The Skagit Region exemplifies the fourth condition.

As a result of the interplay of political independence and social involvement in the Skagit Region, a large part of aboriginal social life was flavored with external relations, even if the foreigners did not

¹The field concept was developed by Lewin (1951) and Swartz et al. (1966:3) and has been employed by many others.

display striking cultural differences. Small differences loomed large. The amount of patterned interaction between ethnic groups was too considerable to overlook in any account of aboriginal Skagit Region society. The following chapter will attempt to deal specifically with those aspects of Skagit Region history that pertain to the numerous ethnic groups and their interaction.

The Earliest Inhabitants of the Skagit Region

The prehistory of the Skagit Region is a subject about which relatively little is known.¹ There is a dearth of archaeological research for the entire Northwest Coast Region. Several projects are underway at present in the Skagit River Valley.² From published reports we know that the ancestors of the aboriginal inhabitants of the Skagit Region probably entered the area sometime after the last Ice Age, ending 11,000 years ago.³ They made crude basalt tools and specialized in hunting land animals. At first they lived on the edges of the retreating glaciers. Later they moved down onto the newly-forming river delta. Refining their tools as they went, they added many new river and saltwater

¹Those who wish to pursue this subject through Indian myths and folk legends are referred to the following sources: Snyder (n.d.), Sampson (1972), Bruseth (n.d.), and Clark (1953). The Skagit believed that they were created near their homeland, along with all the beings in the world, by the Creator. Everyone and everything spoke the Skagit language, until a big flood covered almost all the earth. Among the few survivors was a boy and his dog. The boy became Doquebuth, the Transformer. Receiving instructions from the Old Creator, he waved his blanket over the earth and created people again, this time speaking many different languages (Clark 1953:138-141).

²Gail Thompson, of the University of Washington Department of Anthropology, is currently writing the prehistory of the Skagit delta.

³King (1950), Bryan (1963), Butler (1961).

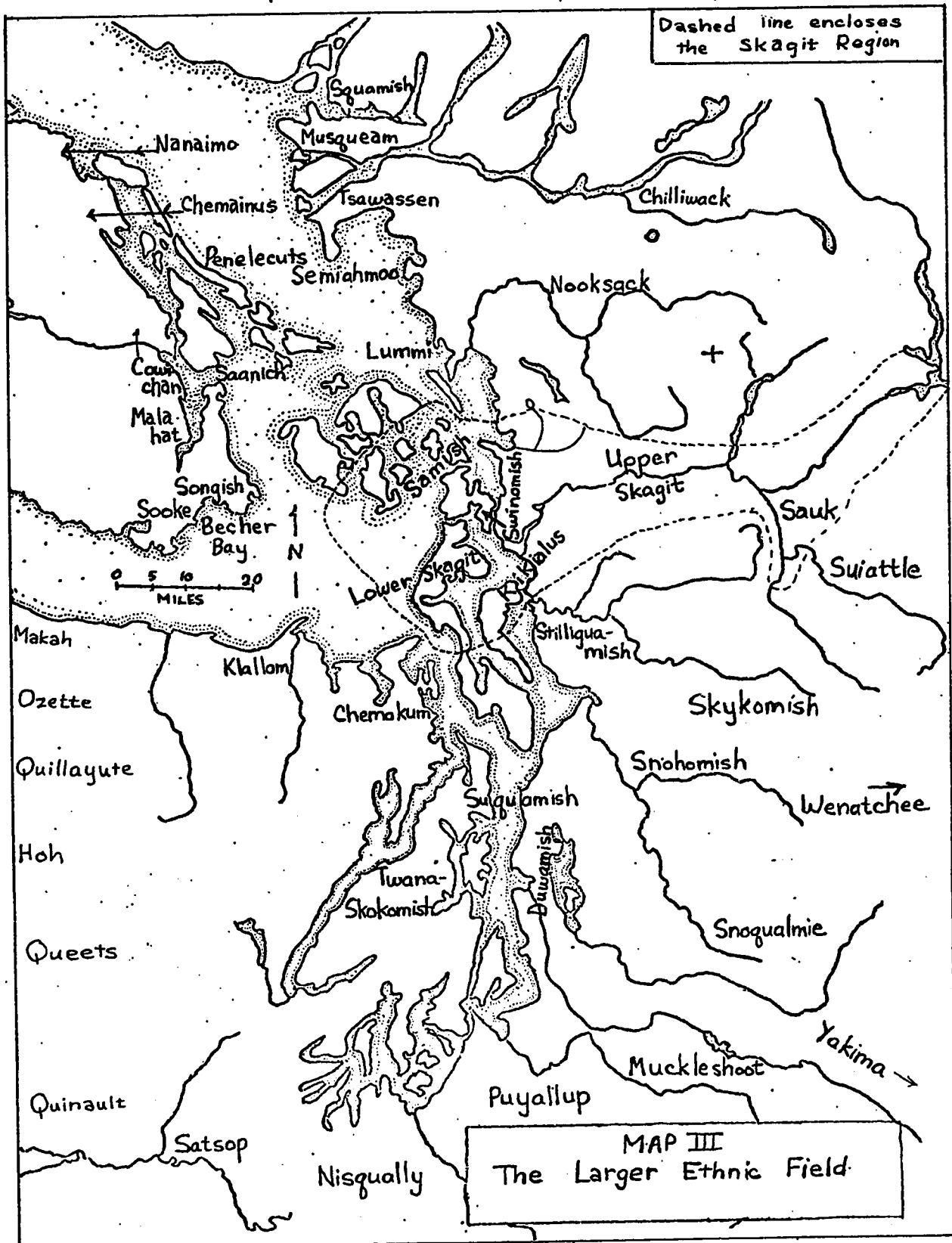
plants and animals to their diet. The environment provided them with a wide variety of resources. These resources they harvested with an efficient system, going different places at different months of the year for specific ones. In the wintertime, they congregated in permanent villages of cedar longhouses. As centuries passed, the aboriginal population of the Skagit Region became quite dense, compared to areas farther south, attesting to the success of these early people. It is likely that they had extensive contact with other people up and down the coast of North America and towards the Interior, but no generally accepted theory of the direction of migration and diffusion has yet come to the fore.

Few published opinions delineate the specific role of the Skagit Region in the prehistoric development of the larger Northwest Coastal cultural tradition.¹ It is possible however to offer a likely sketch of the avenues of ethnic contact in these early times. But first let us look more closely at the ethnic field surrounding the Skagit Region.

The Larger Ethnic Field

Five groups sent descendants to live on the Swinomish Reservation: the Swinomish, Kikialus, Lower Skagit, Sammish, and Upper Skagit. The general location of these groups is shown in Map III. These names do not reflect true aboriginal usage, but are merely labels which have come into popular parlance today. For purposes of general acquaintance with the Skagit Region and its neighbors, conventional labels will suffice.

¹See Bryan (1963:81) and Kroeber (1939:29-30) for a discussion of the possibility that the Skagit Region was a backwash for important events occurring at the mouth of the Fraser River to the north.

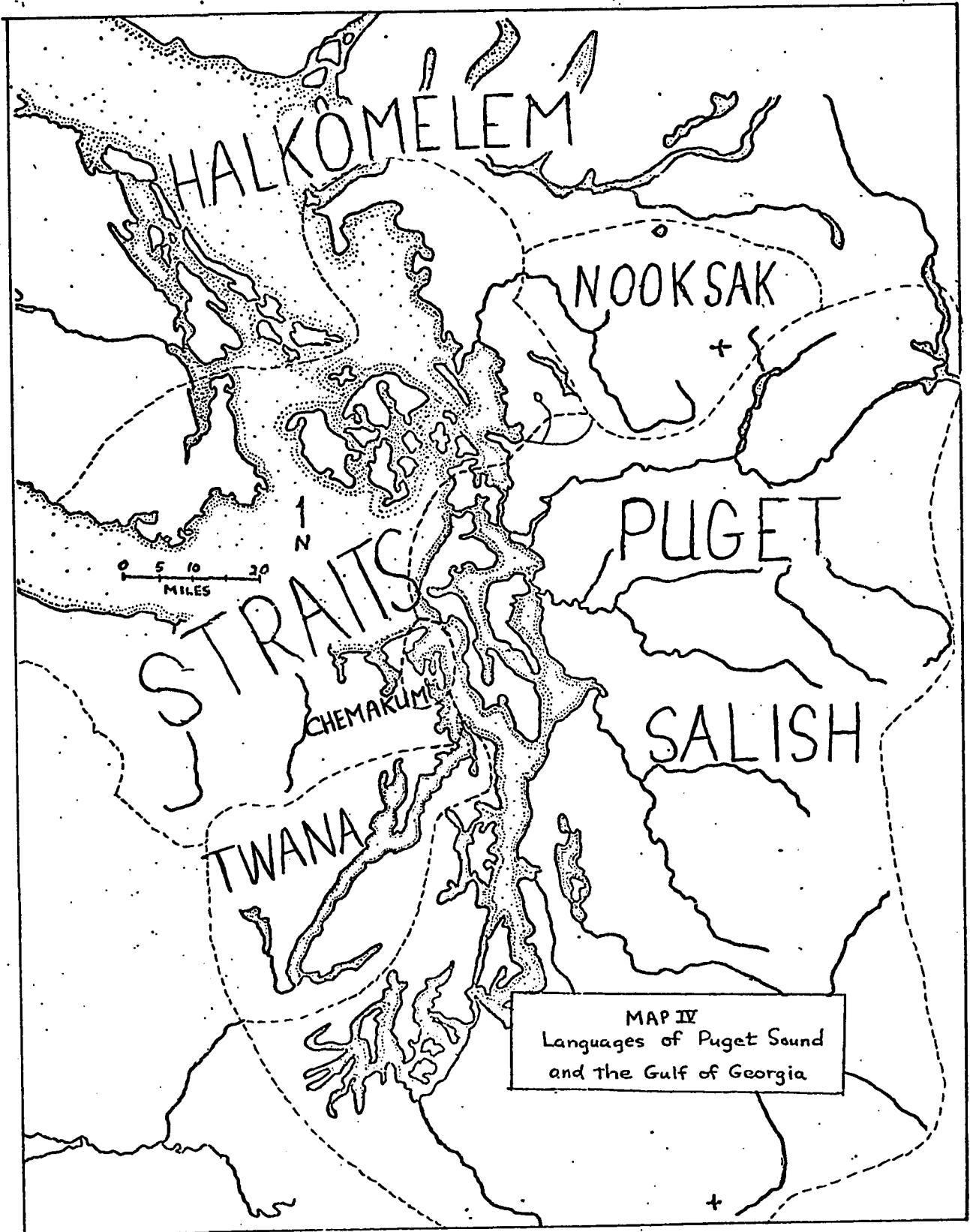


A technical discussion of ethnic labels during aboriginal times will be found on page 45.

Ethnic relations were usually peaceful within the Skagit Region. Before the White Man, there was comparatively little war and feuding among the members, and very infrequent slave raiding. Neighbors relied on each other for marriage partners, trading partners and ceremonial visits. A network of ritualized alliances spread out to other regions. Popular names for some of the other Indian groups are also given in Map III.

Ethnic and language boundaries did not coincide in this part of the world. The speech communities were usually much larger than the ethnic groups. The languages spoken in the Puget Sound and Gulf of Georgia are outlined in Map IV.¹ Most of the Skagit Region people spoke Puget Salish, the language prevailing on the eastern side of Puget Sound from Mount Baker in the north to Mount Rainier in the south. Dialects of this language varied most greatly from north to south. Most of the Skagit Region people could converse easily with the Snohomish to the south, but had some difficulty understanding people as far away as the Puyallup and Nisqually Rivers. From the Snohomish they were separated by small differences in vocabulary and pronunciation. They thus came to call themselves speakers of the Skagit dialect. During aboriginal times sensitivity was great to even finer differences within the Skagit dialect. Swinomish Reservation elders thus speak of the Lower Skagit and Swinomish dialects.

¹See Elmendorf (1960:255), Amoss (n.d.a.), and Suttles (n.d.) for more detail.



Northwest of the Puget Salish language community was the Straits language community. This language was spoken by one Skagit Region group -- the Sammish -- and many other groups. Its speakers were also distinguished by the fishing practice of reef-netting for sockeye salmon.

Further to the north were the Nooksack and Halkomelem language communities, the latter being a large group. To the west was the Chemakum language community, a small group which became extinct after the coming of the White Men, and Twana; to the east, not shown on Map IV, were speakers of Interior Salish and Sahaptian. East of the Cascade Mountains on the Plateau cultural traits also differed markedly.

AVENUES OF PREHISTORIC ETHNIC CONTACT

The Skagit Region people spent a large part of each year visiting and hosting their neighbors. Communication with and knowledge about distant people was channelled along familiar pathways, traditional routes through the region. It did not spread out evenly in concentric circles from their home villages. The pattern of contact Skagit Region villages had with other villages outside the region was determined by a combination of factors: the kind of transportation facilities at their disposal; the geographic features around their homesites; and their social organization.

The Aboriginal Mode of Transportation

Because of the dense forest and brush cover of the Skagit Region, almost all travel had to be done by water. The Indians made many kinds of canoes: huge, fat-bellied canoes to hold a whole family and its gear for months of survival; long, slender canoes to speed a dozen warriors

across the saltwater; and small, tender canoes to allow one or two hunters to silently approach a flock of sleeping ducks.

Crossing open salt water, Indian travellers hoisted mat sails on long poles to take advantage of favorable winds. Camping overnight, they employed the mats and poles for temporary shelters. The long poles were also helpful in probing the river bottom and pushing their way along treacherous streams. To increase speed the men in war canoes wielded a total of twelve paddles. To cross swampy marshes like the Skagit Flats, Indian travellers calculated their trips to take place during high tide. They frequently used Swinomish Slough as a short-cut from north to south, thereby avoiding the treacherous rip tides of Deception Pass between Whidbey and Fidalgo Islands. In their youth, Indians of the Skagit Region acquired a complete familiarity with canoe navigation, the tides and currents, and the winds of their home village areas.

Overland trails through the dense Skagit Region forests saw some use during aboriginal times, taking advantage of meadows and prairies at higher elevations. The horse reached the southern Puget Sound Indians living at the foot of the Cascade Mountains, but in the densely forested regions farther north, horses were not too useful. Few reports of horses in the Skagit Region have come down.¹ Swinomish elders today joke that once the Yakima Indians of the Plateau rode over the mountains on horses and tried to capture Snatelum Point on Whidbey Island, but give no indication how these equestrians got their mounts across the salt-water.

¹The Spanish explorers received reports at Point Roberts in 1791 of Indian traders from east of the Cascades who had animals identified from pictures as horses (Wagner 1933:35).

The distance Skagit Region people customarily traveled may have increased after the arrival of the Whites. In the early 1800's, Skagit Region Indians canoed as far north to Southern Kwakiutl territory, a distance of 170 or 180 miles, and as far south as the Puyallup River, about 80 miles. According to Raymond Paul, Swinomish elder, the trip south took two nights and a day, the first camp being made on Whidbey Island, the second at d'ídzəlá'íč where Lake Washington empties into Puget Sound. Whether they had reason to go that far in aboriginal times is a matter of speculation. The social and ceremonial visitation circles were apparently smaller. However, this does not rule out the possibility of individuals striking out on trading and exploring ventures. There are likely to have always been young men with the Wanderlust. However, travel out beyond the circle of friendly neighbors was inhibited by the ever present danger of capture and enslavement.

Travel East and West Along the Skagit River

In aboriginal times geographic features channelled ethnic contact along two main trunklines: north and south along the coast; and east and west along the Skagit River. Of lesser importance was travel across the open waters in the west to Vancouver Island and the Olympic Peninsula. The rugged Cascade and Olympic Mountains formed rugged barriers to travel, along with the dense forests of the foothills and the rough waters of the open ocean and Straits of Juan de Fuca.

On the lower reaches of the Skagit River, travel took place on a regular seasonal basis, as part of the annual round of subsistence activities. The Indians depended on the river very much. Today they joke about their legendary ancestors asking the Creator to ease the

burden of canoe paddling by dividing the Skagit River into two lanes, one flowing downstream, the other up to the mountains.

The Skagit River has many tributaries. Indian villages were located at the points of their confluence with the mainstream. In aboriginal times an immense log jam on the lower reaches of the river built up for several centuries, supporting a growth of trees and bushes while the river flowed beneath. The Indians constructed a trail around it for a canoe portage.

In its upper reaches, the Skagit River was linked by trans-mountain trails to eastern rivers -- the Methow, Stehekin, Okanogan, Thompson, Wenatchee, and Columbia. The Upper Skagit Indians were located about midway between the Plateau and the salt-water of Puget Sound. Their culture was increasingly similar to Plateau culture farther up the Skagit River. Like the residents of the Plateau, they emphasized social equality and disapproved of slavery and raiding. As an important principle of social organization, kinship overrode class. The salt-water people of the Skagit Region emphasized class and wealth a little more, like the people of the North Pacific Coast.

There was considerable trade between the Upper Skagit people and the Plateau people.¹ An early gold prospector reported that the Upper Skagits maintained two canoes hidden in the country at the head of Lake Chelan, just east of the Cascade Mountains (Harris n.d.:14). This they used on their visits to the Plateau. Early Whites were interested in this trail as a route into the Skagit Region from the

¹See Bryan (1963:9-10;56; and 86) for archaeological evidence in support.

east.¹ In 1972 it was made into a modern highway, which provides scenic views.

The Upper Skagit Indians made marriage alliances and trading partnerships with friends farther east. Transmontane relationships occasionally involved feuds between villages. August Day, a Swinomish elder of age ninety, recounts the legend of the origin of the Nookachamish band of Upper Skagits. In it he tells how eastern Indians wiped out all the Nookachamish except one man, his sister-in-law, and her daughter. After years of hiding the man and lady married and raised a son. The boy grew up to be a strong and fearsome leader who staged a retaliatory attack and eventually led the Nookachamish band to flourish.

According to another Swinomish legend, the stít'a?x people travelled into the Skagit Region by overland trail from the Thompson River to the northeast.² Richard Peters, Swinomish elder, recalls his childhood memories of them:

Children used to be afraid of the stít'a?x people outside at night. Grown-ups knew who they were. They were just wild people who came down from the Thompson River in the fall. They had a trail that stretched all the way through the Cascade Mountains. They used to come about this time of the year and make trouble, raiding people's smokehouses full of salmon. Legend has it that they put a special salve on their eyes and then were able to see in the dark. They used to throw rocks and try to scare them. They ysed to come down and try to steal away babies and teenagers, girls to marry.

The Skagit River route provided access to large camas harvesting region on the eastern prairie foothills of the Cascade

¹The Puget Sound Mail, August 4, 1960, provides a description of the use of this trail by White fur traders, horse traders, stockmen, hunters, and gold miners.

²These people are also mentioned by Haeberlin and Gunther (1930:12).

Mountains.¹ Blueberries were also found at these higher elevations, as well as soapstone and mountain goats. Here Skagit Region people could also contact horse-riding traders from the east who desired salt-water products and shell money (Haeberlin and Gunther 1930:11 and 90; Wagner 1933:35). Descendants of the Plateau neighbors today live on the Colville and Yakima Reservations.

Travel North and South Along the Coastline

Extending north and south along the coastline was a second trunkline of travel. To the north were the Gulf of Georgia people, whose environment provided more material wealth than Puget Sound. Beyond them were even richer tribes, whose culture displayed the classical extreme of Northwest Coast culture: clans, organized lineages, inheritance of crests, secret societies, elaborate potlatches, and social ranking complexes -- all of which were absent in Skagit Region culture. Slave holding also became more important toward the north. Skagit Region people saw more of these people after the coming of the Whites and were more affected by these cultural complexes.² The most immediate neighbors of Skagit Region people in this direction were the Lummi and Nooksack. Their descendants live today on the Lummi Reservation and in small communities along the Nooksack River.

Skagit Region people visited neighbors to the south by sailing

¹Camas (Camassia Quamash) and related bulbs, Wild onion (Allium cernuum) and Tiger lily (Lilium columbianum) were also found within the Skagit Region, in small grassy areas (Gunther 1945:24-25). The bulbs were eaten somewhat like potatoes, dried or baked. They were highly prized and widely traded.

²See Collins (n.d.b.:38-39) and Elmendorf (1960:304-305).

along the coastline and turning up the rivers that empty into Puget Sound. Southern Puget Sound culture emphasized spirit quests and had a lesser emphasis upon inherited privileges than the Northerners. This change parallels the one described for up-river culture. It may be associated with declining environmental wealth and increasing distance from the classical focus of cultural diffusion along the North Pacific Coast. Of all the neighbors to the south, the most intimate friends of Skagit Region people were the Stillaguamish and Snohomish. Today their descendants reside on the Tulalip Reservation.

Travel to the West

Another avenue of contact stretched directly west, out to the Pacific Ocean along the coastlines of the Olympic Peninsula and Vancouver Island. The Samish were particularly active in pursuing contacts in this direction, especially with the people living on Vancouver Island. They shared with them the Straits language and the reef netting practice, with its accompanying ceremonial complex. The Lower Skagit of Whidbey Island probably had some contact with groups on the Olympic and Kitsap Peninsulas. In the 1880's, Lower Skagit villages came into conflict with Klallams who were trying to expand their territory onto Lower Whidbey (Bryan 1963:13).

Farther out on the open ocean coast lived the whale hunting people of the Pacific. There are few indications in the literature of contact with these people during aboriginal times.¹ Contact with groups

¹See Bryan (1963:58) for speculation that a whale-bone club head found at Snetelam Point was probably obtained by trade from the Makah.

farther up and down the ocean shores was even less frequent. The Olympic Mountains formed an impassable barrier, except in southern Puget Sound along the Satsop River. The rugged ocean coastline made navigation difficult for canoe paddlers used to stiller waters of Puget Sound.

The foregoing considerations show that the aboriginal mode of transportation and the geographical features of the Skagit Region played selective roles in channeling ethnic contacts. At least this is all the evidence available at present can tell us of the factors leading to such contact. The network of friendly relationships resulting from their constraint was roughly diamond-shaped, with Fidalgo Island at the center. One point stretched north up the Gulf of Georgia, one point south down Puget Sound. Another extended east up the Skagit River and over the Cascades, the last west out the Straits of Juan de Fuca.

The outer limits of primary, face-to-face relationships between members of different villages were set by social considerations as well as technological and geographic factors. Skagit villagers were motivated to travel by attractive resources in their neighbors' territories, but were constrained from going straight to them by rules of social organization that were shared by all groups in the larger ethnic field. The importance of this aspect of ethnic relations during aboriginal times is so great that it bears separate treatment.

SOCIAL ORGANIZATION OF THE ETHNIC FIELD

In the Skagit Region during aboriginal times the most salient units of social organization were: the nuclear and extended family; the household; the winter village community; and, sometimes, a group of

loosely allied villages. Most attention here will be focussed on the winter village community. But a brief description of the smaller units will clarify the internal workings of winter village communities. It will also demonstrate the integration of individual Indians into their ethnic groups by their membership in units of intermediate levels. For a more complete understanding of Skagit Region and Puget Sound social organization, the reader is referred to the works of Collins (n.d.a. and b), Snyder (n.d.), Suttles (n.d.), Elmendorf (1960), and Haeberlin and Gunther (1930), from which the present picture has been drawn.

The Nuclear and Extended Family

During aboriginal times in the Skagit Region a man lived with his wife and children in one section of a longhouse made of cedar planks. His nuclear unit had its own hearth and bed platforms and kept its own store of food. The longhouse was his family's permanent home. It provided shelter during the winter months and all the other seasons when he wasn't visiting other villages or gathering food.

Alongside the man, his wife and children, in other sections of the longhouse, usually lived the man's extended family. This might include his brothers and their wives and children, his unmarried sisters, his parents, if still living, his grandparents, and any widowed aunts and uncles. Although the component families in a longhouse could be related in many ways, the most usual grouping was a number of brothers. These men formed the nucleus of the household. A man's sisters and daughters most frequently went to live with their husbands' families after marriage. Wives and daughters-in-law were brought in from other villages. However, a man's married sister would occasionally bring her

husband to live with them. Occasionally other relatives, distant cousins, would join the village.

The cedar plank house was built and owned jointly by the nucleus of men who built it. Frequently the eldest brother acted as informal leader, advising and organizing communal endeavors. Each nuclear family in the household had its own store of food and its own hearth. During the spring, summer, and early fall, the individual nuclear families departed from the longhouse, taking poles, planks, and mats to construct temporary brush houses wherever they camped. They could have probably managed to subsist independent of the others on what they collected during these warmer months, but they chose to live together for social reasons, primarily status recognition and security during life crises. Only the larger social setting of the extended family provided a man and his wife with a way to celebrate new births, coming of age, and marriages, as well as a way to survive the anguish of the death of loved ones. The high value Skagit Region Indians placed on public celebrations was the cement binding together the members of the longhouse.

The Household

Inside the longhouse each branch of the extended family had a separate hearth. However, longhouse members cooperated with each other in preparing for large feasts and social occasions. They always shared surplus food with each other and helped each other out in times of hardship.

In political matters their allegiance fell naturally to the household unit. Individual nuclear families derived their social standing in the broader society from the prestige of their household.

It was usually to their material advantage to support the commonly recognized good of the household.

Rules of good conduct were taught to children and youths by precept and example rather than corporal punishment. They were observed as a part of good breeding. To commit a breach of conduct would reflect upon the status of a person's entire household, probably causing other members to express disapproval and withdraw support and affection. There was little need for a strong concentration of authority in the household unit. The longhouse headman lacked the authority to command members against their will, but he seldom needed this to get their cooperation.

To be well organized, a household needed to achieve a balance between the production of food and wealth and the occasions for its expenditure. It also needed to recruit personnel capable of a wide range of activities. Great security could be provided to the members of the household through the presence among them of good hunters and fishermen, a warrior and a shaman, and women with special blanket and basket-weaving talents. To achieve this, the children needed good education. Good marriage partners had to be selected for them. Most of the persons brought into the household from outside were women. Women were especially important because they were the principal producers of ceremonial wealth (baskets and blankets) (Suttles n.d.:494). It was possible to attract sons-in-law with special skills to a household if it were wealthy and successful in appearance. The leader of a household tried to maximize the group's productive capacity by exerting informal influence in the selection of mates for children, his nieces and nephews.

Besides needing good workers, the longhouse needed access to productive resource localities -- fishing and hunting grounds, clam beds,

camas digging areas, and berry patches. Sites in the immediate vicinity of the longhouse were owned by the families composing it. However they needed access to more distant sites to insure variety in their diet, a good supply of feasting delectables, and materials to manufacture items of wealth. This access was gained by forming marriage alliances with households in other villages. Shortly after the selection of mates, the families of bride and groom began a life time of exchange visits, giving each other food, lodging, and access to each others' hunting and fishing grounds. Visiting inlaws were also allowed to use special devices such as fishtraps, hunting snares, and nets. Exchange visits were usually made at peak harvest times. Each family planned its marriage alliances with an eye to the potential resources of its inlaws. It also considered whether the burden of sharing with them would be a strain. For these reasons, each family tried to ally itself with partners of approximately equal wealth and social standing.

The personal feelings of the bride and groom were not unimportant though, nor was the likeableness of their parents. More than anything else, the people desired a stable marriage and many happy children.

If planning was successful, the extended family grew in size and social standing. To accommodate new members, the occupants of the longhouse shifted to make room for new units inside. When the plank house became overcrowded, another one was constructed nearby. The old one continued to operate as it had before, losing only a few members to the new one. Over the years, series of longhouses were built along the lengths of rivers and bays, those having close kinship ties comprising village communities.

The Winter Village Community

Aboriginal winter villages in the Skagit Region varied in size from single households to groups of households numbering several hundred people. As shown above, the cement of village unity was constituted by the kinship ties that underlay the spirit of economic cooperation in preparing for large feasts. Members of the winter village community pooled their resources in order to collect a wide variety of good and gifts for invited guests. The work of coordinating the efforts of so many people, soliciting their contributions and arranging their work schedules, was usually done by a single man -- the sponsor of the event -- and his close kin. A man who demonstrated good managerial skills and a likeable character in sponsoring these events built up a reputation as a village leader. In very populous villages, the heads of the largest, wealthiest households had great prestige. They have sometimes been referred to as village headmen, although they had no formal authority. When a joint decision of all members of the village was needed, the mature adults and household heads gathered together to talk matters over. At these conferences village headmen wielded their greatest influence. The topic of concern was usually the question whether to accept an invitation to another village's feast or whom to invite to one's own feast. Another important decision area was selecting partners to accompany the leading men to their inlaws' resource locations at harvesttime. Occasionally a village meeting might be held to organize the military defense of the community. In such cases, men with warrior talents rose to leadership. Unlike Indian societies farther north, Skagit Region villages seem to have had no standing militia.

Besides being a feast-giving and accepting group, and a unit of military defense, the winter village community was a land-owning unit. Members held in common all the land on which plank houses were located, the shoreline in front of them, and special resource localities in the vicinity of the village. Sometimes individual families held rights to use resource localities. For example, a woman who discovered a secluded berry patch might form a habit of using it each year. After several years her village-mates would recognize her right to hand it down to her daughters. Most resource localities were within easy reach of canoe routes. Farther back from the shorelines, in the dense brush, territorial ownership lines were seldom laid out precisely.

In the warmer months of the year, Skagit families of the winter village community dispersed over a wide area, living a semi-migratory existence. Traveling from place to place, they occasionally returned to the longhouse. At large fishing grounds, families from many different villages congregated. These warm season assemblages were indefinite and fluctuating in composition. There was an integration of personnel into summer communities. When cooperative harvesting took place, the product was divided up on the spot. Each family took back its share to its own small mat-covered, pole-frame house. Returning to the winter village, the family shared food freely with house and village mates. Any perishable surplus was distributed, any prized delicacy divided. Food was never sold to village-mates, although some people may have kept mental accounts. A gift of berries one week may have been made up in clams the next. In this way, variety in diet and self-sufficiency of the village was insured. Sale of food to other communities was done primarily to insure variety, and to secure stores of delectables for winter festivities.

Common occasions for a village headman to celebrate in the winter were the bestowal of an honored name upon his son or daughter, the remembrance of a recently deceased relative, and the initiation of a new spirit dancer. Only the wealthy could afford to sponsor a large program, but all those who contributed food, wealth, and labor benefitted indirectly as clients from the sponsor's elevated status. Members of a village with a very prestigious leader could expect to make more desirable marriage alliances. Winter ceremonies were usually begun after cold weather put a stop to food collecting. Skagit Region villagers considered them an important part of social life, not merely luxury or entertainment. Winter ceremonies provided a strong motivation for intensive labor during the rest of the year.

Winter village communities in the Skagit Region and in Puget Sound generally exhibited a strong degree of independence in the subsistence and political realms. Their separateness and autonomy corresponded to that of what have been called tribes in other parts of North America (Elmendorf 1960:308). The Skagit Region people recognized the existence of only one social unit larger than the winter village community. This was a loose aggregate of named villages sharing a common interest in a river drainage territory. There is no evidence to show that in aboriginal times village clusters held collective meetings or joint activities which bound members to the common geographic identity. Unlike individual winter villages, which interacted with and depended upon each other constantly, Skagit Region village clusters did not represent themselves to each other as units in aboriginal times or do business with each other as clusters. Not all aboriginal Skagit Region winter village communities were members of large aggregates. Some remained unattached

to village clusters, especially in the Upper Skagit River region. The community of interest binding village clusters seems to have been composed of vague sentiments. Members of large aggregates remained autonomous, retained their own name and identity, and withdrew whenever it became advantageous. For these reasons, the winter village community commands attention as the primary unit of analysis in the investigation of ethnic boundary processes during aboriginal times.

The evidence on ethnic labels lends additional support to this choice of the level of social organization to be called the ethnic group. Winter village communities all bore names in the Skagit dialect by which member families and households were identified. John Fornsby said, speaking of his father's village: "Our name is b ə s (h) i k (h) i g w i l c " (Collins 1950:292). On the other hand, the names of drainage system aggregates seem, in some cases, to have been acquired after contact. In other cases the name of one of the component villages seems to have been generalized to refer to the others as well.

Selection of the winter village as the ethnic unit during pre-contact times should not be taken to belittle the importance of village clusters or interaction between villages throughout the entire Skagit Region. The question is how the intense intervillage contacts were organized. The higher level of extended village clusters was most likely an incipient plane of ethnic organization which would have developed more integration had the Skagit Region been undisturbed by outside contact for several more centuries.¹

¹Subsequent chapters will show how contact with Whites strengthened integration of the extended village clusters until they eventually became components of "bands" or "tribes."

Ethnic Labels

Because of the access they provide to the concrete particulars of the Indians' way of thinking about ethnicity, the data on ethnic labels bear additional consideration. The aboriginal residents of the Skagit Region gave names to many individual social and geographic entities: persons, villages, extended village clusters, and river drainage systems. Unlike Indian groups living farther north, they did not label kinship lines (Smith 1941:199). There is no parallel to the Eagle, Raven, and Bear clans of the northerners. Occasionally the term "lineage" is used by non-Indian writers, referring to the holders of an honorific parti- or matriny. This is loose conventional usage. There were no surnames nor true corporate lineages in aboriginal Skagit Region culture, so far as we know. Kinship was reckoned bilaterally. When an individual received an honorific title from his mother's or father's side, or had a new one created for him, care was taken to see that no other living people of the same family bore that same title. It was not possible to inherit a personal name until several years after the former bearer was gone. Frequently parents had to search, visiting collateral relatives, in order to find distinguished appellations for their children.¹

Almost all useful geographic sites had names.² Geographic names

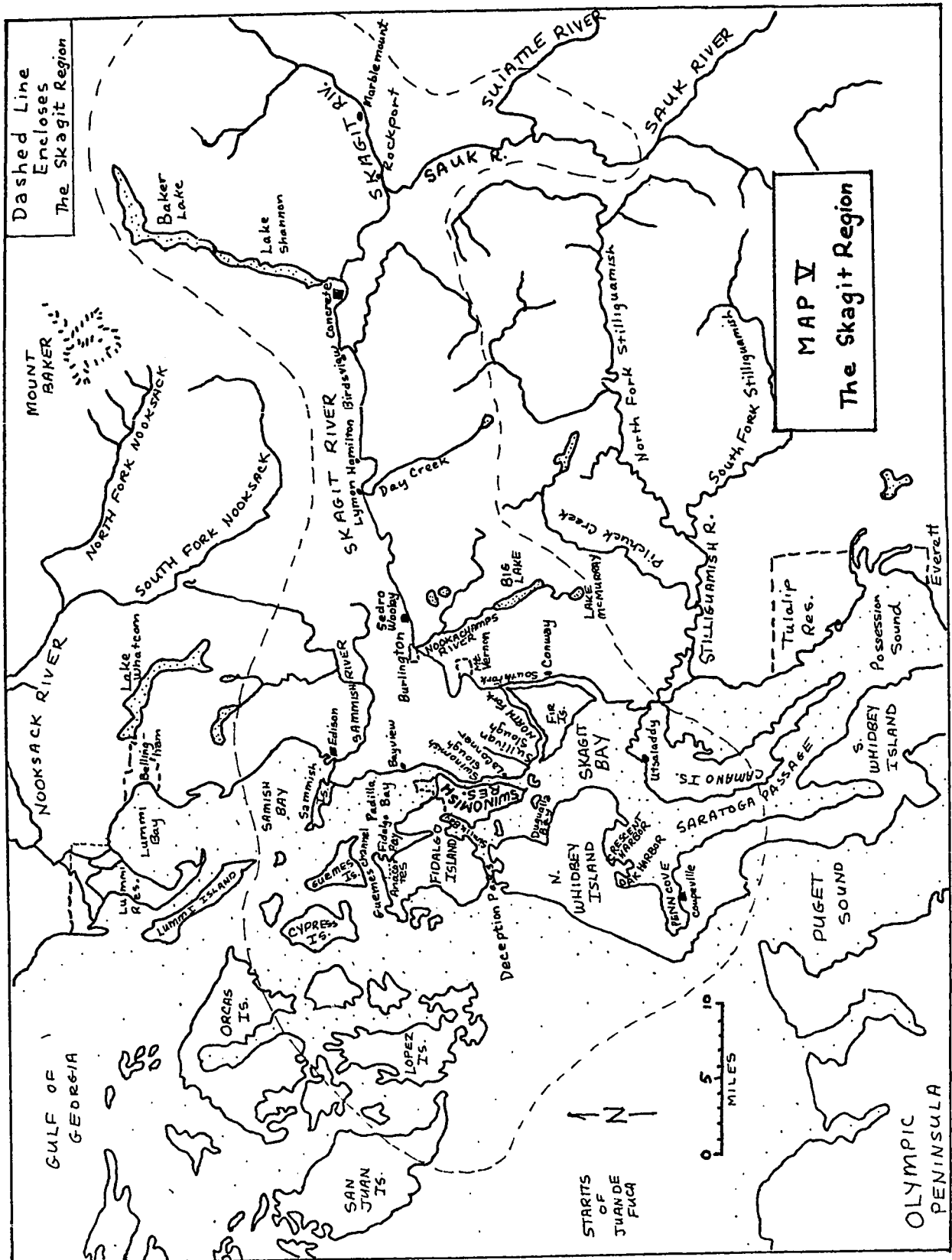
¹Snyder (n.d.:451-452) recounts such a search in a folktale for the name kʷəsqʷidəb.

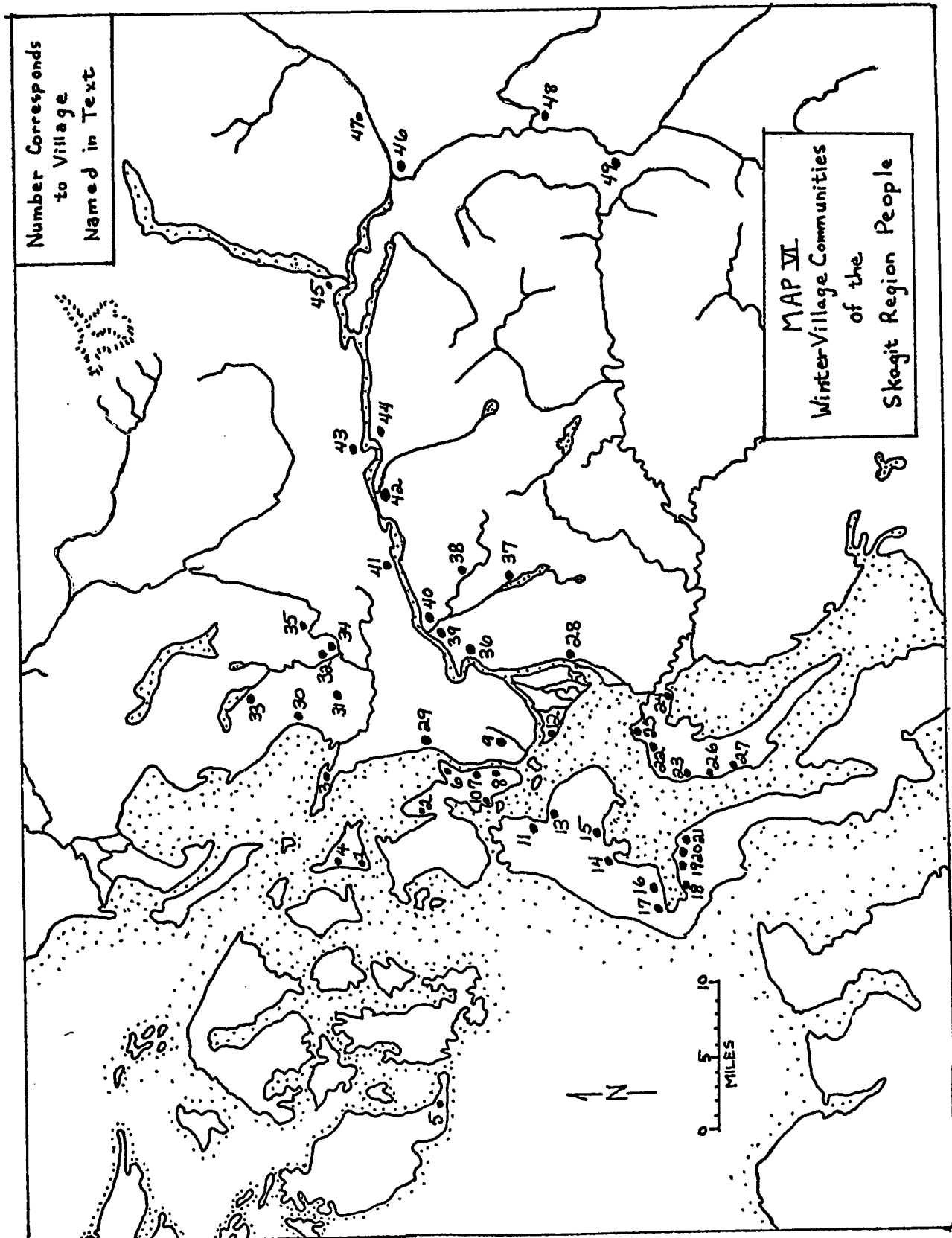
²It may have been an old practice to memorize them in order, the way modern people recall towns along a mountain road or exits along a freeway. Raymond Paul, of Swinomish, was able to reel off with great ease almost a score of named locations along the shoreline of Fidalgo Island from Deception Pass to the present reservation village. This was the first lesson he chose to teach the children in summer school.

formed the source of many winter village, village cluster, and drainage system designations. A language closely related to Puget Salish (Twana) exhibits two varieties of geographic names: single-site terms and extended area terms (Elmendorf 1960:30-31). Winter village names were derived from single-site terms by adding a suffix or prefix denoting "people" of such-and-such a place (Elmendorf 1960:30-31). When inhabitants of a settlement moved en masse to a new location, the village was given another name, derived from the geographic terms for the new site. On the other hand, village clusters occasionally derived their names from extended area terms. Puget Salish may have had a similar labelling system. The Skagit word for the Skagit River (or perhaps any river) was stúlək^w. The people living in its upper reaches were bəstulək^w, meaning "people of the river" or "those owning or having rights to the river." The prefix bəs is used on many names for groups of people and means something like "those owning or having rights to (a particular site)."¹

The following list of winter villages and their names was compiled from several sources: Suttles (n.d.), Bryan (1963), Snyder (n.d.), Smith (1941), Sampson (1972), and Osmundson (1964). Spier (1936) was also examined. Maps V and VI provide the approximate locations of villages named. Names in Straits were left as the original text spelled them. All other names were altered slightly to conform to the phonemic system developed by Thom Hess. In some cases Hess was able to check pronunciations with Swinomish elders Dewey Mitchell, Richard Peters, and Martin Sampson. The author, however, takes full responsibility for errors.

¹Personal communication, Thom Hess, University of Victoria.





In the following pages we shall group villages according to the extended clusters which they eventually became identified with. It should be kept in mind that there is very little information on the origin of extended cluster terms in the sources listed above, and that the extended cluster probably did not exist as an operating socio-political unit in aboriginal times.

1. sx^wá·mél (Straits) (Suttles n.d.:43) (South Guemes)

This village was located on the southwest shore of Guemes Island opposite Anacortes. It was seen by the Spanish explorers aboard the Sutil and Mexicana in 1792. Passing through the Guemes Channel, they were greeted by its villagers with blackberries and shellfish to trade for beads and copper. The Indians also offered them a dog-hair blanket "quilted" with duck feathers (Wagner 1933:246). The Spaniards reported two large houses standing on the northwest point of the channel.

Charley Edwards, a former resident of the Swinomish Reservation, said that his father and uncle came from this village (Suttles n.d.:43). When his father was young, houses stood along the shore west of the present ferry landing, covering all the available space. Conditions had become so crowded that some of the people moved across the channel to qel'é'č'ixč ("ironwoods" in Straits) on the north shore of Fidalgo. Charley Edwards' uncle is said to have built a fort at the main village. This village was abandoned about 1850, when its people moved to Samish Island.

Today Charley Edwards' descendants are living on the Swinomish and Lummi Reservations. His family, as well as those of his brothers Dick, Bob, and Billy, is shown on Charts XI, XI-A, and XI-B in Appendix

II. Charley and Bob were famous canoe carvers for many years at Swinomish, making both family and racing canoes.

Bryan (1963:Fig.1) has listed an archaeological site in the vicinity of this village and called it (SK3). Suttles (n.d.:43) reports that the name of the people who lived in this village was SX^wEX^wá·imeł(Straits). Smith (1941:210) lists two names for a village "at Anacortes." The Puget Salish speakers to the south had their own names for some of the Straits-speaking people's villages.

2. X^wkʔəʔl ("Camas" in Straits) (Suttles n.d.:44) (Fidalgo Bay)

This village was located on Fidalgo Bay, on the east shore of the bay, at the site of the later town of Fidalgo and the present oil refineries. Specifically, it was at the east end of where the railroad bridge is today. It was abandoned early in the 1800's, but continued to be used as a camp site for parties gathering camas on the prairie around the head of the bay. In the late 1830's some Indian women began planting potatoes on this prairie (Suttles n.d.:44).

Bryan (1963:Fig.1) has listed an archaeological site at this location (SK45), as well as two others (SK42) and (SK43), directly across Fidalgo Bay at Weaverling Spit at the west end of the railroad bridge. Another site is located on the tip of March's Point (SK44). Of course, these are probably not permanent village sites. Some may be only shell middens. Bryan does not list the contents of every site he located on his map in his report.

The general vicinity of this village is probably the location of the first White settlement on Fidalgo Island. It is just northwest of the present reservation. Schiach (1906:97) reports that in the spring

of 1859, pioneer Charles Beale and his companions established a settlement on Fidalgo on a fern-covered prairie of considerable area, "a favorite camping ground of unknown ages" for the Indians. It later became known as the Munks place, after William Munks, who resided there for many years, claiming to be the first White resident of Fidalgo.

Arelia Stone, of the Swinomish Reservation, informs us that her husband's father, John Stone, was raised by an Indian who lived by the "old rendering plant," located near here. The Indian's name was Charley Munks.

This village is also listed by Smith (1951:210), who describes its location as Summit Park.

3. ε·c'ε'qən (Straits) (Suttles n.d.:44) (Samish Island)

This village stood on the south shore of the east end of Samish Island (Suttles n.d.:44), or on the south side of the slough at Edison on Samish Bay (Smith 1941:210). It existed before 1850 and about that time received people from the Guemes Channel village. After this move, the villagers built a single segmented house several hundred feet long. Some members of the house also had small plank houses at the mouths of creeks on the mainland, convenient for fall salmon fishing (Suttles n.d.:44).

The name Samish, s'ém iʃ (Straits), is most properly applied to the people of this village, although Indians say they were "all the same tribe" throughout the area (Suttles n.d.:244). Bryan (1963:Fig.1) notes two archaeological sites on Samish Island, (SK47) and (SK48). Sampson (1972:Front map) shows two villages on Samish Island.

In 1869 a White man named Dingwall established a store on Samish

Island (Schiach 1906:110). By 1875 the same man apparently had forced the Indians so much into his debt that they were forced to move to Guemes Island (Suttles n.d.:45). Marion Cladoosby, of Swinomish, informs us that her mother, Annie, was from Samish Island, and continued to dig clams there for sale to Whites until her death, around 1909.

4. ḡʷəŋqəŋéle (Straits) (Suttles n.d.:45) (West Guemes)

This village stood on the west shore of Guemes Island facing Bellingham Channel. The house was built on land "homesteaded" by Citizen Sam and Billy Edwards. Sam took the north and Billy the south of two adjacent lots, and the house was built across them. It was built of lumber and shakes with a gabled roof, but in internal make-up was aboriginal. It was about 40 feet wide and over 400 feet long. There were two plank partitions making separate segments. Nine men helped in construction and were jointly regarded as its owners. The occupants included people from the mainland areas around the Samish River, and from Klallam territory as well (Suttles n.d.:45).

As the younger people of this village grew up they began living in small White-style houses. By the end of the century the big house was partly abandoned. The site was sold in 1905, the remaining people moving to the Swinomish Reservation.

Bryan (1963:Fig.1) has two archaeological sites on the west shore of Guemes Island, (SK9) and (SK10). Two additional sites are located on the northeast side of the island (SK11) and (SK12) on Jack Island. These are not all villages, of course. Marian Smith describes (1941:210) the location of this village as being on Guemes Island facing west toward Cypress Island. Sampson (1972:Front map) also shows this village.

5. x^wsəŋəŋ (Straits) (Suttles n.d.:45) (San Juan Island)

This village was located on the southern peninsula of San Juan Island on Griffin Bay at Fish Creek (Suttles n.d.:45). Only one small house stood, occupied perhaps only a few years by the family of ččí'yám (Straits). This man was a Klallam, married to a Samish woman. His son, Captain George, worked for the American garrison on San Juan Island. They later moved into the new Guemes village (Suttles n.d.:45). This location is outside the area surveyed by Bryan and is not listed by Marian Smith.

The people who lived in the first five villages listed travelled and camped throughout the San Juan Islands: Samish Island, Guemes, Cypress, Blakely and Decatur, northwest Fidalgo, and southeast Lopez Island. The villages for which we have evidence actually existed in post-contact times. Many others existed at earlier times. It seems likely that these islands became depopulated after aggressive northern enemies acquired guns from the Whites.¹ Island residents moved closer into the mainland where they would not be such easy targets for attack.

The residents of this area eventually came to be called Samish, although, as has been seen, this appellation most correctly refers to the people of only one village. The Samish had close interaction with the Lummi, Semiahmoo, Saanich, Sooke, Songish, and Klallam, speaking the Straits language and sharing with them the custom of building reef nets for catching sockeye salmon. They were also close neighbors to four

¹These developments are discussed in more detail in Chapter III.

villages just south of them, although these people spoke the Puget Salish language.

The people of villages #6 through #11 came, after contact with Whites, to be known as Swinomish, after the term swédebš (Collins 1974:9). Their territory covered southern Padilla Bay, Swinomish Slough, and Skagit Bay from Sullivan Slough around the southeast portion of Fidalgo Island (Smith 1941:208). This territory encompasses the present Swinomish Reservation. Martin Sampson (1972:Front map) also shows northern Whidbey Island, from Dugwalla Bay, around Deception Pass, and part of the outer coast of Whidbey as being part of Swinomish territory.

6. galigət¹ (Puget Salish²) (Smith 1941:208) (North end of Swinomish Slough)

This village was located close to Whitney where the highway bridge crosses the north end of Swinomish Slough. Its name was not familiar to today's elders. The location is recalled by Raymond Paul, of Swinomish, not as a village, but as the site of a very large and excellent gillnet drift used by Indian fishermen until the 1940's. Before that time the Skagit River contributed fresh water to Swinomish Slough. Flowing northward, it emptied into Padilla Bay, attracting migrating salmon. The residents of this aboriginal village presumably did not have to go too far to catch their winter's store of food. It was a good location for a permanent village. The village listed above (#3) as being located close

¹This spelling has not been verified by native speakers.

²All further names are in Puget Salish.

to the mouth of the Samish River would also have had the same advantage.

7. cu x^wtə dácí? (Smith 1941:208) (Along Swinomish Slough)

Farther south along Swinomish Slough was another village, recalled and named as above by Richard Peters of Swinomish. It was close to the present home of Tandy and Laura Wilbur. It used to be the home of Charlie Belole, yətyə t^wχ^w.¹ The line of descent was carried on by Belole's son Peter Charles, grandson Alfonsus, and great grandson Melvin Charles. Their family is shown on Chart XIII in Appendix II. A large smokehouse built here around 1912 or 1913 was over one hundred feet long and forty feet wide. Belole bought the lumber in partnership with George Williams, who is shown on Chart XII. This location is sometimes called the place where the "real Swinomish" lived, indicating that the name swədəb^s might have been linked to it.

8. x^wi x^wuc² (Smith 1941:208) (La Conner)

At the place where the present-day reservation village is located, across from the town of La Conner, there used to be a temporary campsite (Smith 1941:208). Joe Willup, of Swinomish, testifies that there used to be a large old style longhouse in the north end of the present reservation village. It was burned down before 1900 during a smallpox epidemic. Sampson (1972:27) informs us that this location was the site of original migration of a group of people from northern Camano Island who prospered and became known as Swinomish. He does not, however, mention the name of the village, nor the date of migration.

¹I am indebted to Thom Hess for information on this name and to Richard Peters of Swinomish.

²This name has not been verified by native speakers.

9. (Unknown) (Smith 1941:208) (Sullivan Slough)

East of the present town of La Conner on Sullivan Slough was located a village whose names is not given by Smith (1941:208). The slough empties into Skagit Bay between the north fork of the Skagit River and the south end of Swinomish Slough. There is considerable fresh water in that vicinity. This and other factors make that part of Skagit Bay prime fishing grounds. Sampson (1972:27-28) mentions this village as being one of the larger Swinomish villages with houses well fortified by deep ditches surrounding them, filled with ironwood stakes. Its location was strategic, he says, because it could be reached by large canoe only at high tide, or by small canoe through the many small sloughs that led from Swinomish Channel. This, presumably, would make it relatively immune to surprise attack by northern raiders. The village was conquered by smallpox (Sampson 1972:28). Only one family, that of La-hail-by, the Prophet, survived the first epidemic. Many Swinomish today are descendants of that man, who predicted the epidemic and gathered his people together to pray and dance for protection.

10. sdiʔús (Raymond Paul and Richard Peters of Swinomish)

(Snee Osh Beach)

Smith (1941:208) describes this site as being "near Lone Tree Point." Swinomish elders say it is the name for Snee Osh Beach. Richard Peters believes the name refers to the fact that the beach is "on the other side, or facing the other way" from the present reservation village. The name for the area around it, or a place adjacent to it, is dadčulgid or "Lone Tree." During the early reservation period Snee Osh was apparently one of the places groups of Lower Skagits from Whidbey Island chose

to camp. Today the tidelands, owned by the Swinomish Tribal Community, are used as a boatlanding and recreational area. Tribally owned and operated fish traps are located just off shore. Across the waterfront road, the land is leased to White home owners.

Bryan (1963:24) mentions a temporary village which was erected on Similk Bay by members of another permanent village stricken by an epidemic. When the disease struck, the strong people moved out to protect themselves. Crude shelters, with trunks of trees serving as house posts, were set up in a densely wooded area "at least 150 years ago," according to Sally Snyder's informants (Bryan 1963:24). Today the beach is called Pacop by Raymond Paul, although he mentions no village. Richard Peters called it qigəlatəd.¹ There are other names for it as well.

11. (Unknown) (Sampson 1972:Front map) (North Shore Dugualia Bay)

Sampson (1972:Front map) shows a village on the north shore of Dugualia Bay, which he identifies with the Swinomish. It was a lowly village compared to the others on Fidalgo Island. The high status people from the region of Swinomish Slough did not mix with those at Dugualia Bay.

Many families of the Swinomish Reservation community have ancestry going back to villages #6 through #10, later called Swinomish. Among them are those of Patrick Willup (Charts IV and IX), Doctor Joe (Chart VII), Swinomish George (Chart XIII), Mrs. George Williams (called Hugulitsa) (Chart XII), Henry Cladoosby (Chart XV), and Charles Belole (Chart

¹I am indebted to Thom Hess for this information.

XIII).¹ Peter John was also Swinomish, though it is not clear whether he belongs on Chart VIII.

12. (Unknown) (Sampson 1972:Front map) (Mouth of Skagit River)

Sampson (1972:Front map) also shows a village on a large island at the mouth of the north fork of the Skagit River. He identifies it as Squin-ah-mish, a word taken from the Treaty of Point Elliott, and close in pronunciation to Snyder's skʷədabš² (n.d.:64-65). The people who lived in this village owned some of the territory along the Skagit River from its mouth at Bald Island upstream to Dry Slough (Sampson 1972:27).

The remaining members of the group are very few. They were closely related to the Swinomish. Joseph Billy and his son Archie, shown on Chart XVI, are descendants of the leader Sats-kanam, who signed the treaty for the band (Sampson 1972:27). Other families in the group were wiped out by smallpox.

13. čút'əp' ("Flea" in Puget Salish) (Smith 1941:208) (South Shore Dugallia Bay)

The other Squin-ah-mish village shown by Sampson (1972:Front map) is located on the south side of Dugallia Bay. Its territory included the south half of Dugallia Bay on Whidbey Island to Brann's Camp. Smith, who supplies the name, does not specify where on Dugallia Bay the village is located. The name may as well refer to Village #11. Bryan (1963:Fig.1) found eight archaeological sites in this vicinity. One was a fish wier,

¹I am indebted for some of this information to Sally Snyder whose unpublished field notes are stored in the University of Washington Archives.

²This spelling has not been verified by native speakers.

showing a V-pattern with an open apex where basketry traps were probably placed. Sampson (1972:28) also mentions fish traps at Dugwalla Bay. Smith (1941:208) links the village at Dugwalla Bay with another across Skagit Bay close to the mouth of the north fork and groups them under the heading skʷədabʃ. Snyder (n.d.:64-65) traces the ancestry of the skʷədabʃ to emigrating dissidents from villages farther south which were prosperous descendants of an ancient lineage, the reputed founders of all Skagits. Descendants of the older group were contemptuous of the dissidents, whom they described as being vassals to the villagers on Fidalgo. Thus the skʷədabʃ, although not poor, were considered somewhat lowly, compared to other villages on Whidbey Island.

At the mouth of the north fork of the Skagit River, at a place called Fishtown today, is a collection of temporary shacks erected by White duck hunters and fishermen. This used to be a place of great importance to the Indians, though it was probably not the site of a permanent village, as indicated by Smith (1941:208). Its name, (s)kʷikʷiʒáb is often spoken by Swinomish elders today. It was a favorite summer fishing spot shared by groups from all over the Skagit Region. Large quantities of salmon were caught and dried here. Ducks and geese were also hunted here. Trading was done at this location. Summer ceremonies occasionally took place here. It was also a place of refuge for residents of Fidalgo and northern Whidbey Island when subjected to attacks by northern raiders. An Indian burial ground was located on a high point in the area. The high bluff, bare of vegetation, was an ideal place for sundrying fish, looking out for seals, sea lions, and occasional whales. It was an excellent station from which to watch for slave

raiding parties (Onat 1969). Archaeological excavations conducted by Seattle Community College under the direction of Astrida Onat show many large hearths, old post holes, and apparently drying and smoking racks (Onat 1969).

A few Indian people continued to live in the vicinity around the mouth of the Skagit River even after the Treaty. Richard Peters recalls that around 1906 Charley Jim and his wife Mary used to live around (s)k'w i k'w ičáb. Later they returned to Snatelum Point, Whidbey Island. After Charley died, Mary moved to Swinomish.

Villages #14 through #21 occupy the eastern shoreline of Whidbey Island. This area was densely populated. The villages were loosely allied into an extended cluster during early contact times called Sqajət or sqájə?. Today it is called Lower Skagit. The villages at Dugwalla Bay are sometimes said to belong to this cluster. Political alliances were very loose and may have changed several times before and after contact with Whites.

14. (Unknown) (Smith 1941:208) (Oak Harbor)

Smith (1941:208) lists a village on Whidbey Island at Oak Harbor, but does not give a name. Bryan (1963:Fig.1) shows many sites at that location, probably not all villages.

15. (Unknown) (Richard Peters of Swinomish) (Crescent Harbor)

Richard Peters of Swinomish speaks of a village at Crescent Harbor belonging to the Lower Skagit group, but does not know its name. Bryan (1963:Fig.1) shows three archaeological sites there.

16. sq'əláyə? (Dewey Mitchell of Swinomish) (Penn Cove Park)
qəqəláyə? (Susie Sampson Peter of Swinomish on an old tape)¹

Bryan (1963:Fig.1) shows many archaeological sites in the region of Penn Cove. At Penn Cove Park he found an extensive shell mound, earthworks, and a mass burial of ten individuals with much contact material. Bryan states (1963:40-41), "Sally Snyder's informants say that this village was named čak'ala, and that it was occupied by sq'əláyə? and his family at least as late as 1850. George Snatelum moved from here to Snatelum Point about that time. This village was reportedly occupied by 'middle-class' people while Snatelum Point was for 'high-class.'"

17. hubəqs (Alfred Sampson and Richard Peters of Swinomish)

(Monroe's Landing) (-qs means "point" according to Thom Hess)

Smith (1941:208) names and places this village not far from San de Fuca. Richard Peters and Alfred Sampson of Swinomish name and place it at Monroe's Landing. Alfred Sampson was raised in the area and recalls the Barley family's smokehouse there. Swift (1913) relates that there was a large encampment east of Monroe's Landing in 1863. It was named after Squysquy, a friend of both Whites and Indians. Whites called it the "Rancheree of Squy squy." He had two sons, Tom and Billy Barlow, and a daughter, "Cricket." The name of Squysquy was carried on the Swinomish Reservation by a man whose first name was Dick. Alfred Sampson's family tree is shown on Charts III and IV-B. Bryan locates an archaeological site (IS52) east of here.

¹I am indebted to Thom Hess for this information, and to Martin Sampson.

18. bəc'ád'əli (Smith 1941:208) (Coupeville)

(The name means "snake ground" according to Thom Hess.)

Smith (1941:209) names this village and locates it at Coupeville. Bryan (1963:Fig.1) shows archaeological sites stretching along the beach for over a mile. After the Point Elliott Treaty signing, the Indians continued to live in beach houses located two feet above highest tide (Swift 1913). The town of Coupeville grew up around them, warehouses and wharves being built between the Indian houses. Two leading Indian men shared authority at this village -- Charley Fay and Jim Clapoose (Swift 1913). Another leader was recognized in the western part of the village -- "Papa Job" and his son Michael Job. In 1863 there was only one store in the town of Coupeville, operated by a White named John Robertson (Swift 1913). It did trade with the Indians in deer skins, dogfish oil, feathers, buckskin gloves, and wool socks, knitted by Indian women.

19. báʔasac (Smith 1941:208) (Mineral Springs)

Smith names this village and locates it "between Coupeville and Snakelum (sic) Point, west of Long Point." Bryan (1963:Fig.1) shows three archaeological sites in the vicinity. One of them (IS77) is the village observed by U.S. explorer Wilkes in 1841. A coin unearthed there indicates the village may have been occupied as late as 1876. The occupation appears to have been ended by a major landslide. After abandonment the site was used as a burial ground. Later one corner was used as a house-site by an old Indian bachelor. The site's English name, Mineral Springs, comes from a continually flowing mineral spring.

20. (Unknown) (Long Point)

Another village may have been located east of Mineral Springs at Long Point. In 1863 Indians made encampments there under the leadership of "General Pierce" and "General Warren" (Swift 1913). The description of "huts" on high ground suggests this may have been something less substantial than a permanent village, though. Bryan (1963:Fig.1) also shows an archaeological site there. No mention of an aboriginal name is made.

21. čùbəʔálsəd (Smith 1941:209) (Snatelum Point)

(According to Thom Hess the name means čubəʔ, "go up from water's edge," and -əl-šəd, "foot.")

Smith (1941:209) locates this large village "on the north side of Snakelum (sic) Point, about four miles from Coupeville." Bryan (1963:47) found shell deposits eight feet deep here, as well as the remains of many dwellings. Two Lower Skagit Indians of great fame, George Snatelum and his son Charley, maintained large smokehouses here in addition to several smaller houses. The large house could accommodate several hundred people (Wilson n.d.:74). Swinomish elders speak of this village often. Raymond Paul visited Charley Snatelum's smokehouse when he was a boy.

A photograph of this house, taken in 1893 by Frank Newberry,¹ shows two separate frameworks, apparently of different ages. The first framework indicates a house 200-500 feet long, while the second was only 100-200 feet long, with crossbeams of logs two feet in diameter (Bryan 1963:47). According to Swinomish informant John Fornsby (Collins n.d.b:

¹The photograph is available in the Northwest Collection of Suzzallo Library at the University of Washington in Seattle.

300) the first big house was burned in an attack by Northern raiders some time in the early 1800's. It was later rebuilt (Bryan 1963:47).

The preceding eight villages were very large and wealthy. Their influence extended north to Dugwalla Bay and east to Camano Island. There may actually have been more than eight -- or less than eight at any single time. This was the most densely populated part of the Skagit Region, its wealth due in part to its location directly across Skagit Bay from the mouth of the Skagit River, in part to the year round availability of fresh food from the salt water, and in part to large camas fields located on the interior of Whidbey Island. Lower Skagit families residing on the Swinomish Reservation include those of Sam Dan (Chart III-B.1. and 2.), John Stone (III-D.), William Peters and Johnny Edge (Chart VI), Charley Wilbur and John Fornsby (Chart X), and others.

An extended cluster of villages on Camano Island was later known as kikialus.¹ A very small group, its territory extended along Skagit Bay from the south fork of the Skagit River to the northern tip of Camano Island and along the western banks of Camano. These villages had many ties with Snohomish and Stilliguamish village clusters farther south. They also had close ties with the Lower Skagit villages of Whidbey and the Squinamish, Swinomish, and other groups to the north.

22. ʔəcəládíʔ (Smith 1941:208) (Utsaladdy)

This village was located on the north shore of Camano Island, on

¹This spelling has not been verified by Thom Hess, nor have village names #23-27 below.

a wide spit at the southernmost spot in Utsaladdy Bay, between the fresh-water marsh and the Bay (Osmundson 1964:32).¹ Bryan found two sites in this area. This village was observed in 1792 by explorer David Whidbey, of Captain Vancouver's party, who described it as very populous. Members of this village intermarried with another village on the lower Skagit River so extensively that they were "virtually absorbed" (Snyder n.d.:55). After that they intermarried with a Lower Skagit village on Whidbey Island and absorbed it (Snyder n.d.:391). This change may account for a feeling among some Swinomish elders that this should be classified as a Lower Skagit village. Perhaps it should. Those who identify with Lower Skagits tend to feel it should. Those who identify with Kikialus villages tend to feel that the Kikialus had villages on Whidbey Island. A White town was later built in the general vicinity of this village and given the name Utsaladdy.

23. x^witx^witkab (Osmundson 1964:32) (Northwest Camano Island)

Osmundson locates this village on the shore between the two northernmost lagoons on the west side of Camano. None of the Villages #23 through #27 were recognized by Swinomish elders Richard Peters or Dewey Mitchell, but Peters said this didn't mean the information was incorrect.

24. čagúš (Osmundson 1964:32) (Northwest Camano Island)

A smaller village was built on a large gravel beach on the southern shore of the northeast peninsula, about three quarters of a mile due east of Livingstone Bay.

¹Osmundson, writing Man and His Natural Environment on Camano Island, Washington (1964), obtained materials from the unpublished field notes of Sally Snyder on Kikialus villages.

25. X^waɬkus (Osmundson 1964:32) (West Camano Island)

Another small Kikialus village was located on a spit between the Brown's Point Lagoon and Skagit Bay.

26. tuiʔaiq^w (Osmundson 1964:32) (West Camano Island)

This small village stood on the shore immediately on the south of the second west shore lagoon.

27. ʔuʔuʔaɬus (Osmundson 1964:32) (West Camano Island)

This Camano village was located at the mouth of the larger of the two streams that flow into Saratoga Passage.

28. (Unknown) (Smith 1941:210) (Carpenter Creek)

Smith identifies a village on the mainland at the mouth of Carpenter Creek on the Skagit River between Conway and Fir, but does not give it a name. Sampson (1972:19) informs us that this was the main Kikialus village at the time the land was settled by pioneers, and there were four longhouses at that time. At Fir, previously called Mann's Landing, there used to be an old Indian burial place. Referring to this place, Schiach writes (1906:111): "After the usual custom of the Indians, the bodies were wrapped in blankets and placed in canoes which were sustained on platforms in the trees." Later, after White encroachment, the Indians moved their graves to more remote areas. Some of them were taken to the Swinomish Reservation cemetery.

Kikialus residents of the Swinomish Reservation have included John Lyons, a reservation leader in the 1920's, and Alfanso Sampson (Chart IX).

Another family with Kikialus ancestry is that of the "Three Sisters and their Half-Brother" from Camano Island (Chart III). This family is so large today on the reservation that if you ask an elder, "Who are the Kikialus here today," he will answer, "Almost everyone here has some Kikialus descent."

On the mainland north of the lower Skagit River Valley were a group of villages sharing the name dx^wahə (Duwhaha or Nuwhaha). They were located along Padilla Bay, Samish Bay, the Samish River, Lake Samish, and Lake Whatcom. These people spoke Puget Salish, not Straits, but they were sometimes called stiksábš (Sticksamish or Upper Samish). In the distant past they were more oriented toward the salt-water than in later times, but they were pushed inland by the Samish people of the adjacent islands. With the other up-river bands, they shared a lacustrine life of freshwater fishing.

29. bəstáʔus or bəstáʔtaʔus (Smith 1941:210) (Bayview)
or merely ʔaʔus (Richard Peters)

This village was particularly important because it was the home of the Indian leader Pateus, a signer of the Point Elliott Treaty. It stood on salt water where the town of Bayview is now located. It is only a few miles across Padilla Bay from the north end of Swinomish Slough. Pateus' granddaughters, Lizzie Sampson, Christina George, and Angeline Bob, and his grandson, William Scott, produced a host of descendants who now live on the Swinomish Reservation (Chart V). Other descendants are living on the Lummi Reservation.

30. (Not mentioned) (Sampson 1972:Front map) (Blanchard)

Martin Sampson (1972:Front map) shows an Indian village located just north of the town of Blanchard, at the foot of the Chuckanut Drive mountainous region. At this place the rocky mountains reach directly over the salt water. To the south a long, low marsh extends. In recent times Whites have diked it for farming.

31. (Not mentioned) (Sampson 1972:26) (Bow)

Sampson (1972:26) mentions an Indian village which stood where the town of Bow is now located. Canoe navigation was possible from the salt water up Edison Creek to this village. From this village a trail led over Bow Hill to the village at Belfast on Friday Creek (#32).

32. (Not mentioned) (Sampson 1972:26) (Belfast)

Sampson (1972:26) mentions an Indian village at Belfast on Friday Creek, but does not give it a name.

33. (Not mentioned) (Sampson 1972:26) (Lake Samish)

Sampson (1972:26) also mentions a village at the lower end of Lake Samish, but does not give it a name.

34. (Not mentioned) (Sampson 1972:26) (Jarman Prairie)

Sampson (1972:26) mentions a village on Jarman Prairie having a good source of roots and bulbs essential to the native diet. The smallpox epidemic of the 1830's killed every member of this village except an infant girl, who was rescued from her dead mother's arms and taken to the village at Bow, after the man who rescued her, set torch to all the buildings in the stricken villages, and burned his own garments (Sampson

1972:25). As a final precaution, before entering his own village, he spent days in three different shelters, fumigating each, together with his clothing, with cedar and fir boughs.

35. (Not mentioned) (Sampson 1972:26) (Warner Prairie)

Farther up the Samish River on Warner Prairie was another village. Its name was not given by Sampson, whose mother, Susan Sampson Peter, remembered the village as having a spring which dried up during hot weather. The headman of the village on Warner Prairie was known as "Mowitch Man" or "Statileius," Chief of the Prairies (Sampson 1972:27).

Many of the members of these villages eventually relocated on the Lummi Reservation. But Swinomish received a few families. Besides Pateus' descendants, there were Thomas F. Williams, Susan Sampson Peters (Chart IX), and the McLeod family (Chart IX), as well as Alfred and Gene Sampson (Chart IX).

Along the Skagit River, upstream from the Kikialus villages, another cluster of villages shared the name dúg'ăč'ăbš (Duckachaups or Nookachamish). The territory of these villages spread up the Skagit River from Mount Vernon to Sedro Wooley, and along the Nookachamish River.¹ The name of the Nookachamish River is dúg'ăč, according to Dewey Mitchell of Swinomish. It flows into Clear Lake and used to be where white fish spawned.²

¹Those desiring more detailed information on the Nookachamish village should consult Collins (1974:17).

²I am indebted to Thom Hess for this information.

36. (Unknown) (Smith 1941:210) (In back of Mount Vernon)

Smith (1941:210) locates one village "in back of Mount Vernon just below the concrete bridge," but does not give a name.

37. cəláʔabš (Smith 1941:210) (At Big Lake)

Smith (1941:210) locates this village on Big Lake. Beyond Big Lake towards McMurray Lake is a place called Big Rock or White Rock.

Richard Peters, of Swinomish, informs us:

The Indian name means "Heart of the Valley." It is ʔiʔyidwasta. The story is that a tribe of Indians lived over there called the dúqʔəččəbš. They used to get lonesome of the valley down there where we live. It used to be all marsh and the Indians lived wherever there were high spots. These people used to go up on that rock and look down. The valley dried out after the White people came and put all the dikes around the river.

Martin Sampson (1972:19) who pronounced the village name also informs us about the rock:

The big rock, sacred to the Noo-qua-cha-mish, was known as "Yud-was-ta," meaning "heart" or "of the heart." It is said to have a huge pile of cedar sapling rope, by means of which the "Star Child" descended, coiled at the top.

The Star Child's legend is retold by Sampson (1941:51-55). He is the one who gave the Nookachamish people names for all their geographic landmarks. He also gave them mystic words to use as prayers in communication with mother earth or nature.

38. ("Whats-al-ul") (Sampson 1972:20) (Barney Lake)

Sampson informs us of an important village which existed during the life span of Indians now living. Its name meant "elevated house" or "house on elevated ground." It was situated on the pleasant little bench on the Nookachamps River just above where it enters Barney Lake.

"Legend has it," says Sampson, "that this village was once wiped out by a war party of Skagits from Ut-sa-laddy, the surprise being so complete that only one young woman and her little brother-in-law escaped." (Sampson 1972:20). This tale is close to the one told by August Day, of the Swinomish Reservation. In his version, the Nookachamish village was wiped out in a surprise attack by Indians from east of the Cascade Mountains. Only a man and his sister-in-law and her daughter escaped. They raised a son who took revenge for them and helped to start the Nookachamish band growing again. That man was named "See-ut-bay-use." He was August Day's mother's great great grandfather. The Day family is shown on Chart III-A.

39. (Unknown) (Sampson 1972:20) (Nookachamish River Mouth)

Sampson (1972:20) also mentions another village located at the point on the Skagit River opposite where the Nookachamps River enters it. He does not give it a name. He quotes Mrs. Harry Moses (Jessie) as saying that in her time every favorable bar on the Skagit River from Mount Vernon to Newhalem was occupied by Indian settlements, ranging in size from one habitation to villages.

40. ("Whuid-zaub") (Sampson 1972:20) (Dead Man's Slough)

Sampson (1972:20) records another village being located on the point of a little island north of the mouth of Dead Man's Slough above Sedro Woolley. This place was the home of the sub-chief Pol-queet-sa, and is thought to be the birthplace of Joseph Sampson, Martin's father. Martin Sampson recalls living in this location as a child of six for a time before his family moved to the reservation. He was born in 1888. His family tree is shown on Chart IX.

In aboriginal times there were at least eight more villages along the Skagit River, probably many more. Each was politically independent. They exhibited no cluster ties. In the early nineteenth century they were unified under the religious and social leadership of the native prophet Stlabebtikud (sḵəbʼbteqəd). As his leadership strengthened the unit, it grew to include the Duhwaha and Nookachamish clusters as well. All of them together were called Upper Skagit. Originally the upper river people had been called bəstúləkʷ, after the word for Skagit River stuləkʷ. This term was meant to contrast with the term for salt-water people. The dúqʷəčəbʼs should probably be included under this heading (Collins 1974:16).

The Upper Skagit villages were homes of many ancestors of Swinomish Community members. Some families with Upper Skagit origins are those of: John Fornsby (Chart X), Irene Moses John (Chart VIII), Ray Charles (Chart X), Allen "Lollie" Franks (Chart XIV), Dewey Mitchell (Chart XVI), Susie Sampson Peters (Chart IX), and Willie Shoemaker (Chart XVI).

Most Upper Skagit villagers continued to live in their homelands long after the Treaty was signed and the Indians of the salt water region had been forced onto the reservation. Some of them had refused to sign the Treaty. Eventually White settlements pushed into the upper elevations and forced some of them to move. Some came to the Swinomish Reservation. Others managed to secure legal ownership of their land and remain close to their aboriginal homeland. They formed a community in the towns along the Skagit River which is separate from the Swinomish Reservation community. The villages are listed here because they did contribute a significant number of people to the Swinomish Reservation. However,

the history of this region is a complex subject of its own. Those seeking a more complete picture of it may read Sampson (1972:20-24) and Collins (1974).¹

41. bəschʰikʰchʰigʷilc (Smith 1941:210) (Near Sedro Woolley)

(It means something like "the people having rights to the big rock(s)," according to Thom Hess.)

The territory of this village, called Sikwigkwilts in English, extended along the Skagit River from Sedro Woolley. It was the home of John Fornsby's father. Both Martin Sampson and Dewey Mitchell recalled its name. Snyder (n.d.:55) describes how the village exhibited expansive tendencies about the time of White contact, intermarrying with a group on Camano Island and then another on northern Whidbey, virtually absorbing them.

42. čubə(?)obš (Smith 1941:210) (Mouth of Day Creek)

(Thom Hess says the name means "the people who climb the bank or go up from the water's edge" from

čubə? → {go up from water's edge
climb river bank} + -abš, 'people'.)

The territory of this village, according to Smith (1941:210), stretched along the Skagit River from Lyman to below Hamilton and included the Day Creek drainage. Dewey Mitchell of Swinomish recalled its name.

¹Sampson (1972:20-24) lists five bands: Cho-bah-ah-bish, Me-sek-wi-guilse, Sba-le-och, Mis-skai-whwa, and Sah-ku-meh-hu. They have villages along the Skagit River and its tributaries. His territorial scheme covers roughly the same area as villages #42 through #49, taken from Smith, but does not correspond in detail.

43. bəsʔuxʔux (Smith 1941:210) (At Hamilton)

The territory of this village stretched along the north bank of the Skagit from Hamilton to Birdsvew, according to Smith (1941:210). Dewey Mitchell of Swinomish recalled the village name.

44. bəsʔadʔʔadʔbixʷ (Smith 1941:210) (Opposite Hamilton)

The territory belonging to families in this village extended along the south bank of the Skagit River from Hamilton to Birdsvew. According to Dewey Mitchell of Swinomish these people were named for the creek they own, sʔáʔadʔdis. The name derives from the prickly growth along its banks: sʔá, "prickly inner fiber of dried fir bark."¹

45. sbáʔliʔxʷ (Smith 1941:210) (At Concrete)

The territory of this village stretched along the Skagit River from above Birdsvew to above Concrete. Its name was remembered by Dewey Mitchell, who called it a "mixture of people."

46. bəsʔʔililucid (Dewey Mitchell) (On Skagit River at Sauk River mouth)

The territory of this village stretched along the Skagit River from Van Horn to roughly three miles above Rockport and along the Skagit River almost to the mouth of the Suiattle River (Smith 1941:210). It was also known as čagʷalqʔ.

47. bəsʔíxʷixʷ (Smith 1941:210) (At Marblemount)

The territory of this village stretched from above Rockport to Marblemount at the mouth of the Cascade River. Dewey Mitchell and Martin

¹I am indebted to Thom Hess for this information.

Sampson recalled this village name.

48. saʔk^wbix^w (Smith 1941:210) (On Sauk Prairie)

The territory of this village extended along the Sauk River above the confluence of the Suiattle. The people eventually came to be known as Sauk. Dewey Mitchell recalled the village name.

49. su ya'k^ʔbix^w (Smith 1941:210) (Above the Suiattle River mouth)

The territory of this village extended along the Suiattle River. Today they are known as Suiattle. These harsh elevated lands were more sparsely populated in aboriginal times than they became after White settlers pushed the Indians out of their villages. Dewey Mitchell recalled this village name.

Many villages existed in aboriginal times which are not listed here. In work done in the 1950's for the Indian Claims Commission, Synder interviewed Indian elders. Her unpublished field notes show over twenty Swinomish villages, where the above list has but five. Her map of Nuwaha territory, constructed with the aid of Wayne Suttles, shows twenty-seven villages, where the above list has but seven. Her data on the Lower Skagit villages seem to exhibit a similar trend.

The task of listing villages is made difficult by the aboriginal and early contact pattern of intermittent occupation of village sites. A complete listing, moreover, would not correspond to the number of villages in use at any one time. Additional difficulties in enumeration are created by variations in names given by different speakers of the Indian language, by fragmentary information about the use of a site -- whether for permanent or temporary dwellings, and by the extremely variable size of villages --

from several longhouses to the small dwelling of a single family.

For the purpose of ethnic boundary study, the exact number of aboriginal villages in the Skagit Region is not necessary. It is merely important to know that they were numerous and small and that they were distributed in the general areas shown on Map VI. It is also important to know that elder members of the Swinomish Reservation community trace their ancestry back to particular geographic sites within the Skagit Region, although they may not know exact names and locations any longer. At one time village names signalled the primary ethnic identification of individuals, but soon after contact with Whites, as early as 1800, village cluster identification grew in importance, a process that will be examined more closely in the next chapter.

An ethnic group, as the term is used here, is the largest operating socio-political unit which is recognized by the people as something they belong to by virtue of how they live and what their origin is. During aboriginal times Skagit Region villagers distinguished themselves much more often by their village names than by their village cluster names. Most of their large scale social interaction was organized according to their village. Relatively little, if any, seems to have been organized by their village cluster. The evidence available indicates that they did not interact in the name of a village cluster or band, as they did at a later date in their history. It is therefore justifiable to speak of the ethnic group being the village and note that there were probably over fifty tiny ethnic groups in the Skagit Region before contact with the White Man. Not all of their names have survived because some of the villages were wiped out by epidemic diseases and military operations. At a very early date after contact use of village terms was overshadowed by the

frequency of use of higher order category -- that of the village cluster.

Criteria of Membership
in the Ethnic Group

The next task is to delineate the criteria of membership in the ethnic group. Turning back to Barth (1969:14) briefly, we recall that we can assume no simple one-to-one relationship between ethnic units and cultural similarities and differences. We must take into account not the sum of objective cultural differences between ethnic groups, but only those which the members themselves regard as significant. Some cultural features may be used by the actors as signals and emblems of difference, others may be ignored.

During aboriginal times in the Skagit Region, most villagers shared pretty much the same culture. Differences between villages were slight. Outward signs of ethnic affiliation such as dress styles and speech patterns were probably very subtle. Most of the knowledge of the unique characteristics of life in different villages is gone today. It was lost during the early contact period and later years. Early anthropologists were interested in gross cultural differences. What has survived is limited to regional differences that show few sharp boundaries. People of the Haro and Rosario Straits, for example, specialized in the technology and ritual of reef-nets. People of the upper reaches of the Skagit River specialized in mountain-goat hunting and collecting minerals such as soapstone. Salt-water villagers were experts in collecting shellfish, hunting seal, and fishing for deep sea fish such as halibut. Evidence that local variations existed in terms for flora and fauna has been collected by Erna Gunther in Ethnobotany in Western Washington (1945). Evidence that differing attitudes towards slavery and social ranking may have been

emblematic was collected by Collins (1951:290-291). We know that there was local diversity in geographic features, in folklore, in local history, in spiritual power sources and paraphernalia, in spirit dances and songs, in basket-making styles, in honorific family names, and other things, but we do not know if these were emblematic of village identity.

The narrowness of the range of cultural differences did not necessarily impede Skagit Region villagers from distinguishing among themselves. They could identify an individual by his residence and participation in social events. A woman marrying into her husband's group could demonstrate her intention to be a full member by working hard, bearing children, and showing loyalty to her husband. A man going to his wife's group might have a little more difficulty adjusting to the new group's male subsistence technology, but if he could demonstrate loyalty to her father and brothers, he would be accepted. Demonstrating loyalty meant spending time with the other members of the group, sharing generously with them, and contributing to the production of events sponsored in the group's name. In these circumstances, members of a winter village did not need gross cultural differences to be able to recognize their own membership. They knew each individually. Members of other groups could be categorized according to the same kinds of criteria, if the information were available.

Ethnic Stereotypes

Closely related to the process of classifying individuals according to their ethnic membership is the employment of ethnic stereotypes. Ethnic stereotypes are most frequently involved in reference to groups of strangers -- members of distant outgroups, whereas criteria of membership are employed to classify members of the in-group.

Again the evidence available from the Skagit Region does not give a complete picture. Snyder (n.d.:433), however, gives information closely related to ethnic stereotypes. The Skagit Region people made a strong distinction between neighbors and strangers. Neighbors were humans acitibix ("us living here") (Snyder n.d.:433). Their lives were regulated the same way, according to the same rules as one's own villagers. They understood the subtleties of the feud, the snub, the verbal innuendo. They were appropriate guests for a ceremonial feast.

Strangers, on the other hand, were considered untrustworthy. They had designs upon one's property -- dwelling and game sites, habitations, and moveable goods -- and upon one's children (Snyder n.d.:433). Strangers were considered fair game for slave raiding. Some of them were felt to be "wild" or "pre-human." For example, the traditional depiction of the Stetal people gave them

. . . characteristics strikingly similar to those of legendary "abominable snowmen," monstrous shaggy creatures which look and act as much like bears as they do like humans. When they run they drop to all fours, and their huge feet permit them to leap like deer -- better than deer -- they can pounce into branches of lofty trees (Snyder n.d.:428).

According to Skagit mythology the world was once populated by creatures who changed back and forth from human to animal form. Some of these creatures had wondrous powers. Others were plundering monsters who killed people, even ate them. Eventually, as the world grew older, the supernaturals working for the human cause pursued the monsters and disposed of them, making the world safe for modern humans.

For Skagit Region villagers, strangers from distant, unknown lands were somewhat like pre-humans. Defeat at their hands was not humiliating, even though they might commit horrible atrocities at night, like the Stetal people did. Strangers were capable of inflicting only physical,

not social destruction. They were therefore dealt with swiftly and brutally, in an almost impersonal manner, unlike any behavior exhibited towards Skagit Region neighbors, friend or foe.

Also closely related to ethnic stereotypes were those based upon wealth and class differences. In pre-contact Skagit Region villages high class people were believed to have exemplary moral characteristics. High class villagers knew proper behavior and were familiar with their family history.¹ Special tutoring in ceremonial etiquette distinguished upper class children. They were taught to address their relatives properly, give speeches, to be slow to take offense, to be quiet and self-restrained, to never be greedy or pushy, and to never, never, come to physical blows in an argument. Well-bred villagers never lied, stole, were unfair or dishonest. Their leaders were gentle and humble, never overbearing or arrogant. In addition, upper class people were usually long-standing residents of a village-site, never newcomers. They took pride in the fact that they lived on the land of their ancestors.

The stereotype of lower class villagers showed them having lost their "advice," their family history. They lacked roots in the past. Failing to uphold family traditions and to recognize all collateral kinship ties, they lacked the etiquette and morality which was thought to distinguish upper class people.

Slaves were seen as most untrustworthy, even if they had once enjoyed high status before being captured. Most slaves came from villages of strangers where there were no kinship ties. They were not allowed to marry free persons, nor accumulate private property, nor receive or

¹In the Straits language this family history was called čilegen ("advice") (Suttles n.d.:302).

donate gifts at feasts. They could move about only with their owner's permission and were usually guarded. A person who was captured as a slave was believed to learn bad behavior which would stick with him for the rest of his life. Even if he escaped and returned to his home village, his character was thought to be tainted by a lifelong stigma. His misdeeds were attributed to his past experience. There were very few slaves in the Skagit Region during the aboriginal period.

In aboriginal Skagit society members of a village sometimes shared approximately the same class standing. Stereotypes of individuals of high and low class standing were sometimes generalized to entire villages. If a particular village had a number of high-ranking, wealthy leaders, people outside the village tended to show respect to the rest of their families according to the status of these leaders. On the other hand, if a number of people exhibited immoral behavior, it might ruin the reputations of the rest of their village-mates.

Evidence is not available to draw actual village stereotypes. Only the components out of which they were probably constructed are known. Of prime importance, no doubt, was the neighbor-stranger status of the village, relative to the person drawing the stereotype. Next was probably its class standing in the regional status hierarchy. Also important were the unique resources of the village's surrounding environment, whether mountainous, riverine, or salt-water, possession of important men of special talents -- warriors, shamen, hunters, and fishermen -- and finally, the history of the village, the special power, costumes, folktales, and ceremonies of its families.

The occasions on which ethnic stereotypes were most frequently invoked were probably discussions of possible alliances, visitations, and

invitations. Should they arrange a marriage with this village's headman's daughter? Should they accept an invitation to a feast? Should they extend an invitation to a feast? And, of course, ethnic stereotypes were probably invoked when giving children lessons on regional history.

Restriction of Interaction Between Ethnic Groups

Ethnic boundaries canalize social life (Barth 1969:15). Members of the same group may potentially expand their social relationship to cover many different sectors and domains of activity while members of different ethnic groups find their interaction restricted to a smaller number of contexts for social interaction. For members of different ethnic groups the contexts are usually more formalized or ritualized.

During aboriginal times in the Skagit Region there were two main social contexts in which members of different villages interacted. In the summer, families of different villages exchanged visits with each other for the purpose of gathering up stores of food. In the winter and spring, villagers held invitational feasts, spirit dances, funerary and name-taking ceremonies, weddings, shamanistic performances, and festivals of competitive games. Occasionally there were chance meetings of members of different ethnic groups at large fishing grounds during the autumn salmon runs. The mouth of the Skagit River was a place of gathering for members of villages all over the Skagit River.

It is possible to conceive of three rings of social distance between the focal village and other ethnic groups. In the center is the kindred group of the longhouse and village. In the first concentric ring are the village's allies. In the second ring are its competitors for regional status. In the third ring, out beyond them all, are strangers.

Contacts were more restricted at greater distances from the center.

In the Skagit Region culture the most frequent, unrestricted daily contacts existed between members of the same longhouse and village. Here the whole round of social life was permissible conversation material. Interaction was restricted mainly by the need to show respect to elders, the need to regulate sexual relations, and the need to maintain harmony of the sibling core of each household. Each household tried to maintain the appearance of unity to other longhouses in the village. Members were expected to curtail their gossip so as not to broadcast internal political conflicts to other villagers. In spite of this ideal, we can surmise that there was a good chance that, within the village, everybody knew everybody else's business.

Farther away from this intimate nucleus of contacts human relationships became more restricted and formal. Geographic distance from other villages cut down the frequency of interaction somewhat. Beyond this were social factors. Interaction between affinally-related villages was friendly but guarded. Each family tried to be as generous with favors to its in-laws as it could afford, without creating an embarrassment. Members availed themselves of the others' resources as much as they could, without straining the relationship. At any time during the year, the parents of a bride and groom could visit the village of their co-parents-in-law and expect to be taken in and treated as guests. Yet always the interaction was restricted by the desire to maintain a longterm equality of exchange between the parties. To upset the balance would be a grave insult. Despite this ideal, the balance was frequently upset. Members of one family would sometimes camp with their in-laws for several months of the year. After such prolonged interaction they would probably achieve

fairly intimate knowledge of their in-laws' daily life and business.

Out beyond the circle of allied villages stood the alien villages. Whereas affinal kin were allies in the regional status contests, alien villages were competitors. Contacts with non-kin at large gatherings such as invitational feasts could sometimes be acutely distressing. The host village put on a public display of wealth, treating the guest-aliens to food and gifts, but the resultant elevation of its status took place at the expense of the others'. The arena of formal competition for status was therefore filled with tension. The greater the tension, the more compliance there was to details of etiquette. Each competitor measured the others' behavior for indications that it failed to meet the highest standards of respectability. In these ceremonies allied villagers played the role of witnesses, conferring status on their hosts. The alien villagers played the role of guests of honor, receiving the hospitality of their competitors. Even here there were subtle complexities to the interaction, for the goal of the hosts was to form eventual marriage partnerships with the wealthiest alien villagers, thereby bringing them closer, into the ring of allies. Outside the longhouse, while ceremonial events were taking place, there may have been considerable informal interaction among members of different villages. We can imagine that the formal events inside had some effect upon the interaction outside.

During aboriginal times in the Skagit Region there was relatively little patterned contact between total strangers. Skagit Region people seldom did business with persons to whom they were unrelated, unless it was to negotiate a marriage, make a trading venture, or stage a feuding raid.

The data from the Skagit Region thus show a more complex situation than the one depicted by Barth in the section quoted above.

Dichotomization of all people into two simple categories -- fellow ethnic group members and strangers from other ethnic groups -- does not occur in regions where ethnic groups are so small and in constant association with each other. However, Barth's main point that there are restrictions on interaction with members of other ethnic groups still holds.

Ecological Relationships Between Ethnic Groups

Barth (1969:19-20) lists three forms of ecological adaptation which may exist between two or more ethnic groups in contact: they may occupy different niches in the same territory and be in minimal competition; they may monopolize separate territories and compete for resources along their borders; or they may occupy reciprocal niches in close interdependence, trading important goods and services. The Skagit Region groups exhibited a mixture of adaptations. They occupied slightly different niches, like Type One, in separate territories, like Type Two, but traded access to resources of great value, like Type Three. Border politics were minimized by social channels providing access to others' territory through marriage alliances. Most of the Skagit villagers' minimal subsistence could have been earned within their own territories. The need for access to others' resources derived mainly from their prestige economy -- their desire for variety in diet at feast times and for raw materials to make fine handcrafted gifts.

The Skagit Region villagers arrived at this mixture of ecological adaptations because of three important environmental factors.¹ First,

¹See Wayne Suttles' "The Economic Life of the Coast Salish of the Haro and Rosario Straits" (n.d.) for a more detailed discussion of these factors. This work also contains a complete list of food resources and other products collected by Skagit Region ethnic groups.

the diversity of geologic formations in the area produced a variegated pattern of resources over the land. Each type of fish, shellfish, sea mammal, fowl, game, root, and berry could be harvested only at particular locations. Ethnic groups in the region were unequally endowed with productive locales. To secure the variety of foods and raw materials needed for manufacture, the villagers found it advantageous to travel outside their home territories. This selected for a firm economic basis for cooperation, engendering friendly relations between neighboring villages.

Second, most resources reached the peak of their availability during a few weeks out of the year. It was most profitable to travel only once a year to the best places and harvest a large supply (Suttles n.d.:68). This resulted in the annual convergence of great numbers of villagers at productive locales. The best resource locations came to be regarded as private property, enabling the owners to give or withhold permission to use them. Permission was rarely denied, but the ritual of asking strengthened village boundaries.

Third, the harvesting of the abundant resources of the Skagit Region required the investment of intensive labor. Every adult spent part of his time contributing to the food supply. Occupational specializations such as shamanism, basket-making, carpentry, weaving, warriorship, and ceremonial leadership were pursued as part-time activities. The most productive harvest techniques were large scale enterprises, in which a number of persons cooperated (Suttles n.d.:46-47). The relative shortage of labor made the largest villages prosper most. Wealth and high status were associated with the size of a village's population. Upriver villages, although backed by large territories, were smaller and poorer than

salt-water villages. The snow-covered high country was unproductive much of the year. Villagers here lacked the year-round supply of shellfish and deep sea fish enjoyed by salt-water villagers.

The relative shortage of labor was a critical factor in Skagit Region villagers' adaptation. The waters did not abound with large sea mammals whose catch could easily feed great numbers of people for long periods. The dense forest gave land mammals thick cover, making them difficult to track. The most efficient living was earned through fishing, a labor-intensive activity requiring cooperation of crews of workers. The larger villages in the Skagit Region were discovering the economies of producing material wealth in large scale lots, although they had not yet reached the point of supporting full-time specialists. The high value of labor made slavery feasible, but not as profitable as it was to their Northern raiders. The greatest military mobilization in the Skagit Region was thus to protect villagers from slave raiders.

The Skagit Region villagers' system of land ownership accommodated these environmental contingencies. Ownership of land surface in itself was not of interest as much as the rights to use it in various ways. It was not divided up and bounded quite the same way as land is in modern times. Attention was focussed on productive resource locales. Some inland sections of land were of little interest. Many resource sites were peacefully shared by adjacent villages. The question of trespass did not arise, except with complete strangers, whose presence was considered a definite intrusion. Shared ownership tended to apply to resources that were available all year round and could be harvested by simple equipment, possessed by all. An example of such a resource locale were the "cold locations" where ling cod and rock fish could be caught (Suttles n.d.:118).

Land which required tending in order to make it productive was privately owned and inherited. Examples of this were camas root plots and horse clam beds. Camas root plots were inherited by women through the female line (Collins n.d.b:77). Mother and daughter visited them annually, dug the roots, reburied the stems, so that new roots could grow, and weeded them. They marked the four corners of the plot by posting sticks. Horse clam beds were tended by removing large rocks and placing them at the edges of the site. Fish weirs were also owned by those who built and tended them.¹

Sometimes the use of a resource site was limited by complex equipment necessary to exploit it. Good places for catching deer were exploited by the owners of large deer nets. The owner organized the hunt, waited at the front line, divided the game, and kept perhaps one third of it for himself. Shallow tide flats or stream beds suitable for fishing weirs were owned by the group of people who took part in construction of the weirs, although the members of one family might supervise the effort. Reef-net locations in the offshore islands were owned by single individuals who inherited them from their ancestors. The reef-net owner fished as the captain or commissioned another to do that job. A crew was also commissioned, composed of men from perhaps many villages who came asking for work. The captain and crew made the net, set up the gear,² and stayed

¹In early reservation times salmon drifts on Swinomish Slough were tended by informal "owners" who removed underwater logs and snags to enable free movement of gillnets. Raymond Paul, of the Swinomish Reservation community, was able to name almost twenty of such "privately-owned" drifts for the period of the 1920's. Most of them were shared by several men who took turns fishing them. Not legal ownership, this was use-right built up by habit and invested labor.

²The reef-netting gear was complex. Sometimes huge boulders were sunk from canoes to anchor it down. See Suttles (n.d.) for an extensive description.

until the end of the season. In return, the owner fed them and gave them a share of the catch.

The ethnic groups in the Skagit Region seem to have contested militarily among themselves for territory only occasionally during aboriginal times. In this they differ from other pre-tribal groups such as the Yanomamo of the Amazon jungle and the Tairora of the Central Highlands of New Guinea,¹ whose battles for territory kept them on constant alert. Suttles (n.d.:320-321) reports only two incidents of a group winning a dispute and expanding its territory. Samish villagers battled the Duwaha villagers in order to take over the mouth of the Samish River and establish a weir site there. Klallam villagers tried to get a foothold in Lower Skagit territory on Whidbey Island.

Skagit Region villagers were more frequently mobilized for defense against raids by distant northerners whose purposes would not be likely to include territory. They included Haidas, Nootkans, Straits Salish, Cowichan, and other Halkomelem on the mainland coast (Suttles n.d.:435). Each Skagit Region village fought as a unit under the leadership of a man with warrior spirit power. The men trained together in fighting tactics, but did not constitute a militia or secret society. The Lower Skagits posted lookout guards throughout the year at special vantage spots, such as a large rock at the mouth of the Skagit River. Because of their outlying position and their vulnerability to attack, the Whidbey Island villagers served as a buffer between the northern raiders and other Skagit

¹See Napoleon Chagnon, The Yanomamo: The Fierce People (New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, Inc., 1969), and James Watson, "Tairora: the Politics of Despotism in a Small Society," Anthropological Forum 2:53-104.

Region villagers, sending out warning messengers when the raiders were spotted. The Samish were particularly vulnerable in the San Juan Islands.

Changes in the ecological relations among ethnic groups in the Skagit Region began very soon after contact, in the first decades of the nineteenth century, before the White population was very large. It is therefore important not to generalize popular stories of tribal wars and raiding based on incomplete information. They may not actually pertain to aboriginal times.

Points of Articulation and Dependence Between Ethnic Groups

The positive bonds that connect ethnic groups in an encompassing social system depend upon the complementarity of their characteristic cultural features. Such complementarity can give rise to interdependence or symbiosis. Symbiosis is the more complex case,¹ interdependence the simpler case. Because of the general cultural homogeneity of the aboriginal Skagit Region, the polyethnic system there seems to have represented the case of simple interdependence. Ethnic groups took turns, or alternated, playing similar roles with respect to one another. Now Village A played host and Village B guest, later Village B was host and Village A guest. The most striking differences surrounded the type of gifts that were presented, not the reasons each had for playing the game. Variety in exchange, or difference in the services offered, grew out of the unique configuration of productive resource locales that surrounded

¹See Barth (1969:19) for a complete description of the conditions under which symbiosis obtains.

each village and the ramifications this had for the development of special technological skills.

Three institutions or forms of relationship drew Skagit Region villages together: marriage, summer exchange visits, and winter ceremonials. Villages depended upon each other for essential services in each of these sectors of their culture. This dependence or reliance charged the bonds between ethnic groups in the field, giving them a magnetic power. The institutions may therefore be called points of ethnic articulation in Skagit Region culture.

Skagit Region villagers placed a high value on selecting mates from other groups. The importance they placed on marriage bonds with other ethnic groups is evident from the length of time the bonds between villages usually survived. If an alliance was satisfactory, it continued beyond the lifetimes of the individuals involved, through the operation of the sororate and levirate. Genealogies collected by Suttles (n.d.: 289) suggest that families tended to marry with the same outside group through several generations. Marriage with another group guaranteed travellers' safety in that quarter. Each group therefore tried to establish marriage alliances in all directions. A village composed of several longhouses sometimes parceled out ties to neighboring villages among the component households to create a balanced system of foreign relations. A particularly wealthy man sometimes acquired widespread alliances through polygynous unions.

All members of the families involved in a marriage alliance were bound, not just the husband and wife. Affinal kinship terminology in Puget Salish and Straits grouped co-parents-in-law into a single

category.¹ Straits speakers lumped further all those to whom they were indebted for their wives and possibly accountable to for them (Suttles n.d.:293). This excluded their wives' sisters and female cousins, who were potential mates upon her death. All those who were indebted to them for their spouses and perhaps accountable for them were lumped under another term. This excluded their brothers' wives, who were potential mates upon their brothers' deaths.

Co-parents-in-law showed each other mutual respect. They frequently worked together to help their married children establish a house (Collins n.d.b.:27). On the death of a spouse, they shared support of their grandchildren.

The high value Skagit Region villages placed on intermarriage thus benefitted them in securing safe passage through distant territory, in establishing newly-wed couples, and in supporting orphans.

The second point of articulation of Skagit Region ethnic groups was the summer exchange visits between allied villages. Skagit Region villagers placed a high value on economic cooperation between allied villages. This institution might be seen as another ramification of intermarriage, but it deserves separate attention.

A man could at any time during the subsistence-gathering part of the year take food to his co-parents-in-law and expect to receive wealth in return (Suttles 1960:298). A son-in-law, brother-in-law, or cousin could also take part in this exchange. Arriving with perhaps a canoe-load of herring, he and his party would be given a feast and "thanked" with gifts of blankets, shell ornaments, fine baskets, hide shirts, bows and

¹See Collins (n.d.b.:19-20) and Suttles (n.d.:293) for the spelling of these terms.

arrows, canoes, or perhaps slaves. Thus they received relatively imperishable items for perishable ones. Later they might use these goods to "thank" the same people for gifts of camas bulbs or dried sturgeon (Suttles 1960:302). In this way they could bank surpluses temporarily with members of other villages. The exchange of food for wealth was an important adaptive mechanism in an environment which showed considerable yearly fluctuation in quantities of food available from different resource locales. Later wealth could be converted into social status and recognition.¹

Another form of summer exchange visit allowed a man and his relatives to drop in on his in-laws during the peak harvest time of one of their resources. He and his villagers would be given temporary housing and use of the hosts' equipment. They would take home what they could harvest. In return, the visitors were expected to welcome their hosts at their own village at a later date. The effect of this proximity between members of different villages was to draw them together into a more or less intimate and comparatively untroubled relationship (Suttles n.d.:389-390). Tensions sometimes arose when the guests would overwork their hosts' territory, flaunting the product in the faces of those who provided it. In such a case, the relationship was severed. Sometimes underhanded hosts would abuse the relationship by withholding special knowledge of necessary harvest techniques. Parity between in-laws was not always easy to maintain (Snyder n.d.:390). Hosts were not always present to guard their resources because they, themselves, might be visiting at other places. Hosts always had the upper hand if they were

¹See Suttles (1960) for a thorough development of these ideas.

home, because they controlled the knowledge of the most efficient harvesting techniques. However, they might suffer even when the visitors intended no wrong, especially if a poor productive season reduced the total harvest. In cases in which two villages had a long history of intermarriage and exchange, the visitors of one community might outnumber their hosts. The only way for a village to protect themselves against being overwhelmed was to make diverse alliances and hope that their in-laws would not arrive from all directions at once.

The third institution that drew Skagit ethnic groups together was the winter ceremonial. It included both the invitational feast and the spirit dance. The winter spirit dance was a relatively small gathering of villages related by marriage, occurring several times a winter in the house of a young person who had recently acquired a guardian spirit.¹ A youth acquired a guardian spirit after years of training, which included long stints alone in the wilderness, bathing and fasting in solitude. The spirit gave him (or her) protection, special knowledge, and talents to aid in worldly endeavors. In return it demanded that he (or she) give a spirit dance of a certain duration, wearing ceremonial costuming, and singing a particular song. The appropriate time for this occasion was signalled by an illness, usually coming during the autumn months of a year in young adulthood. When the youth's family realized the seriousness of the illness, usually diagnosed by a shaman, it began immediate preparations for a spirit dance.

Messengers were dispatched to all relatives in neighboring

¹See Collins (n.d.a.:14-33) for a complete description of the guardian spirit quest in children and young adults and the winter spirit dance.

villages. The summons was considered imperative; all who were asked had to cease their activities and come at once, or the young person would be in grave danger. They brought all the food and gifts they could afford. Entering the house single file, they danced around the circle, placing the food and gifts in view of the family (Collins n.d.a.:28). In the next several days the young person was helped by all present to perform his spirit dance and sing his song. Sometimes others with the same spirit power also performed. A feast, speeches of thanks, and a distribution of gifts concluded the event.

For the rest of the winter the novice travelled and performed, sometimes with dancers from related villages. When spring came, the demands of the spirit power became more infrequent, and he joined in the subsistence activities of his family. Performing his dance every winter for a number of years, the initiate became more experienced. He no longer became so ill, nor required the services of shamans and helpers. He turned to helping other young people.

Since a winter spirit dance required the concerted help of the entire longhouse, the decision to sponsor an event was arrived at jointly by the adult members. Considerable planning and months of saving was needed. If the family were unwilling or unable to incur the expenses of sponsoring a dance, the sick person might suffer for years. However, if the demands of the spirit were satisfied, it would stay with him and protect his family, perhaps even coming again to his descendants after his death. Men of high social standing and wealthy families might acquire several spirit guardians, to help them in fishing, hunting, canoe-building, curing, or war. It was very important for a family to have good relations with its allies in other villages, so that they could be called

upon to make contributions when necessary.

The high value the Skagit Region villagers placed upon acquiring a guardian spirit and satisfying its demands for public performance generated much interethnic activity each winter. Each village was distinguished by particulars of the ceremony -- unique costuming, special animals, birds, or fish for their spirit-helpers, unusual procedures, songs, and magical abilities. The winter spirit dance provided a platform for display of these cultural features, thereby reinforcing and maintaining the distinct ethnic identity of the residents.

The other winter ceremonial, the invitational feast, was related to the winter spirit dance, but a much larger affair. In order to please the spirits Skagit Region villagers believed it was necessary to remain pure. Hence they bathed and fasted in order to attract their guardians. In addition it was necessary to eschew gluttony and hedonistic pleasures. Hard work was necessary to gather enough food for security during the winter, and during winters to come if possible. One could not sit around and get fat all winter, however, eating up one's stores of food. The spirits would be offended at that and never return. One's future subsistence would be threatened without their help. The solution to this problem was to hold an invitational feast and give away the surplus to other villages.

The invitational feast was a gala event, which included games, gambling, trading, singing, dancing, and masked performances staged merely for amusement (Suttles 1951:314). A carnival of delights, it helped dispel the winter doldrums in a land of perpetual winter rain and cloudy weather. Sometimes called potlatches, these feasts were important economic institutions, allowing wealthy communities to convert accumulated stores

of food and wealth into higher social status and prestige. After several years' work accumulating food surpluses and converting them into durable goods by making gifts to affinally related villages, members of a community invited distantly related and alien villages to attend a feast. The nominal purpose was to help the hosts celebrate a family member's wedding, coming of age, earning of an honored name, to commemorate a deceased relative, or to do the heavy work of raising a new longhouse (Collins n.d.b.:31).

In pre-contact times, potlatches were rare among the Skagit Region people because there was seldom much wealth to give away. When they were held, the emphasis was on food and entertainment. The amount of goods given away was small, compared to early post-contact times. A group of sponsors from several longhouses, perhaps even several villages, frequently pooled their resources, and celebrated a number of family members' achievements.

Through a potlatch a village publicized its status to other groups. In effect, the members were saying, "We are an extended family with title to such-and-such a territory, having such-and-such resources." Assuming a name harkening back to the beginning of the world when his ancestors first appeared on the spot, their village headman was not only demonstrating the validity of the village's title to the resources, but perhaps announcing, in effect, "I am the man in charge of the resources" (Suttles 1960:301).

Then, after speeches explaining the purpose of the occasion, the sponsors treated the guests -- distantly related and alien villages -- to gifts of food and durable goods, such as baskets, blankets, canoes, and other items of fine workmanship. The quantity of goods impressed

all those present with the magnitude of the occasion. They may have thought to themselves, "This is all too generous. It is almost embarrassing. We shall have to do something in return." On their way home they gathered determination to save up for a reciprocal act. They might even have felt a psychological heaviness or lowered social status until their obligation was met.

Affinally-related groups were not potlatched, but served as witnesses, giving speeches bestowing recognition upon the hosts. For their trouble they were given take-home gifts of greater value than token presents but of far less worth than those given to invited outsiders of equal rank (Snyder n.d.:83).

Giving away several years' accumulation of food and trade surpluses allowed the less productive communities to recapture their buying power. If amassing wealth had been an end in itself in this system, the process of sharing food surpluses might have broken down because the poor communities would eventually have run out of wealth to give away for food (Suttles 1960:304). By giving food and wealth away, the wealthy community restored the purchasing power of the poor groups and gained intangible status, which it used to make wider marriage ties with more distant villages, thus extending the field of exchange further (Suttles 1960:304). The potlatch thus enabled the whole network of ethnic communities to maintain a high level of food production and to equalize consumption among themselves (Suttles 1960:304).

The values expressed in these three sectors of Skagit Region culture -- marriage, summer exchange visits, and winter ceremonials -- established strong positive bonds between ethnic groups in the Skagit Region. Yet the activities resulting from the points of ethnic

articulation reaffirmed the separate identity of each ethnic group. Interaction maintained cultural diacritica and ethnic boundaries rather than dissolving them.

It is clear that in the Skagit Region something like an inter-village community existed beyond the residential boundaries of the village (Suttles 1963:514-515). This phenomenon has been investigated by Elmendorf (1960:298-305) among the Twana of Southern Puget Sound. Elmendorf discovered multi-ethnic units ("inter-community culture complexes") resulting from joint-participation in Twana eating contests, disk games, upper-class marriage, secret society initiation, and hostile raiding activities. Each activity brought together a combination of villages forming a different multi-ethnic unit. This unit partially overlapped with units formed by other activities. It extended beyond them in others. The boundaries of the Twana multi-ethnic units fluctuated from year to year, depending upon which villages participated in which activities. These boundaries also cross-cut language and ecological zones.

If it were possible to obtain a detailed historical record of the joint-participation of Skagit Region villages in the intervillage activities described above -- marriage alliances, summer exchange visits, and winter ceremonials -- the record would probably show that several kinds of multi-ethnic units also existed in the Skagit Region before contact with the Whites. The long-term association of village-ethnic groups through joint-participation in these activities laid the foundation for their unification into band and tribal units at a later date. The intervillage community does not merit the term ethnic group because, so far as we know, it did not operate as a unit vis a vis other such units.

Ethnic Stratification

Where one ethnic group has control of the means of production utilized by another group, a relationship of inequality and stratification results (Barth 1969:27). In more general terms, it may be said that stratified poly-ethnic systems exist where groups are characterized by differential control of assets that are valued by all groups in the system. The cultures of the component ethnic groups in such systems are thus integrated in a special way: they share certain general value orientations and status scales, on the basis of which they can arrive at judgements of hierarchy (Barth 1969:27). The persistence of stratified poly-ethnic systems over time requires the presence of processes that generate and maintain differential control and distribution of assets (Barth 1969:28).

The Skagit Region during aboriginal times may be said to have had a rudimentary system of ethnic stratification. The asset in short supply was productive resource land. However, distribution of it was not so glaringly imbalanced as to produce a monopoly in any one group's favor. Every village owned some productive land, probably enough to meet its barest subsistence needs. The most superior resource locales were usually owned and controlled by individual villages, who granted access only to those who were their allies and to those who requested permission, showing considerable respect.

A second asset in short supply was labor. Slavery existed, though on a very small scale. Highly-valued skills, such as blanket-weaving, canoe-building, and basket-making, could be obtained by attracting craftsmen and women to marry into one's village. This was difficult unless the village had much to offer.

A system of high and low status, ranking ethnic groups, did exist in the Skagit Region in aboriginal times. Access to land and labor resources was easier to obtain for high status groups than for lower status groups. Differential control and distribution of assets was maintained by processes involving moral behavior, wealth, marriage alliances, the invitational feast, and granting of high status.

To observe the operation of these processes, it is necessary to first describe the system of stratification of individuals shared during aboriginal times. The most clear-cut division separated freemen from slaves. Lines dividing freemen into upper and lower classes were fuzzy. Mobility across class lines was very infrequent, representing a large jump for any individual. However, individuals did perform considerable jockeying for smaller increments of status. Individual competition gave the appearance of a ranking system, but unlike societies farther north, the Skagit Region people did not number individual ranks. Several criteria were used in evaluating status, making enumeration of the combinations of status difficult.

Upper class villagers bore the title siab (Puget Salish) or Siem (Straits), meaning "good person," "chief," "sir," or "madam" (if a woman).¹ The title was gained by demonstrating wealth, good descent, and proper manners and morality. A person could become a siab if he was of good descent, had no hint of slave ancestry in his background, and sponsored a potlatch in which he took the name of a distinguished ancestor. Also necessary were childhood training in proper ceremonial behavior,

¹The description of social classes is taken primarily from Collins (n.d.b.:34-38), and Snyder (n.d.:114-117).

a knowledge of family history, and the acquisition of a spiritual guardian. The personality of a Siab was not aggressive or disagreeably forceful. On ceremonial occasions he was especially quiet and self-restrained. Slow to take offense or display anger in ordinary social relations, he was said to "talk good." Within his family the Siab acted as peacemaker, preventing quarrelers from coming to blows. Not greedy, he never demanded food or property. He did not over-eat. In a crowd approaching a potlatch house, the "good person" might hang back and be the last to enter. Never a liar or thief, he was known to be fair and honest in all his dealings. He was the kind of person who would not return a visit unless he could take the host a more valuable gift than the previous time.

The well-born person could become siab only as the result of his own efforts in obtaining wealth. Inheritance of property was not an important aid. After the death of one's parents, one gave away all possessions to distant relatives. This left little to inherit except small mementos, rights to resources, and residence in the family's longhouse.

Although the term siab was sometimes used as a mere courtesy in speaking to an ordinary adult, in aboriginal times very few people bore the title in its true sense. The number of honorable names was limited. Few families could afford to give them. Even scarcer were very, very wealthy leaders, for whom there was a special term (Snyder n.d.:114-117).

The majority of ordinary people fell into the lower class. There is, apparently, no special term in the Skagit language for them. The prime criterion for their status was their lack of "advice." They had lost their history. The social tradition in which they were raised

did not stress the importance of teaching special "manners" to children. Many lower class people were hard-working, morally righteous, and the possessors of guardian spirit powers, but they could not afford to stage a ceremony proving they were distinguished siab. They probably did harbor claims, nevertheless.

At the bottom of the social scale was the slave, studək^wčišʔ (Snyder n.d.:114-117).¹ The term studək^w implied slave origins but not that the person was a slave himself. The term stʔəšib referred to a person with one slave parent. Slaves were war captives from distant, unrelated villages and their descendants. They were outside the kinship system. Marriage between slaves and free persons was regarded as most objectionable, even if the slave had been high-ranking in his home village and appeared personable to many in his master's village. Slaves performed menial tasks for their master's family, usually under guard. Occasionally they had special talents such as canoe-building. In that case they were highly valued. They were not allowed to receive or donate property at potlatches nor to take honored names. It was believed that once a person was captured and subjected to slavery he learned immoral behavior which stayed with him the rest of his life. It was also passed on to his children. If a free person ignored the objections of his family and married a slave, the offspring of the union were not regarded as slaves, but they operated under heavy social handicaps. In disputes they were sometimes taunted with their low origins. For this there was no appropriate answer except physical violence, which sometimes led to the death of the outraged attacker. Except for these restrictions,

¹The spelling of these terms has not been verified by Thom Hess.

slaves received good treatment in the Skagit Region, especially if they were valuable craftsmen. In aboriginal times there were very few people in the slave category.

Within the Skagit Region stratification of individuals within the village operated on a slightly different scale than stratification of villages. Members of a village community differed in their rank with respect to one another, those closest to the headman having slightly higher positions. In large villages the gamut of rank seems to have been represented, from slaves to wealthy upper-class leaders (Snyder n.d.: 173). Status differences within the longhouse were expressed by the position of the component families' quarters.¹ A similar pattern was followed in the location of longhouses in a large village. Evaluations of rank differences among followers of a headman were expressed when the headman-recipient of a potlatch redistributed gifts. Fine distinctions were also made when people reckoned the relative merits of prospective mates (Snyder n.d.:170).

But for some purposes, all free members of a village apparently shared approximately similar ranks. In everyday life, all respectable freemen distinguished themselves by their skills and access to resources. All voices could be heard in meetings of village adults. All freemen shared basic human rights. There was no noble class or king with divine authority. Nor were women unduly subjugated. With this in mind we may understand Snyder's informants who said, "In most villages everyone was deemed more or less important than everyone else" (Snyder n.d.:170). Only for the most important social and ceremonial occasions

¹See Snyder (n.d.:173) for a complete description.

did Skagit villagers attempt to define internal rank differences precisely.

In the context of the interethnic ceremony, members of a village shared approximately the same rank. Potlatches were frequently sponsored by all the family heads occupying a single great house (Suttles n.d.: 311). All those who shared in the sponsorship also shared in the glory. Their fortunes fell and rose together. Some communities were therefore spoken of as "high-class," and others as "low-class" (Suttles n.d.:304-305). Status was partially correlated with size, since larger villages could stage bigger feasts. A village leader was respected in the inter-ethnic context according to the number of his followers and the amount of labor and material he could command.

The question arises whether ethnic stratification of villages implies that a low-class person from a high ranking village would be shown more respect than a high-class leader of a low ranking village. There is insufficient evidence to answer this fully. Apparently it was possible to avoid embarrassing situations by dealing only with leaders of villages. Occasionally in a giveaway, one presented gifts only to village leaders, in amounts appropriate to their relative ranking, and expected them to redistribute the wealth at home among their lower ranking followers. In other contexts, such as selecting marriage partners, fine distinctions of relative ranks of individuals could involve lengthy group discussions.

During pre-contact times the class system in the Skagit Region was fairly stable. Social mobility occurred only in small increments. An important factor maintaining this stability was the limited supply of food and wealth, which remained fairly constant before the coming of

the Whites. Mobility occurred most frequently when an established village split.¹ Rifts sometimes developed when a segment of villagers disagreed with their headman's estimation of the rank of one of his subordinates.² The headman was supposed to follow majority opinion, but this was difficult with an insurrectionist in the community provoking a confrontation and leading a segment of the village to proclaim its disaffection by moving away. The chance of this development increased as the village grew in size and the numbers of lower class villagers became sufficiently large to encourage them to hope in time to compete with "good" people. The new leader was usually popular and skillful but not particularly well-to-do. Moving away, the dissident group had to start building its own fortune from scratch. No longer attached to a place of great prestige, members experienced a temporary drop in status. They had to work for several years to rebuild their position. In time, with success, the new community's population became stratified along similar lines as the parental village.

The inter-village invitational feast was the focus of traditions maintaining the status quo of rank. Its manifest purpose was not to compete or challenge other villages, as may have been the case among societies farther north. Good upper class leaders did not initiate offensives. Instead they merely corroborated the generally accepted evaluation of all invited recipients (Snyder n.d.:83). Most villagers thought of the potlatch as a way of helping one another, not shaming one

¹This description is taken from Snyder (n.d.:119-120).

²Another point of contention was how much belt-tightening was necessary for the villagers to afford sponsoring a large feast. They might have felt their headman was too demanding.

another. The real purpose was social, to validate status, like "shaking hands in a material way" (Snyder n.d.:83).

During early post-contact times, when a quantity of new wealth entered the system, social mobility increased. Villagers who previously could not have afforded to stage a potlatch now contended for high stations. At this time the old etiquette of potlatching impeded them.

Chiefs in newly formed villages, descendants of commoners, were but grudgingly admitted to the potlatch circle as invited guests. Especially if they had suddenly become exhuberantly wealthy, they were looked upon as conniving vulgarians without right to such good fortune. Their wealth would be overlooked at give-aways sponsored by hosts of the old guard, who contemptuously identified them instead with their former anonymity. And when arrivestees themselves pretentiously potlatched their betters, the elite who mattered would not acknowledge invitations. A potlatch of this kind was a fiasco. The etiquette of potlatching made it impossible that untested claimants to high station crash the society of Skagit bluebloods. Unless a parvenue village had steadily grown in numbers and prosperity over a generation or two, during which time its leaders had maintained a tongue-in-cheek servility on public occasions, it would never come to be accepted by old, influential villages as a worthy rival. Nouveau riche potlatchers lacked training for the manipulation of wealth and were liable to provoke, intentionally or unintentionally, embarrassing situations. That is, they might insult the pride of their august guests, which would only have to be avenged to no one's particular social or economic advantage (Snyder n.d.:100).

Newly rich villages were required to bide their time for many years, not openly challenging other villages for status. Carefully choosing the occasion for their first large potlatch, they sponsored "face-saving" giveaways which were not forthrightly competitive (Snyder n.d.:100). These gifts were given in atonement for the family's past negligence in living up to the siab ideal, so that those present would henceforth overlook those days.

Downward mobility also took place slowly. A usually prosperous village could maintain the standing of past seasons through temporary

bad luck. Its leader would be honored for his past generosity. He could defer loss of status by announcing his obligations on public occasions, hiring a spokesman to extoll the generosity of the guests and compare it with his own feeble, though well-meant efforts to be the same. Only repeated misfortunes of several consecutive years would reduce his standing enough to alter behavior towards him at invitational feasts.

The Skagits tell a folktale about the origin of the village sk^wadabs which illustrates social mobility in aboriginal times. In the tale there is an unusual fall from high position to low and a spectacular rise back again in the space of a single generation (Snyder n.d.:29-31; 132). One version tells of a legendary dispute between villagers on Whidbey Island which led some of the lower-class members to establish a new settlement. A more mythicized version begins with the cohabitation between an unmarried upper-class girl and a lower class man or slave, also represented as a dog. When she became pregnant, the girl was exiled by her people. Not aware of her lover's identity, they let her take along her dog as a companion. When the offspring were born, they were plainly dog-like, but as they grew up, they became more and more human. Working very hard, they eventually became prosperous. At last the girl's family honored them, recognizing their near equality. The community they founded made atonements for the misdeeds of their mother, sponsoring potlatches to erase the memory, so they could stand shoulder to shoulder with the best siab in the area.

The story of the dog-children also demonstrates the possible origin of a "slave" community. Suttles' informant Charley Edwards spoke of such a group on Whidbey Island, indicating that the members used to bring fuel in the wintertime to villagers on Fidalgo Island (Suttles n.d.:

304-305). It might be more accurate to describe it as a client village, subservient to another of higher status. Since returns of potlatch debts were matters of conscience, only moral authority enforced payment. It is conceivable that descendants of a mixed union wished to restore honor to their family by offering services to their creditors. After demonstrating financial solvency for many years, they were finally admitted as contenders in the potlatch.

From the above description it is possible to identify the processes that maintained differential control and distribution among aboriginal Skagit Region groups. Unequal access to resources was insured by a system of private ownership of many of the best sites, coupled with the requirement to make marriage alliances with the owners in order to get full use of the sites. In order to present an attractive offer of marriage, it was necessary to own other good resources and to demonstrate high status in inter-village feasting circles. Demonstration of high status depended upon storing quantities of food and wealth and showing good breeding, dignity, a knowledge of one's family history, and well-trained children. By exchanging material wealth for non-material status, Skagit Region villages enabled poorer groups to make it through winters of hardship without challenging the system of ownership of resource locales. By making marriage alliances with their powerful neighbors, Skagit Region villagers eliminated their most dangerous military opponents in the competition for land and resources.

Several other variables helped maintain this system of ethnic stratification. One was a shortage of food and wealth. Another was the availability of virgin territory for the establishment of new village sites. When disputes arose, a dissident faction did not foment

revolution, but pulled up stakes and removed itself, maintaining an attitude of public decorum. A high degree of consensus governed rules for evaluating high status, though there frequently were disagreements on how to rank individuals. As a result of these factors a large number of separate ethnic groups were voluntarily integrated into a regional network of friendly cooperation and peaceful competition.

Rules Governing Ethnic Interaction

In order for ethnic groups to continue to interact without having confrontation and modification of parts of their culture there must be a set of rules for inter-ethnic social encounters (Barth 1969:16). Such a code will allow them to interact but maintain their separate identities.

Stable inter-ethnic relations presuppose such a structuring of interaction: a set of prescriptions governing situations of contact, and allowing for articulation in some sectors or domains of activity, and a set of proscriptions on social situations preventing inter-ethnic interaction in other sectors. (Barth 1969:16)

It is possible to state each rule in two ways, first prescribing the preferred channel of ethnic interaction, second proscribing interaction outside the channel.

The most important rule in aboriginal Skagit Region ethnic relations was that a person could interact safely with members of other groups only if he were related to them; if he were not, he would avoid entering their territory. Every Skagit Region villagers had to know who his relatives were, both consanguineals and affinals. A hunter or traveler lost in strange territory might have to seek help from a village and thus have to prove he was no stranger. If a man could prove his blood relationship, he would be accepted and aided. If he could not, he might be taken captive.

Though this was seldom done, he might even be dealt with as a trespasser. According to the code, trespassers were thieves, kidnappers, and murderers, and could be killed and buried on the spot. For this reason children were taught to memorize their family trees, keeping track of distant collateral lines. Greeting one's relatives properly was also part of good etiquette at feasts. As more distant kinship relations were reinforced, one's circle of safe travel widened.

A corollary of this rule was that raids and large-scale feuds were waged only between strangers. Marriage between two communities guaranteed amnesty between members of each side, cancelling the possibility of war.¹ When raids on unrelated villages did take place, the offensive was taken by small parties of warriors whose objective was to massacre rather than take a single life to even a score. Such conflicts were checked only with difficulty. They might even be carried on for years by descendants of the people who started them (Snyder n.d.:427-428).

A third rule governing interaction between ethnic groups was that the blood feud between related villages should be avoided at all costs. If this prescription were disregarded, the village would suffer. Crimes of passion tended to develop into protracted feuds, which always led to a great number of deaths. They restricted travel and use of natural resources and created conflicts of loyalty for parties related to both sides. To avoid this situation relatives of a murdered man sometimes hired a third party to take their revenge, keeping their identity secret. But more important, children were raised to be aware of the serious consequences of acts of violence and taught to control themselves in

¹In post-contact times this rule broke down. See Snyder (n.d.: 435) for an account of cases in which it did.

moments of anger (Collins n.d.b.:14). Murder and adultery were therefore rare.

Village headmen sometimes had a hand in settling disputes. They appointed peace officers who cautioned hostile parties to stay at home until tempers cooled off. Arrangements were made for property settlements in amounts that would more than defray the victims' funeral expenses. These consisted of generous payments to persons who helped with funeral preparations, lesser contributions to those who attended the ceremonies, and an outlay of food served to family helpers, and witnesses.

Accidental homicide was also considered a disgrace. The family responsible might pay sums of blankets to the dead person's family "to wipe the tears off their faces, to wipe away the sorrow" (Snyder n.d.:395). Such payment was willingly made because the family "wanted to keep their record clean. They wanted to wipe the accusation out as well as a crime, real or unreal," that is, intentional or accidental (Snyder n.d.:395). The same disgrace was felt by the families of adulteresses.

When disputes were not patched up by property settlements, a cold war between two villages ensued. One side would hire a powerful shaman to use his powers to bring bad luck or ill health to members of the other family. Though few anthropologists' informants ever admitted having taken recourse to magic, many considered themselves to have been the victims. Sickness and death were frequently believed to stem from the actions of adversaries within the circle of acquaintanceship.

In the Skagit system of justice, offenses concerned only those personally affected by them. The principle of a crime against society

was unknown.¹ Those persons intimately associated with the doer were held jointly responsible for his deeds.

The fourth rule governing ethnic interaction concerned the marriage bond. To minimize the insecurities and tensions in affinal alliances, married women were expected to relinquish their old family ties for new ones. The love, respect, and identification of a wife with her husband and his family contributed a great deal of harmony between villages. When women were unable to submit to their husband's decisions, alliances became very fragile. Similarly, husbands who mistreated their wives endangered their villages' relationships. After many years of loyalty, women were rewarded by increased authority in their husband's villages, especially over younger women. Upon the death of her husband a woman might even keep her voice in his house.

Fifth, the marriage bond between families was supposed to signify equality of status. The ideal marriage proposal was conducted with dignity and respect, and sometimes involved lengthy negotiations. Frequently the groom's family would propose four times, through an intermediary. If, for example, the families were camped on opposite sides of a river, the intermediary was the one who canoed back and forth across the river. If the bride's family turned him down three times, but never vehemently, and on the fourth occasion, they did not reply at all, it signified they were willing to listen to more specific details of the offer. Thereupon the groom's family donned fur blankets and performed a song and dance of victory designed to impress the potential in-laws and

¹Court settlement, as found among certain Upper Skagit villages in post-contact times, probably resulted from the diffusion of new ideas from the Plateau accompanying the Prophet cult.

assure them they had made no mistake in their choice of a son-in-law. Afterward the groom's family offered a gift of property, the value of which was high enough to do honor to the bride's family, but not so high as to give the impression of purchasing the freedom of a slave. A blanket or basket would suffice. A very wealthy man would offer a canoe. Potlatches at the time of a wedding were rare. Usually a small feast was given by the bride's family. Formal exhortations were addressed to the young couple by the head of each family. The contract was concluded when the couple had borne children.

Economic exchanges between villages linked by marriage bonds were supposed to preserve balanced reciprocity. If property was not available when visiting co-parents-in-law presented gifts of food, the hosts might "pay" for the food with a song. Later on, the other side would follow suit. Allied villages were never asked to contribute at potlatches, nor were they treated as competitors. They were invited to play the role of witnesses to the event and to be impressed with the importance of the sponsoring family. Imbalances in the economic exchange between allied villages strained the relationship.

A sixth set of rules concerned ownership of property and territory. Consensus in this realm helped maintain peaceful relations between villages. There were many degrees of rights, public and private, and many classes of possessions, material and non-material.¹ The most important class of possessions for ethnic interaction was inherited resource locations. Private ownership of resource locations sometimes derived from the principle that a person owned the artifacts that he made. This

¹See Suttles (n.d.:52-54) for a complete description.

was extended to land when an investment of labor was required to make it productive. Clam beds and camas fields belonged to those who tended them. Reef net locations belonged to those who organized and directed the assembly and operation of the gear. Private rights such as these may have lapsed if ownership had not been demonstrated (Suttles n.d.:488-489). This could conceivably have happened if a family lacked children who continued the work for a number of years.

Other places in the Skagit Region, such as the mouth of the Skagit River, were considered public property, open to all villagers in the region. Although there is insufficient evidence to provide specific information, the land and resource ownership code probably had other complexities which enjoyed consensus among all the villages of the region. The ritual of asking permission to use privately-owned resources was one. The approximation of trespass to theft was another.¹

Public etiquette may also be conceived of as a set of rules governing ethnic interaction. Interethnic gatherings required elaborate ceremonies of welcome and thanks, calling witnesses, and giving gifts. A respectful manner was exhibited to avoid offending the feelings of guests. The guests had to show proper attention during long speeches and be able to speak as witnesses themselves if called upon. Maintenance of proper social distance was achieved by formalities of treating the members of the audience as siab, regardless of their real status. Non-related persons were never criticized in public or in their own presence. To do so was grossly improper, even dangerous. The least bit of hostility or

¹See Snyder (n.d.:432) for a description of a code protecting hunting grounds from looting, equating trespass with theft.

innuendo was humiliating and required the taking of revenge. Being overlooked at a public gathering was taken as a snub.

Behind the etiquette for ceremonial occasions was a set of beliefs surrounding the symbolism for food.¹ Man, being part of nature, was believed unable to control it. Only spirit powers had the ability to control nature. They were outside and above the natural biological order. They were pure. In their appeal to the supernaturals for aid, men attempted to transcend their natural biological state by fasting, bathing, and abstaining from sexual relations and mundane social intercourse. Unable ever to achieve the ultimate purity of supernaturals, men could only reach a condition that was slightly less repugnant to the spirit powers, so that they would not be shunned.

Success in the quest for the help of a guardian spirit made daily living easier. However, any portion of food unnecessary for nurturance was an embarrassment of riches. A sign of possible weakness and greed, it represented the impure and inferior part of human nature. In order to prove high moral status, one publicly removed the temptation to excess indulgence. Giving food away therefore enabled hosts to purify themselves spiritually as well as gain status in the ethnic field. Guests at a feast actually helped hosts by accepting the food. No one could give if there were no one to receive.²

¹See Snyder (n.d.:100-109) in her discussion of the food-wealth-spirit power syndrome. This belief system is induced from themes of Skagit folklore.

²Unlike village members in societies farther north, Skagit Regioner people deplored the destruction of food and wealth. It was not deemed proper to be a glutton at a feast, either. Guests carefully wrapped up and took home what food they could not eat.

A favorite theme in Skagit folklore was the bungling host. Usually played by Raven, the bungling host misunderstood the supernatural origin of food. Failing to acknowledge the source of the gift, he impiously pretended the food stemmed from his own ingenuity or luck. Raven owned no resources that could account for his spectacular food production. Mimicking the urbane host, he sung other persons' spirit songs, going through the motions which he thought would automatically yield food for his guests. Rather than purifying himself by giving a feast, he was intent only on satisfying his own hunger.

In real life, Skagit villagers occasionally found themselves in situations where their host seemed crass and irreverent. This was a difficult position. They did not want to abase themselves by giving recognition to an unworthy candidate. On the other hand, it would have been undignified to comment or criticize the event at the time it was happening. On such occasions, the etiquette of the precarious guest-host relationship acquired a compulsive quality (Snyder n.d.:465).

The final set of rules governing ethnic interaction which will be discussed here is the procedures involved in the invitational feast.¹ There were many kinds of feasts given during aboriginal times. This one was selected for special attention because of its large size and because it was the primary arena for ethnic status competition. It was the means by which the villages granted formal recognition to the most wealthy villages. Not all villages could afford to give an invitational feast. It required a special house and a large outlay of food and wealth. In most cases Skagit Region potlatches were sponsored by a group of

¹The material in this description relies heavily on Suttles (n.d.:308-317).

several hosts from a village. Few individual leaders were wealthy enough to shoulder the burden alone. The invitational feast was essentially a pooling of occasions for the demonstration of status and the payment of debts to other villages received in previous intercommunity gatherings (Suttles n.d.:310). A person who had achieved a change of personal status and wanted to bear an honorific name or perform a privileged ceremony invited leaders of other villages to be present at his installation. They conferred status upon him by their presence. For this they received gifts of food, to eat and take home with them, and of wealth, such as blankets and baskets. It was expected that these gifts would be returned on some future occasion of a similar nature.

Only well-to-do village leaders were issued invitations to be guests or competitors because only they could be expected to make the return invitation at a later date. However they were expected to bring other members of their family with them. These persons would not receive gifts personally, but they would be fed, would enjoy the spectacle, and would perhaps have a chance to pick up something at the "scramble." Each host figured the number of gifts and the amount of food by using little stick counters. Messengers were then dispatched to deliver the sticks to guests, announcing their meaning. If the event was sponsored jointly by several hosts, guests might receive more than one invitation. Women received invitations as well as men.

Approaching the potlatch community on the appointed day, a party of guests would sometimes sing a war or wealth song and dance in its canoes, or planks laid across them (Suttles n.d.:314). A contest of mock warfare between guests was sometimes held (Collins n.d.b.:32). This struggle removed any feeling of bad blood between the two groups,

ensuring the peace of the occasion. Games, gambling, trading, singing, dancing, and masked performances took place for several days. The sponsoring families gave privileged performances, their inherited right. The final paying off took place on the last day. Each host had his speaker, an orator with knowledge of all guests' names. The host stood with his wealth piled high on a platform in front of the house or on the roof. He sang a war or wealth song, then distributed gifts as his speaker called out the names. What was left was thrown from the platform for a "scramble." Sometimes the property was distributed at random from a platform on two canoes floating on the bay or river (Collins n.d.b.:32). Minor contests occasionally took place in which a young man, wishing to establish himself, challenged an older distinguished man to a duel (Collins n.d.b.:32). He piled blankets on the old man; the latter repeatedly asked him for more. If the young man could continue until the old man stopped asking, he gained prestige at the other's expense, because the number had increased beyond the old man's ability to repay. At the end of the whole affair, there was a feast.

The sponsor of an event expressed his recognition of the status of different guests in the amount of gifts he presented to each one. It was an insult not to meet up to someone's status, or to give disproportionately to a person unable to repay it. The goal was to correctly estimate public sentiment regarding the status of each guest.

A wealthy man, through very generous donations, could persuade guests to "forget" ancestors or acts which caused a blot on his record (Snyder n.d.:81). This was the "face-saving" giveaway. His genealogy would be recited, eulogizing honored forebears and omitting those names he wished to be forgotten. His good deeds would be recounted without

mention of the bad one meant to be overlooked. The eradication of shame may have taken four such potlatches, involving a man's whole lifetime.

Gifts on formal occasions were expected to be returned, but in real life the returns was not always forthcoming. Interest, though well thought of, was not obligatory (Suttles n.d.:495). It is easy to see why, in this society of such little surplus, potlatches were rarely held in aboriginal times. Descriptions of property contests, investments and interest were actually descriptions of post-contact developments in the Skagit Region, or of aboriginal customs in societies farther north.

Adherence to the foregoing rules or sets of rules bound the Skagit Region ethnic groups together into a network of voluntary reciprocities. The most general way to describe their system might be to say it embodied the politics of hospitality. Each village alternated taking the role of host and guest in a series of ritualized encounters. The atmosphere of the encounter was personal. The style of the participants was to appear respectable, generous, and powerful, without having to "blow their own horn." They avoided confrontation with other parties on public occasions, unless the matter was extremely serious.

Summarizing briefly, we have found that Skagit Region villagers developed the following rules and sets of rules to govern ethnic relations. First, a person could interact safely with members of other villages only if he were related to them; if he were not, he was supposed to avoid their territory. Secondly, raids and large-scale feuds were staged only between strangers. Marriage ties guaranteed safe passage. Third, a person from one village was required to settle a dispute with someone from another ethnic group by arranging a property settlement

through their village headmen; direct impulsive action led to blood feuds. Fourth, the good wife was expected to demonstrate loyalty to her new husband's group; she relinquished her old family ties. Fifth, the marriage bond signified equality of status, and balanced reciprocity; imbalances strained the relationship. Sixth, a person seeking to use another village's resources established a marriage alliance or asked the owner's permission; he did not muscle in without showing recognition of the other's ownership. Seventh, on ceremonial occasions, etiquette demanded the maintenance of proper social distance; to mention another party's internal weaknesses was highly insulting, perhaps even calling for retaliation through competitive gift-giving. Finally, at invitational feasts, a Skagit Region villager followed expected procedures and expressed publicly recognized estimations of village ranks; deviation was interpreted as an unsportsmanlike challenge.

The above list is not meant to be exhaustive, only representative of the rules governing ethnic interaction in aboriginal times. They maintained the system of ethnic stratification, minimized conflict, and reinforced the boundaries between ethnic groups.

Leadership Strategy

Leadership strategy is an important topic for consideration during aboriginal times, although Barth (1969:33) saves it for treatment as a subcategory of culture contact and change. Aboriginal times are usually thought of as times of stability, relative to the amount of change that occurred after the intrusion of Whites. Village leaders' goals were centered around improving the status and security of their own tiny community.

In aboriginal times Skagit Region village headmen gained their wealth as good fishermen, hunters, warriors, shamen, craftsmen, and owners of reef nets, deer nets, clam beds, or fish traps. Their authority was limited to activities associated with these culturally patterned roles. For example, a shaman could direct others during winter spirit dances, curing ceremonies, and funerals and memorials. He could not, however, exercise authority on other occasions by virtue of his role as a shaman (Collins n.d.b.:43-44). No leader spoke with authority for others beyond his own family without receiving permission. To do so would have been overstepping the bounds of his legitimate authority.

Though authority was limited, power was extensive. A man of wealth controlled the affairs of many others by providing or withholding help and by regulating the number of occasions for the expenditure of food and wealth. A leader earned considerable influence within his village by exercising personal talents in organizing and coordinating work groups and time schedules. The villagers met each spring to discuss working schedules and organize crews. Those planning large feasts in the fall solicited volunteers. Those possessing rights to special resources let these be known. Wealthy household heads were usually at the center of these planning sessions. Others delegated to them the task of organizing and coordinating the whole year's itinerary. For large villages of several hundred as many as two dozen exchange parties would have to be arranged during the seven-month food cycle (Snyder n.d.:73). Sometimes the complex planning work was shared by several men.

The goal was to collect a variety of foods for potlatch guests. To have only one or two staples left to feed them during the winter celebration would be a disaster. A second goal of planning was to balance

the amount collected with the amount to be expended. If the village headman planned to invite a large powerful competitor, he must have enough on hand to feed several hundred people for several days. To accomplish these goals several work parties were sent out to harvest different products simultaneously. Some activities required large scale organization -- the cooperation of fifty or sixty men -- others could be performed by families working individually. Women played as important a part as men, butchering and drying salmon and smelt catches, digging roots, and collecting weaving materials. The best village headmen created efficient work schedules for all these people.

Village headmen also had a hand in coordinating village marriage alliances. In order to create a balanced system of foreign relations, they parcelled out marriage ties to different households. A good selection of allies would give access to all the resources needed for the year's subsistence. It would also attract a wide range of personnel to the community as residents. A wealthy leader might persuade his daughter's husband to come to live in their village, especially if the groom had special talents.

The culmination of the village headman's feats of coordination took place when he sponsored an invitational feast. In several days intensive activity, he commandeered all the villagers' surpluses and new manufactures (given away as gifts), their labors (in preparing and serving food), their ingenuity (in organizing games and entertainment), and their good will (as hosts).

For their assistance the headman rewarded his followers with shares of the wealth and food he received as a guest at other villages' potlatches and feasts. As he divided up the wealth, the followers received public

recognition and affirmation of their rank within the village. In fairness to his adherents, he tried to maintain the status quo, giving to each according to how he had received. The successful village headman also elevated the prestige of individuals in his group in the outside regional competition. This allowed them to make better marriage alliances and perhaps to eventually sponsor a feast for their own personal occasions for celebration.

The village headman had several political strategies for increasing the rank of his group in the regional competition. One was to obligate the leaders of smaller villages by making periodic gifts to them. When planning a grand affair, he called in all small debts, projecting the appearance of leadership over several villages. Further control over other villages was acquired by making promises of future contributions or by refusals to contribute at times undesirable for his own purposes. In order to prevent leaders of smaller villages from combining forces to confront his own major competitors, the successful headman encouraged competition among them. He thus stifled independent action challenging his own status. After the time of White contact, the patterns of wealth redistribution among Skagit Region village leaders built up hierarchies of obligations to high levels. These leadership hierarchies gave the appearance of band and tribal organization where previously none had existed.

Change of Ethnic Affiliation by Individuals

Many different processes may induce a flow of personnel across ethnic boundaries, among them the discovery of economic incentives in another group's territory. The stability of the demographic balance

between ethnic groups may be upset by the flow if conditions are right (Barth 1969:23). When change of affiliation is achieved by uxori-local or virilocal marriage two conditions must be met. First, there must be cultural mechanisms to implement incorporation. Secondly, there must be the incentive of obvious advantages to the assimilating person (Barth 1969:22).

In the aboriginal Skagit Region flow of women across ethnic boundaries was the cultural norm, though this was not the case for men. This pattern by itself tended to produce demographic balance between ethnic groups except in the case where women outnumbered men. There may have been other conditions which upset the balance which we have little record of.

In the Skagit Region a new wife was expected to identify with her husband and his people. Though her incorporation may have been slow, the marriage alliance between two villages, as well as her marriage, depended upon it. The birth of a child speeded her assimilation. Occasionally a man moved to the village his wife, probably at the invitation of his father- or brothers-in-law. To change villages meant a temporary decline in status because the newcomer had to accept the senior authority of the men born there, perhaps the village founders. He would be attracted to it only if the village were large and prestigious in the regional competition. In that case he might experience a net gain in status. His incorporation could be facilitated by his own efforts to make himself a valuable economic producer for the group.

Individuals occasionally changed village affiliations because of personal difficulties in their homes. They usually went to the village of maternal relatives or more distant cousins. The process frequently

began as a series of temporary visits, perhaps in several related villages, until the individual found a comfortable place with relatives eager to take him in.¹

Families or groups of families rarely moved long distances. Occasionally, however, they would become dissatisfied and leave their home. They might go to their maternal relatives' village or start a new one of their own close to the old one.

Phyletic Processes

The most common phyletic process operating in the Skagit Region from the last Ice Age up to White contact was probably fission. Old villages would split over a political issue and a branch of dissidents establish a new group. After many years, when the new village had become stratified like the old, another branch might split off from it. The specific events leading to the founding of each new branch might be forgotten or rendered into myth. A feeling might remain that the people of the several villages were descendants from a common ancestor, though they would not be able to specify how. This sequence of events would account for the proliferation of villages throughout the Skagit Region from the time of its first settlement.²

¹The only case I have found involved a Plateau man who brought his family across the Cascades into Upper Skagit territory to escape the personal threats of an enemy shaman.

²The picture of village fission in aboriginal times is obscured by a possible pattern of establishing multiple winter residences in some areas of the Skagit Region. Elmendorf (1960:269) describes the custom practiced by Twana upper-class men of establishing a second residence. A small plank house was built at the summer fishing station where the owner expected to spend several weeks each year. Occasionally a household leader took up permanent winter residence in one of his plank houses at a new site, bringing his entire household with him (Elmendorf 1960:270). Over a

The second phyletic process operating in the aboriginal Skagit Region was ethnic fusion. This occurred when a poor village inter-married for many years with a wealthier village, sending both men and women to live with their mates' families in the wealthy village. Eventually the poorer village was abandoned, its personnel completely incorporated into the other village. The old affiliation may even have disappeared as a separate ethnic identity.¹

The phenomenon of phyletic fusion apparently resulted from the difficulty of maintaining reciprocity and equality of exchange between closely related communities. The exercise of marital alliance privileges sometimes proceeded beyond the point where a family camped with their in-laws for several weeks during the year to the point where the whole village embarked to settle down with their in-laws for several months (Snyder n.d.:390). Throughout the year there were protracted visits between these villagers-in-law. The direction of migration always pointed toward the more favorable resource area.²

Village fission and fusion operated simultaneously within the

period of years a pattern of an extended winter village community was created. The separate local units did not act socially or in the seasonal food quest as independent groups (Elmendorf 1960:257).

No such pattern is mentioned in ethnographic sources for the Skagit Region, but it might have been overlooked. A possible location for multi-site village communities is Penn Cove, Whidbey Island, where archaeological evidence shows miles of continuous house groups (Bryan 1963:Fig.1). The area was very wealthy and would likely have had leaders rich enough to establish additional residences if they wanted to.

¹Specific evidence to bear on this point is lacking.

²Snyder (n.d.:391) mentions four instances of village fusion around Skagit Bay just prior to the Reservation Era. Epidemic diseases with associated declines in Skagit Region population probably contributed to this tendency.

Skagit Region for centuries, creating a pattern of abandonment and re-occupation of village sites. This has lent enormous difficulty to the task of enumerating ethnic groups in aboriginal times, as has been seen.

CONCLUSION

The Indians of the Skagit Region lived according to the pattern described above for many centuries, perhaps even millenia. The distinctiveness of their pattern of ethnic relations is worthy of further research. Comparison with other regions north and south along the Pacific Coast and inland to the Plateau, Great Basin, and Plains would reveal which dimensions of it were shared with neighbors.

The picture suffers, as all history must when it is written centuries after it happened, according to a newly-derived scientific scheme, using old sources. There is insufficient direct evidence on many important points, for example, on instances of phyletic fission and fusion, on changing ethnic affiliation by individuals, and on specific cultural traits functioning as diacritica for ethnic group membership. The meshing of personal individual and collective ethnic stratification bears further elaboration. The general, systematic approach provided by Barthian analysis raises questions that will never be properly answered. This should not be seen as a weakness if the questions are important and if they are related to historical developments of later times.

CHAPTER III

THE MEETING OF THE SKAGIT REGION PEOPLE WITH THE WHITE MEN (1792-1850)

INTRODUCTION

The first White men to enter the Skagit Region were transients, sent out to accomplish specific tasks and return to their homelands. The period of their early visitations lasted from 1792 until almost 1850. After that time a new breed of Whites came, seeking permanent residence. Historical evidence indicates that the Skagit Region villagers welcomed the transient White visitors and treated them as guests, exhibiting great hospitality. Village headmen conducted tours for the explorers. They formed liaisons with the traders and eagerly took lessons on Christianity from the missionaries. Frequently Skagit village headmen made journeys of a day or two to meet the strangers, to see and talk to them. The settlers and miners who began arriving after 1850 were met with far less enthusiasm. Their presence provoked a direct confrontation over who was to own the land.

This chapter will report the consequences of ethnic contacts between the Skagit Region people and the early White explorers, traders, and missionaries. During the sixty years of early contact, the Indians' way of life underwent fundamental changes. Little folk knowledge of this period remains among Indian elders, but earlier generations were contacted by anthropologists, and several lines of development were researched. To fill in the gaps, the reader may need to activate his historical

imagination.

An understanding of these early changes is necessary to bridge the gap between the aboriginal Skagit Region village and the birth of the Swinomish Reservation community. Since the first White men entered their waters, the Indians have struggled with the process of ethnic reidentification.

THE FIRST WHITES ENTER

Explorers

The Pacific Northwest Coast was first explored and mapped by navigators in sailing ships working their way up from California. Other ships made their way over from Russia, along the Aleutian Island chain. The ships' captains competed among themselves as representatives of different nations, each seeking to expand its political influence in the New World.

The Spanish, British, and American governments all gained a foothold in the Skagit Region in the early 1800's. In 1791, Manuel Quimper, a Spaniard, sailed down the Straits of Juan de Fuca, reaching Fidalgo Island. He was followed the same year by Navarez, another Spaniard, surveying the entire San Juan Archipelago, including Padilla Bay. British Captain George Vancouver came the next year; surveying points farther south of the Skagit Region, into Puget Sound. The United States did not send out ships until much later. The newly-formed government was preoccupied with problems on the east side of the continent. Finally around 1805 it dispatched Lewis and Clark by overland route to the mouth of the Columbia River. Not until 1841 did an American ship, commanded by Charles Wilkes, make a thorough hydrographic survey of Puget Sound.

The early nautical explorers wanted to buy furs (especially sea otter skins) and take them to China where they could get high prices for them. The Skagit Region villagers missed the intensive fur trade, however. The fur trade peaked several years before 1792 and was already on the downswing by the time the Skagit Region was entered. By 1821 a change in fashions and the near extinction of the sea otters brought a considerable decline (AFSC 1971:10-11). Furthermore, the waters of Puget Sound never held the large quantity of these prized animals that the open ocean coast or the northern interior of the continent did. The first contacts between Skagit Region villagers and nautical explorers were thus brief and infrequent.

Sea-going explorers looking for the fabled Northwest Passage hoped the Straits of Juan de Fuca would lead far into the interior of the continent. Disappointed in this hope, they discovered only the Gulf of Georgia and Puget Sound.

The explorers' prime motive was to acquire political control over new territory for their mother country. They laid claim to territory by right of discovery. Since both the Spanish and British had given formal recognition to the occupancy rights of the Indians, this right was understood to hold only against other European powers. The Spanish and British had proclaimed the Indians true owners of the land and said it could not be taken from them except in fair trade (McNickle 1962:11 and 24). Nevertheless, when disputes arose over which European nation would settle a region, the Europeans always worked out their differences without consulting the Indian inhabitants (AFSC 1970:12).

The area north of the Columbia River, now known as the State of Washington, changed status several times. In 1818 the United States and

Great Britain signed a ten-year agreement of joint occupancy. With this compact, they edged the other powers out. Spain and Russia both withdrew from the area (AFSC 1970:11). The pact remained in effect until 1846, when the final borderline between the U.S. and Canada was worked out.

Negotiations with the Indian owners of the territory did not take place until several years afterwards. If the Indians were concerned about these pacts, they could do little to stop them. Their opinions were never formally solicited, let alone regarded as the wishes of the rightful owners of the land. The Whites insured that when the time came to purchase the Indians' territory they would not compete against one another to offer a good price.

With knowledge of previous ethnic encounters between colonialists and natives elsewhere, Whites could predict the future developments in the Pacific Northwest Coast. They knew the temperate climate and rich natural resources would eventually attract many White immigrants. They could foresee a confrontation with the Indians over ownership of the land, the Whites' victory due to superior military technology. They understood the cultural institutions that would probably be set up. They had seen farms, towns, and cities.

The Indians, on the other hand, had only fragmentary knowledge of the Whites. When the explorers arrived, the Indians were already acquainted with trade artifacts of European origin. These were brought from the interior and the south by native traders before the arrival of the first European sailing ship (Barnett 1955:69; Bryan 1963:90; Wagner 1933:35). Some information about their source accompanied the artifacts, yet much was lacking. White culture differed from the Skagits' more than that of any other ethnic group in the range of their experience.

Breaking their own tradition, the Skagit Region people gave the White strangers a cordial welcome. When Galiano and Valdez sailed down the Guemes Channel, the Indian residents of the village greeted them in canoes laden with blackberries and shellfish for trade. The Guemes people also brought a doghair blanket "quilted" with duck feathers, their finest handicraft (Wagner 1933:246). The Whidbey and Camano Island residents presented Lieutenant Whidbey, of Captain Vancouver's party, with woven mats and other articles of trade (Bryan 1963:15). A middle-aged village leader took charge of showing them hospitality, gave them water, roasted roots, dried fish, and other food. Wearing Spanish and English swords at his sides, he exhibited great decorum and treated them as visiting dignitaries. Later he conducted them on a tour of the local waters. Despite this comprehension of the explorers' needs and wants, he and his people had never seen white skin before. Their curiosity was not satisfied until the palefaces opened their waistcoats to bare their chests.

When Lieutenant Whidbey visited Penn's Cove, he encountered a deserted village and some graves. The skeletons of many young children tied up in blankets seemed to indicate that this region had also been visited by epidemic diseases.

Fur Traders

Soon after the explorers British and American fur traders travelled along the coastline and across the interior, following the Columbia and Fraser Rivers. The Spanish established a post at Nootka Sound at a very early date. Other posts were scattered north from that point to Alaska. In the interior, five posts were established between 1807 and 1818 (Coan

n.d.:35). At the mouth of the Columbia River Fort Astoria was founded, at the head of the Willamette, Fort Vancouver. All these early posts were located hundreds of miles from the Skagit Region.

In 1827, just north of the Skagit Region, on the Fraser River, Fort Langley was founded. In 1833 Fort Niqually came along in southern Puget Sound, and in 1848 Fort Victoria, directly west on Vancouver Island. These three posts were all within easy travelling distance of the Skagit Region and provided the first regular direct contact which the Skagit Region Indians had with the White man. By the 1840's the Hudson's Bay Company was using the Swinomish Slough as a trading route (Jeffcott 1949: 423).

Throughout the Northwest generally, the Indians received the fur traders as cordially as they had the explorers.¹ Traders were the first White men many villagers encountered in face-to-face interaction. Only later, when fur traders began to use the Indians' land to set up permanent residences, with building and fences, did conflicts begin to arise. The stubborn traders then responded to the Indians' objections by building stockades around the posts and started housing detachments of soldiers inside. The trading posts thus came to be known as forts.

Large trading corporations came to have crucial importance in the early ethnic relations in the Pacific Northwest. The policies of these companies embodied a wide range of racial attitudes. Since all profits depended upon the willingness of the Indians to engage in trade, the companies were faced with a difficult problem when the Indians declined

¹O. B. Sperlin (1916:1-43) examined the journals of scores of Europeans who visited the Pacific Northwest between 1741 and 1812 and substantiated the Indians' initial hospitality in at least a hundred cases of first contact with the Whites.

to participate. White exponents of a hard line policy¹ felt that unwilling Indians should be punished, taught a lesson, and even exterminated in order to establish respect for the Whites (Coan n.d.:35). This attitude engendered incidents which cost many lives on both sides.² Sometimes the Indians refused to sell furs or horses because the price was too low; Whites then forced the transaction or just stole the goods. Other practices included killing suspected Indian horse thieves and pilferers (Coan n.d.:25-35).

Such hard-line policies provoked hostilities in which Whites retaliated in escalating proportions. Being outnumbered and far from home made Whites particularly insecure.³ In a large-scale serious encounter with the Indians, they could only stand to lose. They hoped that by demonstrating extreme belligerence and threats of greater fire power they could scare the Indians into compliance. They could improve their chances by holding off large-scale encounters until their numbers increased and their military support arrived.

Most of these small-scale ethnic conflicts took place on the eastern side of the Cascade Mountains, on the Columbia River, and at Nootka Sound. The Indians in those areas experienced decades of ethnic

¹Such a man was Ogden when he encountered the unfriendly Modocs in the vicinity of Fort Hall (now Idaho).

²For example, at Nootka Sound, the trading ship's captain, in an angry fit, struck an Indian leader, causing a battle in which the entire ship was blown up, killing the crew as well as many Indians (Coan n.d.:11).

³The precarious position of Whites at Fort Walla Walla (now in Washington State) led them to exclude Indians from the fort and to pass trade goods back and forth through a hole in the stockade wall (Coan n.d.:24).

conflict and innumerable battles with Whites. In the Skagit Region, however, the Indians were fortunate in being spared the hard-line pugnacious policies.¹ Most traders in the Skagit Region pursued more peaceable policies. When conflicts arose, they followed Indian customs, offering property settlements for insult and injuries.

Between 1830 and 1840 trading relations west of the Cascades were dominated by the Hudson's Bay Company. When John McLoughlin took over management, he attempted to establish a policy of benevolence and tolerance. He personally negotiated with the leaders involved.² McLoughlin believed in supplying articles of ammunition to friendly Indians whether or not they had the means of paying. He encouraged inter-marriage of Indians and traders and aided half-breeds in getting education. Under his leadership, the company established agricultural settlements of retired employees, squaws, and half-breeds, and their Indian relatives. To this benevolent trading policy may be credited the maintenance of many years of peaceful relations with the Indians in Northern Puget Sound.

This policy was not based upon purely altruistic motivations, however. Since the interior waters of Puget Sound lacked large sea mammals and otters yielding highly prized pelts, the British-owned Hudson's Bay Company was more interested in establishing trading ties for their consequent political influence among the Indians than for fur profits.

¹Only one case of extreme belligerence by Whites during this early period has come to my attention, and it was not directed against the Skagit Region people, but their neighbors. In 1828 five traders from Fort Langley were killed by Clallam tribesmen just west of the Skagit Region (Etmatinger 1914:197). In retaliation the traders sent an expedition against the Clallams in which they fired upon a whole village, killing the inhabitants indiscriminantly.

²His family claims that he even punished White employees of the company who troubled the Indians (Coan n.d.:57).

Up until 1846, the territory north of the Columbia River was jointly claimed by Great Britain and the U.S. Two trading posts -- Fort Langley operated by the British in the north and Fort Nisqually operated by the Americans in the south -- competed for influence and friendship among the Indian residents of the area between them.

The Indians distinguished these two types of White men, calling the Americans "Bostons" and the British "King George men." Frequently the village headman adopted the names of European bluebloods.¹ Although the Whites who first suggested the grandiose titles had probably intended them as a derogatory slur (Langness 1959:57), the Indian bearers did not recognize this at first, and bore them with honor. There is some evidence they were more attracted to the British,² but Skagit Region people spent considerable time visiting Fort Nisqually. The Americans might have been less willing than the British to recognize the legitimacy of the native rights and land title, since the Americans were involved in a battle to push Indians off their land in the east part of the continent. The difference in British and American trading policies probably helped to call forth different responses by the Indians towards the British and American national characters.

In preparation for a trip to the trading post, the Indians collected quantities of beaver, deer, bear, and rodent skins. At the post they

¹Clallams took names such as the Duke of York, Queen Victoria, and others. Lummi took the names of American statesmen, Washington and Jefferson. A Snohomish headman, apparently feeling the influence of French Catholic priests, called himself Napoleon. A Lower Skagit called himself General Pierce.

²One source, An Uncommon Controversy (1970:15-16) alludes to different affections towards British and Americans, saying, "The relations between the Indians and the 'King George men' were close and cooperative, in contrast to those with the 'Bostons.'"

received food, articles of clothing, blankets, yardage, traps, alcohol, tools, guns, iron cooking pots, and items suitable for potlatch disposal. The first food items were of a supplementary nature rather than a basic item of diet -- bread, molasses, potatoes, peas for planting, and later sugar. Sweet and starchy food were not plentiful in the aboriginal diet and were very desirable.

The most attractive items to the Indians were often in short supply. This enabled traders to virtually dictate the terms of trade. Traders often had many bolts of yardage, but few tools. Guns, always in demand, were given to northern groups at Fort Rupert as early as 1790 (Suttles n.d.:319), yet restricted in the Skagit Region.¹ Alcohol, at first supplied as rum, was banned by McLoughlin in 1833 (Collins n.d.b.:87). In early trading years such restrictions were enforceable, but they later became impractical. Independent traders and smugglers moved into the Skagit Region and began supplying alcohol to the Indians covertly.

The native groups located around Fort King George, at Victoria, profited immensely from their close association with the White trading posts (Collins n.d.b.:38-40). The Sooke, Sanetch, Cowichan, and Comox acquired wealth enabling them to set potlatching standards emulated by southern neighbors. Skagit Region people accorded these wealthy groups considerable prestige. They were astonished at the amount of property and the type of articles given away by the potlatchers from Victoria (Collins n.d.b.:40). As well as surplus food, the Victoria Indians threw guns, bundles of blankets, and even coin money.²

¹Further research might explain this discrepancy in the dates of acquisition of firearms by northern and southern Indians.

²These practices heightened after the beginning of the Reservation

During the early part of this period, when trading contacts were still restricted by long travel times, saltwater village headmen served as middlemen between their people and the traders. The merchants, not wanting to deal with scores of small dealers, encouraged headmen to collect furs from village-mates, bring them in, and take back blankets, shirts, cloth, and traps for redistribution. Some of these native businessmen achieved considerable wealth. Snatelum, of Whidbey Island, was one of the first in his area to make such arrangements with the Whites (Collins n.d.b.:47-48). Another Lower Skagit, General Pierce, profited by arranging transportation services for the Whites.

Most Skagit Region Indians welcomed the new trading opportunities. Village headmen especially enjoyed the new wealth and stature. As a result of this and the benevolent trading policies, there were relatively few incidents of severe conflict between traders and Skagit Region Indians at this early time.

Christian Missionaries

The Indian people were deeply concerned with spiritual education. Even before the White priests arrived native missionaries travelled to distant missions and trading posts to augment their knowledge of Christianity by receiving religious instruction. Returning home, they preached to their own people. Some made extensive journeys to tribes they had never seen before.

Their conversion was facilitated by their perception of

Period, and the Skagit Region people began to give away new kinds of trade goods at their own potlatches. Eventually, among the Swinomish Reservation Indians, the search for new items to give away became a kind of "sport" among leading families, according to Tandy Wilbur Sr., Swinomish Reservation elder.

similarities between their native beliefs and the doctrines of Christianity. According to one native view, one picked up where the other left off:

While the native Tamanowas doctrine, in which each person inherited or acquired a spirit guide, was earthly and assisted the Indian only in his daily living, it did not tell him that there was an overall power controlling the universe, the Great Spirit, and that man's spirit did not die, but advanced from one spirit world to another on its journey to the Happy Hunting Ground. The Indian observed the similarity of the two doctrines -- the life unseen with bodily eyes, the spirit in man, the life that never dies, but lives beyond the grave -- and was readily converted (Sampson 1972:13).

The words of Spokane Garry¹ may have reached the Skagit Region in the early 1830's (Sampson 1972:16). Iroquois Indians from eastern Canada, working for fur trading companies on the Columbia River brought the Catholic doctrine (Sampson 1972:14). Although they may not have had direct contact with the Skagit Region peoples, they probably helped spread a rudimentary knowledge of Christian principles before the black-robed priests arrived.

Another self-appointed Indian missionary brought a form of Catholicism directly into the upper Skagit Valley from eastern Washington. He was called Stlabebtikud (sṭəbibtəqəd) and has descendants in the Upper Skagit Campbell family. June Collins (n.d.a:55-62; n.d.:57-60) has written a short biography of this important Indian leader and a description of the Catholic-Prophet cult² which he developed.

¹Garry was a Spokane Indian who had been educated in Winnipeg, Manitoba, in a mission school run by the Church of England. After leaving he returned to eastern Washington and spent almost his entire life working among the Indians there. His influence probably reached the Skagit Region through the northern route across the Cascades.

²See Spier, Leslie

1938 The Prophet Dance of the Northwest and Its Derivatives: The Source of the Ghost Dance. General Series in Anthropology, No. 1. Menasha: George Banta Publishing Co., 1938. p. 35.

Stlabebtikud's father, who bore the same name, originally came across the Cascades from Nespelim, in the Okanogan country, to live in a salt-water village at the mouth of the Snohomish River. Marrying a girl from the Skagit village at Big Lake who bore him a son, Stlabebtikud maintained his family contacts across the mountains in the Plateau. In the course of his visits, he became acquainted with Catholic-Prophet cults which had sprung up among the Plateau people. As the years passed, he began to preach in the Skagit Region, and became known as the Prophet.¹ He constructed a big wooden house on an island in the Skagit River which was used as a church in the summer and a traditional smokehouse in the winter. His cult observed some elements of Catholic ritual, such as making the sign of the cross before meals, kneeling in prayer, and observing Sunday (Collins n.d.b.:58). It also incorporated Prophet Dance beliefs of the end of the world, the coming of the Whites, and the downfall of Indian culture. A strong political leader, Stlabebtikud united several villages under the authority vested in him by his cult leadership. When the first White resident priest, Father Casimir Chirouse, came into the Skagit Region, Stlabebtikud served as an interpreter for him, since the priest spoke only an Interior Salishan language, close to that of the Indian leader's original homeland. Stlabebtikud's association with the Catholic priest increased his knowledge of Christianity and augmented his prestige among his own people until he became one of the most powerful leaders the Upper Skagit villages had ever produced.

In Lower Skagit territory, on Whidbey Island, several village leaders served as self-appointed Christian missionaries:

¹There is some uncertainty whether this was the father or the son.

Tslalakum,¹ Snatelum, and Witskalatche. They visited the trading post established at Nisqually House in 1833 and received brief religious instruction from the trader, Dr. William Fraser Tolmie. Tolmie, frustrated by the insurmountable language barrier, finally gave up (Sampson 1972:14). The Indian leaders, still interested in receiving further instruction, decided to make a long trip south to the Cowlitz mission to see two Jesuit priests, the Very Reverend F. N. Blanchet, Vicar-General, and the Reverend Modesto Demers (Collins n.d.a.:52). In 1839 these priests came north to Nisqually.² The priests used a teaching device known as the Catholic Ladder, or the "soul stick."³ A pictorial representation of Biblical history from the time of Adam, through the eras of the Old and New Testaments and the historical periods down to 1842, was painted on wood. A series of parallel bars and dots representing different centuries expanded the Indians' conception of the time depth of White history as well as their knowledge of world geography. Copies of the Catholic Ladder were given to Indian leaders to take home.⁴ This was the first opportunity Skagit Indian leaders had to receive an extensive explanation of White culture and religion. Never before had they encountered a worldview so divergent from their own. It is not difficult to understand their curiosity.

¹According to Meeker (1905:490), "Tsla-lacum" has also been written Steilacoom, a familiar word to Washington residents.

²According to Whitney (1942), a group of over 7,000 Indians from the Skagit Region went to hear them.

³A complete description of this famous artifact and photographic plates of it are available in Ezra Meeker's 1905 publication (1905:489-497).

⁴A picture of one hung for many years in the Catholic Church on the Swinomish Reservation (Whitney 1942).

In May, 1840, Fathers Blanchet and Demers visited Whidbey Island, at the invitation of Indian leader Tslalakum. They discovered that the three Indian leaders had already been preaching in their home villages (Collins n.d.b.:48-49). On this occasion the priests performed mass baptisms. Some of the Swinomish villagers returned home from these encounters and decided to build a small church (Whitney 1942). Later a bell for the church was ordered from New York. Arriving at Astoria, on the Columbia River, the bell was transported by the Indians in canoes and on shoulders over portages to Puget Sound.¹

A former resident of the Swinomish Reservation who was born in 1855, John Fornsby, spoke of the historic visit of Father Blanchet to Whidbey Island:

I heard them talk about the Catholics coming to Whidbey Island. He came and walked way up the woods and put a cross on the other side of Coupeville. That cross stayed there a long time. He was the first priest to come. One priest came. He came and walked in the woods, quite a lot of people with him. He lit a match and burned a little grass. They said, "That man is a devil, because the fire burns where he walks." They found out about matches. They thought he was all right. Lots of them didn't care for the priest. The chiefs went to the priest. The priests got them to baptize all the kids, all the girls, all the men, anyone willing to be baptized.

They had something like a map hung up. It told where you go when you die. Old Chief Snatlem had one. It told people where they go when they die, where their souls go. It had God at the head, the old devil's place down below. There was the devil where people are going if they are not good. People were afraid. Some believed it; some didn't. Just like now. They kept that picture in church. The chief told the people about the picture. It was hanging at the end of the church. (Collins 1951: 310-311).

¹It is not known exactly when the Swinomish church was built, but Whitney's informants stated that on the day the peace treaty was signed in Muckilteo, January 22, 1855, the bell in the church rang in announcement.

Some of the Indian people undoubtedly felt skeptical about the new religion when it was introduced into the Skagit Region. The most difficult part of the religion to accept, according to Swinomish elder Richard Peters, was the stipulation that the Indians must give up all their traditional ceremonies. The early missionaries could not persuade the Indians to abandon their aboriginal beliefs and so had to be content to be allowed merely to perform Mass and baptisms. Many years later, after the signing of the treaty and the establishment of a mission school at Tulalip, the missionaries pushed harder on this point. Father Casimir Chirouse exerted his influence over the Indian boys at the boarding school. Chirouse admonished the young Indians not to practice their traditional ceremonies. John Fornsby, who attended the school, recalled:

The Indians say, "The dead have a place, just like where we are. They just live good like where we are." There must be some kind of a river where they are. The dead people live together. One tribe lives together. That is what the old people say.

The old people used to sing at Priest Point. Their powers went down there to where the dead people were. When I was staying with my aunt, I saw the people there at Priest Point. Old Father Chirouse didn't believe in it. "Don't you go, boys; that's the devil's work."

The people there at Priest Point danced all night. Old man ~~tsaas~~ was sick. He was one of the Snohomish. He was sick all the time. He got people to see if he had gone to the land of the dead. . . .

We were there, some of the few boys who were there. I watched the old people, what they did. They were awake all night, dancing all night. Father Chirouse didn't want us to see the old way (Collins 1951:312).

In the years after the treaty signing, Chirouse exerted a tremendous influence over the Indian people in Northern Puget Sound. He compiled a dictionary of the Snohomish dialect and translated many prayers, hymns, and litanies into the Indian language, in order that the Indians would have a clearer understanding of the Catholic doctrine.

Like the traders, the Christian missionaries belonged to organizations that were competing for influence among the native people. There was considerable rivalry between Catholics and Protestants on the national level. The Indians of the Skagit Region were spared the consequences of this because they did not meet Protestants until many decades later.

When President Grant decided in the 1860's to minimize the competition between Christian sects by giving a monopoly on the right to proselytize in different regions to single denominations, the work of the French Catholic priests in Northern Puget Sound received an official sanction.

Summary

The Skagit Region Indians appear to have gained fragmentary foreknowledge of the explorers through their chains of contacts with neighboring groups to the east and south. They treated the early White men as honored guests, conducted them on tours, presented articles in trade, and went far out of their way to seek knowledge about their material culture and their religion. There are occasional reports of explorers being killed in the Pacific Northwest Coastal Region (AFSC 1970:8; Jeffcott 1949:24), but these events occurred very rarely.¹ The Skagit Region Indians modified their own code of trespass classifying strangers as thieves and enemies, worthy of being killed and buried on the spot. The majority of Skagit villagers suspended these rules in dealing with the White strangers, letting themselves be motivated by curiosity over the White skins, the new items of material culture, and the new spiritual

¹Sperlin reports only five such cases (Sperlin 1916:1-43).

doctrines of Christianity.

There must have been many skeptics among the ranks of ordinary villagers, but most influential leaders favored exploiting the new contacts peacefully. Many of them benefitted personally by the new information and trade goods. They accumulated unprecedented amounts of wealth. In addition to this the village leaders probably recognized the negative implications of the entry of the Whites into their world and pursued contacts for information needed to plan their best possible strategy of adaptation. During this historical period the traditional villages were still fairly integrated. The leaders seeking contact with Whites passed down their wealth to the rest of their family and apparently were not accused of ignoring their people's best interests or of being irresponsible. Thus the peaceful approach to ethnic contacts with the Whites prevailed.

During this early time the White men's goals were also peaceful. Their immediate interests in Northern Puget Sound centered on gaining a knowledge of the geographic features of the land and the resources it held. They also wanted to establish spheres of political and religious influence among the Indian people. Different nationalities of Whites competed for several decades in hopes that they would eventually become the dominant establishment in the region.

White attitudes towards the Indians in this part of the country were influenced by their knowledge of the history of ethnic contacts on the other side of the continent. Knowing that Indians had been conquered in the East by superior White military power strengthened their conviction that Whites would hold a dominant position in the long run. Yet being far from home and, numerically in the minority, they were very insecure.

Although it may have been contrary to their nature, most were forced to maintain cordial relations with the Indians until the balance of power shifted. Large scale ethnic conflicts between Indians and Whites were therefore delayed.

The Indians suffered from the disadvantage of not knowing the full history of encounters between Whites and Indians elsewhere. It probably took several decades for Skagit Region village leaders to foresee their people's future. By the time they began to fully comprehend what might happen, a new breed of Whites, the settlers and miners, were beginning to arrive.

EARLY CHANGES IN INDIAN SOCIAL ORGANIZATION

Introduction

During the period of early contact, meetings between Whites and Indians were relatively infrequent. Yet the consequences for change in the Indian social structure were far-reaching. Most of them occurred before settlers and miners began moving into the country in the late 1840's and 1850's. Popular literature on the Indians does not always distinguish between aboriginal lifeways and early post-contact patterns.

The intrusion of the White ethnic group into the Skagit Region added a new perspective to the field of relations. The limits of the system now extended beyond autonomous, culturally-homogeneous villages. The original field of ethnic interaction continued to operate as it had for a while, but as time passed changes began to occur. The delicate balance of power between village ethnic groups of aboriginal times was upset. The relationships between them changed.

More Frequent Contact with
Northern Enemies

After the Whites came to the Pacific Northwest Coast, Indians from unrelated villages, previously regarded as enemies, found themselves coming together in new contexts. Their first meeting places were trading posts. Later they were sawmills, settlements, and hopfields.

The first encounters were frequently marked by conflict (Collins n.d.b.:38-39), since the unrelated villagers could not place one another into a kinship frame of reference. Indian groups residing far north of the Skagit Region, as far as the Queen Charlotte Islands and the Stikine River, often combined trading ventures to Fort Langley and Fort Victoria with slave raiding missions into Puget Sound (Collins n.d.b.:41-42).

Large parties of them spent the summer months in Puget Sound, the women working for Whites as house maids, the men working at small sawmills. Before returning north in their large canoes, they frequently conducted raids on saltwater villages, burning homes, killing some of the inhabitants, seizing others as slaves, and taking as much valuable property as they could. The Northern enemies were especially fearsome because they had acquired an ample supply of guns. In later years, they even dared attack White settlements.

The frequency of Northern raids increased so much during post-contact times that villages on the exposed coastlines in the Skagit Region fell into a constant state of martial law. Houses which had been standing for generations were burned. Entire villages were wiped out, the inhabitants fleeing in fear to live in the woods, and never daring to return to the old sites again (Collins n.d.b.:43). Some of the

villagers began to build fortifications and palisades.¹

As the menace from the north grew, warrior powers became highly esteemed. Village headman Pateus, Snatelum, and Goliah distinguished themselves in battle. Many Skagit Region groups joined together in common defense. John Fornsby told how Snatelum led a unified attack on a Northern village in retaliation for a previous raid on Snatelum Point and the place later known as Coupeville:

Then they notified all the peoples to go on a raiding party. They went up the Skagit. The Lower Skagit and the Upper Skagit went on this raiding party. The Snohomish took two or three canoes; the Lower Skagit, three or four canoes. Some Swinomish went over, too. The Lummi went. My grandmother told me. (Collins 1951:300-301).

These efforts promoted the development of regional consciousness and strengthened alliances between Indian villages located on the same river drainage.

Northern Indians continued to threaten the Skagit Region until the middle and late 1800's when White guns and steamboats mounted with cannons came to Puget Sound. Skagit Region people were thankful for White allies. Northerners continued to visit, but in a more peaceful manner. Relations between the former raiders and the local Indians warmed up very gradually.²

¹Archaeologist Bryan (1963:76-77) located the remains of some of these evidences of war. Several of them appear to have been built by one man, a Lummi, around 1820-1830 (Suttles n.d.:322).

²A photograph taken in 1902, reprinted in the Puget Sound Mail (August 5, 1954), shows an encampment of Northern Indians on the Swinomish Channel enroute to the hop fields near Pleasant Ridge, one mile east of La Conner. A continuous stream of Northern canoes passed by La Conner as the agricultural harvest season approached. Besides being important to the Northerners economically, the southern migrations entertained them as a kind of holiday, and the nights were filled with the bone gambling games.

More Frequent Contact Among
Neighboring Villages

Post-contact conditions enlarged the sphere of friendly relations between neighboring villages within the Skagit Region and provided greater scope for the ancient policy of calculated interfamily marriages. The network of ethnic ties stretched out more distantly into adjacent regions. The trend continued into post-treaty times.¹ The geographic radius of the circles of invitational feasts expanded. Suttles (n.d.:317) reports:

Chowitsut, who potlatched at Lummi in the 1850's, is said to have called people from as far as the Duwamish, Twana, Klallam, Songish, Nanaimo, Squamish, and Chilliwack, that is, nearly all of the salt-water Salish groups south of the Sechelt and Pentlatch plus the Coast Salish of the Fraser River.

It took some time for ancient antipathies to wear off:

. . . at a potlatch at Becher Bay in the 1880's, two mainland Klallam youths got into a brawl with a Cowichan chief because he remarked that it was lucky for them that it was not the old times or he would be killing them (Suttles n.d.:317).

The trend to include more distant villages in marriage and feasting circles has continued all throughout the post-contact period.² Value changes associated with this trend included emulation of higher standards of potlatch-giving (Collins n.d.b.:41-42). The new standards, together with the influx of wealth from trading sources created significant changes in the class structure, which will be discussed below at page 165.

Intensification of traditional patterns of association, such as raiding,

¹In 1869, for example, the daughter of Chief Joseph, of the Swinomish Reservation, was married to a Victoria headman and a series of large scale exchange visits took place (Collins n.d.b.:39).

²Members of the Swinomish Reservation have marital partners from Canada, Alaska, and Oregon, even from the eastern and southwestern tribes. At traditional religious ceremonies held today communities from southern Puget Sound to Northern Vancouver Island are represented.

feasting, and intermarrying, increased the radius and association density of the ethnic field. New patterns of association such as the common defense operations foreshadowed an emergent unity among groups of villages within the Skagit Region.

Another indication of the emergence of higher modes of organization was the unification of upper river villages in the Catholic-Prophet cult. About nine independent up-river villages were brought within the sphere of influence of neo-religious leader Stlabebtikud, achieving a new level of political unity not present in aboriginal times. Only the Sauks held out and would not join them (Snyder n.d.:65). Stlabebtikud extended his influence down to the salt water by taking his second wife from the village at Bayview. He married the daughter of the headman Pateus.

Catholic-Prophet cult villages followed a new set of moral codes, religious practices, and legal innovations. Parties accused of breaking the moral code were tried in a court appointed by the prophet-leader (Snyder n.d.:398-399). A set of strict punitive measures were meted out to parties found guilty. New religious practices included innovations in the first salmon ceremony. The prophet-leader played a key role in the ceremony and over the years gained the right to set the date on which salmon fishing at any point in the entire Skagit River Valley might begin (Collins n.d.b.:44-45). This was a concentration of authority previously unknown.

The lines of unification followed the traditional grooves around river-drainages and other natural features. Contact with Whites merely speeded up tendencies which had existed before.

The post-contact regional associations were loose and fragile.

The partners to interaction were not really bound and could drop out voluntarily when it became inconvenient. The units formed have been called extended village clusters to emphasize the continuing autonomy of the component parts.

The fragility of the alliances between villages in a river-drainage area or along a shoreline was due to a number of forces that constricted interaction. Paradoxically, the firm basis for friendly relations between villages was breaking down during this period, the guest-host relations were being disrupted. The frequency of feuds increased along with slave-raiding and warfare. The whole system of rules governing ethnic relations in the original field was disturbed. These developments are discussed in more detail below (pp. 158-159).

This combination of apparently opposite trends is a very interesting phenomenon. It seems that while ethnic consciousness was expanding areally or geographically, in terms of the diversity of origins of members of the in-group, the meaning of village identity for the members of the group lessened. It became more superficial in its implications for the individual's life. The frequency of personnel crossing boundaries increased. The frequency of villages passing out of existence increased. The individual living through these times was more likely to suffer drastic, recurrent changes of his original village ethnic identity. He moved around more frequently. Gradually the importance of his activities as a member of any one village at any one time lessened in comparison to the importance of his activities as a member of an extended cluster of villages, his loyalty to a particularly wealthy and renowned village headman in his area, his fur-trading activities through this man, and his joint-sponsorship of feasts with this man.

Demographic Instability Following
Epidemic Diseases

A series of disastrous epidemic diseases struck the Skagit Region during the first half of the nineteenth century. They added to the demographic dislocation caused by increased raids from the north. The most severe epidemics struck early, before systematic population counts and censuses were made, perhaps even before the first White explorers arrived. Some of the plagues apparently took a path into the Skagit River Region from the Columbia River region east of the Cascades. Others seem to have come from the south to the southern Washington ocean coast, then inland to southern Puget Sound, and north to the Skagit Region from there.

Mooney (1928:13-14) reports that about 1782-83 a great smallpox epidemic occurred which started on the Missouri River and spread westward and northward, destroying from one-third to one-half of the Indians within its path. This may have reached the Skagit area. Beginning in 1788 the introduction of venereal diseases from sailors and traders at the mouth of the Columbia River worked its disaster on the Indian population of the northwest coast, but no mention of these diseases has been found specifically for the Skagit Region. Elmendorf (1960:271) reports the most disastrous epidemic of smallpox for the Twana struck in 1800, travelling from the Gray's Harbor area. Gibbs (1877:170) cites the depopulation of the Columbia River tribes due to congestive fever in the period from 1820-30. In 1852-53 smallpox, introduced from San Francisco among the Makah, spread among nearly all the tribes of Washington and northern Idaho, wiping out whole villages in some tribes (Mooney 1928:14). Dewey Mitchell, an elder member of the Swinomish Community, reports that

at least one plague of smallpox resulted from a gift of infected blankets to the Columbia River Indians by the U.S. Army. The blankets were subsequently traded across the land, infecting many tribes as they went. Many elder Indians view this as a form of biological warfare. The last major smallpox epidemic in the Skagit Region occurred in the 1890's, when the Indians had moved to the Swinomish Reservation.

Severe dislocation of the Indian population resulted from the epidemics as large numbers of villagers succumbed. They were forced to abandon and burn their longhouses and the contents, all clothing, blankets, and items of wealth -- anything that might have been infected. Somewhere along the line they learned about the nature of contagion and began to destroy these themselves, in order to protect survivors. But sometimes there were too few survivors to do the job:

The year 1890 was also marked by a smallpox epidemix which raged almost exclusively among the Indians during the summer. Scores of them died of the dread disease, the mortality being unusually high. The woods were full of afflicted and dead Indians. Corpses floating down the river were often seen. People at last became afraid to venture into the woods or along the shore and the county hired men to hunt for these unfortunates and attend to them, bury the dead, and burn potlatch houses and other property that the infection might be stopped (Schiach 1906:150).

There was immeasurable suffering. Ethnic groups lost much of their stability as inhabitants were forced to flee into the woods, burn down houses, destroy their property, and go to live with relatives elsewhere. The extent to which the population was reduced is difficult to estimate.¹

¹All population estimates for the early 1800's are merely rough guesses. Mooney (1928:15) estimated the total population of the Skagit and Swinomish in 1780 to be 1,200. Gibbs, writing in 1854 (1967:39-42), estimated that the people we now call Lower Skagits, Swinomish, and Upper Skagits numbered 300 each, for a total of 900. By 1907, their numbers had declined to 273 (Mooney 1928:15).

There was undoubtedly a fragmentation of old village ethnic units, followed by an amalgamation of the survivors into new units later on. The repetition of this pattern over the years affected the nature of inter-village ties, breaking down the separate consciousness of villages.

Points of Articulation and Dependence between Indians and Whites

It is not surprising that the intrusion of Whites into the field of traditional relations in the Skagit Region had major effects on interaction of the original village units, but it is striking that the infrequent initial contact had such early and far-reaching ramifications.

During the early contact period the relationships between Indians and Whites focussed around a relatively small number of needs. In the beginning, the Indians had very few dependencies on the Whites. They had been existing independently for thousands of years and could be content to continue doing so. Because of their independence, their power position with respect to the Whites was correspondingly great.

The Whites depended upon the Indians for many things. The explorers needed information about the land and its resources; they needed guidance through strange territory so they could make maps to prove their discoveries. They needed permission to enter, places to set up temporary camps, food for their crewmembers (who frequently suffered from scurvy), artifacts and mementos to exhibit at home, skins and hides for trade, and language interpreters. Most of these things were also required by the fur traders and missionaries of later years. The latter two groups also depended on the Indians to provide transport crews for their gear. The main means of transportation in the Skagit Region remained the Indian canoe and the steam boat until 1889. Before the steamboat, the Whites

even relied on the Indians to deliver mail between trading posts (Collins n.d.b.:92). When miners and loggers entered the region, Indians were hired to help locate mineral deposits and labor in camps bringing down the trees.

The Whites needed the Indians in an even deeper sense during the early times. They were far away from their homes and the cultural achievements of Western society. On their treks through the wilderness, they welcomed companionship and sociability afforded by the native inhabitants. Many of them took Indian wives and practiced the rules of hospitality that operated in the Indian culture.

While the Indians had few dependencies on the Whites, they were attracted to many things Whites had. They wanted to obtain guns with which to defend themselves against the Northerners. They recognized the superiority of the Whites' fur-trapping and hunting devices, as well as metal tools. The traders usually had only a few of these things on hand and were unwilling to trade them (Collins n.d.b.:87-88). However, they did bring items to satisfy the Indians' desire for sugar and starchy foods.¹ The Indian diet contained few sweet and starchy foods except berries, camas, and wild sweet potato or onion. The natives were eager to get bread, biscuits, molasses, and sugar. The Indians living near Forts Langley and Nisqually were able to obtain seed potatoes and peas at an early date (Collins n.d.b.:88). The new technique of planting potatoes and peas was well adapted to the traditional pattern of systematic harvesting of camas roots, and the Indians planted the new crops right

¹Nutritional science, with a perspective of a couple hundred years, may reveal this to be one of the most unfortunate "gifts" of the White man to the Indians in this part of the country.

in the prairie regions where their native roots grew. Thus when the first missionary visited Whidbey Island in 1840, he found the prairies of the island already covered with potato gardens. So valuable was the seed, that it became an item of trade between Indian villages. While the Lower Skagits were able to get their seed directly from Fort Nisqually in the south, the villagers on the upper reaches of the Skagit River got theirs from the Nooksacks, who in turn had received it from Fort Victoria (Collins n.d.b.:88-90).

Besides guns, traps, tools, and food, the Indians were desirous of obtaining items of wealth which could be used as gifts at invitational feasts. For this purpose, the traders kept large quantities of blankets, clothing, and yard goods. As the years passed, the total amount of goods counted as wealth by the Indians swelled out of all proportion to its antecedents (Collins n.d.b.:87-88).

The Whites also brought rum. Alcohol was at first regarded as a supernatural agent by the Indians, since under its influence they tended to sing their guardian spirit songs (Collins n.d.b.:86). Mooney (1928:14) reports that liquor was introduced in large quantities by Russian traders into the area now known as Washington State, despite the efforts of the Hudson's Bay Company officers to prevent it. Soon after 1833, when Dr. John McLoughlin became Chief Factor of the company, he banned alcohol trade with the Indians. However, when Fort Victoria was established in 1848, the Indians were able to obtain liquor from White bootleggers.

With such a list of attractions, the Indians willingly entered into economic transactions with Whites. High ranking village leaders performed services of transport, language interpretation, fur trading,

and guidance. Ordinary villagers sold clams, fish, and ducks to the Whites. Indian men later worked as laborers and loggers, the women as laundresses and housecleaners. At first they received their pay in goods; later they received money. Eventually they became accustomed to having these luxuries and extras and felt them as needs, especially after trading posts were set up, and the easily available goods were constantly on display. In 1863 a trading post was built near what is now Conway at a place then called Skagit City. In 1869 the first post in the Samish area to the north was opened. In 1876 the first post up the Skagit River was built at Mount Vernon (Collins n.d.b.:92-93).

As time passed and the Indians' economic dependencies on Whites grew, their bargaining power declined somewhat. The Whites, as their numbers increased, managed to rely on the Indians less and less. The balance of economic power gradually shifted towards the Whites, who were able to buttress their position by importing armies and warships. During the early contact period, especially before 1850, the balance of power was precarious. Individual Whites and Indians interacted as equals.

Parallel to the shift in dependencies between the White and Indian ethnic groups was a shift in the dependency relations between groups in the original ethnic field of the Indians. As the economy of the Indians changed from one entirely dependent on traditional hunting, fishing, and gathering, to one partly based upon agriculture, trade, and wage labor, the traditional villages lost their strong interdependence. The firm basis for friendly relations between the villages broke down, and guest-host relations were disrupted (Collins n.d.b.:43). Social controls operating previously to prevent young men from losing their tempers and starting feuds lost their effectiveness. In pre-contact

times a murderer's relatives cooperated in providing restitution to a bereaved village, forcing the murderer to go through an extensive period of fasting in purification. After contact the murderer's family threatened in vain to deny him food and lodging. He knew he could always go and make a living working for the Whites. In addition to this, the frequency on conflicts skyrocketed because of a new context for inter-action -- drinking. Many acts of violence were initiated while men of different villages were drinking together. In such conflicts, one side would often encourage the intervention of Whites. Acting without complete understanding of the issues involves the Whites would force unstable settlements. Consequently a long series of blood feuds arose between neighboring villages. The relative peace in ethnic relations within the Skagit Region was destroyed. Warfare and slave-raiding began to be directed by some villages against their neighbors. The replacement of traditional dependencies between villages with dependencies on Whites caused deterioration of the whole system of rules governing ethnic relations in the original field.

Leadership Strategies

Very little is known about the actual thoughts of the Skagit Region's Indian leaders during the early period of contact with the Whites. The information available has been derived from an analysis of the actions they performed, for which there is some record. There existed, no doubt, some philosophers¹ among them who might have provided

¹Chief Seattle was such a man, judging from his biography and speeches (Anderson 1944). Leschi, Snatelum, Patkanim, Stlabebtikud, Goliah, and Chowitsut may have been others. Others probably have escaped notice.

a complete picture of the deeper levels of the Indian worldview as it confronted the earth-shaking events of White contact. However, due to a lack of data, we must be content with a general picture of the Skagit Region leaders' political motivations and strategies.

The traditional village leader in the Skagit Region was interested in protecting his village from slave-raiding parties, leading it to a position of wealth and respectability, and acquiring spiritual power to secure success through the years. After contact these motives continued to exercise influence on Indian leaders. Military defense became more important. Economic achievements, previously limited by the scarcity of wealth, became possible by entering into transactions with the Whites. Spiritual growth was complicated by the necessity to understand and evaluate an alien system of thought -- one that was initially attractive because of the material wealth it had produced for the Whites. Most Skagit Region leaders responded by perceiving the Whites primarily as potential allies rather than as enemies or competitors. They welcomed White guns and ships mounted with cannons to frighten off Northern raiders. They used the opportunity to engage in trade with the newcomers to get wealth to distribute at invitational feasts and make good marriage alliances. They used the Christian priests to get information on who the Whites were, where they came from, why they came, how they made their goods, and what they intended to do in the future. All this information was necessary to plan their villages' best strategy in the new field of ethnic relations.

Few Skagit Region warrior leaders agitated to expel the Whites during this early period. Most skeptical about Whites were the isolated up-river villages who were closest in their thinking to Plateau neighbors

east of the Cascades. The Snoqualmie leader Patkanim led a strong opposition to the Whites during the 1840's, but later became allied with them (Meany 1909:149;183). The most interested in making alliances with the Whites were the salt-water village leaders.

During the early contact period a new generation of Indian leaders arose, earning their positions in three primary roles: as warriors, as traders, and as religious leaders. Warrior leaders occupied key positions because of the onslaught of Northern raids and the prevailing state of martial law. These men acquired great influence. They began to extend their authority beyond the occasional raid. Growing belligerent and unruly they began to raid their own weaker neighbors. As a result, it became dangerous to travel even in local waters (Collins n.d.b.:43-44). Up-river villagers were afraid to go down to the mouth of the Skagit River, lest they be killed or taken as slaves. As their reputations as daring fighters increased later in life, a few warriors freely violated the accepted standards of moral behavior¹ (Collins n.d.b.: 55).

Patius, the famous leader from the village at Bayview, became an aggressive raider after his son was captured and taken as a slave by another group (Collins n.d.b.:54-55). He fought the "King George" Indians from British Columbia and gained a formidable reputation. His stature was further increased when he signed the Treaty of Point Elliott in 1855 and gained the formal appellation of sub-chief. As he grew older, he

¹They resembled the type of leader that has been called the "bully" elsewhere.

See Watson, James B.

1967 "Tairora: The Politics of Despotism in a Small Society," Anthropological Forum 2:53-104.

"got ornery" and bully-like. He narrowed the range of his stories to his near neighbors. Once he permitted a man to whom he owned property to take one of his own relatives as a slave. Although this behavior would never have been tolerated in pre-White times, the only people who dared to criticize him were his own wife and children (Collins n.d.b.:55-56), and so he was able to escape censure. In the end, however, he died a violent death at the hands of one of his own people.

Other village leaders acquired new heights of power through commercial dealings. One, called "General Pierce," got money and goods by arranging to transport things for the Whites (Collins n.d.b.:47-48). Another, Snatelum, built his power by acting as a middleman in the fur trade between Whidbey Island and Nisqually House. A man of great wealth, he owned a huge longhouse, as well as five slaves, captured in warfare. Some of his slaves knew how to carve big salt-water canoes, enriching his fortune even more. As Snatelum grew older, he came to have arrogant dominion of a type previously unknown in the Skagit Region. Eventually he boasted personal ownership of the whole territory occupied by his villagers and their allies (Collins n.d.b.:51-52). He died in 1852, and his large funeral was attended by even the Klallams, former enemies of the Lower Skagits. After his death, his people were said to have diminished in numbers somewhat and lost much of their former influence (Collins n.d.b.:54). His son carried on some of it.

The scope of influence of the religious leader also increased during the period of early contact. It has already been shown how the Skagit leader Stlabebtikud used his religious knowledge to found a Catholic-Prophet cult and achieved personal leadership over several villages. Several Lower Skagit leaders also gained power through

missionizing among the people: Snatelum, Tslalakum, and Witskalatche. On the arrival of the earliest Whites, the Indian villagers were faced with a need to have the meaning of the events interpreted to them in their own language. White missionaries did not arrive until the 1840's and could rarely speak intelligibly to the masses of Indians. The most talented Indian leaders performed the task of translating the new knowledge for their people. The leaders were initially attracted to the new religion because it seemed to be a kind of spiritual power accounting for the Whites' wealth and power. They were naturally curious about it. In addition, they were influenced by the missionaries' message that the Christian God was also the Indians' Great Spirit. Points of conflict between Christianity and the traditional Indian beliefs were not drawn out until many years had passed. Local Indian leaders who acquired knowledge of the new religion were accorded respect and authority.

As the new generation of leaders rose to power, they established lines of informal authority over minor leaders within their extended village cluster. This hierarchical tendency became more definite as time passed. It was strengthened by White traders and government officials who found it inconvenient to deal separately with each village headman. They preferred instead to have the highest ranking pass messages and goods to lower ranking leaders.¹

The warrior-trader-missionary roles remained important for about two generations, then declined (Collins n.d.b.:72-73). When White law and order was established, raiding was brought under control. Military

¹At the time the treaty was signed in 1855, the Whites formally invested some of the signators the titles of "Chief" and "Sub-chief," lending a legitimacy to the power of some of the highest ranking.

leadership diminished in significance. Warrior chiefs were looked upon with distrust and hostility by the Whites. It was no longer useful to have a headman who was reputed to be an aggressive fighter. In 1856 the first missionary came to reside permanently in the Skagit Region. Knowledge of Christian beliefs became more widespread. Missionary chiefs, like warrior chiefs, vanished from the scene (Collins n.d.b.:72-73). When the fur trade declined Indian traders lost their monopoly of contacts. More Whites moved directly into the Skagit Region and dealt directly with individual Indians. After the treaty, the most important remaining leadership function was the job of representing the Indian people to the White government and initiating action to obtain benefits due from the treaty promises. This involved attending hearings and ceremonial occasions, organizing the relevant data to support the Indian people's case, and speaking out for them.

Corresponding changes took place in the personal qualities that were needed in a head man (Collins n.d.b.:74-75). The earliest leadership ideal had been gentle and undemanding, as has been pointed out in Chapter II. This was replaced during the period of warriors, traders, and missionaries when leaders had to be dramatic and aggressive. Finally, in dealing with the White government, leaders were still expected to show initiative, but more belligerent qualities were detrimental. On one hand, leaders were expected to take an aggressive stand against the Whites. At the same time they could be censured for not displaying the humble statesmanship of the sia b (Collins n.d.b.:74-75). A double bind impeded transition into the new functions of their role.

Stratification

Two kinds of change took place in the Skagit Region's ethnic stratification system as a result of the early contact with Whites: adjustments in the status ladder of the original village units; and the addition of a new category of wealthy outsiders. Among the Indian people themselves, contact brought a heightened emphasis on class differences. There were more siab, or wealthy and well-born people, and more slaves. On the other hand, increased opportunities for earning wealth allowed more people with good ancestry to exercise their personal talents and become well-to-do. Enough capital was available for even lower-class men and slaves to claim and validate a name (Suttles n.d.: 302). On the other hand, the promotion of warfare allowed more people to be captured as slaves. Slavery became so common that it created new problems (Collins n.d.b.:97). There was lack of consensus on how to treat people who had been captured, then had escaped, and returned home to their village. Some believed the rest of the family should reinstate them into their former status as freemen. Others believed they should continue to treat them as if slavery had put a lifelong stigma on their character. In former times such cases occurred only rarely. After contact families sought to dispel any questions about their status by sponsoring extravagant feasts.

Within the traditional system of ethnic stratification social mobility increased. The fortunes of villages rose and fell with greater rapidity than ever before. With more wealth available to individuals, the inheritance of property also became important (Collins n.d.b.:54-55). In order to protect their family's estate and prevent the dispersal of

property to distant relatives, parents in some villages arranged marriages between classificatory siblings (though never between actual brothers and sisters) (Collins n.d.b.:66-67). A temporary increase in polygyny also took place, as wealthy leaders attempted to demonstrate their high status and make even more marriage alliances (Collins n.d.b.: 68-69). This later disappeared when the influence of Christian morality was felt.

An important change in the ranking of individual villages took place during the early contact period. The tendency towards the evolution of a simple hierarchical system was complicated by two factors. First, population dislocation resulting from warfare and disease thoroughly scrambled village loyalties. Secondly, the rise of powerful regional leaders over ordinary village headmen strengthened extra-village ties even further.

The new ethnic unit was the extended village-cluster. Change was occurring so rapidly that the village cluster achieved focal importance for only a few decades. It can't really be said that a hierarchical ranking of village clusters evolved to replace the old system. There was not enough time for a stable system to evolve.

In addition to these changes the addition of a new category of wealthy outsiders -- the Whites -- transformed the entire system. For many years the overall ethnic status ladder seems to have been in a state of shock -- diffuse and unsystematic. Indians and Whites could not agree on a common set of rules that would govern status beyond a certain few basic principles. The Indians credited the Whites for having some items of superior technology: domesticated animals, and sugar and starchy foods. The Whites credited the Indians for having a superior knowledge

of the land and its resources. Beyond that there was little common ground. Neither side understood enough about the other's culture to appreciate its values. A Skagit village leader might have looked upon a White trader offering a blanket for his daughter as a good prospective son-in-law and potential ally, while the trader viewed himself as merely buying chattel (Suttles 1954:47-48). We can surmise that many misunderstandings occurred.

An example of the problem is shown by the interaction between Snohomish leader, Whonaper (also known as Bonaparte) and the American General McDowell. McDowell had been sent to the Puget Sound Region as a special representative of the President to solicit Indian grievances. Bonaparte was one of the Indian leaders he needed to talk to. Bonaparte's personality was characterized by great dignity and elaborate display. He attended the conference attired in strict accordance with native notions of propriety:

His habit consisted of a pair of black pantaloons; a British red coat with epaulets, a stove-pipe hat bedecked with gorgeous feathers, a red Spanish sash about his waist, in which were partially concealed a brace of old flint-lock horse pistols; a long sword hung at his side; a pair of unmatched kid gloves; a pair of brass-bowed spectacles astride his nose; a long cane with a large brass head in his hand and a fancy necklace adorned with talons and beaks of hawks and eagles, the tooth of a beaver and other . . . ornaments (Schiach 1906: 473-474).

General McDowell was introduced to Whonaper as being a very great chief among the soldiers, a direct emissary of the President. But the White man wore a very ordinary suit of civilian's clothing. Whonaper eyed him suspiciously while McDowell invited him to express the Indian's grievances. Finally:

Bonaparte rose to his full height, smote himself proudly on the breast, and with great fire and haughty said:

"Look at me! Do I look like a common Siwash? I am dressed as becomes a warrior and a chief among my people. You say you are a chief, a great soldier man, that you have been sent out here by the great chief, the president at Washington. I look at you; your dress is the same as Mr. Howe's. You look the same as any common white man. I have seen soldier chiefs at Steilacoom, and I have seen King George's soldier chiefs at Victoria, and they dressed differently from common people; they dressed as I do; but you dress the same as any worthless Boston. I do not believe you are a chief at all. I think you lie. Good day, sir." (Schiach 1906:473-474).

If the leaders of each side could not agree on the conventions that would guide their interaction, how could they begin to negotiate?¹

The incorporation of the Whites into the Indians' status system was impeded for many years by the settler's small numbers. At first there were so few that Indians could treat them as individuals, incorporating them into the kinship system as marital allies, if they were willing. Most Whites were adult males. White women and children did not begin to arrive until later, around the treaty time.

During the early contact period the power balance between Indians and Whites in the Skagit Region leaned slightly in favor of the Indians. The Indians did not and the Whites could not demand much obeisance or deferent behavior from each other.²

¹Whonaper may have had more substantial reasons for not wanting to negotiate. He may have felt the interests of his people would be forwarded most by remaining silent, keeping a slim edge over the Whites, and reminding them that they had no monopoly on propriety and morality.

²By the time White women and children began to arrive after the treaty signing, the balance had begun to tip slightly the other way. Whites asserted their cultural values and status criteria in the public, interethnic context.

Phyletic Fusion

During the early contact period in the Skagit Region, individual village ethnic groups underwent phyletic fusion into extended clusters. This process had been operating in aboriginal times; contact with Whites merely intensified it. Regional bonds in aboriginal times were based upon similar political feelings among neighboring villages. People in the same river drainage or along the same coastline tended to have the same allies and enemies. They tended to be intermarried themselves and have common ancestral ties. Occasionally they gave joint sponsorship to ceremonial events and invitational feasts. If the Northwest Coast Indians had been allowed to continue their lives in isolation for several hundred more years, these villages might have evolved higher levels of organization with no outside stimulus.

Interaction between the Skagit Region Indians and the White explorers, fur traders, and missionaries strengthened hierarchical or vertical organization in the Indian social structure. White businessmen preferred setting up a few Indian leaders as middlemen between themselves and the general Indian populace, giving these middlemen a partial monopoly on the access to the Whites' business in order that they would perform the services of gathering together the goods in large quantities and perform the personnel work of recruiting and hiring labor. Missionaries also cultivated the friendship of a select few leaders in order to get invitations to perform baptisms and mass in their home villages. The introduction of firearms among raiding Northerners by early White explorers and traders increased the need for Skagit Region villages to unite in defense under the leadership of a few great warriors.

The new wealth and prestige entering the field of ethnic interaction flowed in channels, going first to some village headmen, then to others. Some Indian leaders became wealthier than others. Passing wealth, information, and favors down to their closest friends and allies, they received unprecedented status and personal followings. The lines of exchange between them and their close kin and neighbors followed river drainages, coves, and harborlines. This process strengthened regional bonds between villages.

This process continued operating in treaty times. It is difficult to specify exact timing for the emergence of the extended village cluster as the largest unit of ethnic organization in the Skagit Region. Apparently all the clusters did not emerge at the same time.

Most of the village cluster names have already been given above: s'émis̓ (Straits) (p. 51); swédəb̓s̓ (p. 54); skʷədab̓s̓ (p. 58); sqa̓jət or sqa̓jəʔ (p. 60); kikialus (p. 64); dxʷaha (p. 67); dlúqʷəč̓əb̓s̓ (p. 69); and bəstúləkʷ (p. 72). The last-named group seems to have exhibited a looser unity than the others (see p. 221).

CONCLUSION

The period of early contact between the Skagit Region ethnic groups and the Whites saw the entry of White explorers, fur traders, and missionaries into the region. Like the Indians, the Whites belonged to several ethnic groups: Spanish, Russian, British, French, and American. The Indian ethnic groups became consolidated into slightly larger units. The White ethnic groups competed among themselves until one predominated -- the American. The Whites began as transient visitors, sent out to

accomplish a task and return home. As time passed many of them stayed longer and longer, first intermarrying as individuals with Indian families, later setting up independent settlements with the intent to stay permanently.

The Indians welcomed the first Whites and extended hospitality to them. They were curious about their material culture and their apparent wealth and power. Village headmen were amenable to setting up trading relations with them. Fortunately they were spared the worst consequences of bad trading policies and relatively little conflict took place between Whites and Indians. Some Indian leaders were curious about the spiritual backing that the Whites had and made journeys to find out more information. They became converted to Christianity and returned to their homelands, preaching the Gospel before the first White priests arrived in the Skagit Region.

The relatively infrequent and brief contacts between Indians and Whites during the period of early contact had far-reaching effects on the Indian ethnic organization. The introduction of guns to raiding northern enemies disrupted peace in the Skagit Region. Skagit Region villages had to mobilize for war or be wiped out. Ethnic ties between villages within the region strengthened as intermarriage, invitational feasting, and defense operations increased. Religious cultism also strengthened extra-village ties. Demographic instability following epidemic diseases caused the death of many old ethnic groups and the birth of others. Indian groups who became desirous of White trade goods gradually lost their economic independence from Whites and the balance of economic power began to shift towards the intruders. New generations of warrior-trader-missionary leaders among the village headmen of the

Skagit Region acquired more power, wealth, and prestige than had existed before, managing to dominate subordinate leaders in their regions to such an extent that an informal hierarchy arose. Social mobility in the feasting circle increased greatly. Simultaneously, the population displacement, weakening of village bonds of loyalty, and the rise of powerful regional leaders cause the old system of parcelling out prestige to individual ethnic groups to cease to function. The incorporation of Whites into the status system presented a multitude of new standards for evaluating individual achievement. Whites themselves formed a new category in need of evaluation. Interaction with the new category strengthened old tendencies to expand ethnic consciousness beyond the bounds of the individual winter village community. The village cluster emerged as a focal unit of ethnic identification and an operating socio-political unit in the minimal sense.

These processes continued to operate after the early contact period into the period of the negotiation of the Treaty of Point Elliott. Just prior to the treaty period, change along several other lines began to take place rapidly. It is very difficult to draw a line between the end of one period and the beginning of another. It is the events leading up to and surrounding the treaty which allows us to distinguish the beginning of a new era in Skagit Region Indian history.

CHAPTER IV

THE NEGOTIATION OF THE TREATY OF POINT ELLIOTT (MUCKILTEO) (1850-1870)

INTRODUCTION

During the two decades from 1850 to 1870 Indians and Whites in the Skagit Region confronted each other squarely. For the first time their interests were clearly in conflict. The issue of who should own and control the land threatened to bring them to arms. This confrontation was sparked by the arrival of a new kind of White -- the settlers and miners, who began coming in great numbers, changing the whole complexion of ethnic relations.

WHITE IMMIGRATION

Settlers and Miners

In 1840 a huge pool of rootless Whites had built up in the eastern part of the continent. Thousands of people were waiting for some place to go. Almost all the land of the Mississippi Valley was occupied by Whites in 1842 (Coan n.d.:423), and the Southwest was closed to immigration before the annexation of Texas and the Mexican cession. The only outlet for the White frontier population was the Pacific Northwest. Between 1842 and 1847 about 7000 of them moved across the Great Plains, along the Oregon Trail, which culminated in the Columbia and Willamette River Valleys (Coan n.d.:88). When they reached what is now Washington State, they

were pushed farther west by powerful and hostile tribes of the Plateau. East of the Cascades, the Indians were militarily strong and refused to allow settlers to locate in the Interior for a number of years. So the immigrants continued on over the mountains along the Columbia River Basin. From there they turned north and south into the coastal regions. It was only a short journey from the Columbia River up to the southern part of Puget Sound, where miles of quiet shoreline and protected inlets attracted the settlers.

The White immigrants didn't reach into the Skagit area until 1850, the same year that Congress passed the Oregon Donation Land Act, giving each settler a 320 acre claim (or 640, "a square mile," for a man and wife) if he lived on it for a number of years. Between 1850 and 1855 handfuls of settlers spread themselves around Whidbey Island, first taking up the tillable prairie lands where the Indians had planted camas bulbs and potatoes. The prime land was quickly spoken for, and later comers had to be satisfied with small portions of prairie and large wooded acreage. Fidalgo Island and the mainland around the Skagit River Delta was not settled until 1859, four years after the treaty was signed extinguishing Indian title. Some settlers attempted to establish horse and cattle runs on the north fork of the Skagit River before the treaty was signed, but were driven out by the unfriendly demonstrations of the Indians (Schiach 1906:99). Numerous parties of transient miners passed through the Skagit Region on their way to Ruby Creek in the Cascade Mountains in the early 1850's (Puget Sound Mail Aug. 4, 1960). Later discoveries of gold brought 5,000 miners through the canyons with strings of packhorses. In 1858 and 1859 there was a large influx into the Bellingham Bay area bound for the Fraser River.

The settlers did not arrive at the place later known as La Conner until 1863. The potential for farming the marshy river flats was first perceived by Samuel Calhoun, who had seen marsh diking done in his boyhood homeland. Calhoun and Michael J. Sullivan, a smuggler hiding away from Custom's House officials, built houses on the Skagit Delta and began diking in 1864 (Schiach 1906:100). The tremendous work of diking out the salt-water and allowing the land to dry out slowed settlement considerably, but once the high productivity of the fertile soil was demonstrated, the rest of the land was snapped up. Some of those who came were miners who had burnt out their luck in the Fraser River gold rush of 1861.

By 1873 almost all the "government" land in the Skagit Region was taken up. A small town at La Conner had been started, enjoying semi-weekly communication with the outside world by steamer. It had two stores, two blacksmith shops, a wheelwright's shop, a post office, and a public school (Schiach 1906:99). Settlement of the upper Skagit valley was delayed until after 1880, when a large log jam on the river was removed, facilitating transportation farther upstream by steamer.

The movement of Whites into the Skagit Region thus followed a general pattern of first touching the arable land on the islands offshore, next shifting to the dikable delta lands, and finally hitting the remote up-river areas. Natural clearings were always attractive. The thick forest was shunned. The Whites, like the Indians, travelled by water.

Many White farmers formed friendly relations with the Indians, learning to speak the Indian language. Some of these settlers were enlightened and dealt with the Indians with honesty and

respect.¹ The frontier also brought a range of undesirable characters. These were usually the miners, smugglers, and whiskey traders, whom the Indians referred to as "cultus" Whitemen, meaning "worthless." Their actions towards Indians engendered innumerable conflicts, and they grew more assertive as their numbers grew. They were intent on cheating the Indians in business transactions. Miners, passing through the country on their way north, demonstrated especially overbearing attitudes towards the Indians and were responsible for considerable conflict (Jeffcott 1949:27). John Fornsby reported that when he was a boy, a White man who harbored a grudge against Fornsby's cousin walked right into the house and murdered him in bed (Collins 1951:306). "There was no law then," Fornsby said.

Some settlers were as exploitative of the Indians as the miners, smugglers, and whiskey traders. An example of one of the outrages suffered by the Indians at the hands of worthless settlers was recounted by Raymond Charles, elder of the Swinomish Reservation with ancestry in the Upper Skagit territory. One summer some of the Sauk River villagers left their village temporarily to gather their winter subsistence. In their absence, White settlers who wanted the prairie land on which the Indian village was located burned the longhouses.

Indian Reaction

On one hand the Skagit Region Indians welcomed the settlers because their guns and steamboats mounted with cannons provided excellent protection from the Northern raiders. In addition the Indians benefitted

¹Such a man was Ezra Meeker, who settled in Southern Puget Sound. He authored an historical account of Indian affairs during the treaty times, entitled Pioneer Reminiscences of Puget Sound and the Tragedy of Leschi (1905). It is also a biography of Leschi, Nisqually headman.

economically from the added opportunities to earn money and trade goods. But nothing could compensate for the loss of their lands as the settlers moved in. During the period from 1850 through 1854, the Indians chafed as the Whites occupied Whidbey. Congress had passed a law giving away plots in their territory before they had ceded it to the U.S. Government. Settlers came pouring in. Yet no arrangements with the Indians had been made.

By the 1850's the Puget Sound Indian leaders had had ample opportunity to learn about the intentions of Whites to make a permanent settlement in their country. Their numerous contacts with Eastern Washington Indians could hardly have failed to convey to Puget Sound Indians stories of military conquest of native American tribes by Whites in other parts of the continent. Nevertheless some of the Puget Sound Indian leaders favored putting up a military resistance. Patkanim, leader of the Snoqualmie villages and their allies, sponsored a grand council of village headmen and their followers on Whidbey Island, providing 60 deer for the feast (Kellogg 1934:17). He argued that the Indians should drive the Whites out while there were still few of them. The leaders from the northern part of Puget Sound disagreed with him, placing high value on the protection the Whites afforded them against the Northern raiders. The Skagit Region leaders, especially the leaders of salt-water villages, joined with the opposition to Patkanim.

The Skagit Region Indians never did put up an organized resistance, although they exhibited scattered displays of hostility towards individual parties of settlers. Some of them burned down the log cabin of a harness maker who attempted to establish himself at Snatelum Point on Whidbey Island (Kellogg 1934:26). Others put on unfriendly demonstrations to run

out a group of settlers trying to settle on the north fork of the Skagit River before 1855 (Schiach 1906:99). It was said that in 1850 the hostile attitude of Indians in the Upper Skagit area discouraged the miners and that, until 1859, it had been unsafe for Whites to settle on Fidalgo (Schiach 1906:98).

Although there was no organized Indian resistance, White fear of it was great. When Calhoun and Sullivan first attempted to establish their claims in the region of Swinomish slough in 1863, tensions were considerable.

At the time this settlement was made the Swinomish Indians were in rather bad repute among the whites. It was said that a year or two before a surveyor named Hunt, while on his way from Penn's Cove, Island County, to Whatcom, was killed by them, they fearing he might work some evil incantation upon them with his instruments. They were also credited with having killed an old and somewhat insane man who had built a cabin close to the banks of the Swinomish slough, and stories were rife of persons who were known to have attempted a passage of the slough and were never heard of after. But notwithstanding all these reports, the two settlers were not molested by Indians. . . . (Schiach 1906:101).

Much of the Indian-White interaction at this time was based on threat, bluff, and counter-threat.

. . . their old chief came to Calhoun after his house was built and wanted to know what he was going to do there. When informed, he said: "You must be a fool. Don't you know that in winter, when the big winds come, the water will be two or three feet high all over the ground?" Mr. Calhoun said he knew it, but that he intended to throw up the earth higher than that and keep out the water. The chief then asked if he did not know the land belonged to the Indians. "No," said Calhoun, "according to the idea of the Bostons the Indians' land is on the reservation." The chief replied that that was the Bostons' cultus wa wa (bad talk) and that he could drive out the white men or kill them if he chose. "That is true," replied Calhoun, "but if you should, the soldiers would come with fire-ships and kill many of you." The Indian admitted that such would be the probable result. He accepted Mr. Calhoun's proffered hand and the friendship there begun was never broken (Schiach 1906:101).

White pioneer historians dwell on incidents in which settlers successfully bluffed their way through Indian resistance. The pleasure Whites derived from these tales must have been psychological compensation for long months of fear and tension.

Numerous accounts of panic sweeping the population of settlers indicate prolonged tensions many years after the peace treaty. During the so-called Indian war of 1855 and 1856, the whole White population of Puget Sound, including the settlers on Whidbey Island, moved into block-houses for protection, although the serious Indian rebels resided primarily south and east of Seattle. A contingent of soldiers was stationed as far north as Fort Whatcom, where Bellingham now stands.

The Indian war, as far as Whatcom was concerned, proved pretty much of a dud, and time hung heavily on the shoulders of the dashing young officers in the fort. With money supplied by the government, Pickett built a road from the fort to Sehome, which was much used by the officers and men in seeking diversion from the monotony of life in the barracks (Jeffcott 1949:423).

The panic of the settlers seems amusing in view of the fact that the Northern Puget Sound Indians remained peaceful and never engaged in any organized hostilities. However, despite this friendly orientation, there was good reason for Whites to be apprehensive. During the decade from 1850 to 1860, a gradual deterioration of Indian-White relations took place, due to postponement of the settlement of the land ownership question and later to postponement of ratification of the treaty. The Skagit Region leaders felt severe apprehension about the delays. The Indians probably experienced much fear themselves, as they wondered what might become of their people. All kinds of political strategies had their advocates among the Indians, although there has survived little printed evidence on this subject for the Skagit Region. One thing is

clear though: if the Puget Sound Indians had ever unified their resistance with the Indian resistance east of the Cascades and also made allies of the war-like Northern raiders, they could have presented a formidable front to the Whites for many decades. The settlers realized the awesome potential of the Indians' resistance and were always fearful that it might take place.

U.S. INDIAN POLICY IN 1850

Indian Removal

In the early 1850's Skagit Indian leaders were justifiably nervous , for the policy of the U.S. government at that time was "Indian Removal." It had been dominant since 1830, when Congress passed the Indian Removal Act, 4 Stat. 411 (1830). As a result of this law, more than sixteen tribes in the eastern part of the nation had been rounded up at bayonet point and marched thousands of miles from their homelands to strange territory beyond the Mississippi River (McNickle 1962:40).

By 1850 the Puget Sound Indians heard rumors about the White government's plans, even that it contemplated shipping all Puget Sound Indians out of the country to the land of perpetual darkness (Alaska) in order to make room for the settlers (Meeker 1905:235). They also observed that the Canadian tribes of Vancouver Island were doing comparatively well in their negotiations with the British Columbian Governor James Douglas.¹ Whether these events in the north encouraged Washington

¹In 1850 and 1851 the British Columbian Indians ceded all their lands to the government but were allowed to keep their village sites, and their accustomed camp and fishing sites (Suttles 1954:41). They received no monetary compensation for the lands ceded (Lewis 1970:46-47), but at least they were not forced to leave their homes.

Indians to insist upon as good treatment is not known, but before the treaty period was over they did manage to alter U.S. government policy considerably.

Lane's Policy

In 1849 Congress set up the Oregon Territory, which included the land which is now both Oregon and Washington States. Joseph Lane, the first governor, was appointed to serve, ex-officio, as Superintendent of Indian Affairs. Lane's approach to solving conflicts between settlers and Indians relied heavily on instilling fear into the Indians. He believed in sending out army forces to quell trouble, to arrest any Indians accused of murder, and to see that the offenders were tried and hung (Coan n.d.: 93). This policy was applied forcefully in the interior of the state, where the strong Plateau tribes put up resistance to settlement.

Concerning the problem of land settlement, Governor Lane joined Samuel Thurston, a territorial delegate to Congress, in recommending that all Indians west of the Cascades be removed eastward to a place designated "Indian Country" (Coan n.d.:429). To care for the Indians' needs after removal, Lane proposed that two huge agencies be established: one for the Puget Sound Indians and one for the Grand Rhonde Valley Indians of Upper Oregon. By acting quickly, he hoped to be able to "extinguish" Indian title before throwing the area open to settlers, thereby avoiding armed conflicts.

Failure of the First Treaties

The U.S. Congress agreed with Lane's approach and acted in 1850 to provide for the negotiation of treaties and the reorganization of the Indian service in the Oregon Territory. Three commissioners were appointed

to treat with the Indians west of the Cascades for their lands and for their removal to lands east of those mountains (Coan n.d.:98-99). As a result, a score of treaties were made with Coastal Indians, mostly with tribes south of Puget Sound.

In negotiating the treaties, the commissioners found the Indians adamantly opposed to removal. Many Indian leaders believed their bands would be extinct within ten years, and insisted on their being allowed to die on their own soil rather than be moved (Coan n.d.:104). In order to carry out the treaty-making schedule and secure some signatures on the paper, the treaty commissioners had no alternative but to offer something better. In the end, they allowed the Indians to retain portions of their tribal lands as reservations. When the resulting treaties were returned to Washington D.C. for ratification by Congress, the distant bureaucrats refused to ratify them, feeling them too radical a departure from existing Indian policy. Congress objected that these treaties did not provide for removal and segregation of the Indians; that the sums of money to be paid them were too large; that the area purchased was too small; and that the tribes signing were small and insignificant (Coan n.d.:430-431). As a result, the establishment of legal accords with all Indians in the entire Oregon Territory was delayed while politicians reevaluated and revised policy. It took several years to reach a new consensus. During these years, pioneer settlements spread north and south of the Willamette River in Oregon and the Columbia River Valley in Washington, and armed conflicts between Whites and Indians became more numerous.

Palmer's Policy

The failure of these treaties forced a reevaluation of policy in

Washington D.C. The policy which finally prevailed was that recommended by Joel Palmer, succeeding Governor of the Oregon Territory. Palmer advocated four principles (Coan n.d.:124). First, he said, grant the Indians a portion of their own lands as a permanent reservation, a home remote from settlements. Second, pass laws guarding them from degraded Whites. Third, pass laws governing the tribes in their relations with one another, preventing their feuding. And fourth, in return for the cession of lands, give them aid for twenty years, making them self-supporting agriculturalists by the end of that period. Included in this aid would be schools, instructing them in agricultural techniques. Palmer's recommendations were accepted by Congress as the new basis for Indian policy in the Pacific Northwest.

Stevens' Policy

In 1854 Congress appropriated funds to negotiate new treaties. About the same time it created Washington as a separate territory. Isaac Stevens was appointed Governor and authorized to act as Superintendent of Indian Affairs for the Territory. Washington's new policy was identical to Oregon's because Palmer and Stevens were of the same opinion. In addition to implementing the forementioned principles, Stevens advocated concentrating as many bands as possible on one reservation to insure easier control over them (Coan n.d.:138-139). Stevens also believed the authority of Indian village headmen should be increased so that the government could hold them responsible for the conduct of their people. And finally, he felt the Indians should not be excluded from their fisheries.

The task of blocking out the treaties to be presented to

Washington Indians was given to Stevens. Considerable pressure was applied on him to make up for lost time. The delay in consummating relations with the Indians was thought to be holding up the growth and development of the Territory. Stevens expressed his impatience in his first speech to the legislative assembly in 1854:

The Indian title has not been extinguished, nor even a law passed to provide for its extinguishment east of the Cascade mountains. Under the land law of Congress, it is impossible to secure titles to land, and thus the growth of towns and villages is obstructed, as well as the development of the resources of the Territory. The surveys of the public lands are languidly conducted, and only by the most vigorous course, the adoption of proper methods, and an efficient and distinct organization can the wants of the people of the Territory be supplied (Gates 1940:4).

Stevens' primary motives were to build up the population of the new territory, win prosperity for it, and attract notice in the East for his personal achievements. He was a strong and determined personality. In blocking out the treaty in his office, he attempted to do in a month what should have properly taken years of patient labor (Meeker 1905:232).

THE PUGET SOUND TREATY CONFERENCES

The Medicine Creek Treaty Conference

Unfortunately, in his hurry, Stevens was misinformed about the Indians' attitudes. He was told that they would sign almost anything that was presented to them. After the first draft of a treaty was ready in his office, it was presented to the Indians without change of any kind, without consultation with the village leaders (Meeker 1905:233). This was done at the Treaty Conference of Medicine Creek, dealing with native groups of Southern Puget Sound. It was held in 1854, in December, a month before

the conference that was to deal with the Skagit Region people. At Medicine Creek, some of the Indian leaders showed strong opposition to Stevens' choice of location for the reservation. Instead of negotiating with them on this matter, he rigidly insisted upon his plan. The land he designated was high bluff, heavily timbered, and included not a single acre of arable farmland (Meeker 1905:257). Leschi, about whom Meeker has written a biographical account, spoke up. He insisted that the Nisqually-Puyallup wanted some river bottom land so they could farm, some prairie so they could pasture their horses, and some land along the creek so they could travel back and forth between the salt-water and the prairies (Meeker 1905:256-257). When Governor Stevens stubbornly refused to yield to these demands, Leschi angrily tore up his commission as chief and walked out of the conference. There is some evidence to show that Leschi's signature was afterwards forged on the treaty (Meeker 1905:241-251).

These actions represented a paradoxical departure from Stevens' usual principles of justice. Only a few months previously he had stated that when the reservations were formed, they should be made of good lands, large enough to give to each Indian a homestead and acreage to pasture his animals. Stevens further stated that the location and extent of the reservations should be adapted to the peculiar wants and habits of the different tribes (Meeker 1905:257-258). At the treaty conference, Governor Stevens was, according to pioneer historian Ezra Meeker, intoxicated and unfit for transacting business. Stevens' personality also had some influence on the outcome of the events at Medicine Creek.

. . . he was possessed of small measure of patience, a characteristic so essential in dealing with Indians. His education had been under military discipline of strict submission to those in command and his habits of obedience had been formed under the experience of war (Meeker 1905:260).

Stevens was extremely pressed for time during these early years. Besides handling the responsibility of managing Indian affairs for the Territory, he had the enormous task of directing the explorations for the Northern Pacific Railroad, a duty which required his whole energies for two years with nearly two hundred and fifty men under his control the summer following his appointment as Governor. Together with these duties, he had to handle the organizing of the new territorial government. It is no surprise that the first treaty he authored failed to secure peace with the Indians.

The Point Elliott Treaty Conference

Nevertheless, the Point Elliott Treaty Conference, which followed that of Medicine Creek, provided more general satisfaction. The point selected for the main reservation, Tulalip, was "a beautiful spot fronting on the Sound, with low shores adjoining, with some arable land and good fisheries, and was as well suited to the wants of the Indians as any one location that could be found" (Meeker 1905:263). Three other smaller reservations were set apart for bands which "refused to be moved to the large central location" (Meeker 1905:263).¹ These were Port Madison, Lummi, and Swinomish Reservations.

In early January of 1855, a month after the Medicine Creek Treaty Conference in the south, the Indians from northern and central Puget Sound

¹However, the Governor ignored the wishes of the Duwamish. These villagers were on unfriendly terms with the Snoqualmies and Snohomishes, in whose territory the Tulalip Reservation was made. By the terms of the treaty, the Duwamish were required to remove themselves from their place of abode and go to live among strangers they feared. Their discontent, especially that of the groups living up the White River, eventually led to the outbreak of hostilities in the following year.

began gathering at the place known as Muckilteo, or Point Elliott. George Gibbs, Acting Secretary, took a census of the Indians within the district described in the treaty. He found them to be 3,959 (Meeker 1905:263), but less than 2,300 were present at the conference. The Governor and his party arrived in a large luxurious steamer. His accommodations contrasted sharply with those of the Indian families, arriving in canoes and setting up temporary camps on the newly cleared site. This was the season when Indian people stayed home, protected from the elements in their plank houses.¹

The minutes of the treaty conference (Gibbs 1855a) record the Governor's speeches in more detail than the Indians' and, unfortunately, none of the informal negotiations that took place. In his opening remarks, Stevens expressed a paternalistic attitude towards the Indians, calling them "my children" and promising to do everything for them that a father would do for his children -- such as seeing that they were fed and clothed. He referred to the White President as the "Great Father" and Indian Agent M. T. Simmons as their "elder brother." Playing along with his familistic convention, Chief Seattle responded, "I look up to you as my father." Stevens expressed his appreciation for the hospitality Indian people had given him in the past, including food, raiment, and care for his horse wherever he had gone. The Indians' concern with intangible feelings in the ceremony was shown by their use of phrases such as "our hearts are all the same," "our hearts are right," and their presentation of a white flag. Stevens' assimilationist attitude was shown by his statement that he and

¹Martin Sampson, a former resident of Swinomish writes (1972:2) that the Nooksack were unable to attend because the Nooksack River froze, preventing canoe navigation downstream.

the Great Father desired the Indians to live as Whites, have homes, be Christians, go to school, learn agriculture and artisanship, have the means and opportunity to cultivate the soil, and "get two blankets when you have one now." M. T. Simmons then spoke exhorting the Indians to stop buying rum from "bad White men." He believed a majority of the conflicts between Whites and Indians stemmed from alcohol. Stevens then expressed his intentions that the Indians continue being able to support themselves, and get fish, berries, and roots. "We mean to pay you for these lands," he said, and then asked four Indian leaders to give speeches. These were Patkanim of the Snohomish-Snoqualmie, Chow-its-hoot of the Lummi, Goliah of the Lower Skagit, and Sealth ("Seattle") of the Duwamish-Suquamish. Finally, Stevens announced that if they were ready to sign the treaty, he would sign first, if not, he would not sign until they made a document they were satisfied with.

The minutes say that the treaty was read and translated into Chinook Jargon by a Snohomish Indian, John Taylor. Taylor supposedly understood English and had been previously acquainted with the treaty's features. The minutes contend that all details were explained to the Indians beforehand except the sum of money to be given for their lands, and that the leaders were consulted beforehand as to the fitness of the reservations. Explanation was made of the process of ratification in which the treaty, if signed, would be sent back to Washington D.C. for the President's approval. If it was satisfactory it would be returned to the Indians.

No record was made in the official minutes of the Indian leaders' responses to separate articles of the treaty or to negotiations that were made over certain points. The minutes merely stated (Gibbs 1855a),

"The chiefs consulted among themselves and expressed their readiness to sign." Their misgivings or qualifications were not recorded. Included were only Sealath's words when he interrupted saying he did not want his people to have so much of the payment in money -- that the Great Chief above who made the country, made it for all, and perhaps he would not be pleased at their taking pay for it. Stevens answered Sealath that the sum would not actually be paid in money, but in goods. Sealath later requested that the Indians be given the services of a doctor. That was also promised.

More Indian responses were recorded in the minutes of the Point No Point Treaty Conference following the Point Elliott Conference (Gibbs 1855b). Reviewing them helps show the misgivings of the Indians which might have gone unvoiced at Muckilteo. An old Skokomish Indian, Che-lan-teh-tat, announced his fear about signing because he didn't know how his family would get enough to eat. He didn't like the Reservation. M. T. Simmons answered that the Skokomish people could continue to live like they were, and get their food in their accustomed places. They needed only move their houses. Another Skokomish said that the land was worth much money, and he didn't want to tell it at such a low price. The Whites responded that land became valuable only by the labor laid out upon it -- the improvements made. A third Indian leader stated that he didn't want to sell all his land, just half of it. He wanted to keep the other half. In response to this Simmons threatened that if the Indians chose to keep half, they would not be allowed to have free travel and go wherever they wanted to. Another native announced that all the Indians present had been afraid to speak, so he would speak for them. He didn't want to leave his land; it made him sick to leave it. He didn't want to go away from where

he was born, he was afraid of becoming destitute. Stevens replied that Indians had already been driven from their burial ground by White settlers, and that the government wanted to put them where they couldn't be driven away by Whites. Finally, an influential Indian leader, the Duke of York, said that he was happy with the treaty signing. He was especially so because the Governor had stopped the fighting between different bands. Before they had always been poor, but now they had blankets and clothing, and earned money. The Duke hoped the Governor would tell the Whites to stop abusing the Indians, as they had a habit of doing, ordering them to go away and knocking them down. Stevens repeated that he wanted to put them where they couldn't be driven away. Following the Duke of York's declaration in favor of signing, other leaders gradually came over to his side, making it evident in their acceptance speeches that they were doing so primarily because they abhorred bloodshed between Whites and Indians. It seems probable that Chief Seattle may have played a similar role at Point Elliott.

One of the most controversial aspects of the Point Elliott treaty conference was official use of the Chinook Jargon, a trade jargon of about 300 words. Although the chiefs may have understood the message of the Point Elliott treaty, the people didn't, according to Swinomish Reservation elder Richard Peters. The Chinook Jargon was new to the Northern Puget Sound Indians. It had originated farther south, in the Columbia River region. The closest translation of the treaty's message understood in the Skagit language, according to Peters, was that the Indians would receive "buckets of gold" in compensation for their land, and nobody knew how much a bucket of gold was worth. Suttles' (1954:47) informants believed that the Chinook Jargon did not reach Puget Sound until around 1850, and

that the Indian who interpreted at the treaty negotiations in 1855 was their first man to learn Chinook in the area. Ezra Meeker (1905:207) quotes Owen Bush, an early resident of the Olympia area: "I could talk the Indian languages, but Stevens did not seem to want anyone to interpret in their own tongue, and had that done in Chinook. Of course, it was utterly impossible to explain the treaties to them in Chinook."¹

The Skagit Region people did understand that they would have to move away from their traditional village sites. Most dissatisfied were the inland groups who were required to move down to the salt-water. Some of the Upper Skagit villages refused to sign. Richard Peters recounts: "The Upper Skagit chief got mad and walked out during the Treaty negotiations. He wanted the money laid right then on the table, not promised. He was a Campbell. He had business in his head, and was the only guy that was right. The government denied the Upper Skagit help for a long time as a result of it." Many of the Upper Skagit never did move to the The Samish leaders did not sign the treaty either (Suttles 1954:55).² They were supposed to occupy the Lummi Reservation, but most of them remained on Samish and Guemes Islands until about 1905 and then moved to the Swinomish Reservation, where they had close kinship ties. Some Samish people never moved to the Lummi or Swinomish Reservations and hold that

¹Hank Adams, an Indian activist from Southern Puget Sound, points out (1970:5) that by arguing the Indians could scarcely have understood the treaty, Whites are "diminishing any obligation to an understanding commonly held by both White officials and Indians. By claiming a lack of understanding by Indians, their lawyers have allowed non-Indians 'not to be obligated' by their own understanding of the treaty."

²Sampson (1972:2) reports that Ch-lah-ben, the Noo-qua-cha-mish chief, signed for the Cho-bah-ah-bish and Chow-its-hoot, the Lummi chief, signed for the Samish. Chief Waw-wit-kin, of the Sah-ku-meh-hu, refused to sign, but sub Chief Dahtl-de-min did sign. Also refusing were Sat-ba-but-kin, of Sba-le-och, and Ki-ya-hud of Mis-skai-whwa.

they have never given away their land or rights. They consider themselves a landless tribe, that is, one without a reservation (Governor's Indian Affairs Task Force 1973:25).

In all, there were twenty seven leaders of Skagit Region ethnic groups who signed the Point Elliott Treaty, out of a total of 82 Indian signators.¹ They represented eight groups of Skagit Region Indians: the Skagit, Kik-ial-lus, Sah-ku-meh-hu, Me-sek-wi-guilse, Noo-qua-cha-mish, Swinamish, and Noo-wha-ah. Four other bands were indirectly represented or were protesting non-signators: Cho-ba-ah-bish, Samish, Sba-le-och, and Mis-skai-whwa. Governor Stevens' party gave these men formal written commissions as chiefs and sub-chiefs (Meeker 1905:242). Most were wealthy

¹These were:

Goliah (Skagit)*
 Kwallattum, or General Pierce (Skagit)
 Kwuss-ka-nam, or George Snatelum, Sen. (Skagit)
 Ilel-mits, or George Snatelum (Skagit)
 S'kwai-kwi (Skagit)
 Kleh-kent-soot (Skagit)
 Sonh-heh-ovs (Skagit)
 S'den-ap-kan, or General Warren (Skagit)
 Ske-eh-tum (Skagit)
 Patchkanam, or Dome (Skagit)
 Sats-kanam (Squin-ah-nush)
 Sd-zo-mahtl (Kik-ial-lus)
 Dahtl-de-min (Sah-ku-meh-hu)
 Sd'zek-du-num (Me-sek-wi-guilse)
 She-hope, or General Pierce (Skagit)
 Ch-lah-ben (Noo-qua-cha-mish)
 Charley (Skagit)
 Sampson (Skagit)
 Hatch-kwentum (Skagit)
 Yo-i-kum (Skagit)
 T'kwa-ma-han (Skagit)
 Sto-dum-kan (Swinamish)
 Be-lole (Swinamish)
 D'zo-lole-gwam-hu (Skagit)
 Kel-kahl-tsoot (Swinamish)
 Pat-sen (Skagit)
 Pat-teh-us (Noo-wha-ah)

*The term "Skagit" refers to the salt-water villages today known as "Lower Skagit."

and respected war leaders, religious leaders, or traders, some a combination of these. They did not, by any traditional character, have the right to speak with authority for the others without their permission (Collins n.d.b.:46-47). In their great haste government officials made a few mistakes. According to Snyder (n.d.:142) Goliah was identified as a chief because of his position as a ceremonial spokesman for Snatelum, the most powerful and wealthy Lower Skagit headman. Goliah had learned to speak English to represent his employer to White settlers and government agencies. The Whites, not comprehending the role of an Indian spokesman, believed Goliah's speaking functions chiefly. After the Treaty, Goliah went to the Swinomish Reservation, Snatelum's family to Tulalip. The Sauk River village headman, according to his descendant Ray Charles of the Swinomish Reservation, refused to sign the treaty without first returning home and properly consulting the rest of his people. When he returned to the treaty grounds three days later, he found that the Governor's party had secured the signature of someone else in his place, and that everybody had packed up and gone home.

One of the most eloquent Indian spokesmen present at Point Elliott was Sealth or Seattle. His famous speech has been translated, published in a newspaper, and since been quoted in many history books.¹ It conveys

See: Treaty Between the United States and the Dwamish, Suquamish, and Other Allies and Subordinate Tribes of Indians in Washington Territory. January 22, 1855. Ratified April 11, 1859. Reprinted by Shorey Bookstore Facsimile Reproduction, SJS-108. Seattle, 1966; or 12 Stat. 927 (1855); or Kappler (1972:669).

¹See Bagley, Charles B.

1931 "Chief Seattle and Angeline," Washington Historical Quarterly, XXII (Oct. 1931) p. 243-275.

Anderson, Eva Greenslit

1944 Chief Seattle. Caxton Printers Ltd. Caldwell, Idaho p. 204-210.

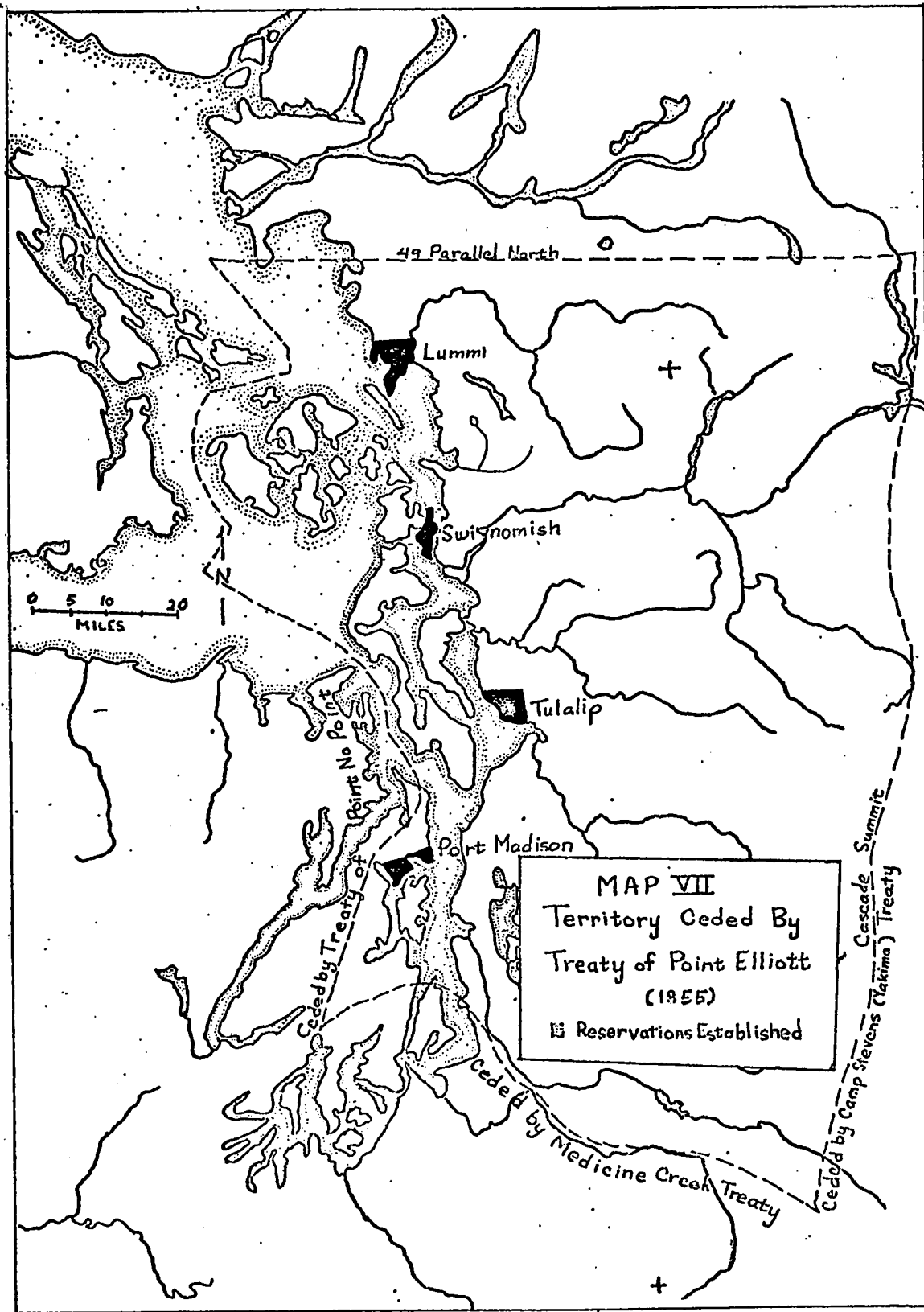
his sense of historical perspective and his awareness of a tragedy befalling his people (AFSC 1970:28). Dedicated to peaceful coexistence, Sealth was popular with Whites. He seems to have played an important role at the treaty convention, persuading more reluctant leaders to sign. His influence was greatest among the Duwamish and Suquamish. The Duke of York played a similar role at the Point No Point Treaty Conference. On a trip to San Francisco given him by a friendly ship's captain in 1850 the Duke of York had been impressed with the strength of the Whites. Consequently he did much to promote peaceful relations (Langness n.d.:24).

It seems likely that one reason why these four men -- Chowitsut, Snatelum (or Goliah, his spokesman), Patkanim, and Sealth -- were chosen to occupy the role of paramount chiefs, giving speeches for their people at the conference, was that they were among the four most friendly to the Whites. At the conclusion of the conference, the Whites presented gifts to the Indian people, funneiling them through these four, strengthening the Indians' paramount positions even more.

The Point Elliott Treaty Provisions

The Point Elliott (Muckilteo) Treaty, 12 Stat. 927 (1855), was the most important legal document in the Skagit Region Indians' history. Its specific provisions were, first, that the Indians agreed to recognize the Government of the United States, the Territory of Washington, and with them the Governor and Superintendent of Indian Affairs as the official representatives. In Article I they agreed to give up their title to the land.¹ Article II reserved four tracts of land on which no White men would

¹The boundaries of the land are described on Map VII.



be permitted to reside without permission from the tribes and bands. The tracts were described roughly and their acreage given. A provision allowing roads to be constructed through these tracts was included. Article III set aside land for an agricultural and industrial school to serve all Indians west of the Cascades. It was located at Tulalip, the central reservation where ultimately all Indians west of the Cascades would be drawn to reside.

The Indians consented to move onto the reservations within one year after the ratification of the treaty by the U.S. Senate, or sooner, if means were furnished them. In the meantime, they were to be allowed to continue residing upon unclaimed land, or claimed land with the White owner's permission. The right of taking fish at their usual and accustomed grounds and stations was secured them in common with all citizens of the Territory. They were allowed to erect temporary houses for the purpose of curing fish. Also secured was the privilege of hunting and gathering roots and berries on open and unclaimed land, provided, however, that they refrained from taking shellfish out of beds staked and cultivated by White citizens.

The U.S. government agreed to pay \$150,000 in installments for twenty years. The President was authorized to decide which beneficial objects upon which to expend it. He would have advice from the Superintendent with regard to the Indians' wishes. These annuities would not be taken to pay the debts of individual Indians.

The President reserved the right to remove the Indians from the reservations, consolidate them, and place them on a central reservation or elsewhere, when, in his opinion, the interests of the Territory required it, and the welfare of the Indians was promoted. In addition,

he could, at his discretion, divide up their reserved lands into allotments and assign ownership of them to individual families. Indians forced to abandon improvements on their land as a result of these actions were promised compensation.

The tribes and bands signing the treaty acknowledge their dependence on the U.S. government, promised to be friendly to all citizens, and vowed not to commit depredations on the property of the citizens. Should violations of this article occur, compensation to the injured parties would be taken out of the Indians' annuities. The Indians pledged not to make war on any other tribes except in self-defense. They promised to submit their differences to government agents for arbitration. They also agreed not to conceal or shelter offenders against the laws of the United States, but to deliver them up to the authorities for trial.

The tribes indicated a willingness to exclude the use of alcoholic beverages on their reservations, and Article X provided that any Indian who brought liquor onto the reservation could have his or her proportion of annuities withheld. The Indians agreed to free all slaves and not to acquire or purchase any more. They further agreed not to trade at Vancouver Island or elsewhere out of the dominions of the United States. Foreign Indians would not be permitted to reside in their reservations without consent of the agent.

To enable the Indians to move onto the reservations and begin cultivation of farmland, the government pledged to provide \$15,000. Finally, it pledged to support an agricultural school for a period of twenty years. This school would be free to children of the tribes and bands of the region, and would be staffed with instructors, blacksmiths, carpenters, and farmers. It was to be fully equipped with tools and shops. A

physician would be paid to reside at the central agency and minister to the sick.

The treaty was to be binding as soon as it was ratified by the Senate and President. Having once decided to sign it, many Indian leaders eagerly anticipated ratification and receipt of the promised annuities and allotments. However, they were forced to wait several years, their legal status in limbo, while the U.S. Senate decided whether to accept or reject the treaty.

THE YEARS FOLLOWING THE TREATY CONFERENCE

The Yakima Indian War and the System of Encampments

After spending the first months of 1855 holding treaty conferences on Puget Sound, the Olympic Peninsula, and the Pacific Coast, Governor Stevens departed for the interior. During the summer he and Governor Palmer of Oregon attempted to work out a single grand treaty for the Yakima, Cayuse, Walla Walla, Umatilla, and Nez Perce. The feelings of the Indians ran high in the eastern areas. By the fall of 1855 their dissatisfaction with the treaties crystallized into outright resistance. A series of military encounters, later called the Yakima Indian War, lasted for three years.

On the west side of the Cascades, discontent was rising among bands of Duwamish, Puyallup, and Nisqually, who had serious grievances with their respective treaties. Members of the Duwamish tribe were ripe for war by mid-summer, according to Meeker (1905:266), but could get no allies west of the mountains. They sought a winter campaign. Governor Stevens, the only man who could legally settle their grievances, had

gone a thousand miles away beyond the Rocky Mountains to assist in treating with the Blackfeet Indians. So pronounced was the unrest of Southeast Puget Sound Indians that Acting Governor Mason found it necessary to visit them and try to quiet their fears (Meeker 1905:264).

In October, 1855, Mason called up six companies of volunteer soldiers in response to hostilities east of the Cascades. Most of these men were commissioned to fight in the Yakima Indian country. Some were charged with the prevention of outbreaks in the Puget Sound region. The volunteer settler-soldiers were highly keyed-up for war and exhibited some independent initiative. One company of nineteen, named the Eaton Rangers, took on as their purpose the apprehension of the influential Nisqually leader Leschi and his brother Quiemuth. Although the two Indians had committed no acts of violence, they had been actively speaking out against the Medicine Creek Treaty. The two brothers caught wind of the Rangers' mission and fled from their homes just as the Rangers came to apprehend them. The Indians left in such haste, they abandoned their plows in the fields and horses on the range. They were driven right into the hostile camp.¹ The first act of war on the west side of the Cascades was thus committed, not by Indians, but by fearful White settlers. Five days after

¹Meeker (1905) has written an interesting account of Leschi's story before and after his entry into the war. A sensitive and gentle man of great wealth, Leschi had suffered great personal losses by the Medicine Creek Treaty. The Indians' resistance became a matter of special concern to Governor Stevens, who became determined to see him punished. Leschi had walked out on him when the Governor refused to negotiate the matter of a better reservation. Leschi was captured after being betrayed by an Indian who was offered a large reward. Amidst great controversy and many delays, Leschi was hung. Many Whites took Leschi's side as the actions of Governor Stevens became rash and reactionary. Though he died, Leschi's actions were responsible for the subsequent renegotiation of the Medicine Creek Treaty granting the Puyallup-Nisqually a more satisfactory tract of land.

this event, on October 28, 1855, the hostile camp of Indians responded by attacking three White families on the upper reaches of the White and Green Rivers. Nine persons were killed, their cabins burned. Shortly afterward the Indians destroyed nearly all remaining cabins along the rivers (Meeker 1905:213).

The alarm traveled quickly throughout Puget Sound. Almost the entire White population moved into protective blockhouses, constructed under emergency conditions. According to one pioneer journal (Judson 1925:154), the settlers feared the Indians were making unified plans to exterminate them all:

While we were equipping our two hundred volunteers with all the available firearms in the country, never giving a thought for our own safety, messengers were passing and repassing from tribe to tribe between British Columbia to the California line among these wily savages, who were secretly conspiring to rise enmasse and exterminate all the white settlers in the territory, which they would no doubt have accomplished had it not been for the too hasty work of some of the more desperate tribes giving the citizens warning in time to frustrate their plans (Judson 1925:154).

The same settler also believed that the hostile Indians had been influenced by unscrupulous traders who told them that there were but a few White people in the world, and if the Indians would kill those in the territory, no more would come (Judson 1925:167-168). During January, 1856, Indians camped in the vicinity of the town of Seattle attacked the little settlement, causing two or three deaths. They were repelled by armed men in the blockhouses and a warship in the harbor. Here again, panicky Whites fired the first shot:

The actual fighting (if it may be called fighting) was precipitated by the [warship] Decatur dropping a shell in "Tom Pepper's house," where a friendly Indian woman reported the hostiles had gathered. The house . . . was in the southern outskirts of the town near the tide flats and on tide level. . . . (Meeker 1905:348).

Despite the alarmed state of the entire White population, the majority of Puget Sound Indians remained peaceful and were not interested in joining the hostile forces. This was especially true for those groups farther north -- in the salt-water areas and the lower reaches of the Snohomish and Skagit River Valleys. The Skagit Indians offered to give up their arms or retain them and help fight the Yakima hostiles (Kellogg 1934:44). The Snohomish leader Patkanim, now thoroughly friendly to the Whites, raised a company of eighty-two Indian men who performed service¹ protecting the settlements during the war (Kellogg 1934:44).

While Governor Stevens was still away, the Territorial government deliberated over its policy toward the friendly Indians. Acting Governor C. H. Mason and the Indian Agent for Puget Sound, Michael T. Simmons, decided that the friendly Indians should be relocated away from the influence of messengers from the hostile eastern forces (Coan n.d.:177). They decided to collect all Indians living between the Cascades and Puget Sound as far north as the Skagit River, and move them farther west, into designated "encampments" for the duration of the war. The officials believed this strategy would prevent the recruitment of more Puget Sound Indians into the hostile camp.

The Indians were commanded to gather at a series of points along the salt water, where local agents directed them to encampments at Bellingham Bay, Port Townsend, Penn Cove, Holmes' Harbor, Port Madison, Fort Kitsap, Fox Island, and Puyallup (Coan n.d.:243-244). The natives were encouraged to surrender their arms temporarily and remain at these

¹They were to be paid for bringing in the heads of hostile leaders (Meany 1909:183).

locations in return for food,¹ if they needed it. By the end of November, 1855, almost all of the Skagit Region people had crossed over to Penn Cove, Whidbey Island. At the encampment at Holmes' Harbor, farther south on Whidbey Island, 1640 Snohomish Valley Indians were stationed. A storehouse was erected and filled with supplies (Coan n.d.: 249). In all of Western Washington, about five thousand Indians obeyed the order (Coan n.d.:244-245). Most of them were in the Puget Sound region.

The decision to carry out the relocation policy in Puget Sound was made before the actual hostilities had taken place along the Duwamish and White Rivers. It was primarily a response to the earlier events taking place east of the Cascade Mountains. At this time, the Point Elliott treaty was still unratified by the U.S. Senate. The legitimacy of the Territory's commands to the Indian population was questionable. The move was an outright assertion of power by the newly-formed territorial government, acting in what it deemed an emergency situation.

The official government literature on the encampments in Puget Sound indicates that the majority of Puget Sound bands were cooperative and accepted the decision of the White government as if it were legitimate.² Apparently the Indians felt that when they signed the compact at Point Elliott, they had, from that day on, granted recognition to the White government.³

¹The White government calculated it would be cheaper to feed than fight them (Coan n.d.:176-177).

²My Indian informants on the Swinomish Reservation rarely mentioned the events following the signing of the Treaty of Point Elliott. As far as I know, they have no recollection of the "encampments."

³One can be sure, though, that the official literature does not include the whole gamut of reactions.

During the first several months after the treaty signing, the rights and obligations of both parties were diffuse. The practical implications of the agreement were still uncertain. There is some indication that the White government was able to capitalize on the confusion by asserting itself. The Indians were apparently commanded to move and not given full explanation until afterwards:

The Skagit Indians were moved from their native place along the Skagit River to Penn Cove on Whidbey Island. They were visited, in Nov. 1855 by R. C. Fay and agreed to move to this island. By the end of November, almost all of these Indians had crossed to Penn Cove. At a council after the removal, the local agent explained the policy of the government to some twelve hundred Indians who seemed to be satisfied with the plan (Coan n.d.:247).

In some cases, the move was made by force or threat of force. Kellogg (1939:43-44) records that shortly after companies of volunteer soldiers were organized on Whidbey Island, First Lieutenant S. D. Howe was dispatched to the mainland to "go out and bring in the Skagit Indians." The upper river Indians objected more than other groups to moving to the salt-water country. After attempts had been made to persuade them, they were given three days to start for the encampment, which they did November 27, 1855. They were, no doubt, motivated by fear of volunteer soldiers stationed at the blockhouses on Whidbey Island.

Another positive influence in securing compliance with the relocation policy in Northern Puget Sound stemmed from a few high ranking village leaders. Lieutenant Howe found Lower Skagit leader Charley Snatelum especially cooperative: "Charley seems well disposed and says that his people are also. . . . Colonel Simmons (M. T. Simmons) is expected down soon to have a talk with them which I think will have a good effect" (Kellogg 1939:44). The White officials promised the Indians all their

needs would be taken care of and all wrongs set right after the emergency was over.

They were told that they would be protected and taken care of, and paid for their property lost due to removal, but those who refused to follow the instructions of the government agents would not be protected or considered as friends. All the Indians that were visited agreed to accept the offer except some two hundred Nisqually, Puyallup, and Dwamish Indians. . . . (Simmons to Stevens, Oct. 22, 1856, Letter from the Secretary of the Interior, Jan. 16, 1857, Serial 899, Doc. 37, p. 71).

The problem of feeding their people through the winter was a paramount concern of the Indian leaders. The salt-water bands were less troubled than the up-river bands because they did not have to move far from their familiar food sources. Although the government stocked a storehouse at Holmes' Harbor and promised to take care of them, it made no regular issues of food. From the beginning the Indians had to rely on their own stores and supplemented by hunting and fishing in the vicinity of the encampments (Coan n.d.:247). The supplies issued to them were obtained in exchange for work, making improvements on the encampments (Coan n.d.:254).

The hardships suffered by the Indians in the encampments were so great that the government administrators were forced to adjust the policy. Otherwise the Indians would not have survived. At the northernmost local agency (Bellingham Bay), where the Indians were remote from the seat of hostilities, it was found unnecessary to collect them at an encampment. Instead, E. O. Fitzhugh, the Indian agent, adopted the plan of giving the Indians passes when they left their regular camps. The idea behind this system was that strange Indians would be detected and kept out of the country (Coan n.d.:244). During April and May, 1856, the Skagit Indians were allowed to return to the Skagit River country to plant potatoes.

The Upper Skagit were permitted to return to their villages permanently. The friendliness of the Skagit Region Indians influenced the policy governing their case, as was the case with the Bellingham Bay Indians (Coan n.d.:247). In the spring of 1857 the Penn Cove encampment was abandoned altogether. Later the same year, the Holmes' Harbor station was also abandoned.

During the next two winters, the Skagit, Snohomish, and Clallam suffered a great deal due to severely cold weather and a small salmon run (Coan n.d.:251-252). Most of them were allowed to roam the country getting a livelihood. Each year as the country became more fully occupied the food stores for winter were more difficult to procure. Agent Fay reported in 1857 (CIAAR 1857:336-337) that "the Indians go where they want nine months of the year, always letting it be known to me or my assistant where they are going or what for." He wanted them to collect as much food as possible. Very little assistance was given in the way of provisions. They were dependent almost entirely on their own resources. There was considerable sickness as well as hunger. Fay reported (CIAAR Nov. 6, 1858, Serial 974, Doc. 1, p. 590) that they were in dire need of governmental assistance.

During the spring of 1858 and 1859, M. T. Simmons made a tour of the remaining encampments to quiet the Indians and make presents to the old and sick. This was a low point in their history, and they had many grievances to express. They complained of the conduct of settlers, miners, and the government -- the settlers for taking their lands, the miners for abuse, and the government for the non-ratification of the treaties (Coan n.d.:261). The large number of deaths among their people since the coming of the Whites caused them to fear they would all die before the

treaty was ratified.

Congress, whose ear was turned towards the Yakima war news, was not inclined to be sympathetic with the plight of the friendly Puget Sound allies, nor to vote much money for their relief, despite the appeals of government Indian agents. With the treaty still unratified, Congress was apparently reluctant to admit any responsibility at all for their welfare. The southern Puget Sound Indians, signators of the Medicine Creek Treaty, received quicker attention because their hostile bands had caused considerable fear and commotion.

The End of the War in Puget Sound

The serious war scare among the settlers on Puget Sound lasted only through the winter of 1855-56, although Indian-White relations rested on a precarious basis until 1860. The resistance of the Yakima and their allies did not end until September, 1858 (Coan n.d.:264).

During the early part of the war, the settlers on Whidbey Island noticed that the Indians at the encampments at Penn's Cove and Holmes' Harbor were becoming bolder. Some of the Skagits warned the Whites that they should be on guard in readiness for trouble. Though nerves were set on edge, there was never any action, nor bloodshed on the island (Kellogg 1934:48). In the up-river country, a fort was established above Snoqualmie Falls. It was dangerous for Indians to travel without passes from the Indian Agent. They were assumed to be spies from the tribes east of the mountains and were considered fair targets for the soldiers in the fort. The Snoqualmie-Snohomish River drainage was believed a potential route for a hostile camp attack on Puget Sound. The low elevation of Snoqualmie Pass made it strategic. The pass into the Skagit Region was a little

higher and too far north of the focal point of the war.

Whites felt the end of the war on Puget Sound had arrived when Leschi was captured in August, 1856 (Kellogg 1934:51), although supervision of the movements of the Indians by government officials continued for some time after that. Not a single White person from Whidbey Island was fatally injured in the war (Kellogg 1934:51). The primary impact of the war was economic -- reduced crops and additional taxes. Over a million dollars in scrip money had been issued to pay for men and supplies (Kellogg 1934:51). How the Territory would repay the debt became a controversial problem.

The focus of governmental attention had been directed south and east, yet the greatest military danger to Northern Puget Sound residents, Indian and White alike, came from the north. Northern raiders were especially bold in their pilferings around the towns of Port Townsend and Port Gamble. Whites feared they might unite with the hostile camp in Puget Sound and sent for large steamers mounted with howitzer cannons to drive them away.

The conflict in Northern Puget Sound was brought to a head in October, 1856, after the end of the Yakima war in Puget Sound. A large group of Northerners, camped in the Port Gamble area, was asked to leave by a military official. Refusing, they were fired upon, and a battle ensued. Two days later they surrendered, having lost 27 killed and 21 wounded (Kellogg 1934:53). It was a devastating loss, made even worse by the death of a high ranking leader.

Determined to retaliate, a party of Northerners returned the following year, attacking and killing Colonel Isaac N. Ebey, a well-known Whidbey Island leader (Kellogg 1934:54-57). White settlers, oblivious

to their own over-retaliation in the previous battle, were outraged.

The word of the tragedy spread rapidly over the Island. Crowds assembled. Over at Port Townsend Captain Hyde of the U.S. Revenue Service arrested seven Northern Indians who were found in the neighborhood and sent a canoe filled with "Kloutchmen" up to the San Juan Islands. These Kloutchmen, or squaws, were to notify the marauding party, should they be able to find them, that the seven Indians taken as hostages would be hung at noon, August the 15th, if the murderers were not turned over to the authorities. Within a few hours a total of eighteen Indians were in chains at Port Townsend and word came over that the citizens were resolved to hand over all they could catch. They requested that the Island people come over for a mass meeting.

The people of the Island were removing their families to the various block houses. . . .

On Saturday the 15th of August, over fifty people from the Island went to Port Townsend where they passed a resolution to kill all Northern Indians who might come into the country from that time on. To their surprise and disgust that day, Judge Chenoweth released eight of the eighteen Indians and at noon, none had been hung. . . .

The murderers were never apprehended. The community resented for many years the fact that nothing more had been done to the Indians who were taken into custody. R. C. Hill states, however, that "for several years thereafter, a Northern Indian never set foot on the soil of Whidbey Island without biting the dust." (Kellogg 1934:57-58).

For years after Ebey's death, Whidbey Island settlers harbored ill feeling towards Northern Indians. Some of this may have affected their attitude towards local Skagit Region and Snohomish Region Indians.

The Ratification of the Point Elliott Treaty

Following the Yakima Indian War, Congress postponed ratification of the Point Elliott Treaty. Because of the successful efforts of Leschi and the Puyallup-Nisqually rebels, the Medicine Creek Treaty was given attention soon after the war and renegotiated. Signators of the Point Elliott Treaty, remaining peaceful during the war, won no special attention for their case. They were kept in limbo until 1859.

Many explanations have been put forth for the delay in ratification. Coan (n.d.:436) attributes it to the outbreak of the Yakima Indian War and disagreements between bureaucrats following it. Officials of the Indian department favored complete military conquest of the rebellious Indians and forceful implementation of existing treaties, while military officials favored discarding the treaties and making a large part of the Pacific Northwest an "Indian country" (Coan n.d.:263). Brockert (n.d.:4) states that the delay was due to the personal opposition of the Secretary of War, Jefferson Davis, who differed from Governor Stevens on an independent issue -- the proposed northern route for the transcontinental railway. Impatient for ratification, Governor Stevens finally had himself elected territorial delegate to Congress, and went to Washington D.C. to personally expedite matters. Ratification was accomplished in 1859, but no appropriation of money for the treaty provisions was made until 1860.

The length of time intervening between the negotiation and ratification of the treaties produced much dissatisfaction and distrust in the minds of the Indians. The lag of one year in appropriation of funds for the implementation caused the agents embarrassing difficulties (CIAAR 1860:171-186). The first distribution of annuity goods did not take place until 1861. During this time, the Indians suffered considerably. Their greatest grievance was that their land had been taken from them and no place given where they could build a house for their children. This feelings of being uprooted, of having no home, persisted even into the early days of the Swinomish Reservation. The actual legal boundaries of the Swinomish Reservation were drawn around 1873. Even as late as the 1880's when allotments of land on the Reservation were issued to

individual Indian families, some were left out because there was not enough land to go around. Richard Peters of Swinomish recalled the Indians' feelings of that time:

Many people didn't have any place to stay as a result of the treaty. Many died with nothing, that is, no place to stay. The chiefs may have understood the message, but the people didn't. They didn't understand the Chinook Jargon. It was new. The closest thing to it in their language was that they would receive "buckets of gold," and nobody knew how much they were worth, either.

White people don't realize, even when you tell them, that the Indians didn't used to be just here on the Reservation, but all around. The Lower Skagits had villages at Snatelum Point, Monroe's Landing, Crescent Harbor, and Utsaladdy.

The government promised the people they could keep the various ways of using the land, but they lost that. The treaty promised education and hospital care and compensation in land elsewhere, but the government did not live up to that either.

Some people did acquire 160 acre plots. One of my father's uncles did at Hole-in-the-Wall. They came from Snatelum Point. Other relatives went to Tulalip and Mud Bay because there weren't enough land deals to go around.

During the period from 1860 to 1870, just after the Civil War, the government defaulted in meeting treaty promises because inflation caused depreciation of paper money. Consequent low salaries created difficulty in procuring and keeping personnel to provide the promised services (Coan n.d.:444-445). The real value of the annuities promised the Indians in the treaties declined correspondingly.

Another cause for complaint was the tendency of some Whites to blatantly disregard Indian rights by encroaching on reservation lands. Some settlers had to be forcefully evicted by government agents. The Indians were plagued by predatory whiskey-sellers so numerous that agents could not arrest them all. According to agents' reports (CIAAR 1860:191-192), San Juan Island, just northwest of Fidalgo, was a "favorable resort for vagabonds and outlaws." In commercial transactions Whites were frequently able to cheat Indians. When agents tried to secure compensation

for the Indian parties, the other arms of government did not back up the Indian service. In 1860 an Indian in Clallam county was cheated out of 172 gallons of oil by a White man. A grand jury found the White man guilty, but did not issue an indictment for trial. Instead it requested the court to place him in the hands of the local Indian agent. No penalty was delineated. No further legal action was indicated. The frustrated agent reported:

What possible power they could suppose an Indian agent could have over a territorial prisoner, I cannot conceive, but I easily see that justice was defeated, and the United States made liable, for the law says, speaking of crimes by White persons against Indians, "that if such offender cannot be apprehended and brought to trial, the amount of such property shall be paid out of the Treasury [meaning the U.S. Treasury]." The law in this case could not be carried out, because no bill of indictment was found against the offenders (CIAAR 1860:189-190).

Though he felt the U.S. Treasury should compensate the Indian, there was no means to complete such action.¹ Murders were committed on both sides, by Indians with alcohol and by White men, both cowardly and cold-blooded (CIAAR 1865:72). The court system did not work. Whites accused of murdering Indians sometimes escaped prosecution because no other Whites would formally identify them to the authorities, or because it was impossible to find an unbiased jury. We may presume that during these times of ethnic tension the word of an Indian witness was not accepted to jurors as sufficient evidence nor were Indians acceptable to the court as jurors.

Despite the injustices, the Skagit Region Indians survived the post-treaty times. Today most members of the community have little memory of these hardships. The community elders prefer to recount the

¹It is interesting to note that the quote can be read to show his prime concern is in protecting the interests of the U.S. Government rather than in protecting the interests of the Indian plaintiff.

constructive achievements of the early reservation leaders who united members of many villages together into a viable community. They refer to the earlier times only to discuss aboriginal culture and economy or the treaty signing conference.

CHANGES IN ETHNIC INTERACTION PATTERNS DURING TREATY TIMES

During the period of the negotiation of the Point Elliott Treaty ethnic relations began to change rapidly in the Skagit Region. At this time the battle for ecological dominance between Whites and Indians was fought. The first formalization of new rules governing ethnic interaction took place. Phyletic fusion took place at an even higher level among the Indians. A new set of ethnic labels came into being.

Ecological Relationships

The primary difference between the settlers and the earlier groups of Whites who came to the Skagit Region was that the settlers were intent upon displacing the Indians. They wanted land to farm, preferably cleared areas without heavy forestation, close to rivers and salt-water for easy transportation, and close to springs for drinking water. This was the same type of land on which the Indians built their villages, except perhaps a little farther back from the beach.

The most direct solution to the problem for the settlers would have been extermination of the natives, but this policy was several centuries out of date (McNickle 1962:10). It was also very expensive, costing close to a million dollars for every Indian killed, according to some estimates (Deloria 1971:61). Although settlers used the word

"extermination" to build up their fighting spirit during times of war, it seldom reached the lips of public officials. Beginning in 1830, "removal" became the accepted phrase. Proposals to move the Pacific Coastal Indians of Oregon Territory to the Interior, east of the Cascades, were defeated after the Indians made it clear they would rather die on their own territory than move.

The plan finally settled on was to move them to a number of small reservations within their local areas, allowing them to continue hunting and fishing at their accustomed places. Simultaneously a school was to be constructed to teach them agricultural techniques, other trades, and industries. It was assumed that in a few decades the Indians would be supporting themselves in the same manner as White settlers.

The Indians, fearing they were dying out and would be completely gone within a few decades, felt their best strategy would be to stay close to the hallowed grounds of their ancestors no matter what the consequences. If they could not have their villages there, at least they would be close enough and have free movement to go back occasionally to hunt and fish, and pick berries and roots. They were a peaceful people. Most of them felt they had nothing to gain by going to war against those with such powerful weapons and warships.

As time passed, the Indians moved their places of residence according to the agreement and took advantage of the annuity goods and services as best they could. A few of them became fairly successful farmers for a number of years, but the majority continued hunting and fishing, merely supplementing their income with short term seasonal work in the White labor market. They did not become immediately converted to the White living style, either in an economic or social sense.

Furthermore, as White settlers moved into the Skagit Region in greater numbers, making great changes in the natural ecology, building dikes, roads, and dams, cutting down timbered areas, and filling in marshes with fields, the Indians became impoverished. All these changes eroded the natural resources on which their traditional way of life depended. At the treaty conference, the Indians could probably not foresee these changes, nor the consequences for their traditional way of making a living. If they had, they probably would have insisted on additional provisions in the treaty protecting the fish and game from the erosion of civilization.

Rules Governing Ethnic Interaction

One of the sharpest contrasts between White and Indian culture at the time of the treaty conference was the degree to which White law depended upon written documents. To the Indians the verbal contract was of paramount importance. It would be remembered as an exchange of solemn vows and passed down through the generations by oral historians. The Whites, on the other hand, needed a document to record the contract. They paid relatively less attention to the meeting of minds and hearts represented by the speeches.

When White society needed a justification for taking the Indians' land, a written treaty "extinguishing" Indian ownership, a contract of purchase, no matter how unfair the terms, absolved them from feelings of moral guilt. A body of legal precedents, primarily the one set by Chief Justice John Marshall of the Supreme Court decades earlier, propounded that discovery of an area in the New World entitled the discoverer to an exclusive right to extinguish the Indian title of occupancy, either by purchase or conquest (Deloria 1971:43). Marshall argued that,

however extravagant this principle, if it had been asserted in the first instance, and afterwards sustained, if a country had been acquired and held under it, if the property of the great mass of the community originated in it, it became the law of the land, and could not be questioned (Deloria 1971:45).

From that legal principle, voiced from the highest levels of government, it was easy for individual settlers and bureaucrats to argue backwards to "if it's legal, it must be moral" and ease their consciences in everyday interactions with Indians. One pioneer carried the logic a step further in her journal, writing that the Indians should be excused for protesting the settlers' encroachments upon their traditional camping sites (Judson 1925). How could they know that the legal title of the land really belonged to the White man who registered it in the land claim office? From her point of view they were ignorant savages. Congress had passed the law doling out the land before it had taken care of the detail of "purchasing" it from the Indians. She and her family felt they were following moral precepts by being patient with the temporary inconveniences old Indian residents caused and moving their log cabin site a few hundred feet so it would not occupy the Indians' fall fishing camp. Fortunately, the settlers did not begin arriving into the heart of the Skagit Region until after the treaty. But even then, confrontations arose between individual settlers and Indians where the Indians did not recognize the Whites' right to be there.

A few other problems diverted the White settlers' attention from this basic moral and legal issue. They were preoccupied with their own internal legal problems concerning states' rights and the federal government. For many decades of early history individual colonies had made

separate contracts with Indian groups. Later the federal government won the right to handle Indian affairs. But the conflict between federal primary and states' rights grew.

Whites felt pressured to hurry negotiations with the Indians. They felt that settlement and civilization could continue piecemeal for only a limited time, after which the frontier had to be tied into financial-legal body of the parent for more investment capital. Secure title to lots in newly forming towns required legal documents showing purchase of the land from the Indians had been secured. Investors' purchases could not be backed up unless further court decisions would support White claims.

As sporadic incidents of violence between Indians and settlers increased, and as disreputable Whites pushed the Indians around, Indian leaders began to desire some kind of protection from the White government. They wanted a place that would be exclusively their own, and would be safe from the encroachments of future generations of settlers. Their desire for the reserved land strengthened as time passed. Eventually they were willing to negotiate a treaty despite the alien nature of written legal documents to their pattern of ethnic interaction.

When both sides had come around to desiring a settlement of land ownership, the problem of the mechanics of the transaction arose. To avoid the inconvenience of making separate contracts with each village, the White government sought to make treaties with groups of villages -- as many Indians as could make it to the conference grounds. This meant all the Indians within one or two days' journey. If the Indians had already been hierarchically organized and sent representatives for even large units, the Whites would no doubt have been willing to make treaties

covering larger geographic areas (as they did in the Interior). The physical aspects of the treaty conference limited the size of the treaty areas. Southern Puget Sound was covered by one treaty, Eastern and Northern Puget Sound by another, and Western Puget Sound (with part of the Olympic Peninsula) by another .

At these conferences the White government representatives made an attempt to organize the Indian field hierarchically. Stevens' party selected certain village headmen to occupy the newly created statuses of "chief" and "subchief." They presented the headmen with paper documents, formal commissions to hold the positions. Some of them were selected to occupy paramount positions. At Point Elliott there were four. The number may have been related to the number of reservations that were to be established after the treaty and the number of major river valleys in northern Puget Sound. At the conclusion of the conference, these four leaders accepted the official gifts of the Whites to the Indians and passed them down to their followers, in the manner of a traditional invitational feast. Chiefs had very few formal duties other than generally representing their people. The Skagit Region people continued to respect the office as if it were an honorable title or hereditary privilege and passed them down through the male inheritance line.

The provisions of the contact signed at Muckilteo have been discussed above (p. 194-198). Besides the matter of land settlement, the most important provision was that the Indians recognize the federal and territorial governments and their official representatives, and that the White governments, specifically the federal government, recognize its

new subjects¹ (and its obligations to them). Two separate parts of the ethnic field were brought into a formal legal-political relationship with each other. The treaty set up the bureaucratic channels through which Indians and Whites would interact in the following years. Certain powers over the tribes were given to the President of the United States, in return for which, he was obligated to provide financial, educational, and health benefits. The language used in the treaty focussed on tangible, negotiable issues. Unfortunately, no general theory of tribal rights or governmental obligations was put forth. If such matters were discussed during the conference, we do not know, for there is no record of this aspect of the negotiations. It is thus difficult to know how much the Indian leaders understood or if they understood they were giving their tacit consent to become the subjects of an already complex body of Indian law.² It seems likely they did not realize what they were getting into. But even if they did, they may not have been able to quickly propose an alternative. White legal language was not their usual way of speaking or thinking. All they could do to cover themselves against future betrayal was to state that "our hearts are as one," meaning that the spirit of honesty and good intentions should continue to bind both parties in the contract forevermore.

From the purely legal point of view the absence of a general theory of tribal rights and government obligations in the treaty set the stage for a great legal debate that would last for decades. It would determine

¹I would say "citizens," but that formal designation was not accorded Indians by Congress until the 1920's.

²Those interested in the development of Indian law should see Price (1973), Washburn (1971), and Deloria (1971).

what kinds of sovereignty the Indian nations would retain vis a vis the federal and state governments. Furthermore, the issues would be decided by the legal institutions of the White society, where the Indians were at a relative disadvantage due to their unfamiliarity and lack of funds.

Phyletic Processes Within the Indian Field

In Chapter III it was shown that interaction between the Skagit Region Indians and explorers, fur traders, and missionaries strengthened hierarchical and vertical organization in the Indian social structure. It might be said that confrontation with a powerful, hierarchically organized opponent tended to strengthen these same qualities in the Skagit Region social structure.

This is not to say that the Whites themselves were completely united under a single umbrella. When they first came to this part of the Northwest Coast, they belonged to several ethnic categories -- Spanish, British, Russian, French, and American. Yet the cultural similarities which they shared were great enough to set them apart from the Indian groups into a single contrastive category. The Whites were never politically unified, but they were able to make agreements among themselves deciding which nationality was to have the right of political sovereignty in this part of the continent. Eventually national government of one group came to represent the whole White category. In dealing with the Indians the relative unity of the Whites was an advantage. The Indians would also have benefitted had they been able to unify themselves with their Canadian and Plateau neighbors. But the process of unification could not take place overnight. By 1855 many of the Skagit Region

villagers had begun to refer to themselves by their extended cluster labels instead of their individual village names. Eighteen signators of the Point Elliott Treaty described themselves (or were described by the Recording Secretary) as belonging to the "Skagit Tribe" (Point Elliott Treaty 1855:6-9). These people from salt-water villages on Whidbey and Camano Islands are today known as Lower Skagit. Three signators called themselves "Swinamish," and others called themselves "Kik-ial-lus," "Noo-wha-ha," and "Nook-wa-chah-mish," all cluster names.

The process of fusion of village identities seems to have been strongest among the salt-water, down-river villages although the up-river religious cult of Stlabehtikud cannot be discounted. However, the salt-water villages were the wealthiest and could afford to stage larger feasts. The population was denser and thus the people were less isolated from each other. They were under the greatest pressures from raiding northerners and were the closest to the wave of incoming Whites. When treaty times came, the up-river people acted as several small units.

The Indian villagers apparently gave their consent to an even higher level of organization. They agreed that four men be given paramount positions. One signed as "Chief of the Duwamish and Suquamish"; one as "Chief of the Snoqualmoo, Snohomish and other tribes"; one as "Chief of the Lummi and other tribes"; and one as "Chief of the Skagits and other allied tribes." At first glance this grouping of all the villages in Northern and Central Puget Sound into four categories appears to be arbitrary. However, the categories do correspond to the four largest river drainage systems in Northern and Central Puget Sound. In that sense the division is logical. They also correspond to the four reservations spelled out in the treaty. The Duwamish and Suquamish were sent to the

place later known as the Port Madison Reservation. The Snoqualmie and Snohomish were sent to the Tulalip. The Lummi were sent to the Lummi Reservation, and the Skagit and other allied tribes were sent to the Swinomish Reservation. The four-way grouping was primarily an administrative division, made by the U.S. government. There were few functions for these paramount chiefs other than signing the treaty and generally representing their people to the government bureaucracy in the years following the event.

Ethnic Labels

For many years the extended village cluster names were part of the spoken Skagit language only. As White men, non-speakers of the Puget Salish language, attempted to write them down in the English alphabet, the village cluster labels were gradually transformed. George Gibbs (1854) made one of the earliest lists, after a hasty canoe tour of Puget Sound in 1854. He observed that, to the untrained ear, the following sounds were "convertible" in the Indian language: D=N, B=M, and Q=G (1854:38). This accounted for the great variety in spelling of Indian names in these early times. With the aid of Hodge's (1912) reference book on American Indian tribal names, it has been possible to discover correspondences between Gibbs' labels and the list of extended village clusters on p. 170.

In 1855, when the treaty conference at Point Elliott convened, the extended village clusters interacted in their first formal capacity. Another new list of labels was generated. Some new names appeared, and some dropped out. The names of Indian groups whose leaders refused to sign the treaty were not mentioned in the document. The words "tribe" and "band" were attached to some of these labels. Gradually the Skagit

Region people began to refer to their own extended village clusters as tribes or bands.

After the treaty period, the significance of tribe and band labels grew even more, overshadowing the old village names. When the Indians were forced to move onto the reservation, individual village identities lost most of their interaction components. Speakers of the Skagit language remembered the names of many of the original villages for many years, but they could no longer see the village ethnic groups interacting.¹

During the reservation period, some of the "band" and "tribal" labels were reinforced, others forgotten. A most important event reinforcing some of them was the establishment of the "Old Council," a body of representatives of the bands composing the reservation community. Thus, the names Samish, Swinomish, Kikialus, and Lower Skagit were remembered longer than any others. They came into current usage by reservation residents.

Chart I in Appendix II summarizes the fusion of ethnic boundaries in the Skagit Region by listing the names of the original villages, the extended village clusters, Gibbs' 1854 terms, the treaty groups, and the current band or tribe names used by residents of the Swinomish Reservation.

Leadership Strategies

The Skagit Region people accepted the Whites' request to organize their village headmen into chiefs and subchiefs. The new role seems to have been incorporated into their culture somewhat like an honorary title,

¹When anthropologists Smith, Collins, Snyder, and Suttles began their field research in the 1940's, they were able to collect the names of the original village ethnic groups, as well as many of the village cluster names in the Puget Salish language. Today this knowledge has almost been lost to the oral tradition.

though there is no evidence it required validation ceremonies. Once a man was called chief, the office stayed in his family. It was passed to his brothers when he died, then to his sons (Collins n.d.b.:72).

Occasionally an especially forceful vigorous sister inherited it. Mere inheritance of the honorary title did not make the holder an actual leader. Individual achievement was still needed. If the man were a dynamic community leader, he used his inheritance of the chiefly role to acquire more prestige. If he were not a dynamic person, the work of representing his people was taken up by another person. Leaders during the treaty period and the years immediately following it were less dramatic and aggressive personalities than the leaders of the early contact period. They were expected to take an aggressive stand in negotiating with the Whites, but also to display some of the genteel behavior of the old siab (Collins n.d.b.:74-75). This was difficult for many Indian men.

The Whites reinforced the Indians' existing power structure by selecting the wealthiest, most prestigious headmen to be chiefs. A new kind of legitimacy was given to the authority of the upper ranks. This innovation was agreeable to the Indians, especially to the ones who were chosen. Those who disagreed had no choice but to leave and go unrepresented.

The selection of chiefs to sign the treaty did not alter authority patterns so much that ordinary villagers actually gave up their right to be heard to their chief. Chiefs still consulted with their people about the decision to be made. After moving onto the reservation their authority was nominal, in that there were few additional decisions to make and duties to perform. The government agent dictated the rules.

The Skagit Region leaders understood the treaty as a legal contract, a business deal, and expected the White government to hold up its part of

the arrangements too. After signing it, they were dismayed when the U.S. Congress put off ratifying it. Their people were in a limbo status for several years, not knowing where their legal home was to be, not knowing if they would receive the promised compensation. The Indians had accepted U.S. sovereignty almost immediately after the decision to sign and had followed orders to relocate temporarily during a war emergency even though it put unnecessary hardship on their children and old folks. The Skagit Region leaders remained peaceful even after it began to appear that the White government was being unjust and untrustworthy. Their friendly attitude helped secure for them a lenient treatment by local Indian administrators. Even so, this was probably the lowest point of Skagit Region history, measured in terms of the amount of suffering and demoralization they endured.

CONCLUSION

Treaty times in the Skagit Region were significant not so much for the amount of cultural change taking place as for the alterations occurring in the field of ethnic relations. The Whites managed to wrest ecological dominance from the Indians. The rules of ethnic interaction between Indians and Whites were formalized. The authority structure of ethnic leadership among the Indians was changed. Fusion of ethnic identities among members of extended village clusters and even larger groups took place, creating band and tribal identities. And most importantly, the treaty divided the Puget Sound Indians into four rough categories, setting aside reservation land for each. It set the scene for the permanent migration of Indian people to new homelands.

There are significant gaps in the historical record for this period, as for the previous one, gaps which can probably never be closed. Probably most important is a complete record of the verbal negotiations at the Point Elliott Treaty Conference. Also missing is detailed information on the relationships between Skagit Region leaders and the other Indian leaders of Puget Sound during treaty times and the Skagit Region Indians' reaction to settlers. A general picture has been drawn, but material on these points would be a valuable addition.

CHAPTER V

THE FORMATION OF THE SWINOMISH RESERVATION COMMUNITY (1870-1930)

INTRODUCTION

The period following the signing of the Point Elliott Treaty was marked by boundaries in flux. Some years passed before the geographic borders of the reservation, described only generally in the treaty, were surveyed. The ethnic lines around the old village and village clusters finally dissolved, being permanently replaced by "band" and "tribal" boundaries. These new units of ethnic identity stood strong for many years, but by 1930 their significance was overshadowed by identification with a larger unit -- the Swinomish Reservation community.

The Swinomish Reservation community, as the term is being used here, refers to the informal interaction community of Indian families living on and around the Swinomish Reservation. It took many years for this unit to emerge as an operating socio-political unit, as distinct from an administrative category. Indian families in the Skagit Region did not grant it recognition automatically as a result of the specifications of the treaty. They continued to place supreme importance on their band or tribal identities. Generations passed before a group of Indian leaders arose who were willing to dedicate themselves to the affairs of the reservation community and who were able to elicit support from all the major families residing on the reservation. However, by the close of

this period, the community had become integrated enough to produce strong spokesmen, voluntary organizations, economic assets, cooperative activities, recreational celebrations, and a meeting hall. It began interacting as a unit with other Indian reservation communities at Lummi and Tulalip, even places as far away as Oregon, Idaho, and British Columbia.

A new confidence and independence in facing White institutions accompanied the increasing internal solidarity of the Swinomish Reservation community. The process of familiarization with White bureaucratic rules and procedures took place slowly. However, once they acquired sufficient knowledge and experience, Swinomish leaders demanded a new measure of independence for the community. The opportunity was presented to them in 1934 by the Indian Reorganization Act, which the community members voted almost unanimously to accept.

This chapter covers a time period of about three generations. Much of it is within reach of the memories of present day elders living on the reservation. They contributed generously by giving their testimony about their younger years and their parents' lifetimes. The narrative has also been supplemented by pioneer histories and the records of the Bureau of Indian Affairs.

THE EARLY SWINOMISH RESERVATION COMMUNITY

Gathering the People Together

The migration of Indian families to the Swinomish Reservation lagged for many decades after the treaty signing. Most Indian families stayed in their traditional homesites as long as they possibly could, until forced out by White settlers. Others, like Lower Skagit village headman

Charlie Snatelum, managed to stay until they died. The settlers seemed to wait for some of the old people, but they held the majority of young and able-bodied Indians to the terms of the treaty.

Migration to the southeast peninsula of Fidalgo did not bring a total change of lifestyle. Most Indian families continued living as before, camping on the beaches and following a seasonal round of resource exploitation. Eventually some families built longhouses or "floathouses" around the perimeter of the reservation. The interior was densely wooded. Spacing out was done informally. Homesites were chosen according to the proximity to fishing and clamming resources and according to how well they liked their neighbors.

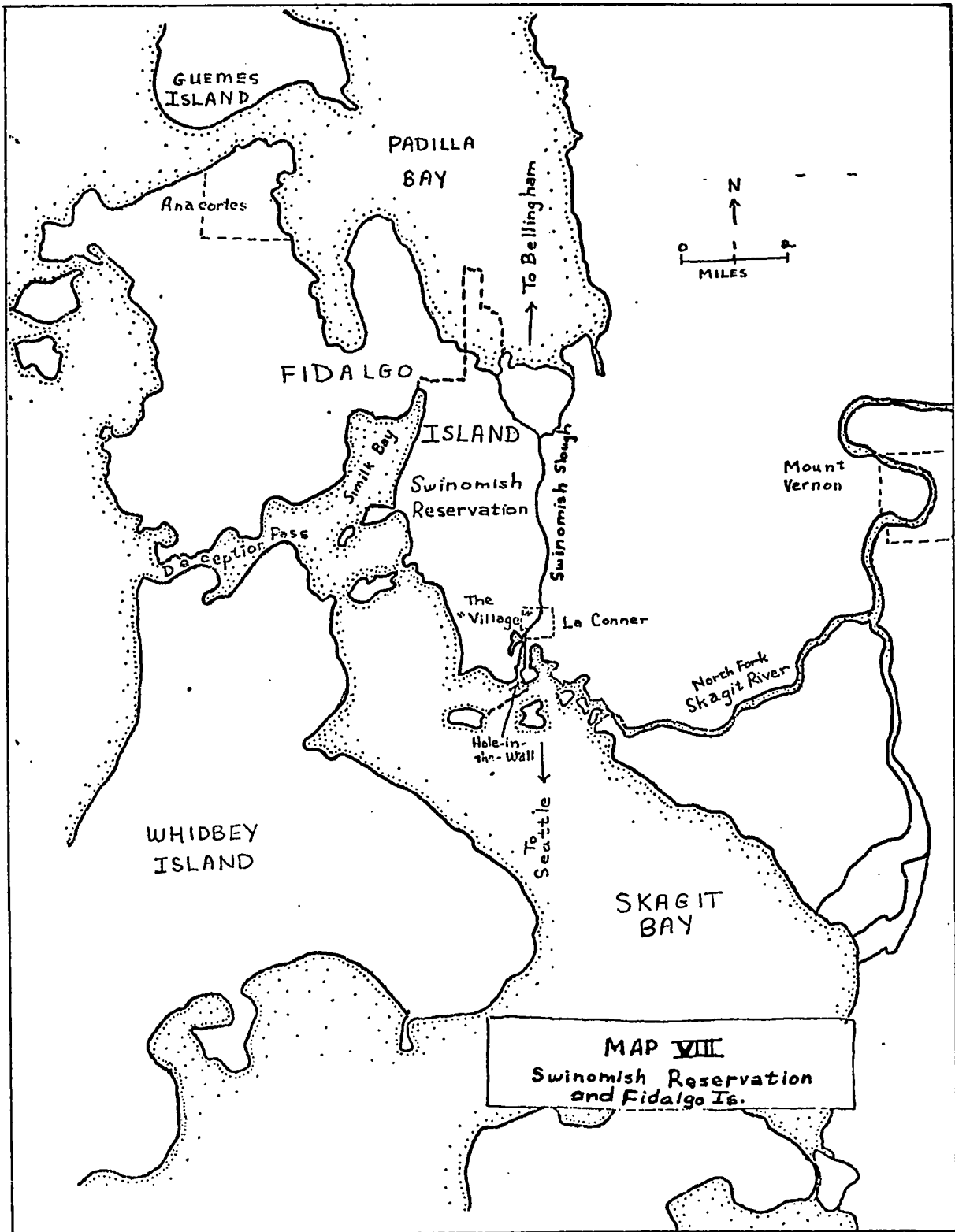
Moving involved more than merely packing up their belongings in canoes and setting off across the waters. The physical aspects of it were fairly easy since they were used to a roving lifestyle during the warmer months of the year. More difficult were the psychological aspects of living on one tiny peninsula. Skagit Region families were accustomed to being able to put miles of distance between themselves and other families if conflicts or bad feelings arose. This was no longer possible on the reservation. The concentration of people onto the small peninsula crowded them -- psychologically if not physically. They were much closer to strangers than ever before, with no place to escape.

It seems inevitable that under these conditions conflicts would arise between different families. Although once more numerous and wealthy, the Lower Skagit villagers were now relative newcomers. The reservation had been Swinomish territory. To avoid conflict, Lower Skagit families seem to have looked for homesites on the western shores of the reservation, away from the old established villages along Swinomish Slough. The

Samish seem to have stayed as long as they could on Samish and Guemes Islands, where White settlement was slow. They moved only when forced to by debts accumulated to the trading post owner at Samish Island, and after 1900, when the young people developed a preference for nuclear family dwelling over the traditional longhouse pattern. The Samish longhouse on Guemes Island was one of the longest surviving traditionally-operating villages in the western lowlands of the Skagit Region. Many Upper Skagits held out and never did migrate to the reservation. Their leaders had refused to sign the Point Elliott Treaty and did not feel obligated to move. Many of them eventually homesteaded plots of land close to their home villages and continued to live there without a reservation or trust status for their land.

Some Indian families waited until after 1884 when they could secure personal allotments of reservation land. They did not feel comfortable merely camping on the fringes of the reservation. The best sites for permanent dwellings had been quickly occupied. Some families moved several times before they finally found a suitable home. Others even decided to move to other reservations.

The second step in gathering the Swinomish Reservation community members together involved the gradual focussing of their attention on the place later known as the "Village," located along Swinomish Slough across the town of La Conner, shown on Map VIII. A natural point of interest because of its excellent fishing, Swinomish Slough was doubly important because it was the only easily navigable route between Skagit and Padilla Bays. The main alternative route, around the outside of Fidalgo Island through Deception Pass, was treacherous because of swift currents and whirlpools formed during tide changes. The Indians avoided similar



problems in the south end of Swinomish Slough, at Hole-in-the-Wall, by navigating at low tide, when the water was only a few feet deep.

The first White settlers quickly seized the small piece of high, non-marshy ground across from the reservation at the south end of the slough. There they founded the town of La Conner. A steamboat line running between Bellingham and Seattle stopped at La Conner to pick up hay and oats for market. Trading posts and business establishments grew up there. The traditional Swinomish village located across from La Conner was chosen as the site of the first building erected by the Bureau of Indian Affairs. Here also an eighty-acre tract was set aside for the Swinomish Day School. Tandy Wilbur Sr. explained:

In those very early days before the turn of the century, the government maintained a school over here and they had an agent. And so they retained eighty acres they called "school land." They refrained from allotting that out to individuals and retained it for the use of the whole community, for the purpose of having an agency and a school and a cemetery. So then of course, as time went on, the government started to withdraw these things, close the school down, close the agency down. But they permitted the Tribe to use it. And that's when the people started to build homes here. There were homes here before these new ones here. There were homes as far back as early 1900's.

This part of the reservation gradually became a focal point for community events. In outlying areas, the traditional longhouses gradually wore out and fell down, or were burned during smallpox epidemics. Sometime after 1900 a large new longhouse was built a few miles north of the village and served many years as a gathering point for traditional ceremonial occasions. Later the Indian Shaker Church was built in the same general vicinity of the reservation. These two places were very famous, and Indians from many distant parts of the state visited them. They did not, however, shift the major focus of attention away from the place known as the "Village."

Surveying the Legal Boundaries
of the Reservation

After the treaty the Skagit Region became more densely populated by Whites. Good land became scarce. During the early 1870's, Whites began to encroach across the boundaries of the reservation. In 1870 the agent made special mention of the annoyance of Mr. J. J. Conner, whose persistent attempts to jump or appropriate certain parts of the reservation for his own use did not comply with regulations warning trespassers to get off Indian lands (CIAAR 1870:39). It became necessary to remove him by force. Two regions were the sites of special contention -- the northwest section of the reservation where the boundary cut from Similk Bay across Fidalgo Island to Padilla Bay, and the eastern boundary of the reservation along Swinomish Slough. There was great need for a legal survey to solidify the Indians' rights.

On September 9, 1873 President Grant signed an Executive order establishing the legal surveyed boundaries of the Swinomish Reservation (Kappler 1904:925). On February 22, 1889 Congress, in the Enabling Act for the States of North Dakota, South Dakota, Montana, and Washington, underscored the special federal status of Indian lands (25 Stat. 677). The interests of the two levels of government became involved when they had to decide exactly where their separate jurisdictions lay. Tandy Wilbur Sr. explained an added importance of the Act for the reservation community:

In 1873 the President's Executive Order defined the actual boundary of the reservation. In this act they give the description of the Swinomish Reservation from Similk Bay around out here to the Skagit River and back down through the Swinomish Channel, and then a line crossing from east to west on the north end until it intersected the high and low water mark of the tides. The high and low water mark was established by this act

and that's what we base our case on when we make a claim that we own certain tidelands. And it has held good. We've been brought to the State Supreme Court and we won out on that, and established it. The low water mark in those days could have gone way out several miles on the north end here. And the same way over here on this side here. We lost some of the land. We are going to regain it, we are going to bring suit against somebody for it because it's our land. . . .

. . . The Indians at the time of the treaty understood the term "low water mark" to mean "as far as the tide went." And so this takes in all this area out here across the channel, out towards the river out there. This is all land which the surveys will show used to go dry. It actually did go dry from the reservation clear out here because this was flat land. It went dry clear across the slough and partly up the Skagit River.

During the years after the survey was taken the Indian community lost some of its tidelands because farmers on the opposite side began to dike out the salt-water marshes and dig new, deeper channels farther westward.

The Enabling Act was important for another reason as well. It was taken as a public statement that the Swinomish Reservation was to be a permanent home for the Skagit Region Indians. Before that time, government officials had been contemplating selling off the Swinomish land and moving the Indian residents to either Lummi or Tulalip (CIAAR 1871:121). White disturbers threatened the Indians that the President was planning to remove them from their land (CIAAR 1874:338). The uncertainty discouraged the Indians from constructing permanent dwellings and making improvements on the land, which further increased the probability that government officials would define the reservation as merely a temporary waystation, as may have been implied in the treaty.

The Indians objected wholeheartedly with any proposition to move or consolidate them with groups elsewhere. They argued that in the treaty the reservations were reserved by themselves as permanent homes for themselves and their children, and that the cession was of their lands

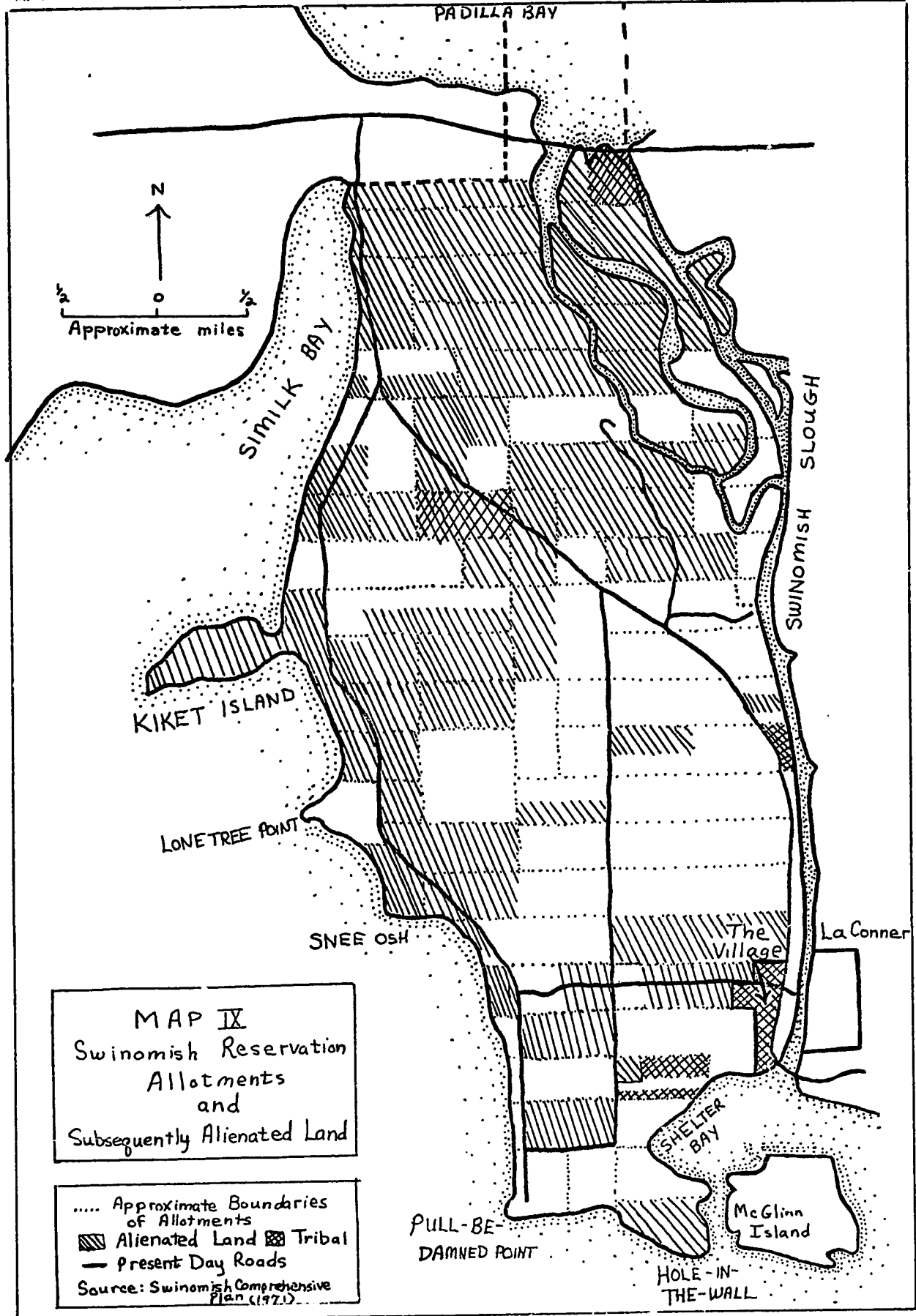
other than the reservations. Therefore the reservation lands belonged to them absolutely. This countered the Whites' argument that the Indians ceded all their lands to the federal government which then turned around and reserved some land for them. Whites argued that basically the land belonged to the federal government, and it could decide at will to keep or to sell it.¹ After the Enactment of the State of Washington, Indian ownership was more secure, the reservation a relatively permanent feature.

Dividing the Reservation Land Among the Families

Before 1884 all Swinomish Reservation land belonged communally to the bands signing the treaty. In some ways group ownership was a comfortable and familiar kind of ownership for the Indians. But apparently some of them had been led to believe during the treaty negotiations that eventually each family would receive individual ownership of a separate parcel to make a homestead on. Some of them were impatient to receive their land. Finally, almost 30 years after the treaty, Congress passed the Dawes Allotment Act (25 U.S.C. Section 331 et. seq.), calling for the division of Indian lands into 80 acre and 140 acre tracts. Forty-eight individuals at Swinomish received allotments in 1884 (CIAAR 1884:169). The rest of the allotments were given out a few at a time, until 1906, when the land was all allocated. A patchwork quilt effect resulted. The only land remaining under communal ownership was the tideland around the fringe of the reservation and the "school land" in the Village.²

¹Technically, the U.S. Government held naked legal title for them in trust. That aspect of it was not familiar. See Price (1973) for legal background on the ramifications of the trust relationship.

²See Map IX of the Reservation Allotments.



Allotments supposedly provided not only a place to live, but a potential income as well, from lumber and agriculture. However, most Indian families preferred living close to the waterfront. Much of the reservation land allotted was high and dry, much too infertile for farming.¹ Restrictions upon the full-scale exploitation of lumber resources were made by the Bureau of Indian Affairs until about 1912, in accordance with the provisions of the Allotment Act. This meant that for many years allotment holders could cut and sell only deadwood. They were therefore not prompted to do much more with their land except hold it for their family's future and occasionally go hunting and woodcutting on it.

During this time the Bureau of Indian Affairs favored the policy of encouraging agriculture among the Indians and eventually turning them into homestead farmers. Treaty annuities to the Swinomish residents included orchard seedlings, stock animals, and a stumppuller to clear land. Throughout the reservation, Indian families attempted to raise fruit trees, sheep, chickens, and some cattle on their allotments. The most successful were those who had secured fertile river bottom land along the north end of the slough. With the help of the government agent, three hundred and fifty acres were diked and fenced. With this fertile land, these Indian farmers produced oats and hay in commercial quantities that put them in favorable competition with White farmers on the other side of the slough. After a generation or two most farming on the reservation died out. The land was too small to support the number of children. It was leased. The majority of Indian families took to fishing and woodcutting.

¹Only 210 acres of the reservation were suitable for agriculture (OEDP 1970).

The Allotment Act provided that Indians could not sell their lands for twenty-five years after they received it. After that period, the allottee could apply to be declared "competent" to manage his own affairs and received title in fee simple. Upon his receipt of such title, his land passed forever out of trust status. He could sell it to whomever he wished or do with it whatever else he saw fit. The land passed onto the tax rolls of the state and the Bureau of Indian Affairs had no further interest in it.¹ In this way, ownership of large chunks of reservation land fell into White hands. The Swinomish did not suffer as severely as many other reservation communities. There were no surplus lands left over after allotment for the government to sell. In addition most allottees did not apply for "competency" status and thus managed to keep the trust status of their land. However, in many cases elderly people, destitute to support themselves in their old age, requested that the Bureau of Indian Affairs sell their land or timber for them, without declaring them "competents." The Swinomish Reservation originally covered about 7,000 acres. Since that time approximately one-third of the land has been sold into private ownership by non-Indians (OEDP 1970). Retrieving this alienated land is one of the most important long-range goals of the Swinomish Tribal Community.

The Allotment Act can thus be seen to have had both beneficial and detrimental effects on the Swinomish Reservation community.² It provided early Indian families with a sense of security and feeling of

¹In addition the government could declare unallotted lands "surplus" and sell them off.

²The Allotment Act had more disastrous effects on other Indian groups. See Price (1973:531-572) for a complete discussion of the Allotment Act.

having finally obtained a "home." It clarified and strengthened their connection with the reservation before the time when there was any overarching community political structure. On the other hand, it allowed much Indian land to fall into White hands. It also created the situation in which ownership was shared by the heirs of the original allottee, who sometimes number as many as fifty.

The Dual Economy

During most of the early reservation period it was possible for Swinomish families to fall back on traditional subsistence patterns in times of need. They purchased White goods and foods when they acquired money, but did not suffer too much when they were without them. Swinomish elder Raymond Paul described his childhood around 1910 as being a time when the people slept on board beds with homemade duck feather quilts and survived all winter long on duck, venison, and dried salmon. In those days the lack of variety of foods was not perceived as so much of a hardship as it is today.

During this period both men's and women's chores had an outdoor focus during much of the year. The men fished in small boats with "driftnets" or gillnets. There they were able to catch all the fish they needed in the vicinity of the reservation. Fresh water from the Skagit River ran down Swinomish Slough, attracting the salmon from the north. There were almost twenty named drifts on the slough. At some of these the Indian men took turns. As many as eight boats rotated on one spot every morning or evening. Whites also fished on the slough, but tended to use different drifts. The Indian men also did spearfishing in the shallows off Hole-in-the-Wall, reef netting in the traditional

family-owned spots in the San Juan Islands, and beach seining at Lone Tree Point. The fishermen's wives sometimes helped them. The rest of the time they worked at home, canning or smoking the catch. A family of six or seven would need to put up between two hundred and two hundred and fifty fish for the winter.

During the early reservation period, Indian families continued to visit clam and mussel beds on Fidalgo and Whidbey Islands, sometimes going quite far on the occasion of an especially low tide. Clams were dried in long strings on strips of cherry bark. A pocketful of dried clams comprised the Indian hunter's favorite lunch. He might also take along a few baked "dzabee," described variously as sweet potatoes or onions. Indian women obtained these wild roots from special places in the San Juan Islands.

Indian hunters frequently canoed to Whidbey Island and Cypress Island, whose mountainous slopes still teemed with deer. A herd of elk that roamed the flats of the Skagit River delta during the 1860's and 1870's was quickly killed off when Whites arrived with guns. Ducks of all varieties nested in the ten mile square marshland. Swinomish men preparing for a large feast might bring back hundreds of them, to be cooked in a huge iron pot. This famous artifact hung in the smokehouse of Charlie Belole and measured six feet in diameter. According to Swinomish elder Ray Paul it held two hundred small ducks, and was sometimes filled up three times in one night. Six men were needed to lift it off the fire.

During the early reservation period, Indian women continued to pick and dry many different kinds of berries. For blueberries and huckleberries they travelled high up into the mountains and to eastern Washington. They learned how to can in jars with hot syrup. Every year they put up

large quantities of fruits and vegetables. Apples, potatoes, and vegetables from family gardens were stored in subterranean "potato houses."

As the years passed, the Indians at Swinomish were drawn more closely into the White economy. Some families established long-standing ties with particular farmers in the La Conner region, selling them fish, clams, ducks, and firewood at repeated intervals in exchange for spot cash, credit, and goods. Many Indians supplied agricultural labor to a favorite employer throughout the year. A large hop ranch at Pleasant Ridge attracted hundreds of Indians at the end of the summer, including Canadian tribesmen. Frequently the Swinomish Reservation Indians packed up their canoes and made a two or three day journey south at harvest time to the Puyallup River Valley. After hops, potatoes and vegetables, and commercial berries came into the Skagit Valley.

Not all families hired out their labor. Some spent the daylight hours harvesting oats and hay on their own allotments and the night fishing in the slough. Where the land was fertile, they were able to do as well as White homesteaders on the other side of Swinomish Slough. Many sheep and cattle were raised on the reservation. It was open range until the White population grew large enough to bring bridges and roads. There were also some orchards on the reservation.

Logging camps and sawmills attracted Indian men, who earned \$1.25 to \$2.50 a day in 1883 (CIAAR 1883:151). Women sometimes found work in them as cooks. Indians needed not go very far from home to work in a logging camp while the lowland timber was still being cut. Later, the logging camps moved farther up the foothills of the Cascade Mountains. Before 1912, the Bureau of Indian Affairs prohibited the large-scale

exploitation of reservation timber resources. When the ban was lifted, the reservation was logged. Numerous "skid roads" wound through parts of the reservation that have since become overgrown with tangled brush. Indian men earned good money cutting and selling firewood to farmers, town dwellers in both La Conner and Anacortes, and steamboats. They cut bolts for shingle mills and pulpwood for pulpmills. Indian men sometimes took a raft out after a flood and salvaged shingle bolts that were washed down the river. Early farmers also needed brushwood for making dikes.

Another source of employment for Indians during the early reservation period were fish canneries operating during the summer and fall salmon runs. Many Swinomish elders worked at the "F.I.P." cannery in Anacortes as children. This company owned several fish traps and employed hundreds of people. The Indians were particularly skilled at cleaning the salmon ("sliming") and packing the cans. The company hired them through their own recruiter and provided lodging in long cabins partitioned into units for individual families. The cannery also employed Chinese workers, mostly men who were supporting families across the seas. Whereas the Indian workers cooked their own meals, the Chinese men ate in company mess halls.

The Indians at Swinomish sold some unusual products during the early reservation period. To logging companies they sold gallons of dogfish oil, used to grease the skid roads for dragging logs. To another White company they sold large quantities of duckfeathers. Indian women learned to knit and market socks made of home grown wool. They were highly prized by fishermen. Indian women also sold baskets, and men with carving expertise occasionally sold canoes.

Economic opportunities for the Skagit Region Indians were

plentiful through the first two decades of the twentieth century. A boy of age fourteen could always find work to support himself if he had to leave his parents' home. Swinomish elders testify they were almost never unemployed. If they could not quickly find work opportunities they could survive by traditional means. All they needed money for was their flour, potatoes, salt, and sugar. They never had to worry. These were the "good old days." During the latter part of the early reservation period ecological changes took place which limited the wide range of choices available earlier. The sphere of traditional subsistence activities was undermined by declines in the availability of salmon, ducks, deer, clams, roots, and berries. These will be discussed in more detail on p. 283-287.

The Need for a White Governmental Employee

There were two main contact agencies during the early history of the Swinomish Reservation, the Bureau of Indian Affairs and the Catholic Church. The Bureau suffered from insufficient funds to meet the treaty obligations during the 1870's and (except for a brief time in 1870) was unable to employ a permanent full-time employee to live at Swinomish until after 1880. There was much dissatisfaction among the Indian residents of Swinomish during the 1870's. They complained of Whites encroaching upon their lands and of being systematically swindled in the sale of their logs. The agent at Tulalip reported (CIAAR 1873:299) that "vicious" Whites went among them and "debauched" them with whiskey and prostituted their women. Whites were reported to threaten the Indians that the President was planning to remove them from their land (CIAAR 1874:338), and to murder those Indians who sought to take up homesteads and become citizens (CIAAR 1874:337). Father Chirouse, the Catholic missionary stationed

at Tulalip, occasionally made visits to the outlying reservations in order to settle difficulties between Whites and Indians, but this was inadequate. The Swinomish Reservation residents requested a full-time employee be stationed there (CIAAR 1873:299).

The Farmer-in-Charge

In 1881 a "resident farmer" was employed to live at Swinomish and supervise the building of a dike along the tideland strip at the north end of the reservation. He eventually became known as the Farmer-in-Charge by the Indian residents and was looked to as having some authority. He distributed the annuities promised by the treaty, provided advice on farming, and served as the prime liaison between the Indians and White settlers. He also provided the Commissioner of Indian Affairs with information about the state of affairs on the reservation. Much of his time was apparently spent in farming for himself. A Farmer-in-Charge continued to be employed by the Bureau of Indian Affairs for many years at Swinomish. Sometime after 1912 the position was terminated.

The Farmer-in-Charge was not an innocuous character on the reservation. He was the representative of a government that claimed almost dictatorial powers. Richard Peters emphasized the disgusting nature of the relationship from the Indians' point of view (see Appendix I).

The legal basis for the dictatorial powers of the representatives of the Secretary of the Interior and the Commissioner of Indian Affairs goes back to an 1832 law which says that "The Commissioner of Indian Affairs shall, under the direction of the Secretary of the Interior, and agreeably to such regulations as the President may prescribe, have the management of all Indian affairs and of all matters arising out of Indian

relations" 25 U.S.C.A. Section 2. This statement has been used on innumerable occasions to justify unlimited and dictatorial powers of the Secretary of the Interior over Indians. Because of its lack of legal limitations of the powers of one man it is a bad law and has caused Indian people much suffering (Al Ziontz: personal communication). I doubt that the Swinomish themselves were aware of the existence of such a law.

The Government Physician

In 1912 a physician was also employed by the Bureau of Indian Affairs. He treated illnesses and initiated a health education and sickness prevention program. One present-day elder describes his teaching: "We learned we had to become 100% cleaner." The doctor made inspections of all Indian homes and their surrounding premises, teaching the value of cleanliness and cautioning about protecting the source of drinking water. Early physicians showed zeal in pushing cleanliness verging on domination. However, the great number of contagious diseases striking down the Indians at this time may have provided some justification. Many Indian children were lost. For the most part, the members of the Indian community welcomed White medical services, feeling that the care the government provided was inadequate.

The federal government provided special hospitals and tuberculosis sanatoriums for Indians. The Cushman hospital in Tacoma was reserved for Indians. Swinomish elder Bessie Cline spent some time there after the birth of her first daughter. She says it had Alaskan people too. The hospital was quite small and had male patients on the first floor and female patients on the second. There was also an up-patients' ward and a surgery ward. Bessie was an up-patient and eventually got well and went

home, but some of her friends didn't. Irene John of Swinomish spent some time in the tuberculosis sanatorium in Lapway, Idaho:

My sister had tuberculosis and needed to be sent there, but my father wouldn't allow her to go there alone, so I went with her. There were Indian people there from all over. It was just for Indian people. We had some good times there. They used to raise watermelon there and in the evenings the matrons would get some and cut it in half and we'd all get some, a half all to ourselves. In the winter time we used to get up at four or five o'clock in the morning and throw snowballs with the matrons. We had to sleep on screened porches. It was cold and the rain and snow came right in over us, but we were warm under our blankets and the canvas they put over us. We had to have all the fresh air we could get. We were at a high altitude there.

The last time I was over there it was about eight years ago. We were visiting friends and just stopped by. It is just an Indian agency now, the hospital is closed. They built little homes around the old hospital and it is a village, a little community like this one.

Another tuberculosis sanatorium was located at Toppenish, Washington.

The Tulalip Boarding School

Besides the annuities and health care, the Point Elliott Treaty promised the Indians education. To meet this obligation, the Bureau subsidized a boarding school at Tulalip. Built by Catholic missionaries in the 1860's, the Tulalip Training School began with a small number of students. Gradually it grew to almost 200. The curriculum included half a day's basic academic studies and half a day's work in vocational positions, such as the bakery, the laundry, the infirmary, the furnace room or steam plant, the garden, and various carpentry and machine shops.

Most of the present-day Swinomish elders spent at least a few years at the Tulalip school. In the fall of the year a government boat visited the Swinomish and collected the children, taking them to school where they stayed until the following summer. Richard Peters recalls:

My father was a man when he went to Tulalip School. He learned to write his name there, but that's about all. I don't know what year that was, it must have been before I was born [1900]. There used to be two great big buildings, one for the boys and one for the girls. Before that there was one big building, but it got too crowded. When I first went there we used to stay there twelve months of the year. It turned out a lot of nice cooks and workers and so on.

Elmer Cline recalls:

I was in the government school at Tulalip, around the First World War, 1915. They didn't give us food to survive. They had stuff— potatoes, the bread was just like dough. We used to throw it up at the ceiling and bounce it off. The tomatoes sometimes had big white worms in them. The mush we used to get, we used to pick out the rat turds from. I still pick the dark spots out of my mush, ha-haha! We didn't have no sugar. There was only molasses. We used to put the butter we got on the table, underneath and save it there for the next meal. The dough used to stick. The same way with peanut butter. We used to stick it under the table. We sat in the same seats every day and it was survival then. The little boys always had to give food to the older boys. I tried to hide food my dad and mother brought, grapes, apples, and homemade biscuits, but the other kids wanted it. It was food from the First World War. It was left over from the army and they sent it to the Indian schools. Bessie worked in the bakery. She had to sift the flour four or five times out, to get out all the other things.

The Indian students had their own rules and organization at Tulalip. Elmer Cline recalls:

I used to steal in those days. I had a gang and everything. After I got to be a captain, they asked me to steal something. I was captain of the musical band. I had to work up to that just like everything else. I was about nine years at that school. They had a big commissary. It had 2" x 12" boards supporting it, and we knocked them out. I used to put my boys through that small spot. It had cupboards with shelves. They used to go out through the spot and we would cover it up afterwards so that nobody knew how we got in. They'd laid out cases of raisins, fruit, hardtack inside and we used to lower it on a rope down. Then when these guys came back it was underneath a big motor so nobody could see the place. Two of these boys were twin brothers. They ate the raisins we stole -- it was just for survival. When they got sick, they went to the hospital and spit up. The hospital people saw it was all grapes, and then they knew who had stolen what.

Allen ("Lollie") Franks recalls how he got started in a prizefighting career at the Tulalip School. He has a dark complexion.

Then come up me farther, after I grow up a little bit, see, I was just a little kid, and the little kids were picking a fight you know, one time a couple kids got on me you know. They were beating me up and all that you know. They call me you little nigger and all that. It was like that. And I got a great big cousin, after I got to be about ten years old. And I could handle myself pretty good. Well, I didn't want to fight nobody. I didn't want to fight anybody, see? You know I was kind of a little coward too! A coward! And those snots would come over there and would say, you get it on fighting fellow, or I'll lick you myself. That's what he'd tell me. I wasn't scared of my opponent, I was scared of him. I'd fight and win him. And when I grew up and I got out of that school nobody would lick me. Yeah, and then Doad Burcott discovered me. He was a prize fighter, a man of iron. Lived in Everett. He asked \$100 of Mr. Lawson and said, "Can I have that boy?" Mr. Lawson said, "No, he's not allowed out of bounds, unless we sneak him out." Oh, they were practicing me. By gosh, one day, they took me to Everett, you see. I'll never forget that as long as I live, you see. I was sixteen years old then. My first fight! I went over there and got ready and said I didn't know what's all this fighting about. "Oh, you're gonna fight tonight. You're gonna get ten dollars." Gee that was big money. "You just go ahead and fight like you fight those Indian kids over there. Don't try no style, you just get in there and fight because he's gonna hurt you if you don't fight, you lick 'em. When that bell rings, you get out there." Boy, when that bell rang I was right out there like a wild cat. I didn't even know what I was doing. I knocked him out in two rounds. Yeah. From then I went, I had 65 straight. I had 111 fights before it was all over.

Al Sampson went to Tulalip Indian school. He explains the Indian children were forbidden to speak Indian. One time he spoke Indian to the doctor who was also the Superintendent and the doctor told him, "I understand you, what you are saying. But don't speak in Indian any more. If you do you will be punished." Punishment for speaking Indian was usually not very severe -- just having to sit or stand in a corner and face the wall for an hour or so. But children who fought with each other would have to stand for a whipping with a leather strap. Al got into a fight once. Lizzie Sampson went to Tulalip Indian school too. One time she and three

other girls were going to escape. The other girls approached her and asked her if she would go with them. She said, "Yes," but she had to work that night in the doctor's office and forgot all about the plan. That night at roll call before bed they missed the girls. She didn't say anything about knowing where the girls were because she was afraid she would be punished too if they were ever found. The Indian police were sent after the girls, who were caught walking down the road towards Marysville. They were brought back and lashed with a leather strap by the matron, while bent over a stool. When they came back the girls wanted to know why she was so lucky to have escaped. She said that her work had saved her.¹

Tulalip education was an important factor influencing the development of new attitudes by community leaders at Swinomish. Swinomish elder Raymond Paul feels it is possible to distinguish "generations" of Swinomish men according to the kind of exposure they had at White schools. The oldest generation was raised in the old Indian beliefs with no schooling in White ways at all. Following them was a generation that went to a mission school in Tacoma. They retained their Indian beliefs and were powerful Indian shamen. Most of them retained their loyalty to their separate tribes and families. They died in the 1880's and 1890's. Following them was a generation that understood the new way of life quite well and lived through the changes of the early 1930's. They had a pretty important early council members. They were the earliest reservation

¹Swinomish elders do not phrase it this way, but underlying their remarks is the basic objection that Indian children at the boarding school were often treated as if they had no civil rights. This legal and political problem is one that the National Indian Youth Council has been working on in the 1960's and 70's (Lester Sandoval: Personal communication).

generation that attended the Tulalip Boarding School, though it may have been for only a short time. Following them were generations who went to Tulalip Boarding School for a long period of time, and those who went to the public school in La Conner. Those who attended Tulalip for an extended period of time lost their fluency in the Indian language and, of course, could not teach it to their children.

The Swinomish Day School

In 1897 the Swinomish Day School opened. It was built by the Indian community members with the supervision of the Farmer-in-Charge. Located in the Village, it was attended by about 30 to 60 children from the reservation. The Bureau employed a teacher who instructed the first three grades, country-schoolroom style. Since passing the third grade required learning to read and write English, some students took several years to complete it.

After graduating from the third grade students were sent to the Tulalip Training School, and following that to Chemawa Boarding School in Oregon or Haskell Institute in Kansas. The Farmer-in-Charge reported considerable antipathy on the part of parents towards sending children away to Chemawa and Haskell (CIAAR 1903:340). Few from Swinomish attended the distant boarding schools. Indian parents were especially afraid of their children catching tuberculosis at schools. During epidemic years attendance dropped.

Getting to the Swinomish Day School every morning without a school bus was difficult for those children in outlying areas. Richard Peters paddled a little canoe down the slough every morning. Arelia Stone walked several miles, hitchhiking along the horse carriage road when possible.

Raymond Paul recalls hitching a ride with a neighbor in his Model T. During high tide the beachfront road was covered by water in some places. In other places, the gradient was so steep that the car, which had no fuel pump, had to back up the hills.

In 1918 the Swinomish Day School was closed (Sampson 1972:34), and around 1930 the Tulalip Boarding School was closed. The government policy regarding Indian education was changing, and it was believed that Indian children should be integrated into local public schools. The Indians had wanted to attend the La Conner school but were stalled by the townsfolk's petition to keep them out. Strong opposition by Swinomish leaders coupled with threats to take the matter to higher courts defeated the motion.

Record-keeping by the Tulalip
B.I.A. Office

The function of record-keeping for the Swinomish Reservation community was a service provided by the Tulalip Office of the Bureau of Indian Affairs. Once the reservation lands were allotted to individual heads of families, it became necessary to make determinations of inheritance. When ownership became fractionated among many relatives, record-keeping became very complex. When trust land was leased or timber was sold, all monetary payments were channeled through the Bureau of Indian Affairs. This created a false impression that the Indians were receiving a lot of money from the Bureau. The Swinomish Reservation Indians received only twenty years' worth of annuities promised in the Point Elliott Treaty. These annuities were presented in goods. Although it was not specified in the treaty, early Indian agents even required the Indians to perform some labor in return for the goods (CIAAR 1877:198; 1878:139). Rather than

receiving something for nothing, the Indians were swindled out of what was legally theirs.

The Community Court

Another early function of the Bureau of Indian Affairs was the establishment of a community court on the reservation. From the time of the signing of the treaty, legal cases involving offenses by Indians against Whites were tried in territorial and federal courts, as were cases involving offenses by Whites against Indians, if they ever reached the stage of prosecution. Cases involving conflicts between Indians were left to the Indians to settle by traditional procedures until 1885, when the U.S. Congress extended federal jurisdiction for major offenses involving Indians (murder, manslaughter, rape, assault with intent to kill, arson, burglary, and larceny) (Deloria 1971:168).¹ Following that legislation the Bureau hired policemen and judges from the Indian community and set up a court on the reservation for minor offenses. It also determined what offenses and the penalties for offenses would be. Punishment included being confined to the jail, a small one-room building constructed in the Village, and labor on reservation roads. A person sentenced to road work was apparently allowed to recruit help from his family.

The community court contained the seeds of self-government. One of the important cases that was decided in the early 1930's concerned the fencing of horses and sheep. Ray Paul recalls this case. It came after the roads had been built on the reservation.

When Sam Kadim was the Chairman of the community, there come to be a court of law suit that Gus Stone bumped Jimmy Charles' horse with his car and somehow broke its neck and killed it. Jimmy Charles was going to sue him. This horse

¹See 23 Stat. 385.

was standing on the road. Gus was coming down the hill in his 1932 Chev. They put it to court and they just outlawed the animals out of the reservation. Jim Lyons was the judge on that, I believe, and he decided that a horse didn't have no right on the road. Then Sam Kadim decided that all the people would have to take their animals and put them in their fields where they belong or in a barn or something or get rid of them. So that's how they got rid of all these wild cattle they had and sheep and horses. A lot of people didn't have no place to keep their horses. So they had to get rid of them. In those days the butcher came right over from La Conner and butchered your cow in the field for you, if you wanted to sell it to him. I remember cause I had quite a bit of cattle.

The laws and rules that were enforced by the community court in the early years of its operation did not enjoy complete consensus, especially if they were made by Bureau officials acting paternalistically in what they felt would be the Indians' own best interest. Such were the prohibitions against the consumption of alcohol on the reservation. The Indians had agreed to a rule against the consumption of alcohol in the treaty, yet very few were really willing to follow it. About 90% of the cases tried in the Indian court involved intoxication. In 1893 cases of intoxication were rare at Swinomish (CIAAR 1893:335), but after 1905 the Heff decision made it legal to sell alcohol to Indians in the State of Washington (CIAAR 1906:379). Swinomish elders jokingly recall being confined to the little jail and staging escapes through the rickety roof.

The Outlawing of the Pow Wow

One of the most important rules established by the Bureau of Indian Affairs during the early reservation period outlawed the performance of traditional spirit dancing and the practice of Indian medicine. According to the Bureau's report (CIAAR 1892:29-30) the punishment for performance of traditional spirit dancing was having one's annuities withheld or being imprisoned. The punishment for practicing Indian medicine was imprisonment.

for ten to thirty days.

Historical background for this policy is provided by John Collier, former Commissioner of Indian Affairs (1947:137). In 1884 the Interior Department framed a criminal code forbidding Indian religious practices in order to suppress the powerful Plains tribes.¹ At this early date the total suppression of Indian religions in all parts of the country was a task beyond the Government's resources. Outside the Plains area the main means of persecution was not to shoot or jail adult worshippers, but to require the Indian children to attend boarding schools and compel them to join Christian churches (Collier 1947:137).

Members of the corrupt Bureau of Indian Affairs² viewed the destruction of the native religions as a political necessity because the religions made the tribes strong and the individuals of the tribes immune to intimidation and corruption.

Though many of the Skagit Region people had already voluntarily become members of the Catholic church, this did not make them eager to

¹At one time the Whites perceived these bison-hunting peoples to be formidable military opponents. Though they lived in scattered sub-groups for most of the year, they derived considerable strength and unity from the annual Sun Dance, a primary integrative institution in their society. Finding their ethnic unity a major threat, the Government determined to break it up. Its strategy was first to encourage destruction of the bison on which the Plains peoples depended for food, to hand out rations until they became dependent on the dole, then to forbid participation in the Sun Dance and withhold rations from those who refused to cooperate. If the threat of starvation failed to quell the summer rites, the "outright massacre of Indian communities was practicable," as occurred at Wounded Knee in 1890 (Collier 1947:137).

²In the 1920's an open drive to suppress all Indian native religions was set in motion during the Warren G. Harding administration, when Albert B. Fall was Secretary of the Interior. Fall and the Indian Bureau pushed a bill through Congress that was designed to get at the oil-rich lands of the Pueblo Indians in the Southwest.

give up their traditional rites. Nor did they agree with the White administrators of the Tulalip office that the spirit dances were "pernicious practice," "injurious and contrary to civilization," and a "serious hindrance to the efforts of the Government" (CIAAR 1885:xxi).

The Swinomish and their neighbors responded to the oppression by taking their spirit dancing and Indian doctoring underground -- operating quietly in private instead of in public, and shifting their gatherings to a large smokehouse on Guemes Island, far from the areas of White habitation and control. Tulalip Agent Charles Buchanan wrote in 1914 that the dances were obsolete (Suttles 1954:80), but may have merely been looking the other way.

The "Mean" Indian Doctors

There were some accidental side-benefits in the repressive government policy for the Swinomish community. Because of crowded conditions on the reservation conflicts between families had increased and intensified. The dearth of paths to successful leadership and achievement for Indian men caused many to seek status in the traditional ceremonial realm. The spiritual power they acquired was used to protect their families from neighboring enemies -- other Indian families. Eventually there were more Indian doctors than ever before. Almost every family had its own protector, if not several. A syndrome of competitive threats and bluffs began to build up between the Indian doctors, and they began to create fearsome reputations. Some of them were so "mean" that they would make others sick, just because they were annoyed, even kill them. People were especially afraid for helpless little children. Mothers would run and grab up their children and hide them when they saw one of these notorious

"mean" men coming. Swinomish elder Raymond Paul explains what happened:

Well, the power was given to them by helpin' Indians, but they took it and they went wrong with the gift. God gave them this power. There was Indians before that used to help one another with their power. In that generation where there was hatred, they found out they can use this power in a different way -- for gettin' different people. Before that time, before the other generation, they helped one another by good ways. And when an Indian doctor like that help you, help you or me, we have to give them blankets and pay 'em for helpin', helpin' the child or something like that. There was mean people before that too. When they had war they had leaders, one leader to . . . one leader that was always mean. They had that gift power where you go out and become a leader of war, a captain, or lieutenant, or what you call them. He'd be in the bow of the canoe with his club or spear. This one he used to kill with his power. Most of the time he'd murder the people that way. He was the bravery, otherwise.

After this mean generation a good many people died from the hatred of these Indian doctors. Like a child or something, a child has never treated you right and I didn't like it and I could get ahold of this child with my evil spirit and jail up his soul and he'd get so sick he would die. And that's how this Indian doctor business got outlawed. They outlawed it. That was early somewhere around 1907 or somewhere around there. They just outlawed all those things for a good many years. Finally, by Indians killin' one another. By hatred, by people don't like one another, they kill a child or a grown person. Now if you wonder how this Indian power is kinda faded away, it was from the time of the older, elder people started dying off, and this group of mean, bad old men.

The true spirit of Indian doctoring had been changed by the bad circumstances of life on the reservation. Most members of the Swinomish Community went along with the ruling on the surface even though they regarded it as oppressive. Unfortunately it meant that all the good Indian doctors who used their powers to help were also outlawed. They would be fined, put in jail, and made to do road work. As a result of the ruling, the doctors had to work undercover, in private homes. Sometimes they got in trouble. This situation lasted for many years until Indian leaders won a reversal of the policy.¹

¹This will be discussed below on p. 265.

The Road Tax

As the reservation became more populated during the years after 1900, the Indian community began to build roads for horses and carriages. One important road went from the Village to the agricultural flats along the northern border of the slough. It had a cribbed bridge and was used to haul fish and agricultural products back and forth. Another important road went from the Village to Snee Osh Beach and Pull-Be-Damned on the western shore of the reservation. There were other roads, termed "skid roads," along which logs were dragged.

The work building the roads through the dense forest was long and hard. Early BIA records speak of road work as a punishment meted out by the community court. Later records mention the good spirits community members showed in performing the road work. Even members who were not obligated volunteered for the work. Still later records speak as if three days labor a year were a legal requirement for all able-bodied males between the ages of 21 and 45 (CIAAR 1906:384). The Indians called this duty the "road tax." Raymond Paul recalls:

The Indians used to have a road tax. The ones that had wagons and horses, you know. And a good many times my dad he'd come out and he'd work. They paid for somebody in jail or in trouble or something. They worked only on the weekends or like that. A lot of them that was out here wanted these roads fixed up. They got rocks from up here at the cemetery and hauled them along and dumped them on the road. They had a special wagon fixed so you could take it and pull it apart and the gravel would spill out.

The spirit of cooperative work done with willingness and enthusiasm engendered good feelings among members of the reservation community, gradually brought them closer, strengthening their unity.

The Catholic Church

From early times the Catholic Church had regular ties with the Indian community at Swinomish. Catholic priests missioned on Whidbey Island in the 1840's. As a result of their contact the Indians living in the vicinity of Swinomish Slough built a "brush church" before the treaty was signed. This was replaced with a frame structure in 1868 and was enlarged in 1877 (Sampson 1972:16). The Catholic members of the Swinomish community met for many years in the church for prayers and hymns without a resident priest. Father Chirouse, who lived at Tulalip, occasionally visited Swinomish Reservation, mediating between Indians and White settlers when there were conflicts. Later Father Hartnet moved into the area and attended to their religious needs.¹ He stayed for thirty years, achieving good rapport with the community members. He knew everybody and participated freely in informal social intercourse in a way his successors could not match.

The Growth of the Town of La Conner

La Conner began as a commercial outlet for products of the surrounding farm region. The Skagit River Valley turned out to be incredibly fertile once initial investments in dikes were made. World records were set for the production of oats and hay. Produce was shipped as far south as California. When steamboats became the main means of transportation on Puget Sound, La Conner experienced a boom, early White families becoming quite wealthy. Small specialty shops lined Main Street -- grocery stores,

¹A look into church records in Seattle would provide additional data on the impact of Catholicism at this early period of Swinomish history.

millinery shops, clothing stores, hardware stores, feed stores, black smith shops, candy stores, a newspaper and post office, hotels, and restaurants. A telegraph line strung through La Conner was part of the circumglobal cable, planned to stretch along the coast of North America to Siberia and connect up with lines from Europe.¹ High officials of Washington Territory hoped the northern transcontinental railroad route would make its western terminus in Anacortes, close to La Conner. There was a period of intense investment speculation in land.

Later developments caused a decline in La Conner's fortunes. The telegraph project was not completed. Cities farther south won the railway terminus. Economic depressions in the rest of the nation hurt commercial farmers. The unemployment problem in the middle 1880's prompted a move to force imported Chinese laborers back to China, even from Mount Vernon. As inland areas were logged, roads were built north and south, diminishing the importance of La Conner as a seaport. Commercial business moved to Mount Vernon, which was located along the road. Later, as automobiles replaced horses, the price dropped out of the market for oats and hay. Farmers had to find other profitable crops. La Conner apparently had its hay day before 1906. During this year a pioneer history was published, giving it a prominent spot (Schiach 1906).

Waterfestivals

During the later years of the early reservation period, around the 1920's and 1930's, several local towns sponsored moneymaking tourist events emphasizing their pioneer background and the part the Indians played in it. The town councils, Chambers of Commerce, and civic clubs of Anacortes,

¹A famous Swinomish racing canoe was named Telegraph after it.

Bellingham, Everett, Coupeville, and Victoria put up prize money for Indian canoe races, inviting Indian teams from all over coastal Washington and British Columbia. Sometimes they even arranged for crews' lodging. Canoe races on Swinomish Slough received partial sponsorship by La Conner businesses. They drew large crowds because the canoes were the fastest boats around before outboard motors came into use.

Canoe racing and preparation for it was an extremely important community event at Swinomish. The "skipper" of the canoe began a training program two months in advance of a race, making team members run three miles every morning, give up smoking and drinking, and work out every day. The skipper and eleven paddlers split the prize money. There was also a manager for each team, usually an older man who was present all the time to care for the canoe -- polish it with sour home brew to make it slick. When the team went to Victoria, it sometimes hired the Malola tugboat, owned by Gene Dunlap, a La Conner businessman.

There were many kinds of events at water festivals, including bone games. The rules of the races, the shape of the course, and the technological features of the canoes and paddles showed evolution over the years. Each canoe carver experimented to develop special features, such as speed and ease of turning. Elmer Cline of Swinomish has collected the names of the Swinomish canoes, carvers, pullers and their special features from 1909 to 1938. Some of the canoes were: Whistling Arrow, Telegraph, Messenger, Smoke, Traveler, Elk, Chee, Question Mark 1, Question Mark 2, War Hawk, Lone Eagle, Lady of the Lake, Rain Bow, and Suzie Q.

Canoe racing sponsorship is one of the earliest formal cooperative relationships between the Swinomish Reservation community and neighboring

White towns. It shows the evolution of White attitudes about Indian culture. During the first few decades of the early reservation period, interaction between White settlers and Indians in the Skagit Region was direct and personal. Both groups were organized primarily on a family scale. Whites accorded respect to Indian culture. Farmers sometimes learned to speak the Skagit language from Indian hired hands. Later, as the growth of the towns and White population occurred, succeeding generations of Whites became more distant from Indian families. Ethnic interaction took place mainly outdoors and in business establishments -- rarely in homes. Only a few White families continued to maintain sympathetic first-hand contact with the Indians. During this second phase the focus of White attention evermore on the advantageous attributes of their own civilization seems to have lowered their estimation of Indian culture. After enough time had passed a third phase began. Indian culture drew their attention as a remnant of the past. By 1906 Skagit Region Whites had begun to talk about pioneers and Indians as part of "the old days." Indian canoe races became a tourist attraction for about three decades. Mutual interest in them drew White towns and the Indian reservation community together in a common effort. The Indians have tried to revive canoe races many times in recent years. Everybody knows their value, but it costs a lot of money to support them.

Civil Engineering Projects Around La Conner

The growth of the town of La Conner brought many changes in the physical environment that affected the Indian community at Swinomish. Already mentioned was the creation of dry land by diking out sea water along the east side of the slough. This meant the Indians lost the

valuable marsh land as a hunting area. Another important change was the building of a bridge across Swinomish Slough between La Conner and Swinomish, linking the reservation with the mainland. Coinciding with this was the construction of a road across the reservation to Anacortes, a vital link for the La Conner residents. Another important change was the construction of a rock jetty south of La Conner to McGlinn Island. Richard Peters of Swinomish describes how a little railroad train carried rocks and sand out to the end of the spit and dumped them. The purpose of the jetty was to divert the flow of silt-laden Skagit River water from the mouth of Swinomish Slough, making it more easily navigable. The jetty crossed a little bay the Indians were accustomed to using for salmon fishing, obstructing their easy access by canoe. A fourth change was the building of the defense installation on Goat Island (Fort Whitman). This fort was abandoned after World War I and seems to have had few effects on the Indian community except providing employment and contact with military personnel. All the above projects took place before World War II.¹

The Growth of Community Organization at Swinomish

As the families of the Swinomish Reservation community became acquainted with each other, accustomed to living in close proximity to each other, and familiar with White social organization, they began to generate and participate in voluntary clubs and societies. One of the first was the Farmers' Club, formed in 1910 with the sponsorship of the government (Sampson 1972:37). "It was the Bureau's attempt to get people working together in the very early days," explains Tandy Wilbur Sr.

¹The jetty was extended later. See pp. 285-286 below.

It had a President and Secretary, but did not last too long because, according to Martin Sampson, "the returned students and the old-timers could not agree on policies. The old held onto old ideas while the young people wanted modern progressive programs." (Sampson 1972:37).

Another early organization was the Northwest American Society. This was an independent organization of individuals started in the early 1920's. Members subscribed by paying an entrance fee of about \$35. When enough money was collected, materials were purchased for building a meeting hall. The community needed a hall larger than the old school house and the old court house for Christmas programs and Memorial Day programs -- activities other than traditional spirit dancing. A few of the early men who supported this organization were Charley Wilbur, Tandy Wilbur, Wilbert James, George Cagey, George Alexander, Thomas Williams, and Jimmy Charles. Some members contributed labor and carpentry skills in the construction. The Old American Hall stood for about twelve years and then burned down. Fortunately the society had insurance on it. They took the insurance money and pooled more funds and volunteer labor and built a second hall, which still stands today. The second hall was built in the early 1930's. Somewhere around 1936 the Swinomish Tribal Community purchased the building from the independent association.

In a community divided by tribal and family loyalties, people could be brought together for the specific purpose of building a meeting place. Another focus of common interest was sports. Baseball teams as well as racing canoe teams were started during these early years. Box socials, barn dances, Memorial Day celebrations, Fourth of July festivities, and many other activities were put on to raise money to support the teams. Later the La Conner Athletic Club was organized to sponsor the teams,

which began to travel out and play other teams -- from reservations and towns. Elders today say that in those days the LAC exercised a lot of informal social control over the members, especially the teams in training.

Raymond Paul recalls:

It ain't like it is now. Them days it was strong. All us young people were everything for sport. We never backed up to nothing. We'd never say it's too much work to fix up our ball ground. . . . We'd have a meetin' and discuss it, and get to work. . . . We had a chairman, a constitution, and bylaws. Three men were the backbone of the canoe racing, the skippers -- Jessie Bob, Dewey Mitchell, and Gus Stone. . . . One time Jessie didn't like it that Martin sold his canoe and we didn't have any more canoe. Then Jerry Willup had canoe cedar behind the gravel pit up there by a little shack. Somebody says, well, we'll go back there and we'll chop this canoe, all canoe pullers chop their own seat out. So we started choppin'. Everybody went back there every weekend and in a little while we had that canoe chopped out so we could carry it out of there. It was fun!

Another early organization at Swinomish was the Ladies' Club. It gave assistance to families at funerals, served feasts, and took an interest in the children's schooling. During the summer community women gathered at the Old American Hall to can large quantities of fruits and vegetables so that in an emergency they would have enough food on hand to feed several hundred people.

The Altar Society of the Catholic Church may have been organized during this period also. Catholic members of the community were self-sustaining during the years when priests were not available to them. They may have shown some responsibility for keeping up the grounds of the community cemetery.¹

The Indian Shaker Church attracted large numbers of Indians from the Swinomish Reservation after about 1910. Founded in 1881 by John Slocum,

¹During this period groups of community men and women made pilgrimages to all the old Indian burial grounds and brought back the remains of early burials to the Swinomish cemetery.

a Squaxin from Southern Puget Sound, the Shaker Church combined elements of traditional Indian religion with Christianity. For many years services were held in private homes. Members made frequent visits to other communities. Healing was an important part of the Shaker ritual, especially during the years the traditional Indian medicine was outlawed. The organization exercised strong social control over its members, causing them to give up drinking and having a generally beneficial effect upon their lives. In 1924 a church building was erected on the Skagit River at Concrete, and in 1939 one built on the reservation. The Shakers carried on the old tradition of serving meals to their members and holding meetings which sometimes lasted more than one day. Early White officials of the Bureau of Indian Affairs charged with executing the ban on traditional spirit dancing did not understand nor appreciate the Shaker ritual any more than the old religion, despite its Christian elements, but seem to have refrained from persecuting it as vigorously.

The Annual Cycle of Community Events

As the years passed members of the Swinomish community developed an annual cycle of community events and celebrations. Besides weddings, funerals, birthday parties, and memorials for the dead staged by individual families, there were new traditions open to participation by any Indian resident of the reservation: New Years, Easter, Memorial Day, Fourth of July, Labor Day, Halloween, Thanksgiving, and Christmas. Though taken from White culture, each had a local Indian character. Most events involved the production of a feast with donated labor and food and a special program suitable for the occasion. Planning for the rites of passage was usually done by one individual sponsoring family, but

occasionally it received the aid of one of the organizations mentioned above. Planning for the annual programs usually involved a series of business meetings of the sponsoring organization. Everyone who heard about the party was welcome to come. It was usually staged in the Old American Hall. Because of the small size of the community formal publicity was usually unnecessary. After many years there came to be informal understandings about which community organizations might sponsor which events, what procedures were involved, what the program would be like, and who could be counted on to volunteer food and labor. Many of the annual events contained unique features of traditional Indian culture. Richard Peters recalled the Christmas program held at the Indian school on the reservation. Part of the program included the telling of traditional folktales by Sam Currier. The children were gathered around a large tree. A half-breed Farmer-in-Charge, Mac McClosky, translated the story into English for those Indians who had become monolingual English speakers. Thanksgiving and New Year's celebrations involved traditional spirit dancing after the time when the Swinomish won back their right to practice their old religion.

Winning Back the Pow Wow and Beginning
the Treaty Day Celebrations

Sometime between 1906 and 1912 the Indians of the Swinomish and Tulalip Reservations, and probably the Lummi as well, succeeded in convincing the Superintendent of Indian Affairs in the Tulalip office to lift the ban on traditional Indian spiritual practices. Raymond Paul, of Swinomish, gives credit for "winning back the pow wow" to Charley Wilbur, who led a large delegation of Swinomish down to Tulalip to confront the agent. Charley's son, Tandy Wilbur, Sr., recalls that William Shelton

of Tulalip played a significant role in recruiting Charley to the move. Shelton talked to Indian leaders all over northwest Washington and asked them to come to Tulalip and talk to Indian Agent Buchanan. Tandy Sr. was still a small child at that time, but he recalls:

I remember the people from Swinomish boarded this steamboat that used to travel between Seattle and Bellingham, the Fairhaven, they used to call it. When it burned, it was left over here in the graveyard. It was a passenger boat, a sternwheeler. A whole bunch got on. Most of the older people were afraid because if they sang their song they might get arrested. But Old Fornsby said, "I'll sing my song." And he sang his song, going to Tulalip, going from here on the boat. Everybody joined in, of course, and they got to Tulalip and argued with the agent. William Shelton, he was on our side. He was one of the main ones that was talking for us, and my dad. I don't remember that part of it, but I would assume some of the other tribes sent delegates too.

Tandy Sr. tries to place the date of the confrontation:

Oh, I must have been awfully small, because I don't remember any other details other than I can vividly remember seeing them on this big boat. I don't even know if I was on that boat or not. I probably was. Maybe I wasn't. I must have been just a couple of years old. That would make it around 1906, 07, or 08. It was regained long before 1933. That was during the Depression. They were going great guns then. The pow wow up there at the old smokehouse. I used to live right below it. Tandy and Claude were small. We used to go up there because we had no work. During the Depression there were no jobs.

Some light on the informal negotiations preceding the event is shed by Mrs. William Shelton of Tulalip (Suttles 1954:81). She states that agent Charles Buchanan apparently originated the idea of having a celebration of the anniversary of the signing of the Treaty of Point Elliott. Faced with opposition by people who did not want to celebrate the occasion on which they lost their lands, he solicited the help of William Shelton, an influential Indian leader. Shelton suggested that they could stir up interest if he would permit them to give a show imitating the old spirit dances. He felt so strongly about this that he even wrote to the

Commissioner of Indian Affairs and the Secretary of the Interior asking that the Indians be given the right to perform their old dances (Suttles 1954:81).

One of the arguments the Swinomish presented to the agent was that they had modernized their outlook in recent years.¹ The old "mean" Indian doctors had passed away on their reservation. Therefore the community rightfully deserved to assemble in their traditional way, invite guests from other reservations, and have some fun. To demonstrate their good intentions, the Swinomish proposed putting on a big Treaty Day celebration, inviting the public, and including the Whites. They offered to put on a special program of "show dancing," and a dramatic presentation of the treaty signing. The purpose of the drama was to remind the Indian youngsters and the Whites of the original 1855 transaction transferring the land from the Indian ownership to the hands of the U.S. government. The Swinomish leaders also hoped privately to remind the White public of the promises that had been made to the Indians at that time, many of which had been broken, or unfulfilled.

Superintendent Buchanan consented and later granted permission for Shelton to build an old-fashioned smokehouse for the event (Suttles 1954: 81). The Swinomish and Lummi also built smokehouses about the same time.² Through a series of accidents the one at Swinomish eventually became a regional center of many traditional spirit dances. Dances were permitted at Tulalip for three years (Suttles 1954:81). During a measles epidemic

¹This is according to Raymond Paul of Swinomish.

²Aurelia Stone of Swinomish explained that the Swinomish smokehouse was built around 1912 by her relatives George Williams and Charley Seateate. It was located on the road now known as Wilbur Road.

at Tulalip the agent, afraid for the children's health, required the major Treaty Day celebration be shifted to Swinomish, where it continued to be held for several years.¹ After a while the dances were again forbidden altogether. Apparently he felt too much traditional dancing was being performed.

Once the dances had once been permitted, it was difficult to stop them. Tandy Wilbur Sr. recalls:

They got the concession to have the Treaty Day. And when they got the Treaty Day they they went a little further. "We can't have just a Treaty Day, we have to have a practice." "We have to have our practice session." So then they had a little pow wow. Then they got to have a clean-up day. They just kept running them. They knew how to do it, you know. Heh-heh. That's the way those poor old Indians had to beat Government. Heh-heh.

The force of the Indians' desire to meet and perform in their traditional way was unstoppable. Once allowed a little expression it grew stronger, verging on open defiance of the ban. The government had to concede.

By the 1930's Treaty Day was a major event on the reservations in this part of Washington State. At Swinomish busloads of tourists came to watch the events, which included a reenactment of the Point Elliott Treaty Conference and a performance by specially-costumed dancers, who paraded out from behind a curtain around the floor in front of the public.² Old traditions which had not been performed for many years (such as the use of a spear and an animal head mask) were combined with innovative elements (such as costume fringes made of small wooden paddles). The

¹According to Mrs. William Shelton, quoted in Suttles (1954:81).

²Tandy Wilbur Sr. played Governor Isaac Stevens. Andrew Joe led the program of entertainment, or "show" dancing.

performance of several dancers in unison was another innovation made for the "show."

After each evening's performance the tourists departed in buses. Then the Indians performed their real spirit dances in earnest. These ceremonies lasted through the night into the early morning. Indian guests from other reservation were given an opportunity perform first. Everyone stayed until all dancers had taken their turn. After several years a new generation of young dancers began to be initiated. Some of them began as "show" dancers and received their real spiritual power after this. Some people who had turned to the Shaker Church came back to the Smokehouse at this time also.

The Smokehouse as a community organization seems to have gotten its start at this time. The members selected by consensus one man to be the head for several years. That man chose the head cook, the elder hunter, the head firemaker, and all the leaders of tasks necessary to stage a celebration. These people in turn selected their teams. Staging a series of meals for several hundred people required considerable planning and coordination. During the period before representative government became formalized, the pow wow organization seems to have been the largest community-wide organization on the reservation. Many people belonged and participated in it who later became relatively inactive as they shifted their attention to other community affairs.

The Old Council

For many years the reservation community had no representative governing body. In 1912, the BIA agent reported that the Swinomish community as a whole held no business councils or committees. In 1916,

the aboriginal tribes (Swinomish, Samish, Lower Skagit, and Kikialus) formed business organizations in order to begin legal proceedings suing the government for compensation for broken treaty promises and losses of land, but the reservation community still operated as a unit only in the social-recreational and religious sense.

Around 1922 or 1925 the BIA set up a council. Tandy Wilbur Sr. recalls:

It was a kind of business council. They had one representative from each of the four tribes -- the Samish, the Swinomish, the Skagit, and the Kikialus. There was one at-large member. And they made up a five man council to kind of do business for the tribe. And then the agent met with them. This was a kind of haphazard way of trying to get them organized and involved in tribal affairs.

The first important business of the Old Council seems to have been collecting rent on the tidelands from private parties operating fish traps and log booms. I believe they may also have been involved in projects such as making cemetery improvements, constructing a ball park and tennis courts, but no one at Swinomish has specifically stated so. For many years the Old Council functioned mainly to legitimize agency decisions. After a while, though, the members became more assertive and began to feel responsible to steer an independent course.

The Puget Sound Tribes' Land Claims
Case of 1925 to 1934

Accompanying the evolution of political organization on the community level came attempts to consolidate Indian political power on a regional level. The Northwest Federation of American Indians was one of the earliest of these. It was organized through the efforts of one man, Thomas G. Bishop, a Tacoma Indian, beginning in 1912. Eventually it grew to involve representatives from many reservations in Washington, Oregon,

and Idaho. A few of the Swinomish Reservation leaders achieved influential positions in it. Charley Wilbur served as its President, his son Tandy Wilbur Sr. later as Assistant Secretary, and Martin Sampson also as its President. Through participation in it, the Swinomish Reservation leaders gained an early awareness of regional and national politics in Indian affairs.

As a result of these efforts, the U.S. Congress passed in 1925 a law permitting the aboriginal tribes of Puget Sound to sue the U.S. Government seeking compensation for injustices growing out of the treaties of Point Elliott, Point No Point, and Medicine Creek. Five tribes from the Skagit Region joined with thirteen others in seeking compensation under this legislation. They were the "Whidbey Island (Lower) Skagit," Upper Skagit, Swinomish, Kikialus, and Samish. The Court of Claims decision on Duwamish et al. Tribes of Indians.v. The United States, 79 Court of Claims 530 (1934), was not reached until 1934. The results gave little satisfaction to the Indians because of the court's strict adherence to limitations placed on its jurisdiction by Congress in the legislation.

In the 1925 statute, Congress authorized the court to pass judgment compensating only claims growing out of treaties, not claims growing out of acts of Congress or any other basis. The court found that the Oregon Donation Act of 1850 had cost the Lower Skagit about 15,000 acres of land, but ruled not to compensate this claim. The court could not extend its jurisdiction and impose a liability on the U.S. Government which Congress was unwilling to assume (79 Ct. Cl.:571). The Government could not be sued without its consent. The extent of its willingness to make matters right was limited.

A similar decision was made for several non-treaty tribes in the

case. They were the Upper Chehalis, Muckleshoot, Nooksack, Chinook, and San Juan Tribes of Indians. The court ruled it was without jurisdiction when the Government had given the Indian owners of the land no formal recognition by signing a treaty or passing an act acknowledging their title by right of occupancy (79 Ct. Cl.597:603).

The judges invoked the principle that the Government had the authority to take tribal lands from Indian groups with no compensation as part of its sovereignty.¹ In the judges' opinion the matter was akin to international politics. A political question such as this could not be judged by the courts. They felt it was improper for them to question or inquire into the motives of legislators, or of treaty negotiators.

. . . where Indian treaties [had] been executed, ratified by the Senate and proclaimed by the President, the courts [presumed] that they were lawfully made; and no charge that they were obtained by misrepresentation or that the signatures of the Indians thereto were procured by sharp practices [could] be entertained. (79 Ct.Cl.:531)

In these circumstances, the court advised that the Indian tribes seek relief by an appeal to Congress for redress. This, of course, would take years. Many of the Indian plaintiffs knew that they would reach old age before any compensation would be won.

Taking up claims arising out of the Point Elliott Treaty, the court considered the matter of the longhouses the Indians had lost and never been rightfully compensated for as specified in the treaty. The court ruled the longhouses were worth only \$250 each. The Indians asked \$900, but the court said the logs used had been free and the labor used had been cheap (mostly volunteer). Their money value was therefore low. The court

¹For a discussion of the issues of sovereignty and property, see Price(1973:353-520)

did not consider the cost Indian families had borne building new houses on the reservation or the fact that because of high prices, many families were able to afford only small shacks after leaving the longhouses. Violation of this treaty article underlay Swinomish feelings that the Government was partially responsible for the poor housing conditions during the early reservation period.

The Indians also sought compensation for the loss of land they had cleared for cultivation. However, the court ruled that there was no way of correctly estimating the acreage and value of these improvements. No payment was awarded for this loss.

The Indians also held that during the treaty negotiations they were promised verbally, in the Chinook Jargon, eighty acres for each family located on a general reservation to be established after ratification (79 Ct.Cl.:577-578). The general reservation was never established. Although many of them rejoiced because they didn't have to move farther from their familiar homelands, they still expected to receive their promised allotments. Although many did receive allotments after 1884, others did not because of insufficient land on the reservations.

The court brought the matter down to a semantic battle. The exact words of the treaty, in English, said that the President "may" hereafter cause the lands to be surveyed into lots and assign them to Indian families. "May" should not be construed to mean "will," it said. The Government was not obligated. The judges said they must accept the treaties as they were written in the official language -- English. They could entertain no charge that the treaties were obtained by misrepresentation or sharp practices.

Finally, the Indians contended that the Government had promised

to establish an agricultural and industrial school at the Puget Sound general agency and to supply a farmer, blacksmith, carpenter, and physician for a period of twenty years. A full-fledged, adequate school (the Tulalip Training School) was not established until fifty years after the treaty signing.

The court recognized the Government's "marked and irrefutable" failure (79 Ct.Cl.:585). But no award was given because of the difficulty in appraising the money value of the loss (79 Ct.Cl.:586). It was left to the Indians to demonstrate the monetary value of the loss, and the judges believed their proof was inadequate.

Congress stipulated in the 1925 claims law that the court must subtract the Government's counterclaims from the total amount granted the Indians. These were treaty annuities, post-treaty moving fees, school administration costs, and health care expenditures accumulated during the 75 years following the treaty. They totalled more than \$2 million, more than the amount the court voted the Indians deserved for their claims. Therefore, the court dismissed the case without giving the Indians anything.

The Indians felt it was an injustice to be charged for services which had been promised in the treaty, especially after most of the expenses derived from salaries for White agents. The treaty promised money and services both. However, the court ruled it was legal because the treaty empowered the President to decide how to apply treaty monies to the Indians' benefit.

After working almost twenty years, the Indian tribes of Puget Sound received nothing from the Court of Claims except an education about White law.

The Tideland Ownership Cases

One of the most important boosts the Swinomish Reservation community received in the early 1930's was the acquisition of assets with income-generating potential. These were the tidelands that surrounded the reservation on three sides. They were only a narrow strip of land, partly covered with water, but provided a strong stimulus for development of management skills by the community leaders.

The Treaty and Enabling Act intended that the tidelands be communal property, but this was not understood until court cases brought the matter out clearly. A 1903 case established that the Squaxon Island Reservation in southern Puget Sound included the encircling rim of tidelands and that White owners of adjacent uplands could not interfere with the Indians' occupancy and use of the shore (U.S. et al. v. O'Brien et al., 170 Fed. 508 (1903)). Despite this finding, White owners of alienated allotment uplands on the Swinomish Reservation operated fish traps on the adjacent tidelands for many years without paying rent on the sites. Rent was not collected until the late 1920's, when the Swinomish Old Council was formed.

In 1930 the Federal District Court ruled on the Lummi tidelands (U.S. v. Stotts et al., 49 Fed.2d 619 (1930)) that when allotted lands were sold to Whites, the adjacent tidelands (to the low water mark) remain Indian property, an asset held in common by the members of the tribe: "The allotments of upland did not release the abutting tidelands from the reserved right as long as the land is used by the Indians." The tidelands were not owned by individual Indian allottees, but held in common by the reservation community.

This was just before the time that fish trap owners at Swinomish were forced to pay rent for their tideland sites. The Old Council collected the rent. This was the first community income in the modern sense of the word and was a strong factor influencing the community to go into business when the opportunity was presented.¹

Changes in Federal Indian Policy

By the early 1930's the time was ripe for a change in federal Indian policy throughout the nation. John Collier, former Commissioner of Indian Affairs, portrays a nation-wide Indian affairs revolution occurring between 1922 and 1933, when he reached office (1947:150). The change stemmed from the Bureau of Indian Affairs' suppression of the Pueblos and its attack on the expanding, intertribal Native American Church. An insurgence among the Pueblos widened and deepened, reaching as far north as the Columbia River basin tribes (Collier 1947:151). The tribes had a common agenda for revolution but formed no single, all-Indian nationwide organization. The American Indian Defense Association served them legislatively and through research and publication; but each of the hundreds of tribes, except the confederated Pueblos, moved ahead autonomously, each upon its own, yet in concert (Collier 1947:150). Although pressures from the Indian Bureau sometimes temporarily silenced one or another tribe, the Indians' front was never broken.

The tide turned slowly in the Indians' favor until 1927, when the U.S. Senate threatened to make an investigation of Indian administration.

¹Other tideland ownership cases came up in the late 1930's and 1950's.

In 1928 the famous Merriam Report¹ was produced by an independent organization, the Brookings Institution, and the record was opened to the public. A Senate committee travelled to every part of Indian country and heard the tribes present their case. Then, in 1933, President Roosevelt appointed Collier as head of the Bureau of Indian Affairs. Collier and his staff formulated a new set of policy principles, which included the guarantee of the right to organize, the right to cultural liberty, and the right to religious liberty (Collier 1947:155).

ETHNIC INTERACTION DURING THE EARLY RESERVATION PERIOD

The Mode of Organization

During the early reservation period the original ethnic units of the Indians -- their winter villages -- finally dissolved completely. Few functions were left for the villages in the new reservation setting. Many of their earlier social functions were taken over by the extended families on the reservation.

Since the time of the treaty signing, Indian people of the region had begun to identify themselves according to tribal and band labels. These new units became useful on the reservation to refer to the general part of the Skagit Region which the original family villages were located. Most reservation residents could trace their ancestry to more than one band or tribe; they tended to emphasize only one, at least in later years of

¹Institute for Government Research. The Problem of Indian Administration. Baltimore: Johns Hopkins Press, 1928. This was a report of a survey made at the request of Honorable Hubert Work, Secretary of the Interior, and submitted to him Feb. 21, 1928.

of reservation history. The units became useful for land claims litigation, since the band labels were used in the treaty. Band and tribe labels were also used on the Swinomish Reservation to provide balanced representation of the Indian population for the Old Council. However, by the time the Old Council was formed, the bands had fused into four: the Swinomish, the Samish, the (Lower) Skagit, and the Kikialus. A fifth group, the Upper Skagit, was an informal part of this conceptual scheme. It was not represented on the Old Council because many of its members did not sign the treaty and preferred to live off the reservation on allotments won up the Skagit River.¹

As time passed into the twentieth century, the significance of tribal and band identification declined somewhat relative to the importance of reservation affiliation. The ties between families forming the social and religious community on the Swinomish Reservation became steadily stronger. Persistent internal rivalries between bands and tribes and factional disputes between families within the community were tempered by growing loyalty to the reservation community in its confrontations with White institutions. Informal associations and clubs were organized drawing membership from all different bands and tribes. An annual round of community events came into being with understandings about appropriate programs and volunteer contributions. The ultimate step of political consolidation was made when the Old Council was accepted as the community

¹Many non-treaty-signers managed to hold out for decades without confronting White settlers. They were far up the river and their land was too high in elevation and too snowy to permit much farming. It did, however, contain valuable timber. After 1900 they felt pressured and sued the government for land. They won and were granted more than 60 allotments in the Sauk Valley (CIAAR 1903:41). Later some of their land was lost due to legal definition of adjacent national forest boundaries.

governing body and took over the task of managing communal affairs.

Criteria of Membership

During the early part of this period, when Indian families were still migrating to the reservation, the criteria for membership in one or another reservation community were very general and relied heavily on the individual's indication of his desire. There was a tendency for families to shift from one reservation to another if chances of receiving an allotment improved and if it had kinship ties to exploit. Eventually most Indian families settled down and became known to agency personnel as belonging to a particular reservation. The agents apparently did not hold individuals to strict administrative rules about who should go where. The government was most concerned with attracting to any reservation those who refused to move away from their traditional homes. Once an Indian took up residence at and became known to the agency personnel of a particular reservation, received annuities or an allotment, and got his name on the books, that was apparently sufficient to identify him and his descendants as being members of that reservation community. To remain members, descendants would need to reside on or near the reservation or visit frequently and participate in community social events.

Membership in a band or tribe also involved a degree of individual choice -- especially in the case of persons who could trace descendancy from several different groups. Because of the demographic mobility during early contact and the intermarriage pattern, many people had a choice after they moved onto the reservation. They stressed parts of their ancestry showing their preferred band. Until the Indians began winning land claims cases in recent years there was relatively little need to prove

their band membership. On the reservation they could show their choice by participating in social and religious activities with other members of their preferred band.

Crossing Ethnic Boundaries

During the early reservation period the boundary between White and Indian could be crossed in two ways. The first was for an Indian to marry a White, have children of mixed blood, and to raise them to identify with their White relatives and live like Whites. This did not guarantee their acceptance by their White relatives though, nor that the children would not chose to emphasize their Indian identity as adults. In 1877 one eighth of the population of the reservation was of mixed blood (CIAAR 1877:198).

The second way to cross the White-Indian boundary was for an Indian to follow a White pattern of life, refuse to move to the reservation, apply for a homestead, and try to become a citizen. It had long been public policy for the nation to assimilate individual Indians (Deloria 1971:130). In many treaties articles were inserted which purported to grant full citizenship to Indians willing to leave the tribe and live among the Whites. However, in times of land shortages, the equality was merely a guise under which Indian lands could be put up for sale while they were systematically denied any privileges of citizenship (Deloria 1971:131).

In the Skagit Region, the Indians who tried to live off the reservation had poor luck. Most of them were unwilling to leave their villages (CIAAR 1874:337). In 1877 fewer than half of the Indians lived on the reservations (CIAAR 1877:198). Of those off the reservations,

some had attempted to take on homesteads and become citizens of the U.S. However, they did not usually conform to the White custom of making improvements on their lands. This incurred the wrath of Whites who proceeded to get them drunk and murder them while under the influence of whiskey (CIAAR 1874:337). As a result of the misfortune of these few, most other Indians in the region were fearful of following their path. They felt it was folly to try to become citizens, and decided to try to get reservation allotments with government protection rather than homesteads.

Thus, before 1900, when law and order of the wild west prevailed, there was little diffusion of Indians into the White group. In 1924, as a result of the overwhelming response of young Indians to service in World War I, Congress passed a general citizenship statute, giving all Indians, on and off reservations, citizenship (Deloria 1971:144). After this time some families of mixed bloods did cross over the boundary between Indian and White, but it usually took more than a single generation. As the years passed they lived more and more like Whites, exploiting their Indian identity only for a few economic advantages, such as fishing rights. They participated in the Swinomish community's social life only to the extent of attending funerals. Their children married Whites. After they grew old, they sometimes showed token respect when meeting elders of the Indian community on the streets of La Conner, especially if they knew the elder remembered their original kinship connection with the Indian community. Otherwise they had few ties to the community and most young Indians could not distinguish them from ordinary Whites.

A small number of Indians from Swinomish migrated to the city and spent many years there, returning home only when they were very old and

111. Some married Whites. Some married members of other minority groups in the city and produced children who chose to identify with their city parents' family. One such family recently returned to live as part of the reservation community after inheriting a piece of land. Some members of the community left and were never heard from again.

Throughout Swinomish history, people of mixed blood have chosen to identify with the Indian ethnic group. They have usually been accepted into the reservation community without much question. Some have even become leaders.

Ecological Relations

During the early reservation period the Skagit Region Indians gradually lost their village sites to the incoming White population. They continued to use their traditional hunting and fishing grounds for many years, but the overall importance of these declined. Early settlers recognized the Indians' treaty rights and permitted them access but succeeding generations of Whites gradually refused to recognize their rights. The Indians lost many of their traditional resources. Environmental changes were equally important factors behind the decline in the subsistence economy. Changing tastes contributed to the reliance on the marketplace. By the end of the early reservation period it was no longer possible to make a living solely by traditional means. One needed a money income in order to survive. The fundamental basis of the Indians' relationship to the land changed. While they continued to supplement their diet with products of the land, they were now locked into the competitive battle for success in the White dominated marketplace.

Swinomish community elders who lived through the early reservation

period are good-natured in their attitude toward involvement in the modern economy. They raise tones of resentment and bitterness to only a few points, mostly concurring environmental changes that eroded their traditional resources.

The decline of water fowl on the Skagit flats began very early. Their habitat was destroyed by White farmers filling in the marshlands to make farming fields. However, the pace increased in the 1920's and 1930's when farmers began to capitalize on the duck resources by starting gun clubs. Although the farmers would not allow Indians to hunt on their lands for food to feed their families, they invited rich sportsmen from Seattle to come and pay a fee in order to shoot ducks at special feeding stations on the farm. Each sportsman shot hundreds of ducks with no intention of preparing them for food for his family. The farmers put out food for the ducks at these stations, attracting the ducks from the surrounding region. Soon the Indians were no longer able to get ducks easily at other places. The gun clubs were outlawed in the 1930's when the State of Washington voters passed conservation legislation, but not in time to save the duck population from a severe decline. Richard Peters of Swinomish explained:

The decline in the ducks and other water fowl was not gradual, but very rapid. It was a result of the gun clubs that rich people from Seattle had. They shot thousands of ducks, not to eat, just for sport. The decline was so fast that they had to outlaw the feeding of ducks and gun clubs.

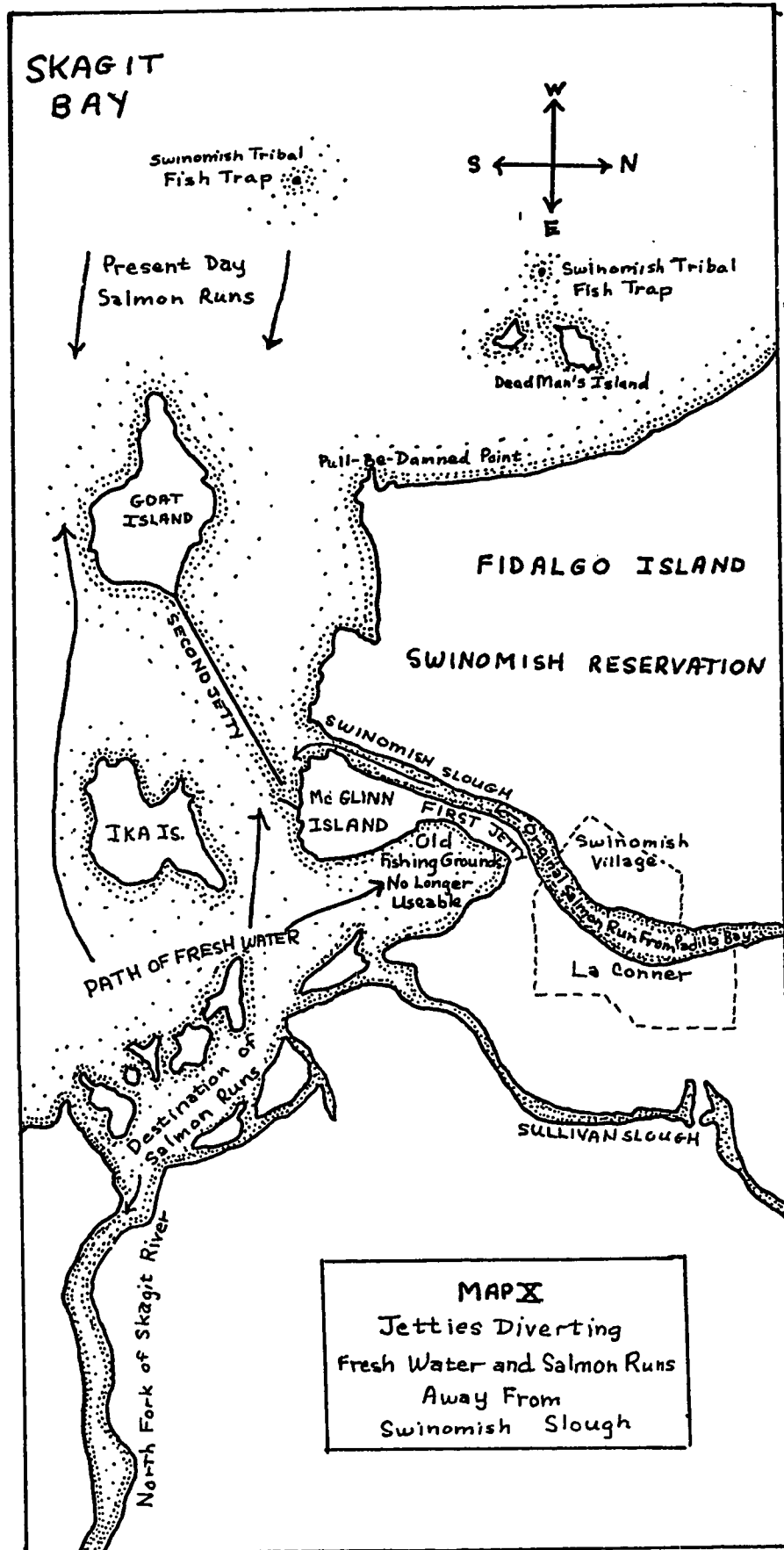
The gun clubs were all over the place, wherever a farmer would give his permission. They were all over the sloughs. They attracted the ducks with oats, wheat, barley spread on little platforms. There were keepers who stayed there all the time and fed them. They also policed the place. Poor people couldn't hunt there. If you tried to go out in a canoe, you always got kicked out. The ducks all tended to flock to the spots where they would feed them.

Another point of resentment concerns the staking of clam beds. For hundreds of years the Indians had been accustomed to dig in the prolific clam, horsecclam, and mussels beds along the shores of Fidalgo, Camano, and Whidbey Islands. In signing the treaty, however, they agreed to give up use of those beds that were staked by White owners of adjacent shorelines. At first this was a small dent in the total resources of the region. As the population of the region grew, more and more Whites began to stake their clam beds -- to keep off strange Whites as well as Indians. The situation was similar to the digging of "dzabee" wild sweet potatoes. Richard Peters of Swinomish explained:

They used to go out to the San Juan Islands to dig "figs," potato-like things. In 1923-4 no trespassing restrictions were put up on Whidbey Island. After these younger people got there, the sons and daughters of the pioneers, they didn't know the Indians. The older people knew the Indian and respected him. I done that with my friend. That was all we used to live on. It was after we got married that I started to work; I stopped going out.

In this way the Indians lost access to their old digging grounds.

In addition the overall resources of the region began to decline. Farmers plowed up fields of wild sweet potatoes. Whites began to take more and more of the clams. Inexperienced White clam diggers wasted clams by taking home more than they could eat, and by throwing away the clams whose shells they accidentally broke. They even began to deplete the clam resources on the Swinomish Reservation. This continued into the modern period of Swinomish history. After legal ownership of the tidelands of the reservation was clearly established to reside in the Indian community, and not in the owners of the adjacent lands, the Indian community restricted clam-digging by outsiders, hoping to gradually bring the clams back.



A third point of Indian resentment concerns the loss of salmon runs through Swinomish Slough. This trend began in the early reservation period when a long jetty was built along one side of the mouth of the Skagit River to divert the flow of silt-laden fresh water out of Swinomish Slough. The change made the slough more easily navigable but directed the salmon runs away from the reservation boundaries. This in itself would not have been a great loss had the Indians not been gradually losing their fishing rights off the reservation. Just after the treaty was signed and people moved onto the reservation, the Indians were free to fish wherever they wanted. They could even fish with nets across the river many miles upstream. After Whites discovered the commercial value of the salmon and began fishing to can them, or salt them away in barrels and send them to San Francisco, the salmon runs began to decline. In order to save the runs from extinction, the State made rules governing fishing. They sought to enforce these rules against Indian fishermen as well as Whites. After a while it became illegal, according to the State of Washington, to fish around the mouth of the Skagit River, and then to fish anywhere off the reservation during certain days of closed season. The last right the Indians were able to hold firmly onto was their reservation fishing right, their tideland fishing right. In the 1930's even it was challenged. When the salmon were diverted away from the reservation boundaries, they were as good as lost to the Indians. The only good fishing places left were crowded with Whites with more expensive fishing gear. To add to the difficulty, a second jetty was constructed from Goat Island to McGlinn Island in the modern reservation period. It was longer, more efficient, and diverted the salmon runs even further from the reservation tidelands. In the 1970's, the jetty was extended even further, out from Goat Island.

It would be a mistake to imply that jetties and fishermen have been the main ecological factors decreasing the size of the salmon runs up the Skagit River. In the 1930's and 1940's, three dams were built on the upper reaches of the Skagit River -- Baker Dam, Diablo Dam, and Ross Dam. Their primary use was the generation of hydroelectricity for the growing White cities of the Puget lowlands. All along the river salmon spawning beds have been destroyed. Tributary creeks and brooks have been polluted, filled in, and rechannelled around White habitation points. Before 1930 White companies operated mammoth fish traps in the San Juan Islands and around the shores of Fidalgo -- much larger than the present day Indian fish traps at Swinomish. Today modern fishing technology can harvest the fish efficiently far out at sea. All these factors together have caused a decline in the salmon runs and in the number of Indian families that can support themselves fishing, especially fishing in the waters close to the reservation.¹

Many other ecological changes occurred during the early reservation period which the Indians had to adjust to. Towards the end of this period and into the modern reservation period the old pioneer way of life passed out of existence and with it many transitional sources of income for the Indians. The old pioneers raised oats and peas. The oats were exported for horsefeed. The peas were dried. A few Indians worked at these as agricultural laborers. Many more worked in the hopfields. After the automobile began to replace the horse, the market fell out of the oat business. After the commercial canning industry started, the demand for

¹Unfortunately the reservation itself has no sizeable streams or brooks which empty into the salt-water and therefore could be used to develop runs onto the Indians' land.

dried peas declined. After the agricultural area east of the Cascade Mountains was irrigated, hop farming left the Skagit Region. In place of these crops came vegetables for canneries, strawberries, and seed farming. The younger generations of Swinomish did not continue working in agriculture as intensely. The woodcutting business rose to a peak when big farmers on Swinomish flats would order a hundred, a hundred and fifty ricks to feed their house furnace all winter. After oil came in, farmers installed oil burners, and around the Second World War, the wood business began to decline. Before the time when there were roads on the reservation, sheep and cattle grazed around freely. During the spring when they sheared them, they sold the extra animals to the meat market in La Conner. Indian women used the wool to knit stockings and sweaters. When it began to get populated with White people, when they built the bridge and roads, the Indian people had to get rid of their sheep and cows or else get fences and corrals.

The Indians, during the early reservation period, lost their village sites, their hunting, fishing, and gathering rights, their traditional resources, and many of their transitional forms of employment. In addition to this they lost much of their reservation land. Whites took up residence on the reservation. Richard Peters explains:

White settlers began to move onto the island when the government turned the Indians loose to sell their lands. The bridge across Swinomish Slough was built about that time. Gunner Ashland, a Swede, was the first settler on the Reservation. He bought the land from an Indian owner, up above where that tavern is on the other side of Lone Tree. He bought a whole 160 acres. It happened when I was going to school. There was already a wagon road on the island. Some of the Indian people had horses and wagons and got together and built it with pick and shovel.

These changes did not all occur at the same time. Some of them continued into the modern reservation era.

Restrictions on Ethnic
Interaction

Interaction between Indians and Whites during the early part of the period under consideration was carried out in a direct personal manner in the Skagit Region. Disagreements led to physical violence unless they were arbitrated by a mutual friend, such as the priest from Tulalip. Business arrangements such as trades were usually negotiated personally between the two parties on the spot. The local White settler was family-oriented, just as was the Indian. Value conflicts between Whites and Indians were mitigated by the fact that both parties knew each other as individuals. They were familiar with each other's life history and family patterns. They remembered the meaning of the Treaty of Point Elliott.

As the density of White population increased and new generations were born, the Indian and White social spheres separated. Frontier intimacy passed away. The parties to ethnic interaction were sometimes strangers to each other. Higher institutions of White culture were imported. Direct personal negotiation was replaced by third party institutions. A farmer with potatoes no longer bargained with the Swinomish for clams. Both parties dealt with the shopkeeper at the trading post, using money and credit. The Swinomish fisherman sold his catch to a fish buyer, rather than directly to the consumer. His brother worked for a cannery corporation or a logging corporation. Conflicts arising between Indians and Whites during this part of the period were mediated through courts and bureaucratic institutions.

The interposition of the third set of institutions between Whites and Indians made ethnic interaction more restricted. Although the volume or frequency of ethnic interaction was increasing, the scope of the

interaction was narrowing somewhat. The interposed institutions were all of White origin. Indians had little ability to control ethnic interaction. Their traditional culture was becoming enclaved. Very few public ceremonies off the reservation honored or saluted Indian identity. In the public sphere the Indian was expected to act according to White rules. His unfamiliarity with them or his unwillingness was misinterpreted as incompetence or insensitivity by Whites. By 1930 most of the public social life of the Skagit Region was dominated by White institutions. Indian culture was beginning to be viewed as a quaint, exotic remnant of the historical past.

The Indians themselves did not view their traditions as exotic, quaint, or necessarily dying parts of the past. In order to prevent misinterpretation, they attempted to manage public information about their social life more effectively -- displaying some aspects for tourists and keeping other aspects locked away in the private sphere of their home. Only Whites of longtime friendship were welcomed to the private sphere.

While ethnic interaction between Whites and Indians was narrowing in scope, interaction between the Indian groups comprising the reservation community at Swinomish was becoming less restricted in some ways. In 1870, Swinomish Reservation families felt crowded. Members of different tribes or bands had numerous conflicts. As time passed they became accustomed to living so close to each other. The frequency of their interaction increased and the scope widened. Organizations covering all aspects of social life were started, taking members from the community on the basis of their willingness to participate, regardless of their band and tribal affiliation. A business council was organized with representatives of the four largest bands. The Indian community on the reservation was

tightening its organization, developing a unified set of internal agreements and unrestricted internal interaction at the same time that the gulf between it and the surrounding White society was widening.

It is also possible to view the imposition of the White government's rules as restricting interaction between Indian groups. The repressive rules prohibiting spiritual ceremonies are a good example. The Indian groups had lost much of their autonomy and could not interact freely with each other as independent political entities. In the sense of the range of geographic travel, there may also have been increasing restriction of ethnic interaction. The migration to the reservation was something of a settling down, although inter-reservation travel did continue.

I believe that if one measures restrictions in terms of the variety or range of appropriate social contexts for interaction between members of different groups, the overall trend will be seen to be from relatively restricted interaction in the pre-reservation era to less restricted interaction as members of different bands drew together on the reservation, brushed elbows on more occasions each day or week, and began to organize new "excuses" for getting together. As restrictions dropped an informal reservation community was established, which operated as a unit vis a vis other reservation communities as well as White communities.

Rules and Roles Governing Ethnic Interaction

The basic format of rules governing ethnic interaction between Whites and Indians in the Skagit Region was set up by the Point Elliott Treaty in 1855. These rules were augmented and modified by the U.S. Congress, by federal courts, and by the Bureau of Indian Affairs. Five important federal laws affected the residents of Swinomish during this

period: the Executive Order of 1873 establishing the reservation boundaries, the 1889 Enabling Act for the State of Washington, the Allotment Act of 1884, the 1885 Act Extending Federal Jurisdiction for Major Crimes to Reservations, and the Indian Citizenship Act of 1924. In 1892, the Commissioner of Indian Affairs listed a number of additional rules which were to govern social life within the confines of the reservation. Indians guilty of offenses were tried in reservation courts. There were prohibitions on traditional spirit dancing, plural or polygamous marriages, the practice of Indian medicine, destruction of the property of another Indian, sexual cohabitation, intoxication, and refusing to perform road duty (CIAAR 1892:29-30). The source of authority for these prohibitions was an early statute (25 U.S.C.A. Section 2) which stated that the Secretary of the Interior shall have the management of all Indian affairs. The lack of restraints on his power in this law allowed him to justify a very wide range of rules governing Indians. He had almost dictatorial powers over Indians.

The State of Washington also passed some legislation affecting the Indians in the Skagit Region. In 1890 it created the State Department of Fisheries. In 1905 the State tried to regulate Indian fishing. It became embroiled in legal difficulties because of the special privileges guaranteed the Indians by their treaty with the federal government. In the 1920's and 30's the voters of Washington State approved measures regulating hunting and fishing practices. This outlawed fish traps operated by Whites as well as feeding ducks in order to shoot them.

Besides legislation, there were several court cases that affected the Indians during this period. A complete survey of legal impingements is beyond the scope of this work.

Rules also emerged from informal interaction between local Whites and the Swinomish, but they are difficult to codify. For the most part they are unspoken habits, like matters of courtesy. Swinomish elders rarely speak with outsiders about prejudice and discrimination, unless specifically invited to do so. Yet we know it existed. It is possible to gain an impression of informal attitudes from books such as An Illustrated History of Skagit and Snohomish Counties (1906), and The Siwash, Their Life, Legends and Tales (1895). They represent the dominant White racist point of view with occasional departures. A look through the files of the Skagit Valley Herald in the 1880's reveals that the Whites were apparently not interested in reading news about the reservation people, though they could drum up outrage for Geronimo of the Apaches and were concerned about exporting the Chinese.

One informal rule that a few Swinomish elders were able to verbalize concerned Whites' entering their homes. Swinomish families during the early reservation period were sometimes embarrassed about the appearance of their homes and were reluctant to allow Whites to enter. Members of the dominant ethnic group who accorded little respect and honor to Indian culture were not welcome guests in this last sanctuary of Indian identity. Insensitive Whites were met with short replies and silence.

During the earliest part of the historical period being considered the rules governing informal social intercourse between local Whites and Swinomish Indians were still only half-formulated. There were few specialized roles for dealing with interaction across ethnic boundaries. Swinomish and local settlers worked directly with each other, receiving an occasional visit from the agent stationed at Tulalip. After the Farmer-in-Charge was located at Swinomish, a wide variety of business

between Swinomish and local Whites was channeled through him. The passing years added more employees: an additional Farmer-in-Charge, a school-teacher for the Swinomish Day School, a physician, and a missionary priest. The Swinomish also generated specialized roles for dealing with Whites: racing canoe managers, cannery foremen, Catholic church lay leaders, judges for the community court, reservation policemen, and members of the Old Council. These people specialized in dealing with members of the other ethnic group, or its rules as they were applied to the reservation community.

As the number of specialized roles increased on both sides of the ethnic boundary, the rules of interaction were spelled out more clearly. They were detailed and formalized. As personal agreements and understandings grew up between specialists interacting across the boundary ambiguities of interpretation were clarified. Gradually these crystallized into expectations of proper behavior for people occupying the roles. They frequently involved exhibiting certain attitudes towards persons of the other group. New occupants of the role learned the expected behavior by unconscious imitation of the previous occupants, unless the time came when they felt they wanted to make some changes. For example, the members of the Old Council followed the rule of deferring important decisions to the Superintendent of Indian Affairs. They always sought his advice, until many years had passed, younger members started to press for more independence. "Why do we always have to see what Mr. X will say?" they asked.

One of the consequences of ethnic role specialization was increased social distance between members of both groups. It became possible for the Swinomish and local Whites to interact, carry out their

business, following the rituals, and depart without knowing each other in a deep personal sense. The cannery official utilizing the services of a Swinomish recruiter had no need to learn the names of all the Swinomish working at his company. There was a growing impersonality in ethnic contacts.

Points of Articulation and Dependence

As the early reservation period passed, and the population of Whites in the Skagit Region increased, the Swinomish became more of a numerical and cultural minority. After their grasp of the land became more secure, local Whites showed less concern for Indians, became less dependent upon them for economic services, and less interested in interacting with them socially. There were exceptions, of course, but the basic dependence of Whites on Indians of pioneer days passed away.

The Indians were attracted to some goods of the White marketplace -- flour, sugar, and metal tools. Their attraction grew into a dependence, a perceived need. For many years they kept their need for White goods to a minimum -- a few basic essentials. They got all the rest of their food and materials from the environment around the reservation. They worked only at short term, seasonal jobs, or sold things to Whites. They enjoyed acting as their own bosses. Despite this independence, they were still influenced by economic conditions affecting the White market. The demand for certain goods and types of labor changed over the years. The environmental deterioration destroying their traditional hunting, fishing, and gathering resources increased the number of items they wanted to purchase in the marketplace, and made them even more subject to influences originating in the White economy. They were tied to it, tied in a way

that made them become poverty stricken, measured in terms of money income.

As the reservation community became more socially enclaved during the early reservation period, certain kinds of ties between the Swinomish and neighboring White towns emerged. Whites were invited to barn dances, water festivals, Memorial Day games, and salmon bakes. Leaders of the Swinomish community felt that they would help the reservation in the long run by establishing new points of articulation. Economic self-betterment and improving public image seemed to go together. This feeling increased dramatically in the 1930's.

Stratification

The early reservation period was a time in which control of much of the most valued economic asset -- land -- passed into White hands. The land remaining in Indian hands was divided up among individual families. Poor individuals sold it to Whites. The remaining families had no way to pool their wealth, to amass enough to make income-generating investments. They were powerless. Only a few Swinomish were able to win success in the White business world. One such man, Thomas F. Williams, successfully operated a large-scale logging business from 1900 to 1910, providing employment for many of his people (Sampson 1971:37). Another, Charles A. Wilbur, became a successful farmer for a while. Most of the other talented Indians were forced to move away from the reservation, or sell their labor in low-paying seasonal jobs, while continuing to fish, hunt, and gather as best they could.

By the end of the early reservation period poverty became clearly visible on the reservation. The problem was beginning to crystallize clearly in the minds of community leaders. Martin Sampson writes:

In the 1920s, living conditions were deplorable with health and morale at a low ebb. Children's funerals ran as high as five in a week.

In 1928 we were fifty years behind the times. There were only eight or ten livable houses on the Reservation, and only one of these had plumbing and running water; the rest were shacks or float houses. . . Two small wells, equipped with buckets, pulleys, and ropes furnished water for the thirty families then living there. Indian children were being expelled from the La Conner schools because they were 'filthy, dirty, and diseased.' (Sampson 1971:40).

Education in White schools made the younger generation of Swinomish leaders sensitive to poverty. They were also dissatisfied with the inferior social status that accompanied poverty. Basically proud and self-respecting, they had reached the limits of their willingness to tolerate bombardments on their self-image.

Leadership Strategies

During the first part of the early reservation period a crisis in leadership arose for the Indians. The Farmer-in-Charge was the political dictator of the reservation. A dearth of achievement roles for young men caused many of them to choose to gain status through the pursuit of traditional spirit power. Combined with the crowded conditions on the reservation and the inevitable conflicts between families this trend created "mean" Indian doctors whose talents were used in ways destructive to the community. Men like this had been valuable in aboriginal times as war leaders, but in the new context they were a detriment.

Towards the end of the early reservation period a new generation of leaders came of age. Educated beyond the traditional Indian upbringing, they were able to identify with the reservation community as a whole. Loyalty to it, they said, should supercede conflicts between families and tribes. They defined the problem to the rest of the community: "How can

we raise the morale of this community, bring better health, housing, and more income? How can we improve our image to the people of La Conner and the rest of the Skagit Valley?"

The new leaders stressed the importance of developing communal resources, deemphasizing tribal identities and family rivalries. The years of effort members had spent developing community social, recreational, and athletic traditions had served to get them into the habit of identifying with the new ethnic unit. Not only were psychological habits created, but new action patterns had been established. Swinomish community members were experienced at arranging communal events and dealing with other Indian reservation committees and White organizations. By the conclusion of the early reservation period the symbolic aspect of community life was well integrated. The next steps were to form a community government and corporate economic business.

Phyletic Processes

During the early reservation period Indian people from all over the Skagit Region gathered together on the southeastern peninsula of Fidalgo Island. They identified themselves primarily in terms of the general locations from which their families came. Following treaty terms, they used band or tribal labels to make reference to their origins. After many years the process of lumping villages, village clusters, and bands into larger categories produced four labels associated with the Swinomish Reservation -- Swinomish, Kikialus, Samish, and (Lower) Skagit. Sometimes a fifth group was named -- Upper Skagit. The use of village cluster names declined. There were few activities in which their use was significant. The four main band and tribe labels, on the other hand,

were incorporated into the reservation business council formed on the reservation in the 1920's. They were also used in claims litigation against the U.S. government. The bands and tribes formed business councils around 1912.

As even more time passed during the early reservation period, the importance of band and tribal affiliation declined relative to membership in the Swinomish Reservation community. As the bands and tribes intermarried and left their home territories, the younger generation began to trace their descent to several. Tandy Wilbur Sr. explained:

Maybe at the very beginning around 1880 or somewhere around there, when they first were thrown together, there might have been strong feelings about their lineage or something, but as time went along, they started intermarrying more and more. You know, I've heard many times over there, at gatherings, at funeral gatherings or any other kind of social gathering, people say, "We're all related, we're all related every one." It's true too, their relation, if you look it up, while it's not real immediate and close, the relation is still within the third and fourth cousin. The Indians are that way. They are sentimental people. And they do respect this. Like I said, almost any person could say I'm part Skagit, I'm part Samish, I'm part Swinomish. It could be almost anything. You could sign up with any one of them too. Even if it is only a fourth or whatever. It is still enough. The government has never questioned it, as long as they can prove it, that they have some lineage to it, and they can collect some money for it.

The reservation community became more integrated. It acquired leaders who spoke for it, organizations, a common culture, an annual cycle of festivities, and economic assets. After 1925 it acquired a business council to represent Swinomish interests to the Bureau of Indian Affairs and other communities in the local region.

As time passed, the Swinomish Reservation families also acquired a more comprehensive understanding of the term Indian. They became more fully aware of the history of other American Indians across the nation. They familiarized themselves with the legal status which all Indians share.

They experienced problems interacting with the Bureau of Indian Affairs, various churches, and other contact agencies similar to those experienced by many other native American communities across the nation. The reservation experience was a common factor uniting almost all Indians.

By 1930 the fusion of bands and tribes into the reservation community had progressed so far that some members began to call themselves "Swinomish" on occasions when they wanted to refer to their ethnic identity. Occasionally they called themselves "La Conners." It meant that they had family connection on the Swinomish Reservation, they had roots, rights, and traditions there. Though Whites had given the reservation its location and legal boundaries, the Indian people living on it had created the substance of community out of their loyalty, their efforts to organize events in its name, and their remembrance of its history and traditions.

CONCLUSION

The early reservation period at Swinomish is important because it shows the simultaneous operation of ethnic fusion and community development. The length of time involved, about sixty years, and the many minute steps in the progress in developing common community loyalties, leaders, and associations underscore the difficulty that modern community developers must face when they are required to speed the process up in crash development programs.

The material from this period also illustrates the fact that what at first seemed like dark ages of Swinomish Reservation history, with relatively few important events, were actually filled with important ethnic confrontations. The Swinomish of this period were far from helpless, ignorant, or broken in spirit. They pursued traditional

culture energetically, making adaptations for the new circumstances of the reservation life. They found ways to circumvent federal bans on their religious practices, finally confronting Bureau of Indian Affairs officials openly and winning. They joined regional political lobbies and put together a claims case against the federal government. They operated their own community court, social and recreational associations, and road building crews. They built their first community hall with subscription funds and labor. They carried on special relations with White municipalities for canoe racing. And they produced a generation of far-sighted leaders who actively worked for political change, and an organized community government.

Gaps in the historical record for this period might be bridged by a combination of archival research and interviewing of Swinomish elders. A more complete picture of the roles of Bureau of Indian Affairs personnel and early reservation leaders might reveal how effective community development is initiated. Further investigation in genealogies and interviewing of White families with some Indian ancestry would fill in the story of the outmigration of members of the reservation and consequent initiation of separate mixed blood communities in Skagit Region towns. Additional reporting on the Swinomish use of traditional and post-contact subsistence means might reveal a formal picture of economic maximization. An artful account of arts, crafts and subsistence technology would be welcomed in schools at La Conner and the Swinomish Reservation, as might be a collection of thumbnail biographies of early reservation leaders.

CHAPTER VI

THE INCORPORATION OF THE SWINOMISH TRIBAL COMMUNITY (1930-1974)

INTRODUCTION

The modern period of Swinomish history is distinguished by its extreme complexity though this may be partly a result of a more complete and fuller record. As in many parts of the world, when Swinomish society passed from aboriginal times through peasant-like conditions and entered the national economic mainstream, the pace of history accelerated. The variety of activities pursued and the number of relationships with the outside world increased, making it impossible for a historian to completely cover all the important events.

The scope of inquiry must therefore be limited to brief discussions of the events pertaining to the nature of the corporate body of the modern Swinomish community and the ethnic boundaries around it.

In the beginning of the modern era, the Swinomish had pulled themselves together into an informal community and prepared to incorporate into an organization with a legal definition recognized by the U.S. government. They called themselves the Swinomish Tribal Community. The new way of identifying themselves was alien to their traditional method of operating, but the Indian leaders believed it would enable them to compete more effectively for survival in the contractual, White-dominated society.

The preceding decades had brought many disappointments and setbacks to the Swinomish community. There had been official suppression of the native spriritual practices. The Puget Sound tribes' land claims case of 1925 to 1934 was lost. The fish and wildlife resources of the Skagit delta, on which they depended, had begun to suffer serious declines. Sportsmen's organizations began attacks on Indian fishing rights. The Great Economic Depression threatened their entrance to the labor market. When Swinomish leaders looked around the Village and outlying areas on the reservation, they saw old, run-down houses, health problems, and other aspects of poverty. The educated young leaders who had attended some White schools were discontent. They could not resign themselves to accepting a poor image of their community, nor to getting through times of hardship by falling back on old means.

As their readiness for action grew, the tides of change brought revitalizing currents. Freedom to exercise religious and cultural rights was fully restored to the Indians. The Swinomish community acquired a firm hold on valuable income-generating assets -- their tidelands. And, most important, the Indian Reorganization Act of 1934 brought the opportunity to contract with the federal government and borrow money for improvements in the community's standard of living and for generating further income capabilities.

The independence, experience, and confidence Swinomish leaders gained during the years after their decision to incorporate fostered in them more assertiveness in dealing with the State and Federal governments. This increased significantly during the World War II years. Formalization of the community's internal democracy had ramifying effects on its voluntary clubs and associations. During the decades

following the IRA, the unity of the Swinomish community was strengthened. Tribal intermarriages produced children of mixed affiliation whose primary loyalty fell to the community. The overall impact of factional strife was relatively minor. It gradually became apparent that the Indians of the region could win more through reservation community efforts than they could working as separate aboriginal tribes. They obtained federal funds to build a community hall, construct new homes, and establish a Community Action Program, a Summer School, and a Manpower Development and Training Assistance Program. With other grant and loan funds they drew up a fifty year land use development plan and started to build an industrial park. Corporate status also allowed them to purchase several pieces of alienated land and consolidate a number of small parcels for lease.

As a community government, the Swinomish Tribal Community developed a variety of services for its members. These ranged from employment, education, and health care to housing and utilities, law and order enforcement, recreation, credit assistance, and funeral benefits. When it did not bear the entire burden of administering these programs itself, it acted as a liaison agency between the individual Indian and the outside source.

The corporate community organization appears to be the most successful form of ethnic organization the Swinomish have had since the coming of White civilization. While aboriginal tribal groups remain important as symbolic links with the past, they do not function actively any longer, except in land claims cases. The amounts they have won in court are small. The Swinomish Tribal Community, on the other hand, is developing into an organ of government with functions parallel to

municipalities. In the future, it may exercise its right to issue bonds and levy taxes, as well as contract with State government agencies for more adequate services for its members. At present Swinomish leaders are fighting to gain recognition for the Swinomish Tribal Community as a legal organ of government from the State of Washington. This trend will allow the Indians to regain some of their former independence and dignity, though on a different scale from pre-treaty times.

FORMALIZATION OF COMMUNITY GOVERNMENT IN MODERN TIMES

Incorporation Under the Indian Reorganization Act of 1934

One of the most progressive eras in Indian history took place during the Franklin D. Roosevelt Administration. During that time official government policy reversed itself and moved to build up the strength of tribal structure and self-government on the reservations. The Swinomish took advantage of the IRA by voting to accept its provisions.¹

The Indian Reorganization Act, also known as the Wheeler-Howard Act (48 Stat. 984) of 1934, provided for an end to the issuance of new allotments (Section 1); a continuation of the federal trust status of Indian lands (Sec. 2); the restoration of alienated lands to trust status and tribal ownership (Sec. 4); and the acquisition of new land, water rights, and surface rights for the reservations (Sec. 5). Congress appropriated \$2 million per year for the acquisition of new land.

¹In recognition of the importance of the policy changes at the top, they carved a bust of Roosevelt and an American flag into the top of the totem pole that stands in the center of the Village.

It appropriated \$250,000 per year to enable the Indian reservation communities to form chartered organizations (Sec. 9); \$10 million in a revolving fund to provide them with loans for economic development (Sec. 10); and \$250,000 per year to provide loans for Indian tuition at vocational and trade schools (Sec. 11). The IRA also provided for the recruitment of Indians to jobs in the BIA through channels outside the civil service (Sec. 12).

The IRA recognized the right of any tribe or tribes on a reservation to organize themselves under a constitution and by-laws. It granted recognition to any group if these were ratified by a majority vote of adult members or adult Indian residents and approved by the Secretary of the Interior (Sec. 16). The IRA vested in the tribe or the tribal council the rights and powers to employ legal counsel, prevent the sale of tribal lands and assets, and negotiate with the federal, state, and local governments. A federal charter of incorporation was issued, conveying the power to purchase, own, manage, and dispose of property, as well as act as a corporate business (Sec. 17). The community was prohibited from selling, mortgaging, or leasing reservation land for more than ten years.

If the adults of an Indian reservation community vetoed a proposal to organize under the IRA, they could never subsequently adopt a constitution under its provisions.¹ When the act was first passed,

¹This was the only detrimental provision of the act, according to national Indian spokesman, Vine Deloria (1971:100). He recommends that further legislation reopen the opportunity to tribes who previously vetoed it and now see its advantages, as well as to urban Indian centers and scattered tribes who are under state supervision east of the Mississippi River. Others believe that the provision requiring approval of the Secretary of the Interior for tribal constitutions has caused considerable trouble (Price 1973).

some tribes were skeptical about what its results would be. They turned down the opportunity. Probably because of their previous involvement in political organizations at the regional and national level, the Swinomish were well-educated to its advantages. They had already begun to think in corporate terms in their fish trap dealings. At a community election, 166 adult residents of Swinomish voted on secret ballots to accept the IRA. Only one opposed the move. They gave themselves the name Swinomish Tribal Community. A Constitution and By-laws was drawn up and ratified about 1936. They named the powers and the goals of the community organization. They provided a set of membership rules, adoption rules, and specifications for an annual election. They provided for a tribal senate, officers, and working committees.

The new status allowed the Swinomish Tribal Community to contract a loan to build a new fish trap. In two years the trap earned enough money to pay back the loan. Later the Tribe, as it came to be called, went into the oyster raising business, eventually buying out its partner and acquiring a small piece of property in the town of La Conner. After a few years a Tribal Business Office was created on that lot. As time passed, tribal business grew. The Swinomish Tribal Community hired clerical workers, fish trap managers, community hall custodians, and many other employees. Eventually it acquired enough capital to buy back three parcels of alienated land.¹

About three-fourths of the Indians in the United States and Alaska voted to organize themselves into corporations under the Indian Reorganization Act. They proved themselves to be "the best credit risk

¹To the best of my knowledge, the IRA funds were never used directly for repurchasing land.

in the United States: of more than \$10,300,000 loaned across ten years, only \$69,000 is today (1947) delinquent" (Collier 1947:159).

The Johnson-O'Malley Act

Congress also passed the Johnson-O'Malley Act in 1934, providing for the "devolution of federal power to states and other political subdivisions, and for the enlistment of private agencies in the Indian task, through a flexible system of contracts and of grants-in-aid (Collier 1947:158). This act authorized contracts with public school districts for the education of Indian children. The Bureau of Indian Affairs school at Tulalip was closed down and Swinomish pupils were sent to school at La Conner. The first full generation Swinomish students began to graduate from La Conner High School after World War II.

According to Collier the idea of "devolution" of the federal institution to local subdivisions of government did not imply the discontinuance of federal responsibility to the Indians. Both the IRA and the Johnson-O'Malley Act (JOM) contemplated that a single, integrated agency of Indian administration would continue to exist, charged with the effectuation and defense of the Congressional policies (Collier 1947:169).¹

Both controversial when passed, the IRA and JOM suffered many attacks in the 1940's and 1950's. They withstood every attack except the one through appropriations. Collier explains:

Increasingly in recent years (the late 1940's) the appropriation acts of Congress have been made vehicles of covert legislation. The appropriations sub-committees, especially in the House of Representatives, are all but autonomous; the House gives only a fiction of deliberative consideration to the

¹This contrasts with the 1950's idea of the "termination" of federal responsibility.

annual supply bills. In numberless cases Congress has concluded after careful deliberation that such and such policies shall be law, and has then proceeded to rubber-stamp appropriation bills which nullify and reverse the policies (Collier 1947:169).

The shortage of funds to fulfill the 1934 legislation made it difficult for the Indians. In order to expedite their applications Indian leaders have had to become masters of red tape and politics.

The Great Depression

During the Great Depression the federal government relieved unemployment on the reservations through the Works Progress Administration. Swinomish men formed WPA road crews and built Wilbur Road, Reservation Road, and Indian Road as well as the athletic field in the middle of the Village.¹ Old American Hall was remodelled. Carvers, from the Joe family, were employed to cut the totem pole which now stands in the crossroads by the field.² These federal projects helped bring the Swinomish more directly into the national economic mainstream. For the first time groups of Indian villagers worked together in the employ of the federal government. During this time the Swinomish also won a loan from the National Housing and Slum Clearance program of the National Housing Administration (NHA). With this they constructed their "model village" -- the eighteen homes today seen on both sides of the county road through the Village. The Works Progress Administration

¹The field was later named John K. Bob Memorial Park, after a Swinomish youth who gave his life in World War II. He was an athlete of outstanding reputation at La Conner School as well as a student body leader.

²Martin Sampson (1938) recounts a number of tribal legends which are illustrated on the pole.

hired community members to work on the houses and the NHA supplied loans for building materials to individual owners. Dewey Mitchell, a member of the community, was chosen to be the project foreman. His leadership helped bring out the innate carpentry skills of the Indians. Elder spokesmen today say that when the Swinomish people moved out of their old float houses and shacks into the modern dwellings, it was the biggest cultural change of the century for them. It affected all aspects of their lives. They were proud of their achievement and paid off their loans in several years.

The project loan funds were won with the help of the La Conner Chamber of Commerce and Civic Club. They included money for the clearing and grading of streets, and the extension of water pipelines and electricity across Swinomish Slough from La Conner. Arrangements were made to extend the services of the La Conner Volunteer Fire Department to the Reservation.¹ The Indians paid for their fire service in fish. Each year the community put on a large salmon barbecue for the volunteer firemen and their families. This practice was abandoned later in favor of a fee charged the owner of a building for the services of the truck. This is also the practice for the Snee Osh Fire Station which grew up in recent years.

The extension of modern utilities and housing to the Indian reservation strengthened the ties of neighborliness between La Conner citizens and the Swinomish. Facing each other from opposite sides of the Swinomish Channel, the town and Indian village occupied a more equal footing.

¹Before this, fires were fought by "bucket brigade," a relatively inefficient method which cost the community the first Old American Hall.

The WPA projects also strengthened ties among members of the Indian community. Elders today enjoy recalling road work. They are proud of the results. Acting out the old Indian tradition of cooperative labor for the benefit of the whole community, enduring hard physical labor produced close bonds.

Tribal Business Ventures

The earliest business venture of the Swinomish Tribal Community was the leasing of fish traps at Pull-Be-Damned Point and Snee Osh Beach. Built by Whites and operated for many years as private White enterprises, the traps were acquired by the Indians after the tidelands court case of the 1930's (see p. 275). For a while individual community members leased them from the community. Then the Swinomish Tribal Community rebuilt and operated them, wholesaling fish to canning companies in La Conner and Anacortes. At first the traps were very small; later, with the aid of a government loan, they were enlarged.

Constructed of long fences log pilings and wire mesh the traps stretch across known fish pathways, creating a maze of tunnels leading to a "pot." Schools of migrating salmon are led into them by small female leaders, called the "little slaves." Once inside the pot, the fish cannot easily find their way out. A huge net suspended on a square frame inside the pot is lifted once or twice a week, the fish scooped out and sorted on a scow. During heavy runs the net is lifted more often. The fish are transported aboard the scow back to La Conner to be sold or packed.

Beginning operation in the spring as soon as the weather permits new wire to be strung between the posts, the traps continue fishing

until late fall. In the winter rough weather demands they be dismantled in order to protect the log piling structure. The tribe employs crews of attendants, guards, repairmen, and transporters. Fish used to be sold to local canneries. Now it is packed in the tribal fish plants by crews of packers. Some is sold fresh off the dock to La Conner citizens. Some (mostly bottom fish) is distributed free to needy families in the community. In addition, the Tribe saves some fish for large barbecued salmon dinners, given to the public on Memorial Day, the Fourth of July, and Labor Day. Money earned by the Swinomish Tribal Community is reinvested or spent on community services. There has never been a distribution of dividends to corporation members, although it has been proposed at the annual meeting of the General Council.

With funds from the Community Action Program of the federal government, the Swinomish have built their own fish processing plant, where fish are frozen or smoked. The plant has enabled the Tribe to capture more of the value added in processing the fish, as well as provide more employment for community members.

Another early tribal business venture was oyster raising. The idea was first introduced to the Swinomish Senate in the late 1930's by the Bureau of Indian Affairs. The agent persuaded the community to buy and plant a large amount of oyster seed in the northern end of Swinomish Slough and in the waters off the western shores of the Reservation. The oysters were shipped to Seattle for sale. Experiencing some difficulty harvesting the oysters properly the Tribe went into partnership with an experienced Japanese firm. The Japanese, forced to quit during World War II, sold the Swinomish their share. The Tribe made good profits in the oyster business during the war, selling 80% of its

crop to the U.S. Army. After the war demand dropped and it was forced out of business by White competition with more capital backing. The loss was considered no tragedy though, because the Indian workers did not enjoy working with oysters as much as fish. Oysters were not a traditional native resource. Shucking them quickly with no injury to the meat is a highly technical skill, developed mainly by the Japanese. It always remained difficult for the Indian workers.

For several years in the 1940's and 1950's, the Swinomish Tribal Community also ran a saw mill, located on the waterfront in front of the Village. Indian men were familiar with this work and good at it. However, as time passed, timber resources from the reservation and the surrounding area were exhausted. White competition began buying large logs from the foothills of the Cascade Mountains. The Swinomish lacked the capital to invest in the large equipment necessary to handle these logs and were forced to abandon the business. According to Ray Charles, the Swinomish were only one of a large number of small sawmills that were forced out of business -- "frozen out" -- when large companies used devious tactics. At present the Swinomish Tribal Community leases a stretch of tideland north of the Village to a local White enterprise for a log storage and sorting area.

In recent years the Swinomish Tribal Community has diversified its interests somewhat away from fish toward the development of real estate. The most valuable lands on the reservation are the communally-owned tidelands. The scenic beauty of the region has attracted residential developers with plans for marinas. The Swinomish negotiated a lease to one of these for some land lying south of the Village. Combining tribal land with a number of small parcels of allotted lands

produced a sizeable annual rent for the community.

The ninety-nine year lease required a special Act of Congress¹ authorizing the Swinomish Tribal Community to freely purchase, sell, exchange, mortgage, and lease land for long periods of time. The act was passed in 1968, two years after the Tribe amended its constitution and by-laws to permit such action. Without a long lease period, it has been impossible for the Tribe to attract business or industry to the reservation, and thus develop its resources.²

In the tideflats at the northern end of the Swinomish Channel, the Tribal Community has begun developing an industrial park.³ The site is located at the convergence of railway, highway, and water transportation routes, several miles from populated residential areas.

In its forty years of existence as a corporation, the Swinomish Tribal Community has gained recognition in the business community of Skagit Valley. Recent years of unemployment have interested regional powers in any business that the Indian community can pull into the Valley. The Indians' special federal status allows them to attract resources and capital from different channels than ordinary White businesses. For these reasons the Swinomish Tribal Community is sometimes seen as a valuable ally rather than a competitor in the business world.

¹Public Law 90-534, 82 Stat. 885 (1968), 25 U.S.C.A. Section 610. See also Public Law 255, Chapter 215. 69 Stat. 539, 25 U.S.C.A. 415 (1955).

²See p. 354 below for discussion of property and income management.

³See p. 366 below for further discussion.

The 1936 Fishing Rights Case

According to Swinomish tribal elders, the Indians have always been involved in fishing rights battles, right from the turn of the century. Their fishing rights were eroded in stages. Before the 1900's, Indians could fish anywhere they wanted to, at any time, and with any equipment. They could string nets across the river. After Whites discovered the value of salmon and steelhead and began fishing in greater numbers, the Indians lost their rights to fish upstream on the Skagit River. Later they lost their right to fish around the mouth of the river. Then their right to fish anywhere off the reservation was challenged. In 1937 they withstood the worst attack of all, the challenge of their right to fish on the reservation, in the tidelands. This attack was directed at the tribal fish traps.

In 1934 the Washington State voters approved an initiative prohibiting the operation of fish traps in State waters. Sportsmen's organizations, seeking to preserve salmon and steelhead runs, played an instrumental part in its passage. After the election over 200 fish traps were closed, many of them in the Skagit Region. At this time the Swinomish owned two traps, one being leased to Whites and one built with federal loan funds. Initiative #77 made it illegal for Whites to operate traps anywhere, so the lease was cancelled. The Swinomish continued operating both traps.

In 1934 a representative of the State Game Commission arrested three Indians operating the Swinomish traps (Alfred Edwards, Alfonso Sampson, and Thomas McLeod). He felt the Indians were violating the new law. The Superintendent of the Tulalip office of the Bureau of Indian

Affairs went to Washington D.C. and solicited the aid of the U.S. Attorney General. The Attorney General instructed the local district attorney to represent the Indians in their defense. The following March, the Skagit County Superior Court decided the case in favor of the Indians, affirming their right to fish in reservation waters using whatever means they wanted. State officials appealed the case to the Supreme Court of the State of Washington. The Supreme Court upheld the lower court's decision in a very strong opinion favorable to the Swinomish (State of Washington v. Edwards et al., 62 P.2d 1094 (1936)).

The court ruled that the Swinomish traps were within the Indian reservation boundary and therefore not subject to State law. The Enabling Act (Section 4) had used the ambiguous terminology "low water mark" to describe the Swinomish boundary. The State contended the traps were outside "mean low tide" and therefore outside the boundary. The Indians contended that the traps were within "low low tide" and therefore were inside the boundary. The judges decided that the treaty right must be defined according to how the Indians understood it in 1855, before technical language was evolved by White lawyers. Low tide meant the farthest point out to which the water recedes during the year. The Indians demonstrated that they had understood this meaning for decades by their regular use of extremely low tidelands for clam digging and other subsistence activities.

The Swinomish today refer to these as their "reservation" fishing rights, in contrast to their "off-reservation" rights. The Supreme Court affirmed their reservation rights. The off-reservation rights of Washington State Indians have been the subject of many

conflicts up to the present day.¹

Following the 1936 Indian victory, State Fisheries officials, fish conservation groups and sportsmen attempted to get a federal law passed ordering the Bureau of Indian Affairs to prohibit fish traps on Indian reservations. They also sought to remove Superintendent Upchurch. These failed. In defense of the Swinomish (and himself), Upchurch argued² that the two small traps at Swinomish took so few fish that they had an inappreciable effect on the Skagit River salmon runs. Some of the larger traps closed by the State had taken more fish in one lift than these two small traps took in an entire season. There had been around two hundred traps. The Swinomish traps usually fished only at high tides (four hours a day) and covered only 2% of the approach to the Skagit River system. The Tribe itself imposed a daily and week-end closed season. A survey of the recent depletion of salmon runs made by the Fisheries Commissioner had found it to be due to the destruction of spawning places by dams. Upchurch argued further that the remaining fish traps were unimportant to anyone except the small group of Indians to whom they meant the difference between independence and pauperism.

¹For a discussion of the off-reservation fishing rights controversy, see An Uncommon Controversy (1970:72-106). Most of it deals with the Puyallup-Nisqually, Muckleshoot and other tribes to the south. The Swinomish were involved in the 1963 case, State of Washington v. McCoy, 63 Wn.2d 421, 387 P.2d 942 (1963). The court ruled against a Swinomish who was gillnetting off the mouth of the Skagit River, and who claimed rights under the Treaty of Point Elliott. In February, 1974 Federal District Judge Boldt passed down a decision affirming off-reservation fishing rights and the case was sent up to the Circuit Court of Appeals in Seattle. The reader is referred to Price (1973:293-308) for legal discussion of off-reservation hunting and fishing rights and to Washburn (1971:193-198).

²In the File "Swinomish Fisheries 1937," Volume Tribal Industries Series 100, Records of the Tulalip Indian Agency, Record Group 75,

The Swinomish were being made scapegoats for the crime that civilization had committed against the salmon.

The controversial Swinomish fish traps were located on the western boundary of the reservation. The eastern boundary was also the subject of fishing rights conflict. During the period from 1936-37 Swinomish Slough was being dredged to maintain navigation. The question arose as to where the Indians could fish in the slough. Where was the reservation boundary? An attempt to define the boundary was made by J. M. Stewart, Director of Lands, Office of Indian Affairs, who said that if the slough was unnavigable, the boundary line was in the middle of the slough.¹ If it was navigable, then the boundary would go to the low water mark.

No matter where the legal boundary was, the Indian fishermen were accustomed to fishing along the slough and around its mouth at both ends, including the southern end where shallow tide flats stretched over to the Skagit River delta. They did not feel that they had to observe an imaginary line in their fishing. The treaty guaranteed them the right to fish in all their accustomed places on or off the reservation.

In 1939 more Swinomish fishermen were charged with illegal fishing off the reservation. Their case was resolved by a court ruling on a similar one, the Sampson Tulee case (Tulee v. Washington State, 315 U.S. 681 (1942)). Sampson Tulee was a Yakima Indian whose case was first tried in 1939 at the U.S. District Court for the Eastern District of

National Archives and Records Service, Archives Branch, Federal Record Center, Seattle, Washington.

¹From File "Swinomish Fisheries 1937," Volume Tribal Industries, Series 100, Records of the Tulalip Indian Agency, Record Group 75, National Archives and Records Service, Archives Branch, Federal Record Center, Seattle, Washington.

Washington, Southern Division. The court ruled that while the Indians had the right to fish off the reservation and could not be required to pay a fee or purchase a fishing license, the treaty with the federal government did not limit the right of the state to regulate the fishery off the reservation, meaning the Indians had to abide by the seasons and bag limits off the reservation, just like the Whites.

After this case, the Indians were required to carry an identification card in place of a license. Following this the Commissioner of Indian Affairs also attempted to make a master list of sites of Indian rights in use. The attempt failed because of the unwillingness to list the exact locations. It was felt such a list would have the effect of limiting the Indian rights to those places. Because the treaty did not specify sites, the Indians felt they should not have to, but be able to, fish wherever they needed to catch the fish.

Much legal difficulty has stemmed from an ambiguous combination of phrases in the treaty: "rights in common with other citizens" and "in their usual and accustomed places." More misunderstanding seems to derive from different definitions of fishing held by Indians and sportsfishermen. To the Indians the right to fish is the right to catch fish, not to try at catching it -- to catch fish for their livelihood, just as they always had. This was no problem until White civilization decreased the supply of salmon and steelhead relative to the demand for it. Recent thought about the legal issues has centered around the problem of how to divide up the salmon runs to assure the Indians a percentage of the total take.

The Smokehouse

During the 1930's, after formal organization of community government at Swinomish, the other community associations on the reservation began to formalize their internal structure. In doing this they became more clearly distinguished from one another and from the community governing structure. One of these was the Smokehouse. The Smokehouse organization is a very old part of Swinomish social structure. For many years it was not an organization but a cultural pattern shared by all families on the reservation. It was a way of celebrating they all understood. For awhile, when it was made illegal by the BIA, some of the families became inactive in this sphere. The old meeting places fell down or were burned and never replaced. Then, when concessions were won from the Tulalip office of the BIA, a new meeting place was built just a few miles north of the reservation village. At that time participation in the activities became a way of asserting Indian identity, a joyful protest and a victorious concession. Many people in the community returned to being active. Tandy Wilbur Sr. explains: "By the 1930's they were going great guns up there in the Smokehouse." At this time the Smokehouse was not really differentiated from the overall community structure. The leaders were selected by informal consensus from among the most influential leaders of the community. They appointed the head cooks, hunters and firetenders, who in turn recruited helpers. Each event was probably organized a little differently, depending upon which families were sponsoring it, but the overall sponsorship rested on the shoulders of the whole reservation community, as it hosted other Indian communities and White tourists. The amount of overall

cooperative activity carried out by the Smokehouse probably exceeded that of any other association on the reservation. The Smokehouse was thus not clearly differentiated from the overall informal community social structure.

After 1934, however, activity in the name of the community was carried out by the Senate, the officers of the Swinomish Tribal Community, and the standing committees to an increasing extent. Leaders began to specialize a little, some spending more of their time with "tribal" business than with the Smokehouse. The Smokehouse activities became increasingly separate. It has officers with specific duties, its own fund raising activities, and a slightly different membership than the Swinomish Tribal Community. Not all members of the community participate in the activities of the Smokehouse, although they could if they wanted to and showed a desire. Many celebrations take place in private homes rather than in the Community Hall. During the winter months the Community Hall may be reserved for other activities. The Smokehouse requests permission to use it from the Swinomish Tribal Community when it wants to put on a large "party." Some members of the community attend the pow wows only once or twice a year, but show their support by giving donations of food -- fish, ducks, boxes of oranges and apples, baked goods, and so forth. Occasionally they give gifts of money to help with travel expenses. Other members have pulled away almost completely because of various objections -- too much money is involved, old procedures and discipline are no longer followed. Yet all members of the community show respect for the old Indian spiritual traditions. All know what to expect and how to behave at a pow wow today.

An important change in the initiation process occurred during the 1930's. This was the appearance of the "curtain." As the population of the Skagit Region had increased with White settlement, many of the sacred places where the Spirit had lived became defiled. When Whites began trampling through them, the Spirit departed from them. It became so difficult to contact the spiritual world in the immediate vicinity of the reservation that it was necessary to substitute a form of ritual seclusion for the initiative -- in the Smokehouse behind a curtain with the help of special aides.

In recent years, the pow wow seems to be undergoing a revitalization at Swinomish and neighboring reservations. Through it the youth are able to express their Indian identity, as well as receive community acknowledgement of their coming into adulthood. They also receive individual spiritual guidance necessary to keep them from the pitfalls of despair and alcoholism. The initiation of a new dancer provides an important social matrix for his (or her) family, which is immediately involved in a series of exchanges, lasting years.

The new dancer, in company with his family and other new dancers in the community and all their aides and community supporters, responds to invitations from other reservations in the circuit -- northwest Washington and southwest British Columbia. He in turn hosts delegations from these communities. In following years he gives support to other new dancers. At present the Swinomish Smokehouse is attempting to build a new building on the site of the famous old one located a few miles north of the Village.

The winter spirit dances are a significant platform for ethnic social interaction among the Indians. Many Canadian groups are involved.

In large smokehouses such as the present one at Tulalip, delegations from other communities are seated around the floor under signs showing their names: Swinomish, Lummi, Tulalip, Chehalis, East Saanich, Power River, Musqueam, Duncan, Kuper Island, and others. The Indians have usually been allowed to travel freely back and forth across the international boundary. The Canadian tribesmen are also viewed as great canoe racers and bone game players. In all the traditional cultural realms they are perceived as powerful.¹

The Growth of More Assertive
Managership of the
Tribal Community

After the Swinomish Tribal Community had existed as a corporation for a number of years, its leaders became experienced in dealing with White rules. A gradual dissatisfaction crept into their minds when they dealt with the Bureau of Indian Affairs officials.² Tandy Wilbur Sr. explained:

A lot of superintendents in the past, they have ideas, many decades past, they think they know what is best for the Indian people. They try to convince the council, they try one way or the other, almost make it mandatory in some cases. . . . They were simply doing it all the time because they thought they could do better than the Indian Council. They believed that the Indian Council didn't have the know how and so forth to run their own business. They constantly came down and visited, advised them on what to do about this and that. And what they said generally went.

The agency used to handle all the tribe's money, accounting disbursing, receiving, and everything. We couldn't see through to develop our resources with that much supervision.

¹They are also perceived as much poorer than the American Indians.

²The materials in this section rely heavily on the testimony of Tandy Wilbur Sr., who has held the position of Swinomish Tribal Business Manager for several decades.

Eventually a confrontation took place between the Manager of the Tribal Community and the Superintendent of the Bureau of Indian Affairs. It concerned the operation of the tribal oyster business. Wilbur recalled:

You see, during that time the second man at the Bureau used to more or less run the business of the Reservation, with the approval of the Council. He had visited an oyster association meeting in Everett and listened to speakers who were promoting the idea of an oyster industry. He got interested in it, so he took tribal money, two or three hundred dollars, or whatever it was, and bought some seed from Japan. He planted it here and there along the different tidelands.

This was all right. There was nothing wrong with it. But today the Indian Council makes decisions like that. You see, this is the way they used to press their ideas. They just came down here and did it. I've never found a resolution where the Senate ever authorized it. It's illegal, really, but they had the administrative power to do it, I guess.

The Bureau official attended a meeting of the Swinomish Senate. He talked the members into buying a large amount of oyster seed from Japan and planted it in the tribal waters. To pay for it he arranged for a loan from the government, which amounted to around \$11,000. The oysters were planted and several years passed during which they were left to mature.

Then, of course, the natural thing followed: nobody in the tribe knew anything about oysters. One man in the tribe had worked as a laborer in oyster beds. The Bureau officials believed that he knew the business. They put him in charge of it, but he wasn't very successful. Tandy Wilbur Sr. explained again:

To show you how little we knew about it, they'd go up there and harvest the oysters, get a scow, and ship them down to Seattle, and the company would condemn the whole load. They'd think our oysters must be no good. However, that wasn't the case. It was simply that they didn't know when to harvest them. They were picking them up when they were spawning, when they were milky, and the oyster companies could not use them. They lost a whole scowload each time they done that. A couple or three times that happened.

Around 1941 Martin Sampson, Chairman of the Swinomish Tribal Community, resigned his position. Tandy Wilbur Sr. moved up from Vice Chairman to fill the vacancy. Concerned about the oysters, Wilbur appointed a committee to study the problem. The committee made a tour of oyster plants in the state of Washington, from Rockpoint around Bellingham to Olympia to Willapa Harbor. They wanted to contract a company to harvest the oysters and teach the Indians at the same time. Wilbur explained further:

We found a Japanese man in Willapa Harbor. He actually lived in Seattle, but his sister and brother-in-law had quite an industry down in Willapa, raising oysters, opening, shucking them and so forth. He came down here and he was well-versed in it. So we made a contract with him to open and harvest our oysters, sell them, and pay us so much a gallon. It wasn't very much money, but he was doing all the work. He hired Indian help, of course, as much as he could. But our Indians didn't know how to open oysters. He brought his own Japanese people, and they taught us some. They taught any Indian people who wanted to learn.

The partnership was satisfactory. However 1941 was destined to be a bad time for Japanese people in the U.S. Wilbur explained:

His name was George Fujii. Mr. Fujii happened to be a national. He wasn't an American-born Japanese, he was a national. And the war broke out between Japan and America about that time. The government clamped down on all Japanese Nationals, especially those who had connections with the old country. And he did because he was a kind of exporter-importer. The government sent them to California to concentration camps or whatever you call them. They had them picked up. Those people lost a lot of money, in some cases everything those people had built up was turned over to White people, and by the time they came back, the White people had dissipated the funds and in some cases had the places mortgaged.

At the same time Fujii was running out of money. He had purchased a site for the oyster plant in the town of La Conner, and was converting the small building on it into a processing station. It had to be rigged with conveyor belts and loading platforms and so forth. He hired

Tandy Wilbur Sr. to keep the books. Wilbur could see his financial situation. Fujii foresaw the government suppression of Japanese and his own shortage of funds and went to Wilbur. Wilbur recalled:

He confidentially told me, "Well, I think I'm going to be up against it." He hadn't done anything wrong. The government suppression was just security precautions. So I asked him, "What do you think about the tribe buying the place here and using your people here to help and so forth. We'll change the contract and we'll authorize the business, and we'll help the Japanese workers here, and get somebody else to help us with the money."

He was agreeable, but the poor guy he just about had to submit to anything. So, we decided this, we made this decision ourselves right here.

At this time the Bureau of Indian Affairs still handled financial affairs for the Swinomish. The Indians had to send all their payrolls and earnings down to the agency in Tulalip. Everyone who worked for the Tribe had to go down to the agency to pick up his check, unless the Tribe sent someone down to pick them all up. When the Swinomish sent the documents converting the ownership of the oyster company from Fujii to the Tribal Community, the Superintendent refused to let the money go. The Swinomish sent a committee to Tulalip. Still he refused. Wilbur recounted the confrontation between himself and the Superintendent:

So they came back and they didn't have no checks or nothing. I called the Superintendent and asked him to come down here and talk to me about this. This room was part of the fish plant and oyster plant. There was nothing in it. Word got around the Reservation that he was coming down, and by the time he got here, almost an hour and a half later, this room was almost full of people, and we really had a hoe down.

I had one thing going for me. In our conversation on the telephone, when I asked him why he wouldn't give us our money, he mentioned the faults of George Fujii, and when he mentioned them, I knew who had reached him, because the bank down here had told me the very same things. The banker told me who told him that. It was the manager of Rockpoint Oyster Company. He didn't want us to get the oyster company and be his competitor, and he was giving the scare to the banker. Of course the banker didn't have too much to do with our business at the time. And if it

wasn't for Mr. Upchurch, the Superintendent, starting to tell me some of the faults right away, I wouldn't have known. And this was what I had going for me.

Immediately after the banker had listed Fujii's faults to Wilbur, Wilbur had gone to Fujii and had a heart-to-heart talk. He wanted some explanation. He listed all the accusations. Fujii laughed at some of them, saying they were fabricated and exaggerated. He explained away the others. Wilbur was satisfied. He was convinced that behind the accusations was someone who was trying to destroy or impede the Swinomish community's progress. That man had an ulterior motive -- he didn't want the Swinomish competition. Wilbur went on:

And so I had all the answers when Mr. Upchurch came to our office. When he threw all these things at me, I came right back at him with the facts as I knew it. And he was really stuck. He couldn't figure out how in the heck he let on, you see. And so then in the end, we got pretty angry. He got pretty high up and I got pretty . . . well, any way, when I got through I said, "MR. UPCHURCH, it is high time we Indians stand up on our own horses, and stop letting White people run all over us. This man down here is no more interested in what our progress is going to be than the man in the moon. All he is worried about is his own business. He's protecting that business and you're falling for it. I'm not. He's trying to keep us out of the competitive field, to save his business. He wants to come down here and buy these oysters for 50¢ a bushel and make \$3 or \$4 out of them. And you're willing to go along with that. I'm through with that kind of business. If I can't get nothing here, I'll go further than this!" I meant business too. I would have gone farther up, higher up in the BIA, if he wasn't going to go along with it, submit to our orders.

You know, he thought a long time after I said this. And he said, "Let me think it over in the morning." And I said, "O.K." And Wilbur James said that when he left he jumped in his car he went right down there to Rockpoint and talked to that man. The next morning the telephone rang and he said, "Get your contract and your committee together, and get Mr. Fujii and come down here and we'll work out a contract."

Superintendent Church had been worried that Tribal Manager Wilbur dissipate tribal funds by taking a gamble on Fujii's oyster business. He tried to protect the Swinomish against this action. But the Swinomish.

had reached the point where they were ready to make their own decisions. They were convinced this was the only path open to them. They were sure it would make money. Fortunately it did. The Second World War raised prices. The Army bought 80% of their oysters. They paid back the \$11,000 loan, the mortgage for the building in La Conner, and bought a new dredge. They even had money left over.

After the success in oysters, the Swinomish submitted a proposal to the Superintendent to transfer their funds to the local bank. They proposed hiring their own accountant to do the books. At first the Superintendent would let only enough money go to operate on, but later he increased the amount. After a year and a half the Swinomish got everything. Within two years they gained full control of their business enterprises. From 1945 on, the Bureau became less and less effective in controlling Swinomish enterprise.

Looking back on the years of close BIA supervision, Tandy Wilbur Sr. recalled that the overprotection was as much due to the Indian community's attitude of acceptance and reliance on official advice as anything:

I can recall, prior to that for many years, they'd be talking about something they want to do, always, never fail, either the guy at the head of the table or somebody in the audience, would say, "Well, let's see what the Superintendent says, we can't move until we see what the Superintendent says." They relied on him so strongly. I heard that over and over many times. It always bothered me, why do we have to go to somebody to help us make a decision. We should be able to make this decision ourselves. And, of course, my big mistake was, we make this decision without even consulting him and that's what got him so doggone mad. It never occurred to me other than, "Why here we are. We're the boss. We can do whatever we decide." It never occurred to me why this was a practice here going on for many decades, of always going and seeing the Superintendent and getting help making the decision. And generally whatever way he went, that's the way they went, that's it. I guess this

kind of thing is going on all over the United States, I mean this kind of supervision, influence that the superintendents have here and there and everywhere. Indian people always felt that they had some kind of godfather or something, in the Superintendent. They almost had to have a resolution for everything they ever drew out of the tribal account when he was holding the money.

Today the Swinomish make most of their own management decisions; Bureau officials respect their assertiveness. Following the retirement of Mr. Upchurch in 1942, Superintendent Gross dealt with the Swinomish. Wilbur declared:

Mr. Gross was very cooperative. He took a look at what has been going on and he was the first one that said, we take all of our money down here. You see, we were drawing just our operating expenses. He says, "What do we want to be a partner to your company for? You people can run your own business, and there's no need for us to be mixed into it, why don't you take all of your money down there?"

The Swinomish oppose the rotation of administrative personnel in the BIA so that they spend only a brief time in each agency. The Swinomish feel they have had a sympathetic and helpful superintendent for many years. He accepts the community's policies, enforces them, and tries to find ways of bending the laws and rules in order to accomplish what they want. He has never coerced them into making a decision one way or the other. "He has been wonderful in this respect," Wilbur declared. If he were rotated and sent away, the Swinomish would have to spend considerable time educating a new employee. Just as soon as they had made good contact with the new one, he would be transferred, and they'd have to start over again.

World War II

Since they moved onto the reservation the Swinomish have demonstrated loyalty and patriotism in defense of the country. Members of

the Indian community volunteered for service in World War I, before the Indians were considered citizens. Among them were Alfred Edwards and Martin Sampson. Because so many American Indians across the nation volunteered for active duty overseas, Congress declared Indian citizenship in 1924.

During World War II an even greater number of Swinomish men volunteered. Each year on Memorial Day the Swinomish honor their veterans with services at the cemetery. The program for 1973 lists 22 warriors who served in the U.S. armed forces who are now deceased.

Other Swinomish men were engaged in defense-related employment during World War II, such as the construction of the Oak Harbor Naval Air Base on Whidbey Island. Their draft boards sometimes excused them from service in order to continue this work. The Oak Harbor installation is still in operation today. Indian civilians occasionally find work there. On Memorial Day, the Navy sends several men to perform as a color guard for the services at the Swinomish cemetery. Some vocational training courses have been conducted for Indians at the Oak Harbor base.

Other Swinomish men were employed during World War II by Sagstead Shipyards. Sagstead leased a piece of tideland along Swinomish Slough from the Tribal Community and erected a plant there. Indian men worked several shifts at it. After the war it was closed down.

Swinomish men also served in Korea and Viet Nam, many because of the draft. Others volunteer in order to leave home and see the world, and find employment. It offers more security than merely moving to the city to look for work. It also offers education to non-high school graduates. All these factors are significant in a region of high unemployment such as Puget Sound has been during the late 1960's and early

1970's. Indians have suffered more severely than the general population in this region, as in most places.

Family Composition of
the Community

Genealogy is a major component of what the Swinomish view as their history. It is a complex body of knowledge, mastery of which is necessary in order to make even a mundane conversation with members of the community. A number of Swinomish elders are able to relate a vast amount of genealogical data. Some have reputations for being expert at it. Most of these people were born during the early reservation period, when the families presently containing many households were but a nucleus of siblings. As the present day elders grew older they saw their friends grow up, marry, have children, outlive their spouses, remarry and have more children, divorce, remarry, have grand children and great grandchildren, and perhaps pass away. They observed this and remembered it. Today they declare to the younger generation, "We're all one big family on the Reservation," "Everybody in this community is related through these three sisters and their half brother," and "If you looked back far enough you'd find that they are really ten or twelve big families here at Swinomish, and farther back than that, only about three." They try to teach the younger generation the key relationships that unite the families in the community. The children are quick to learn and very interested in it. In the case where the linking relatives have passed away it is difficult.

Genealogical data for the Swinomish community was originally collected by Aileen Satushek, who generously helped me. Expanding the

depth of generations and tracing out collateral lines allowed the information to be integrated into large kinship charts.

The information gathered is displayed in Charts III through XVI in Appendix II. The largest family is shown on Chart III, composed of the descendants of three sisters ("Daialtza," "Abida," and "Supilia") and their half brother Jack Day. This chart takes seven pages. Numbering and color coding are intended to aid the reader.

Chart IV shows the second largest family, that of the three Moore sisters (Nellie, Alice, and Mary). Chart V is a family composed of the descendants of Pateus, a Samish treaty signer. Chart VI is a Lower Skagit family from Snatelum Point, Whidbey Island, bearing the surnames Peters and Edge. Chart VII is Doktor Joe's family. He was also known as "Salighkadim." Chart VIII is the John family with the Upper Skagit relatives of Irene Moses. Chart IX is the Willups, Sampsons, and McLeods. Chart X is the Wilbur, Fornsby, and Charles family. The Wilburs and Charleses are linked through an important marriage alliance,¹ rather than common descent. Chart XI is the large Edwards family. Chart XII contains the descendants of George Williams. The last four charts show smaller families for which there is insufficient data to show links to the main stems, though these may exist.

All the main Skagit Region tribes (Swinomish, Kikialus, Upper and Lower Skagit, and Samish) are represented in the upper levels of the charts. At the bottom are the young children, most of mixed descent.

¹Tandy Wilbur Sr., Business Manager of the Tribal Community, and Ray Charles, Vice-President of the Tribal Community, are "co-parents-in-law" according to the old Indian tradition. Both families have a number of members working for the Tribal Community.

They call themselves "Swinomish," after the reservation community. Most people select one of their tribal ancestries for claims case benefits.

If the charts were completed, each person in the lower levels would appear at least four times, if not eight -- once showing the descent line going back to each of his grandparents. Some might even appear twice on one chart. Effort has been made here only to show everyone at least once. Cross references to other charts have been used to avoid repetition of large segments of data.

Individuals are sometimes related through chains of marriages. A woman may marry a man and have children by him. She may later die, and he remarry, have more children and die or divorce. His second partner will remarry and have children by another man. The children are thus half and step-siblings or less. This situation is especially frequent at the tops of the charts, among the elderly people who have lived a long time. Because of the complexity of representation, this situation is not clearly marked on the charts. In many cases there is even more relatedness than shown on the charts.

An Internal Dispute

During the 1940's and '50's, the internal strength of the Swinomish community continued to improve, but suffered from an important internal dispute. The disagreement arose over the ownership of the reservation's valuable tidelands. Three members of the community, representing the Swinomish aboriginal tribes, attempted to sue the Swinomish Tribal Community and the Business Manager¹ for mismanagement. Feeling that the

¹This section relies heavily on his interpretation of the charges.

tidelands belonged to the Swinomish aboriginal tribe, they argued their families should be allowed to operate the fishtraps off the west coast of the reservation. They felt that they should at least be allowed to lease the trap from the Tribal Community and operate it as a personal enterprise. Their application to the Tribal Senate was refused. Seeing the Business Manager as their chief obstacle, they initiated action in the Tribal Senate to put him out of office. When this failed, they brought a federal court case against the entire Senate.

The case was tried in a Federal District Court at Bellingham and continued for eight years. Both sides spent considerable time and money preparing their legal stands. The judge, hearing the side of the plaintiff, dismissed the case without hearing the defense. He ruled that the aboriginal Swinomish, just like all the other aboriginal tribes in the Skagit Region, gave up its rights to all land when it signed the Treaty of Point Elliott. The reservation to which its members promised to remove themselves was not designated for any one tribe or another. The tidelands were common property of all the Indians in the surrounding area and had to be managed as an asset of the whole Indian community's corporate organization.

In a community composed of poor families such as this one, internal conflict is perceived in individual and family terms rather than as a consequence of externally-imposed impoverishment or incomplete and ill-defined laws and policy. Each side believes the other is getting away with something unjustly. Members of the defendant's families believed that the parties representing the Swinomish aboriginal tribe wanted to get control of the fish traps for their personal gain. Members of the plaintiffs' families felt that the leaders of the Tribal

Community were managing funds to benefit their family. Even though an audit of Tribal books by an independent law firm, going back to the time the corporation was formed, revealed no illegal practices, hard feelings carried on for many years. They continue to manifest themselves in the competition for jobs on the Tribal payroll. As in any society, the distribution of income in a just and fair manner is the most difficult internal political problem.

The 1946 Claim Case
Legislation

In 1946 the Indian Claims Commission Act (60 Stat. 1049 (1946)) was passed by the U.S. Congress. It was an attempt to settle once and for all the myriads of Indian claims suits which had piled up over the years. It enabled all tribes to come directly before the commission in search of justice without having special acts of Congress passed to allow them to sue the government. The 1946 legislation broadened the basis for suit to include claims arising under the Constitution, laws, treaties, Executive Orders, and all other possible grounds. Furthermore, it allowed a revision of the treaties on the grounds of "unconscionable consideration." The act allowed the settlement of claims due to injustices taking place at any time in U.S. history up to the time of the passage of the act.

Even in this apparently liberal legislation, the scope of the Commission to dispense justice was limited. The tribes were to be paid in inflated modern dollars, whereas they had been deprived of the lands at a time when the dollar was worth much more (Deloria 1971:220). Usually no interest was allowed on the debt. The court still had to take "offsets," or government expenditures, for Indian administration

into account, although recent emergency appropriations (such as for unemployment during the Depression) were not included. Furthermore, according to Indian barrister Deloria, as the claims cases were decided "no one decision appeared to relate to another in any consistent theory of reparations or claims. . . . The ultimate insult was the appointment of former Senator Arthur Watkins, a mortal enemy of Indian people, as Chief Commissioner of the Indian Claims Commission. Watkins did his best to deprive the tribes of any recovery at all" (Deloria 1971:220).

The 1946 act provided that the commission would stop accepting cases in five years and would terminate its existence in ten years, but the response of the tribes was so great that Congress extended the period of its operation. The Skagit Region cases began to appear in 1959. The Swinomish, Samish, Kikialus, Lower Skagit, Upper Skagit, and Sauk-Suiattle all organized themselves, hired lawyers, and presented cases. All were recognized by the court as being legitimate "identifiable groups" with representative organizations. One group, the "San Juan Tribe of Indians," was rejected on the grounds that its members, who were descendants of residents of the San Juan Islands, were Lummi and Samish.

A complete study of the complex court proceedings is beyond the scope of this work.¹ It must suffice to say that the tribes claimed that the price paid for their land in the Point Elliott Treaty was an unconscionable consideration. Court proceedings involved judgments on

¹A partial list of the Skagit Region's case materials has been taken from the index to the Indian Claims Commission decisions available in the University of Washington Law Library. See Bibliography -- Legal.

the legitimacy of the plaintiffs as representatives of the descendants of the wronged parties, the tracts of land owned in aboriginal times, the amount of acreage involved, the true value per acre of the land, and the total price that should have been paid. Next the court decided the price actually paid for the land and the total value of the offsets. Finally it subtracted the total amounts the government paid from the total amounts the Indians should have received and reached the amount due to the plaintiffs.

The Lower Skagits were awarded \$75,856.50 on October 13, 1971. The Samish were awarded \$5,754.96 on October 6, 1971. The Upper Skagit were awarded \$426,801 in 1968. The Kikialus were awarded \$6,026.69 less offsets. Progress on the Swinomish case as of November 18, 1971 had reached the description of territory. The court was about to determine the acreage.

The amounts awarded were very small. Many tribal members on the reservation did not seem very interested in the proceedings. One of my informants jokingly admitted he and his relatives were at first very excited about the possibility of getting "paid off," but when they discovered they had to pay \$2 to join the organization their enthusiasm dampened. They supposed they would only get \$1 for the award. The amount of land the northwest groups owned was small compared to that of the Plains, Plateau, and Great Basin tribes. They do not receive payment for their most valuable resource, the water.

Another reason for the small size of the awards was the low valuation per acre: between \$.30 and \$4.00 per acre for the Lower Skagits. At the time of the treaty, very little land was being bought and sold in the Skagit Region. An economist from the University of

Washington, serving as the petitioners' expert witness on valuation of land, employed both a market valuation, or commercial value derived from the marketing of products, and a "subsistence value," based upon the potential earning capacity of each Indian multiplied by the number of Indians in the plaintiff tribe. This resulted in relatively high values for the land.¹ His methods of evaluation were rejected by the Commission in all cases.²

The Government's expert witness utilized a market value approach, attempting to estimate the price per acre that a prospective purchaser would have paid in 1859 (the year the treaty was ratified). He divided the land into types according to its potential uses and assigned a value per acre for each type. He evaluated open, potentially agricultural land on Whidbey Island at \$2.00 per acre, on the mainland at \$1.25 per acre. He requested that the overall value be set at 55½ cents per acre, giving a total value of \$31,235.50.

The court accepted the Government witness' approach, but substituted higher acreage valuations. It felt the land averaged \$1.79 per

¹In the Lower Skagit case, according to the first method, he computed the value of timber discounted to 1859 at 8%, and added a per acre value for agricultural potential. Under this method he placed a valuation on the Whidbey Island lands of \$4.95 per acre, and the mainland tract of \$1.25 per acre.

In his second method of valuation, referred to as the "subsistence valuation," he arrived at a valuation of the entire Skagit tract of \$1,000,000 less \$200,000 for retained rights, or a net subsistence value of \$800,000. This conclusion was derived by using \$150 per year as the value of subsistence (potential earning capacity) of each Indian, multiplied by the number of Skagit Indians at the time (400). [Lower Skagit Tribe v. The United States, 22 Ind.Cl.Comm. 28, 46 (1969).]

²For the complete decision behind the rejection see The Nooksack Tribe v. The United States, 6 Ind.Cl.Comm 599-602 (1958).

acre and totalled \$100,188.00. Subtracting offsets, this left the Lower Skagits a settlement of \$74,856.50.

After the settlements were received, the tribes began drawing up legal rolls of members for the disbursement. The Upper Skagit tribal officers expected 10,000 people to apply for a share of the settlement funds. Although not all these would qualify, it is apparent from this figure that the numbers of people who can trace their descent line in some way back to the Point Elliott Treaty Indians is very large. It is much larger than the present population of Indian communities. The tribal members residing on reservations do not recognize all applicants as members. Some have sought in vain to cut down the numbers by requiring a certain degree of Indian blood, perhaps one eighth. However, Congress refuses to alter the requirement that a member need only show descent and may share in only one disbursement.

Some Swinomish residents today emphasize the relative fruitlessness of claims case suits compared to efforts to win government grants for the Tribal Community programs.

The Termination Policy

In 1953 the U.S. Congress passed legislation endorsing the general policy of termination. In 1954 laws were passed "freeing" six Indian groups across the nation of federal supervision and control. Far from liberating the Indians, the acts liquidated tribal assets and distributed the proceeds among the individual members. The reservations were abolished (68 Stat. 250; 68 Stat. 718). Accompanying this was the termination of federal responsibility for Indians in health, education, and welfare. This was a unilateral move by the federal

government. Only after protests by the National Congress of American Indians did the Department of the Interior several years later reluctantly endorse the principle of securing the consent of the tribes to be terminated.

The terminated groups suffered disastrous consequences. In some cases the common property was sold for a fraction of its potential value and the administration of funds was turned over to private bankers in distant towns. The loss of the treaty health, education, and welfare benefits was tragic for poor Indian families. Some tribes found in jeopardy their valuable hunting and fishing rights. The Indian land lost its trust status and fell onto the tax rolls of the states. Many other fees and assessments became immediately due -- charges for services such as fire protection and police service. In addition, the tribes lost one of the strongest bolsters of ethnic identity -- their tribal organizations.

Though the pace of termination has slowed in the wake of overwhelming national Indian opposition, the law remains on the books. Many Indian leaders fear it may again be activated. Swinomish leader Tandy Wilbur Sr. opposes this law with as much vehemence as he can muster, although the Swinomish, according to Wilbur, are forever protected against termination by the IRA status. The dissolution of tribal assets is the exact opposite of what Indian leaders have worked for forty years. Besides seeking to build communal assets and income, they have worked to hold the government to its ongoing treaty responsibilities, and to strengthen the Swinomish ethnic identity. They firmly believe that the non-tangible benefits of tribal incorporation continue for years beyond the time when any individual share of monetary funds would be spent.

Termination is the most direct attack on the existence of the ethnic group that has been made in the twentieth century.

The Bureau of Indian Affairs'
Direct Relocation Program

The first nationwide mass migration of Indians from the reservations took place during the Second World War. Many Indian men served in the armed forces. Others left the reservations to work in war industries. During the recession following the war Indian workers were laid off; unemployment was a severe problem. The unemployment rates for Indians were, and still are, several times those of non-Indians (Sorkin 1971:12).

The Swinomish Indian community has also suffered from unemployment problems.¹ In the early 1950's the National Congress of American Indians produced a resolution for a vocational trade training program for the Bureau of Indian Affairs. When the BIA finally responded, it offered the Direct Relocation Program, providing Indians with help to move away from the reservations to metropolitan areas in the West where they might find jobs. Many Indian people went to places such as Denver, Los Angeles, and San Francisco. Jobs were not secured for them beforehand. They went without knowing what they would find. After arriving they found they had to accept work they didn't really like. Tandy Wilbur Sr. explained:

Then the BIA had to help them find a job. In most cases it was the kind of work they didn't like. For the most part the Indians were unhappy. They didn't understand how to live in a modern apartment, how to use appliances. And it was all just a kind of strange life to them. Taken from the community

¹The 1970 Swinomish unemployment rate of 38% is five times that of Skagit County and eight times that of Washington State (OEDP 1970).

where they were always involved with other people in daily association, where community life was closely knit, they were put into this apartment in this big city. And nobody knew anyone, who they were or what they're doing. What one does is none of their business. Just simply a strange, strange feeling came over them. Then they got a job on something maybe they didn't care for. They needed the money. The end result was they finally gave up in despair, disgust, and lonesomeness and longing for their own community. It is probably safe to say that between 90% and 95% of them drifted back home again, after two or three years.

The program was simply unsatisfactory. That was not what we were asking for.

In order to eliminate these problems Swinomish leaders pressed for programs that would train Indians to work in the vicinity of the reservation. They also wanted to keep the talented young people from moving away. The community needed its bright young leaders. Direct relocation, if successful, would drain the reservations of talent, spelling the death of the Indian community as a vital, prosperous ethnic unit. Even after new programs were won in 1956, the federal government continued to spend more than \$3 million annually on direct relocation (Sorkin 1971:106).

The Indian Vocational Training Act

In 1956, Congress passed the Indian Vocational Training Act, a great improvement over direct relocation. Tandy Wilbur Sr. stated:

Then they finally came up with a program we liked a lot better. This was the vocational trade training program. If young Indians hadn't finished high school, they gave them GED courses at a trade school in Seattle, Tacoma, or Portland, until they obtained their high school diploma. Then, at least, they got to the point where they could study for class examinations for whatever kind of training they wanted to get.

BIA personnel helped trainees find work in their fields with some success. Swinomish sent about half a dozen young people into this program, who found jobs they are still working at today. There were some problems with the program, though. Wilbur explained:

When they first started out with the program like this, the BIA always launched into it backwards. It takes them a little while to get things right. When they got the machinery set up, they specified which courses you could take. If anybody signed up for any other kind of course, they couldn't get it, the funding wasn't available.

Eventually these problems were corrected. One of the best innovations was locating the training school on the reservation itself.

In the late 1960's the Swinomish Tribal Community cooperated with Skagit Valley College and the Washington Employment Security Department to set up, with federal funding, a pilot training program on the Swinomish Reservation. Called the Manpower Development Training Act (MDTA) program, it included courses in fiber glass boat building and repair, automobile mechanics, nurses' aid training, and clerical work. Courses in basic education were also taught, enabling many Swinomish to earn their high school diplomas. Measured in terms of Indian participation, spirit and morale, this was one of the most successful programs that ever operated on the Swinomish Reservation.

The success of the pilot program spurred the Indians to submit a proposal for a three-reservation program. The \$755,000 proposal included schools on the Swinomish, Lummi, and Tulalip Reservations. Although submitted by the Indians in plenty of time, the application was killed as it lay on the desk of a Washington State administrator so long that the federal agency depleted its resources on other applications. The unexpected loss of this program engendered anger and disappointment among the Northern Puget Sound tribes.

Fortunately there were other provisions in the Indian Vocational Training Act. It also authorized government-subsidized on-the-job training (OJT) for reservation Indians, aged eighteen to thirty-five years.

The BIA could negotiate contracts with private companies to hire recommended Indian applicants as apprentices. In return, the agency would reimburse the firm for a portion of the trainee's wages as well as pay for their transportation to the training facility and their subsistence en route (Sorkin 1971:108). Though beneficial, the OJT program has remained smaller in scale than the MDTA program. A few Swinomish have been sent to work in local companies. In addition, the Swinomish Tribal Community received OJT funds to train several men on the construction of its fish plant. Application has also been made for several additional people to work in the plant learning salmon processing and smoking.

Creating employment opportunities is one of the main goals of the Swinomish Tribal Community. Besides sponsoring vocational training programs, the Tribe hopes to act as a business corporation, hiring members on its own payroll, and act as the community government attracting outside businesses. It seeks industries and commercial enterprises that will employ Indians (women as well as men) in the kind of work they have a leaning towards. It seeks steady, full-time employment.

Housing

Another primary goal of the Swinomish Tribal Community is improvement in housing for its members. In the 1930's the Swinomish won eighteen new houses through the WPA. The government paid Indian people to build the houses, as well as to grade the roads and roadside ditches. Individual members of the community took out loans from the government for the construction materials. After the loans were repaid, the houses belonged to the Indian families. The Bureau of Indian Affairs provided

funds for a construction supervisor. The Swinomish chose their own Dewey Mitchell, who did an outstanding job and went on to serve as Chairman of the Swinomish Senate.

In the next three decades few new houses were built. World War II passed. Families grew and matured. The housing shortage grew severe. In the 1960's, the Swinomish won ten more houses through the Mutual Self Help program administered by the Housing Assistance Administration and the Bureau of Indian Affairs. By contributing their labor, tribal members acquired a "sweat equity" in their homes, which were otherwise financed with HAA loan funds (Sorkin 1971:174-175). Families then made monthly payments to the housing authority depending upon their income and number of dependents. The approximate cost of each house was \$8,500. After the loans are repaid, the families will gain title to their houses.

The Swinomish were somewhat dissatisfied with the houses resulting from this program. Because of poor construction supervision, many details had to be corrected after families moved into them. In addition, the area around the houses was not landscaped. Sidewalks and road pavement were not provided for.

In 1973 a second increment of houses was completed at Swinomish, using the Turnkey program of Housing and Urban Development (HUD). This program contained no provision for "sweat equity". They were built by professional builders and finished before the families moved in. All the families had to do was to "turn the key." Innovations in the business arrangements behind the program gave the Tribe the responsibility to set up an independent housing authority. The La Conner town druggist and mayor, Fred Martin, was elected to head the Swinomish Housing Authority. Through this organization, the Indians supervised the design

of the houses, hired the contractor, and selected the foreman. This resulted in very attractive homes which seem more satisfactory than the first group. Two rental apartment complexes -- one for "Young Newly Weds" and one for "Senior Citizens" -- were constructed. Attached to the Senior Citizens' complex is a small community hall for entertainment. Through the Indian Health Service, the sewer system and water line were engineered and installed. Through the Bureau of Indian Affairs, roads and sidewalks were constructed. A very simple, but attractive landscaping was done around the houses.

Law and Order

Prior to the Indian Reorganization Act of 1934 law and order on the Swinomish Reservation was handled by the Bureau of Indian Affairs.¹ According to Tandy Wilbur Sr., it was pretty much a "kangaroo court." The BIA wrote the laws, appointed the policeman, and selected the judge. It paid the salaries and received their reports.

After the Tribal Community incorporated in 1935, the Swinomish Senate composed its own legal code and job descriptions, setting wages and selecting candidates for policeman and judge. Serving as a judge for many years was Thomas Williams, a respected elder member of the community. Serving as policemen were Andrew Joe and Al Sampson. These officers handled minor offenses -- misdemeanors committed on the reservation by Indians. Most were disputes arising out of drunken episodes. They also handled matrimonial disputes. Major crimes, such as murder, rape, and manslaughter, remained under federal jurisdiction, as they had

¹The material for this section relies heavily on the testimony of Tandy Wilbur Sr., Business Manager of the Swinomish Tribal Community for many decades.

been since the late 1800's. Infractions of federal laws were investigated by the U.S. Marshal, stationed in Everett, where the Bureau of Indian Affairs was also located. The Federal Bureau of Investigation could also be called in if necessary.

One problem the Tribe faced was the prosecution of Whites and outsiders committing petty crimes on the reservation, such as vandalism, burglary, trespass, and game poaching. State courts lacked jurisdiction on the reservations. Nor could the county sheriff be called in from his office in Mount Vernon. The Swinomish code was not his to enforce. Compounding these difficulties was the Bureau of Indian Affairs' lack of funds to support the reservation's law and order system. The Tribe had to pay its own employees. It could afford to hire only retired persons, who were already receiving social security benefits. Tandy Wilbur recounted:

Yes, we had to pick somebody that was on social security because about all that we could afford to give was \$100 a month and at that time that's all social security would allow anyone to earn without deducting it from their benefits. . . . So we'd hire someone. He'd just add it to his income and was satisfied. Of course, we didn't expect him to be on the job 24 hours a day or anything. He was on call and he didn't have to be out patrolling unless we'd be having a gathering. Of course, he was right at home if there was any trouble or any need for a policeman, then he was available. We furnished him with a star and credentials and all the things that policemen generally have. We got by a little bit that way, with some semblance of law and order.

The Swinomish finally decided that they needed better law and order protection. Wilbur explained again:

We had a lot of White people living on the Reservation, paying rent to Indian land owners. In order to protect them, the people on the reservation voted to get some kind of law protection. We accepted State criminal jurisdiction.

The extension of State jurisdiction to Indian reservations was made possible through legislation passed in 1953, and revised in 1968. The U.S. Congress passed Public Law 280 (25 U.S.C.A. Sections 1321-1324; and 18 U.S.C.A. 1162 (1953)) authorizing the States, under certain conditions, to assume criminal and civil jurisdiction over Indian reservations.¹

The Swinomish conveyed their desire to accept state jurisdiction to the proper authorities, hoping to improve their law enforcement. It helped very little. Wilbur explained:

As it turns out, we probably gained very little. The only thing that got straightened out was the jurisdiction part. That did not give us law and order enforcement because we didn't have any more money to do it with now than we did before.

When the BIA finally began to respond to the needs for law enforcement on reservations throughout the entire country it left the Swinomish out.

Wilbur put it this way:

The BIA, on the other hand, began to get pressured among the tribes for law and order assistance. They started setting aside money in their budget for it. And then they began to help these Indian tribes that did not accept state jurisdiction. They started getting all their enforcement people on the reservations. They started funding for it, then they turned right around and said those tribes that did accept state jurisdiction were not entitled to it. Why do we have to be deprived because we took state jurisdiction to correct the deficiency? We still don't have any more money now than we did. The state is sure not going to place a policeman on our reservation.

¹This law was an adjunct of termination. See Task Force (1972: 19; 92-97) for a discussion about its being an imposition on some tribes, especially in the realms of juvenile and family affairs. "The State was empowered to impose its authority over Indian country in eight points of law, including: compulsory school attendance; public assistance; domestic relations; mental illness; juvenile delinquency; adoption proceedings; dependent children; operation of motor vehicles upon public streets and roads within the reservation."

See Price (1973:210-218) for a legal discussion of the law.

The State of Washington argued that the Swinomish should behave as an ordinary municipality. They could not expect to receive more help from the State than any local town would. Wilbur explained:

Sure! The sheriff will come when you call him -- from Mount Vernon. But that's nothing. It's ten miles away. La Conner, Mount Vernon, Anacortes, they all have to maintain their own police departments. We are supposed to too, or else they'd be doing more for us than they are for the cities. They have to maintain their own police departments.

The BIA gradually began to understand the Indians' problem. Wilbur explained:

They are beginning to see the problem the situation we are in, not having any law enforcement. We are exploring the idea of retrocession. If we retrocede and fall back on the BIA, we can get them to start giving us some law enforcement again. Then we have to work on our code and have our code working for jurisdiction in the State, work both ways.

Retrocession is the means by which the U.S. can retake jurisdiction over Indian reservations. It was provided by a 1968 amendment after an uproar in some parts of the country about the assumption of state jurisdiction without tribal government consent. The Indians' goal today is to get the government to return to the tribes whatever degree of law and order authority each tribe agrees to assume, and to provide federal aid for code enforcement if the tribe doesn't have the money. In addition, the tribes should be able to contract with State, county, and city agencies, to provide law and order services if they so desire. The problem of proper alignment of federal, state, and reservation codes, and the meshing of law enforcement coverage is a complex legal task.¹

¹See Task Force (1972:22-23) for additional suggestions.

The Swinomish Senate

The Swinomish Senate is the governing body of the reservation, and consists of eleven members. Each member is elected to a five year term. Terms are staggered so that two members are elected each year, except in years ending with zero and five, when three members are elected. The election takes place at a General Council Meeting, held early each year at the Community Hall. Most members of the Tribal Community come to this meeting, even those who live off the reservation. In the morning they cast their ballots for the nominees of their choice. After lunch the results of the election are announced, reports from the officers and committee chairmen are given, and the future trends of reservation development are discussed. If there are important matters of business to consider, such as the adoption of new members, amendments to the constitution and by-laws, they are settled at the General Council Meeting.

The Senate meets as a body regularly during the year. Its sub-committees meet as necessary. The objective of the Youth Committee is the orientation of young people on the mechanics of tribal government and the development of future leadership. The Recreation Committee promotes sports competitions, including the basketball and baseball tournaments and canoe races. The Education Committee develops educational programs and counsels schools, parents, and the Senate on children's problems in school. The Loan and Lease Committee authorizes personal loans to members of the Tribal Community and handles tribal land leases of a minor nature. It researches major leases of tribal lands and makes recommendations to the General Council. The Community Action Committee

acts for the Senate in its capacity as the Community Action Agency, taking responsibility for the large CAP program, and works with the Community Action Program Director. The Community Center Committee delegates authority to tribal employees to schedule events and maintain the hall. It is responsible for the general up-keep of community facilities and sets rent and lease prices. The Cemetery Committee maintains the cemetery in proper order and plans the layout of plots. The Housing and Sanitation Committee assists in planning and proposing housing and sanitation programs. Two other important committees are the Seafoods Enterprise Committee, which manages the Swinomish fish business, and the 701 Comprehensive Resource Committee, which plans the future development of the reservation. There is also a CAP Personnel Selection Committee, a Utility Committee, a Health committee, and a General Services Vehicle Control Committee.

Besides Senate Committees, several voluntary organization operate in the community: the Ladies' Club, the Altar Society and the Parish Club of St. Paul's Catholic Church, the Smokehouse, the Shaker Church, and the Pentecostal Church.

Zoning

The Point Elliott Treaty specified that no one is permitted to reside on the reservation without the permission of the Tribe and the Superintendent of Indian Affairs. This provision has turned out to be important in the Swinomish Tribal Community's battle to gain recognition as a governing body with powers to enact zoning ordinances for all land

within the reservation boundaries.¹ Zoning jurisdiction is an important power in comprehensive land use planning. Without it, the Swinomish will be unable to prevent outside entities, such as Skagit County, from zoning land for competing purposes.

A recent conflict between the Swinomish Tribal Community and the Skagit County Planning Commission involved zoning jurisdiction of alienated reservation land. According to the opinion of Washington State's Attorney General the county has the right to zone reservation property that is owned by Whites. There is a solid block of alienated property in the northern end of the reservation. In spite of the Indian tribe's protests, Skagit County recently zoned the north end of the reservation up to the edge of Indian-owned land.² The Skagit County Planning Commission designated a use for this land that was incompatible with the Swinomish Tribal Community's plan for the west portion of the reservation. White investors were buying up reservation land and trying to attract an oil refinery. In the same area the Tribal Community wanted to establish a resort marina along the communally-owned tidelands. The two kinds of development were incompatible.

In order to purchase the single remaining piece of Indian land, the White investors needed approval of the Bureau of Indian Affairs. Using political pressure, they secured it, along with the owner's consent to sell at \$500 per acre. The value of the land rose immediately to \$1200 an acre. When the Swinomish learned about this they were

¹The material for this section relies heavily on the testimony of Tandy Wilbur Sr., Business Manager of the Swinomish Tribal Community for many decades.

²They would have zoned all the alienated property on the reservation, but state law prohibits "spot zoning."

furious. Tandy Wilbur Sr. explained:

It's fantastic what people can do! I was just boiling. I knew what was going on. I got my ears to the ground around here. I know what's going on in Mount Vernon and other places around here in the way of development, planning and things like that. It's all on the QT, it's not going to come out in the papers, but we do have our connections -- with the Chambers of Commerce, people in industry, people that are planning. We know these people. They are everyday friends of ours. And we pick up bits of information.

And I tried to tell the BIA, "You guys are just going nuts if you're going to let these people have that land for \$500 an acre. You're nuts to let them have it at all. It's Indian property. You should let them keep it.

The Swinomish took the issue to the press, with some success. Wilbur went on:

We raised so much stink about it that now the people have gone. We did not much yelling around that the press took it up. We got the Planning Commission a little bit uneasy. We got people talking to them and asking, "What have you guys been doing down there on the Reservation?" And they changed their plan. They took the heavy industry part of it out of the zoning. They changed it to something much less. We didn't want heavy industry. Of course the heavy industry they were talking about was a refinery. We kind of won that battle.

Although the Swinomish prevented the refinery from being located on their territory, the basic question of the right to zone within the reservation boundary remained in the air. Wilbur explained:

But here's the thing that hurts, the thing that's unsettled. The Attorney-General -- there's never a thing that he ruled on that's in our favor, always against us. But his is just a matter of opinion, it's not law. But it does influence. So, what we're doing now, Congressman Meads is going to put an amendment into a law that Senator Jackson introduced regarding zoning. And we want it very definitely stated in that law that we have the right to zone, not only our own members, but anybody that's within the confines of our boundaries, our exterior boundaries.

The Swinomish want to be recognized the same way municipal entities are. Their representative bodies have rights to control the development of commerce and growth within their territory. Wilbur explained:

And that's the way it ought to be. The county can't come into La Conner here and zone in here. Because they're a recognized entity. Why can't they recognize an Indian entity? We feel that we're entitled to be recognized as a sovereignty. That our rights should not be encroached upon by any other entity, who has, in the first place, no jurisdiction. They do not have jurisdiction within the confines of our reservation.

It will take a while for the legal process to settle this issue.¹

Property and Income Management

The Swinomish, unlike many other Indian groups in the country, have no large sum of trust funds deposited in the U.S. Treasury. Settlements from the 1946 claims legislation cases will go to the aboriginal tribal groups who signed the Point Elliott Treaty. Income from timber resources has gone to the individual holders of the allotments and their descendants. There are no known potential oil and gas resources on the reservation.² At present their most important income-generating asset is tideland property. Most of the income from the tribal fish traps is paid out in wages to tribal employees. With the tribal fish plant in operation, the picture looks better for the Tribal Community. The Tribal Community also leases some property to White enterprises.³

Two other possible sources of income as of 1971-72 are lease money from a proposed industrial park located at the northern end of the reservation. In taking these conservative approaches to raising income

¹Those who wish to follow the problem of zoning further should see Price (1973:276-292; 674).

²Sorkin (1971:141) mentions that there are several tribes in the Puget Sound area of Washington State that have potential oil and gas income (quoted from Hough, Henry W., Development of Indian Resources. Denver: World Press, 1967, pp. 128-129).

³See pp. 313-314 above.

there is little chance that the tribe would lose money. However there is so far no industrial park nor great volume of business on the reservation.

A riskier alternative would be to seek grants through the Small Business Administration of the Economic Development Administration and enter into partnerships with outside companies. With the borrowed funds, the tribe could build the plants. With money from other sources it could also supply the necessary equipment. From its own resources, it would supply the sites for the plants. Tandy Wilbur Sr. explained:

The Tribe would be in partnership because of their building, their equipment, and their land. So they get a half share of the business, or whatever. But this way of going is a gamble. If the company makes big money, you make money. But if they go belly up, well, all you've got left is a bunch of buildings and a bunch of equipment. So this is why it's better to take the conservative way and collect your leases every year, bona fide lease, security bond, and everything like this. The company has to be bondable. Not just anybody who comes around and says, "I want to lease," signs the lease and then not be able to pay anything.

Another difficulty with this alternative is the difficulty of getting government loans. It might be possible to secure funds from the State, however. The Washington State legislature and Governor recently set up an Economic Assistance Authority, with special avenues for Indian reservation enterprises.

Alternatively, tribal investment funds accumulated in the future might be deposited in an Indian bank. If all the tribes in the nation combined their resources to establish a bank, they could raise a substantial amount.¹ The hope is that an Indian-owned bank will be more likely to give loans to individual Indian families. At present it is

¹American Indian National Bank opened offices in Washington D.C. in 1973.

almost impossible for a young Indian person at Swinomish to develop a good credit rating or get any kind of a loan from the local bank. This is especially true when the person's parents do not have an established credit rating and cannot cosign on a loan, as is the custom among Whites. In order to facilitate their credit build-up, tribal officials sometimes provide that service. It may be true that even an Indian bank would not solve the problem of individual Indian needs. Just as other banks, it may have to restrict credit in order to protect its loans.

One of the most desirable ways to invest tribal money is to purchase reservation land put up for sale by Indian families and thus prevent it from falling into the hands of outsiders. The difficulty getting together the necessary cash is great because speculation by Seattle developers has raised the price very high.

The Swinomish Tribal Community has recently attempted to purchase an eighty acre piece of land on the beautiful western shore of the reservation, known as Lone Tree Point. It is used by many members of the community for picnics, swimming, and beach seining. The property is hidden from view of wealthy Whites whose homes stretch out on either side of the coastline.

When a piece of land is offered for sale the following legal procedure set up by Congress. Tandy Wilbur Sr. explained:

If every member that's got a share in that piece of property signs the power of attorney over to the Bureau, the Superintendent then goes to work and advertises this piece of land for sale.

First of all they get an appraisal of the piece of property. Then it'll probably be delayed six, seven, eight months, while they get it appraised. They only have one appraiser in the area, in the Portland Area Office. And he goes all over Oregon, Washington, and Idaho. He comes down here and gets the valuation from the real estate people, the County people,

or any kind of related lands, looks at the piece of land, how it's related to water, to roads, other kinds of things, improvements. Then he looks at sales made recently. . . . Then he comes up with the valuation of the property.

Once appraised, land is advertised for sale to the general public. The appraisal is kept secret and bids are received. If a bid is received that is at least 80% of the appraised value of the land, then all the land owners meet. If they agree to accept the bid, then they are allowed to sell the property. If the bid is under 80% of the valuation, they cannot sell the land. Therefore the appraised value of the land is a prime factor in regulating sales. If the Bureau wants to see a piece of land go, it can put a low valuation on the land. If it wants to hold back, it puts a very high price on the land.

When the Swinomish Tribal Community heard that the owners of Lone Tree Point were advertising it for sale, they were quite unhappy. The price was too high for the tribe to buy the land. By gaining the cooperation of the Bureau of Indian Affairs, the tribe has stalled for more time. This involved convincing the Bureau that its job was to look after the interests of the community, not just the individual landowners. It may be that the Indian community will never be able to afford to buy back this priceless piece of land.

The Swinomish Community Action Program

In 1964 Congress passed the Economic Opportunity Act. This was, according to Indian Affairs analysts (Josephy 1971:53), a momentous breakthrough in Indian affairs because the act included Indians as its beneficiaries. Prior to this time Indians had not usually been included as beneficiaries of legislation intended for the general population.

Most congressmen felt that Indians were cared for by appropriations for the Bureau of Indian Affairs. For the first time the Indians were asked to propose and work out plans for programs they wished to have on their reservations (Josephy 1971:53). Once the proposals had been approved, funds were made available to the Indians, who administered the programs themselves. The Indians were permitted to take responsibility for the program and finances.

Soon after the law was passed, the Swinomish decided to take advantage of it. In order to qualify for funding they had to generate an administrative superstructure. Using its authority as community governing body, the Swinomish Tribal Senate designated itself as the Community Action Agency and applied for federal funds. It elected from its ranks a CAA Sub-committee and a Personnel Selection Committee.¹ Receiving its first grant in the 1960's, the Senate hired a Community Action Program Director from outside the community to supervise a staff of community members. The Director was delegated the responsibility for financial and bookkeeping aspects of the program. The Director was responsible to the Tribal Senate and the Office of Economic Opportunity.

This Swinomish CAP has operated four programs: the Seafoods Enterprise; Alcoholism Prevention and Control; Emergency Food and Medical Services; and Community Organization. The Seafoods Enterprise, later named Swinomish Fish, explored the possibility of selling fish from its traps on the retail market, rather than on the wholesale market. It constructed a modern fish processing plant with freezing and smoking facilities, located on the waterfront in front of the Village. The

¹See Chart II in Appendix II entitled "Swinomish CAP Lines of Authority and Service at the Reservation Level in 1971."

Seafoods Enterprise received technical consultation from the University of Washington and the Bureau of Commercial Fisheries. After successful operation on one grant, it received funding to expand the plant for extra smoking and freezing facilities, home vegetable canning facilities, and tribal offices.

The Alcoholism Prevention and Control Program allowed the Swinomish to hire a full time alcoholism counselor to reside on the reservation and operate an office from his home trailer. Though an outsider, he is an experienced reservation worker and was trained specifically for his present job at the University of Utah.

The Emergency Food and Medical Services Program was initiated by hiring a member of the community to assist families with emergencies, to help with the school lunch program, and to develop independence and preparedness through projects such as cooperative gardens and communal fruit and vegetable canning at the fish plant.

The Community Organization Program hires personnel to run the Community Hall, publish the tribal newspaper, handle public relations in the CAP Office, and reach out into the community. It also employs a secretary bookkeeper, an employment counselor, and a youth worker.

The CAP staff, particularly the Director, served as a liaison between the Swinomish community and numerous federal, state, and county agencies. It deals with over a hundred other public and private institutions, such as schools, colleges, hospitals, physicians, churches, and philanthropic organizations. When an outside agency has business on the reservation the CAP staff helps it get in touch with the right people. It also works with the Tribal Senate to secure the services of other government programs. A partial list of some of the programs operating

in the early 1970's on the reservation included the following:

1. STEP (Services to Elderly People), was a program of the U.S. Department of Labor, which put a crew of middle-aged men to work improving the cemetery and doing carpentry and repairs on elderly people's houses. It put a group of middle-aged women to work doing handicrafts and other traditional group activities such as quilt-making.
2. Skagit Valley College sponsored several vocational and trade training programs for the Swinomish which also come from the Department of Labor. Most important of these was MDTA (Manpower Development and Training Assistance).
3. New Leaf, another Labor Department Program, provided supplemental training employment to graduates of the MDTA Program as a transition to employment.
4. The Job Corps took several Swinomish youths to a school in Kicking Horse, Montana and trained them in well-paying skills such as truck driving for road construction.
5. The Neighborhood Youth Corps has put Indian teenagers to work in the community hall and around the Village at various tasks during the summer and after school hours the rest of the year.
6. Project Catch Up took several Indian teenagers to Western Washington State College in Bellingham for an in-residence summer school program.
7. The La Conner School System and Bureau of Indian Affairs, using Johnson-O'Malley funds, provided a summer school for Swinomish children in the community hall. Courses were offered in remedial reading, Indian arts, culture and history. Field trips and service projects were organized. Members of the community were employed both as teachers and as teacher aides.
8. Churches and volunteer groups occasionally provided free camperships for Indian children. The Washington State Parks and Recreation Office planned an entire camp session for them.
9. Headstart provided a preschool for Swinomish children for many years. Members of the community were hired as cooks, teacher aides, and administrators.
10. The Indian Health Service, part of the U.S. Public Health Service since about 1955, hired a Community Health Representative from the tribe to aid and educate members with medical needs. It provided a number of other services: psychiatric counseling, well baby clinics, and dental care units.

11. Three agencies (HUD, BIA, and IHS) contributed in various ways to the development of new housing, utilities, sewers, sidewalks, and roads in the western part of the Swinomish Village.
12. The Economic Development Administration (EDA) was prepared to provide loan funds for the development of an industrial park at Swinomish.

A full description of all the Swinomish programs is beyond this work. Their administration at the local level has been handled by the staff of the Community Action Program in many cases. It has been a job too great for the small staff of the Tribal Community. The complexity of the administrative task is so great. Some tribal members understand only the general outlines of the structure. Those employed in part of it or serving on Senate committees understand more in detail. Most members of the tribe seem aware of the services that are provided and some express their opinions and evaluations in open community meetings.

In 1969 it appeared that the Office of Economic Opportunity was being phased out of the federal government. This spelled trouble for the Indian CAP programs. The national political philosophy that the federal government should not administer programs itself, but merely share the revenue and responsibility with state and local governments, was growing. In the past it has usually been more difficult for Indians to get money from the state governments than from the federal. At state and local funding levels, the special legal status of Indians is discounted. The reservations must compete with large urban municipalities which have powerful lobbies in the state capitols. In Washington State, when reservations are grouped with rural lobbies, they are overshadowed by powerful agricultural interests. Finding recognition in state government is one of the most difficult political battles facing

Indians today.

Washington Indians have been somewhat successful in making themselves heard in the Governor's office. In 1970 an Indian Affairs Task Force, composed primarily of Indian leaders, toured seven reservations, conducting hearings. It produced a report on Indian problems within the state and their legislative solutions. The report, Are You Listening, Neighbor?, was published in 1972 by the Human Affairs Council in the Office of the Governor, Olympia, Washington.

The Overall Economic Development Plan

In the late 1960's the Swinomish Tribal Senate realized ever more clearly that it wanted to be able to direct and control the changes that would inevitably come to the reservation in the next fifty years. Speaking about this desire in a report, it said:

The Swinomish fully recognize that the region in which they live is going to grow and develop along the lines of White culture. They also recognize that it is difficult to maintain attributes of their Indian culture which they desire to preserve. It will become increasingly difficult unless they plan to grow and develop with the region, and take positive steps to implement and achieve their tribal needs.

Complacency and drift are policies of inaction. We need consistent policies and positive programs for their achievement. Perhaps more important, we need tribal participation.

Tribal participation puts emphasis on local initiative in the development of the Reservation. All the Swinomish who take part in the formulation and execution of programs to achieve tribal objectives will have an opportunity to grow in self-reliance and responsibility, in dignity and pride. They will also have greater assurance that overall needs will be most effectively and equitably provided.

Finally, we also recognize that if our undertakings are to be accomplished successfully, mutual cooperation between the Indians and the Whites must be improved and maintained on a continuous basis. (Paraphrased from Swinomish OEDP Report, 1970)

The Senate then formed an eleven man committee to work on the problem.

With financial assistance provided by the Public Works and Economic

Development Act of the U.S. Congress, they hired a consultant firm of economic and social planners to help them. They succeeded in obtaining a 701 Planning grant from HUD. In the early 1970's they produced a master plan for the development of the reservation.

The Swinomish Overall Economic Development Plan considered three questions of great importance: what services would be needed by the Swinomish in the future, what commercial and industrial development should the tribe foster in order to employ Swinomish workers,¹ and what land requirements all the facilities would require. Finally, the reservation land was divided into zones, some of which were: single family dwellings; apartment housing for young married and the elderly; light commercial developments; industrial developments; and undeveloped woodlands.

The land adjacent to the Village on the west was zoned to allow for growth of single family dwellings. This is the area in which the recent housing development is located. Rental apartment space for young marrieds was also located in this region, separated from space reserved for the elderly by a small grove of trees, to minimize conflict over noise levels. By providing rental units the tribe hoped to give a start to young people who were married with perhaps one child, but who were unable to buy a home because of the housing shortage on the reservation, discrimination off the reservation, and their own lack of a credit rating. Prior to this, most young couples have had to live with their

¹It was estimated in the OEDP Report that to bring the Swinomish community to full employment by 1975, they would need to create 200 new jobs. This took into account the needs of both males and females who were over 16 years of age in 1967, the needs of new young people who would be entering the labor market, and the competition from incoming migrants who would be attracted to the region because of the improving development picture.

parents or move to the city. By constructing rental units for the elderly, or "Senior Citizens," the Swinomish hoped to provide them with prestige, companionship, and a convenient location close to the center of the Village where they could be served by nurses and maids. A small community hall was attached to the Senior Citizens' rental units by a covered walkway. There they could entertain as well as offer lessons in culture and history. Space was allotted along Snee Osh Road for a small commercial development, eventually to include a grocery store, gasoline station, and laundrymat.

Below the Skagit County Road, running through the center of the Village, the Swinomish plan a Tribal Compound, stretching along the waterfront from the bridge to the present Community Hall. Houses located in that general region will eventually be removed. The Tribal Compound will include the present Swinomish Fish Plant, a boat maintenance and repair facility, and new tribal offices. There will be a tourist complex with a show arena, grandstand, arts and crafts shops, and cultural and historical museum. Separated from the tourist complex will be a recreation area for salmon barbecues and dances, a medical clinic, a day care center, and the present Community Hall. The separation will maximize privacy for the Indian Villagers, who have opened the gates to commerce and tourism in the southern part of the Tribal Compound.

At the northern end of the reservation, where Swinomish Channel enters Padilla Bay, the tribe planned an industrial park. Tideflats would require dredging and filling in order to prepare them for use. The tribe drew up a strict set of environmental quality controls for future industries which included noise and vibration as well as air and water pollution. At present much of the center of the reservation is

undeveloped woodland. The tribe wants it to remain so. It knows population growth is inevitable, but its members want to minimize the amount of disturbance to the natural environment.

A desire was once expressed at community meetings for the eventual establishment of a trade and vocational school on the reservation. This would be an Indian public school with student housing and a recreational complex as well. Allied with it might be an athletic campsite, attracting Indian and White youths for intensive summer sessions. Members of the community could be employed as teachers, coaches, cooks, caretakers, house parents, and administrators of the school and camp. Others would be employed in the construction of the buildings and grounds. The tribe considered a land trade to acquire the twenty or thirty acres necessary to set up the school or camp. If the State of Washington were to consolidate the La Conner and Conway School Districts, a new school would probably be built at Pleasant Ridge, a few miles east of La Conner. The reserved school land at Swinomish would then be more conveniently located for the residents of Fidalgo Island.

The Swinomish also considered converting some tideland along the western shore of the reservation into a recreational area for tourists, who might be willing to pay for canoe rides out to the offshore islands and for viewing canoe races. They might also allow a small boat marina on that side of the reservation. Consideration was also made of allowing the construction of a nuclear power plant on Kiket Island.¹ Controversy has been aroused by fear that warm water outflow would harm fish and

¹For many years Kiket Island has been leased by the University of Washington Department of Fisheries for research purposes.

wildlife. Thus the tribe looked for assurance that scientific solutions will be found for all pollution hazards.

The comprehensive plan also gave attention to the development of utilities. At present electric power is supplied by Puget Power and Light. The Swinomish Tribal Community supplies water to its members through arrangements with outside water departments. The reservation has few streams that can be used for such purposes. It does have ground water resources that might be tapped, though. In 1972 the Swinomish made a contract with the town of La Conner for joint participation in a sewer and water system project which received funds from the Economic Development Administration.

Developments in the Swinomish Comprehensive Plan were planned in phases. The earliest phases began with the construction of parts of the Tribal Compound and new housing in the Village. The plan is flexible. Later phases may see changes of direction if circumstances demand it. The Swinomish are trying to avoid limiting the entire reservation's development early in the game by a single inadvertent decision. As the fifty years pass, they hope to keep a number of alternatives open.

The Industrial Park

In the northern delta of Swinomish Channel lies a tract of tideland belonging to the Swinomish Tribal Community. The title to this land was recently cleared in court and the exact boundaries established. On this land, just north of the point where the east-west highway crosses the channel, the Tribal Community planned to build an industrial park. Transportation resources were readily available. In addition to the highway, a railway spur crossed the channel at this point. Swinomish

Channel provided navigable access to the ocean. The area was zoned industrial by the Skagit County Planning Commission. It is located close to an oil refinery complex. The county garbage dump was located on one side of the tract, making the area unsuitable for residential development.

The Industrial Park would potentially provide jobs for unemployed Swinomish, lease money for the Tribal Community, and business operation tax revenues. It would also employ many non-Indian citizens of Skagit Valley. Thus it seemed an attractive economic venture. In the summer of 1971 the Economic Development Administration encouraged the Swinomish Tribal Community to apply for a large grant to prepare the site. The money was to be used partially for dredging and filling part of the tidal flats to raise them up to a higher elevation. For this purpose, silt from the bottom of Swinomish Slough was to be recovered, as has been done for many years by the Army Corps of Engineers, which maintains the channel for navigation.

In August, 1971 the Swinomish had attracted two clients to locate in the park. One was a cedar products company from Vancouver, British Columbia, which promised to provide special training opportunities for over 25 Swinomish men. The company operated a sawmill on Vancouver Island and needed to bring the planks down to Fidalgo and kiln dry them before sale. The company was eager to locate at Swinomish although several alternative sites along the Frazer River in Canada were available to it. The second Swinomish client was a manufacturer of pre-stressed concrete poles and piling. This company was willing to conform to stringent air and water pollution standards and employ a special process of collecting and recycling dust from its exhaust. Both companies posed

little pollution hazard and were unusually willing to make special adaptations for the Indian labor force. In the long, two year evaluation period for the EDA grant, the Swinomish lost both these clients. After the grant proposal had cleared the Seattle office of EDA and been sent to Washington D.C., it faced two bureaucratic delays. The first occurred when approval of the project was sought by the top levels of the Department of Commerce. The Commerce administration requested an evaluation of the project by the Department of Interior. The Interior Department sent the inquiry down the line to its local branches. Responses were to be forwarded back to it and processed at the top into an environmental impact statement. When it was found that there was need for reconciliation of adverse comments about the park, a series of meetings were planned to bring the adverse parties face to face. At the Swinomish Community Hall representatives from the EDA, the BIA, the Washington State Department of Commerce, and the two client companies, confronted the representatives from the Washington State Department of Fisheries and Wild Life Management and the Army Corps of Engineers.

At the time the project was originally conceived, ecology had not yet become a national issue. The consultants hired by EDA to do the planning testified they had conscientiously tried to expose themselves to ecological considerations but had experienced difficulty. There was a lack of studies of marine biota in the geographic region. In order not to waste the potential of the site, they had tried to recruit marine-oriented tenants who would actually need salt-water access. These were companies that would take up another spot on the Washington coastline -- if not here. This requirement followed BIA guidelines. The Bureau would not allow dredging of non marine-oriented projects such as hotel, motel,

and recreational sites.

The primary objection of the ecologists seemed to be that they had not been consulted extensively enough nor early enough in the planning of the site. They were upset over the precedents that might be set by the project. As a general rule they opposed dredge and fill operations, and they specifically opposed them on Padilla Bay, which hitherto had no industrial development and was a wildlife refuge for certain creatures. To approve the plan, they wanted detailed specification of the land use of each acre of waterfront, distinguishing the micro-zones of sandy uplands (with elevations around five and ten feet) from those of tide washed mudflats where plankton grow and flocks of birds feed. They wanted care taken from the beginning to write these aspects into the original grant proposal.

To these attacks the EDA advisors countered that they had followed the procedures that were ordered by Congress, calling for an ecological evaluation at this point, no sooner. They expected another round when the Army Corps of Engineers would be asked to give its opinion.

The Indians seemed caught in the middle of a disagreement between two arms of the federal bureaucracy. Reconciliation took many months. Approval of the Army Corps of Engineers was not secured until February, 1973. The additional year cost Swinomish both its clients. The companies had their own time schedules to meet. Red tape was thus not mere annoyance to the Indians, but a weapon their opponents could wield against them. Had the Swinomish possessed capital investment funds sufficient to develop the site without a federal grant, they would not have had to submit to evaluation of their plans. This illustrates only one of the development problems Indians face because they are poor.

The delays were partly a result of unfortunate timing. If the Swinomish had submitted the proposal for approval a year earlier, they probably would have had less trouble. The wave of public concern over the shoreline would not have yet risen. If it had been submitted a year or two later, the bureaucratic procedures may have already been tried out. Some other project might have been the "test case" and the Swinomish would not have wasted so much energy. As of March, 1975, the Swinomish were still battling red tape to get their industrial park.

ETHNIC ORGANIZATION IN MODERN TIMES

The Mode of Organization

During aboriginal times in the Skagit Region the highest mode of ethnic organization was a winter village community. Early contact with Whites reinforced tendencies to grow into a cluster of villages. The Point Elliott Treaty formalized the new groupings and called them bands or tribes. During the early reservation period, members of five Skagit Region tribes relocated on the Swinomish Reservation and formed an informal residential community. In 1934 the informal community acquired a legal corporate charter and the name "Swinomish Tribal Community." The new corporation had characteristics of both a business enterprise and an organ of local government, though its federal charter gave it status no ordinary city government held.

The special federal status was shared by many other tribal groups across the nation, together comprising a single large category known as "American Indians." Throughout their history the Swinomish had been acquiring an increasing awareness of this larger category. It probably

came into existence the moment they realized how different White explorers were from any of their neighbors. The larger category was used in informal social interaction from the time of first contact, but group organization and activity did not take place on the highest levels until treaty times and much later. A regional organization of Northwest tribes was begun in about 1915. The National Congress of American Indians was begun about 1945. As concrete manifestations of group unity appeared, ethnic consciousness among American Indians on reservation across the entire nation was strengthened. Two other national organizations which grew up were the National Association of Tribal Chairmen and the National Indian Youth Council. These associations represent the national-legal character of the national ethnic group.

The Swinomish Tribal Community, a corporation with constitution and by-laws, represents the national-legal character of local ethnic organization. Underlying these formal associations is a matrix or network of informal kinship ties. The Indians themselves view their ethnic community as much as a group of families who reckon with each other daily in face-to-face interaction as a legal entity.

The informal mode of ethnic organization has a counterpart at higher levels. Family ties spread out from Swinomish to other reservations in network fashion from coast to coast across the nation. Individual Indian identity at the national level is strengthened by intertribal social gatherings where people from many reservations participate. The mass media also contribute by disseminating information about distant tribes and the national political scene involving American Indians.

Criteria of Membership
in the Ethnic Group

There were two kinds of membership in the local ethnic group at Swinomish in the modern period: "membership in the community," and "membership in the Tribe." These terms distinguish between participation in the residence community and legal membership in the corporation. Not all members of the community were members of the Tribe.

To be an informal "member of the community" one has to have both (1) a traceable kinship tie to one of the original Skagit Region families and (2) live on or close to the reservation or make appearances at annual community social events frequently enough to be remembered. Spouses of members become members if they participate in community events. Some Whites achieve the status by marrying into the community. If a member of the community moves to an urban area to find employment, he returns periodically so people will not forget him. A kind of honorary membership is extended to Whites from the outside who were working with the community and participated in preparations for feasts and social gatherings. Neighboring White citizens who sometimes attended social gatherings were treated as guests.

Formal "membership in the Tribe" or "Tribal Community" is a more exclusive status. It was legally defined in the Swinomish Tribal Community's constitution. There are three kinds of tribal membership: charter membership, inherited membership, and adoptive membership. Charter members are Indians who were living on the reservation and were enrolled with the BIA at the time of incorporation. A formal list of names was prepared by the BIA and the Swinomish at that time. People who

had been members of the community were excluded if they were living on another reservation. Membership in the Tribe is inherited by children if they are born while their parents are residing on the reservation. A Swinomish woman who becomes pregnant while residing in an urban center or on another reservation often comes home to live for the duration of her term if she wants to insure that her child will automatically become a member of the Tribe. The Tribal Community periodically conducts a census and updates its rolls.

Adoptive membership requires a long residence on the reservation, approval of the General Council at its annual meetings, and a fee. The fee is usually waived by vote of the General Council if the candidate demonstrates his or her worth in potential services to the Tribal Community. A person seeking adoption usually volunteers for committee work and jobs such as dishwashing and cooking in the community hall for several years, or does corresponding men's work, if he is a male. After adoption, he continues to try to demonstrate his worth. In the late 1930's, just after the Tribal Community was formed, many people were adopted. Many seem to have been immigrants from other reservations who had been incorporated into the informal community. Since then, many have become community leaders. It is quite difficult to be adopted nowadays. A Canadian woman, married to a Tribal member and employed by the Tribe for many years, thus indicated that she would not seek adoption, even though she would probably qualify.

Membership in the Tribe entitles one to vote in the annual General Council meeting. To hold office, a member must have resided on the reservation for the previous year (or within fifteen miles of it) and be nominated in a petition signed by five other members. A person

needs not be a member of the Tribe in order to receive employment from it, or to receive many of its other general services and benefits.

The criteria of membership in the national ethnic group, "American Indian," also deserve some discussion. The most important factor bearing on the selection of criteria is the identity of the person or agency making the judgement and the purpose for which it is being made. The U.S. Census Bureau uses personal acknowledgement as the criterion, though it has followed varying practices before 1960 (Sorkin 1971:3). The U.S. Bureau of Indian Affairs counts only those who are eligible for its services: those living on or near reservations (Sorkin 1971:4). In recent years urban Indians have begun to organize to get recognition from the government even though they are far from their tribal homeland. State Fisheries personnel and game wardens have sometimes required that a person show an identification card to exercise their fishing rights. The card was issued by the tribe or the BIA.

For purposes of claims litigation, the criterion of blood descent is used. A Skagit Region Indian who seeks to qualify for benefits of a court award needs only to show that he is a lineal descendant of an Indian who belonged to a treaty tribe in 1855. A roster of old Indian names and their descendants is drawn up jointly by the membership committee of the tribe winning the award and the Bureau of Indian Affairs. The cost of preparing the roster is taken out of the settlement funds. According to this procedure, any person is an "Indian" who demonstrates he is a member of an aboriginal tribe -- or a descendant of one. Some people with only a small degree of Indian blood, living in urban areas according to White culture patterns, qualify for a share of the court-awarded benefits.

There are, in Skagit Region towns, groups of families with Indian ancestry who have almost completely crossed the ethnic boundary and become Whites. They maintain their Indian identities only for legal benefits such as claims case payoffs and perhaps fishing rights privileges. Occasionally they attend funerals on the reservation when a linking relative has died. Occasionally, when they meet an elder on the streets of La Conner, they stop to say hello and show their respect. However they do not participate in the social events of the Swinomish Reservation. Reservation youths would not recognize them as being Indian at all.

On the other hand, some members of the Swinomish Tribal Community who are White in appearance participate actively in tribal affairs, attend community gatherings, and live on the reservation. One of them, a gray-haired, blue-eyed man with a Scottish surname, spent his early adult years working as a bookkeeper, income-tax counselor, and all-around bureaucrat. Despite opportunities to leave the reservation, he and his family prefer to stay. He fishes occasionally in the summer. He handled Indian job-counseling for a state agency in Mount Vernon. His coworkers were surprised to learn he was Indian. Away from the reservation neither his physical appearance nor his behavioral clues readily identify him as an Indian. He explains that child upbringing is a major factor in producing this unusual combination of ethnic traits: "My wife's parents were more Indian by blood than mine. As you see, she looks more Indian than I. But while my parents raised me according to the Indian way, hers didn't. So we really don't live according to the Indian way anymore." There is, however, no question that the family is part of the Swinomish Reservation community and is on the membership rolls of the Tribal Community.

It seems that membership in a local Indian reservation community is easier to describe than membership in the national ethnic category, "American Indian." The national category includes isolated urban individuals and members of Indian communities without reservation status. There are fewer gatherings and activities for urban Indians to reaffirm their ethnic identity than for members of reservation communities. There is therefore a larger number of borderline individuals in the national category.

Restriction and Canalization of Ethnic Interaction

Interaction between Indians and Whites at Swinomish has been less restricted in modern times than ever before. Members of both groups meet in numerous public contexts and interact as equals. The most important restrictions stem from racial discrimination against Indians in the job and residence markets. These create poverty which in turn produces more restrictions. Poor Indians seldom interact with wealthy Whites. The most frequent informal socializing between Whites and Indians probably takes place at school, where youngsters meet every day, and in taverns, where the lower classes meet on weekends. Basketball, football, and baseball games are meeting places for both young and old. Socializing between Whites and Indians in each others' homes is still limited. Many contacts between Indians and public servants are channeled through the tribal office and CAP agency office if the parties are strangers. In this way many possible misunderstandings are avoided. The Swinomish tribal office and CAP agency are working to educate Whites about Indian culture and history so that Indians will receive special treatment and not be

expected to conform to alien cultural values. This message seems to be finding a more receptive audience each year.

Interaction between members of the Swinomish Tribal Community and other Indian reservation communities is also relatively free and unrestricted. The major impediment is geographic distance. To facilitate contacts with other Indian groups, the Swinomish community plans numerous social occasions during the year to which other Indian communities are specially invited. The Swinomish host all-Indian basketball tournaments, inviting Indian teams from all over Washington State. A few teams come from as far as Browning, Montana. Canoe races attract Canadian neighbors. The Swinomish also host a variety of political and planning conferences for other Indian tribes. In the wintertime the pow wow brings together Indian communities from Puget Sound and the Gulf of Georgia. The Swinomish frequently travel out to other Indian community events. Almost every family has an automobile.

Rules Governing Ethnic Interaction and Intercultural Roles

Ethnic interaction between Indians and Whites at Swinomish is governed by a number of rules, perhaps the most important of which is the special legal status Indians hold with respect to the federal government. The federal government is obligated to provide services to the Indian people, to recognize their tribal organizations, and to recognize many special rights of Indian people, the implications of which have been the subject of long, complex legal debates beyond the scope of this paper. Many government officials would just as soon forget the treaty of 1855 and the corporate charters issued in 1934. The tribes have been forced

to defend their rights in many courts and legislatures. The implications of these are still being worked out. The Swinomish tribal organization is asserting its right to zone land use on the reservation, to levy taxes, to handle law and order administration, and many other things usually attributed to municipal and county governments.

Besides gaining special rights, the Indians have been required to submit to the bureaucratic procedures of the federal government in order to procure its services. This means following miles of red tape. The Indians have also had to abide by court decisions they consider unjust, obtained after years of legal pursuit.

As has been discussed earlier (pp. 293-294), throughout the early reservation and modern era there have arisen informal rules of social intercourse between Indians and Whites. In public interaction at schools, businesses, stores, banks, offices, places of employment, and places where housing is advertised, Indians have been requested to conform to standard White procedures despite unspoken discrimination of their ethnic identities. The message has sometimes been perceived by Indians as, "You are not welcome here." In modern years, the Swinomish have worked at changing many of the traditional discriminatory practices by infiltrating these institutions with their own members. A member of the Swinomish community who succeeds in getting a job in one of these places sometimes acts as a cultural ambassador, facilitating communication between his employer and the Indian community. Attitudes of outsiders towards Indians sometimes improve when they learn that the Swinomish are backed by a full time staff of workers in the Tribal Office and a Community Action Program and that there are well-known, long-standing Swinomish leaders with good business reputations.

Ethnic interaction between the Swinomish and other Indian reservation communities is governed partly by traditional host-guest relations. Each year the Swinomish host intertribal conferences, sports tournaments, and social and religious events in their community hall. It gives them great pleasure to do this, as well as prestige and political power. A familiar protocol for intertribal events includes the offering of a meal, welcoming speeches, explanations of business purposes, and thank yous to the guests for their attendance. Many intertribal political efforts are coordinated through such meetings. Occasionally government administrators are invited. Meetings of this kind have been held at Swinomish for many decades. In 1945 they hosted a meeting to consider reorganization of the Northwest Federation of American Indians (Seattle Times July 4, 1945, found in Clipping file, Northwest Collection, Suzzallo Library, University of Washington). Around the same time they also hosted an investigatory task force from the U.S. Congress.

The Swinomish also send representatives out to other reservations. Every year a delegation attends the National Congress of American Indians Convention and helps hammer out resolutions of national significance to Indian affairs. Various colleges and universities also provide conferences on Indian affairs at which local leaders meet each other. A recent one at the University of Washington provided a platform for urban and reservation Indians to see common goals in the field of education.

Ecological Interchange

During the modern era traditional subsistence activities have declined in significance, although they still play a small part in filling Swinomish families' larders, especially the poorest families. Indian

men who have jobs in the White-oriented economy manage to do a little fishing during the summer months. Only a few families can survive by fishing alone. Wholesale and retail trade in fish have flourished since 1930, but now threaten to decline as migratory fish runs near the reservation are endangered by a buildup of civilization and commercial take out at sea. Competition from Whites over the use of Swinomish Slough cost the Swinomish their best fishing grounds. In recent years tribal leaders have considered fish farming, or "aquaculture." They would like to reestablish the fish runs. Unfortunately there are few small streams on the reservation suitable for stocking with fingerlings. The Lummi Indians to the north have experimented with creating artificial salt-water environments for several species of fish and shellfish by diking off many acres of tideflats. The Swinomish have focussed their attention on experimenting with the retail market. Their fish processing plant has allowed them to capture more of the value added to a product they formerly sold wholesale.

Despite this success, the Tribe has realized the long-term value of diversification -- shifting its reliance to revenues gained through leases and business operation taxes and attempting to create new jobs in commerce and industry. While attempting to attract commerce and industry, they are cautious about admitting potential polluters of the natural environment to the reservation. Thus they have formulated a restrictive code for their industrial park.

Since modern highways have been built linking the region to metropolitan areas, more Whites are seeking homes on Fidalgo Island. The Swinomish have recently leased portions of the reservation to developers of upper-middle class residential communities. An aerial view

of the reservation would show further encroachment by Whites since 1930, particularly around the uplands adjacent to the shoreline. The reservation originally covered about 7,000 acres. Since that time approximately one-third of the land has been sold into private ownership (alienated) (OEDP 1970). Of the remaining land about 3,200 acres are in Indian allotted ownership. Tribal reservation lands consist of only 262 acres (OEDP 1970). In their competition with Whites for ownership of reservation land, the Swinomish have managed to hold their own for several decades now. The Tribe has even managed to buy back a few pieces of land owned by Whites. The high prices now commanded by scenic view property on the reservation make it impossible to move very swiftly in this direction.

Although the Swinomish do not own all the reservation land, they have a great amount of control over the growth and development of the reservation by virtue of their right to zone for land use. In the early 1970's they have drawn up a fifty year plan in order to preserve the land according to basic Indian values.

Mention must be made of the ecological relations between the Swinomish and other Indian communities. With respect to land, Indian reservations are noncompetitive. They are separated by distance and their geographic boundaries are fixed by law. With respect to financial resources won through government grants, they are usually cooperative. They join together in seeking legislation which will benefit the common good. It is possible, however, that there is some competition for funding.

It is on another dimension that Indians have experienced the most

competition among themselves -- the urban-reservation dimension.¹ Unlike larger reservations in eastern Washington, such as the Yakima, the Swinomish have not had a significant portion of their membership forming an urban political faction. In the past urban Indians have sometimes favored termination. Recently some urban Indian leaders have declared their opposition to termination. They explain that most urban Indians are forced to leave their reservation homes by unemployment. Many continue to own land on their reservations and enjoy returning periodically to relax and be themselves. The primary concern of urban Indian organizations is not working against the interests of reservations, but securing medical coverage, education, job training, and other services for those in the cities. In the past these have been denied them because the government administers only through local offices of the Bureau of Indian Affairs adjacent to the reservations.

The Swinomish have been more successful than most small tribes in western Washington in gaining experience applying for and administering government grants. For this reason it has been unnecessary for them to join an organization many of their neighbors belong to -- STOWW (Small Tribes of Western Washington). Other small tribes which were slower to develop their tribal government found it advantageous to pool their resources and experience in order to work out programs for their reservation communities.

¹This does not deny the importance of competition between members of a single reservation community, which is sometimes stimulated by the input of government funds and sometimes manifests itself as political factionalism.

Value Differences Between
Ethnic Groups

During the modern era of Swinomish history there has been a great deal of cultural change by the Indian people. In many ways Indians resemble Whites. Beneath the trend toward increasing similarities important value differences remain. These have some bearing on the maintenance of ethnic identity. The Swinomish value family and community life very highly. It is harder for them to leave the reservation than it is for most Whites to move away from the city of their birth. They are less mobile than Whites. The Swinomish family is not isolated in an urban mass, surrounded by strangers, but is part of a well-developed community. Service to the community is the focus of many public speeches. Competition by individuals for achievement in the material and financial worlds is not valued as highly as cooperation and service to the group. Generosity brings more esteem than display of items of personal wealth, especially generosity in giving food and meals to large groups. Swinomish value personal, face-to-face contacts highly and seem to eschew impersonal communication by writing. Even those who spend much of their day doing paperwork prefer face-to-face interaction or telephone communication. Many Indians do not feel comfortable interacting with large numbers of strangers, as occurs so often in the city environment.

Most Indians have a different attitude towards their land than Whites do. They do not enjoy thinking of it as a financial asset. Many of them regard it as sacred. They seldom consider selling it or trading it as an impersonal investment decision. The poorest Indian families, who have few financial assets other than their land, probably feel the strongest about this. The land is more than territory, home, and

financial asset combined. It is the support for an ecosystem related to their historical past. All the plants and animals living on it are respected in a special way, as are occupations relating to them, such as lumbering, boat building, park rangering, field agricultural work, and so forth.

Finally, Indians of the Swinomish Reservation have greater respect for spiritual knowledge gained through transcendental experience than most Whites do.¹ Their traditional religion deemed it an appropriate pursuit for individuals of all ages and both sexes. A place for it was made in community life. Even those who no longer participate in these activities feel they have a place in the Indian culture today.

These values -- loyalty to family and community, awareness of ethnic history and aboriginal culture, cooperation with and service to the group, generosity, close personal relations, the sacred nature of the land, preservation of the natural ecosystem, the joy of working outdoors, and the community recognition of individual spiritual transcendence -- when taken as a group, have special significance to Indians. They are good not merely because of their intrinsic worth, but also because they are Indian and they are Swinomish. Giving them high priority is an expression of ethnic identity. They are the subjects of public speeches at ceremonial, political, and educational events. They are raised in conversations with Whites to whom Indians try to interpret their culture. They are used to explain peculiarities of Indian behavior. Though not universally followed by all Indians, they would be universally

¹One White group that shares this value, the Pentecostal Church, has made quite a few converts among the Swinomish and has established a small church building on the reservation.

recognized as having ethnic significance.

Swinomish elders sometimes contrast themselves with other Indian groups. One of the most frequent comparisons was made between coastal Indians (or the canoe paddlers) and interior Indians (or the horse riders). Viewing a movie on the devastating conquest of the buffalo hunters of the Plains, Swinomish elder Raymond Paul remarked: "We were never conquered. We never pleaded to the White Man for help like those people in that movie." The Skagit Region Indians were not pushed through such a violent ordeal. Their descendants consider the Point Elliott Treaty to have been a business deal, conducted with pride and independence on the Indians' part. The Swinomish experience of contact was milder than the Plains Indians'. Consequently their attitude is softer towards Whites. The cultural exclusiveness of coastal Indians today sometimes appears less extreme than in the interior. Swinomish elders Al and Lizzie Sampson contrasted Swinomish attitudes with those of the Yakima, whom they visit frequently. They singled out the emphasis on secrecy in ceremonial rites practiced by longhouse groups of the Yakima (their "Smokehouses" are called "Longhouses"). "Over there," they said, "they lock the doors after the ceremony begins. No uninvited person, White or Indian, can come wandering in." In public speeches or writings, Swinomish elders usually emphasize the friendship and cooperation that sometimes existed between pioneers and Indians during the early reservation period.

Another contrast Swinomish sometimes point out is that between themselves and their Canadian neighbors to the north. In aboriginal times the Skagit Region people were poorer than those farther up the ocean coast. They were therefore more conservative with material wealth.

Tandy Wilbur Sr. states that the potlatch did not really exist this far south. It was mostly the giving of food, feasts, and maybe a few baskets or blankets. There just wasn't that much wealth around to give. The Swinomish did not give away or destroy masses of wealth. Only after contact with Whites did they begin to think of it as "sport" to give unusual things. Today the relative poverty levels are reversed. One Swinomish lady confessed that just a few years ago she used to send care packages of clothing to her distant relatives in Canada. "You know, those people are much poorer than we are." She also noted that they were not as modern in their attitudes about things such as sanitary dishwashing methods. The Canadians seem to have changed more slowly than the Washington Indians. Elder Raymond Paul states that in recent years the Canadians work harder at being canoe racers, drum carvers, and basket weavers. Despite subtle differences between themselves and other tribes, the Swinomish feel that their basic core of values and goals is shared by Indians across the nation, and Swinomish leaders frequently speak of "Indian values."

Areas of Articulation and Dependence

Modern times have seen a proliferation of points of articulation between the Swinomish community and White society. In the 1930's the Swinomish began maintaining constant contact and communication with many municipalities in the Skagit Region, as well as government agencies, businesses, and other organizations. The managers of the Swinomish Tribal Community have endeavored to change the nature of the Indian community's dependence on White society, to move away from dependence on loans and

grants from the federal government to an interlocking connectedness with the Skagit Valley's private enterprise. Progress in this direction has been made by selling fish on the retail market, by leasing land to private development corporations, by constructing an industrial park, and by promoting employment and training programs on the reservation.

Swinomish success in business creates ties of dependency among Whites. Whites depend on the Swinomish for fresh fish, for their leases, for industrial products, for a supply of trained labor, and many other things, including the annual Indian cultural performances open to the public. Increasing family incomes at Swinomish creates dependencies among White businesses for the consumer's dollar. As these ties increase and dependencies are generated, the Indian community gains higher social status. Its leaders have more political power in dealing with White society. It might be said that the Indian community has experienced upward mobility in the system of ethnic stratification. It has been able to tip the balance of dependency back slightly towards the way it was during the early contact period when Whites needed Indians and were willing to get involved with them.

Mention should also be made of the increase in points of articulation between Indian reservation communities which has come in recent years. Indian tribes now depend upon each other for political support in regional and national lobbying associations. They have many regular social and recreational ties and their economic ties are growing. Cooperation between the Swinomish, Lummi, and Tulalip Reservations in submitting grant proposals is one example of this. Another is the Lummi supply of fish to the Swinomish processing plant which sometimes takes place. As dependencies grow between tribes, their political front gains unity.

Demographic Relations Between
Ethnic Groups

The population of the Swinomish community has remained fairly stable during the last several decades -- around 370 (OEDP 1970). There are, of course, many other Indians living off the reservation in urban centers and up the Skagit River. Growth on the reservation has been impeded by infant mortality and outmigration. The goal of community leaders is to reduce both these factors by promoting better health and more employment. If they succeed, the Swinomish community will experience some population growth in the future. The comprehensive development plan takes this into account, and attempts to provide additional housing and community facilities, as well as employment.

Skagit County, which is mostly White, has been growing: from 14,000 in 1900 to an estimated 63,000 in 1970 (Pool 1964). In the 1930's the Skagit Valley began changing from a fairly homogeneous farming area to one of mixed farming, industry, and urban development. The decade from 1960 to 1970 saw unusually large population growth and corresponding commercial development. Since 1930, the number of Whites living on the reservation has also increased significantly. By 1970, 51% of the Swinomish reservation was non-Indian (PYE 1971-2). It is clear that the Indians have become and will continue to be overwhelmingly outnumbered.

Despite this, the Swinomish have improved their standing in recent years. Since the time they organized their community government and went into business they seem to have become less a minority in terms of power. Sympathetic newspaper coverage of the Indian community has increased. Today there are several articles on Indians each month in local papers. Local White attendance at Swinomish public events such as salmon barbecues

grows. Volunteer efforts on behalf of the community increases. In these and many other ways, it is apparent that the Swinomish have managed to counteract the negative consequences of population trends since 1930.

Leadership Strategy

Soon after the Tribal Community was incorporated in 1934, its leaders began to put forth great efforts to improve the Swinomish Reservation's reputation.¹ In a series of advertisements in the Puget Sound Mail, the local newspaper, they portrayed the Swinomish as modern, progressive, and energetic Indians, concerned with improving their standard of living; they portrayed themselves as honest businessmen, good credit risks, having a democratically elected governing body, and as financial contributors to many public causes.

They worked to educate each local superintendent of Indian affairs to understand their goals and persuaded him to think of his job as relating not merely to individual Indian landowners, but to over 300 members of a corporate community. They had quite a lot of success in cultivating the friendship of the superintendent, although problems always remained below and above him in the hierarchy of command of the Bureau of Indian Affairs.² Today they are reluctant to give up a superintendent once they have educated him to Indian problems.

This strategy was used on other officials, in other departments and levels of government. It has been very successful. One measure of

¹The material in this section relies heavily on information gained in several conversations with Tandy Wilbur Sr.

²Joseph (1971:116-125) finds the source of many Indian problems to be inherent within the administrative structure of the Bureau.

its effectiveness is the numbers of offers of help which have recently come to the reservation through the governmental agencies. Tandy Wilbur Sr. explains:

I've had more newspapers talking to me about every little thing. I've had more offers for help on the reservation here at Swinomish this last year than I've had in the whole history. People writing in . . . learned about us through the agencies or something, or they inquired. They write here and ask if they can help. Some want a little pay, some are on a program and are willing to work for free -- all various kinds of propositions -- young people too, just out of college. But, my God, we'd have the reservation loaded with all kinds of workers, and I don't really know if we've got enough work to go around. Heh heh.

I think what's happening is that the governmental agencies are aware of what Swinomish is doing, their progress here and the way we operate, what we're attempting to do. And when these information seekers come along, they think of Swinomish and employ them, or send them to us.

The Swinomish leaders have also attempted to influence the passage of legislation in the U.S. Congress. Their strategy for this includes participation in the National Congress of American Indians, a body which writes legislative proposals according to Indian needs. In addition the Swinomish have cultivated friendships with the local representatives and senators from the State of Washington. On the State level, they have worked through the Governor's Indian Advisory Committee.

The Swinomish have sought to win friends on the local level as well. Their leaders have belonged to the Chamber of Commerce of La Conner; they have volunteered speeches in the Lion's Club and the Kiwanis Club; and they have participated in County Fairs, Sidewalk Sales, La Conner's Old Pioneer Days Weekend; and many other special occasions. In addition to these activities, the Swinomish occasionally put on a traditional Indian feast. The occasion for this is usually a dedication for the gymnasium-community hall, the new housing development, or some other achievement. The Swinomish invite key people from the county and other

levels of government, treat them to a spectacular dinner, and give speeches on the reservation's goals and needs. The expense of the dinner is no obstacle because they feel it is worth the large return in public relations. Local friends and allies donate gifts for the feast. A dedication was held in July, 1973 for the second installment of new homes. Tandy Wilbur Sr. recounted how the Swinomish staff was introduced to the guests:

Last night we had this dedication over there. . . . We had a nice crowd. We had an overflow crowd. They spilled over into the gymnasium. We had three lines of tables, and they had to set up three more lines in the gym. And we had good people from around the county, around the region. And we had a good time, everybody seemed to enjoy themselves very much. And we, a, they introduced our staff. It was the first time I realized how big of a staff we had over there. Heh-heh! That is to say, just the key people. And each one of them has got a bunch working under them.

Then he recounted how friends helped:

We'd put on the dinner for a purpose, for public relations purposes. We don't mind the expense because we feel we get lots more than what it's worth in return, in public relations. And I was surprised, we got a donation of a whole bunch of flowers from the people in Anacortes, Mrs. M., kind of organized it. They brought the flowers down, beautiful flowers. The bank over here bought a nice centerpiece for our head table. And one of the farmers out here contributed ten crates of strawberries. And, gee, that's worth over fifty dollars. And, well, I mean retail prices. Course, that's his own berries, you know, but still we appreciate it, you know. And then, one of the fishermen from Anacortes donated all the crabs that he was able to catch in the last five or six days. I don't know how many dozens. There was crabs for everybody. We cooked it and fixed it up nice and put it on the table. It was really nice, I thought there, a real good gesture. All unsolicited, you know, we never asked no one for anything.

The purpose of the dinner was to honor the people who had helped the Swinomish get their new houses, and who had made them fit Indian standards.

Wilbur explained:

Well, we kind of put the thing together in the last few minutes, so to speak. We had been thinking about it for a long time. We had decided to have our dedication of our home sites. We were pressured. I don't really care too much for dedications. They're good for public relations, but I'm not crazy about them. We got pressured into this, and so we thought we had better put it on after all. We had pretty good bids from the HUD people from the housing and the senior citizens' home, and the unmarrieds, and partners, and the little community center, and all that, you know. The Indian Health Service Program, they engineered and installed the sewer systems and the water lines. The BIA made all those nice roads and sidewalks over there. And we thought we had better honor those people. So we went ahead with it.

The effectiveness of this kind of event on the Swinomish public relations is substantial. Wilbur explained:

Maybe I'm a little wrong for not getting too enthused about dedications. It is an opportunity we have every so often to bring our friends in that are influential in the county. We tried to reach every influential person and bring them there last night. We treated them, made them feel welcome, made them feel we loved them, and everything like that. They went home happy. It's going to be hard for them to do anything that's really against us, once we know that it is. . . . Sometimes they do things without knowing that it is against us. But that's one thing about this public relations thing that we did last night, if something comes up and they're not too sure, they'll call and ask, you know, if they're on our side, if they're not too sure about anything. If anything comes up at the State Legislature, or something that is being proposed here or there, they'll call us, what our position is. They're sometimes surprised that we'd be utterly opposed to something, that it would hurt us, the Indians, but when they find out, they come around. So this is the kind of thing that we started many years ago to try to win this kind of relationship with these people.

It is advantageous to have favorable local public opinion when the Indian community is proposing a new reservation development. The Indian leaders never know who will support it and who might turn out against it. In the past, when they wanted to develop the industrial site, the industrialists were for them, the environmentalists against them. On another occasion, it might be the other way around. Wilbur adds:

There's no reason why we can't have a good nucleus of the county on our side for what we want to do. And I think that we're gaining ground too, in this respect. I believe that the County Commissioners we have now are very respectful and sympathetic for our cause. I'm not saying that it always was that way, but it happens to be that way right now. That's the indication that I get from them that supported us better than any one else. Of course they're not always able to do just exactly what they want. They get a lot of pressures too, from other people and from other industries. Something that the Indian people are going to have to do -- get out and fight for themselves. Start winning people. . . . And somebody's going to have to continue building this after I'm gone.

Swinomish leaders also cultivate friendships with the press, radio, and television. They never turn down a request for an interview, and frequently invite the interviewer to come and visit them on the scene. In recent years they seem to have received sympathetic coverage.

The primary means of persuasion Swinomish leaders rely on is personal diplomacy, face-to-face confrontation. They make time available to speak with any outsiders, high or low. They are willing to travel, though this has sometimes been a personal strain. In recent years the amount of work involved in the purely political aspects of the Business Manager's job has grown to be a full-time job for one man. To handle other aspects of the job, the Swinomish have hired an economic development planner. These include research and evaluation of development alternatives such as aquaculture, industrial and commercial sites, and health programs. The role will probably continue to be split into two specializations in the future.

Space permits only brief mention of many of other strategic decisions that Swinomish leaders have made since the 1930's.

1. As individuals they gave their personal efforts to improve the standing of the Tribal Community rather than worked for their individual aboriginal tribes in claims cases. They worked to get others,

especially government agents, to work for the entire community instead of for individual Indians.

2. They specialized in the community government affairs of the reservation, leaving traditional ceremonial affairs to other Swinomish leaders.

3. After several years' experience operating tribal enterprise, they asserted their right to control their own financial affairs, and their freedom to make their own investment decisions. The Bureau of Indian Affairs balked at first, but cooperated after hearing persuasive arguments. As time passed, more and more independence was granted the Swinomish.

4. The Swinomish have always tried to secure government loans and grants only to set themselves up as an independent business, not to become dependent on the dole.

5. Being forced out of business several times by White competitors, the Swinomish realized their biggest handicap was a lack of investment capital.

6. The Swinomish leaders have stressed education and job training programs and have worked to alleviate unemployment by hiring members of the community directly on the tribal payroll.

7. The Swinomish have tried to reverse the trend of outmigration from the reservation and have opposed programs for relocation and termination.

8. They have tried to develop industries suited to the Indian's needs, ones they enjoy working in, such as fish processing and lumber finishing.

9. Realizing the long-term benefits of economic diversification, they have recently turned to developing their real estate resources, mainly

the tidelands.

10. In financial investments they foresee taking a conservative path, collecting leases and business operation taxes, rather than risking partnerships with outside businesses, although once in the past they did form a partnership and profited by it.

11. In order to control the future development of the reservation and avoid overpopulation, pollution of the waters and air, and being overrun by White commercialism, the tribe has drawn up a fifty year plan. It has defended its right to zone all the reservation for land use.

12. Swinomish leaders believe that one arm of the government always communicates with the others, given enough time. They have avoided creating bad relations with any department that might later jeopardize relations with another from whom they are expecting help.

13. In ethnic and cultural matters the Swinomish have emphasized the importance of pride in their ethnic identity. They therefore have made special efforts to teach young people to respect and be knowledgeable about Indian tradition and history.

Although the political turmoil on the national Indian affairs scene has brought criticism to traditional reservation leaders in general, the Swinomish leaders hardly qualify for censure. A look into their history reveals many years of dedication to improvement for their community's standard of living and cultural freedom. Every generation makes a contribution, but none can solve all the Indians' problems. As younger generations move up to continue the work, their task will be lightened because of the accomplishments of their elders in the realms of community government, tribal enterprise, and public relations.

In modern times the index of progress is changing. Young Indian leaders still seek improvements in Indian health, education, housing, employment, and income. But many of them also seek freer expression of their ethnic identity, spiritual revitalization, and recapture of traditional Indian arts, crafts, and subsistence technology.

Within the Swinomish community criticism of leadership seems to focus on who is deriving the benefits of community enterprise and who succeeds in winning jobs rather than on what management strategies are being developed. As younger generations take over, this situation may show some change.

CONCLUSION

The modern period of Swinomish history illustrates the modest success of a relatively small, poor, enclaved Indian community in raising its status in a rural setting. The first substantial action its members took was to incorporate under the Indian Reorganization Act, elect a governing body, and set up a full time staff. Incorporation required that they formalize their criteria for membership. In subsequent years they worked for less restricted interaction with Whites, channeling many ethnic contacts through the tribal office and staff in order to avoid misunderstandings. The staff members became more experienced in manipulating the rules governing ethnic interaction and in defending Indian rights. The common assets of the reservation community became a significant factor in the ecological relations between the two groups. A wide range of investments was considered. Those favored related to activities especially valued by Indians. As the Indian leaders tried to build up more areas of articulation between the Swinomish and White

communities, they began to increase the number of White dependencies on Indians, thereby increasing the bargaining power of the Indians. The general effect counteracted somewhat the steadily overwhelming demographic imbalance that was putting Indians in the numerical minority in Skagit County.

It is difficult to measure progress in ethnic stratification, since it implies a relative ranking of ethnic groups. Indians, the Swinomish included, are still on the lowest rung in terms of health, income, and all the standard indicators of well-being in modern times. Serious problems still remain. The gap is being significantly closed, though, and the direction of change is clearly upward. Most encouraging is the recent trend in public schools to allow expression of Indian identity in the curriculum.

It seems unlikely that material success will weaken the ethnic boundaries around the community. On the contrary, if the standard of living of all families on the reservation is raised, the poor will not be forced to migrate to urban areas to find employment. As more opportunities unfold, the decisive factor is likely to be the degree to which the Swinomish continue to emphasize a set of Indian values in their management decisions, and their educational, economic, and social planning.

CHAPTER VII

ETHNIC FUSION

INTRODUCTION

The investigation of ethnic boundary processes in the history of the Skagit Region Indians has led us to examine the nature of ethnic fusion, the coalescence of two or more ethnic groups into a single unit. We have observed the fusion of a number of small, politically autonomous winter villages into extended village clusters, and the redefinition of extended village clusters as bands and tribes; the fusion of five tribes into an Indian reservation community, and the formalization of the reservation community structure into a legal corporation. Throughout the whole post-contact period, we have seen the emergence of the supra-category of Indian and Native American and the strengthening of ethnic ties with other reservations across the nation.

The importance of ethnic fusion as the primary boundary-transforming process operating in Swinomish history merits additional consideration. The model of ethnic boundary processes derived from Barthian analysis has led us to investigate many aspects of ethnic relations, but no other aspect organizes as much of the change which has taken place since aboriginal times in the Skagit Region.

Ethnic fusion involves the expansion of ethnic consciousness on the part of individual human beings. Historical forces cause people who previously felt little in common to emphasize a shared identity, to

spend more time relating to other members of that category, to invest their time and resources sponsoring events in the name of that group, and to awaken their peers to the importance of membership. When a substantial number of people so bound are persuaded that in a substantial part of their lives they have more to gain from making common cause or more to lose from a refusal to do so, ethnic fusion has taken place.

The circumstances that promote or impede mutual identification of members of separate ethnic groups are diverse. In reviewing the course of ethnic fusion in the Skagit Region from aboriginal times to the present, we will summarize the factors which contributed to the expansion of ethnic consciousness among individual Indians, and the factors which slowed down or limited the process.

THE ABORIGINAL POTENTIAL FOR ETHNIC UNIFICATION

The Skagit Region winter villages in 1792 exhibited considerable potential for ethnic unification. The latent tendency for expanded ethnic consciousness was supported by many factors.

First, the Skagit Region lacked large, unified tribes during aboriginal times, ethnic blocs of strength and cultural distinctiveness sufficient to carry well into or beyond their common location as co-residents of a single reservation territory. Band organization did not flourish until the era of treaty negotiations. Unification began at a relatively low level, and was achieved more easily than it would have been at higher levels. Numerous small, weak ethnic groups merged more quickly into a single unit than a few large, powerful tribes would have. Large tribes would most likely have experienced centuries of previous

enmity and competition. Their unification would have been impeded by the need to break down entrenched political authority within component units and traditional ranking among them.

Second, the Skagit Region villages seldom made war upon each other. They avoided the blood feud between related villages at all costs. Once begun, the disruptive consequences of such feuds would ramify far beyond the individuals involved. Skagit villagers therefore favored non-violent methods of conflict resolution and rewarded peaceful dispositions in their children. These cultural traits and the peace that prevailed probably had a great effect on members of different villages in later historical periods, making it easier for them to identify with each other.

Third, there was a relatively high degree of cultural homogeneity in the Skagit Region. A consensus of values covered many important areas: political authority, leadership qualities, conflict resolution, and criteria for high and low social status. The villagers shared a common set of religious and spiritual values. This consensus survived even the disruptive change brought by contact with the early White men. The predominance of a single language throughout most of the Skagit Region also contributed to the potential expansion of ethnic consciousness.

Another supporting factor was the existence of a loose network of cooperative ties between aboriginal winter villages. Skagit Region people were accustomed to visiting each other frequently. Villages cooperated in providing marriage partners for each other. They shared economic resources and depended on each other for support in the ceremonial realm. The relatively high frequency of interaction and degree of functional integration contributed to the potential for ethnic

unification at later times. The lines of potential unification followed common routes of travel up and down river systems and along coastlines and sloughs.

With all the above factors favoring an expansion of ethnic consciousness, what maintained aboriginal boundaries at the village level? First was the absence of political authority beyond the village. A man could speak only for his own family, unless he had conferred with heads of other households in his village. He was limited to managing specific tasks agreed upon beforehand. No man could govern members of other villages. The only commands he could issue to them were to vacate his land (if they were visiting) and to stop mistreating his sister (if she had been given to them in marriage). Other communications of that nature took the form of requests.

Second was the absence of interaction contexts for groups of villages. Village clusters had little business to do with each other as clusters. Regional identity was not as important as village identity. Territory and resources were owned by families and villages rather than village clusters. The village cluster was a potentially important unit of ethnic organization, but historical circumstances had not focussed the attention of Skagit Region people on it as their primary reference unit.

FACTORS CONTRIBUTING TO THE COALESCENCE OF VILLAGES INTO CLUSTERS DURING THE EARLY CONTACT PERIOD

One factor contributing to the expansion of ethnic consciousness during the early contact period was the strengthening of political authority above the village level. Between 1792 and 1855 a small number

of Skagit Region village headmen increased their political power by acquiring exclusive control over new inputs into the system -- trade goods and information about the Whites. White traders did not want to deal with each village separately. They encouraged leaders of the largest villages to act as brokers or middlemen in all transactions in their region. The new regional leaders accumulated larger personal stores for invitational feasts than ever before. Their prestige soared. They were able to establish a personal following among other village headmen in the cluster of villages around their home. As a result, members of a village cluster operated as a unit vis a vis the White trader. They also sponsored feasts jointly.

Other Skagit leaders gained power by studying Christianity under the Catholic priests. Returning home, they missionized among all the villages in their region. They won unprecedented respect for the knowledge and spiritual power they had acquired. One of these used his personal charisma to unify the Upper Skagit villages and establish a church.

Other village leaders earned superior power as warriors. Soon after 1792, when the Europeans introduced firearms to Vancouver Island and Frazier River Region Indians, hostile northerners increased their raiding activities, forcing Skagit Region villages to band together in mutual defense. Talented warriors led consolidated forays to the north, commanding men from many other villages around their home. They gained fearsome reputations, giving them more political sway than any other headmen in their region.

Another factor increasing the relative importance of village cluster identity was the demographic dislocation due to epidemic disease

and increased feuds, raids, and warfare. People were forced to change village groups so often, and saw the composition of their group changing so rapidly that they placed less importance on it than on the emerging alternative of a more general, higher level category. This was not the situation of hierarchical growth with maintenance of lower level organization.

Also operating in the early contact period were processes which set back ethnic unification. Geographic factors channeled unification to villages within easy reach of each other by canoe travel. The importation of alcohol increased crimes of passion and spontaneous fights between Indians encountering each other at trading posts, mills, farms, and logging camps. Social controls over the contestants by their village members broke down because they could leave the village and survive without the families' support by going to work for the Whites. As a result, there was a large increase in the number of blood feuds between proximate villages. Peaceable relations between Skagit Region villages broke down. The availability of firearms and the rise of boisterous warrior headmen, who preyed upon people close to home, intensified intervillage conflict, and diminished the radius of customary travel somewhat, impeding the expansion of ethnic identity beyond each village's nearest neighbors. These factors conspired to limit ethnic integration in the early contact period to members of an extended village cluster. If one were measuring expanded ethnic consciousness in terms of the number of regular, long-distance trips to visit neighboring ethnic groups in the traditional manner of invitational feasts, one might find that there were years when ethnic consciousness contracted. If one were measuring expanded ethnic consciousness in terms of the increased

number of group members, one might find that during epidemic periods ethnic consciousness contracted. A village cluster in 1850 might not have had as many people as one of its component units in 1750. However, here we are measuring expanded ethnic consciousness in terms of the conceptual levels involved.

FACTORS CONTRIBUTING TO THE FORMATION OF
BANDS AND TRIBES OUT OF VILLAGE
CLUSTERS DURING TREATY TIMES

Skagit Region villagers experienced the strongest force towards their unification when they confronted an outside ethnic group with more military firepower, a group which (1) opposed them all equally and (2) almost entirely failed to distinguish among them in aboriginal terms. They were fortunate to have more than half a century of fairly peaceful contact with Whites (from 1792 to 1852) before the White settlers came into direct conflict with them over their land. Early White explorers had been interested in cultivating friendly relations with the Indians for their potential political value. Fur trading corporations, interested in the same thing, spared the Puget Sounders the hard-line, pugnacious policies which had prevailed over eastern Indians.

During the early contact years, Skagit leaders absorbed themselves in getting educated about the Whites and assessing the meaning of impending White settlement. When the settlers began arriving, they chose not to make war. Unlike Indians in many other parts of the country, they suffered no military defeat.

Instead, in 1855, they negotiated the Treaty of Point Elliott with the U.S. government. Their collective decision was to make a business contract, giving up one thing in exchange for another. Though

they regretted having to relinquish ownership of their lands, they believed it was better than going to war. They felt they would be compensated by having a homeland reserved for themselves and their descendants away from White encroachers and by being able to hunt and fish in their usual and accustomed places. They also received promises of money and government services. Although there was not total consensus on the decision, the fact that Skagit Region village leaders met together, discussed their common relationship vis a vis the Whites, and then acted collectively, strengthened the bonds between villages.

Hardships they experienced following the treaty signing may also have increased their sense of mutual identity. While the eastern Indians were engaged in a war of rebellion against the U.S. government, administrators on the west side of the Cascades sought to insure the peaceable behavior of Puget Sound Indians by confining them to large encampments near the salt-water. Subjection to winter hardships in these temporary concentration camps at the hands of the Whites further strengthened their unity.

In preparing to negotiate the treaty, White government representatives selected the most wealthy and powerful Indian leaders in Puget Sound to bear the titles of chief or sub-chief. This designation was primarily an honor, but bore with it the responsibility of representing their people to the U.S. government during the early reservation era. The authority inherent in the position was not great, but it was more substantial than had existed before. Skagit families guarded the positions and passed them down from father to son for several generations.

The treaty set forth in written language (English) a listing of all groups of Indians and their chiefs or sub-chiefs. Extended village

clusters were termed "bands" and "tribes." The treaty established four regional reservations and four paramount chiefs, the Skagit Region people being grouped together under the Lower Skagit chief who lived in the village at Snatelum Point. This was the strongest force towards unification the Skagit Region villagers had ever experienced.

Processes impeding ethnic unification during the treaty times were the same ones listed for the early contact period -- they continued before and after the treaty signing. It might also be said that the Whites' fear of true ethnic unification among all Indians of Puget Sound, Eastern Washington, and the Gulf of Georgia, limited their willingness to encourage true unity of feeling among the Indians. They sought to isolate Puget Sound Indians from hostile Eastern Washington Indians and chose to put them in salt-water encampments to insure the growth of ethnic consciousness was checked.

FACTORS CONTRIBUTING TO THE FORMATION OF A COMMUNITY OF TRIBES ON THE SWINOMISH RESERVATION

During the early reservation era continued conflict among families from different villages impeded expansion of ethnic boundaries. As migration to the reservation took place between 1860 and 1900, it became increasingly difficult for Indian families to locate good homesites. Fresh water, food resources, and privacy were all relatively scarce, compared to the abundance of their previous homes. Reservation life was crowded. As a result, many of them just camped along the beaches at the fringes of the reservation. Others put off moving to the reservation for many years. Because settlers were late in occupying the foothills of the Cascades, some of the Upper Skagit villagers managed to hold out

for decades. They formed a separate community which survives there today.

Reluctance to begin constructing permanent dwellings on the early reservation derived also from the fact that the treaty specified the Swinomish Reservation as only a temporary home. It held out the possibility that the residents might be moved and consolidated with other Indians elsewhere. Many Swinomish Indians felt they no longer had a real home. They did not identify with the artificial, temporary grouping of Indian people on the reservation.

Internal discord among reservation families was promulgated by "mean" Indian doctors. During the years following the treaty signing, a dearth of achievement patterns for Indian men led members of the younger generation into the realm of ceremonial healing. This was one place where a young man could still gain status. Each family had its own doctor, or group of them, protecting it against the threats of rivals. Growing older, some of the Indian doctors put on belligerent and fearsome attitudes, creating feelings of distrust and danger throughout the reservation. All these divisive factors impeded the growth of ethnic consciousness among members of the reservation community.

Beginning in 1874 a number of events occurred which counteracted the processes fragmenting the reservation community. The President and U.S. Congress confirmed the legal status of the reservation and its boundaries through administrative and legislative action sometime after 1872, giving Swinomish residents a feeling of having a permanent home. In 1884, the Dawes Allotment Act provided Indian families with individual ownership of parcels of land. This strengthened and clarified their relation to the reservation at a time when there was no overarching

community government except domination by the BIA. The act's weakening effects on the newly-forming reservation would have been counteracted had the act contained provisions against alienation of reservation lands to the hands of Whites. However, the general policy of the government at this time was to discourage and set back any collective political, economic, or religious activity among members of the Indian community.

The Indians' ability to pursue their traditional subsistence economy in the general vicinity of their original homelands also strengthened community bonds somewhat. Adjusting to increased demands on local resources, members of different bands shared their food. Reservation fishermen took turns at the best gillnetting drifts along Swinomish Slough. Gathering large quantities of traditional foods, reservation families distributed them to the entire community at ceremonies. One large smokehouse became a focal point for these activities.

New economic activities sometimes strengthened the bonds between reservation bands. When the BIA loosed the reservation lumber resources for development, the Indians held joint work projects to build "skid roads." Wagon and automobile roads were later built by large crews of community members. The establishment of the Swinomish Day School and the community court also helped somewhat to bind the members of the community into a single unit, although most of the rules enforced by the court were formulated by the BIA.

Another important factor was external ascription of common identity by Whites. The first White settlers in the Skagit Region understood the aboriginal ethnic organization of the Indians much better than their descendants did. They knew, for example, which families came from which place, where the old villages had been located, and much more.

Later Whites did not distinguish Indians on the basis of their aboriginal villages or bands. They grouped all Swinomish residents into a single category. At the Anacortes fish cannery White employers separated Indian workers from Chinese laborers and gave them special living quarters. The Bureau of Indian Affairs administered government services to the Indians by their reservation, not their former villages. After many years external definition of common identity had an effect upon the reservation members.

Decades of co-residence at Swinomish produced a common social and religious life. Several community clubs were established. The Farmers' Club was formed around 1910, with the help of White administrators. After that came the Northwest American Society, the La Conner Athletic Club, and Ladies' Club, and the Altar Society. These organizations took turns sponsoring community gatherings. Informal understandings grew up about procedures and programs, volunteer contributions of food, money, and labor. An annual cycle of holidays was followed. Weddings, birthday celebrations, and funerals were held. A community hall was built with volunteer subscription labor. During the sixty-year period from 1870 to 1930, the degree of formalization of community structure increased. In addition, the families on the reservation intermarrying widely, produced a generation of children with mixed tribal affiliations. Here on the reservation the offspring did not have the space to separate themselves from one parent's people and thus emphasize the other parent's affiliation. The exclusiveness of tribal membership faded and they belonged to both, their children four, their grandchildren perhaps even more.

The collective life of the reservation was given a boost after the Indians won back their right to practice traditional religious rites. During the years of repression by the Bureau of Indian Affairs a rebellious attitude had grown up among the Swinomish. They continued to gather in secret. Gradually they acted more boldly, finally confronting the Indian agent directly. Winning back the pow wow was a psychological victory for them. Their joy was expressed in several years of large gatherings and innovative ceremonies. The structure of their religious organizations became more formalized. The Shaker Church and the Smokehouse emerged as separate institutions from the community committees and clubs.

Following the growth of the informal community at Swinomish was the birth of community government. By 1916 five aboriginal bands had consolidated themselves and established tribal business organizations: the Swinomish, Samish, Lower Skagit, Kikialus, and Upper Skagit. They worked on getting materials together to produce a legal case against the U.S. government for not meeting its treaty obligations. By this time the reservation community as a whole still had no formal governmental structure. It operated as a unit only in the social-recreational and ceremonial spheres. Governmentally, it was administered by the Bureau of Indian Affairs.

By the late 1920's new generations of Indian leaders came to maturity. Some of them had received a little White education. They advocated putting aside tribal differences on the reservation and unifying the community. The policy of the federal government had also changed. As a result of the combined efforts of Swinomish leaders and governmental representatives, the Old Council or Council of Five was formed, with representatives from each of the four aboriginal tribes plus one member

at-large. The council first functioned mainly to legitimize decisions made by the Indian agency. After several years' experience, council members became more independent.

Between 1870 and 1930 the expansion of ethnic consciousness took a major leap. On the reservation the tribes and bands intermarried and began carrying on a joint social and ceremonial life. Finally they joined together to form the governing council of the reservation.

FACTORS STRENGTHENING THE SWINOMISH TRIBAL COMMUNITY DURING MODERN TIMES

During the modern era of Swinomish history, the unity of the newly-formed community was strengthened. Treaty-time tribal organizations continued to exist, but their importance faded relative to that of the Swinomish Tribal Community. Several significant political victories were achieved by the Indians at the beginning of the modern period. Each success bound members of the reservation community more tightly, increasing awareness of their common identity and their relationship to other Indians across the nation.

The reservation community received its first income-generating assets when a court case clarified its ownership of valuable tidelands. The Old Council took over management of these assets and decided to operate the fish traps as a community enterprise. About this time the Indian Reorganization Act was passed by Congress, allowing Indian reservation communities to form legal corporations and qualify for federal loans to develop their resources.

In a legally-supervised election the Indian residents of the Swinomish Reservation adopted the provisions of the IRA and applied for

a federal charter. They wrote up a constitution and by-laws, elected a tribal senate and officers, and appointed committees. The definition of corporation membership was based on a list of charter members and their descendants. The community abandoned the old requirement of dividing the community into separate tribes for representation purposes. The members decided to call themselves the Swinomish Tribal Community, or just "the Tribe" in local conversations. This was probably the strongest force for ethnic unification on the reservation since the treaty and the migration of tribes and bands to Swinomish.

Taking out a loan from the federal government, the Swinomish Tribal Community built and operated the fish traps on its western tidelands. This venture was successful and the Tribe was able to repay the loan within a few years. After that it ventured into the oyster-raising business and operated a small sawmill. The oyster business made a large profit during World War II, but the sawmill was given up because of White competition with more capital and larger equipment. Numerous other ventures were tried. In forty years the Swinomish built a fairly successful small enterprise, a viable contender in the Skagit Valley business community. Their ability to survive was due to strengthened loyalty of members and progressive attitudes in many other areas of community life. The only major internal dispute arose over ownership of the tidelands between the Swinomish Tribal Community and the aboriginal Swinomish tribe, on whose territory the reservation was located. The divisive issue had to be resolved in federal courts.

During the 1930's the Swinomish Tribal Community applied for government aid in constructing a number of new houses in the reservation village. The houses were built, along with roads, a ball park, and

modern utilities, by crews of community members under the foremanship of a reservation person. Some of the work was done under the Works Progress Administration. The work crews put forth hard physical labor and endured hardship for the benefit of the community as a whole. Acting out the tradition of cooperative labor produced close ties between them. They shared the value of improving the reputation of the reservation community and making it respectable and progressive in its relationships with White society.

During the 1940's the managers of the tribal corporation became more assertive and independent from supervision by the Bureau of Indian Affairs. The Tribal Community won the right to handle its own finances. It made its voice heard in national legislative forums, lobbying against termination and employment programs which required relocation of Indians to urban areas. The collective goal of the Swinomish was to strengthen their organization and use it to improve the life of Indian people on the reservation so that the youth would not be siphoned off to the cities. An adjunct of this goal was to get Indian community control over the administration of governmental programs to insure a beneficial impact. As a result of success in recent years the Swinomish now administer their own programs in housing, education, economic development planning, fish trap and plant operation, health, alcoholism prevention and treatment, and many other community services.

A progressive attitude about community development and planning has prevailed at Swinomish since the 1930's. While there is some internal disagreement, as in any community, there seems here to be consensus on the major direction of change.

The location of the Swinomish Reservation the western fringe of

the continent, close to a major metropolitan development, but far enough away not to be engulfed, has been advantageous. They have always found a market for fish, though the supply has dwindled in recent years. The value of their land has been rising dramatically.

The unity of the Swinomish community would be strengthened and their position further stabilized, if enough employment could be found so that all the families could be rescued from the despair of poverty. Another great advance would be made if young people on the reservation could be inspired to establish creative personal goals that would benefit the community in years to come.

The achievements of the Swinomish Tribal Community stand in contrast to the meager success of the aboriginal tribal organizations. In fighting their claims cases against the U.S. government, the latter groups have had to wait for decades and go through endless court proceedings. After the tribes finally began winning their cases, they found that the small disbursements yield almost insignificant portions to individual members. As a result of these circumstances, ethnic affiliation along aboriginal tribal lines is becoming less important as the years pass.

On the other hand, the importance of membership in the national category of American Indian or Native American has grown in recent years. There is more contact with members of other reservations, especially with distant reservations. Marriage patterns show Native American partners from Canada, Alaska, New York and other distant places. The participation of the Swinomish in national organizations, councils, and associations has grown. They belong to regional all-Indian basketball leagues and pow wow circles. Their children occasionally attend distant

schools for Indians operated by the Bureau of Indian Affairs. Consciousness of ethnicity on the national level is becoming more sophisticated and informed.

It remains to be seen the degree to which ethnic consciousness will grow above the level of American Indian. Swinomish Indians have considered themselves Americans since signing the treaty of 1855. They were granted citizenship in 1924. They have participated in both World Wars, the Viet Nam War, and county, state, and national governments, schools, universities, and economic life. That level is not at question. It is the degree to which they may join forces with Third World Black, Spanish-, and Asian-Americans that is uncertain. If such a move takes place, will it grow from the grass roots or blossom at the top in the form of a national political lobby? What will be the major factors impeding such unification? What circumstances might promote a common ethnic consciousness of Indian-, Black-, Spanish-, and Asian-Americans? Or will the ethnic boundaries between each of the smaller groups and the general White populace dissolve before unification of minorities can take place?

SUMMARY

Summarizing in theoretical terms the main factors that have facilitated integration of ethnic groups in the Skagit Region, we find that the following have been of major importance. First, the members of the ethnic group had labels to refer to themselves and their collective identity. Second, the frequency of their interaction and transaction of goods, messages, and personnel increased. Interaction became more

direct and personal. They had more travel in each others' territories, closer residential integration, more intermarriage, and fewer taboos on conversation.

Third, as members of different ethnic groups drew together, their functional integration in economic and political realms increased. They provided more goods and services for each other. They participated in cooperative work projects. They shared access to resources. They developed a common system of political authority, recognized the same leaders, common opponents, and emphasized their common ethnic history. They relaxed rules of etiquette governing their internal ritual code and developed a more detailed legal code defining their unity. They also emphasized their common genealogical roots. Functional integration in the social realm slightly preceded integration in the governmental realm, as many voluntary associations of their members were formed.

Fourth,¹ value congruence between component groups, great to begin with, was not destroyed by the influx of new cultural ideas of Whites. At times of rapid change, the members of the newly-forming group were able to get together and agree on what aspects of their culture they valued most and make arrangements to sponsor them collectively.

Fifth, the members of the newly formed ethnic group recognized a common, shared ethnic status vis a vis other ethnic groups. They worked together to try to gain control over assets they held in common. They worked together to try to improve the ranking of their group in

¹Three of the above-mentioned factors (increased interaction and transactions, functional interdependency, and value congruence) are identified by Paden (1970:242-270) as stages or levels of ethnic integration.

relation to others. They tried to settle internal conflicts non-violently, in contrast to conflicts with members of other groups. Pressure of external ascription of common identity by a large outside reference group (the Whites) probably underlaid most of these tendencies.

Sixth, ethnic fusion was facilitated when commonly-recognized leaders adopted the strategy of emphasizing their ethnic identity and battling for improved status. They tried to dissuade young people from leaving their home and neglecting their participation in the community. Instead they encouraged them to infiltrate the establishment, gain good positions, and make places for other members of their group. Group leaders emphasized service to the community and the adoption of a strong future-orientation towards group achievements.

APPENDICES

APPENDIX I

**SWINOMISH ELDERS' REACTION TO THE
FOREGOING ACCOUNT OF THEIR HISTORY**

An early draft of the dissertation was presented to the Swinomish Tribal Community allowing time for reading. Three elders were able to get through it, or substantial parts of it. They expressed their general satisfaction. A return visit to two of them revealed that they preferred to express their suggestions and criticisms in conversational form rather than as written alterations of the text. Their main concerns were with points that had been left out or not stated strongly enough. Because it may be of interest to the reader, these points are recounted here, in a separate section, rather than in the text itself. It is hoped that the reader can gain an appreciation of the manner in which the Swinomish elders reacted to the foregoing account of their history and the direction future revisions would take.

Richard Peters pointed out that when the Indians moved onto the reservation, the old chiefs lost their authority. Before that time each tribe had a chief who ruled his people. After the move, the chiefs became common people. When he was a child, Richard didn't even know there had been chiefs. He found out only when he was grown up and asked about it. The reason for the loss of authority was that the reservation was ruled over by the Farmer-in-Charge. The dictatorial power he had was disgusting. The Indian people couldn't do anything without his permission, even cut wood on their own land. They could be jailed if caught selling wood from their land from anything except a dead tree. They had to have his permission. And some of them were put in jail. The road tax, however, wasn't a punishment. It was just something you had to do -- three days a year after the age of 18 -- in order to get the roads in. Although the members of the Old Council were unschooled,

and couldn't read or write, they knew English and were sharp. They understood what they were doing. They were capable of fighting the government in court, for instance. They had a strong council. After its formation they advanced quickly and the government in charge slowed down, weakened, and stopped asserting such strong authority over the reservation people.

Tandy Wilbur Sr. pointed out the very important omission in the thesis of the 1926 order, signed by U.S. President Calvin Coolidge, giving Indians the right to vote, giving them full enfranchisement and citizenship. As a result of this the Indian learned the importance of voting, voting for the right man. Because of it the Indian was able to persuade the government to enact laws and do all kinds of things that would help out. Before the tribal meeting that set up the Old Council, the reservation people had no governing organization at all. They only had the old Farmers' Organization, a private group which had built the meeting hall. The BIA from the beginning of history thought they were going to make farmers out of the Indians and failed. When the BIA wanted to start the Old Council, the Indians took advantage of the fact that they had an organization and used it for other purposes. The people got together at the Farmers' hall and were told they could have a council. They decided that the best way they could organize it was with five representatives, one for the Skagit, the Kikialus, the Samish, the Swinomish, and one at large. Each group met in a separate corner that same afternoon. They selected their representatives: George Alexander, Skagit; John Lyons, Kikialus; George Cagey, Samish; Ignacious Willup, Swinomish; and Charley Wilbur, At-Large. As representatives grew old, new ones were voted in to replace them. The core of leaders thus

fluctuated slightly. Some of the early ones became members of the Swinomish Tribal Community Senate after 1934. Charley Wilbur's supporters were men of means. They had no hesitation in shelling out when an appeal was made.

Richard Peters explains further that about the time the Wheeler-Howard Act came through and the Swinomish accepted it, the Farmer-in-Charge was thrown out. The BIA was running out of money. First it got rid of the boarding schools, then the Farmers-in-Charge. When the Swinomish Senate was elected, the BIA got rid of the Farmer-in-Charge at Swinomish. After the BIA closed the Tulalip School there was no place for the Indian children to go. The government made financial arrangements to put the kids in town schools -- paid for them to go. Then a big struggle started. Before that time there were four or five children attending the La Conner School, and no one in La Conner paid much attention. No one bothered them. But when the government started to arrange for all the Indian children to go there, the townsfolk put up a big commotion. They started a petition to keep them out. The mayor of La Conner was the first person to sign the petition. He was, however, a good friend of Charley Wilbur's. Charley Wilbur was acquainted with a lawyer in Mount Vernon and went to the lawyer to get his counsel. Charley decided to fight the petition. When the mayor found out that Charley was going to fight it, he withdrew his name from the petition. All his friends followed. That's how those kids got to go to school in town.

Tandy Wilbur Sr. corrected a possible error in the thesis, calling attention to the existence of two separate bodies of regional political organizations in the Pacific Northwest. The Northwest Affiliated Tribes was a group that covered all of Western Washington. This was the group

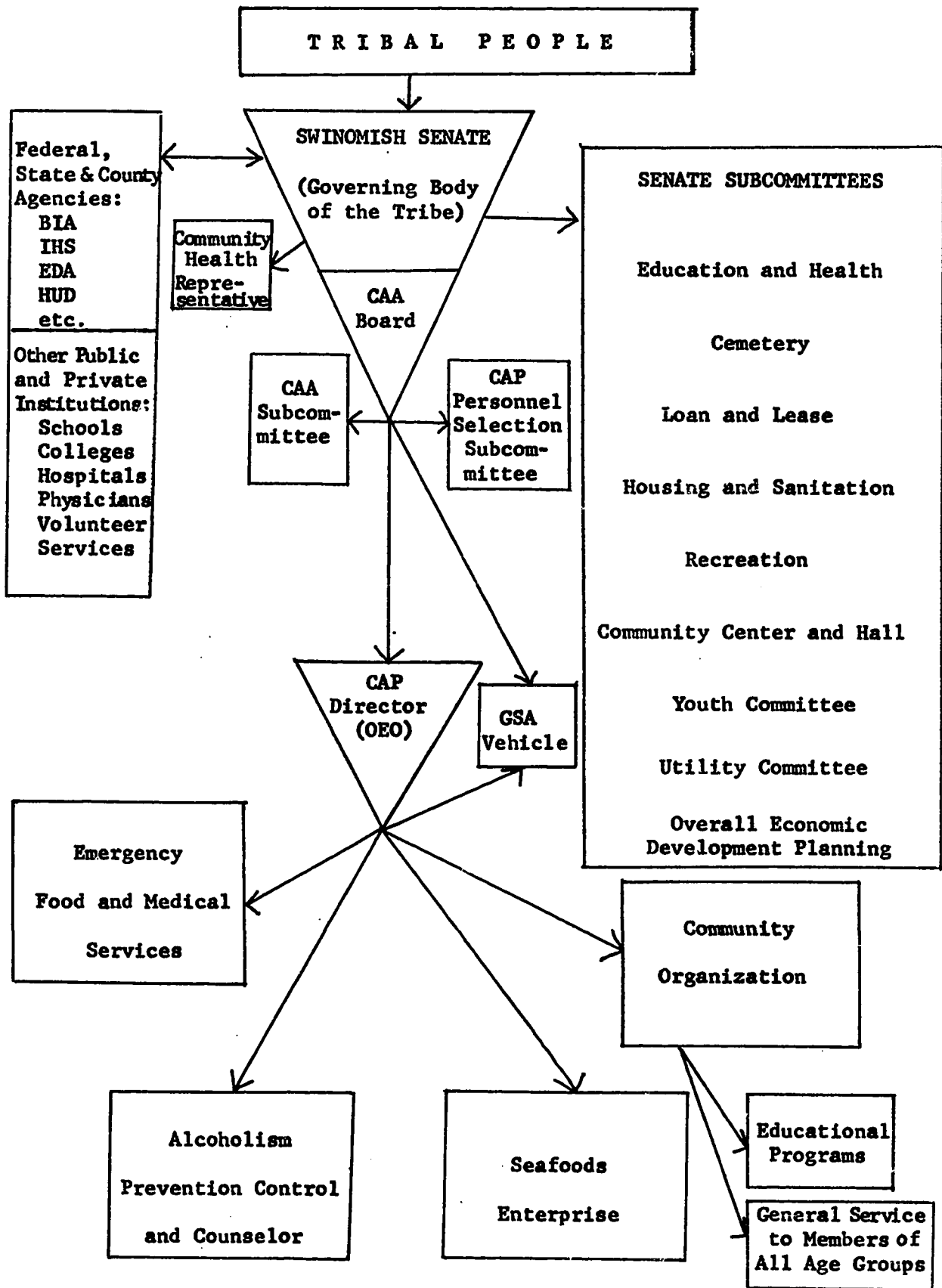
started by Thomas Bishop in the 1910's for purposes of land claims cases against the U.S. government. It differed from the Northwest Federation of American Indians, a regional political body started much later, covering Washington, Oregon, Idaho, and possible Montana. Many other attempts have been made to consolidate the efforts of tribes. One was the Intertribal Council of Western Washington. The goal of this body was to oppose moves in the federal government to terminate Western Washington tribes. There actually was a bill to terminate them introduced into the Congress, but it never passed.

APPENDIX II

CHARTS

CHART I
Fusion of Ethnic Boundaries in the Skagit Region

Villages	Extended Clusters	Gibbs' (1854) Terms	Point Elliott Treaty-Signers	Non-Treaty-Signers (Sampson, 1922)	Modern Reservation Terms
1. $sx^w d me t$ 2. $x^w k t i t l$ 3. $e ce q a n$ 4. $g^w a n q a n e l a$ 5. $x^w s a n a n$	šemiš	Samish		Samish	Samish Tribe
6. $q a l i q a t$ 7. $c u x^w t a d a c i ?$ 8. $x^w i x^w u c$ 9. (Sullivan Slough)					
10. $s d i ? u s$ 11. (North Shore Duqualla Bay)					
12. (Mouth Skagit R.)					
13. $\check{c} u t a p$					
14. (Oak Harbor) 15. (Crescent Harbor) 16. $s q^w a l a y a ?$ 17. $h u b a q s$ 18. $b e c a d a l i$ 19. $b a ? a s a c$ 20. (Long Point) 21. $\check{c} u b a ? a l i s e d$	swədabš	Swo-da-mish	Swinamish Band		Swinomish Tribe
22. $\check{c} u t a p$					
23. $s q^w a l a y a ?$ 24. $h u b a q s$ 25. $b e c a d a l i$ 26. $b a ? a s a c$ 27. (Long Point) 28. $\check{c} u b a ? a l i s e d$					
29. $\check{c} u t a p$					
30. (Oak Harbor) 31. (Crescent Harbor) 32. $s q^w a l a y a ?$ 33. $h u b a q s$ 34. $b e c a d a l i$ 35. $b a ? a s a c$ 36. (Long Point) 37. $\check{c} u b a ? a l i s e d$					
38. $\check{c} u t a p$	sqajət sqajə?	Skagit	Skagit Tribe		Lower Skagit Tribe
39. $\check{c} u t a p$					
40. $\check{c} u t a p$					
41. $\check{c} u t a p$					
42. $\check{c} u t a p$					
43. $\check{c} u t a p$	kikialus	Kikialtis	Kik-ial-lus Band		Kikialus Band
44. $\check{c} u t a p$					
45. $\check{c} u t a p$					
46. $\check{c} u t a p$					
47. $\check{c} u t a p$					
48. $\check{c} u t a p$	dxwaha or stiksábš	Tow-ah-ha (Gibbs 1877)	Noo-wha-ah	Upper Samish or Stick Samish	
49. $\check{c} u t a p$					
50. $\check{c} u t a p$					
51. $\check{c} u t a p$					
52. $\check{c} u t a p$					
53. $\check{c} u t a p$	dúgəčəbš	N'qua-cha-mish	Noo-gua-cha-mish		
54. $\check{c} u t a p$					
55. $\check{c} u t a p$					
56. $\check{c} u t a p$					
57. $\check{c} u t a p$					
58. $\check{c} u t a p$	bəstúlək ^w		Me-sek-wi-guilə	Cho-bah-ah-bish	Upper Skagit or Upper River
59. $\check{c} u t a p$					
60. $\check{c} u t a p$					
61. $\check{c} u t a p$					
62. $\check{c} u t a p$					
63. $\check{c} u t a p$	Sma-lih-hu Mis-kai-whu Sa-ku-me-hu		Sba-le-och Mis-kai-whwa		Saw Suattle
64. $\check{c} u t a p$					
65. $\check{c} u t a p$					
66. $\check{c} u t a p$					
67. $\check{c} u t a p$					



SWINOMISH CAP LINES OF AUTHORITY AND SERVICE AT THE RESERVATION LEVEL IN 1971

CHART II

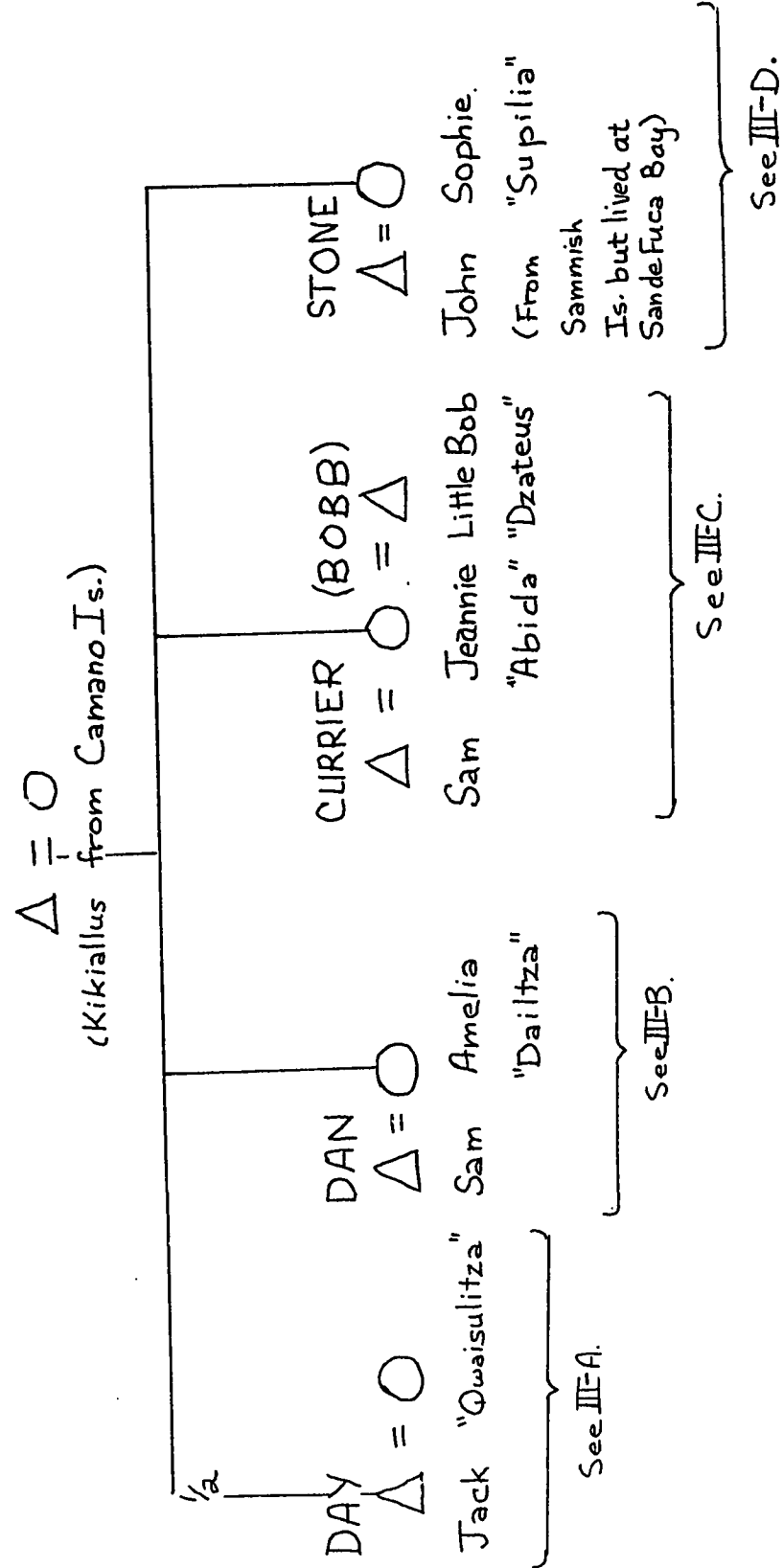


CHART III
 The Three Sisters' and Their Half-Brother's Descendants

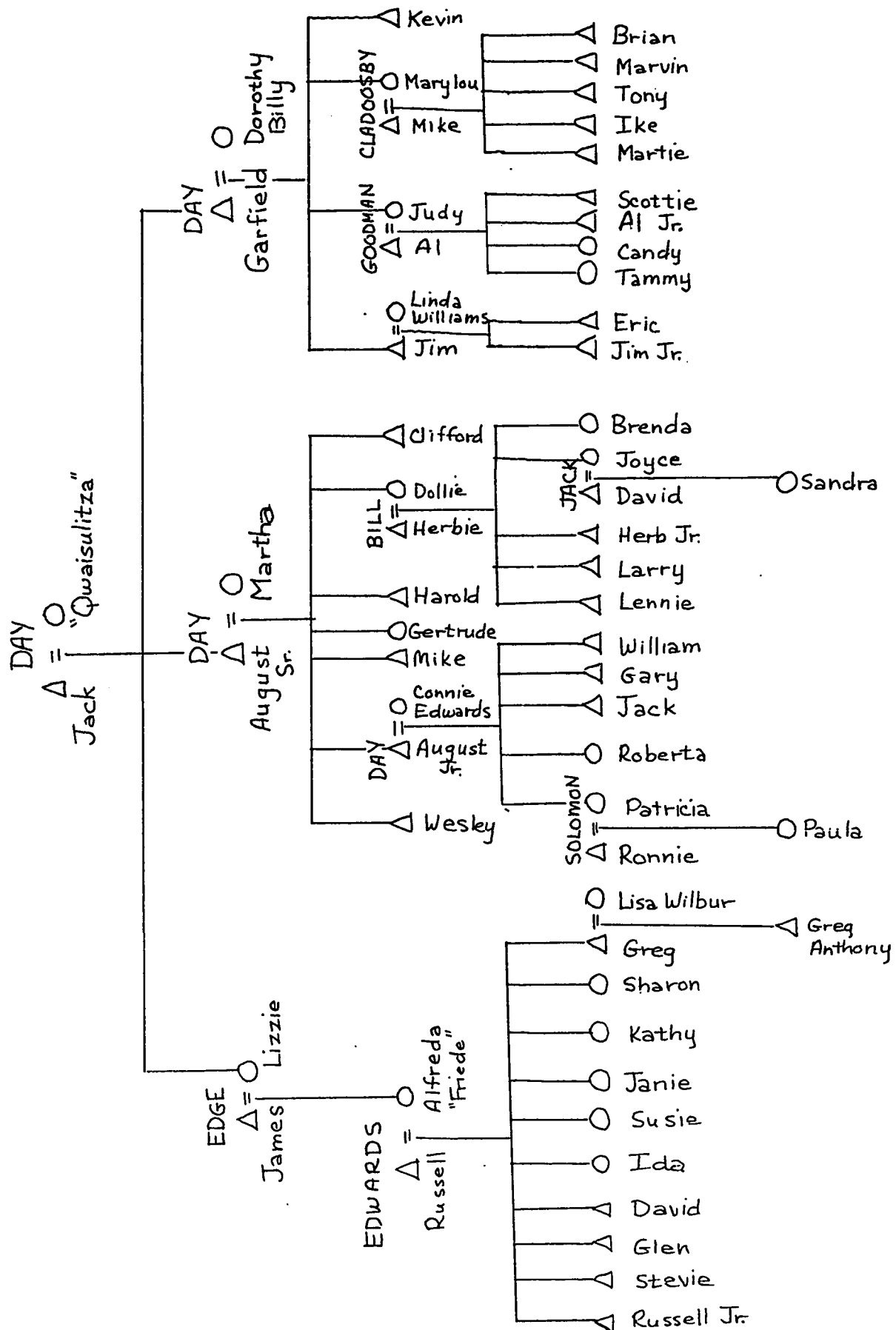


CHART IIIA. JACK DAY'S Descendants

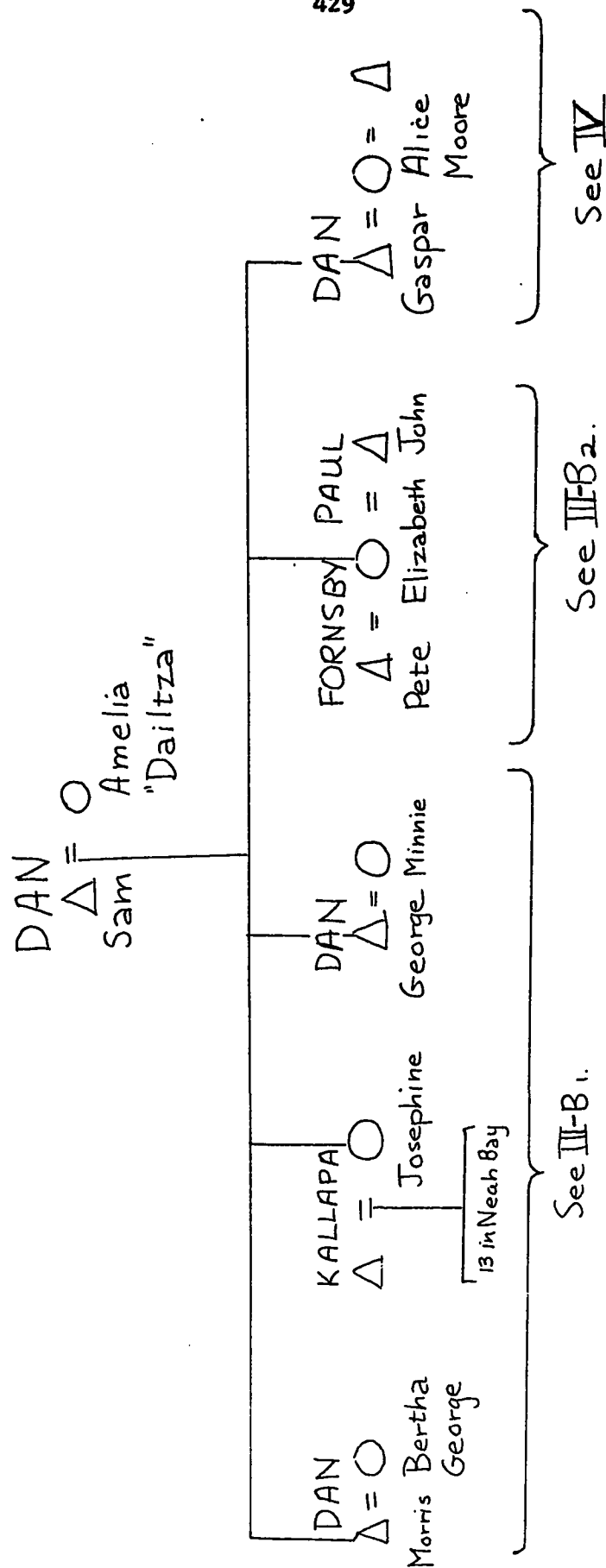


CHART III-B.
AMELIA DAN ("DAILTZA")'S Descendants

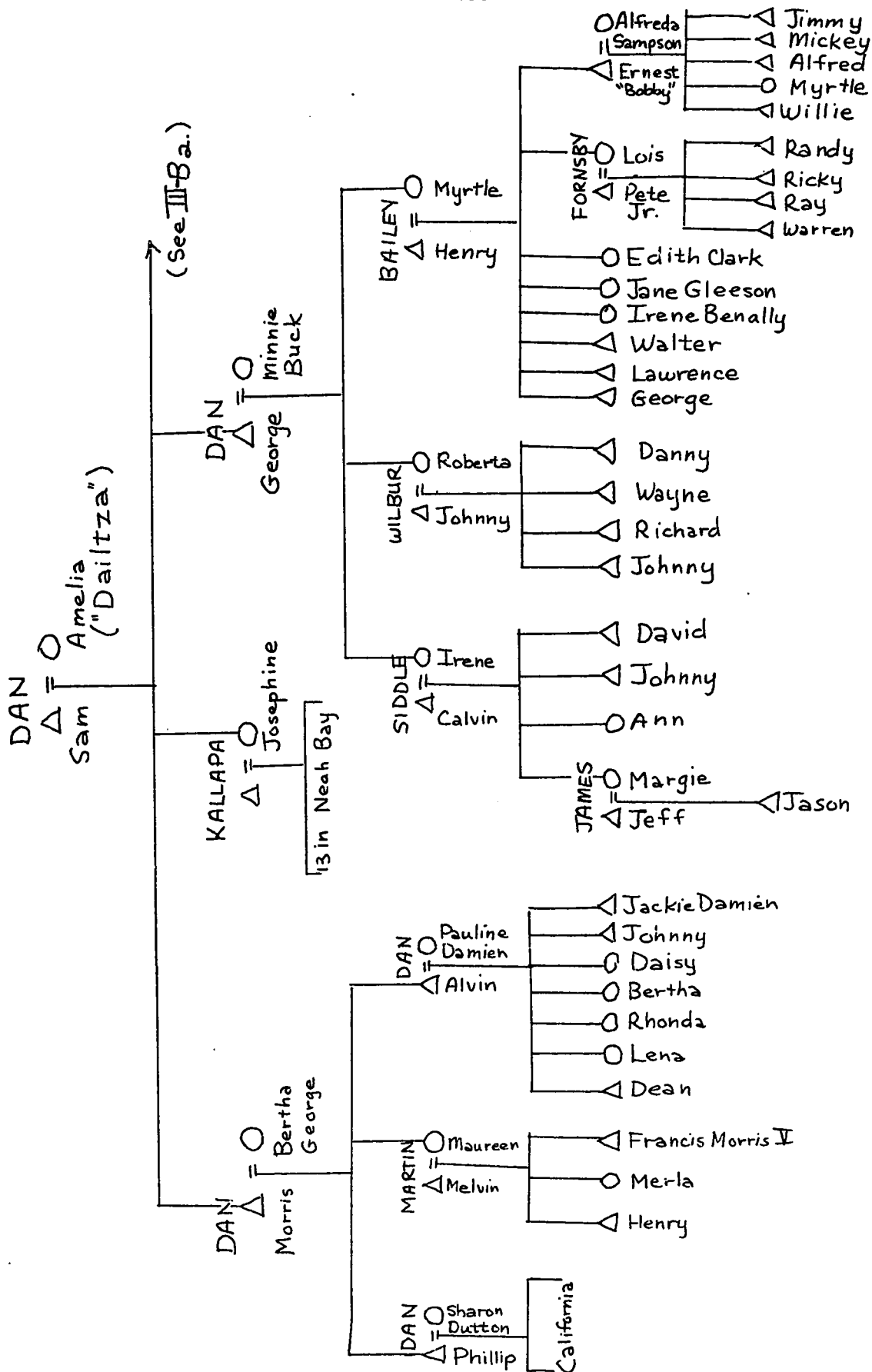


CHART II-B 1. Morris, Josephine, and George Dan's Descendants

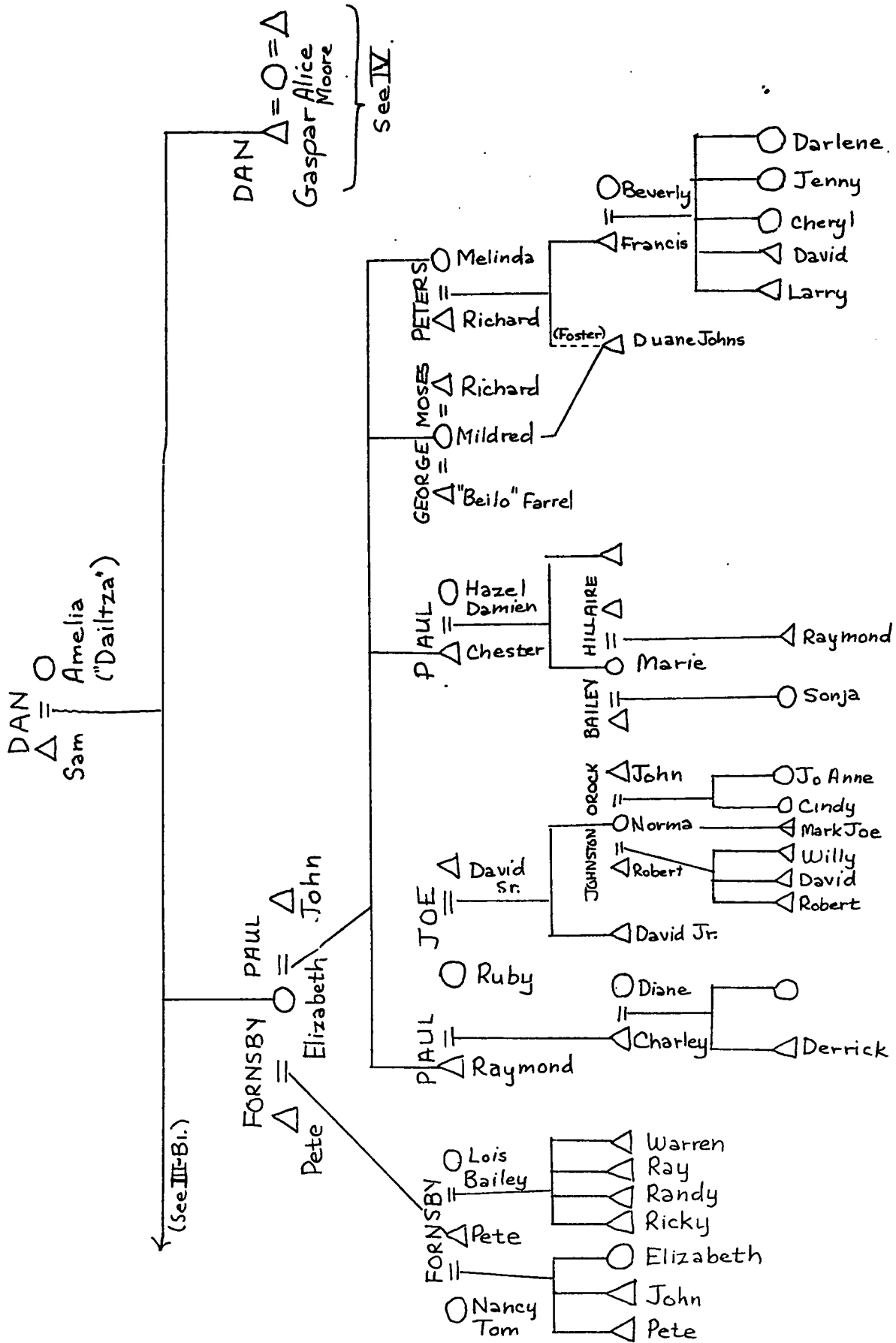
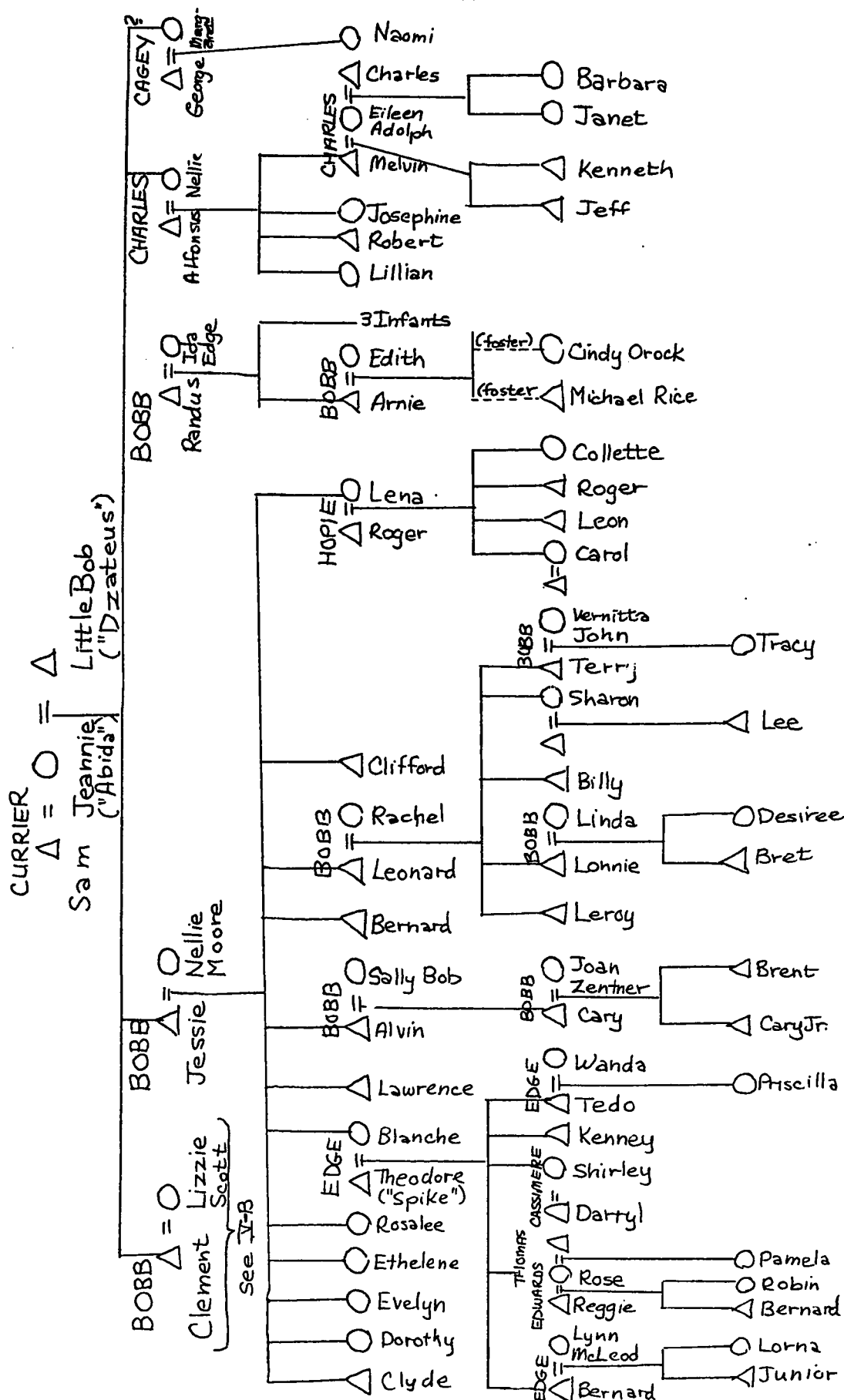


CHART III-B2. Elizabeth and Gaspar Dan



Jeannie ("Abida")'s Descendants

CHART III-C.

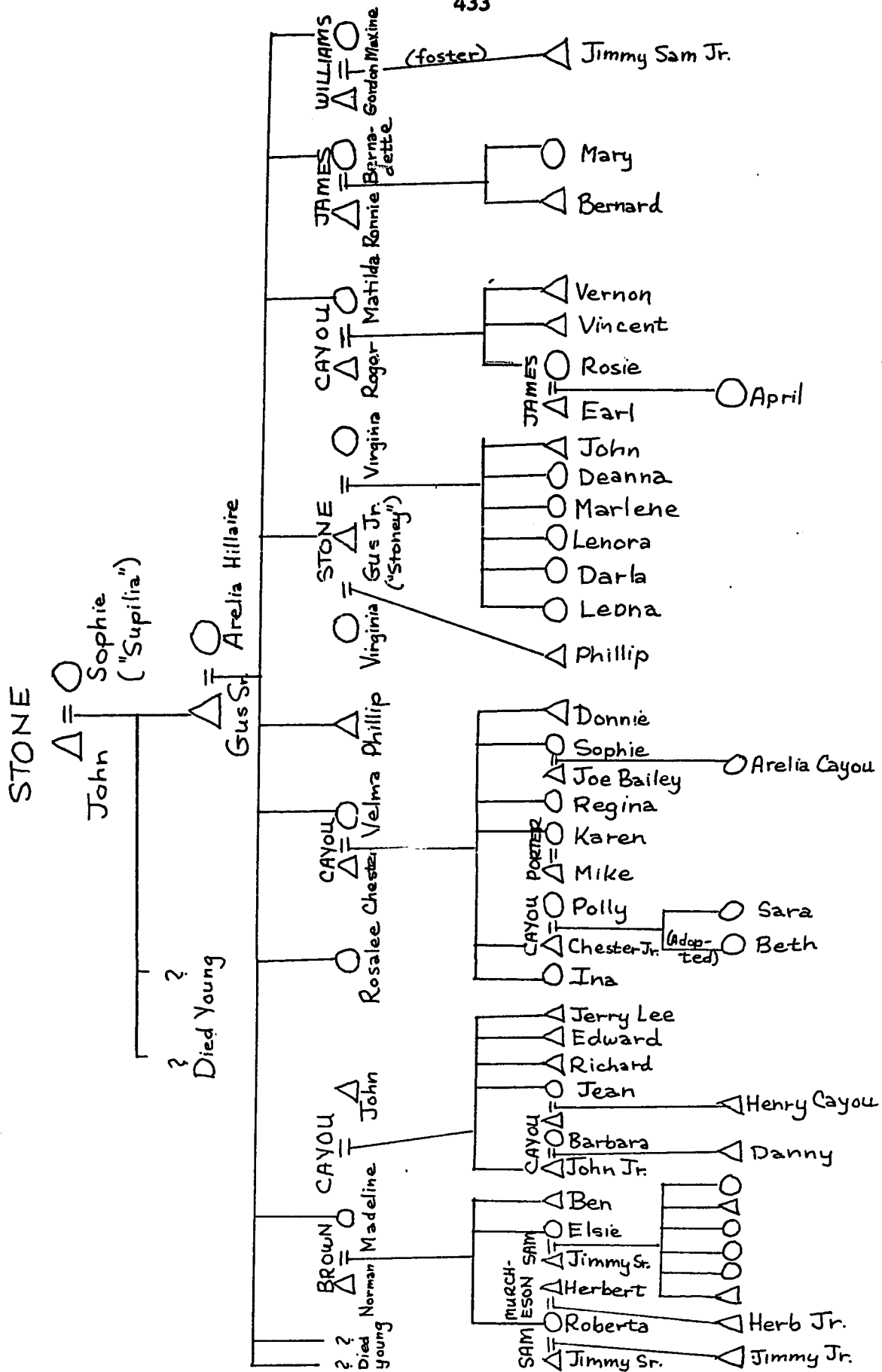
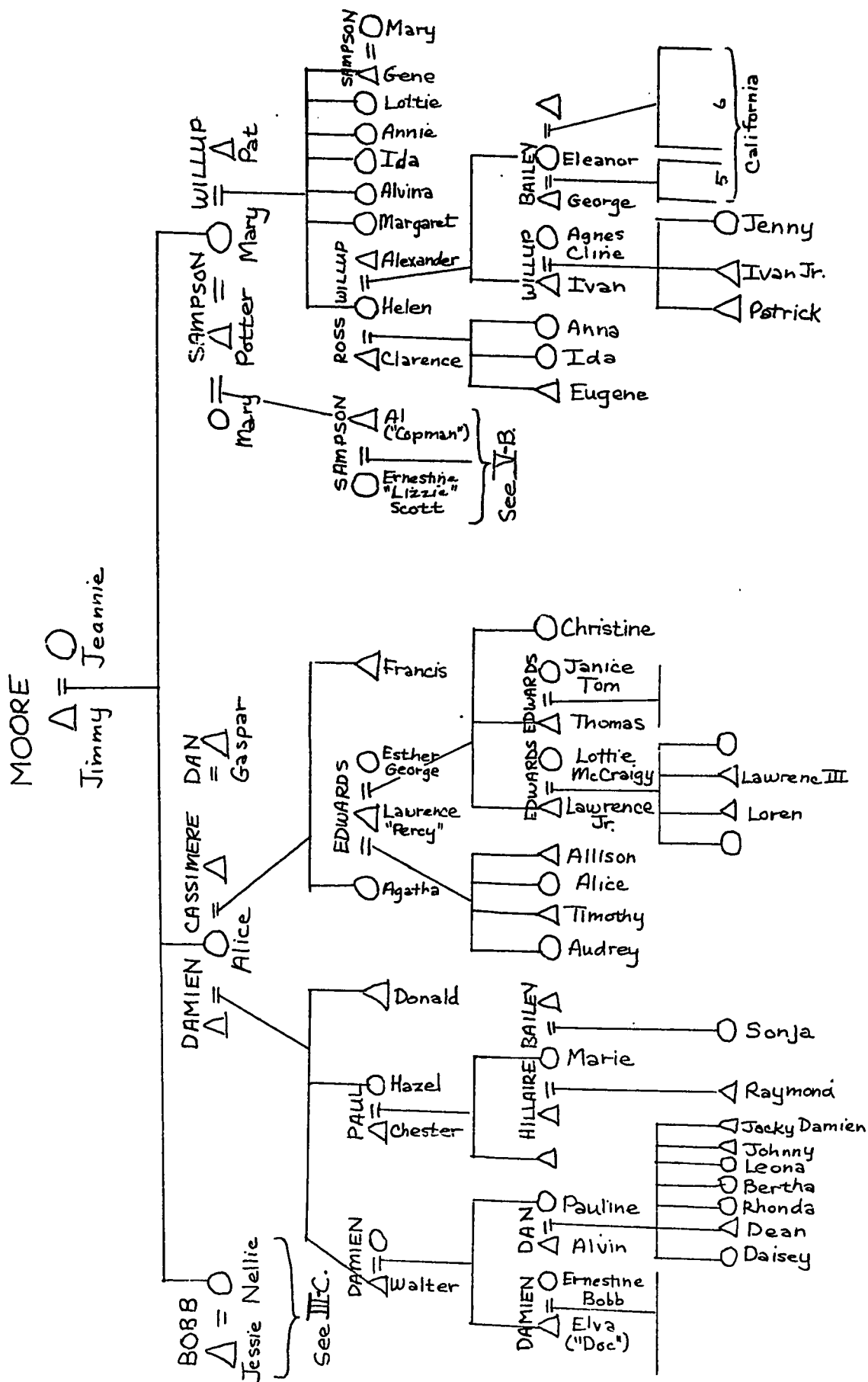


CHART III-D. Sophie ("Supilia")'s Descendants



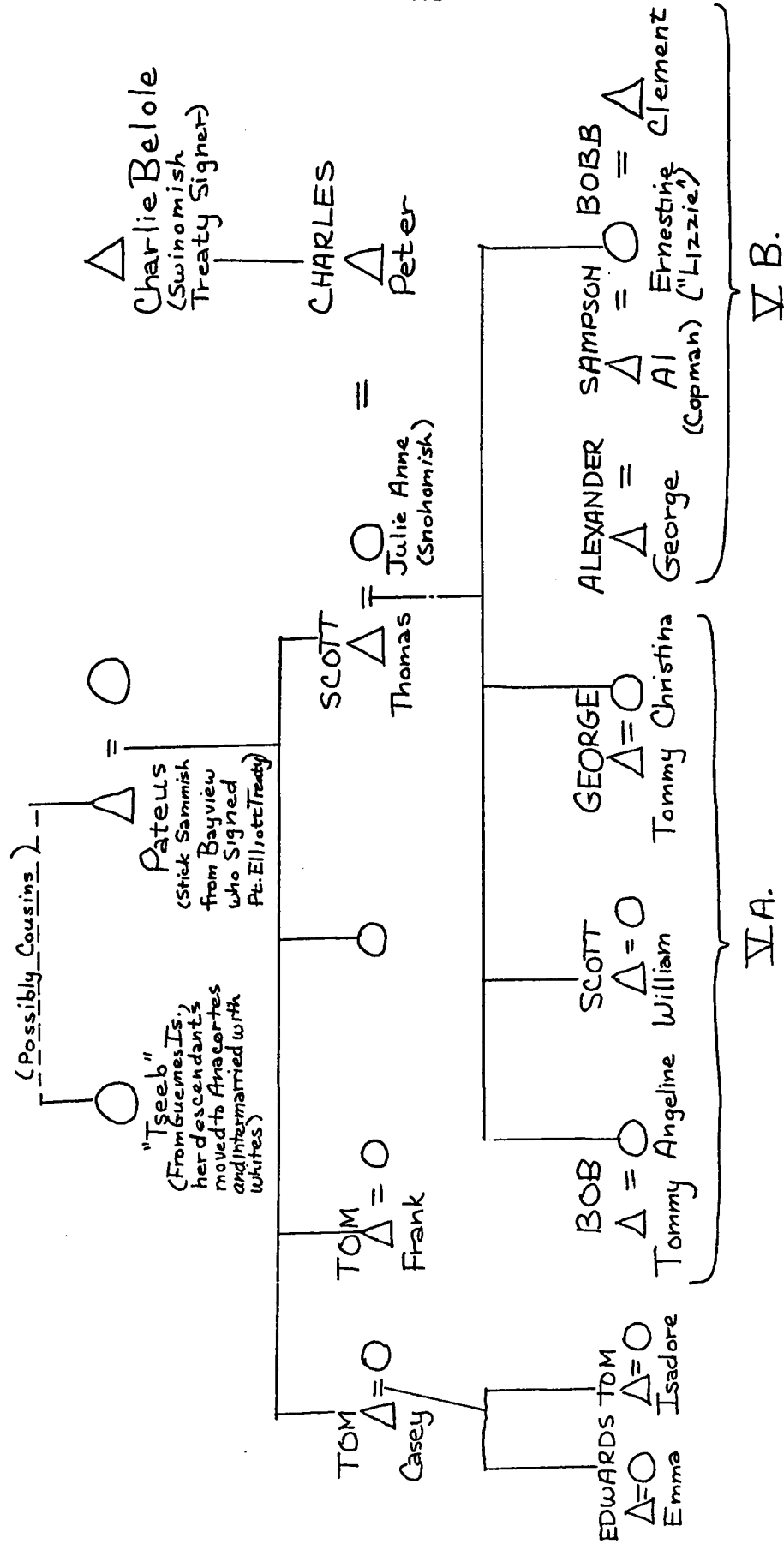


CHART V "PATEUS" Descendants

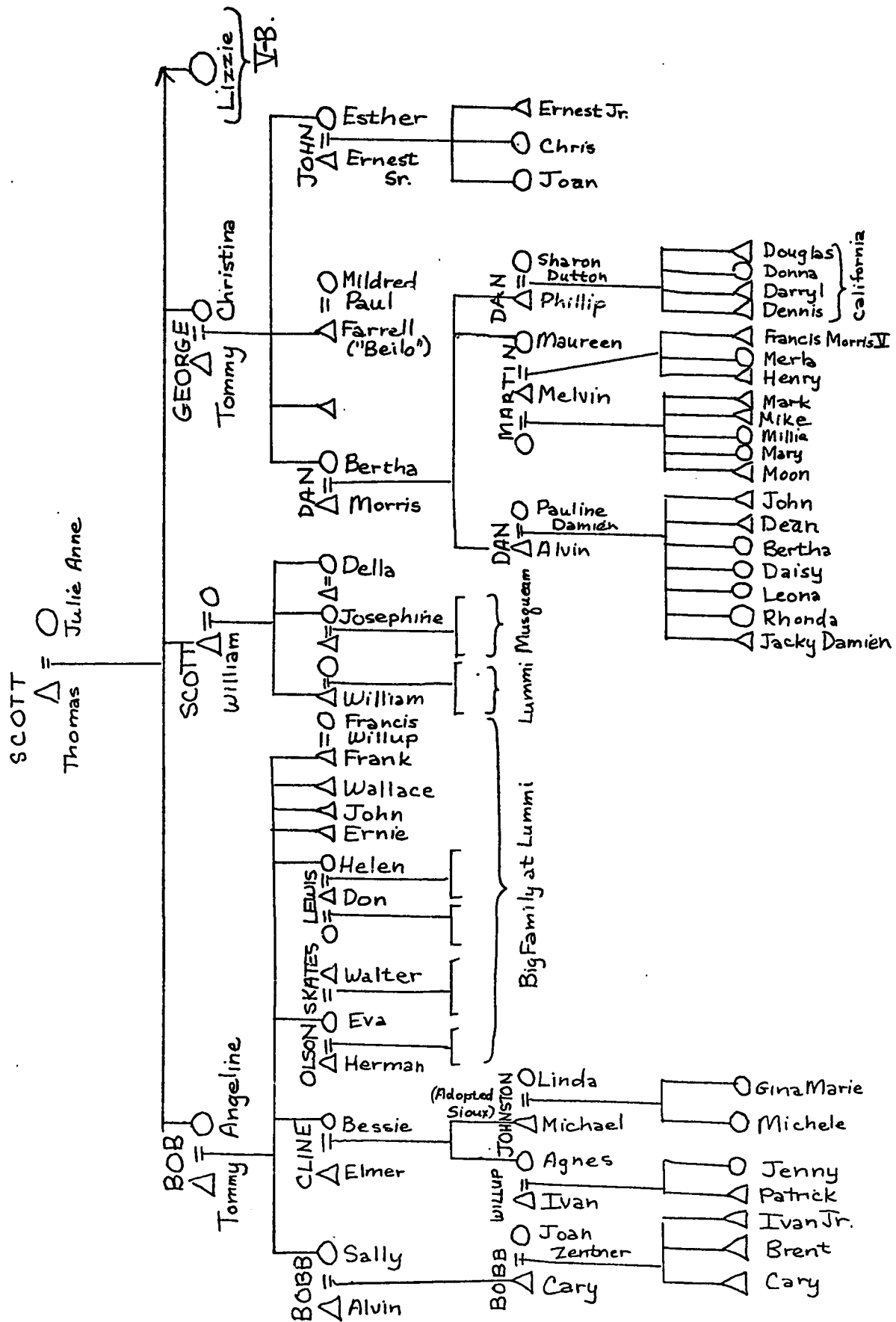


CHART V-A. Angeline, William, and Christina Scott's Descendants

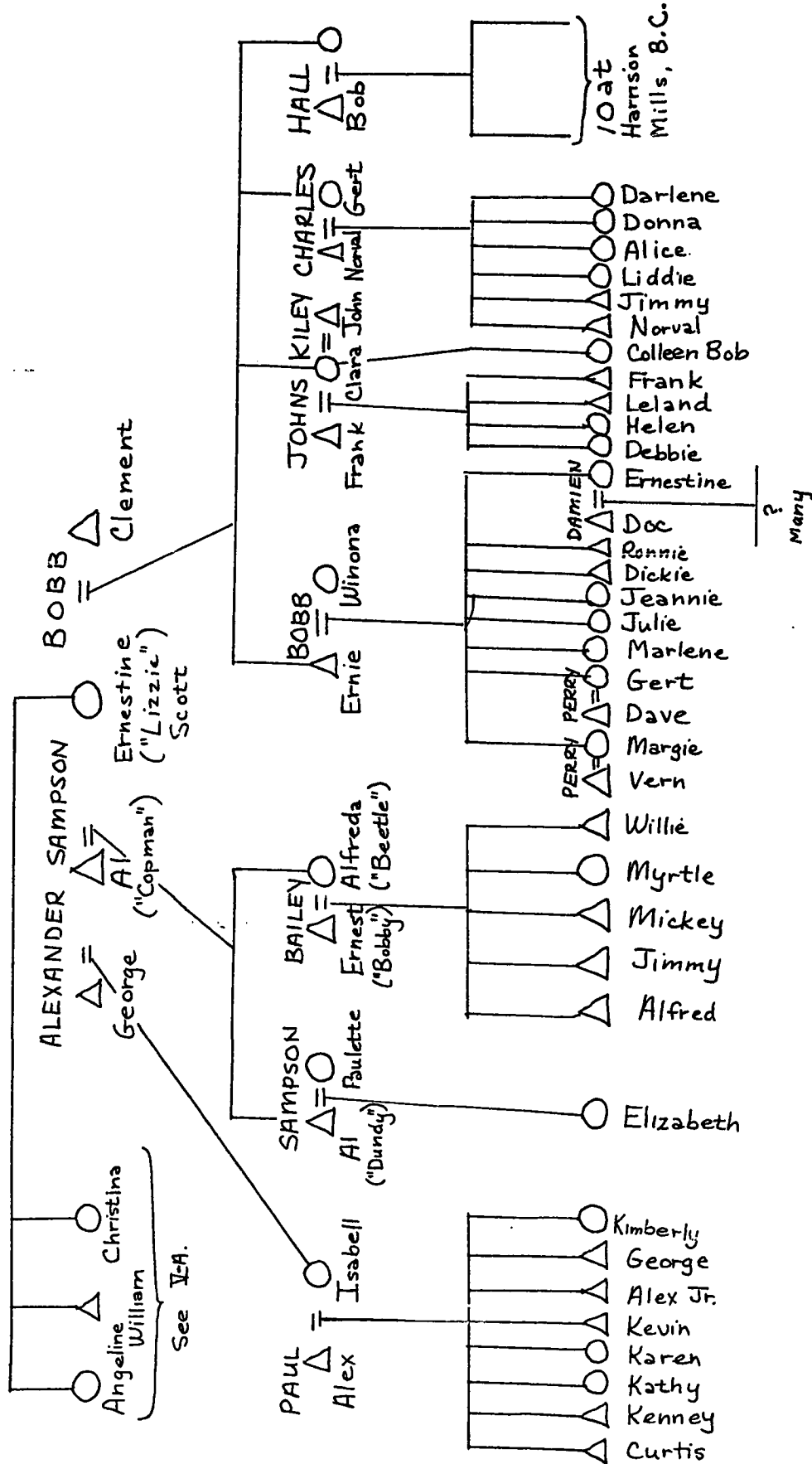


CHART V-B "Lizzie" Scott's Descendants

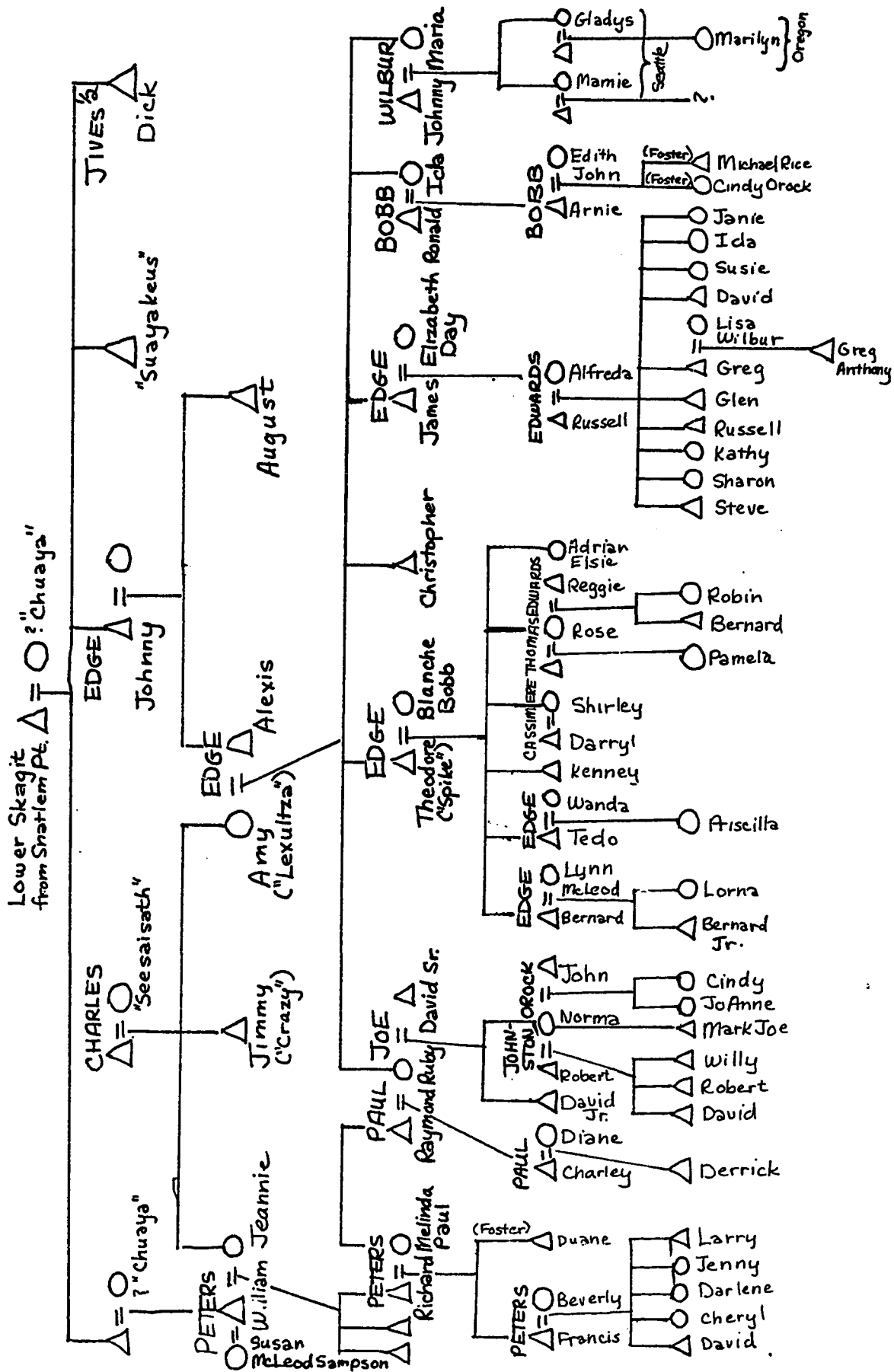


CHART VI A Lower Skagit Family from Snetlem Point: The Peters and Edges

CHART VII Doktor Joe's Descendants

CHART VIII. The John Family and Some Upper Skagit Relatives

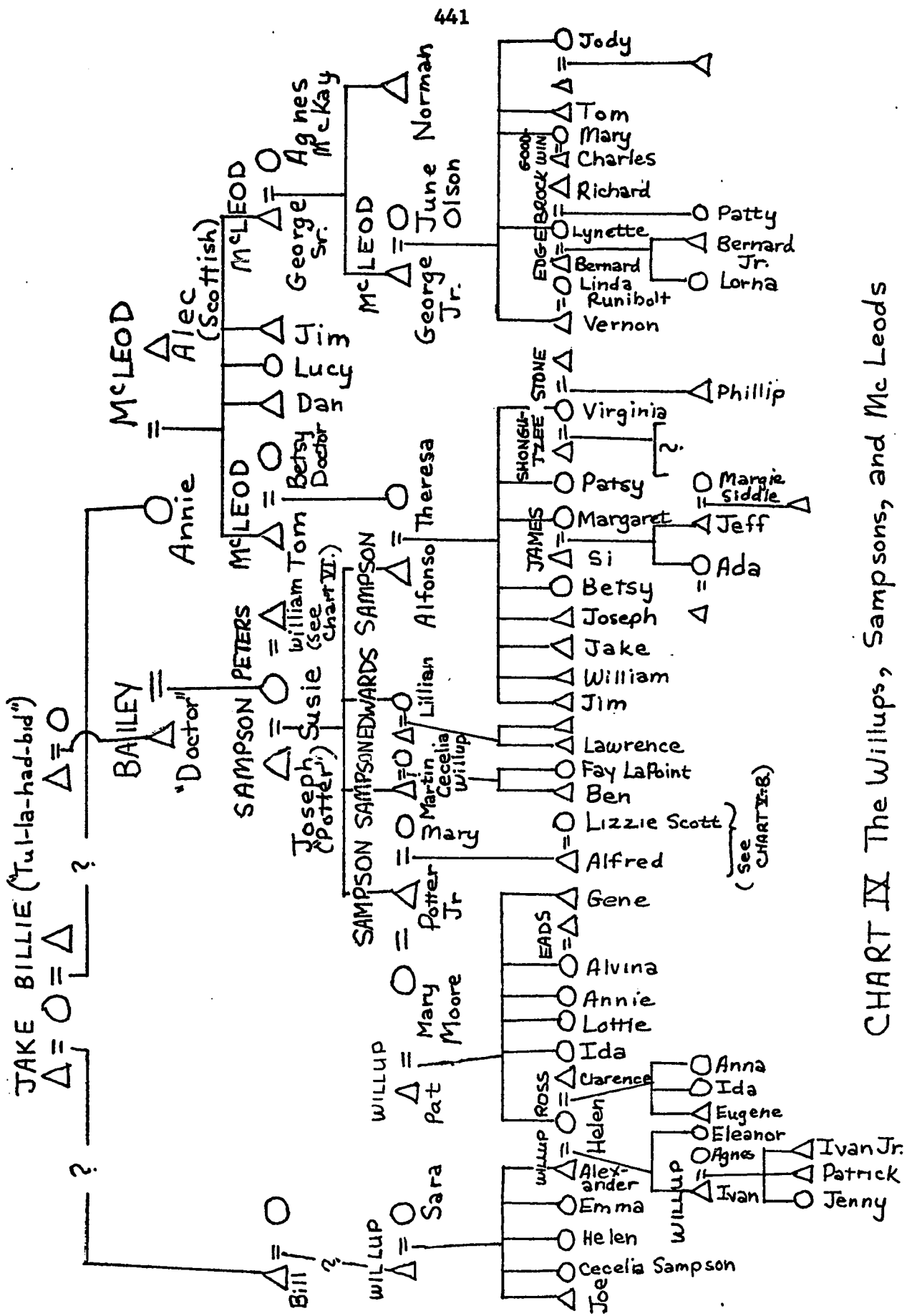


CHART IV The Willups, Sampsons, and Mc Leods

CHART X The Wilbur, Forsby, and Charles Families

(Samish from Guemes Is.)

EDWARDS

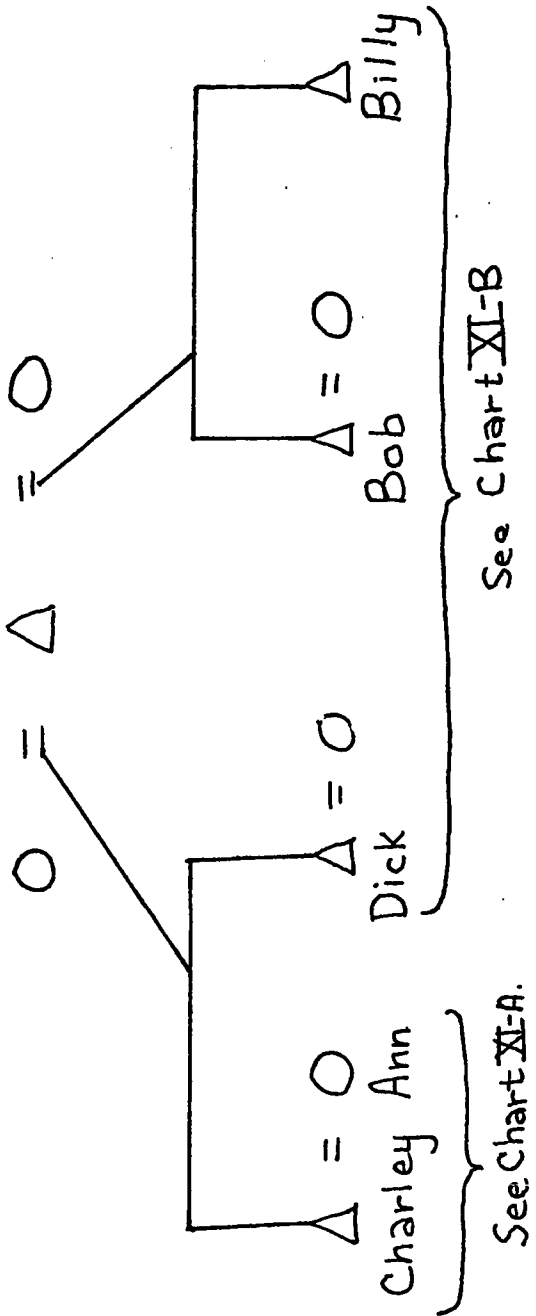


CHART XI The Edwards Family

EDWARDS

Charlie = Ann

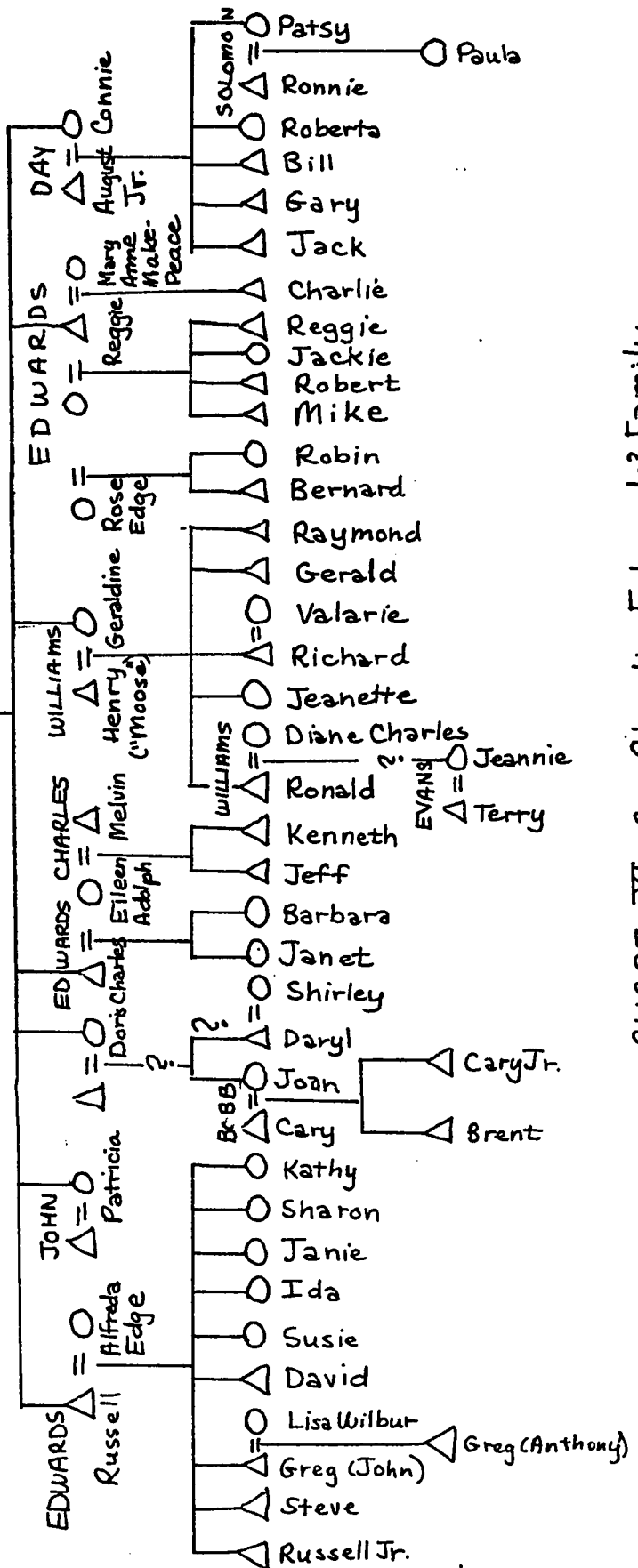
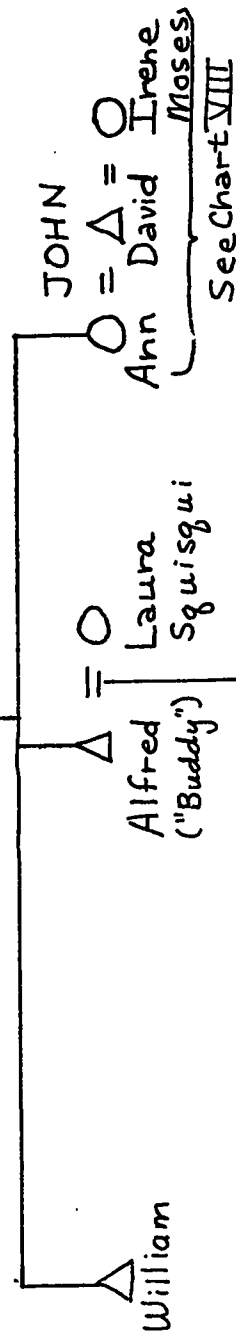


CHART XI-A Charlie Edwards' Family

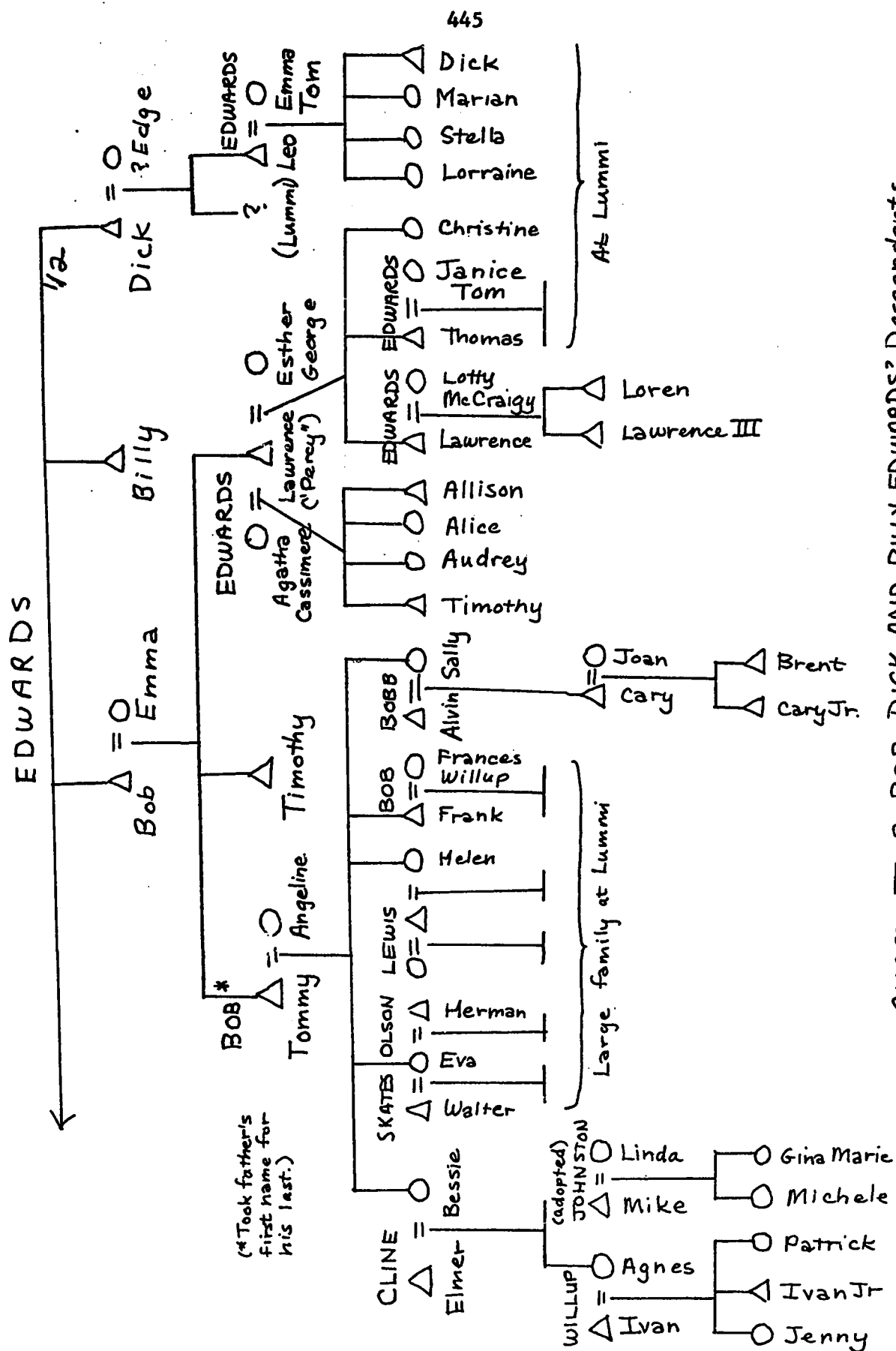


CHART XI-B BOB, DICK, AND BILLY EDWARDS' DESCENDANTS

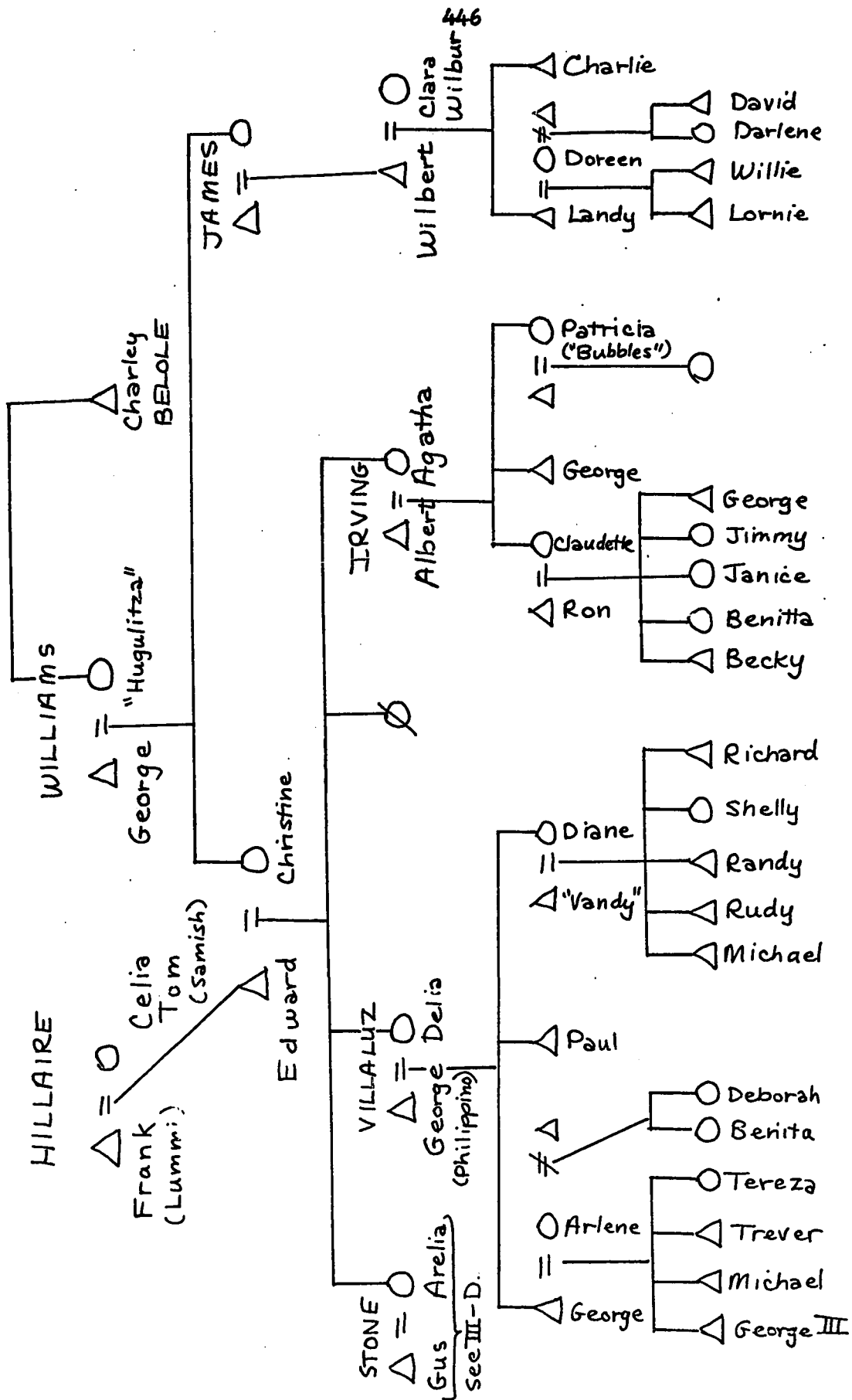


CHART XII George Williams' Descendants

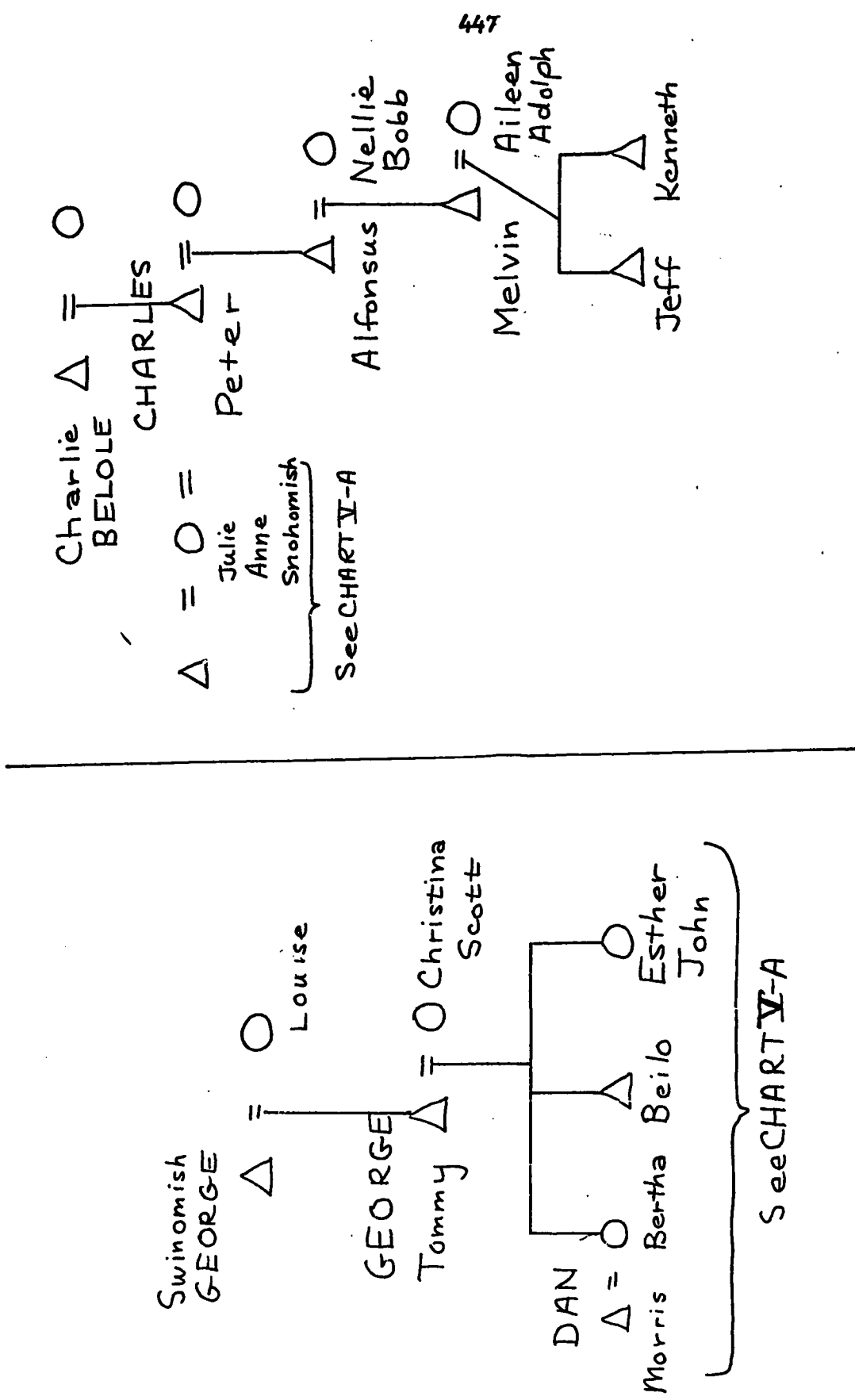


CHART XIII Swinomish George's and Charlie Belole's Descendants

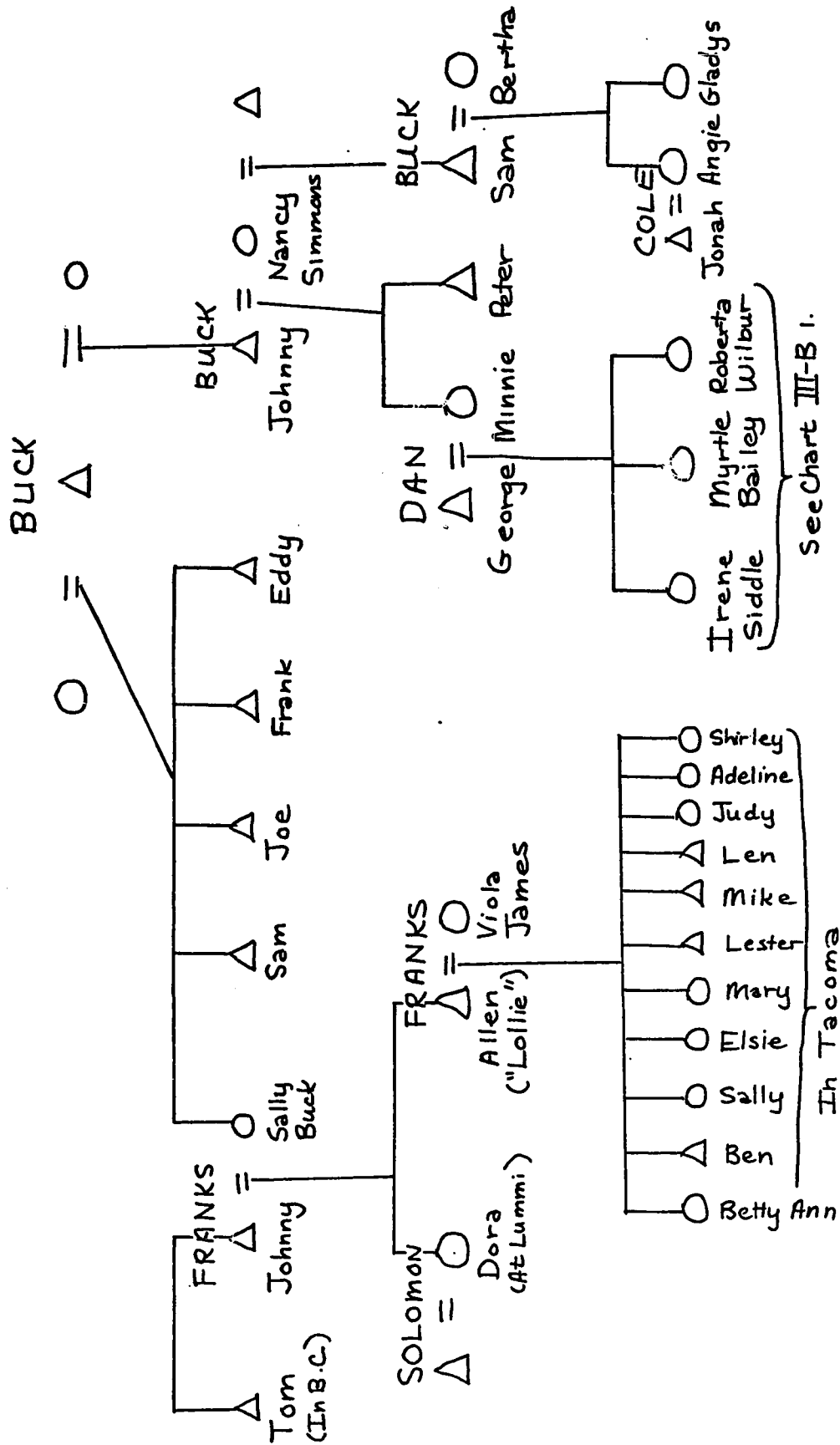


CHART XIV Allen ("Lollie") Franks' Relatives

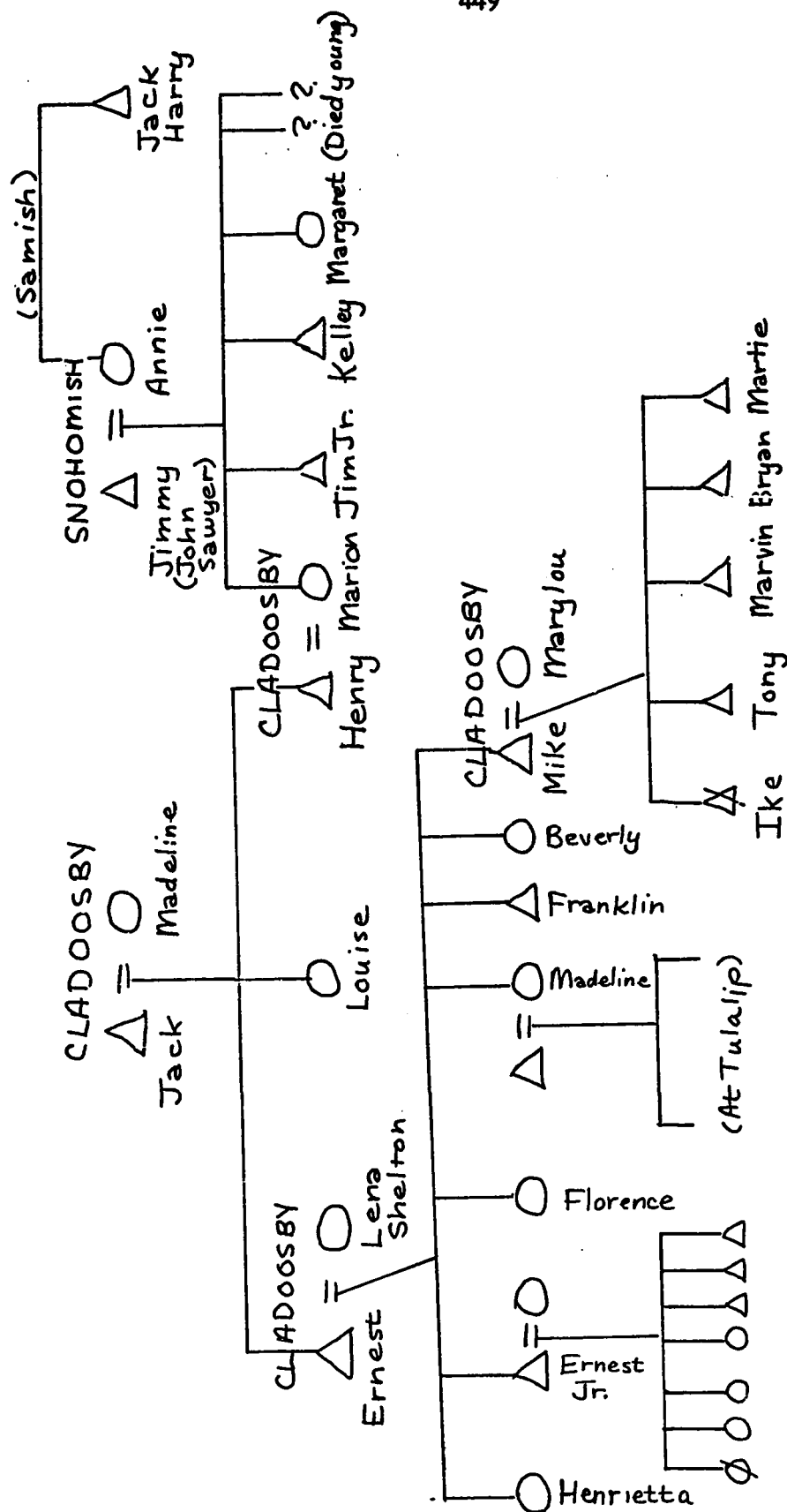
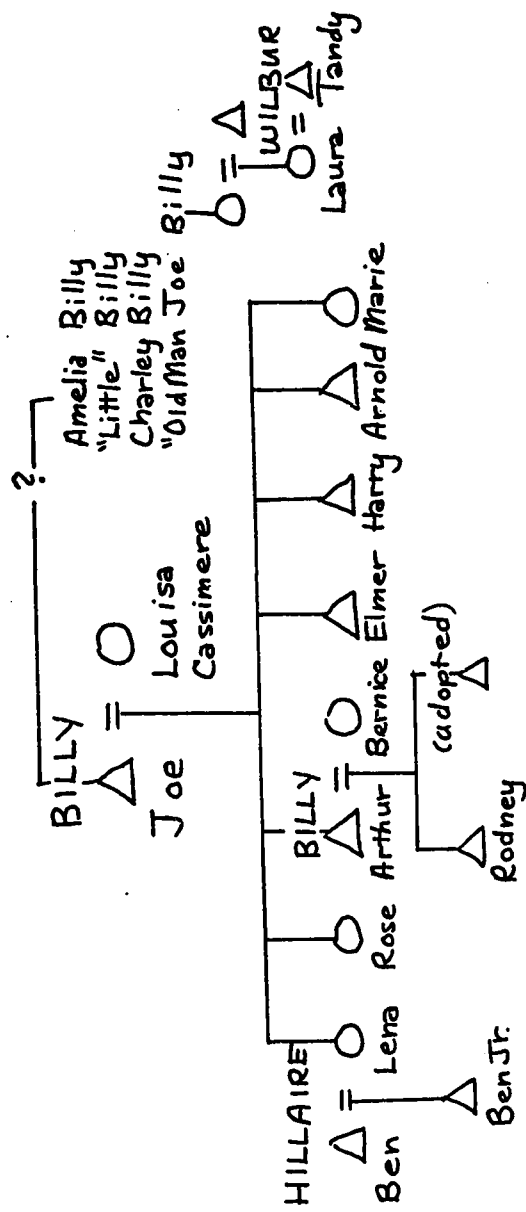
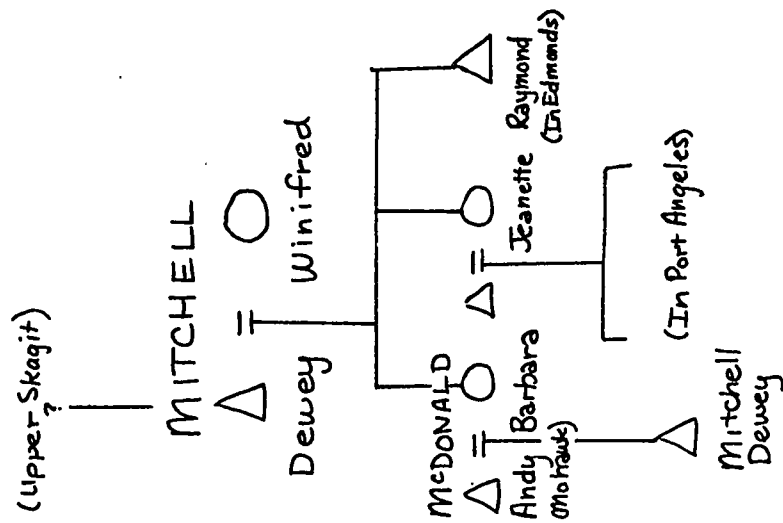


CHART XVI Henry and Marion Cladoosby's Relatives



450

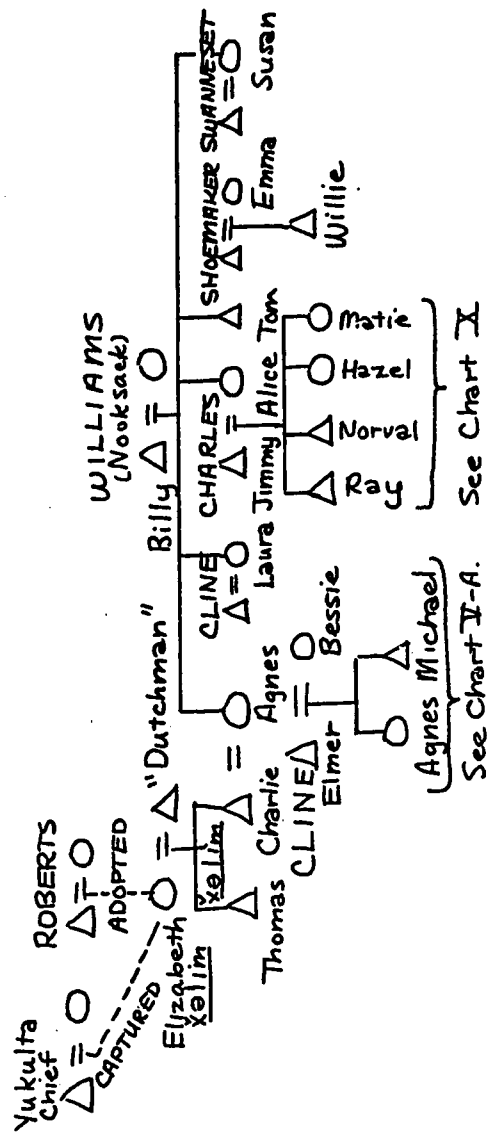


CHART XVI Dewey Mitchell, Joe Billy, and Elmer Cline

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- 13 Ind.Cl.Comm. 583 (1964)
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