

"I am an Indian and live on the Indian Reserve":
History, Culture, Politics, Colonialism, and the (Re)Making of Chief Billie Hall

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Abstract

Exploring the experiences of one Aboriginal man, Chief William (Billie) Hall of the Tzeachten reserve (located within the City of Chilliwack, BC), as documented by him in his journals covering the period 1923-1933, this thesis argues that categories of class and gender, as well as Aboriginality, serve as windows providing insights into how Native individuals understood and experienced colonialism as they struggled to find a place for themselves in a rapidly changing world. This thesis examines gender and class differences within *Stó:lô* culture to interpret Hall's experiences at a time during which the *Stó:lô* faced great change as a result of the imposition of new restrictions and boundaries placed upon Aboriginal people by the Canadian government and its Indian Act (1876) and the new economy developing in their territory. Beginning with an exploration of the historiography of Aboriginal men living their lives in a world rapidly being changed by colonial forces, the thesis continues with a detailed introduction to who Hall the man was at the time he began writing his diaries, placing his life history within a *Stó:lô* understanding of class and gender. The third chapter explores the effects of the Indian Act, which set out a definition of "Indian and imposed new forms of community governance, on not only Hall's identity, but that of another man from his reserve, George Matheson. The fourth chapter examines Hall's work as an "Indian boss" in the hop industry, an as yet unstudied role in which an Aboriginal man acted as steward for hundreds of temporary Aboriginal labourers and their families, and demonstrates interesting links between the wage labour economy and Aboriginal leadership. Ultimately, this thesis demonstrates that Hall, in his engagement with colonialism, was able to achieve an identity for himself that was grounded in a local *Stó:lô* understanding of who an elite male, a leader, was and needed to be. Furthermore, this thesis argues that voices like Hall's, which may not fit neatly with a broader meta-narrative about colonialism in B.C., in which Aboriginals were made victims, are nonetheless important to understanding the Canadian colonial past.

Acknowledgements

This thesis would not have been possible without many supporters, and while there are too many to list here, there are several to whom I would like to give particular recognition and gratitude.

My friendship with my supervisor Dr. Keith Thor Carlson now spans nearly fifteen years, and his role in my academic and professional career cannot be underestimated. While I was an undergraduate, Dr. Carlson was the first to encourage me to develop “real world” skills and experience as a historian. At his strong suggestion, I enrolled in an ethnohistory field school, and was introduced to the ethics and practical considerations of conducting oral histories in the field. Most importantly, Dr. Carlson showed me how to engage in history that is not only sensitive and responsive to community interests, but also brings critical insights to broader stories. Five years later, after starting my career with the Canadian government as a historian on Aboriginal issues, a chance meeting with Dr. Carlson (in which he encouraged me to think about graduate school) led to my enrollment at the University of Saskatchewan. Throughout the many years of my M.A., his encouragement of my ideas, confidence in my abilities, and strong interest in my topic kept me going when I found the going tough. I could not have asked for a better advisor.

This thesis further benefited from the careful considerations of my committee members. Dr. Bill Waiser reminded me to connect Billie Hall’s story with the local context of both place and time. Dr. Geoff Cunfer’s questions about how my work as a public servant actively addressing the colonial legacy of the Indian residential school system were reflected in my work made me think more about my own personal perspective on the broader meta-narrative of colonialism in Canada. And both Dr. Waiser and Dr. Cunfer helped me realize the importance of Billie Hall’s voice as a man of mixed heritage. Lastly, the thoughtful questions about the meaning of identity

and the act of writing a journal asked by my external examiner, Dr. Kristina Bidwell, led me to think a bit more about what journal writing may have meant for Billie Hall.

Participating in not one, but two, ethnohistory field schools at *Stó:lō* Nation brought me into contact with many amazing people. Dr. John S. Lutz, from the University of Victoria, provided much encouragement and also helpful guidance on both field school papers, the second of which was focused on Billie Hall. Tia Halstead, the archivist at *Stó:lō* Nation, helped immeasurably with the research, placing Billie into the local context. Alice Marwood's genealogical research on the Hall family provided a wonderful "shortcut" for me by providing information from a wide range of historical sources. Staff at the Chilliwack Museum and Archives were wonderful in providing excellent information about the hop industry in general, and the Hulbert Hop Gardens in particular. Lastly, Karen at the Coqualeetza Cultural Education Society was incredibly helpful in assisting me in finding information about *Stó:lō* participation in the hop industry, and also in reviewing the typewritten copies of Hall's journals.

My colleagues with Aboriginal Affairs and Northern Development Canada also deserve special recognition. I could not have completed my M.A. without the support of my manager, Paula Caird, and supervisor, Alison MacRae-Miller, who approved a number of extended leaves and altered work arrangements which allowed me to research and write this thesis while holding a full-time job. A debt of thanks is also owed to my close colleagues, who stepped in and took on extra work while I was out of the office, asked for updates, and offered encouraging stories of their own graduate experiences. The outstanding dedication to excellent work demonstrated by the staff of National Research and Analysis, and the desire to never do less than their best, will always be an inspiration to me.

Countless friends and family provided much encouragement, and maybe just a little ribbing, over the six years from start to finish of my M.A. experience. My aunt, Joy Barr,

provided a cozy home away from home whenever I needed to be in Saskatoon. My parents, Ken and Irene Kostuchenko, mostly kept their fears about me ever finishing to themselves; their patience and support of me, in all I do, is something for which I will always be grateful. Mandy Fehr, a wonderful friend and colleague, read endless drafts, provided invaluable comments, and always made me smile, no matter how down I felt. Just as it takes a village to raise a child, it takes an incredible circle of friends to raise a thesis.

Lastly, I cannot thank Cathy Hall enough for allowing me access to Billie Hall's diaries. Thank you for sharing your family's history with me, and others, who can now access copies at the *Stó:lô* Nation archives. Your pride in your family is something to celebrate, and I am so honoured to have been able to share in it.

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Preface

While this M.A. thesis is not the one I set out in 2006 to research and write, in many ways it is consistent with my general historical interests. Particularly, I have always loved histories that connect a direct line between a historical happening and the present I experience. As such, I have been particularly drawn to histories that speak about the not-too-distant past, and specifically the twentieth century. And while I have always been interested in learning about other cultures, the history of Aboriginal people in Canada holds a particular special place in my heart, as I have had the honour of working with and for Aboriginal people throughout my career which has been engaged in conducting historical research for the federal Department of Aboriginal Affairs and Northern Development. So while initially I may not have set out to explore Billie Hall's specific history, his story perfectly fits with my research interests.

I have been studying and working with *Stó:lô* people in the upper Fraser Valley for over a decade. In the late 1990s, I had the opportunity to work as an archaeologist during a field school and thus began a focused study of *Stó:lô* cultures, peoples, and histories. A year later, I joined another field school, guided by historians Keith Carlson (then a PhD candidate and historian for the *Stó:lô* Nation) and Dr. John Lutz of the University of Victoria which brought me back to work with the *Stó:lô* Nation in Chilliwack. It was at this second field school that I was encouraged to develop my own skills in the area of ethnohistory. Ethnohistory allowed me to integrate the teachings from the two majors of my undergraduate degree: history and archaeology, and I discovered a wonderful combination of the cultural interests and anthropological theories I'd learned as an archaeologist with my skills in historical research.

While at the ethnohistory fieldschool in 2000, I researched, in broad strokes, the history of agriculture (post-1876) among *Stó:lô* people. This research opened my eyes to not only how widespread the adoption of Western-style agriculture was, but also how colonial agents simultaneously encouraged and restricted its adoption among Aboriginal Canadians in general and the *Stó:lô* specifically. Specifically, I was inspired by the story of one *Stó:lô* man, whose

story I was told, but was not able to fit into my fieldschool paper, who was not only successful at, but clearly had a passion for dairy farming - not an occupation one would normally associate with people typically portrayed as dependent on fishing. When I was accepted into the graduate programme at the University of Saskatchewan, I was determined to follow-up on this man's history, and the story of *Stó:lô* dairy farmers generally.

I had the fortune of participating in a third field school with the *Stó:lô* in 2007, this time as an M.A. student in History, determined to interview living *Stó:lô* people who had been involved in agriculture, and particularly dairy farming. Unfortunately, for a variety of reasons, I was unable to conduct any interviews, especially with the family of the man whose dairy farm in which I was most interested. Instead, I had the particularly good fortune of being led to four type-written copies of Chief Billie Hall's diaries, kept at the Coqualeetza Cultural Centre archives, after I'd enquired about anything they might have on Aboriginal farmers. I was amazed at the detail and variety of subjects Hall had written about, and when I finally realized, almost two years after the completion of the field school, that my plan to study the experiences of *Stó:lô* dairy farmers would not be realized, I knew that I had found something special that could form the basis of any number of interesting topics. Shortly after switching my topic of study to Hall's journals, I was surprised to be contacted by the *Stó:lô* Nation's archivist, who introduced me to Cathy Hall – Billie Hall's great-granddaughter. I was even more surprised to learn that she had an additional six journals, including Billie's original journals kept in wonderful condition.

Now at the end of my M.A. journey, I believe that Billie Hall's story is the story I was meant to write about. He has taught me a great deal through his journals, and in turn, I hope that I have brought interesting insights into his life and times. And while this is not a biography per se, it is Billie's biography, his life-story, that illuminates the history I am bringing forward. Thank you Billie.

Chapter 1 Introduction

In March 2011, I attended “Sharing Truth—Creating a National Research Centre on Residential Schools,” an event hosted by the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada (hereafter TRC), a commission of inquiry set up by the federal government in response to the terrible legacy of Canada’s Indian residential school (IRS) system.¹ The purpose of the three-day gathering was to provide the TRC’s three commissioners and support staff with information from a wide-ranging group of international speakers who were associated with organizations that seek to gather information and expose issues of human rights violations; part of the TRC’s court-ordered mandate is to establish a National Research Centre as a permanent resource for all Canadians to research and learn “what happened within the Residential Schools.”² Among the attendees were university librarians, human-rights scholars, TRC staff, representatives from Indian Affairs and Northern Development Canada,³ and many Aboriginal former IRS students. Although not one former IRS student was invited to be a presenter, many in the audience spoke up to address the commissioners directly during the question period that followed each panel.⁴ Their comments and questions were for the most part not about what a possible research centre might look like or what it might contain, but about the TRC’s mandate itself. They wanted to know: “Are you going to talk about foster care? Adoption? What about all the other ways our human rights have been violated by Canada?” They commented, “if you want to get at truth and reconciliation, you must look at everything, the whole system, not just residential schools”; they were talking about Canadians’ shared history of colonialism. I heard other, implicit, statements

¹ “Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada (TRC)”, n.d.
<http://www.trc.ca/websites/trcinstitution/index.php?p=4>.

² “National Research Centre Forum,” *Sharing Truth—Creating a National Research Centre on Residential Schools*, n.d., <http://www.trc-nrc.ca/websites/NRC/index.php?p=181>.

³ Note: As of May 18, 2011, the applied title of this federal department is Aboriginal Affairs and Northern Development Canada.

⁴ Former students were not invited as panelists although the Indian Residential Schools Survivor Committee, an advisory committee to the TRC composed of former students, was invited to publically reflect on what members had heard from the international panelists.

and questions in the comments of these former students: We know our truths; we have been trying to reconcile lives, cultures, and communities to this thing called colonialism for a very long time. When will non-Aboriginal Canadians understand the truth? When will they reconcile with *their* past? When will all of us, Native and newcomer Canadians alike, be reconciled as a society?

As both a student of the history of Aboriginal people in Canada, and a federal public servant working on historical research to support efforts to acknowledge and understand the history of the Indian residential schools system on Canadians⁵ – Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal alike – I have spent, and continue to spend, countless hours reflecting on the historical narratives that have been created to explain Canada’s colonial past. For me, this history is not only “the past”, but “alive”, an ever-present force affecting the Canada I experience today. I am also conscious that there are many “truths”, many stories, about the past, not all of which fit within the broader storyline that has come to represent the Canadian colonial past. The still lingering meta-narrative, in which Canadian colonial agents and structures victimized Aboriginal people over and over again until finally they were excluded from broader Canadian society, while undoubtedly true in many, many aspects, nonetheless obscures or leaves out other voices. The purpose of this thesis is to bring forth one of these heretofore hidden voices, expanding the history of colonialism in British Columbia.

This thesis explores in some detail the life of William (Billie) A. Hall, a man (of mixed Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal heritage) from the Fraser Valley in British Columbia (B.C.), in an effort to understand the complex interplay of cultural understandings of elite masculinity with opportunities made available through the colonial world of B.C around the turn of the twentieth

⁵ In 2000, I took a short-term contract with the federal government to provide research to support the government’s response to litigation claims associated with abuses at IRS, later joining the public service and working more directly on the resolution of IRS claims. I have researched the histories of many schools and of thousands of individual students and staff. I have been immersed in federal government records of our colonial past while also an active participant in implementing programs and policies directed at Aboriginal Canadians. Most recently, I have been working to identify and organize records for disclosure to the TRC (and eventual inclusion in the National Research Centre it will create).

century. While there were likely many opportunities to which Hall may have had access, I look specifically at the impact of the Aboriginal governance model set out by the Indian Act, and the wage labour economy of the hop industry which developed in B.C. at about the same time. I argue that these opportunities significantly contributed to Hall's achievement of the hallmarks, status, and identity of an elite *Stó:lō* male – one who was “wealthy”, respected, and controlled an extended kinship network's access to resources. Importantly, the exploration of Hall's life-story illuminates, perhaps surprising, facets of broader colonial processes such as the creation of “Indians” and community and personal identities, and the effect of these identities on Indian-Newcomer politics and relationships and the wage labour economy. Lastly, the meta-narrative behind Canadian colonialism is complicated by the revelation that colonial policy administration was not applied evenly in all places, in all times, and to everyone.

Broad studies of Aboriginal people and their experiences with colonialism, I argue, must be viewed in the context of local historical actors and actions, and insights drawn from other disciplines that, increasingly, have made efforts to historicize their topics of study. Many such general studies start with the assumption that the Indian Act and its many amendments, which form a large part of the legal framework within which the Canadian government operates with regard to Aboriginal peoples, was (and is) uniformly applied across the nation and in all time periods. Sociologist James S. Frideres has written a textbook for undergraduates which purports to be a concise and comprehensive examination of the effects of government colonial policy and legislation on Canada's First Nations, recognizing that an understanding of history is necessary to understand the lives of First Nations people and socio-economic realities today.⁶ Colonization and the effect of colonialism, Frideres notes, “has been an insidious process, encroaching upon First Nations communities without a face—government just acts and

⁶ James S Frideres, *First Nations in the Twenty-First Century*, Themes in Canadian Sociology (Don Mills: Oxford University Press, 2011), ix.

consequences follow.”⁷ The second chapter of his textbook focuses on issues of identity and Indian status, a large focus of this thesis. Frideres finds that, for First Nations people, there is a “disjuncture between real life and the abstract realities of [government] social policy”,⁸ wherein “Indian and Northern Affairs Canada has chosen to use the Indian Act as the sole basis for determining who is and isn’t an Indian and has rejected the subjective definition [i.e. self-identification]”.⁹ The Indian Act, Frideres states, “is the core document upon which First Nation–government relations are based and is considered by the government as the ‘scripture’ that must be followed.”¹⁰ Frideres concludes: “This short history reveals that the ‘Indian’ label was given or taken away at the unilateral discretion of governments, and thus many people in Canada have attributes associated with ‘Indianness’ but are not legally considered ‘Indians.’”¹¹ Similarly, Crisca Bierwert, an anthropologist, has examined issues of identity specifically among the *Stó:lō* people, the descendents of Billie Hall and his contemporary community members. Developing her conclusions with regard to the political and historical context, Bierwert finds that “*Stó:lō* families have been strongly influenced by historical political acts that shape existing reservation [reserve] structures.”¹² Bierwert, in her study of domestic violence among the *Stó:lō*, considered the impact of the Indian Act, in a section she titled “Administered Kinship”, which determined who was (and was not) an “Indian,” a legal status associated with certain rights and benefits. The act, which until 1986 privileged men in conferring Indian (or non-Indian) status on their wives and children, Bierwert found, was “not merely a bureaucratic issue of accounting but a system of privileging male claims to land, housing, and children.”¹³ The conclusions Bierwert

⁷ Ibid.

⁸ Ibid., x.

⁹ Ibid., 27.

¹⁰ Ibid., 33.

¹¹ Ibid., 37.

¹² Crisca Bierwert, *Brushed by Cedar, Living by the River: Coast Salish Figures of Power* (Tucson: University of Arizona Press, 1999), 201.

¹³ Ibid., 202.

and Frideres arrive at oversimplify a complex historical process, ultimately stripping Aboriginal historical actors of their agency and certain agents of colonization of their humanity.

Government, as is revealed through the journals Billie Hall has left us, is never “faceless,” particularly historically, when local government officials were often readily accessible and, more importantly, spent considerable time in the communities they served. While this thesis is not the first study to raise these questions, (as historian J.R. Miller put it, “scholars [who] have treated policy intent and effect as similar, if not identical, largely because they concentrated on government fiat and documents”¹⁴) it is unique in its inclusion of Aboriginal voices and my own perspective as a ‘government insider.’ Thus, this present study brings forth a nuanced perspective on the many aspects of Indian identity and how the Indian Act was applied in B.C., and challenges Frideres and Bierwert and other academics who take for granted that the Indian Act dictated how colonialism was enacted on the ground.

The historiography of B.C. has been described in a 2011 article by Ned Blackhawk, a Western Shoshone and American historian, as having a “long-standing tradition in which Indian peoples have figured prominently,” but also one that until recently has “failed to recalibrate broader assessments” of its regional histories.¹⁵ Recent scholarship is changing this history by drawing on interdisciplinary, theoretical, and “transnational” methods and concepts, which, Blackhawk notes, “have shifted the lens of analysis away from colonial policy makers to Native peoples themselves.” My thesis joins this trend in scholarship by focusing on an individual Aboriginal man.

Looking at the life-story of Billie Hall within his own individual context, this thesis explores themes of class and gender (as understood within Coast Salish culture); issues that are difficult to unpack when looking at Aboriginal history at a community or group level. In many

¹⁴ J. R. Miller, “Owen Glendower, Hotspur, and Canadian Indian Policy,” *Ethnohistory* 37, no. 4 (October 1, 1990): 390.

¹⁵ Ned Blackhawk, “Currents in North American Indian Historiography,” *The Western Historical Quarterly* 42, no. 3 (Autumn 2011): 319.

respects, this work picks up where Keith Thor Carlson's study of Stó:lô eighteenth- and nineteenth-century collective identities left off. Carlson's 2010 book, *The Power of Place, the Problem of Time: Aboriginal Identity and Historical Consciousness in the Cauldron of Colonialism*, incorporates Coast Salish culture, Stó:lô oral history, and sources more traditionally employed by historians, to uncover how culture, Indigenous historiography, and the actions of religious and political newcomers to Stó:lô territory created conditions that led to a range of collective identity options for the Stó:lô, which then were deployed in different ways in reaction to ever-changing circumstances. Not only are Hall's journals a line of evidence that were unavailable to Carlson, but they also date from the early twentieth century and provide significant evidence of how individuals created and maintained Stó:lô identities in the 1920s, a period during which it has been assumed that the Indian Act, and its dictates on who was or was not "Indian," was firmly entrenched.

This examination of Hall's individual lived experiences, and those of other men of mixed Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal heritage that this study touches on, is also significant in that these are particular voices that have not traditionally been included in the meta-narrative of colonialism in B.C. Academics looking at Aboriginal history elsewhere in Canada have found that there are periods when people of mixed Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal history held privileged places as cultural and societal intermediaries. Anthropologist Jennifer S.H. Brown found that until the 1830s (when the numbers of women of European heritage increased significantly), mixed-blood women of rank held high social standing among communities associated with the Canadian prairie fur trade.¹⁶ Looking at the Great Lakes region in 1650 – 1815, historian Richard White described the history of Peter Chartier, a trader who had an Aboriginal mother and a French father, who began as "an important but marginal figure, a man who acted through the chiefs ... eventually... became a man who challenged chiefs, and

¹⁶ Jennifer S. H. Brown, *Strangers in blood: fur trade company families in Indian country* (Vancouver: UBC Press, 1996), 129.

ultimately, he acted like a chief himself” and became a Shawnee factional leader.¹⁷ These and other academics have described mixed race individuals as “people in middle” who held key positions, but in an earlier time period than that under study in this thesis, and in areas of North America other than B.C. Specifically, by illustrating Hall’s life story, and touching on the stories of other men of mixed heritage, this thesis suggests that people of mixed race may have also held privileged positions in B.C, but until a much later date (at least the 1930s) than has been documented elsewhere in North America. Currently, the historiography of B.C. has not yet included examinations of mixed race individuals as the focus of careful study.

If Blackhawk is correct, and the pendulum of historical analysis in BC has indeed swung away from colonial policy to focus on Aboriginal people themselves, then my thesis reflects my desire to also deviate from this trend, in order to bring the pendulum back to a place within the “center” of native-newcomer history in BC. Each side of the hyphen cannot be understood without the other, something Aboriginal people have long acknowledged, and one non-Aboriginal Canadians are slowly realizing for themselves. It will be that when Canadians understand this particular truth, then, our society can move towards reconciliation.

Through a set of his daily journals, carefully preserved through the decades by his family, Billie Hall is able to speak to me and other readers directly about his experiences with the colonial world in which he lived and worked. By gathering additional historical and cultural context for this thesis within which to place Hall’s journal entries, his thoughts, once private and written in the moment, meet my own thoughts, nearly one hundred years later, in an arena of dialogue. By this I make reference to the historical philosopher R.G. Collingwood’s view on the subject matter of history. “Thinking” is the proper subject of historic inquiry, explained Collingwood, or more specifically, “It is the act of thought itself, in its survival and revival at different times and in different persons: once in the historian’s own life, [and] once in the life of

¹⁷ Richard White, *The middle ground : Indians, empires, and republics in the Great Lakes region, 1650-1815*, 20th anniversary ed.. (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2011), 190.

the person whose history he is narrating.”¹⁸ In this thesis, Hall’s thoughts are being engaged in a two-way conversation with mine. His journals “speak” to me, and I try to understand him by asking clarifying questions: “Is that what you are saying?” Returning to his journals, or other material I have gathered to make our conversation an informed one, I get varying answers. Sometimes the answer I get is “no.” Other times it is “yes,” and many times I do not receive an answer. Therefore, this thesis represents Hall’s truth *as I understand it* from our “conversations,” to which I bring my knowledge and life experiences, *my* personal context.

Chief William Augustine Hall, or Billie, as he called himself, was a *Stó:lô* man born in 1862. The *Stó:lô* are part of a large cultural and linguistic group known as the Coast Salish. The *Stó:lô*’s traditional territory, on the Canadian side of the Canada-United States international border, stretches from the mouth of the Fraser River in Vancouver, up river to about where the Fraser narrows above Yale in the Fraser Canyon, and along the Fraser River’s intervening northerly and southerly oriented tributaries.¹⁹ In the late 1890s, Hall lived and farmed on the Tzeachten Indian Reserve, one of several reserves located in and around the city of Chilliwack, approximately 150km east of Vancouver. Figure 1-1 is a map of Chilliwack, B.C., and some of the reserves in its vicinity, including Tzeachten I.R. 13.

¹⁸ R.G. Collingwood, *The Idea of History: With Lectures 1926–1928*, rev. ed. (Oxford; New York: Oxford University Press, 1994), 303.

¹⁹ There are also people who are culturally *Stó:lô* located in Washington State. For more information, please refer to the base map “*Stó:lô* Territory in the Contemporary World,” in *A Stó:lô Coast Salish Historical Atlas* (Vancouver: Douglas & McIntyre, 2001), 4–5.

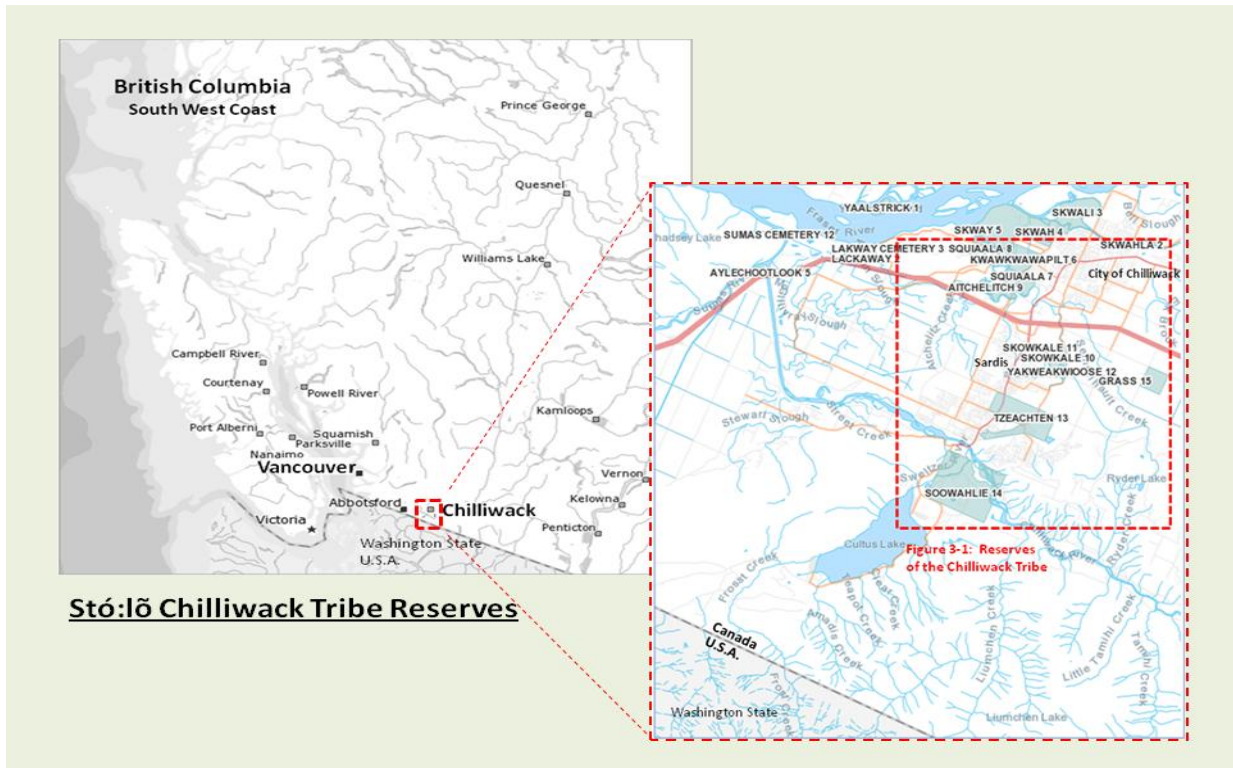


Figure 1-1 Map of the *Stó:lō* reserves in the Chilliwack B.C. area. Base map courtesy of GeoBase. GeoBase is a federal, provincial and territorial government initiative overseen by the Canadian Council on Geomatics (CCOG). Through the GeoBase portal, users have access to geospatial information with unrestricted use. Natural Resources Canada Government of Canada, “GeoBase—Home,” n.d., <http://www.geobase.ca/geobase/en/index.html>.

Hall became the first chief of Tzeachten under the system of reserve governance imposed on Aboriginal people in Canada through the Indian Act (1876). He was also a labour leader for other Aboriginal people who were engaged in wage labour, most notably in the hop industry. Hall was in his eighty-eighth year at the time of his death in 1951; undoubtedly, he had witnessed and experienced great change as the Canadian government established restrictive and assimilationist policies, and legislation grew to encompass more and more aspects of Aboriginal lives.

The research for this thesis is based primarily but not exclusively on Hall's surviving journals, the details of which are bolstered by documents created by federal government officials, his non-Aboriginal employer in the hop industry, and a few other Aboriginal and non-

Aboriginal people. The ten surviving journals were written largely in the 1920s although some notebooks have notes and entries extending to the turn of the twentieth century and others into the 1930s.²⁰ He was a prolific and, in many ways, a very detailed writer; in this set of his journals, nearly every day had an entry in which Hall wrote down much of what he did, sometimes what he said, and occasionally what he *thought* about the things he did and said.²¹

A meticulous writer, Hall wrote about a variety of topics. It would be impossible to cover the variety of information Hall recorded in his excellent penmanship (always using pencil rather than ink), but some examples include births and deaths, labour of various kinds, politics, and interactions with other Aboriginals as well as newcomers from a variety of ethnic and cultural backgrounds. Hall took particular pains to record numbers, especially money—how much things cost, money owed to or received by him, and money spent by him—but this also extended to time, e.g., when trains arrived or left, how long journeys took, and the order in which things happened. Hall also had a distinctive approach to his writings; his entries follow a basic formula. Beginning with a report of the “wether” [*sic*], the entry is generally a chronological accounting of the day’s events, ending with a report of who came to visit the family that day. Hall’s characteristic style extends from the fashioning of the entries to the writing itself. His sentence structure made copious use of periods (usually in place of commas) and capitalization beyond proper nouns to include nouns of any kind, or sometimes no capitalization at all. By way of example, Figure 1-2 is the inside cover and entry for May 15, 1926, the first entry in Hall’s 1926 journal.

²⁰ In the summer of 2007, I happened to be at the Coqualeetza Cultural Education Centre during the visit of Shirley D. Leon, the centre’s former manager. At the time, I was interested in materials related to Stó:lô farmers, and Ms. Leon pointed me in the direction of typewritten copies of four of Hall’s journals. When I changed my focus to study Hall’s journals, I was introduced to Cathy Hall, Billie Hall’s great-granddaughter, by Tia Halsted, the archivist at the Stó:lô Nation Archives. Cathy had requested information from Tia on how to copy and preserve the original journals she had in her possession. I met with Cathy in August 2009, and she graciously allowed me to photograph the originals, in order to provide reference copies for her family and to provide the Stó:lô Nation Archives with research copies. She had three of four of the typewritten copies of the journals as the Coqualeetza Cultural Education Centre, plus an additional six original journals.

²¹ For this thesis, I refer to each journal either by the years it covers or the “title” written on the outside cover: “Daybook,” 1923 Journal, 1924 Journal, 1924–1925 Journal, 1925–1926 Journal, May 15, 1926 Journal, 1928 Notebook, 1930 Journal, 1932 ‘Cash,’ and the 1933 Notebook.

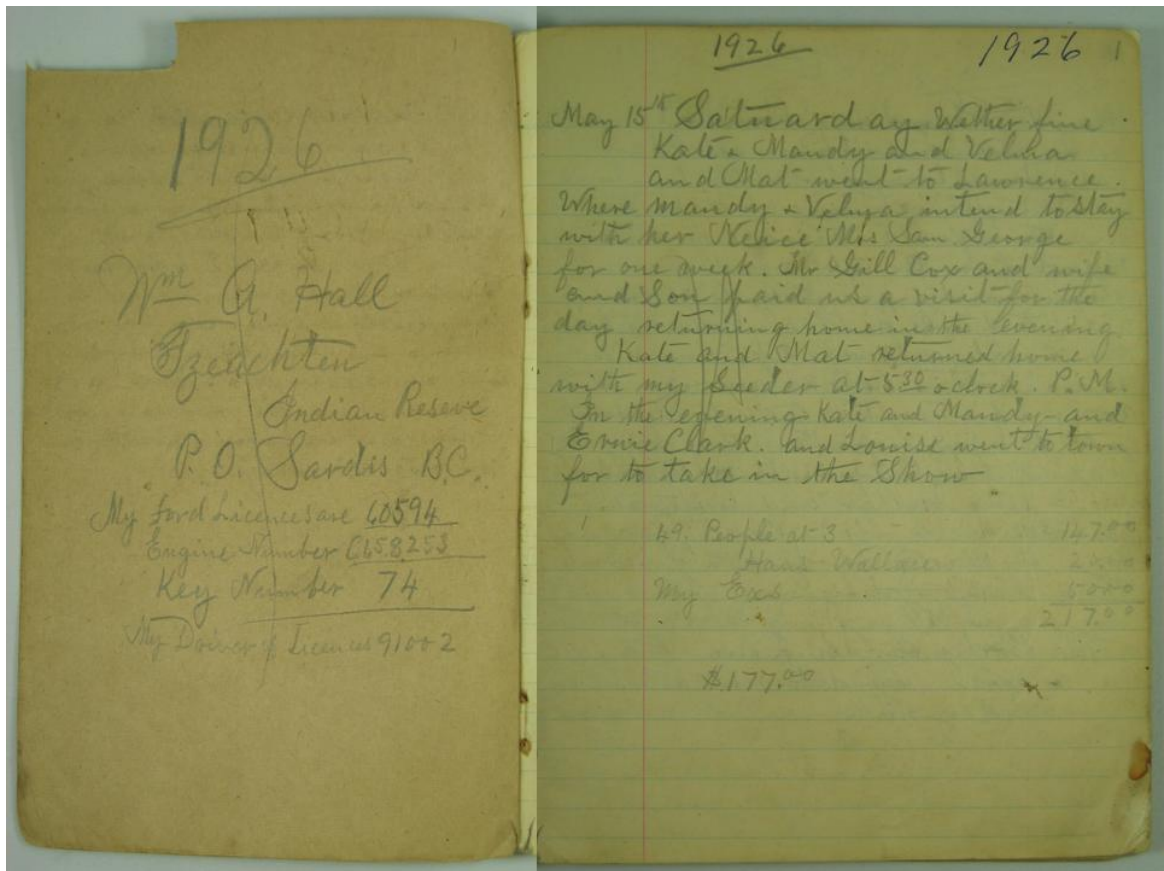


Figure 1-2 Composite photo of Hall's May 15, 1926 Journal. Photos taken by the author.

Lastly, Hall's journals are perhaps particularly unique in that he carefully copied out some of the letters he sent to non-Native persons, largely to the Indian Agent and other representatives of the federal government. Being personal accounts, an examination of these journals reveals much about the concerns, actions, and lives of Hall, his family, and his community.

Historiography and Methodology

Increasingly, historians examining Aboriginal histories have turned to the interdisciplinary methodologies employed in ethnohistory, a field that includes insights from history, anthropology, linguistics, ecology, and ethnography, among other disciplines. In so doing, these

ethnohistorians seek to create histories that are not only sensitive to, but inclusive of, Aboriginal understandings of past events; this in turn reflects the evolution of academic attitudes towards Aboriginal history. Around the 1950s, attitudes shifted from conceptualizing Aboriginal peoples as possessing static cultures and passively making the best of a new world, to viewing Aboriginal peoples as having dynamic cultures and actively participating in the new society surrounding them. Initially, the field was primarily occupied by anthropologists employing historical methods in their work, until the 1970s and 1980s, when increasingly historians began using anthropological understandings of how culture functioned in a society (as well as other tools normally employed by other disciplines) in their historical analysis. As historians undertook to understand the role culture played in the past events they were studying, academic scholarship about the “Native-newcomer” relationship also became concerned with finding evidence of aboriginal agency. Concurrently, postmodern thinking about gender, class, and identity in general has increasingly led to social histories in which ethnicity was given a central role in understanding *what happened*. The trend towards ethnohistorical analysis, and shifts toward social histories, has opened the door for this analysis of Billie Hall and his life experiences.

Good ethnohistories incorporate two lines of evidence that earlier histories of Aboriginal people were less than successful at including: an understanding of the cultural context within which Aboriginal people would have been operating, and the voices of Aboriginal people themselves. For many historians, their efforts to learn about the culture of the people they are studying begins with surveying the published and unpublished records of the late nineteenth- and early twentieth-century salvage ethnographers and anthropologists, as well as the more recent anthropological published material. Carlson, for example, in his study of *Stó:lô* history, has turned to the works of anthropologists Wilson Duff, Marian Smith, and Wayne Suttles as the

starting point for his understanding of *Stó:lô* culture;²² further, Carlson identifies himself as “working within the Suttlean tradition.”²³ It is recognized, however, that there are some problems in relying too heavily upon the information contained in such publications. Historian Wendy Wickwire has challenged historians to contemplate how this early ethnographic archive has shaped our understanding of the Aboriginal past, specifically that of Aboriginal historical consciousness, citing as an example her own work with the Okanagan people in south-central B.C.²⁴ Wickwire’s review of the published anthropological material gave her a “feeling of preparedness” for her own fieldwork conducting oral history with an Okanagan storyteller.²⁵ However, in the course of her work, Wickwire, like Judith Berman and David Murray before her, realized that the ethnographic archive she had relied upon for her understandings of Okanagan culture had to be considered in conjunction with the ideological underpinnings—the desire for capturing “authentic” Aboriginal traditions untainted by non-Aboriginal society—that lead to its creation.²⁶ In other words, that early ethnographers left out information they deemed inauthentic, and made little attempt to document what they had left out, limited the value of their publications. Wickwire cautions historians of Aboriginal histories that, if they “are truly serious about incorporating indigenous histories into the mainstream record, they must realize the limitations of the archives and begin to move instead toward fuller and more dynamic sources, such as living storytellers.”²⁷ Another important criticism of reliance on the field notes and publications of these salvage ethnographers is their choice in informants.

The ethnographers of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries sought cultural experts within Aboriginal communities that they felt were “uncontaminated” by the modern

²² Keith Thor Carlson, *The Power of Place, the Problem of Time: Aboriginal Identity and Historical Consciousness in the Cauldron of Colonialism* (Toronto; Buffalo: University of Toronto Press, 2010), 15.

²³ *Ibid.*, 26.

²⁴ Wendy Wickwire, “Stories from the Margins: Toward a More Inclusive British Columbia Historiography,” *The Journal of American Folklore* 118, no. 470 (October 1, 2005): 454.

²⁵ *Ibid.*

²⁶ *Ibid.*, 471.

²⁷ *Ibid.*, 456.

Western society settling around them. Often they were directed towards the elite members of Aboriginal communities, for example, the hereditary name holders within *Stó:lô* society, while ignoring those, like Billie Hall, who were of mixed ancestry or who appeared to have more certainly assimilated with their white neighbours.²⁸ In so doing, the ethnographers gathered their information about traditional culture from those who had the most interest in seeing their version of “traditional” culture retained, who had, perhaps, the most to lose by its passing. Historians who rely on such ethnographies often seek out access to the field notes created by the ethnographer, seeking greater understanding of, and new information from, the expert informants. Those histories constructed on these notes by salvage ethnographers, and by proxy their elite informants, still do not contain the entire story. As anthropologist Bruce Granville Miller has pointed out, the results of these ethnographers’ work was scholarship in which “real, individual people were largely absent, and in their place, we were presented with a normative culture.”²⁹ I argue that histories based on these works also have too often resulted in “normative histories” wherein the experiences of individuals have been generalized to represent the experiences of entire groups of peoples. However, within any group, culture, or society, there is a range of identities and experiences, and the value of taking an ethnohistorical approach is that it allows for the exploration of the experiences of individuals, which in turn broadens our historical understanding of Aboriginal past experiences. If the majority of cultural information comes from elite members of Aboriginal society, what types of histories will be created? A better question, posed by historian John S. Lutz in his discussion of traditional sources relied upon by

²⁸ Carlson notes, for example, that Wilson Duff had “prominent *Stó:lô* elders” as informants during his work in the 1940s. I have not found any indication that Hall was interviewed by Wilson Duff or any other ethnographer. Keith Thor Carlson, “Early Nineteenth Century *Stó:lô* Social Structures and Government Assimilation Policy,” in *You Are Asked to Witness: The Stó:lô in Canada’s Pacific Coast History* (*Stó:lô* Heritage Trust, 1997), 91.

²⁹ Bruce Granville Miller, “Introduction,” in *Be of Good Mind: Essays on the Coast Salish*, ed. Bruce Granville Miller (Vancouver: UBC Press, 2007), 2.

historians creating Aboriginal histories, is “what different conclusions might be reached if we chose new conversational partners and re-evaluated the old ones?”³⁰

I have chosen for this thesis a new conversational partner, one who has yet to be introduced to academic historians.³¹ My goal in choosing to converse with Billie Hall and his journals is to create a history that is about more than being Aboriginal, or *Stó:lô*, but also looks at how class, gender, and Indian Affairs officials (who interpreted and enacted colonial policies) all played a role in creating individual Aboriginal identities. As Carlson has noted, “too often the racial and or/ethnic issues of Native-newcomer history work to obscure important class and/or status and gender issues within Indigenous society.”³² With this criticism in mind, this thesis applies gender and class differences from within *Stó:lô* culture as a frame through which to view Hall’s experiences at a time during which the *Stó:lô* faced great change as a result of the imposition of new restrictions and boundaries placed upon Aboriginal people by the Canadian government and its Indian Act (1876) and the new economy developing in their traditional territories.

Employing Hall’s journals as the main source for this thesis presents unique challenges for historical analysis. Methodologically, in some ways using a diary or journal for historical analysis is not unusual, but the nature of the evidence written down by Hall, his cultural heritage as a *Stó:lô* man, and the heavy reliance upon Hall’s journals required understanding insights and cautions offered by historians and other scholars who have studied the journals written by men from cultures that did not have a written tradition prior to contact with a colonial power. This study of Hall’s journals draws on key examinations of such diaries and diarists from an anthropological and historical perspective.

³⁰ John S Lutz, *Makúk: A New History of Aboriginal-White Relations* (Vancouver: UBC Press, 2008), 16.

³¹ Cathy Hall and other members of her family, however, have been researching their own family history for several years, and this thesis benefits from their efforts.

³² Carlson, *The Power of Place, the Problem of Time*, 30.

Anthropologists and historians who study the acts of personal writing by Africans, who also experienced radical changes to their lives and cultures as a result of colonialism, offer helpful insights for understanding the use and function of diary- and journal-keeping within societies that rely upon oral narrative traditions. A social anthropologist, Karen Barber, provides a helpful overview in her introduction to *Africa's Hidden Histories: Everyday Literacy and Making the Self*. She highlights how other authors in *Africa's Hidden Histories* have examined specific diarists and diaries and found that some “cultural innovators” also used these new forms in a “redeployment” of older genres.³³ One such example of this redeployment is Akasease Kofi Boakye Yiadom, the writer of a detailed autobiographical journal maintained for over 60 years. His diary, which was read aloud to his family and contained markings to indicate the performance, was “at least as much a script for the performance of a persona as it was an exploration of interiority.”³⁴ Barber argues that “the very desire to trap significant utterances and events in the lapidary forms of letters, diary entries, obituaries... can be seen to be in continuity with the fixing and memorializing strategies of many African oral genres.”³⁵ In this way, personal writing in Africa entered cultures that were “predisposed” to its reception, resulting in a rapid expansion of “memorializing... all kinds of things” that could now be “permanently” retrieved.³⁶ Such performative elements as written by Yiadom do not appear in Hall's journals; however, this does not mean that Hall's journals might not be reflective of “older” cultural traditions. The Stó:lô have two narrative genres for their oral histories: *sxwoxwiyám* are stories set in the distant mythological past, and *sqwélqwel* are usually more contemporary stories that are speak to personal or community experiences.³⁷ The term *sqwélqwel* may be translated as “true stories”

³³ Karin Barber, *Africa's Hidden Histories: Everyday Literacy and Making the Self* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2006), 18.

³⁴ Ibid., 10.

³⁵ Ibid., 18.

³⁶ Ibid.

³⁷ M. Theresa Carlson et al., “Spoken Literature: Sto:lo Oral Narratives,” in *You Are Asked to Witness: The Stó:lô in Canada's Pacific Coast History* (Stó:lô Heritage Trust, 1997), 185.

or “news” and are generally about everyday life and experiences.³⁸ Hall’s journal entries about his life and experiences, although written and not oral (and not known to have been presented orally by Hall), do clearly act as a mnemonic device; it was important for him to note that a meeting happened, for example, but not what was said or what occurred at the meeting, which he would have recalled by memory. His journals may have functioned as a private system of checking the accuracy of stories presented orally. In this way, African letter-writers and diary-keepers, like Billie Hall among the *Stó:lô*, used these new forms of self-expression in a way that was consistent with their cultural norms.

Both Barber and her peer Olufunke Adeboye, a historian, offer insights into how diary-keeping among Africans was a way to explore self-identity in a world rapidly changing as a result of colonization and colonial forces; their work has particularly informed my interpretation of Hall’s life as evidenced through his journals. Barber notes that, as relative newcomers to reading and writing adopted the genres of the letter and the diary, products of personal writing played an important part in the creation of Africans’ concepts of “self.”³⁹ African forms of letter-writing and diary-keeping, Barber asserts, were largely modeled on the European versions that Africans encountered: missionary journals, and government and commercial correspondence. Barber has found similarities between these African writers and eighteenth-century Europeans, in which such forms of personal writing, as interpreted by Charles Taylor, are connected with newly configured conceptions of self.⁴⁰ Barber sees diaries as a place where ‘self’ is presented to the self, “as if one was looking into one’s own eyes,” making possible new forms for self-examination, self-projection, and self-dramatization.⁴¹

Adeboye, in her examination of the diary of a man in colonial Nigeria, also looks at the diary as a symbolic cultural creation, finding that his diary is a place for self-invention and

³⁸ Ibid., 193.

³⁹ Barber, *Africa’s Hidden Histories*, 7.

⁴⁰ Charles Taylor, *Sources of the Self: The Making of the Modern Identity* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1989). As cited in Barber, *Africa’s Hidden Histories*, 7.

⁴¹ Barber, *Africa’s Hidden Histories*, 8.

expressions of personal masculinity. Adeboye's research also looks at the interplay between the personal and "public" constructions of self. Using a multidisciplinary approach, Adeboye's historical analysis focuses on the psychological aspects of diary-keeping ("cathartic," ritualized, private, and personal), and, more importantly for my study of Hall and his journals, the sociological aspects of self-representation and the negotiations of multiple identities.⁴² The subject of her research is the diary of Akinpelu Obisesan (1887–1963), which he kept between 1914 and 1960. Obisesan was a member of an educated social elite in Ibadan, Nigeria, that was established in large part due to missionary activity in Africa in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries.

Adeboye finds that Obisesan's diary is a "window" through which to observe his particular preoccupation with the attainment of elite masculinity. In colonial Yorubaland (Nigeria), elite masculinity or "big man" status, was marked by Western education, wealth, and at the highest level, the acquisition of a chieftaincy title.⁴³ Adeboye finds that Obisesan and socially elite men were "under pressure to distinguish themselves... to create a sense of self, in the context of the expectations, opportunities, and above all, the constraints of the colonial state."⁴⁴ In the forty volumes of his diary, she finds a gap between Obisesan's perception of himself and his social reality in the early years, but as he got older, he was slowly able to attain the elite status she finds he spent his whole life seeking. In exploring the two functions of the diary (sociological aid to self-representation and psychological stabilizer), Adeboye concludes that they are not mutually exclusive, but interrelated, and that the diary "is a symbolic cultural creation, an auto-biographical narrative that both documents and creates the self of the writer and exists at the intersection of the private and the public."⁴⁵ The set of Hall's journals which are available for this study do not cover as long a period as Obisesan's, and they were written when

⁴² Olufunke Adeboye, "Reading the Diary of Akinpelu Obisesan in Colonial Africa," *African Studies Review* 51, no. 2 (2008): 76.

⁴³ *Ibid.*, 84.

⁴⁴ *Ibid.*, 78.

⁴⁵ *Ibid.*, 93.

Hall was in his sixties and had already achieved considerable personal success. Nonetheless, Adeboye's work reminds me that Hall's journals provide evidence of his personal self (his identity), that, unlike Obisesan, was not being created over the period of the journals but rather had already been achieved by the time he wrote his journals. Furthermore, Adeboye's placement of Obisesan's writing and expressions of identity within a culturally based concept of class and masculinity has encouraged me to do the same. In the second chapter, I outline the biographical details of Hall's life until he moved to the Tzeachten Reserve sometime in the late 1890s, when he was in his mid-thirties (after which his life changed markedly, when he became a chief as well as a labour boss), situating him within a socio-cultural context informed by anthropological studies of *Stó:lô* and Coast Salish communities.

Adeboye also situates Obisesan's creation of a self-identity within the constraints of colonial Nigeria. She places her study of Obisesan within the work of other scholars who examined the social role played by Obisesan and his elite intelligentsia peers, finding that they assumed the role of community "elders" and sometimes functioned as culture brokers between indigenous socio-political paradigms and the new colonial structures being developed in the colonial state. In chapters three and four, I examine how Hall also acted as an intermediary between other *Stó:lô* people and the colonial government (as chief of his reserve) and the wage labour economy (as an "Indian boss" in the hop industry). Colonialism, Adeboye finds, set out many contradictions for this socially elite group: they had been empowered through Western education but were subservient to the processes and priorities of the colonial powers.⁴⁶ Hall also received a Western education that provided him with the power to assume leadership roles as chief and a labour boss, but I think it is too simplistic to describe him as subservient to colonial powers. As this thesis reveals, Hall found opportunities within colonialism to model his life and identity to something in line with traditional *Stó:lô* concepts of a high-status male.

⁴⁶ Ibid., 78.

The intellectual ground regarding journals by Aboriginal people in Canada, and B.C. in particular, shifted recently with the publication of historian Peggy Brock's extensive study of the journals of Arthur Wellington Clah (1831–1916), a *Tsimshian* man from the Pacific Northwest Coast. Brock has spent countless hours reading and transcribing the thousands of pages of Clah's journals, wherein he recorded his daily activities in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries.⁴⁷ Clah and Hall share some similarities. Both were early adherents to a Western/European style of personal writing, and each was a Christian although Hall was Roman Catholic and Clah was Anglican. These two men were also documenting the rapid changes to their own lives and those of their communities, imposed upon them by many forces from the colonial world. Clah began his diary-keeping for the express purpose of improving his English and keeping track of the Western/European calendar with its days, weeks, and months, but his journaling also had greater purposes for him.⁴⁸ Brock has described two additional purposes for Clah's diary-keeping: to record his "moral accounting"⁴⁹ and for posterity.⁵⁰ If Hall had a particular set of reasons for starting his journal, they are unknown.⁵¹ His earliest "journal" is in fact more notebook than diary, suggesting that he began writing notes for the simple purpose of accounting and keeping track of important items, which then led him into a pattern of daily journaling.⁵² As his writing evolved into writing daily, his journals also functioned for him as a mnemonic device, as discussed above. It should be noted that Hall also recorded what might be

⁴⁷ Peggy Brock, *The Many Voyages of Arthur Wellington Clah: A Tsimshian Man on the Pacific Northwest Coast* (Vancouver: UBC Press, 2011), 6.

⁴⁸ Ibid., 34.

⁴⁹ Ibid., 35.

⁵⁰ Ibid., 37.

⁵¹ Cathy Hall said that she did not know why Hall kept a diary or exactly how they had come to be passed down to her from her grandmother via her uncle and then an aunt. Personal communication, May 4, 2010.

⁵² A clue is given in the form of the journal itself. Titled "Daybook," the blank pages are laid out like a ledger, with numbered pages and seven columns per page for recording information. In "Daybook" Hall records a number of types of information between 1908 and 1945, and does not use the pages sequentially, instead appearing to loosely organize the information by type, as evidenced by a sampling of the titles appearing on different pages: "Horse Record, 1908"; "Work for C.J. Japp"; "Account with C.J. Japp"; "1919 Cow Record"; "1920 Old Mollies Account or Maryan Cannell"; and "Death of My Friend's [sic]," in which Hall recorded the dates and circumstances by which his friends, Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal, passed away. Hall, Chief Billie, "Daybook", n.d., 1, 4, 5, 94, 128, 224, Stó:lô Nation Archives.

considered a type of “moral accounting;” this is discussed in chapter two. It is unclear if Hall wrote for posterity; he does not indicate this in his journals. However, if Hall did not write his journals for future generations specifically, it is obvious that his family recognized their value, caring for them and holding onto a valuable family record that is also significant for broader historical reasons.

Brock, who would not have known about Hall and his journals, describes Clah’s book as a rare “first-hand account of colonialism from the inside” that reveals “the complexities for the personal interactions between colonizers and the colonized and the shift... [to] interference by the colonial state in cultural and political matters, and diminishing economic opportunities.”⁵³ Specifically, Brock’s examination of Clah’s diaries found that he “came to regret the presence of these people [government officials] who had changed his status from an independent entrepreneur and man of standing into a wage slave.”⁵⁴

My research has found that diaries kept by Aboriginal people in B.C., particularly men it seems, in the early twentieth century may not be as rare as has been assumed; I learned of at least two other Stó:lô diarists, whose diaries, like Hall’s until recently, remain in private hands.⁵⁵ Studies like Brock’s and this one reveal the many truths experienced by Aboriginal people as they encountered and came to terms with colonialism, and that the unique experiences and personalities of both the Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal actors had great influences on how individuals experienced the realities of living in a colonial world. Importantly, Hall’s journals reveal that, in contrast to the revelations of Clah, it was not always the case that the state interfered with Aboriginal communities on issues of family and identity, nor did all Aboriginal people find that colonialism, at least in the early part of the twentieth century, brought diminishing economic opportunities. This thesis establishes that not only was colonial policy in

⁵³ Brock, *The Many Voyages of Arthur Wellington Clah*, 4.

⁵⁴ *Ibid.*, 40.

⁵⁵ One of the diarist’s journals is mentioned by Reuben Ware and Albert Phillips in their fieldwork notes from the 1970s. The other was mentioned to me by staff at Stó:lô Nation. Reuben Ware and Albert Phillips, “Stalo History Fieldnotes,” n.d., Stó:lô Nation Archives.

B.C. not applied evenly, neither were colonial officials totally unresponsive to community concerns.

This thesis engages Hall's journals to understand what life was like for a traditionally non-elite man of mixed heritage living in a *Stó:lō* community in the early to mid-nineteenth century and his journey to create a modern *Stó:lō* identity for himself. The next chapter serves as an introduction to who Hall was and provides a short explanation of his biological heritage and his life up until his mid-thirties, when he moved to the Tzeachten Reserve, placing these experiences within a *Stó:lō* understanding of class and gender at the turn of the twentieth century. Chapter three looks at how being an Indian (by law) was defined and how Hall and another man of mixed Aboriginal ancestry struggled to create identities for themselves that fit within a colonial definition of "Indian," challenging the accepted truths of studies that present the "Indian Act as scripture" as a model of colonialism. The fourth chapter examines in detail the key role Hall played in the hop industry as a labour boss for Aboriginal workers and reveals the varied and complicated nature of Aboriginal involvement in B.C.'s wage labour economy in the early part of the twentieth century, something that is less understood by historians. Ultimately, this thesis demonstrates that Hall, in his engagement with colonialism, was able to achieve an identity for himself that was grounded in a *Stó:lō* understanding of who an elite male, a leader, was and needed to be. Hall's story reveals what may be surprising realities about how colonialism was enacted in reality and how Hall and other *Stó:lō* people were beginning to reconcile themselves to the new colonial world in which they lived and worked. By giving Hall's voice a platform and a place to discuss how colonialism was experienced by him and other *Stó:lō* people he included in his journals, this thesis challenges accepted truths for Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal Canadians alike, as we quest together for reconciliation of our shared past.

Chapter 2 Who was Billie Hall?

It would be impossible within the limits of an M.A. thesis to discuss in full all the information Hall recorded in his journals, but given the daily entries about his activities, Hall himself provides us with tremendous details about some aspects of his life and fewer about others. Drawing upon Hall's journals and other sources of genealogical information, this chapter presents the factual details of Billie Hall's life—his family, his education, and how he made a living—within the socio-cultural context of *Stó:lô* society at the turn of the twentieth century. I have drawn upon the works of anthropologists Wilson Duff and Wayne Suttles, who studied Coast Salish peoples and worked with the *Stó:lô* specifically, in the 1940s, '50s, and '60s, in order to understand how class and gender roles were constructed. Duff in particular relied upon informants in the Chilliwack area and indeed members of Hall's own community of Tzeachten although Hall was not one of his informants. It is important to understand how Billie Hall would have understood issues related to gender and class within the *Stó:lô* community he grew up in and later led as chief and to find the ways in which Hall's life fit—or did not fit—within socio-cultural norms and expectations. This chapter provides the necessary background for chapters three and four, which examine in greater detail how Hall was able to create a life for himself that fit within the *Stó:lô* paradigm of an elite male and an identity as a "Tzeachten Indian."

William (Billie) Augustine Hall had a connection with the people of the Chilliwack Tribe that was more indirect than one might have assumed, given his tenure as chief of one of the Chilliwack Tribe's four reserves. Hall was born in Washington State, in the United States of America (U.S.), on June 22, 1862, to parents Joseph Hall and Mary.¹ This date is confirmed by

¹ Finding basic genealogical information about Billie was surprisingly easy, thanks to the hard work of Alice Marwood, the genealogist at *Stó:lô* Nation. Her years of careful gathering of information about *Stó:lô* families from

Hall himself, writing on June 22, 1930, that “This is My Berth [sic] Day 68 Yrs of Age. Born in the year of June 22nd 1862.”² Billie’s mother was from the Bellingham, Washington area of the U.S. (approximately 77 kilometres southwest of Chilliwack) and from either the Lummi or Nooksack tribes (both are Coast Salish peoples though from different linguistic families³).⁴ Although on the surface it appears that Hall did not have an immediate family connection to the Chilliwack Tribe, in the *Stó:lô* method of remembering their relations, he was connected to the people living in the reserves along the Chilliwack River. In his description of how the Chilliwack Tribe moved down from the Chilliwack Lake area and into the Chilliwack River area throughout the nineteenth century, Carlson reveals the connection between the Chilliwack Tribe and the people around Bellingham, Washington. Prior to their move downstream, the Chilliwack tribal community was not oriented towards the Fraser River but rather to the Nooksack and Skagit watersheds that ran south and east into the U.S.⁵ So strong was the connection between the Chilliwack Tribe and their neighbours to the south, that the mother tongue of the Chilliwack people was a dialect of the Nooksack language (it was after their move down to the Fraser River plain in the nineteenth century that the Chilliwack Tribe adopted *halq’eméylem* as their language).⁶ After the death of his father, Hall developed a direct connection to the Chilliwack area, as his family relocated there.

Although Hall’s Aboriginal heritage came to him from his mother, an equal part of his heritage came from his non-Aboriginal father. Cathy Hall’s research has uncovered that his

census and other archival records, as well as from interviews with family members, has resulted in a treasury of genealogical data comprising well over 20,000 entries that she generously shares with *Stó:lô* people and, in the case of information about Hall and his family, with me. Alice Marwood, “Family Group Sheet for William Augustine (Billy) HALL” (Chilliwack, B.C., 2009), *Stó:lô* Nation.

² Hall, Chief Billie, “1930 Journal”, n.d., *Stó:lô* Nation Archives.

³ Brent Galloway, “Language Revival Programs of the Nooksack Tribe and the Sto:lo Nation,” in *Be of Good Mind: Essays on the Coast Salish*, ed. Bruce Granville Miller (Vancouver: UBC Press, 2007), 213.

⁴ Cathy Hall, personal communication, February 24, 2012.

⁵ Keith Thor Carlson, *The Power of Place, the Problem of Time: Aboriginal Identity and Historical Consciousness in the Cauldron of Colonialism* (Toronto; Buffalo: University of Toronto Press, 2010), 120.

⁶ Ibid.

father was born in Belfast, Ireland, but little else is known about him.⁷ It is not known when Joseph and Mary came together as a couple, but before Joseph's death, they had at least three sons and one daughter.⁸ The 1901 Canadian census confirmed that Hall was of mixed heritage, listing him as a "half breed."⁹ Of note, Hall does not provide any information about his parents in his journals or any indication that he is anything other than "Indian."

In conversation with anthropologist Wilson Duff, Robert Joe, one of Billie's contemporaries and a man from his reserve, revealed that Mary and her children left Washington State and settled in the Chilliwack area while the children were still young. Why Hall's mother came to the Chilliwack area to raise her family after the death of her husband is unknown; Joe has suggested she was rejected by her home community. Duff recorded the information Joe provided in his field notes: "Wm. H[all]'s mother was Lekamen [central Fraser Valley], related to Chilliwacks¹⁰. ... When she grew up, she went to US, lived with a white man, raised a family, 4 boys, 2 girls. Fa[ther] died, Mo[ther] brought children home, back to Lekamen. They wouldn't accept her family. She came here. They gave them [a] place to stay."¹¹ Although Duff did not record specifically where Joe was referring to as "here", it is likely the area around the Chilliwack River and Lukakuk Creek, the nineteenth-century home of the Chilliwack Tribe. The history of the Chilliwack Tribe's movement to this area, and the creation of the Tzeachten and other reserves that the Canadian government set aside for the Chilliwack Tribe, is discussed in detail in chapter three.

The *Stó:lô* have an equal respect for both their female and male relatives, evidenced by the high regard they hold for all their kin relationships; thus Hall's mother's relationship to the people of Chilliwack was a strong connection for him as well. Duff determined that the *Stó:lô*

⁷ Cathy Hall, personal communication, February 24, 2012. Note that Robert Joe, in conversation with Duff, noted that Hall was one of four boys and that he had two sisters.

⁸ Alice Marwood, "Family Group Sheet for William Augustine (Billy) HALL."

⁹ Ibid., 3.

¹⁰ Note: This is incorrect; Hall's mother was not from Lekamen, on the Canadian side of the border with the U.S., but from the American side. Cathy Hall, personal communication, February 24, 2012.

¹¹ As recorded in Duff's field notes. Duff, Wilson, "Stalo Notebook #3," n.d., *Stó:lô* Nation Archives.

trace the “web of relationship in all directions for several generations,” valuing matrilineal and patrilineal relationships equally.¹²



Figure 2-1 Undated photo of Billie and Kate Hall. Note that Kate is seated. Photo courtesy of Cathy Hall.

As a young man, Hall was able to strengthen his connection to the Chilliwack Tribe through his marriage to Catherine Joe from the community of Skowkale. Hall was married to Catherine, or Kate as he called her, at Hope, B.C., on April 8, 1882, by the Roman Catholic Father LeJeune.¹³ Kate was just 17 years old when they were married, and according to the Missionary Oblates of Mary Immaculate record of their marriage, from “Skowkhin”, or Skowkale.¹⁴ Billie and Kate had 17 children between 1882 and 1911, seven of whom are known to have died before 1913.

¹² Wilson Duff and British Columbia Provincial Museum, *The Upper Stalo Indians of the Fraser Valley, British Columbia*, Anthropology in British Columbia no. 1 (Victoria: British Columbia Provincial Museum, Dept. of Education, 1952), 78.

¹³ Alice Marwood, “Family Group Sheet for William Augustine (Billy) HALL,” 4.

¹⁴ Ibid.

Figure 2-2 is a selected family tree for Billie Hall.

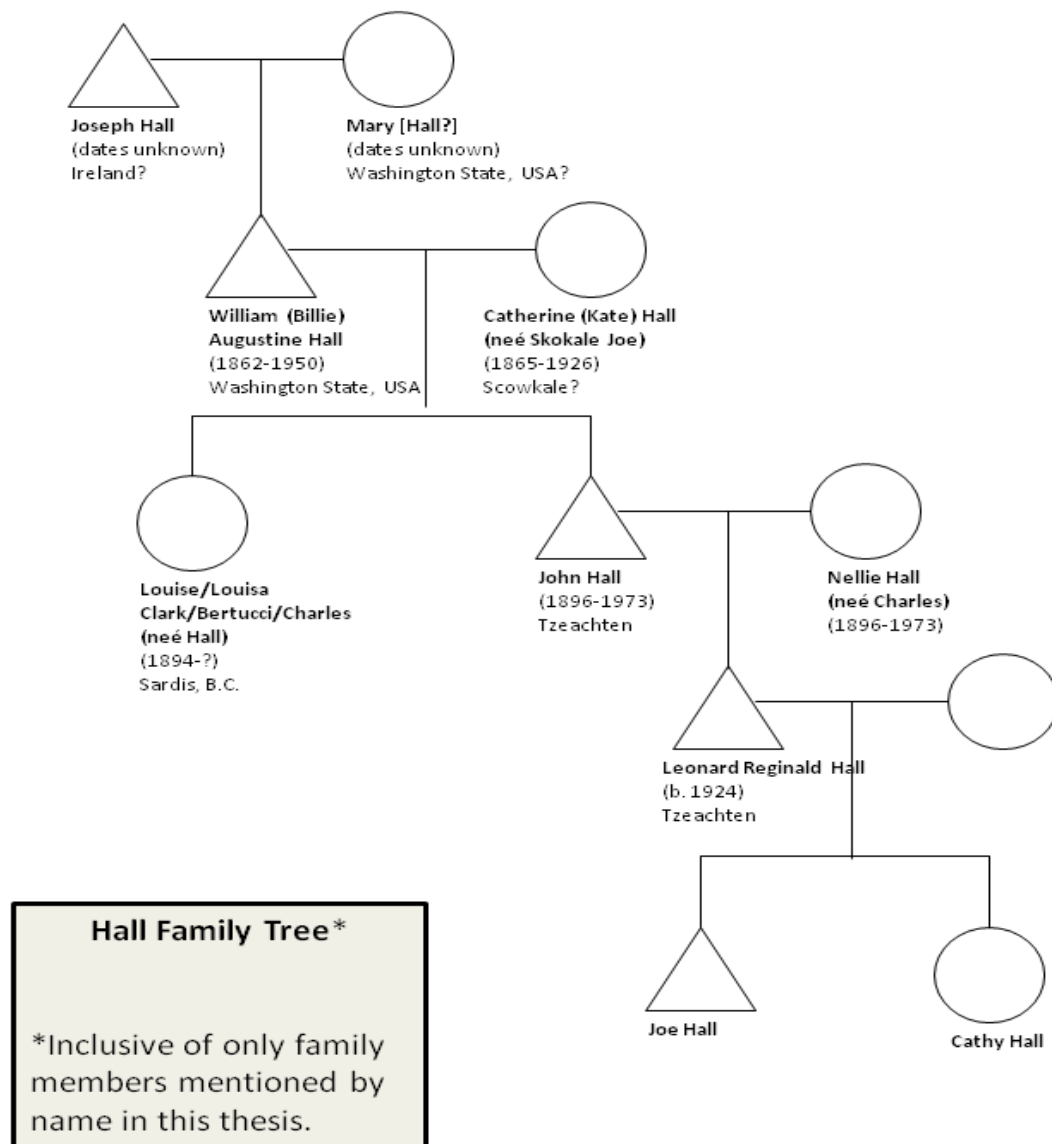


Figure 2-2 Hall family tree: select family members only. Created by the author.

Duff found that, among the *Stó:lô*, married couples often but not always lived in the husband's community (this was particularly true for elite men who were wealthy enough to support a large family and had more than one wife), but this was not the case for Billie and Kate.¹⁵ In a 1972 interview, Louisa, one of Billie and Kate's daughters, revealed that the family lived in a log house somewhere in the Sardis area of Chilliwack until a fire destroyed their home when Louisa was about five. The Hall family then moved temporarily to Skowkale Indian Reserve, Kate's "home" community and then finally settled on the Tzeachten Indian Reserve, where they established a ranch, with crops and livestock.¹⁶ The Halls' move to Tzeachten, when Billie was in his thirties, is significant, for it was there that he began accumulating land and wealth, became a political leader, and formalized his control over other individuals' access to wage work. It was at Tzeachten that Billie was able to create a life modeled on the *Stó:lô* paradigm of a high-status male.

At this point it is necessary to provide detail about how *Stó:lô* society and culture constructed social and material differences between high- and low-status people, before discussing how Hall fit within this understanding. At the turn of the twentieth century, *Stó:lô* society recognized at least two classes of families, distinguished primarily but not only by wealth. Duff, after speaking with his informants, determined that the *Stó:lô* were stratified according to social rank, which in turn was closely related to how much or how little the individual and/or the family were respected.¹⁷ He concluded that *Stó:lô* society was stratified into three classes (high, low, and slave), which was supported by Suttles's later studies of the

¹⁵ Duff and British Columbia Provincial Museum, *The Upper Stalo Indians of the Fraser Valley, British Columbia*, 79.

¹⁶ "Mrs. Louisa BERTUCI (née HALL)," interview by Sara Henning, audiotape, 1972, Chilliwack Museum and Archives.

¹⁷ Duff and British Columbia Provincial Museum, *The Upper Stalo Indians of the Fraser Valley, British Columbia*, 80.

broader Coast Salish culture. Suttles envisioned Coast Salish society as an inverted pear shape, a view that has been widely accepted by anthropologists and historians.¹⁸

Hereditary rights and privileges are the most obvious characteristic of the high-status *smelá:lh* people, particularly in a time when traditional subsistence activities were still an important part of the *Stó:lô* economy, which in turn was “intimately linked with social and ceremonial activities.”¹⁹ The *smelá:lh*, or “worthy people” class, of Coast Salish communities consists of elite, high-ranking, wealthy families and forms the largest segment of Coast Salish societies.²⁰ Families within this class carry special hereditary names, which in turn have their own inherent high status and entitle the current holder of the name ownership of important resource sites, such as fishing spots and berry patches, the right to regulate access to those sites and to use any surplus that may come from those resources.²¹ Certain names also carry great respect for their connection with ancestors who were changed by *Xexá:ls*, the transformers, who came to a chaotic world in the distant past and made the world right through their transformations, evidence of which remains in stone and in physical locations throughout the *Stó:lô* world.²² The Chilliwack Tribe, for example, traces its heritage from four legendary ancestors, *Wileliq*, *Thelachiyatel*, *Yexweylem*, and *Siyamches*, black bear brothers with white spots on their chests, transformed into men who later became leaders of the Chilliwack people. They are “regarded as binding the Chilliwack people’s collective past and future together through powerful metaphysical forces.”²³ Common descent from these four brothers, who are “heroic ancestors or genealogical founders,” as described by Carlson, is a primary bond that

¹⁸ Wayne Suttles, “Private Knowledge, Morality, and Social Classes Among the Coast Salish,” *American Anthropologist* 60, no. 3 (June 1958): 504.

¹⁹ Keith Thor Carlson and John Lutz, “Stó:lô People and the Development of the B.C. Wage Labour Economy,” in *You Are Asked to Witness: The Stó:lô in Canada’s Pacific Coast History* (Stó:lô Heritage Trust, 1997), 112.

²⁰ Keith Thor Carlson, “Early Nineteenth Century Stó:lô Social Structures and Government Assimilation Policy,” in *You Are Asked to Witness: The Stó:lô in Canada’s Pacific Coast History* (Stó:lô Heritage Trust, 1997), 89.

²¹ *Ibid.*, 93.

²² Albert (Sonny) McHalsie, David M. Schaepe, and Keith Thor Carlson, “Making the World Right Through Transformations,” in *A Stó:lô Coast Salish Historical Atlas* (Vancouver: Douglas & McIntyre, 2001), 6–7.

²³ Carlson, *The Power of Place, the Problem of Time*, 14.

links the Chilliwack Tribe together as a community.²⁴ The names of these four brothers have been passed down within families that have the right to carry them, and they hold great respect and honour. Duff found that people from the *smelá:lh* families had “tremendous advantage [through]... control of wealth, access to respected [hereditary] names, and the opportunity for training for a position of high respect.” They were also considered to have inherited excellent personal qualities such as wisdom, ability, industry, generosity, humility, and pacifism.²⁵ By virtue of birth, persons of this status were respected for these inherent qualities, according to Duff. High-status people, then, were not only wealthy but had the best social characteristics. It is not difficult to imagine that those of the lower-status groups might aspire to become part of this *smelá:lh* class.

In contrast to the high-status *smelá:lh* were two smaller classes of individuals. The smallest group, perhaps even non-existent at the turn of the twentieth century, were the slaves, or *skw'iyéth*, owned by high-status individuals and considered, according to Suttles, socially “non-persons.”²⁶ A slightly larger class were the low-status *s'téxem*, or “worthless people,” who lacked the hereditary privileges the *smelá:lh* enjoyed.²⁷ Given that Hall is not known to have carried any hereditary or traditional *Stó:lô* names,²⁸ nor appeared to have strong direct connections to the Chilliwack Tribe and the resource sites its hereditary leaders controlled, he may have been viewed by his community (and perhaps by himself as well) to have been part of this *s'téxem* class of people. However, it is important to emphasize that I am unable to confirm his class standing on the Aboriginal side of his heritage, nor can I say for certain how his “white” parentage may have affected his status; Hall may well have been considered to be from a *smelá:lh* family through his mother.

²⁴ Ibid.

²⁵ Duff and British Columbia Provincial Museum, *The Upper Stalo Indians of the Fraser Valley, British Columbia*, 80.

²⁶ As quoted by Carlson. “Early Nineteenth Century Stó:lô Social Structures and Government Assimilation Policy,” 90.

²⁷ Ibid.

²⁸ Cathy Hall, personal communication, February 24, 2012.

Within *Stó:lô* society, in which one is born into a family of one rank or the other, there is a great deal of social mobility within the two main classes and sometimes between them although cross-class movement appears not to have occurred until the colonial era.²⁹ Duff noted that, within *Stó:lô* society, “individual effort and ability could overcome the disadvantage of low birth.”³⁰ Suttles also determined that “mobility upward within this larger class was quite possible,”³¹ noting that “poor-boy-meets-spirit-and-makes-good stories are numerous [in Coast Salish oral traditions]... so we may assume that a man without inherited fishing sites and without ritual knowledge could also become wealthy and attain high status.”³² Further, Suttles came to the conclusion that, when “Coast Salish informants speak of social mobility and tell folktales and historic accounts of poor boys who become successful, they are thinking of poor (but good) families within the upper class, which included the bulk of the population.”³³ Suttles’s conclusion reveals a capacity within *Stó:lô* society for individuals of relatively lower social status to be recognized as *smelá:lh*. This thesis presents Billie Hall as just one such individual.

Suttles’s work, which illuminated the connections between morality and the social classes within Coast Salish society, not only provides a critical analysis of the profound respect for the inherent good social qualities of the *smelá:lh* class that Duff found but also provides insight into how upward social mobility within the *smelá:lh* might be facilitated. In addition to wealth (gained through hereditary rights but also through the practical and spiritual knowledge to exercise those rights), Suttles found that the *smelá:lh* families also had private knowledge of matters he identified as “advice.”³⁴ Advice consisted of knowing one’s family history, “gossip” about inferior families, instruction in private matters such as questing for spirit power, and “a

²⁹ Keith Thor Carlson, personal communication, May 6, 2012. See also Carlson’s broader discussion of class and social mobility in Keith Thor Carlson, “Chapter Five: Events, Migrations, and Affiliations in the ‘Post-Contact’ World,” in *The Power of Place, the Problem of Time*, 113–56.

³⁰ Duff and British Columbia Provincial Museum, *The Upper Stalo Indians of the Fraser Valley, British Columbia*, 80.

³¹ Suttles, “Private Knowledge, Morality, and Social Classes Among the Coast Salish,” 504.

³² *Ibid.*, 501.

³³ *Ibid.*, 505.

³⁴ *Ibid.*, 501.

good deal of solid moral training.”³⁵ The moral training, shared between generations of a family, consisted mainly of ideas about good conduct, such as “don’t steal” and being polite to elders.³⁶ Suttles found that restricting knowledge of good behaviour to the upper class contributed to social control, given that the Coast Salish did not have an equivalent of a police officer to monitor social behaviour, nor did they rely on a supernatural power to punish misbehaviour.³⁷ Suttles concluded, then, that, to be considered to be a member of the (rather large) *smelá:lh* class, one must have wealth (generally through control of important resources) and be considered to have high “moral training.” Hall, I would argue, attained both these attributes during his lifetime, due to his education and new economic opportunities provided by the colonial economy that gave him practical skills, a solid moral training, and eventually, wealth. In combination, these attributes not only permitted Hall and his family to be affirmed as belonging to the *smelá:lh* class but also gave him the personal qualities necessary to fit within *Stó:lô* concepts of leadership, discussed shortly.

Moral Training and Practical Skills

After considerable activity by missionaries in their territory in the nineteenth century, *Stó:lô* people found Christian-based religions appealing, with its emphasis on strict moral rules and behaviour, and thus a new type of moral training entered the *Stó:lô* world. The Roman Catholic missionaries were the most successful among the Coast Salish, developing a system of community-building among Aboriginal peoples known as the “Durieu system.”³⁸ Citing Catholic priest and historian Vincent McNally, Carlson has outlined that this system, named after Bishop Paul Durieu, sought to create morally “good,” temperate, and agriculturally based

³⁵ Ibid.

³⁶ Ibid.

³⁷ Ibid., 501–02.

³⁸ Carlson, *The Power of Place, the Problem of Time*, 181.

Aboriginal societies.³⁹ Indian residential schools proved to be particularly effective at educating Stó:lô people about the new Christian morality they were adopting.

Hall received his practical and moral education by attending school at a local Roman Catholic mission. Louisa revealed that her father attended school as a child at the Roman Catholic St. Mary's Mission, located in the Fraser Valley.⁴⁰ The residential school at St. Mary's Mission opened in 1863, just one year after Hall's birth.⁴¹ Hall's attendance at St. Mary's provides further evidence suggesting he came from a family that was considered low status: before the Canadian government made residential school attendance compulsory in 1884 (well after Hall was likely to have attended), Stó:lô children taken into residential schools were largely from low-status families, were orphans, or were ill.⁴² It is not known how old Hall would have been when he entered St. Mary's Mission or how long he would have resided there, but typically children entered school before the age of ten and stayed at least two or three years (and often longer, particularly in the twentieth century).⁴³ It is safe to surmise that Hall spent a number of years in residential school, as evidenced by his excellent written communication in English and his skill in teaching music, both abilities he likely would have gained from a lengthy residential school experience. It was at residential school, Louisa revealed, that Hall played in the school band, picking up a love of music that extended into adulthood, as he spent "many evenings" teaching other young Indian men to play.⁴⁴ An Indian brass band had been established at St. Mary's Mission in November 1868, after Father Lamure arrived, teaching boys singing and music for an hour and a half each day; perhaps Hall picked up his love of music from Father

³⁹ Ibid., 182–83.

⁴⁰ "Mrs. Louisa BERTUCI (née HALL)," interview by Sara Henning, audiotape, 1972, Chilliwack Museum and Archives.

⁴¹ Keith Thor Carlson, "Early Nineteenth Century Stó:lô Social Structures and Government Assimilation Policy," 101.

⁴² Ibid.

⁴³ Note: this is my personal knowledge after twelve years of researching thousands of individual IRS claims.

⁴⁴ Interestingly, in his surviving journals Hall does not mention playing an instrument or teaching music; possibly he had retired from such activities by the time of their writing. The Hall family does, however, have a piano, and on many occasions Hall described enjoying live music. Henning, Interview, "Mrs. Louisa BERTUCI (née HALL)." 1972.

Lamure.⁴⁵ In addition to the reading, writing, and mathematic skills Hall learned at residential school, he would have received instruction in farming techniques and would have attended many classes of catechism.⁴⁶

Many entries in Hall's diaries provide evidence that he took his Catholic faith to heart and to his life. Surprisingly though, records suggest that he was not baptized until the day of his marriage to Kate.⁴⁷ It is also interesting that, in the surviving journals, Hall rarely records attending church services, but this did not mean he was not a practicing Catholic. For example, after a long bout of illness, Hall noted that he was "feeling much better and I am looking over the Bible," listing thirteen passages.⁴⁸ Religious spaces, churches and cemeteries, were highly valued by Hall. He recorded a community-funded project to fence the Tzeachten cemetery in 1924. Hall also recorded a detailed history of the 1884 cemetery opening, describing the Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal people involved in its creation, suggesting that he perhaps was a witness to the events.⁴⁹ He was personally involved in the construction of the Catholic church on the Yakwekwioose Reserve in March 1925.⁵⁰ But perhaps the greatest evidence of Hall taking his Christian religion to heart is the many entries in which he recorded the moral infractions of others in his community.

A great many of Hall's journal entries record instances of individuals behaving immorally, especially consuming alcohol and fighting, and criminal proceedings related to this behaviour. Frequently, Hall recorded the arrest and subsequent convictions for alcohol consumption, which was illegal for status Indians. For example, in April 1925, he recorded the arrest of his brother

⁴⁵ Jacqueline Gresko, "Roman Catholic Indian Brass Bands, 1866–1915," *British Columbia Historical News* 16, no. 2 (Winter 1983): 12.

⁴⁶ Jody R. Woods, "St. Mary's Roman Catholic Boarding School: A Spatial Analysis," in *A Stó:lô Coast Salish Historical Atlas* (Vancouver: Douglas & McIntyre, 2001), 68–69.

⁴⁷ Alice Marwood, "Family Group Sheet for William Augustine (Billy) HALL," 4.

⁴⁸ In the entry dated March 25, 1923, Hall notes reading (in this order) John 1:48, Genesis 1:26, John 1:3, Colossians 1:15–17, Ezekiel 28:12–19, Isaiah 14:12–15, Ephesians 2:1, Revelation 20:10, Romans 4:3, Judges 15:14, Ephesians 2:11–13, Romans 8:17–35, Romans 3:7–8. At the top of the page Hall has written "Holy Bible or Who made the Devil." Hall, Chief Billie, "1923 Journal," n.d., Stó:lô Nation Archives.

⁴⁹ June 15, 1930. Hall, Chief Billie, "1930 Journal."

⁵⁰ See entries March 17 to March 20, 1925. Hall, Chief Billie, "1924–1925 Journal."

Robert and Robert's wife and four others "for being drunk." Justice was swift, at least for those accused of imbibing, for the very next day, all were convicted: one man received jail time and three received fines ranging from \$5 to \$20; the fate of the last man was not noted.⁵¹ Often, Hall was not a witness to the alcohol consumption or other crime but heard about it from others; more than one entry notes that "it was reported to me that..."⁵² Not only did Hall record these moral and legal infractions in his journal, but he also reported them to the Indian Agent on at least one occasion. In a December 26, 1925 letter to Indian Agent A.O.'N. Daunt that Hall copied into his journal, he asked the Indian Agent to come up to Sardis, as "there is a lot of drunks going onn [*sic*]."⁵³ Hall did not record drinking alcohol himself, except after being prescribed brandy by his doctor.⁵⁴ There were other criminal acts and interactions with the law that Hall made mention of in his journals: fighting;⁵⁵ the 1926 performance of a traditional "Indian dance" intended to cure a child of sickness (outlawed with the 1884 amendment to the Indian Act that made "ceremonial dance" illegal along with potlatching);⁵⁶ hunting deer out of season;⁵⁷ breaking, entering, and theft;⁵⁸ and illegal fishing,⁵⁹ to name a few. Hall's reporting of moral infractions demonstrates not only his personal commitment to the Roman Catholic faith but also indicates that he may have been a member of one of the many temperance (sobriety) societies set up by the Roman Catholic Oblate missionaries in the late nineteenth century.⁶⁰ These societies were headed up by "watchmen" who were assigned to monitor the activities of the community and report moral violations to the priest; Hall may have been a watchman, as his

⁵¹ See entries dated March 5 and 6, 1925. Ibid.

⁵² See, for example, entries for February 6 and 16, 1926. Hall, Chief Billie, "1925–1926 Journal," n.d., Stó:lô Nation Archives.

⁵³ Ibid.

⁵⁴ January 13, 1923. Hall, Chief Billie, "1923 Journal."

⁵⁵ For example, the entry dated January 11, 1926, noting the arrest of two men for fighting at a Christmas dance. Hall, Chief Billie, "1925–1926 Journal."

⁵⁶ February 16, 1926. Ibid.

⁵⁷ February 19, 1926. Ibid.

⁵⁸ August 2, 1926. Hall, Chief Billie, "May 15, 1926 Journal," n.d., Stó:lô Nation Archives.

⁵⁹ April 17, 1930. Hall, Chief Billie, "1930 Journal."

⁶⁰ Carlson, *The Power of Place, the Problem of Time*, 184.

journal entries suggest.⁶¹ Carlson has noted that the oral traditions of *Stó:lô* elders in the late twentieth century describe these watchmen as both respected and feared.⁶² Importantly, the watchmen, as agents of the Church, were “the point men in establishing and maintaining a new set of internal social divisions.”⁶³ The “Durieu system” therefore became an important and widely adopted means of moral training for *Stó:lô* people in the late nineteenth century, as well as the system by which morality was socially enforced. If, as Suttles has found, “a good deal of solid moral training” was a key indicator of being a member of the high-status *smelá:lh* class, and *Stó:lô* society was broadly (though one could not say wholly) adopting the particular brand of morality espoused by the Roman Catholic Church, then Hall’s education and subsequent moral behaviour surely qualified him to meet this requirement for high status. But, following Suttles and Duff, the other requirement for high status in *Stó:lô* society was wealth, something Hall was also able to obtain.

Wealth

The means by which wealth was accumulated by *Stó:lô* people had changed over the course of the nineteenth century. Prior to there being significant opportunities for wage work within the settler economy, *Stó:lô* people used surpluses from their natural resources (fishing, hunting, berry-picking, and other types of food and supply gathering), which were owned and controlled through hereditary rights, to support what has been called a prestige economy, based on the *stl’e’áleq* (potlatch) ceremony.⁶⁴ *Stl’e’áleq* ceremonies reinforced the social wealth of the host of the ceremony, by demonstrating his wealth through the giving away of prestigious goods but also through the public recognition of the conference of hereditary names and the related

⁶¹ Ibid., 186.

⁶² Ibid.

⁶³ Ibid.

⁶⁴ Colin Duffield and Albert (Sonny) McHalsie, “Contact-Era Seasonal Rounds,” in *A Stó:lô Coast Salish Historical Atlas* (Vancouver: Douglas & McIntyre, 2001), 62–63.

transfer of family-owned resources.⁶⁵ Although *stl'e'áleq* ceremonies were still held by the *Stó:lô* in secret after they were made illegal in 1884,⁶⁶ the source of an individual's wealth increasingly came through his or her work for wages in the capitalist economy of the settlers. Hall's journals provide significant evidence that it was precisely in this way, wage work, that he was able to gain wealth.

Before discussing how Hall gained his "wealth," it is important to define how I am using the term in relation to Hall and his family. The term *wealth* is of course relative, and I do not have information about the economies of other *Stó:lô* families to compare with Hall's, nor have I compared Hall's family's wealth to that of non-Aboriginal families in the Chilliwack area of the 1920s. However, it is significant that, although Hall records in his journals instances of asking for and obtaining "relief" from the Canadian government for individuals and families in his community, he does not record receiving relief for his own family. At this time, receiving relief from government was not seen as embarrassing by *Stó:lô* people, nor was there a stigma attached to such income;⁶⁷ it is therefore unlikely that Hall would have had a social reason not to record relief, had he obtained it. Further, Hall was meticulous about recording his income, so I feel confident in stating that he did not collect relief. Finally, that Hall records obtaining what might be considered luxury goods such as a piano and motor cars and regularly spending money on leisure activities such as attending "moving picture shows" suggests that the Hall family had enough income to meet basic needs and for extras that perhaps not every *Stó:lô* family at the time was able to obtain. Hall's comparative wealth, however, had diminished significantly by March 1933, when the Great Depression was fully experienced across North America:

⁶⁵ Ibid.

⁶⁶ Keith Thor Carlson and John Lutz, "Stó:lô People and the Development of the B.C. Wage Labour Economy," 121.

⁶⁷ Liam Haggarty, "'I'm Going to Call It Spirit Money': A History of Social Welfare Among the Sto:lo," *Research Review: Through Student's Eyes: Sto:lo Ethnohistory Fieldschool Studies* 2, no. 2 (Spring 2009): 80.

I Wrote a Letter to Mr. A.O.N. Daunt Ind. Agt. New Westminster BC Requesting Him to come up As my People are Facing Starvation as it is more serious than any outside Person Would think so. I have Helped the Needy ones With Potatoes + Meat + Salmon + Cabbage + Beans Untill [sic] I have no more. Now I have to live with my Band on Potatoes and Dried Salmon and Warm Water or Tea if they Have it.⁶⁸

Based on the foregoing, it is likely that, in the 1920s, Hall and his family would have been seen by others in his community as having “wealth,” or at least, enough wealth, I argue, to be considered part of the *smelá:lh* class.

Hall’s accumulated wealth was obtained through his industrious work in a variety of economic pursuits. Hall, according to his daughter Louisa, started out working as a deck hand when his family was small and young, and took up farming sometime after settling on the Tzeachten Reserve. Interspersed throughout these farming activities were a number of non-farming-related tasks.

Hall’s journals contain regular and detailed descriptions of the activities related to his farm, which provided both a means of subsistence for his family and economic gain. Having previously investigated the agricultural history of Stó:lô people, I know that Hall’s farm was similar to that of a number of his contemporaries.⁶⁹ Hall had a reasonably sized mixed farm located on reserve, raising cereal crops, maintaining a large orchard, and by 1926, had enough milk-producing cows to ship milk to the Fraser Valley Milk Producers Association.⁷⁰ John Hall, their son, his wife, Nellie, and eventually their eleven children, lived nearby on the reserve and worked the farm alongside their father and grandfather. John and other family members were valued partners on the Hall farm; John was described as having learned “every aspect of

⁶⁸ March 9, 1933. Hall, Chief Billie, “1933 Notebook,” n.d., Stó:lô Nation Archives.

⁶⁹ Amber D. Kostuchenko, “The Unique Experiences of Stó:lô Farmers: An Investigation into Native Agriculture in British Columbia, 1875–1916”, June 29, 2000, Stó:lô Nation Archives.

⁷⁰ Nellie, Hall’s daughter-in-law, received the first cheque from the FVMPA on July 27, 1926. Hall, Chief Billie, “May 15, 1926 Journal.”

farming” from his father.⁷¹ With the assistance of his extended family, Hall managed a farm that included pigs, chickens, turkeys, cows, horses, and a “gentleman ox” named Stranger.⁷² All the large livestock—horses, cattle, and oxen—were given names that most likely were popular for such animals on both Aboriginal and non-native farms; Beauty the heifer, Jerry and Sam the horses, and even Jock the Turkey Gobbler are all frequently referred to by Hall in his journals.⁷³ More than just a means to an economic end, the animals were used for their milk or as transportation and draught animals, and occasionally brought in additional money to the family when they were rented to other farmers for a variety of uses including reproduction and as draught animals. The smaller animals were all raised as food animals and frequently traded or sold. In addition to animals, Hall raised a number of cereal and fruit crops. Some of the cereals planted by Hall include mangles and oats, and Hall also cut hay, burdock, and thistle. The farm contained a “big” orchard that included apples, pears, plums, and cherries, the surplus of which was often sold.⁷⁴ The Halls had a large garden, planting a variety of produce such as potatoes, carrots, beans, peas, and cabbage. The garden appears to have been solely for family use, except for potatoes, which in 1923 were sold for \$1 a sack.⁷⁵

The Hall farm, like all farms, had its own cyclical rhythm based on the seasons, a concept that probably was second nature to *Stó:lô* farmers such as Hall, whose Aboriginal ancestors followed seasonal rounds. A review of his journals provides an overview of the year’s activities. Hall and his family spent the early spring preparing for the work ahead; building fences and removing stumps were key activities. Chief Hall also spent much of the first part of the year pruning and spraying the orchard. Later in the spring came the time to prepare the

⁷¹ June Bonner and Sandra Pederson, “Chief John Hall,” in *Remembering the Sacred Time of Elders: 25th Annual Gathering of First Nations Elders: Silver Anniversary Souvenir Book*, by Jo-ann Archibald (Chilliwack, B.C.: Coqualeetza Cultural Education Centre, 2001), 17.

⁷² May 11, 1923. Hall, Chief Billie, “1923 Journal.”

⁷³ See, for example, Hall’s entry for April 19, 1923: “Stranger [the ox] and the Black heifer were Married today.” Ibid.

⁷⁴ Chief Billie Hall’s granddaughter and great-granddaughter provide a brief description of “Billy’s big orchard” in the biography of Chief John Hall. Bonner and Pederson, “Remembering the Sacred Time of the Elders.”

⁷⁵ May 25, 1923. Hall, Chief Billie, “1923 Journal.”

ground for planting, keeping Hall busy with plowing and harrowing; the animals were kept busy with many births. Planting soon followed, and the summer was spent weeding and tending the garden and fields and picking ripe fruit. The fall was harvest time: potatoes were dug, hay cut, and apples picked. Finally, the winter arrived, but this was not a quiet time for Hall, who spent time pruning, digging out stumps, hauling manure, and planning for the year's work ahead.

Hall's journals also reveal his activities in other areas of economic pursuits. One source of income for Hall was spraying "Indian orchards" on local reserves, hired by the Federal Department of Indian Affairs Inspector of Indian Orchards by at least 1909 and until at least the fall of 1926.⁷⁶ Hall also did a bit of work related to the timber industry, assisting family and reserve members cutting cottonwood in the winter, arranging for timber sales, and sometimes pulling stumps for neighbors.⁷⁷ Hall participated in other economic activities by arranging for Aboriginal labour to work for settlers, particularly in the fish-canning and berry- and fruit-picking industries.⁷⁸ But most significantly, and a major year-round source of income for Hall, was his work as an Indian boss in the hop industry, a job that saw him well paid in comparison to other Aboriginal workers in that industry. His responsibilities as Indian boss were primarily to arrange for and monitor Aboriginal pickers to work in the hop yards at harvest time. As the Indian boss, Hall was able to control access of *Stó:lô* and other Aboriginal peoples to a new economic resource, wage work, which I detail in chapter four.

⁷⁶ T. Wilson and W.B. Anderson are listed as Indian Orchard Inspectors in the DIA annual report for 1918. Hall records the money owed to him by Tom Wilson and W.B. Anderson in his journals (without mentioning the DIA specifically). See, for example, the "Daybook" entry for "1909: Work For Tom Wilson, A Spraying Indian Orchards" and Hall's entry for November 24, 1926, in which he and Anderson discuss the "winter spray." "Dominion of Canada Annual Report of the Department of Indian Affairs for the Year Ended March 31, 1918," *Indian Affairs Annual Reports, 1864–1990 – Library and Archives Canada*, n.d., http://www.collectionscanada.gc.ca/databases/indianaffairs/001074-119.01-e.php?page_id_nbr=28810&PHPSESSID=252aeh7ppfser495q9m96kcij7.

⁷⁷ For example, Hall spent much of the first part of 1925 working with "the boys" of the reserve cutting and cording cottonwood, resulting in "\$3.50 each for 22 men" being paid on February 14, 1925. Hall, Chief Billie, "1924–1925 Journal."

⁷⁸ See, for example, for two entries in the month of June 1926: June 11, Hall is paid \$3.00 per day to arrange for pickers for Mr. Creeth's berry farm, and on the 26th when he is approached by "Ching Nye a cannery Chines [sic] foreman" in regard to arranging for some Indian women to work in the cannery, Hall, Chief Billie, "May 15, 1926 Journal."

Hall appears to have been remunerated well for his work as an Indian boss for the Hulbert Hop Gardens, or at the least, he earned more than the other Aboriginal workers at the hop garden. In 1908, in the first mention in his surviving journals of work for Hulbert, he earned \$1.50 per day “collecting pickers” and “looking after camp.”⁷⁹ Hall, who also picked hops during harvest time, earned \$2.50 per day picking in 1909.⁸⁰ His wages rose by 1911, when he earned \$2.00 per day getting pickers, and \$3.00 per day picking hops.⁸¹ In 1926, Hall’s “settlement” from Hulbert, after the season’s harvest, was \$369.90, which likely covered the months of August, September, and October and included wages earned picking hops, for Indian boss work, and the reimbursement of expenses for trips to arrange pickers.⁸² Hall’s wages for work as the Indian boss and for picking hops appears to have stabilized at these rates until about 1928, when he received \$3.00 a day for arranging pickers for Hulbert.⁸³ As Hall worked for Hulbert at various times throughout the year, the income related to his position of Indian boss was relatively steady. As an Indian boss, Hall represented middle management, and as such he likely was comparatively well paid for his wage labour work vis-à-vis other Aboriginal labourers in the Hulbert Hop Gardens.⁸⁴

Suttles has recognized that it was possible within *Stó:lô* society for individual men to gain wealth through “practical skills acquired through their own efforts.”⁸⁵ Although he was likely referring to “traditional” economic practices, I argue that Hall’s practical skills in English, his ability to interpret between *halq’émeylem* and English, and his knowledge of farming skills were

⁷⁹ “1908 Trip Collecting Pickers.” Hall, Chief Billie, “Daybook,” n.d., *Stó:lô Nation Archives*. 40.

⁸⁰ “Account with Mr. Hulbert, 1908” contains the entry for Sept. 1909. *Ibid.* 44–45.

⁸¹ “1911 Work for Mr. Hulbert getting pickers.” *Ibid.*, 64.

⁸² October 22, 1926. Hall, Chief Billie, “May 15, 1926 Journal.”

⁸³ August 21, 1928. Hall, Chief Billie, “1928 Notebook,” n.d., *Stó:lô Nation Archives*.

⁸⁴ An analysis of income earned in the hop yards has not been completed by any scholar. However, it is known that picking was paid by the basket and families worked together to fill baskets, which were then combined into boxes. Other workers were hired to pull down the vines and were paid by the hour or the day. How the incomes of either of these types of worker would compare to Hall is unknown. Robert L.A. Hancock, “The Hop Yards: Workplace and Social Space,” in *A Stó:lô Coast Salish Historical Atlas* (Vancouver: Douglas & McIntyre, 2001), 70–71.

⁸⁵ Suttles, “Private Knowledge, Morality, and Social Classes Among the Coast Salish,” 504.

the basis upon which he was able to gain wealth in the new economy in which *Stó:lô* were participating in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Hall's journals and the life story they tell reveal that he had achieved relative wealth and provide evidence that the life he lived was based upon the moral teachings of his Catholic faith. As a result of this "moral training" and accumulation of wealth, I argue that, by the time he wrote his surviving journals, Hall and his family could rightly be considered members of the *smelá:lh* class, evidence that Suttles was correct in identifying the capacity for social mobility in *Stó:lô* society. As Hall was increasing his family's wealth, he was concurrently serving his community as a leader.

It can be said that, in *Stó:lô* society, the most elite men were the *sí:yá:m*. Respected *Stó:lô* community leaders, the *sí:yá:m* tended to come from the high-status *smelá:lh* families. Leading their extended families, these men historically gained wealth through the ownership of resource sites (such as fishing or berry-picking); it was the *sí:yá:m* who controlled access to these sites.⁸⁶ These leaders were often referred to by early non-Aboriginal observers as chiefs, although "respected leader" is a more accurate translation. It is important to make clear that *sí:yá:m* were not political leaders in that they were not elected or appointed although certainly a *siyá:m* (singular of *sí:yá:m*) may have held political office under the governance system imposed on Aboriginal people in Canada after the 1878 Indian Act was enacted.⁸⁷ Traditionally, when required, a leader would have stepped out of his usual role as family head to assume leadership of a village or community, but his ability to assume a broader leadership position rested with the level of respect afforded him by those outside his extended family group.⁸⁸ Suttles emphasized that the small group of leaders were "an impermanent set of adult males with greater wealth and privilege."⁸⁹ One did not have to be born into a *smelá:lh* family to become a leader; however, wealth and high status were required. In about 1896, when Hall became the first chief of

⁸⁶ Carlson, "Early Nineteenth Century *Stó:lô* Social Structures and Government Assimilation Policy," 91.

⁸⁷ Ibid.

⁸⁸ Duff and British Columbia Provincial Museum, *The Upper Stalo Indians of the Fraser Valley, British Columbia*, 81.

⁸⁹ Suttles, "Private Knowledge, Morality, and Social Classes Among the Coast Salish," 504.

Tzeachten, he was most likely just beginning to gain his wealth and high status, as it was about the same time that he started his farm on Tzeachten and began his work as an Indian boss in the hop industry.⁹⁰

The very real gender and class differences had pronounced influences on how the *Stó:lô* understood not only personal identities but also collective affiliations at the end of the nineteenth century. Carlson has explained that high-class *Stó:lô* women and lower-class *Stó:lô* men (who were not slaves) had similar interests in the “affairs of people” outside their communities, as a result of elite polygamy and patrilocal residence patterns.⁹¹ Conversely, elite *Stó:lô* males were associated more closely with, and were more interested in the affairs of, their own geographically based communities. Although this pattern of interest was interrupted by changes throughout the course of the nineteenth century, such as population reduction and the reconstitution of communities due to introduced disease and the decline of slave-holding, it held true throughout this period that high-status males maintained a great interest in the affairs of their geographically based communities. Indeed, Carlson points out that, “to this day, high-status men typically derive much of their authority and status by publicizing genealogical [and geographical] ties to heroic ancestors.”⁹² Billie Hall would have been aware of how leadership, respect, and wealth were closely associated with high-status men in *Stó:lô* society. By becoming chief of Tzeachten, Hall achieved the role of just such a community leader, a role that might otherwise have eluded him.

Hall had recently moved to the Tzeachten Reserve and was starting to build his wealth through his economic activities, when, in his mid-thirties, he became the reserve’s first federally recognized chief and a prominent figure in the hop industry as an organizer of Aboriginal labour.

⁹⁰ According to a letter from the Department of Indian Affairs, Chief William Hall resigned from the position of chief of Tzeachten on April 6, 1936. If he did serve as chief for 40 years, as his obituary indicates, he would have first become chief in 1896. J.R. Wright, Associate Director, Program Services Branch, Indian and Northern Affairs, “Re: Chiefs and Councilors of the 25 Stalo Bands Since 1937,” December 15, 1978, Coqualeetza Cultural Education Centre Archives.

⁹¹ Carlson, *The Power of Place, the Problem of Time*, 30.

⁹² Ibid.

The first few decades of the twentieth century, then, was the period in which Hall transformed his identity and lifestyle from that similar to the low-status *s'téxem* class into that of the high-status *smelá:lh* and became a political leader. That Hall became chief of the Tzeachten Reserve is remarkable for two reasons. As a man of mixed heritage, according to Canadian legislation, Hall should not have been able to reside on reserve and certainly not hold the office of chief. But the reserve land of Tzeachten was also not supposed to have a political identity separate from that of the other reserves of the Chilliwack Tribe. The following chapter looks at the unusual circumstances by which Hall became Tzeachten chief and under which the people living at Tzeachten gained a separate identity, a by-product of the efforts of another man of mixed heritage, George Matheson, to claim a Tzeachten Indian identity. Hall's accomplishments as the chief of Tzeachten Reserve put him in the company of other elite male leaders in *Stó:lô* society, but the stories of Hall and Matheson also reveal the complexities of "Indian" status and identity. These complexities may not be well understood by other historians, anthropologists, and political scientists studying issues of Aboriginal governance.

Chapter 3

Creating a “Tzeatchen Indian” – Two Case Studies in Identity “Politics”

The late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries were a period in British Columbia's history during which Aboriginal people became increasingly ensnared in Western notions of governance and residence by the actions of the Canadian federal government. In turn, Aboriginal people responded to these changes and together (government-imposed systems and Aboriginal reactions) altered many of the ways in which Aboriginal people asserted collective identities. Since the 1980s, many Aboriginal communities have begun using the term “First Nation” to describe their settlement-based community and associated traditional territory. Whereas the term “First Nation” often refers to collectives that include both members who hold “Indian” status and those that do not, the Canadian government also recognizes many bands (whose membership lists contain only those people whom the government has determined to hold Indian status) as “First Nations.” The Tzeachten First Nation, located on Tzeachten Indian Reserve #13 in the Chilliwack area of British Columbia, is one of these communities. The members of this modern entity have both a formal political identity (through which the Canadian government interacts) and personal identities (in that many community members identify themselves as being from Tzeachten). The Tzeachten First Nation and people today also hold other collective identities, such as members of the Chilliwack Tribe and as members of the broader *Stó:lō* Nation. These identities are both “older” and “newer” than the Tzeachten identity. Billie Hall was the first chief of the Tzeachten community, and his journals and other documents record the creation of this modern new identity for the people of Tzeachten in the early years of the twentieth century. Hall's personal history and that of another man, George Matheson, whose journey to be recognized as an Indian and a member of the Tzeachten Band was recorded by Hall in his journals, reveal that both “Indian” and “Tzeachten” were historically complicated and complex identities to obtain and maintain, ones that had less to do with ethnic or cultural background than with the political milieu in which they were to be employed. In this way,

Tzeachten identity can be seen as a continuation of what Keith Thor Carlson documented with reference to other *Stó:lô* collective identities in the nineteenth century, wherein he found that “many [Coast Salish people]... found ways to re-establish existing affiliations” while “others... seized the opportunity to recast their identity in a new mould.”⁹³ Billie Hall and George Matheson serve as key examples of men who were able to fit themselves in the new mould of “Tzeachten Indian” created by the Canadian government when it established, and recognized, a distinct Tzeachten Reserve under the Indian Act. Although the circumstances under which Matheson and Hall were each able to accomplish this were significantly different, each man’s experience reveals how aspects of culture, history, gender, and politics (both inside and outside the reserve) converged to permit them to establish new identities, as Tzeachten Indians, which previously neither would have been able to hold. These individual identities also permitted Hall and Matheson to connect with broader collective identities such as the Chilliwack Tribe and the *Stó:lô*, which were also beginning to assume the contemporary forms that still roughly hold today. As this chapter and the following one reveal, Hall’s life story is especially interesting because it uncovers one of the ways that men in the middle were able to find and create opportunities (even within systems of reserve governance such as those imposed by the Canadian government, and with the wage labour opportunities presented by the hop industry) that allowed them to become recognized as “Indian” leaders. In turn, these positions, chief and labour boss, allowed Hall to create an identity and a life for himself, in an older *Stó:lô* model of an elite male: a geographically-based community (reserve) where he controlled access to resources (wage work).

The creation of reserves was one of the main changes brought about by the Canadian government in the nineteenth century that altered *Stó:lô* Aboriginal identities. Reserves allowed the government to monitor the daily activities of Aboriginals, create band lists to associate

⁹³ Keith Thor Carlson, *The Power of Place, the Problem of Time: Aboriginal Identity and Historical Consciousness in the Cauldron of Colonialism* (Toronto; Buffalo: University of Toronto Press, 2010), 154.

people with a particular place (and a chief and council), and apply legislation specific to a legal category of Aboriginals, the “Indians.”⁹⁴ Together, reserves and band lists transformed *Stó:lô* territory to include lands that were for the exclusive use (and control) of local residents.⁹⁵ The effect of reserves and band lists was to create new and artificial physical and social divisions between people. No better example of the effects of this transformation can be found than the history of Tzeachten No. 13 Reserve. And the history of Tzeachten IR 13 in turn cannot be understood outside the context of Billie Hall and his efforts to create a modern personal and political identity.

The history of the Tzeachten Reserve is a component of that of the Chilliwack Tribe, a distinct collective within the broader *Stó:lô* Nation, that by the late nineteenth century had their primary residences around the Chilliwack River and Lukakuk Creek. The story of how the Chilliwack Tribe came to live in this area has become quite well known even among non-Natives, thanks to Robert “Bob” Joe, a Tzeachten man and well-known ethnographic informant of Wilson Duff and other twentieth-century ethnographers.⁹⁶ As discussed in chapter two, the Chilliwack Tribe was led by men who carried the names of their legendary ancestors *Wileliq*, *Thelachiyatel*, *Yexweylem*, and *Siyamches*, of which *Wileliq* was the most prominent. Under the leadership of various men who carried the name of *Wileliq*, the community was moved several times over the course of the early nineteenth century from its pre-1800 residences around Chilliwack Lake at the easterly origin of the Chilliwack River, down river to where the Chilliwack River met Lukakuk Creek, where the tribe was located by the 1830s and 1840s.⁹⁷ The Chilliwack Tribe “headquarters” were still located in this area in 1858, when the British government declared the area to be part of the colony of British Columbia.

⁹⁴ Carlson, *The Power of Place, the Problem of Time*, 18–19.

⁹⁵ *Ibid.*, 177.

⁹⁶ Carlson describes Joe as being “widely regarded as the foremost mid-twentieth century *Stó:lô* tribal historian.” He worked with anthropologist Marian Smith, folklorist Norman Lerman, Oliver Wells (a local ethnographer and friend of Joe), as well as Duff. Carlson, *The Power of Place, the Problem of Time*, 117.

⁹⁷ *Ibid.*, 126.

It was the colony of British Columbia under Governor James Douglas that made the initial efforts to create Indian reserves in British Columbia, demarcating physical spaces within which the Chilliwack Tribe would live and work. Sergeant William McColl was sent out by the colonial Governor James Douglas to survey the reserves in the Fraser Valley in 1864, with the understanding that each reserve would meet the requirements necessary for successful agriculture.⁹⁸ For the Chilliwack Tribe, one large reserve was surveyed to encompass what later became the much-reduced and smaller, separate, reserves of Skowkale, Yakwekwioose, Tzeachten, and Soowahlie.⁹⁹ It was in 1867, with a change in colonial governorship and the appointment of Joseph Trutch as the Chief Commissioner of Lands and Works, that these reductions took place. Under Trutch, *Stó:lô* reserves were resurveyed and reduced by 91%¹⁰⁰ and Yakwekwioose, Skowkale, and Soowahlie became individual reserves. The physical separation of the Chilliwack Tribe into different reserves and autonomous political units by the colonial government likely amplified the effects of a previous separation of the people of the Chilliwack Tribe in the 1830s and 1840s, which resulted in the “tribal headquarters” being moved to Yakwekwioose.¹⁰¹ This physical separation, Carlson notes, “appears to have been accompanied by a degree for socio-political atomization” resulting in greater decentralization of the leadership Chilliwack Tribe.¹⁰² This decentralized leadership would soon be challenged to once again lead collectively when, on June 20, 1879, the Tzeachten Reserve was set aside as a

⁹⁸ Ibid., 173.

⁹⁹ This thesis uses the official reserve/community names as listed in Aboriginal Affairs and Northern Development Canada’s *First Nation Profiles* (<http://pse5-esd5.ainc-inac.gc.ca/FNP/Main/Index.aspx?lang=eng>), unless quoting an original source. A map showing the original reserves and the reserves as they are today is found in *A Stó:lô Coast Salish Historical Atlas*. The green dashed line indicates the “Douglas reserves, 1858–1864, and the areas filled in with yellow represent the reserves as they are currently. Keith Thor Carlson, “Indian Reservations,” in *A Stó:lô Coast Salish Historical Atlas* (Vancouver: Douglas & McIntyre, 2001), 94–95.

¹⁰⁰ Keith Thor Carlson, “A Legacy of Broken Promises: The Xwelitem Exploration and Settlement of Solh Temexw (Our Land),” in *You Are Asked to Witness: The Stó:lô in Canada’s Pacific Coast History* (Stó:lô Heritage Trust, 1997), 74.

¹⁰¹ Carlson, *The Power of Place, the Problem of Time*, 126.

¹⁰² Ibid.

woodlot to be used in common by the people of Yakweakwioose and Scowkale.¹⁰³ Figure 3-1 is a map of the modern reserves of the Chilliwack Tribe, located in and near the Sardis area of Chilliwack.

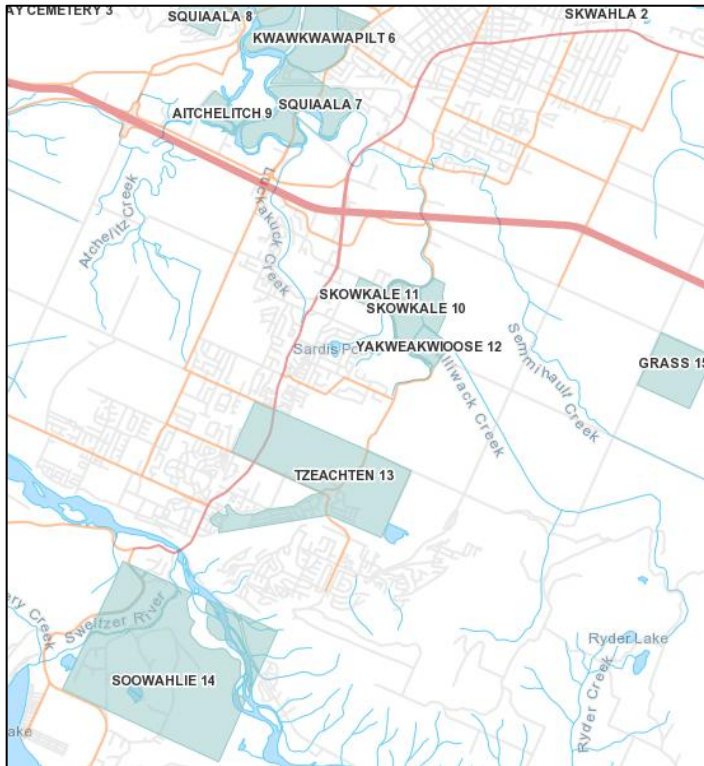


Figure 3-1 Modern Reserves of the Chilliwack Tribe. Base map courtesy of GeoBase.

It is not known when people began living on the Tzeachten Reserve, but it was likely very soon after the people of Skowkale and Yakweakwioose began clearing it.¹⁰⁴ It is also likely that these

¹⁰³ Per the Indian Lands Register—Reserve General Abstract reports—The [Tzeachten] reserve was allotted by Reserve Commissioner G.M. Sproat on 20 June 1879, as land in common. Information provided by Tia Halstead, Archivist, Stó:lō Nation Archives, personal communication, February 29, 2012.

¹⁰⁴ In conversation with local Chilliwack ethnographer Oliver Wells at the Yakweakwioose Reserve, Albert Louie notes that, although there were “big houses” or “smokehouses” where traditionally “the family, the tribe and band, all [lived] in one place” located at Yakweakwioose and “in other places,” there were “none in Tzeachten. Tzeachten just moved there later.” Oliver Wells, *The Chilliwacks and Their Neighbors* (Vancouver: Talonbooks, 1987), 155.

first settlers had the permission of the chiefs of these two reserves to do so.¹⁰⁵ The movement of people onto the Tzeachten Reserve was the first step towards the creation of a Tzeachten identity, separate from the others of the Chilliwack Tribe. The creation of a Tzeachten identity as distinct within the Chilliwack Tribe would also require government acknowledgement and eventually recognition by the other reserve communities, Skowkale and Yakwekwioose in particular, as separate from them. The histories of Billie Hall and George Matheson, and their achievement of becoming Tzeachten Indians, together resulted in just such recognition.

Both Hall and Matheson, by the mid-1920s, were recognized by the Canadian government as key leaders from the Tzeachten Reserve and the Chilliwack Tribe although neither man appears to have had any direct ancestral connections to the Chilliwack Tribe. Hall did spend some of his childhood on these reserves and returned to them after leaving residential school. Matheson, originally from the north coast of British Columbia, attended Coqualeetza Indian Residential School, located only a few kilometres from the Skowkale, Yakwekwioose, and Tzeachten Reserves. Both married women from the Chilliwack Tribe and created and maintained farms on the Tzeachten Reserve. And by the mid-1920s (although the circumstances for each man were different), each established an identity, officially recognized by the Dominion of Canada's Indian Affairs branch of the Ministry of the Interior, as a Tzeachten Indian. Establishing their personal identities as "Tzeachten Indians" also had the effect of solidifying a collective "Tzeachten" identity and connected the Tzeachten community to broader regional identities and political organizations. Billie Hall was the first to receive recognition from the Canadian government as the first chief of Tzeachten. Thus, he participated in the creation of a new politically based identity for the community of Tzeachten. His tenure as the chief of the Tzeachten Reserve, therefore, led to the creation of both a personal identity as an Indian and a distinct identity for his community. But it was not without being challenged along the way.

¹⁰⁵ The chiefs giving permission to move onto this common woodlot may have been hereditary leaders, or the recognized chiefs under the Indian Act, or, more likely, the individuals held the titles simultaneously, as Carlson has noted. Carlson, *The Power of Place, the Problem of Time*, 200.

Several sources suggest that Hall was not elected chief but rather appointed by the Department of Indian Affairs (hereafter “Indian Affairs”),¹⁰⁶ sometime in the late 1890s.¹⁰⁷ Whether elected or appointed, at least one individual was impressed by Hall’s leadership. In an undated newspaper article, the unknown author provided a brief but glowing report of Hall and his work as leader: “One of the most progressive bands of [illegible] Chilliwacks is the Tzeachtons [sic], under Chief Billy Hall, a superb type of man both physically and intellectually. The chief occupations of the tribe are farming, stock-raising [illegible; grain?], growing, and hop picking.”¹⁰⁸ By highlighting the economic successes of those living on the reserve, the author seems to have been eager to emphasize the “civilizing affect” of Hall’s leadership, as was expected of federally supported chiefs at the time.

¹⁰⁶ Robert Joe, in his interview with Duff, says of Hall: “Bill while here was appointed by agent as chief—not elected.” Duff, Wilson, “Stalo Notebook #3.” This was also noted by Siyémches (Frank Malloway), “Through the Eyes of Siyémches Te Yeqwyeqwí:ws,” in *You Are Asked to Witness: The Stó:lô in Canada’s Pacific Coast History* (Stó:lô Heritage Trust, 1997), 26.

¹⁰⁷ According to a letter from the Department of Indian Affairs, Chief William Hall resigned from the position of chief of Tzeachten on April 6, 1936. If he did serve as chief for 40 years, as his obituary indicates, he would have first become chief in 1896. J. R. Wright, Associate Director, Program Services Branch, Indian and Northern Affairs, “Re: Chiefs and Councilors of the 25 Stalo Bands Since 1937,” December 15, 1978, Coqualeetza Cultural Education Centre Archives.

¹⁰⁸ Undated, untitled newspaper clipping. Denys Nelson Papers, “Halkomelem (or Delta) Bands,” n.d., Stó:lô Nation Archives.



Figure 3-2 Photograph of Chief Billie Hall and his son John in an undated clipping from an unknown newspaper; the headline of the article reads “Chilliwack Indians Possess Richest Store of Folklore.” This photograph may be from the same article that discussed Hall’s leadership, but it is unclear from the manner in which the original collector photocopied them. Denys Nelson Papers, “Halkomelem (or Delta) Bands,” n.d., Stó:lô Nation Archives.

As chief, Hall played an important leadership role, and his journals are full of accounts of the considerable work he did to support his community. He was the main point of contact between his community and local and federal governments, interacting with several federal government representatives, including the Indian Affairs Indian Agent, the Dominion Constable, and the Inspector of Indian Orchards. During his forty years as chief, Hall advocated for the “destitute” Indians on his reserve (many times), petitioned for fishing permits, monitored court proceedings against Tzeachten individuals, applied for permission to log reserve land, argued over reserve boundaries, and had many other dealings with the federal government. He also worked with local forms of government, including the Sardis Board of Trade and the Chilliwack

Municipal Council, primarily regarding road construction and rights of way.¹⁰⁹ Within his community, Hall worked with band members on internal issues, such as resolving interpersonal disputes (over land and buildings) and writing letters and doing other advocacy work with non-governmental organizations. Finally, Hall also played a leadership role in the broader Stó:lô world, working with chiefs of other nearby reserves and those farther away, and participating in the Allied Tribes of British Columbia, an organization that sought recognition of Aboriginal rights and titles, discussed in greater detail later in this chapter.¹¹⁰ Given that Hall took the time to write down his activities, it is clear that he took his job as chief seriously and saw the historic importance of his work.

Given Hall's personal and family history, his achievement in assuming the position of chief of Tzeachten, as per the Indian Act, is not what one would have expected, had one relied solely on a reading of government legislation and policy. Hall was a man of mixed heritage, whose parents had been married, and he was born, *before* the enactment of the Indian Act of 1876. Had they been married, and Hall born, *after* 1876, Hall would have been, under the law, a non-Indian. The Indian Act defined who could be an Indian, and women who married non-Aboriginal men lost their Indian status and gained the rights and privileges (such as they were) of non-Native women in Canadian society.¹¹¹ But Hall was already an accepted member of the Chilliwack Tribe when the Indian Act was enacted in 1876, as discussed in chapter two.

Although he was half Irish, Hall's journals and letters suggest he primarily identified as Indian and saw himself as Indian. Indeed, in a November 1925 letter copied in his journal, Hall writes to the management of REO Motors Limited in Vancouver, B.C., from whom he had

¹⁰⁹ See, for example, the entries for March 17 and April 8, 1925. Hall, Chief Billie, "1924–1925 Journal," n.d., Stó:lô Nation Archives.

¹¹⁰ Hall frequently mentions attending meetings related to the Allied Tribes of B.C. but only twice specifically refers to the organization by name; his entries do not provide significant details of what was discussed at these meetings. See entries dated October 27 and December 10, 1926. Hall, Chief Billie, "May 15, 1926 Journal," n.d., Stó:lô Nation Archives.

¹¹¹ Canada, *Changes to the Indian Act Affecting Indian Registration and Band Membership McIvor V. Canada* (Ottawa: Indian and Northern Affairs Canada, 2009), 2.

purchased a car, explaining that he was unable to make consistent payments due to the seasonal nature of his work. Citing various reasons why he could not visit Vancouver to sort the matter out in person, Hall informed the dealer that he might have to ask the Indian Agent to look into it on his behalf, “as I am an Indian and live on the Indian Reserve.”¹¹² Hall had good reason to connect being an Indian with living on a reserve, as at this time in British Columbia, all persons considered Indians under the Indian Act were captured on band lists and associated with Indian Reserves. The Indian Act legislation was also the way in which Hall derived his authority as chief of his community.

The reserve system physically separated the Tzeachten people from the rest of the Chilliwack Tribe, but the Indian Act also created new governance systems that created tensions in the community between “old” and “new” forms of leadership. Carlson has noted that, by the end of the nineteenth century, “most” *Stó:lô* chiefs that were recognized by the Canadian government were also adherents of the Catholic faith.¹¹³ Hall, who became the first chief of Tzeachten Reserve in approximately 1896, matches this description. Additionally, Carlson found that such leaders were also “able to demonstrate blood ties to prominent hereditary leaders of the past” resulting in “general continuity in leadership from past generations.”¹¹⁴ Significantly, Hall did not fit this model. He does not seem to have had hereditary rights that he could draw on but rather came to a leadership position by making the most of opportunities and values that newcomer society was projecting into Indian country. In fact, Hall found himself at times in conflict over leadership on the Tzeachten Reserve, which reached a boiling point during Matheson’s efforts to become a Tzeachten Indian in the 1920s, almost thirty years after Hall became chief. According to *Stó:lô* oral history, it was Indian Affairs officials who appointed Hall chief of Tzeachten. In conversation with Robert Joe sometime in the 1940s, Wilson Duff recorded that “Bill [Hall] while here was appointed by [the Indian] agent as chief—not

¹¹² Letter, November 18, 1925. Hall, Chief Billie, “1925–1926 Journal,” n.d., *Stó:lô* Nation Archives.

¹¹³ Carlson, *The Power of Place, the Problem of Time*, 200.

¹¹⁴ *Ibid.*

elected.”¹¹⁵ Decades later, Chief Frank Malloway of Yakweawkwoose (the current carrier of one of the four Chilliwack Tribal hereditary names, *Siyémches*) recalled that there were:

chiefs that were not really from [hereditary] chief’s families but ... were appointed by the Department of Indian Affairs because of their knowledge; their education. Billy Hall was well educated... he could read and write and that’s what the Indian agents were looking for—people to write letters to them and report to them. So Billy Hall was appointed chief of Tzeachten.¹¹⁶

Siyémches highlights the tension within the Chilliwack Tribe, between the reserves of Skowkale and Yakweawkwoose on one side and Tzeachten on the other. Hall was not a leader in the traditional understanding of the Chilliwack people. His authority was granted not by the Chilliwack people themselves but by the Canadian government, and, as a chief under the Indian Act, Hall came to see himself as, paraphrasing Carlson, the leader of an autonomous community administratively disconnected from tribal relatives in the nearby communities of Yakweawkwoose and Skowkale. Adding to the discord created by the system of governance imposed by the Canadian government was the fact that, according to official government records, the Tzeachten Reserve was created for the common use of people living at Skowkale and Yakweawkwoose, where the “traditional” leaders of the Chilliwack people resided. It was under these conditions that Hall laboured to create a legitimate identity for himself as a leader and for his community as separate from those who officially could proclaim “interest” in the Tzeachten Reserve.

Ironically, it would be the process by which another man of mixed ancestry, George Matheson, achieved Indian status and Tzeachten band membership that helped Hall to solidify his leadership and a separate identity for the people of Tzeachten. George Matheson and the story of how he came to be recognized as a Tzeachten Indian further complicates discussions of Indian identity in the early twentieth century, as his connection to Tzeachten was different

¹¹⁵ Duff, Wilson, “Stalo Notebook #3.”

¹¹⁶ *Siyémches* (Frank Malloway), “Through the Eyes of *Siyémches* Te Yeqwyeqwi:ws,” in *You Are Asked to Witness: The Stó:lô in Canada’s Pacific Coast History* (Stó:lô Heritage Trust, 1997), 26.

from Hall's, and yet both came to be members of the community and band. Matheson's efforts to establish and legitimize his identities—"Indian" and "Tzeachten"—involved the interaction of family, history, culture, and traditional leadership, which played out on a background of local and national politics. Beginning sometime in 1923, Matheson endured three years of identity limbo and community and political interference before he became a recognized member of the Tzeachten band. Hall's journals record the progress of the "Matheson case,"¹¹⁷ and additional information was found in the Indian Affairs file on the matter.¹¹⁸

George Matheson, like Hall, was of mixed Aboriginal-newcomer heritage. Born in approximately 1879¹¹⁹ on the north coast of British Columbia at "Kitlakdamax" on the Nass River (approximately 1400 kilometers northwest of Tzeachten) and raised at Port Simpson, B.C., Matheson had a Scottish father, who had been an employee of the Hudson's Bay Company.¹²⁰ His mother was an Indian of "Tsimpsean" [Tsimshian] heritage;¹²¹ the Tsimshian, or "People of the Skeena," are geographically located on the Nass and Skeena Rivers.¹²² By 1923, Matheson had become estranged from his *Stó:lō* wife, Agnes, but was still living on the Tzeachten Reserve; questions were raised about his rights to continue living there. In 1924, Matheson made formal application to "be acknowledged as an Indian of the 'Lower Fraser Tribe', and a member of the Tzeachten Band" and appealed to the Canadian government, as represented by

¹¹⁷ Note: Hall most often misspelled Matheson's name as "Matherson." Hall referred in his journals often to the specific topic of Matheson's bid to join the Tzeachten band, calling it the "Matherson case."

¹¹⁸ RG 10, Series C-II-4, Volume 11294, File 62-153; File Title: Indian Commissioner for British Columbia—New Westminster Agency—Correspondence re membership/status of George Matheson, Tzeachten I.R. Chilliwack Band; Dates: 1924–1925. Library and Archives Canada.

¹¹⁹ Matheson was unsure of his exact age, but he estimated his birth year to be around 1879. Minutes. A. O'N. Daunt, Indian Agent. *Meeting with the Indians of the Tzeachten Band Held by Mr. W.E. Ditchburn, Indian Commissioner for B.C., on the Tzeachten Indian Reserve on Friday, February 27th, 1925 for the Purpose of Taking Evidence in Connection with the Application of George Matheson to Be Considered an Indian, and to Ascertain the Feeling of the Tzeachten Band Towards His Admission to Their Membership, in the Event of His Application Being Granted by the Superintendent General.* February 27, 1925. p. 2. RG 10, Series C-II-4, Volume 11294, File 62-153, Library and Archives Canada.

¹²⁰ Letter, G. Matheson to Duncan C. Scott, Deputy Superintendent of Indian Affairs, Ottawa. March 1, 1924. RG 10, Series C-II-4, Volume 11294, File 62-153, Library and Archives Canada.

¹²¹ Letter, George Matheson to A.O'N. Daunt, Indian Agent, New Westminster, B.C. February 2, 1924. RG 10, Series C-II-4, Volume 11294, File 62-153, Library and Archives Canada.

¹²² The Bill Reid Centre for Northwest Coast Art Studies, "The Virtual Village Project: Tsimshian", n.d., <http://www.sfu.ca/brc/virtualvillage/tsimshian/>.

Indian Affairs, to acknowledge him as such under the provisions of the Indian Act.¹²³ Matheson faced two hurdles: first, to be recognized as an Indian under the Indian Act, and second, to establish a significant connection to the Tzeachten community. Hall, in contrast, because of his lifelong connection to the people living in the Chilliwack area (a connection that predated the Indian Act), did not have the same difficulties establishing himself as either an Indian or in demonstrating a connection to Tzeachten (as far as Indian Affairs was concerned). Matheson, however, had been born after the passing of the Indian Act in 1876, and his connection to Tzeachten was relatively more recent than Hall's, Matheson having moved there in 1904.

Ultimately, Matheson was successful in his claim. On April 11, 1925, Duncan C. Scott, the Deputy Superintendent General of the Department of Indian Affairs, notified W.E. Ditchburn, Indian Commissioner for B.C., that, after "careful consideration of the facts.... I have decided that George Matheson may be considered as an Indian and a member of the above mentioned band."¹²⁴ However, the convoluted series of events and process of information-gathering that led to Scott's decision reveal an intriguing intersection of local political motivations and leaders, the strengths and weaknesses of the Indian Act in the determination of Indian status, and how an arbitrary decision by one man created an Indian identity that historians and political scientists have accepted. Moreover, in the course of resolving the questions about Matheson's status, the question of the Tzeachten Reserve's autonomy from Skowkale and Yakwekwioose was resolved, if only in the eyes of the Canadian government.

There were two motivations spurring Matheson's desire to be confirmed as holding these identities under the Indian Act. The first was purely practical. Matheson had married Agnes Murphy of Tzeachten in 1902. Both had been students at Coqualeetza IRS located in the Sardis area of Chilliwack, within walking distance of the Tzeachten Reserve, although they may not

¹²³ Letter. A. O'N. Daunt, Indian Agent, New Westminster Agency to W.E. Ditchburn, Indian Commissioner for B.C. February 6, 1924. RG 10, Series C-II-4, Volume 11294, File 62-153, Library and Archives Canada.

¹²⁴ Letter. Duncan C. Scott, Deputy Superintendent General, Department of Indian Affairs, "To W.E. Ditchburn, Esq., Indian Commissioner, Victoria B.C.," April 11, 1925, RG 10, Series C-II-4, Volume 11294, File 62-153, Library and Archives Canada.

have overlapped in attendance, as Matheson appears to have been a number of years older than Agnes. After a few years in Port Simpson, the Mathesons and their children returned to Tzeachten and settled on reserve land, establishing a large farm. In May 1923, Agnes and George separated, and Agnes moved to live on the Sumas Reserve, roughly 30 kilometers away.¹²⁵ No doubt, without Agnes, Matheson felt his claim to Tzeachten Reserve land to be tenuous, and further, without being “Indian” or from the “Lower Fraser Tribe,” in danger of being removed from reserve lands without warning or consideration to the improvements he had made. Matheson appealed to A. O’N. Daunt, the Indian Agent for the New Westminster Agency, whose area of responsibility included the Chilliwack area, to “request that under Section 18 of the Indian Act you forward a report to the Superintendent General [of the Indian Affairs Branch] [a] report showing that I am an Indian being a member of the Lower Fraser Tribe and am entitled to occupy and use the land being part of said Reserve [Tzeachten] now occupied and used by me.”¹²⁶

But practical matters were not Matheson’s only motivation. His desire to retain possession of the lands he occupied on the Tzeachten Reserve was, in part, motivated by the economic and political benefits that might have accrued to someone the Canadian government acknowledged as an Indian and a member of the “Lower Fraser Tribe.” Matheson was closely involved in provincial and national (and arguably international) movements to secure lands and rights for the Indigenous people of B.C. In June 1919, likely after other prior involvement, Matheson joined the first Executive of the Allied Tribes of British Columbia, an organization that pressured the Canadian government for recognition of Aboriginal rights in British Columbia.¹²⁷

¹²⁵ May 31, 1923. Hall wrote: “Mrs. Agness Matherson [sic] have moved to Kanore [Sumas according to note at top of page] for to live there for Sometime [sic]. She has taken everything with her the only thing she left behind is Geo Matherson and says he is no good.” Hall, Chief Billie, “1923 Journal,” n.d., Stó:lô Nation Archives.

¹²⁶ Letter, George Matheson to A.O’N. Daunt, Indian Agent, New Westminster, B.C. February 2, 1924. RG 10, Series C-II-4, Volume 11294, File 62-153, Library and Archives Canada.

¹²⁷ George Matheson was made a member of the Executive of the Allied Tribes of British Columbia at the first General Meeting on June 17, and 18, 1919, at Vancouver B.C., and concluded June 24 and 25, at Spences Bridge, B.C. See their statement summarizing their positions and the outcome of the general meeting: J.A. Teit, Special

Among the “tribes” the organization represented was the “Stalo [*Stó:lô*] or Lower Fraser Tribe.”¹²⁸

The Allied Tribes of British Columbia (hereafter “Allied Tribes”) was an Indigenous political organization active between 1916 and 1927, constituted by delegates who represented a number of “tribes” in British Columbia, from the coastal sections, to the Lower Mainland, to the Interior, although this membership varied over the years as groups alternatively joined or left to pursue their different political options. The organization formed with the primary purpose of opposing the implementation of the recommendations of the Royal Commission on Indian Affairs for the Province of British Columbia (1913–1916). Later, in the mid-1920s, the Allied Tribes attempted to further their aims for the recognition of Aboriginal rights by bringing their case for Aboriginal title to the Privy Council in London but ultimately were unsuccessful. The Allied Tribes’ efforts in the late 1910s and 1920s resulted in an unfortunate legacy, as the Dominion government responded by passing an amendment to the Indian Act in 1927. Section 141 of the act prohibited fundraising for the purposes of advancing legal claims of Indians (unless written consent of the Superintendent General of the Department of Indian Affairs was given) and was in effect from 1927 to 1951, curtailing the abilities of Indians across Canada to have their claims heard.¹²⁹ But when Matheson was making his claim to Indian status, it was the 1916 Royal Commission’s recommendations on Indian Reserve size that occupied the Allied Tribes.

The 1916 Royal Commission (commonly referred to as the McKenna-McBride Commission, after the two commissioners, J.A.J. McKenna, appointed by the Canadian government, and Sir Richard McBride, the premier of the province of B.C.) made a number of

Agent, “British Columbia Indian Land Controversy: Information for the Allied Tribes,” July 22, 1919, summit.sfu.ca/system/files/iritems1/10353/IA_0022.pdf.

¹²⁸ The Allied Tribes’ statement of their June 1919 General Meeting notes that “The Tribes actually represented by Delegates were the following: Stalo or Lower Fraser Tribe (from nine different bands)...” Ibid.

¹²⁹ For more information on the Allied Tribes, see Paul Tennant, “Cut-Offs, Claims Prohibition, and the Allied Tribes, 1916–27,” in *Out of the Background: Readings on Canadian Native History*, ed. Kenneth Coates and Robin Fisher, New Canadian Readings (Toronto: Copp Clark, 1996), 293.

recommendations related to “Indian lands” in B.C. It recommended that 666,640 acres of land were to be confirmed as reserve lands, that 87,291 acres were to be added to existing reserves or be created as reserves in their own right, and, more significantly for Indian peoples in B.C., that 47,058 acres were to be “cut-off” from particular existing reserves.¹³⁰ As noted by political scientist Paul Tennant, “cut-off” land was “almost entirely regarded as highly desirable by white farmers, ranchers, developers, speculators, and municipal officials” and worth much more than the proposed land that Indians would gain.¹³¹ In March 1920, the federal government introduced Bill 13, *An Act to Provide for the Dominion of Canada and the Province of British Columbia respecting Indian Lands and Certain Other Indian Affairs in the said Province*, to facilitate the implementation of the recommendations of the McKenna-McBride Commission. In response, a delegation of the Allied Tribes headed to Ottawa to oppose the bill.¹³²

Five members of the Allied Tribes, led by Peter Kelly, arrived in Ottawa in March 1920, for the purpose of persuading parliamentary members to reject Bill 13. The Allied Tribes had held its first general assembly a mere nine months earlier, in June 1919, at Spences Bridge (near Lytton, B.C.), where its executive was confirmed. Accompanying Kelly and the three other Indian members of the executive was James A. Teit, an ethnologist and longtime supporter of Indian rights. The Indian representatives came from several tribes: Kelly was from Haida and Peter Calder was from Nisga’a, both from the northwest coastal section of B.C., and Chief Basil David of Bonapart (who had met with King Edward VII in 1906¹³³) represented Interior peoples. The fourth “Indian” man participating in the delegation was George Matheson, described by Darcy Anne Mitchell, in her 1977 M.A. thesis in political science, as a “Tsimpsean.”¹³⁴ However,

¹³⁰ Ibid., 281.

¹³¹ Ibid.

¹³² Darcy Anne Mitchell, “Allied Indian Tribes of British Columbia : a Study in Pressure Group Behaviour” (Electronic Thesis or Dissertation, University of British Columbia, 1973), 49, <https://circle.ubc.ca/handle/2429/20954>.

¹³³ Carlson, *The Power of Place, the Problem of Time*, 265.

¹³⁴ Unfortunately, Mitchell does not provide a citation for this information in her thesis. Mitchell, “Allied Indian Tribes of British Columbia,” 49.

it is more likely that Matheson was representing the “Lower Fraser Tribe,” not only as part of this particular delegation but in all his (many) activities with the Allied Tribes. Shortly after their arrival, the Allied Tribes delegation was joined in Ottawa by Arthur E. O’Meara, their legal counsel. O’Meara was also an Anglican missionary and had been active in supporting Indian rights in B.C. since 1910, with the formation of the Friends of the Indians of British Columbia organization.¹³⁵ By 1920, Members of Parliament and other government officials were irate with O’Meara and his Indian rights activities, seeing him as “the parent of considerable trouble among the Indians of British Columbia.”¹³⁶ Despite the efforts of the Allied Tribes delegation, Bill 13 received royal assent on July 1, 1920, permitting the implementation of the recommendations of the McKenna-McBride Commission.¹³⁷ Disregarding this blow, the Allied Tribes—and George Matheson—continued their efforts to resolve the issue of Indian rights in B.C. throughout the early and mid-1920s. The political pressure associated with Matheson’s activities, and the involvement of O’Meara, played a significant role in Matheson’s achievement of Indian status.

The question of Matheson’s standing on the Tzeachten Reserve stretched back to at least 1923. The first entry in Hall’s surviving journals with regard to the “Matherson [sic] case” was on January 7, 1923, when he noted a “big meeting here [Tzeachten Reserve] in regards to Mr. and Mrs. Matherson [sic].”¹³⁸ Later in the month, Hall recorded another meeting about George Matheson:

The Indians are having a meeting in regards to George Matherson. Mr Daunt the indian agent made it an appoint [sic] to have George Matherson put off the indian reserve[.] on the second point is if the indians want to keep him on, then Mr Matheson would have to pay rent. But the indians decided to remand the case until next Wednesday, Jan 31st upon which date the indians will take a vote on

¹³⁵ E. Palmer Patterson II, “Arthur E. O’Meara, Friend of the Indians,” *The Pacific Northwest Quarterly* 58, no. 2 (April 1, 1967): 92.

¹³⁶ Arthur Meighen, Minister of the Interior, Canada, House of Commons Debates, March 26, 1920, as quoted by Mitchell, “Allied Indian Tribes of British Columbia,” 53.

¹³⁷ *Ibid.*, 57.

¹³⁸ January 7, 1923. Hall, Chief Billie, “1923 Journal.”

Mr Matherson wether [sic] he shall become a member of the Tzeachten band or walk out.¹³⁹ [lack of capitalization as in original]

However, the expected vote on January 31 was postponed due to illness on the Tzeachten Reserve but also because, as Hall noted, “Chief Billy Sappass [Sepass, chief of Yakweakwioose Reserve] received a letter from the Indian agent Mr. A.O. Daunt, new Westminster to say George Matheson is a white man and not an indian [capitalization as in original].”¹⁴⁰ Next, Hall recorded that “Mr. Grant + Mr. Harding [Dominion constables] came here with a Notice that George Matherson [sic] have to leave the Tzeachten Reserve By the 1st of June, 1923.”¹⁴¹ But Matheson’s departure from the reserve was short-lived, as his political activities and the question of his status at Tzeachten were about to converge.

By the summer of 1923, there was a political aspect contributing to the debate over Matheson’s status on the reserve, resulting from his high-level involvement with the Allied Tribes. Summarizing the issue to date, Indian Agent Daunt wrote in a March 1924 letter to Indian Commissioner Ditchburn that “I had Matheson off the Tzeachten Reserve last summer, but on the occasion of the Minister’s [Stewart, Department of Indian Affairs] visit to the Coast he [Matheson] got a promise to remain on [the Tzeachten Reserve] pending a definite settlement of his case.”¹⁴² Furthermore, it was O’Meara who submitted Matheson’s formal application in February 1924 for Indian Affairs to recognize him as an Indian and member of the Tzeachten band, “acting on behalf of the Rev. Mr. [Peter] Kelly [Chairman of the Executive, Allied Tribes], in the matter of George Matheson’s application to the Superintendent General.”¹⁴³

The significance of Matheson’s connection to the Allied Tribes was not lost on the federal officials involved in Matheson’s claim of Indian status. In the eyes of Indian Affairs,

¹³⁹ January 25, 1923. Ibid.

¹⁴⁰ January 31, 1923. Ibid.

¹⁴¹ March 20, 1923. Ibid.

¹⁴² A. O’N. Daunt, Indian Agent, “To W.E. Ditchburn, Indian Commissioner for B.C.,” March 12, 1924, RG 10, Series C-II-4, Volume 11294, File 62-153, Library and Archives Canada.

¹⁴³ Letter. A. O’N. Daunt, Indian Agent, New Westminster Agency to W.E. Ditchburn, Indian Commissioner for B.C. February 6, 1924. RG 10, Series C-II-4, Volume 11294, File 62-153, Library and Archives Canada.

Matheson's association with the Allied Tribes had always been as a representative of the *Stó:lô* groups of the Lower Fraser area. Indian Agent Daunt outlined for W.E. Ditchburn, the Indian Commissioner for B.C. in a letter dated February 6, 1924, that "the Indians of the 'Lower Fraser' have allowed him [Matheson] to represent them at Meetings of the Allied Tribes held in the Interior, notably at Spences' [sic] Bridge [in 1919] and Kamloops [possibly referring to an event in 1912, when Interior bands presented a petition to the Prime Minister at Kamloops, B.C.]."¹⁴⁴ Furthermore, Daunt saw this Matheson's representation of the *Stó:lô* as one of two facts "in favour of" Matheson's application. Additionally, that Matheson had been living on and improving land on the Tzeachten Reserve (as Indian Affairs had been encouraging on-reserve Indians to do with their land) supported Matheson's claim of Indian status and membership in the Tzeachten band, Daunt felt.

By 1924, Matheson had been living on the Tzeachten Reserve for twenty years, a fact Matheson relied on in support of his claim, which he bolstered by emphasizing that he had the support of traditional leadership within the Chilliwack Tribe. In a letter to Deputy Superintendent Scott, Matheson described how he had come to reside on the reserve:

In the spring of 1904 we [Matheson and his family] came down [from Port Simpson, B.C.] in order to carry out my wife's wish to be near her mother and her folks. And on the advice of Chief Louis one of the life [hereditary] Chiefs (Chief [Billy] Sepas [Sepass] is the other) who has charge of Tzeachten reserve according to agreement when Tzeachten was made a reserve, we entered into occupation upon the land now occupied by me. ...I can truly say that I have spent the best part of my life improving the land occupied by me now. With the consent and approval of the Chiefs and their people we have enlarged the original ten acres so that I have improved all told some what [sic] in the neighbourhood of about forty acres.¹⁴⁵

Chief William (Billy) Sepass, who also carried the name *K'hhalserten*, was the chief of the Skowkale Band,¹⁴⁶ and Chief Louie, who carried the name *Qw'ottseltel* (and whose father

¹⁴⁴ Ibid.

¹⁴⁵ Letter. G. Matheson to Duncan C. Scott, Deputy Superintendent of Indian Affairs, Ottawa. March 1, 1924. RG 10, Series C-II-4, Volume 11294, File 62-153, Library and Archives Canada.

¹⁴⁶ David M. Schaepe, "The Maps of K'hhalserten, C. 1918," in *A Stó:lô Coast Salish Historical Atlas* (Vancouver: Douglas & McIntyre, 2001), 126–27.

carried the respected name *Tíxwelátsa*),¹⁴⁷ was the chief of Yakweakwioose.¹⁴⁸ Matheson continued to hold approval of the Chilliwack Tribe leaders, who he believed to be the “true” chiefs responsible for the Tzeachten people despite the fact that, for the entire time he had resided on the Tzeachten Reserve, Hall was its official chief. Sepass, however, also had complicated claims to hereditary status.¹⁴⁹ Sepass had Aboriginal ancestry on both sides of his family although he was not *Stó:lô* but *Okanagan* (B.C. Interior) on his father’s side and *Nlakapamux* (Upper Fraser Canyon) on his mother’s. Sepass, however, had relocated to Chilliwack as a young person sometime in the mid-nineteenth century, and under the mentorship of his high-status uncle at Skowkale he was not only accepted by the Chilliwack people, but he also became one of the “most prominent and respected *Stó:lô* leaders of the late-nineteenth and early twentieth centuries.”¹⁵⁰ Matheson’s reliance on the support of the *siyá:m*, the “respected leaders,” of the Chilliwack Tribe, and the fact that he appealed to Indian Affairs to affirm the authority of these traditional leaders, reveals the ongoing tension within the community caused by the new form of leadership Canada had imposed on the Chilliwack Tribe. Matheson was not the only person, on Tzeachten or the other Chilliwack Tribe reserves, who continued to consider the *siyá:m* the “true” leaders and thus questioned the legitimacy of Hall’s authority to lead and make decisions on behalf of the reserve. This was demonstrated clearly in February 1924, when Matheson’s supporters at Yakweakwioose and Skowkale attempted to circumvent the leadership of Hall and his council.

¹⁴⁷ Wells, *The Chilliwacks and Their Neighbors*, 155.

¹⁴⁸ In discussing the differences between the chiefs that were from “chief’s families” and those appointed by Indian Affairs, Siyémches notes that “On this [Yakweakwioose] reserve there was a choice between [two hereditary leaders:] Billy Sepass (a well spoken person), and Chief Louie, but Chief Louie wasn’t educated, he was Indian educated not through the school system, so Billy Sepass was chosen by Department of Indian Affairs to be a spokesperson.” Siyémches (Frank Malloway), “Through the Eyes of Siyémches Te Yeqwyeqwi:ws,” in *You Are Asked to Witness: The Stó:lô in Canada’s Pacific Coast History* (Stó:lô Heritage Trust, 1997), 26.

¹⁴⁹ Personal communication, Keith Thor Carlson, April 15, 2012.

¹⁵⁰ Born ca. 1840, Sepass was approximately twenty years Hall’s senior. For additional details about William Sepass, please consult note 3 in Appendix 2 in Henry Pennier, *Call Me Hank: A Stó:lo Man’s Reflections on Logging, Living and Growing Old*, ed. Keith Thor Carlson and Kristina Rose Fagan, 2nd ed. (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2006), 118–19.

A meeting was held on February 2, 1924, at the Skowkale Indian Reserve, regarding the question of Matheson's status. It was attended by Sergeant J. Browning, the Dominion Constable acting on Agent Daunt's behalf. Browning noted that the meeting, also attended by O'Meara, was "for the purpose of electing George Matheson a member of the Tzeachten Band."¹⁵¹ However, as was noted by Browning, the fact that the meeting was not held on the Tzeachten Reserve and was only attended by a few Tzeachten Band members brought the legitimacy of the meeting into question. This resulted in Browning leaving the meeting, voiding the vote that was reportedly unanimously in Matheson's favour.¹⁵² Billie Hall was made aware of the meeting by his wife, Kate, who informed him that "they are having a meeting at Skokale [sic] in regards to Matherson [sic]."¹⁵³ Having been notified of the meeting, Indian Commissioner Ditchburn was blunt in his opinion of what had transpired: "O'Meara endeavoured to have Matheson railroaded into the membership of the Tzeachten Band at a meeting composed almost wholly of Indians from the Skulkayn and Yakweakwioose Bands."¹⁵⁴ Matheson, of course, had a different opinion, feeling that the meeting was legitimized by the attendance of the *siyá:m*: "This vote was according to Precedent and custom, and the Agent, Mr. Daunt had given his word of honor that the method should be followed in my case. Sergeant Browning did not stay for the meeting because he did not like to carry out the wish of Chief Sepas [Sepass] and Chief Louis and their people in the method of voting."¹⁵⁵ Despite his appeal for respect and recognition of the traditional political leadership of the Chilliwack Tribe, Matheson's request that Indian Affairs recognize the vote was rejected. Indian Commissioner Ditchburn was not the only

¹⁵¹ Letter. Sergt. J. Browning, #2858, To A.O'N. Daunt, Indian Agent, New Westminster, B.C. February 4, 1924. RG 10, Series C-II-4, Volume 11294, File 62-153, Library and Archives Canada.

¹⁵² Matheson himself reported that the matter was "unanimously voted on by the members of the three reserves who were present at the meeting." Letter, G. Matheson to Duncan C. Scott, Deputy Superintendent of Indian Affairs, Ottawa. March 1, 1924. RG 10, Series C-II-4, Volume 11294, File 62-153, Library and Archives Canada.

¹⁵³ February 2, 1924. Hall, Chief Billie, "1924 Journal," n.d., Coqualeetza Cultural Education Centre Archives.

¹⁵⁴ Letter. Commissioner Ditchburn to Deputy Superintendent General [Duncan C. Scott]. February 5, 1924. RG 10, Series C-II-4, Volume 11294, File 62-153, Library and Archives Canada.

¹⁵⁵ Letter. G. Matheson to Duncan C. Scott, Deputy Superintendent of Indian Affairs, Ottawa. March 1, 1924. RG 10, Series C-II-4, Volume 11294, File 62-153, Library and Archives Canada.

person upset at the attempt to avoid having the matter of Matheson's application dealt with by the recognized Tzeachten leadership; its chief was also displeased.

In his journals, Hall wrote often about Matheson, especially with regard to his activities with the Allied Tribes, but like a lot of what he wrote, Hall did not have much to say specifically about the nature of their relationship. However, in a letter he wrote to the Indian Agent regarding Matheson's request to join the Tzeachten Band and be recognized as an Indian, Hall's opinion of Matheson and the meeting at the Skowkale Reserve was made perfectly clear. At the request of some Tzeachten Band members who had attended the February 2, 1924 meeting at the Skowkale Reserve, Hall wrote a bitter letter to Indian Agent Daunt to complain. Some of the band members, Hall wrote, felt that they had been tricked into voting to accept Matheson into the Tzeachten Band:

They say that Chief Billie Sepas [Sepass] and Frank Roberts Deceived them By Saying this. we are Sending Matherson [sic] to Ottwa [Ottawa, with the Allied Tribes delegation] and we Want you to put your name or cross [mark] on this paper [to indicate that you are in favour of sending him as your representative]. And after he [they—the members of Tzeachten Band] put his [their] name on the paper then Billie Sepas + Frank Roberts would tell them [told them] that they are [they did] Voteing [sic] for Matherson [sic] [to become a member of the Tzeachten Band]. Then they kick[ed]¹⁵⁶ because they [Sepass and Roberts] have deceived them. But the Chief [Sepass] and Frank would not listen to them [and take their names off of the list].¹⁵⁷

Furthermore, the members of the Tzeachten Band who had signed the paper "in favour of" Matheson wished their names stricken from the vote. Hall then wrote of an incident in which he felt Matheson had been "making some trouble" over the division of profits from the sale of timber on the reserve. He then warned that "if Matheson becomes An indian [sic] you will see the Trouble he will commence. I could tell you some more but I have no space to tell you all that he

¹⁵⁶ In this instance, "kick" is used to express opposition or objection.

¹⁵⁷ Letter. Billie Hall, Tzeachten Indian Reserve, to A.O'N. Daunt, Indian Agent, New Westminster, B.C. February 4, 1924. RG 10, Series C-II-4, Volume 11294, File 62-153, Library and Archives Canada.

intends to do. and have [sic] done.”¹⁵⁸ Hall finishes the letter with what he felt was an explanation of why the Skowkale meeting had happened without him:

I would like to See you and have a talk with you. Because the [Skowkale and Yakweakwioose?] Indians are against me because I do not take any part in this Indian Land Questions and that is the reason Why the crazy Indians sticks [sic] to Matherson [sic].¹⁵⁹

This meeting at Skowkale must have infuriated Hall, who had predicted in a letter to Indian Agent Daunt nearly a year before the meeting occurred that such an event might happen.¹⁶⁰ If Daunt replied to Hall’s letter complaining about the February 24, 1924 meeting, the response was not copied to the file now with Library and Archives Canada. However, in forwarding Hall’s letter to Indian Commissioner Ditchburn, he did agree that “Matheson is so unbalanced that Hall is probably right in his prophesy of what would follow his recognition as an Indian.”¹⁶¹

Undoubtedly, Matheson’s reliance on the support and approval of the “life chiefs,” Chief Louie and Chief Billy Sepass, did not please Hall. It is difficult to say why Hall wrote that he did not take any part in “this Indian Land Question,” as this statement contrasts sharply with his many private journal entries noting his involvement with Allied Tribes. As early as 1923, Hall was writing about the activities of Matheson, Sepass, Roberts, and others with regard to the Indian land question. Perhaps Hall knew of the “trouble” Matheson and O’Meara were causing for Indian Affairs and wished to distance himself from them in the direct eyes of the government. Hall may have been savvy enough to publically state that he was not involved with Matheson and the Allied Tribes, as all of his authority as chief of Tzeachten, and a steady portion of his income working for the Dominion Inspector of Indian Orchards, was derived from Indian Affairs.

¹⁵⁸ Ibid.

¹⁵⁹ Ibid.

¹⁶⁰ Hall had told Daunt, “I have been thinking that it would be better for you to make a date When you can come up to settle this Matherson [sic] case and let me know a few days ahead so as I could get the Tzeachten Band together to take a vote on him and I do not want no outsiders to vote in this case let me know in Plenty of Time.” March 6, 1923. Hall, Chief Billie, “1923 Journal.”

¹⁶¹ Letter. A. O’N. Daunt, Indian Agent, New Westminster Agency to W.E. Ditchburn, Indian Commissioner for B.C. February 6, 1924. RG 10, Series C-II-4, Volume 11294, File 62-153, Library and Archives Canada.

Or, maybe this was simply how Hall felt about the Allied Tribes and their activities in February 1924, though Hall's journal entries suggest that this was not the case. Unfortunately, I have been unable to review Hall's 1924 journal, which covers January 1, 1924, to December 13, 1924, during which Hall's relationship with Matheson may have soured for a period.¹⁶² However, it is known that shortly after he wrote this letter, Hall became more interested in the issue, or at least more involved, attending an Allied Tribes meeting in Vancouver a mere eight months later.¹⁶³ From his journal entries, it seems that Hall was very interested in Matheson and his work with the Allied Tribes even prior to sending this letter to the Indian Agent, for he recorded Matheson's attendance at meetings in Vancouver and Ottawa as early as January 1923, and noted when Matheson reported on the group's activities at local meetings.¹⁶⁴ Hall even made efforts to assist Matheson in his work with the Allied Tribes, attending local meetings to raise money for Matheson to travel to Ottawa and working with local men to plow and plant Matheson's crops while he was in the nation's capital for several weeks.¹⁶⁵ Further, Hall went to considerable lengths to involve himself in the work of the Allied Tribes, from reading over copies of the numbered treaties that Canada signed with other Aboriginal groups¹⁶⁶ to taking multi-day trips to Vancouver to attend their meetings (at his own expense, the exact details of which he recorded in his journals). In truth, his journal-writing implies that it was likely Matheson's public questioning of Hall's authority that he disliked most.

¹⁶² A copy of Hall's 1924 journals exists at the Coqualeetza Cultural Education Centre, which I initially reviewed for a different project in 2007. The copy was unavailable at the time I was researching this thesis. I have some notes from my 2007 review regarding the Indian Land Question, upon which I have relied for parts of this chapter.

¹⁶³ October 21, 1924. Hall, Chief Billie, "1924 Journal." Hall wrote: "Chief Mathias and I went over to meet Mr P.R. Kelly and Mr Omeara [sic] + Mr Ambrose Reid and Mr. Andrew Paul + Mr Nowel with the Intention of Meeting the Prime Minister of Canada But Instead of meeting him we Met Mr McGivern + Mr Hayden the Senator for one Hour allso [sic] Dr King the Minister of Public Works."

¹⁶⁴ Hall does not provide either positive or negative descriptions of Matheson's activities with the Allied Tribes; he only notes that they happened.

¹⁶⁵ See entries from March 22 to May 5, 1925. Not only does Hall assist in the planning of Matheson's crops, but he was also the one to meet with Matheson to determine where he wanted "his spring crop put in" (March 23). Hall, Chief Billie, "1924-1925 Journal."

¹⁶⁶ On February 10, 1923, Hall noted that "Mr Frank Roberts payed [sic] us a visit and brought me the Treaties of 8. 9. and 10. of which I looked over." Hall, Chief Billie, "1923 Journal," n.d., Stó:lô Nation Archives.

Matheson wrote on more than one occasion to Indian Affairs officials that he did not feel Hall's authority was legitimate and questioned the purpose behind his actions as chief.

Matheson, in his direct appeal to Deputy Superintendant Scott, revealed his opinion of Hall:

From this time [1920] my wife, her step-father, Robert Joe, her brothers and her mother schemed how to get rid of me off the reserve. They all worked through Wm. Hall, a half-breed, who is acting as Chief for Tzeachten, although he has never been appointed by the Indians according to the Indian Act. The actions of this man are most excruciating to myself and to my children because it appears that the Department in [New] Westminster [Agent Daunt] and in Victoria [Indian Commissioner Ditchburn, and possibly the Indian Orchards Inspector W.B. Anderson] are trying to side in with him.¹⁶⁷

As with Hall's letter to the Indian Agent, Matheson's letter suggests an animosity between the two men; however, as noted, the two worked together often on many matters. Perhaps, then, the two were at issue more over Matheson's reliance on the alleged "life chiefs" of the Chilliwack band to try and get around the limitations of the Indian Act and the Tzeachten council than anything else, and they were able to put their feelings behind them after Matheson became an official Tzeachten Band member.

Matheson personally delivered his letter of appeal to Deputy Superintendant General Scott, meeting with him in Ottawa in March 1924, having accompanied the Allied Tribes delegation.¹⁶⁸ As a result of this meeting, Scott asked Indian Commissioner Ditchburn to confirm Matheson's Aboriginal heritage (also that his father was non-Aboriginal) and to arrange for the band to which Matheson wished to be admitted, to vote on the matter. Indian Affairs was unclear as to which group or groups of Indians should be allowed to vote on the matter, and Scott asked Ditchburn to have Indian Agent Daunt sort out whether or not it was the custom of the three bands to vote on such matters together.¹⁶⁹ O'Meara pressured Indian Agent Daunt to

¹⁶⁷ Letter. G. Matheson to Duncan C. Scott, Deputy Superintendent of Indian Affairs, Ottawa. March 1, 1924. RG 10, Series C-II-4, Volume 11294, File 62-153, Library and Archives Canada.

¹⁶⁸ However, it is noted that Matheson did not participate in their activities on this occasion. Letter. Duncan C. Scott to W.E. Ditchburn, Esq., Indian Commissioner, Victoria B.C. March 8, 1924. RG 10, Series C-II-4, Volume 11294, File 62-153, Library and Archives Canada.

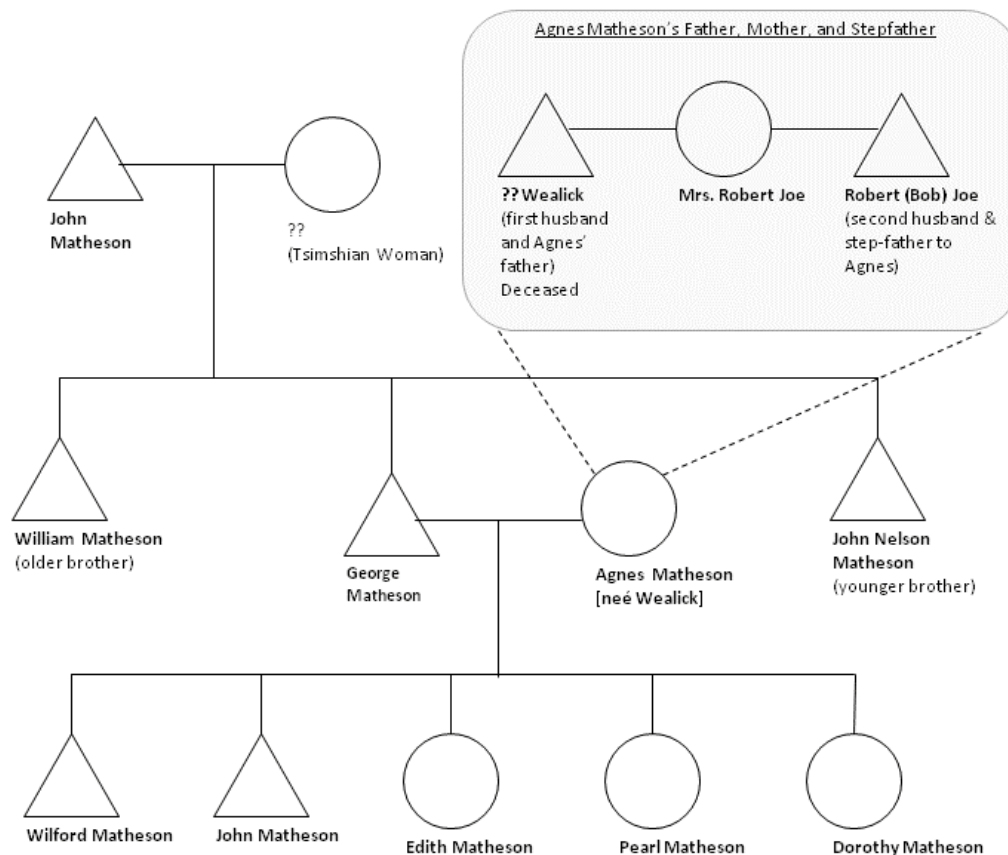
¹⁶⁹ Ibid.

recognize the traditional leadership structure of the *siyá:m* and allow the Indians of Skowkale and Yakweakwioose to vote alongside those of Tzeachten, falsely stating that Scott had already approved of this course of action.¹⁷⁰ Daunt sought clarification, noting that “it is a foregone conclusion that Matheson will be elected a member of the Tzeachten Band by the Skowkale and Yakweakwioose vote, while it is equally certain the Tzeachten members will vote against him. He will therefore be voted into permanent possession of land in a Reserve, the residents of which do not want him.”¹⁷¹ It was later confirmed that Tzeachten had been recognized (at least by Indian Affairs, if not the members of Skowkale and Yakweakwioose), as separate from the other two reserves in 1895, and therefore the only eligible voters on the issue of Matheson’s membership in Tzeachten would be those from Tzeachten itself.

Matheson’s claim to be an Indian was further complicated by the statuses of his two brothers. Figure 3-3 is Matheson’s family tree, based on the research for this thesis.

¹⁷⁰ Letter. A.E. O’Meara to A.O’N. Daunt, Indian Agent, New Westminster, B.C. March 12, 1924. RG 10, Series C-II-4, Volume 11294, File 62-153, Library and Archives Canada.

¹⁷¹ Letter. A. O’N. Daunt, Indian Agent, to W.E. Ditchburn, Indian Commissioner for B.C. March 17, 1924. RG 10, Series C-II-4, Volume 11294, File 62-153, Library and Archives Canada.



Matheson Family Tree*

*Inclusive of only family members mentioned by name in this thesis, other than the Matheson's children, who's names come from Hall's journal entries. It is not known if these are all of Matheson's children; there may be others.

Figure 3-3 Matheson family tree. Created by the author.

Indian Affairs officials were hopeful that the statuses of Matheson's brothers would provide clarity with regard to Matheson's claim to Indian status. Indian Commissioner Ditchburn noted that "the point as to whether Matheson is to be considered to be and Indian can only be determined after full information [on Matheson's family history] has been received from the

[Indian Agents in the] North [of British Columbia].”¹⁷² Ditchburn’s enquiries of the northern Indian Agents revealed that none of the three Matheson brothers was recognized by the Port Simpson Band as having any rights to membership.¹⁷³ But Matheson’s two brothers had very different relationships with Indian Affairs. The eldest brother, William, “refused to be recognized as an Indian,” whereas George’s younger brother, John, had been adopted by his maternal uncle, not only living on the Kilkahla Reserve but also sitting on council.¹⁷⁴ The situations of his brothers, therefore, did not assist the Indian Affairs officials in their evaluation of Matheson’s Indian heritage.

The opinion of the Tzeachten band as to whether or not to accept Matheson was the other matter Indian Affairs officials had to determine, but before that could occur, the issue of the possible rights of the people residing at Yakweakwioose and Skowkale to be involved in matters respecting the Tzeachten Reserve had to be addressed. Indian Affairs officials, undoubtedly concerned about the points Matheson had raised about the authority of the *siyá:m* Chief Billie Sepass and Chief Louie, and under pressure from O’Meara, had to be sure about who could vote on the matter, for the people of the Chilliwack Tribe and for their own understanding. It was Indian Commissioner Ditchburn, who sorted out the matter, finding that:

The Minutes of Decision [no date provided] show that Tzeachten Reserve was allotted for the use of the Skulkayn [Skowkale] and Yakweakwioose Indians and previous to 1895 no mention is made of a Tzeachten band in the census enumeration... In that year, however, the Tzeachtens are enumerated as having 46, Skulkayn 26 and Yakweakwioose 41, which would make the total 113. Apparently Agent Frank Devlin had not deducted those Indians from the last two mentioned bands who were living on Tzeachten Reserve, but did so the next year, for it is found that in the 1896 census the Skulkayn census is 24, Tzeachten 46 and Yakweakwioose 26 and the figures remained in about this order up to 1917.¹⁷⁵

¹⁷² Letter. W.E. Ditchburn, Indian Commissioner for B.C. to A. O’N. Daunt, Indian Agent, New Westminster B.C. March 18, 1924. RG 10, Series C-II-4, Volume 11294, File 62-153, Library and Archives Canada.

¹⁷³ Letter. W.E. Ditchburn, Indian Commissioner for B.C. to Duncan C. Scott, Deputy Superintendent General, Department of Indian Affairs, Ottawa. April 1, 1925. RG 10, Series C-II-4, Volume 11294, File 62-153, Library and Archives Canada.

¹⁷⁴ Ibid.

¹⁷⁵ Letter. W.E. Ditchburn, Indian Commissioner for B.C. to A. O’N. Daunt, Indian Agent, New Westminster B.C. March 18, 1924. RG 10, Series C-II-4, Volume 11294, File 62-153, Library and Archives Canada.

It was upon the simple fact that, in 1895, the Tzeachten Indians were counted as separate from those at Yakweakwioose and Skowkale Reserves on the census, and only on this fact, that Ditchburn determined that the Tzeachten band was an autonomous group. Ditchburn took advantage of the vote on Matheson's potential membership to make it clear to the people of the Chilliwack Tribe who had a right to vote on issues involving the Tzeachten Reserve and band (and, therefore, who did not):

In connection with the proceedings my understanding is that only members of the Tzeachten Band will have a right to vote on whether George Matheson is to be a member. The Tzeachten Band was made distinct in 1895. I have gone over all the records and find that up to 1895, the Tzeachten Indians were included with those of Yakweakwioose and Skulkayn. In the year 1895 at the request of the Indians the Tzeachtens were formed into a Band by themselves and have been recognized as a band by themselves since that year[,] consequently no person other than the Tzeachten Indians have a right to vote on *any questions* in connection with their Reserve.¹⁷⁶ [emphasis mine]

After the matter of who could vote on Matheson's potential membership was settled, and all the information on Matheson's background was gathered, Indian Affairs moved the case to a vote by Tzeachten Band.

On February 27, 1925, a meeting and the vote was held at Billie Hall's home on the Tzeachten Reserve, with Indian Affairs officials W. E. Ditchburn and A.O'N. Daunt in attendance to authorize the vote and transcribe the meeting.¹⁷⁷ Hall also recorded in his journal a brief account of the meeting.¹⁷⁸ These accounts reveal that, although politics and a desire to retain possession of his home on Tzeachten Reserve may have been the main motivations for Matheson in his application, the community of Tzeachten had other interests. One interpretation

¹⁷⁶ Minutes. Indian Agent Daunt, *Meeting with the Indians of the Tzeachten Band*. February 27, 1925. RG 10, Series C-II-4, Volume 11294, File 62-153

¹⁷⁷ Others in attendance at the meeting were thirteen adult male members of Tzeachten Band, six adult males from the Skulkayn, Yakweakwioose, and Soowahlie Bands (listed in the minutes of the meeting as "also present but not members"), and three men who were "not Indians" (George Matheson, Wilfred Matheson, believed to be George's son, and Dave Myers). Also present at the meeting was at least one woman, Mrs. Robert Joe, Matheson's mother-in-law. There were likely others, but as non-voting individuals, they were not recorded as "in attendance." Ibid., 1.

¹⁷⁸ Hall also recorded who was in attendance and noted some men in addition to those recorded by Daunt, but he did not record any women as present. February 27, 1925. Hall, Chief Billie, "1924–1925 Journal," n.d., Stó:lô Nation Archives.

of the meeting discussion recorded by Indian Agent Daunt, and possibly the best interpretation, is that those voting ultimately were more interested in maintaining traditional *Stó:lô* identities and social cohesiveness and protecting *Stó:lô* families from the destructive effects of the Indian Act, which categorized and divided Aboriginal peoples.

The meeting was chaired by Ditchburn, who opened it by asking Hall if everyone in attendance understood that the purpose was to ascertain “the position of the Tzeachten band with regard to George Matheson, should his application to be considered an Indian be determined by the Superintendent General in his favour.”¹⁷⁹ After Hall confirmed that those present understood, Ditchburn explained to the group assembled that only members from Tzeachten could vote. When the context of the discussion and vote was established, Ditchburn led Matheson through a statement of facts that Matheson had presented with his application to be considered an Indian and a member of the Tzeachten Band, getting him to confirm his family history, education, and how he came to be on the Tzeachten Reserve upon approval of Chief Louie of Yakweakwioose and Chief Billie Sepass of Skowkale. Ditchburn also confirmed that Matheson was “not considered a member of the [Tzeachten] Band” because his name was not on the list of band members who voted in 1917 on the sale of spruce from the Tzeachten Reserve.¹⁸⁰ Lastly, Ditchburn asked Matheson to swear that his statement of facts was true to the best of his knowledge. After Matheson affirmed this, Ditchburn opened the discussion to all in attendance and may have been surprised by the direction of the conversation that followed.

In their discussion, the Aboriginal people in attendance raised interesting gender issues, which, not surprisingly, given the gender bias of the Indian Act at the time, had not previously been considered by the government officials involved in Matheson’s case. Their conversation had nothing to do with whether or not they wanted Matheson on their reserve but how much they wanted Agnes Matheson and her children to remain a part of their community. The first

¹⁷⁹ Minutes. Indian Agent Daunt, *Meeting with the Indians of the Tzeachten Band*. February 27, 1925. RG 10, Series C-II-4, Volume 11294, File 62-153

¹⁸⁰ *Ibid.*, 4.

person to speak was Mrs. Robert Joe, Matheson's mother-in-law, whose presentation was translated from *halq'émeylem* by Billie Hall. Her concerns were, understandably, about her daughter Agnes's rights to live at the Matheson farm on the reserve:

I am the mother of Mrs. Matheson and would like to [say] a little bit about my daughter being driven away and Mr. Matheson still remains at the home. If Mr. Matheson becomes an Indian I have no kick but I want my daughter to come back and live in this place. After you have voted Mr. Matheson as a member of the Band set him aside in one corner of the place and my daughter in the other. This land was bought by my late husband [whose last name was Wealick, the Anglicized version of *Wileliq*, the hereditary leader] and given to my daughter Mrs. Matheson.¹⁸¹

Another person in attendance at the meeting asked, "if Matheson is voted out how [what] about his children?"¹⁸² The comments and questions by those at the meeting highlighted an aspect of Matheson's application that Indian Affairs officials were not in the slightest concerned about. Under Section 14 of the Indian Act, if Matheson did not have Indian status, then having been married to a non-Indian, Agnes and her children would have gained his status as a Canadian citizen; Agnes would have forever lost her Indian status.¹⁸³ As a result, Agnes and her children would have no right to live on the Tzeachten Reserve (near her mother and brothers) or have any say on other matters affecting those on the reserve, nor any other rights under the Indian Act, thus physically and legally separated from their on-reserve family members. Furthermore, Ditchburn explained what might happen to his family if Matheson was determined to be an Indian, paraphrasing Section 15 of the Indian Act:¹⁸⁴

The Department [of Indian Affairs] could say that he is an Indian or they can say that he is not an Indian, of course neither himself nor his family will be Indians unless the Department say[s] so, and his wife and children will be considered the

¹⁸¹ Ibid.

¹⁸² Ibid., 5.

¹⁸³ Ditchburn quoted Section 14 of the Indian Act to the meeting: "Any Indian woman who marries any person other than an Indian, or a non-treaty Indian, shall cease to be an Indian in every respect within the meaning of this Act, except that she shall be entitled to share equally with the members of the band to which she formerly belonged in the annual or semi-annual distribution of their annuities," which Tzeachten did not receive. Ibid., 4.

¹⁸⁴ Ditchburn further informed the meeting that, under Section 15, "Any Indian woman who marries an Indian of any other band, or a non-treaty Indian, shall cease to be a member of the band to which she formerly belonged, and shall become a member of the band or irregular band of which her husband is a member." Ibid.

same Band of Indians that he is found to belong to [Tzeachten or possibly Port Simpson]. If the Tzeachten Band want[s] George Matheson for a member[,] his family become members of the Band also.¹⁸⁵

The Aboriginal people in attendance at the meeting were concerned about what had happened to Agnes. Hall spoke on behalf of the Tzeachten, noting that

Mrs. Matheson was never driven away from the Band or by the Band, and we always look upon Mrs. Matheson as one of the members because she was an Indian, and any time she thinks fit to come back to this Reserve, we are willing.

Further, Hall confirmed that “nobody would like to turn any woman away [from the reserve].”¹⁸⁶

Hall’s comments reveal that, in the eyes of the Tzeachten, to whom Agnes was married had no bearing on whether or not she was an Indian and a member of their community. After the matter of the possible impacts on Agnes Matheson and her children had been made clear to those in attendance, a final speaker chose to address the group before the vote proceeded.

The last word went to Robert Joe, Matheson’s father-in-law, who echoed the concerns Hall presented in his 1924 letter of protest over Matheson’s application:

Robert Joe states: “I do not agree to this as Matheson and his wife are not living together. I am not kicking whether Matheson becomes a member or not but he gave us a little bit of trouble before and I wonder when he becomes a member if he will give us more.”¹⁸⁷

Joe’s use of the word *when* raises the possibility that the members of Tzeachten already knew which way the vote would go. The fact that the community members came to the meeting with questions about what fate would befall Agnes Matheson and her children, without those questions being raised by Indian Affairs officials, further suggests that they had been discussing what might fall out from the decision they were being asked to make. Perhaps rumours that a vote going against Matheson would result in Agnes and her family losing formal connection to Tzeachten had already been spread through the community, or perhaps they were aware of

¹⁸⁵ Ibid., 5.

¹⁸⁶ Ibid., 3.

¹⁸⁷ Ibid., 5.

similar situations. Regardless of whether any of this speculation is true, what is clear is that, at the time of the vote, Tzeachten members were concerned about Agnes and her children and wanted them to remain part of their reserve community.

After the discussion was completed, Indian Commissioner Ditchburn once again stated the purpose and put the matter to vote. However, Ditchburn put forth a slightly differently worded resolution for the vote, requesting Hall to:

kindly ask the members of the Tzeachten Band to vote on the question, as to whether or not they desire George Matheson *and his family to be known as regular members of the Tzeachten Band of Indians*, all those who desire him to be a member say yes, and those who do not say no.¹⁸⁸ [Emphasis mine]

Whether he realized it or not, Ditchburn's subtle rewording of the vote to include Matheson's family as "regular members" of the Tzeachten Band more than likely made it impossible to vote against Matheson, no matter how much they may not have wanted him as a member of their band.

After Ditchburn reassured those at the meeting that Matheson understood that "he is not to give any trouble," he commenced with the voting. Sixteen band members (males over the age of 18), including the three who were absent, were entitled to vote; ten voted in favour, two voted against, and one, Robert Joe, refused to vote. Hall also recorded the vote in his journals.¹⁸⁹ Ditchburn declared that a "full majority of the total" had voted "in favour of George Matheson being taken into the Tzeachten Band of Indians, provided that the Superintendent General of Indian Affairs decides that he is an Indian."¹⁹⁰ When the vote was concluded, and the history of Matheson's family established, Ditchburn turned the case over to Scott for the final decision.

¹⁸⁸ Ibid.

¹⁸⁹ Hall confirms three absent, and Robert Joe was "no vote." February 27, 1925. Hall, Chief Billie, "1924–1925 Journal."

¹⁹⁰ Minutes. Indian Agent Daunt, *Meeting with the Indians of the Tzeachten Band*. 5–6. February 27, 1925. RG 10, Series C-II-4, Volume 11294, File 62-153

In communicating the results of his investigation to Scott, Ditchburn made a key recommendation and issued a brief caution about the implications of the Matheson decision for racial politics (and Indian Affairs budgets) in B.C.

If the decision is in favour of Mr. Matheson, I would recommend that the wishes of the Tzeachten Indians should be concurred in [with] and he and his family should be considered to be members of the Tzeachten branch of the Chilliwack Band of Indians. In conclusion I would, however, respectfully suggest that very careful consideration be given to this case for in the event of it being decided that Matheson is an Indian, there will be many other half-breeds throughout the Province who will expect treatment similar to that accorded to Matheson.¹⁹¹

Shortly after Deputy Superintendent Scott received Indian Commissioner Ditchburn's report, he made his decision to confirm Matheson was an Indian.

It is interesting to note that Matheson was determined to be an Indian of the Tzeachten Band based solely on Scott's decision, without reference to the Indian Act. In Matheson's case, a by-the-letter application of the Indian Act would not have given him the same result. Scott's April 1925 letter does not provide specifics of how he had "considered" the information gathered by Ditchburn, but clearly under the Indian Act, Matheson's mother should have (and seems to have) gained all the rights and responsibilities due a Canadian citizen and should have passed these on to all of her children. It is therefore not much of a stretch to consider that Scott's decision was made on another basis.

In February 1925, two months before Scott's letter announced his decision, O'Meara had approached Indian Agent Daunt about the case. Daunt reported the visit in a letter to Indian Commissioner Ditchburn (who undoubtedly reported the incident upwards to Scott):

Mr. A. E. O'Meara called here on Saturday with reference to the Matheson case at Tzeachten. It appears Matheson is to go East as one of the Allied Tribe Delegates, [punctuation as in original] this month and the [Executive] Council are anxious to have his status as an Indian established beforehand. Mr. O'Meara was very civil, but intimated that the matter would be laid before the Minister [of

¹⁹¹ Letter. W.E. Ditchburn, Indian Commissioner for B.C. to Duncan C. Scott, Deputy Superintendent General, Department of Indian Affairs, Ottawa. April 1, 1925. RG 10, Series C-II-4, Volume 11294, File 62-153, Library and Archives Canada.

Indian Affairs] without reference to the Department if action was not taken at once!¹⁹²

Matheson's high-profile role with the Allied Tribes as a representative of the "Lower Fraser Tribe," O'Meara's advocacy on his behalf, and the Allied Tribes' recent January 1925 resolution that they were "more than ever determined" to have their claims heard by the Judicial Committee of the Privy Council in England,¹⁹³ would all have been on Scott's mind as he made his decision. That the Indians of Tzeachten (or at least those entitled to vote) were willing to accept Matheson as a member may have forced Scott's hand, resulting in his assent to recognition of Matheson as an Indian under the Indian Act, a member of Tzeachten Band, and a legitimate representative of the "Lower Fraser Tribe." Conferring Indian status on Matheson allowed him to continue his high-profile work with the Allied Tribes, which may not have been the outcome Scott desired. It may well be that he and other Indian Affairs officials delayed making any declarations about whether or not Matheson met the definition of Indian as per the Indian Act, until the results of the Tzeachten vote were known. Scott may have been hoping that, as was suggested by Indian Agent Daunt in the month before the vote, the Tzeachten would reject Matheson as one of their own. Had such a rejection occurred, Scott would then have had further justification to reject Matheson's application to become "Indian" by proper application of the Indian Act.

If that was Scott's intention, to wait for the Tzeachten to reject Matheson first, then he was oblivious to the intentions of the male Tzeachten Band members (and their wives and daughters, who did not have the right to vote) to preserve traditional *Stó:lô* and Tzeachten identities for Matheson's wife and children, given that descent through male and female lines

¹⁹² Letter. A. O'N. Daunt, Indian Agent, to Mr. Commissioner [W.E.] Ditchburn. February 2, 1925. RG 10, Series C-II-4, Volume 11294, File 62-153, Library and Archives Canada.

¹⁹³ Allied Tribes of British Columbia, Executive Committee Resolution, January 25, 1925, as quoted in Mitchell, "Allied Indian Tribes of British Columbia," 77.

were equally valued.¹⁹⁴ It was therefore not Matheson's blood or ethnicity, or even the definition of an Indian as per the Indian Act, but a confluence of history, politics, the desire of the Tzeachten to maintain officially recognized relationships with Matheson's wife and children, and, ultimately, the decision of one man, that resulted in Matheson achieving recognition as a member of the "Chilliwack Tribe" and placement on the band membership list at Tzeachten.

By spring 1925, both George Matheson and Billie Hall could claim Tzeachten identity, an identity that had been newly bestowed on Matheson and newly affirmed by Indian Affairs. It was also an identity created not by the *Stó:lô* themselves but by the colonial government, given that the Tzeachten Reserve was not a historic Aboriginal settlement nor viewed as separate from the people and resources of the Chilliwack Tribe (unlike the other Chilliwack Tribe reserves of Yakweawkwoose, Skowkale, and Soowahlie). However, it was not until many decades later that the right to determine the affairs of the Tzeachten Reserve was given up by Yakweawkwoose and Skowkale, when, on January 28, 1964, the two bands surrendered all rights to Tzeachten "in order that the Reserve can be set aside for the sole use and benefit of the Tzeachten Band of Indians."¹⁹⁵ In the course of determining Matheson's identity, Indian Affairs officials helped to further solidify the identity of the Tzeachten Band, or Tzeachten First Nation as it is known today, as distinct from the Chilliwack Tribe, something that Billie Hall was undoubtedly pleased about. Indeed, today the Tzeachten First Nation's website confirms that "the Tzeachten people originate from the *Ch-ihl-kway-uhk* [Chilliwack] Tribe," proud of their connection, but equally proud of their own separate community, as evident in the online video "Tzeachten First Nation: Investing in Our Future."¹⁹⁶

¹⁹⁴ In outlining the kinship structure and terminology among the *Stó:lô*, Duff noted that "if it can be considered that kinship terminology mirrors the actual kinship structure, then Upper Stalo kinship structure is simple, symmetrical, and bilateral." Duff and British Columbia Provincial Museum, *The Upper Stalo Indians of the Fraser Valley, British Columbia*, 78.

¹⁹⁵ From the Reserve General Register: Skulkayn [Skowkale] Band (Surrender 2362) and Yakweawkwoose Band (Surrender 2364) gave up rights to Tzeachten. Information provided by Tia Halstead, Archivist, *Stó:lô* Nation, February 29, 2012.

¹⁹⁶ "Tzeachten First Nation," n.d., www.tzeachen.ca/admin.

Finally, the examples of Hall and Matheson also raise an important concern. Given their mixed heritage, neither man should have gained legal status as an “Indian” in the eyes of the federal government officials responsible for implementing the Indian Act. As Matheson and Hall were born more than one hundred years before the 1985 Bill C-31 eliminated the gender discrimination inherent in the Indian Act with regard to Indian status,¹⁹⁷ the status of their white fathers should have been imposed on their Aboriginal mothers, and they in turn should have inherited that status. That these men’s personal histories challenge this rule, and the common assumption among many academics that the rule was uniformly applied, suggests that there are many features of Aboriginal-newcomer history that still require investigation. The histories of Matheson and Hall, and Ditchburn’s warning that there were many other people of mixed heritage who would be interested in receiving the same “treatment” as Matheson, serve as stern warnings that historians, political scientists, and other native studies scholars writing about Aboriginal identities need to investigate the validity of their assumptions about Aboriginal identity, requiring historical testing and context. In short, the rules of colonialism were not always the actions lived in reality.

Billie Hall, who grew up in a rapidly changing socio-political environment resulting in more intense colonial actions on the part of the colony of British Columbia and later the federal government of Canada, found ways to create Aboriginal and other identities that may not have been recognized by his Aboriginal ancestors. Clearly, both Hall and Matheson found unexpected tools that allowed them to forge new personal identities, and in the process of doing so, each contributed to the creation of a distinct Tzeachten identity that today is a source of pride for those who claim it.

About the same time Hall became chief of Tzeachten I.R. 13, he took on an additional leadership role. In the late 1890s, Hall was hired by the non-Aboriginal owner of a hop yard, located a few kilometres from Tzeachten, to be an intermediary between the foreman of the hop

¹⁹⁷ Canada, *Changes to the Indian Act Affecting Indian Registration and Band Membership* *McIvor V. Canada*, 2.

yard and the owner himself, and the thousands of temporary Aboriginal hop pickers who were employed seasonally. Hall's employment as an Indian boss empowered him in two ways, by increasing his income and placing him in a position of power over all other Aboriginal workers at the hop yard. In the next chapter, I outline Hall's responsibilities and functions as Indian boss, which both complicate and raise questions about academic scholarship with regard to Aboriginal labour in B.C. at the turn of the twentieth century.

Chapter 4

The “Indian Boss”: Shaping Aboriginal Labour in the Hop Industry

Hall began working for the Hulbert Hop Gardens of Sardis British Columbia shortly after moving to Tzeachten I.R. 13 and becoming its chief. As an “Indian boss,” Hall was responsible for managing the hop yards’ Aboriginal labourers, another opportunity to demonstrate his leadership skills. Hall wrote in his journals of the year-round responsibilities required to organize his labour force and ensure that they were treated fairly by the non-Aboriginal owner. In becoming an Indian boss, as this chapter will demonstrate, Hall was able to control Aboriginal peoples’ access to a still relatively new economic resource, wage labour opportunities, and acted in a leadership role that would have been recognizable to Coast Salish peoples. While Hall’s work as an Indian boss for the Hulbert Hop Gardens is important for this thesis that examines his life experiences and the creation of his personal identity, it is also a perspective yet to be discussed by scholars studying Aboriginal wage labour in B.C. at the beginning of the twentieth century. Examining this aspect of Hall’s history from an understanding of class from the perspective of an Aboriginal culture challenges and complicates the conclusions other academics have drawn.

The participation of native peoples in the capitalist economy of the newcomer society that developed in B.C. has been the focus of two major and broad academic studies: anthropologist Rolf Knight’s *Indians at Work: An Informal History of Native Labour in British Columbia 1858–1930*, and more recently, ethno-historian John S. Lutz’s *Makúk: A New History of Aboriginal-White Relations*.¹ Both these studies seek to understand and explain *why* and *how* Aboriginal peoples’ participation in B.C.’s wage labour economy changed from large numbers of people working in a wide variety of industries to a present when many Aboriginal people are

¹ Dianne Newell also examined the complexities of Aboriginal labourers in B.C.’s wage labour economy, focusing on the fishing industry, which is less relevant to this thesis than the studies of Knight and Lutz. Dianne Newell, *Tangled Webs of History: Indians and the Law in Canada’s Pacific Coast Fisheries* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1993).

under- or unemployed. They examine in detail the period between the establishment of the colony of B.C. in 1858, up until the experiences of the Great Depression of the late 1920s and 1930s.² Hall's description of the responsibilities and work involved in being an Indian boss allows for a critical evaluation of the conclusions Knight and Lutz make about the engagement by Aboriginal people in B.C. in general with the capitalist economy. These two scholars have revealed which industries Aboriginal people in B.C. participated in from the late nineteenth into the early twentieth centuries and provide some explanations of the push and pull factors that brought Aboriginal people in and out of the wage labour economy.

Writing about the same topic and time period, though thirty years apart, Knight's "informal history" and Lutz's more analytical work arrive at many similar conclusions about the rise and decline of Aboriginal participation in B.C.'s wage labour economy in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. But their approaches to understanding the choices that Aboriginal peoples made when it came to understanding their participation differ significantly: one chooses to focus on class differences (diminishing the importance of cultural differences), whereas the other finds that culture was a major factor in how and where Aboriginal people participated in B.C.'s economy. Hall's journals suggest that a better explanation lies somewhere between these two perspectives.

Both Knight and Lutz seek to debunk a "myth" about Aboriginal labourers that was most prominently promoted by historian Robin Fisher in *Contact and Conflict: Indian-European Relations in British Columbia, 1774–1890*, a broad-ranging study of native-newcomer relations in B.C. from 1774 to 1890.³ Fisher concluded that Aboriginal people became irrelevant to, and excluded from, the settlement economy of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries.

² It is interesting to note that this period is very similar to the time in which Billie Hall lived (1862–1950).

³ Considered a groundbreaking work at the time of its original publication in 1977, *Contact and Conflict* examined the role of Aboriginal people in the economics of the colony, and later, the province. Fisher describes "colonies of exploitation" where Aboriginal labour played a significant role in the economy. This changed with the rush for gold in 1858 that brought an influx of non-Aboriginal settlers to the West Coast. These later colonies of settlement, as summarized by Lutz, made "Indians, at best, irrelevant." Robin Fisher, *Contact and Conflict: Indian-European Relations in British Columbia, 1774-1890*, 2nd ed. (Vancouver: UBC Press, 1992).

Without other academic studies of the interactions between Aboriginal people and the wage labour economy, Fisher's interpretation of history was generally unchallenged by historians.⁴

Lutz and Knight take rather different approaches to explaining the reasons and nature of Aboriginal participation in wage labour.

Knight, in his broad examination of Aboriginal labour, sets out to use class rather than culture as a means for exploring why and how "Indians" engaged in wage labour, choosing to view them as part of a broader group of workers from a variety of cultural backgrounds.⁵ His intention was "to question some of the wondrous claims made for ethnicity and its allegedly guiding role in people's lives."⁶ Choosing to ignore the use of culture as a mode of analysis to explain Indian labour history, Knight also goes on to exclude other aspects unique to Aboriginal people as important to their economic history, finding both racism and the legal restrictions that increasingly dictated Aboriginal lives largely inconsequential to explain differences.⁷ Instead of cultural explanations, Knight used non-culturally-based class characteristics to explain Aboriginal involvement in new economic activities that opened up to them with the settlement of the colony and province of British Columbia.⁸ By comparing Indian and non-Indian workers, Knight sought to end the idea that "unique Indian work patterns" continued from the pre-contact period into the twentieth century, with little modification, finding instead that the work patterns of

⁴ In his preface to the 1996 second edition of his book, Knight explains that Aboriginal people have been "left out" of the economic history of B.C., citing only three academics who have examined the economic lives of Aboriginal people in B.C. Rolf Knight, *Indians at Work an Informal History of Native Labour in British Columbia, 1848–1930*, 2nd, rev. ed. (Vancouver: New Star Books, 1996), 6.

⁵ Again in his 1996 preface, Knight places his original work in the academic context of the time, describing it as "a reaction to the glorification of social ghetto which was fostered under the guise of multiculturalism during the 1970s." Ibid., ix.

⁶ Ibid.

⁷ Knight does admit that these differences between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginals exist. Regarding legal restrictions, he states that "such laws appear to have affected the economies of Indian producers more severely than Indian wage workers." Regarding racism, Knight states that Aboriginals were not the only people to suffer discrimination, and that, although "institutionalized 'racial' disabilities are a part of the story, it is not the main story dealt with here." Ibid., 19.

⁸ While considering Aboriginal people as a part of a working class, Knight is careful to explain that he does not think that Aboriginal peoples had a class consciousness, or at least, of which he has not found evidence. Ibid., 21.

Aboriginal workers were the same as those of non-Aboriginal workers.⁹ Class, then, and class interests, “not racism or racial interests, are what made the [economic] world go around—as much in the British Columbia of a century ago as today,” Knight concludes.¹⁰ This is not a conclusion shared by Lutz.

Whereas Knight sets aside cultural imperatives, racism, and the legal framework applied uniquely to Aboriginals, Lutz takes these aspects as crucial to explaining the nature of Aboriginal inclusion and exclusion in the B.C. wage labour economies, on the road to explaining his broader conclusions about how Aboriginal communities in B.C. were peaceably subordinated.¹¹ Aboriginal peoples, according to Lutz, participated in what he has termed a “moditional economy,” combining their traditional (cultural) economies with the capitalist modes of production.¹² In contrast to Knight, Lutz holds a place for the “traditional” pre-contact cultures that determined how and why Aboriginal people chose to take a place in the take wage-for-work economy.¹³ Citing historian Alexandra Harmon and her history of ethnic relations and Indian identities in the Puget Sound area of Washington State, and Karl Marx’s work on the concept of capitalism, Lutz states that “the incorporation of Aboriginal Peoples into the capitalist economy did not involve the destruction of their non-capitalist economies” but rather that the two economies coexisted.¹⁴ Although all cultures use a variety of modes of production, they share the same goals: subsistence, exchange or trade, and prestige goods. However, Lutz cites the

⁹ Ibid., 18.

¹⁰ Ibid., 19–20.

¹¹ Lutz describes peaceable subordination as “the techniques of power that the British used to secure colonies... Here, the dispossession of Aboriginal Peoples was cloaked in terms of incorporation, of bringing them into a ‘new order of things’ with the benefits of Christianity, civilization, and the rule of British law.” Lutz, *Makúk*, 24–25.

¹² However, as Lutz notes, Aboriginal people were not the only Canadians to participate in a moditional economy, and, similar to Knight, determines that this type of production was shared by “rural Canadians everywhere.” Ibid., 23.

¹³ *Makúk* is largely a case study of two separate Aboriginal groups, the *Lekwungen* of Vancouver Island and the *Tsilhqot’in* of the central interior of the province, although Lutz also draws in evidence from other communities to support his broader conclusions about the history of Aboriginal people in B.C. in general.

¹⁴ Lutz, *Makúk*, 23.

emphasis on the requirement of prestige goods for the potlatching practices¹⁵ of the *Lekwungen* as a particular motivation for them to find work for wages, as participation in the wage labour economy increased the abilities of the Coast Salish peoples to engage in potlatching.¹⁶ The noted increase in the number and elaborateness of the potlatches celebrated at the end of the nineteenth and beginning of the twentieth centuries led Lutz to conclude that “the Aboriginal People who were eager to participate in the foreign economy tended to be those who had well-developed prestige economies” and that “when these aboriginal workers joined the capitalist economy, they... did so for purposes integral to their own [culturally specific] priorities.”¹⁷ Lutz and Keith Thor Carlson also made this argument about the *Stó:lô* in an earlier publication.¹⁸

Though they differ on significant points of interpretation, the works by Knight and Lutz are quite similar in their excellent descriptions of the diversity of economic activities undertaken by Aboriginal people, both as communities and as individuals, a diversity reflected in the journals of Billie Hall. Whether working on his own, with family members, or with his community, Hall was involved in what today seems a remarkable variety of jobs, trades, and industries, as discussed generally in chapter two. To a large extent, what Hall recorded in his journals supports much of what Knight and Lutz describe about the variety of work undertaken by Aboriginal people in the early twentieth century and the seasonal nature of their working lives;

¹⁵ Potlatching, a means by which status, rights, and titles were conferred and recognized by entire communities and nations through the giving away of prestige goods, is recognized as a central socio-political feature of many Aboriginal communities residing along the northwest coast of North America, including the Coast Salish, of which both the *Lekwungen* and *Stó:lô* peoples are considered to be a part. Abraham Rosman and Paula G. Rubel, “The Potlatch: A Structural Analysis,” *American Anthropologist* 74, no. 3, New Series (June 1, 1972): 658–71.

¹⁶ Money earned through wage labour is converted into material wealth (goods) that is given away, leading to a final transformation, wherein material wealth is converted into socio-cultural wealth and status. Ibid.

¹⁷ Lutz, *Makúk*, 234.

¹⁸ The authors noted a successful integration by the *Stó:lô* into the capitalist economy at the end of the nineteenth century, through participation that was “compatible with their traditional lifestyle. In fact, the *Stó:lô* chose to enter the new economy in ways that benefitted their position within traditional *Stó:lô* society. For example, lucrative wage labour and other capitalist economic opportunities had permitted people to host ever more elaborate potlatch ceremonies.” Keith Thor Carlson and John Lutz, “*Stó:lô* People and the Development of the B.C. Wage Labour Economy,” in *You Are Asked to Witness: The Stó:lô in Canada’s Pacific Coast History* (Stó:lô Heritage Trust, 1997), 120.

however, Hall's journals raise questions about central aspects of both Lutz's and Knight's main arguments.

Knight and Lutz posit class and cultural reasons for the integration and eventual exclusion for Aboriginal participation in B.C.'s wage labour economy, but Hall's journals provide evidence that there were other factors at play in shaping Aboriginal workers' participation. Lutz argues that, for the *Lekwungen*, work for pay provided them with a new form of economic power to support the traditional cultural practice of acquiring and giving away material goods through a potlatch. The *Stó:lô* also participate in potlatch culture, holding their *stl'e'aleq* ceremonies to transfer rights and titles between people and families, and witness—recognize—marriages, namings, and other important events, which includes the distribution of wealth represented by prestige goods.¹⁹ However, the surviving journals written by Hall do not record a single instance of him participating in a *stl'e'aleq*, either by attending or holding one himself. Of course, this is not evidence that Hall did not participate in potlatch culture though it is suggestive.²⁰ If indeed Hall did not partake in potlatching, then this would suggest other reasons for his participation in the wage labour economy. One can imagine that Knight would take delight in reading Hall's journals, given that Knight assigned such low importance to cultural imperatives, especially potlatching, as reasons for Aboriginal people choosing wage work as and when they did.

Hall's writing about his work as an Indian boss reveals not only that there was more than one category of Indian labourer, something that Knight did not to explore in his book. Hall clearly occupied a middle role between Aboriginal workers on the one side, and the non-Aboriginal owners and managers on the other. The recently reissued autobiography of another *Stó:lô* man,

¹⁹ As described in Colin Duffield and Albert (Sonny) McHalsie, "Contact-Era Seasonal Rounds," in *A Stó:lô Coast Salish Historical Atlas* (Vancouver: Douglas & McIntyre, 2001), 62–63.

²⁰ The potlatch was banned by the 1885 Indian Act amendment and remained an illegal activity throughout the period covered by Hall's surviving diaries. This restriction, and the fact that Hall would have been aware of the conviction of Bill Uslick, a *Stó:lô* man from Chilliwack, for potlatching in 1896 (in fact the first person to be convicted under this section of the Indian Act), may have made him wary of participating in or writing down his personal experiences with potlatching. Keith Thor Carlson, "Early Nineteenth Century *Stó:lô* Social Structures and Government Assimilation Policy," in *You Are Asked to Witness: The Stó:lô in Canada's Pacific Coast History* (Stó:lô Heritage Trust, 1997), 99.

Hank Pennier, reveals that he also was a labour boss in the forestry industry of the mid-twentieth century, suggesting that the role Aboriginal people played as managers in the wage labour economy was perhaps more common than scholars have so far considered.²¹

Furthermore, Hall's position as chief, and therefore a political leader, raises interesting questions about the overlap between Aboriginal governance and wage labour, discussed later in this chapter.

While Hall was personally involved in a variety of industries, most principally his own farming enterprise, he also spent a great deal of his time performing a valuable role arranging and supporting the participation of Aboriginal people in the hop industry as an Indian boss for the Hulbert Hop Gardens. The Hulbert Hop Gardens, located in Sardis, B.C., was one of several hops operations in the Fraser Valley.²² Figure 4-1 is a map of Sardis; Hulbert Hop Gardens and the Tzeachten Reserve were separated by only a few kilometres.

²¹ Pennier, *Call Me Hank*.

²² Hop-growing occurred in the Sardis area of Chilliwack from 1893 through to 1997. Introduction. "Brewer's Gold: Looking Back at the Hop Industry in Chilliwack, British Columbia Canada," n.d., http://www.chilliwackmuseum.ca/BG_Main.html.

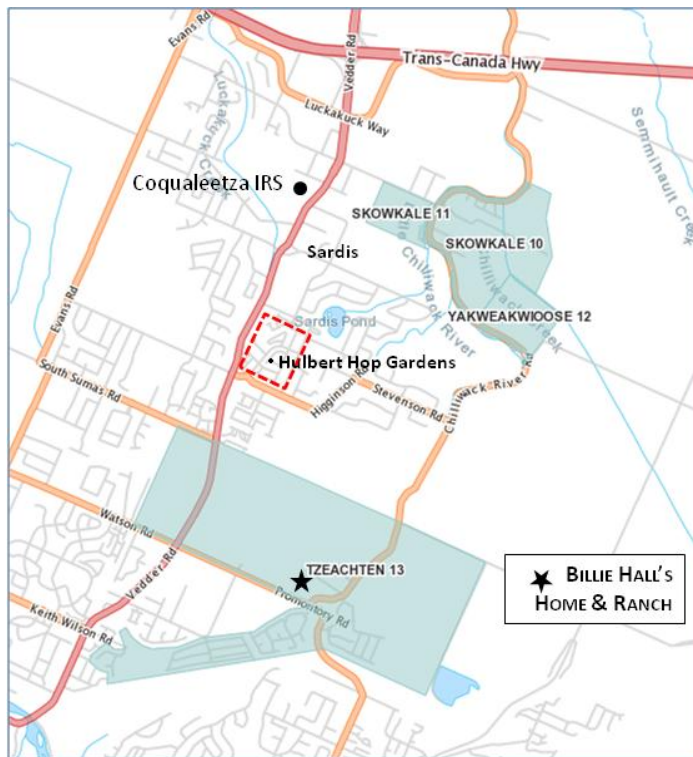


Figure 4-1 Location of Hulbert Hop Gardens, Sardis, B.C. Map courtesy of GeoBase.

The hop industry relied upon large numbers of workers to bring in the harvest, until most of the operations were mechanized in the 1950s. It was also an industry that employed, and segregated, groups of Aboriginal, Chinese, Japanese, Mennonite, and other non-Aboriginal labourers.²³

In the documentation available to me, I was unable to uncover a job description for Hall at the Hulbert Hop Gardens, but Lutz provides some helpful information about a *Lekwungen* Indian boss and his relationship to the people he served as both chief and labour broker. Michael Cooper was concurrently the elected chief of the *Lekwungen* and an Indian boss for the

²³ Making a Living in the Hop Fields. Ibid. See also John Lutz, "Seasonal Rounds in an Industrial World," in *A Stó:lô Coast Salish Historical Atlas* (Vancouver: Douglas & McIntyre, 2001), 70–71.

Empire Cannery, a fish cannery located near the *Lekwungen* Reserve. Hired by Empire Cannery in 1905 “to secure labour and to look after the Indian Help,” Cooper spent the next twenty-eight years “look[ing] after employment of Indians at Empire Cannery, see[ing] that they receive employment and proper pay and living conditions,” as he described his role at the cannery.²⁴

Lutz sees a common reason both for Cooper’s election as chief and employment as an Indian boss: his ability to act as an intermediary between the newcomers’ society and the *Lekwungen*. In these two roles, Cooper “symbolized both continuity and adaptation,”²⁵ fulfilling the traditional functions of a *siem* (or *sí:yá:m*), a traditional “head of household” in Coast Salish society.²⁶ In Coast Salish cultures, among other roles, *siems* (or *sí:yá:m*) were the customary organizers of labour and inherited their rights to be the head of an extended family.²⁷ In the case of Cooper, his right to lead the *Lekwungen* was not “inherited” as a traditional leader but was instead the result of an active choice made by his community, a choice to have as their leader a man with British and *Lekwungen* ancestry. Cooper’s mixed ancestry may also have been a factor in Empire Cannery’s decision to make him an Indian boss, or perhaps they based their decision on the fact that he was already a leader of his community, recognized by the *Lekwungen* and legitimized by Indian Affairs.

It important to point out that there are many similarities between Cooper and Hall. Both had Aboriginal mothers and European fathers and, as per the Indian Act, should have never gained legal status as “Indian” in the eyes of the federal government officials responsible for implementing the Indian Act. Equally, they both communicated well in English, in written and

²⁴ Lutz does not provide any information on where the quote “to secure labour and to look after the Indian Help” comes from, but the way in which this passage in *Makúk* is written suggests that it came from Empire Cannery correspondence. Lutz, *Makúk*, 100.

²⁵ Ibid.

²⁶ Ibid., 61.

²⁷ Keith Thor Carlson, “Early Nineteenth Century Stó:lô Social Structures and Government Assimilation Policy,” 89–91.

oral forms.²⁸ Neither Cooper nor Hall were traditional “hereditary leaders” of their communities; instead, both were leaders of their communities under the new governance structure set up by the Canadian government.²⁹ Coincidentally, they also served for nearly the exact same period of time, nearly forty years, from 1896 to 1935 and 1936. In a final comparison, Hall and Cooper also ceased acting as Indian bosses in their respective industries in the early to mid-1930s. As Lutz suggests, both could be seen to be intermediaries between their communities and the newcomer society.

The function of the Indian boss to act as intermediary, then, was something that appeared to have been valued by both the *Lekwungen* and the cannery seeking to hire Aboriginal labour. Lutz states that, as such an intermediary, “Cooper’s experience was common to many high-status ‘Indian bosses’ and recruiters, particularly at the canneries and hop fields, which required a guaranteed number of workers for a specified season.”³⁰ Unfortunately, if Lutz found a description of Cooper’s “experience” as an Indian boss in the Empire Cannery records, he does not provide it in his book. If indeed Cooper’s experience was common, as Lutz suggests, then the extensive information Hall provides in his journals about his life as an Indian boss for the hop industry can help historians understand an important aspect of Aboriginal labour history in B.C. in the early twentieth century that is currently missing from the scholarship.

A great deal of Hall’s writing in his journals records his work as an Indian boss. His journals reveal Hall’s year-round work to secure labour for a local hop yard owner and the tasks required to ensure that those contracted to work in the hop camps arrived at work and had adequate work and living conditions. Hall’s writings also reveal complex networks of Indian bosses and the interactions between these labour brokers as they worked to arrange Aboriginal

²⁸ Lutz, *Makúk*, 100.

²⁹ It should be pointed out that I was unable to learn much about Hall’s Aboriginal ancestry. It may well be that he was able to trace descent from a high-status chief through his mother’s side.

³⁰ Lutz, *Makúk*, 100.

labour. The personal history described in Hall's journals reveals how his complementary roles of chief and Indian boss in some ways influenced the labour choices of hundreds of other Aboriginal people. For this reason, a study of Hall's journals not only reveals something about the role of men like him, situated "in the middle" of the native-newcomer relationship but also something profound about the history of labour and its connection to political authority in western Canada.

Billie Hall worked as an Indian boss primarily for Henry Hulbert, owner of the Hulbert Hop Gardens in the Sardis area of Chilliwack, located just down the road from the Tzeachten Indian Reserve. Hulbert, originally an English tea grower from Ceylon, started his hop garden on forty acres of land in 1893, with hopes of establishing a thriving business.³¹ Figure 4-2 is a highly detailed map of the Hulbert Hop Gardens drawn by Henry Hulbert's daughter, Anna I. Gunn, in 1976, for the Coqualeetza Cultural Education Centre's hop industry research project.³²

³¹ The section "Fraser Valley Growers" provided some helpful information about Henry Hulbert and the Hulbert Hop Gardens. "Brewer's Gold: Looking Back at the Hop Industry in Chilliwack, British Columbia Canada."

³² Gerald Charlie and Val Sutherland [O'Connell], "Hopyard Interviews (1st and 2nd Drafts) and Resource Material," 1976, Coqualeetza Cultural Education Centre Archives.

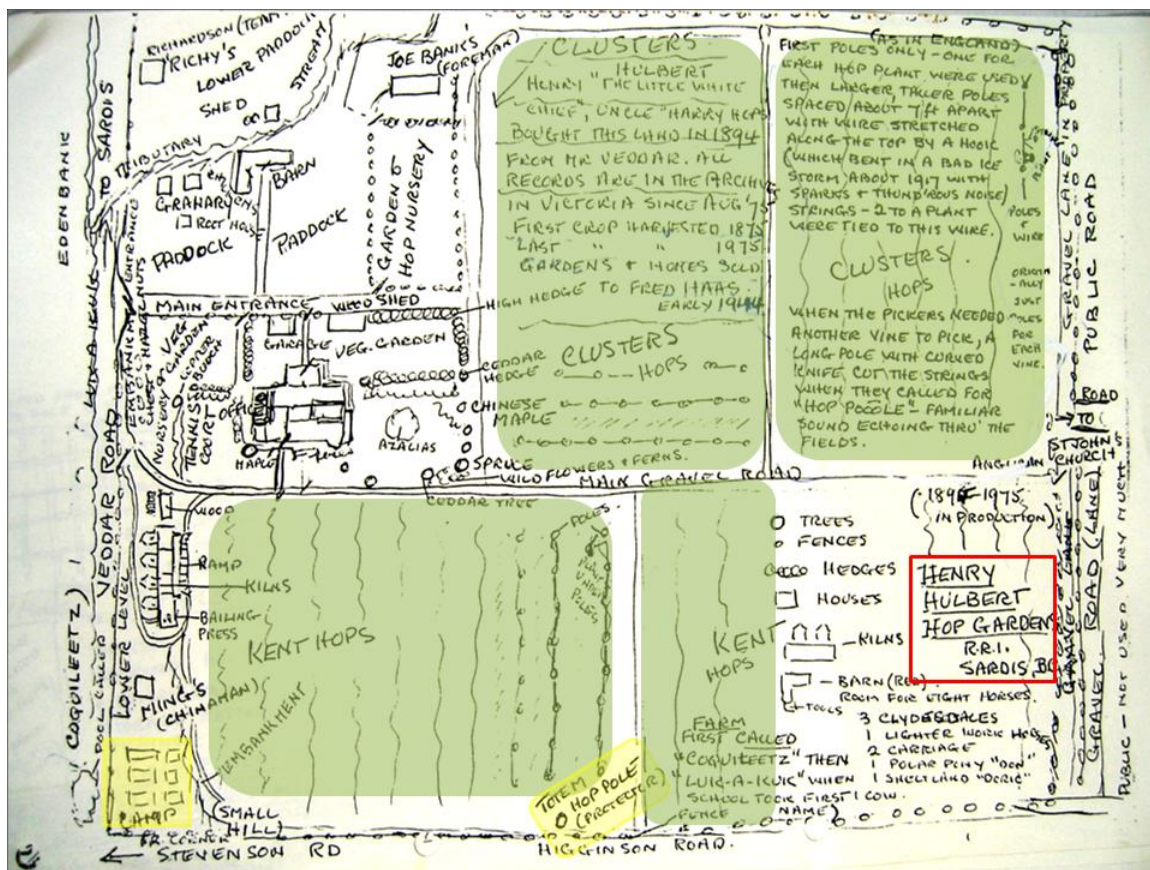


Figure 4-2 Map of Hulbert Hop Gardens, Anna I. Gunn, 1976. The map is oriented north-south; Vedder Road is the western boundary of the property. Hop fields are marked in green, and the Indian camp and the "Totem Hop Pole (Protector)" in yellow.

Hulbert's property was eventually developed to include the family home (top left quadrant of the map), four plots of hops (two each for the cluster and the Kent varieties), barns, drying kilns, and other outbuildings, as well as year-round accommodation for Joseph Banks, his hop yard foreman, and Sing (Hulbert's "head Chinaman," likely a boss for the small number of Chinese labourers employed at the hop yard; referred to as "Ming" in Gunn's map). The hop yard also contained residential camp buildings for the many seasonal Aboriginal workers needed during the harvest season. During the 1912 harvest, the *Chilliwack Progress* reported that 300 "Indians" were employed as pickers at the Hulbert Hop Gardens.³³

³³ "Hop Picking Is Now in Full Swing," *The Chilliwack Progress*, September 4, 1912.

The promise of a profitable hop yard was predicated on securing large numbers of labourers to manually pick the many thousands of pounds of hop cones that were harvested in late summer each year.³⁴ Initially, Hulbert found it difficult to get enough labour to harvest the crop, writing in 1897 to R.H. Pidcock, Indian Agent for the North West Coast Agency at Fort Rupert, B.C., that “there are not enough Indians in this vicinity to pick the crops off,” and additionally that “those that are here have their own harvesting to do after fishing”; as a result Hulbert “lost about fifteen thousand pounds of hops.”³⁵ Clearly, employing sufficient numbers of pickers was a key to triumph in the hop business, and Hulbert required the services of a network of Indians to ensure their labour at his gardens, having recognized that “the Indians are of course free agents to go where they wish.”³⁶ By 1902, Hall and other Indian bosses had been hired by Hulbert to assist in engaging these “free agents” to come to *his* hop yard when harvest time arrived, a job Hall held for 28 years, until he was hired as an Indian boss for the rival Canadian Hop Company in Sumas, B.C., in 1930.³⁷

By the 1920s, Billie Hall was the main Indian boss for the Hulbert Hop Gardens, which is not only an impression given by a reading of his journals but also one supported by those who worked with him. In 1976, the Coqualeetza Cultural Education Centre, in a project led by Gerald Charlie and Val [O’Connal] Sutherland, interviewed several *Stó:lô* people who had worked for the various hop companies in the Fraser Valley.³⁸ One of their interviewees, Anna I. Gunn, Henry Hulbert’s daughter, described Hall’s role at her father’s hop yard:

³⁴ “Brewer’s Gold: Looking Back at the Hop Industry in Chilliwack, British Columbia Canada.”

³⁵ Additional information about Hall’s work for Henry Hulbert can be found in Henry Hulbert’s Letter Books, which contain letters written between 1884 and 1928. The Hulbert Letter Books are currently held by the British Columbia Archives, but I was able to access research copies held by the Coqualeetza Cultural Education Centre Archives. Henry Hulbert, “To R.H. Pidcock, Indian Agent at Fort Rupert, Hulbert Letter Books, Volume 1,” October 6, 1897, Coqualeetza Cultural Education Centre Archives.

³⁶ Henry Hulbert, “To E.C. Horst, [of B.C. Hopyards, Agassiz, BC], San Francisco, Hulbert Letter Books, Volume 4,” June 6, 1906, Coqualeetza Cultural Education Centre Archives.

³⁷ Unfortunately, I was unable to discover why Hall ceased employment with the Hulbert Hop Gardens.

³⁸ Sutherland and Charlie interviewed Louise [Louisa] Hall, Billie’s daughter, for the project, but unfortunately the first side of the recorded tape was accidentally erased before the interview was transcribed. The remaining side two of the tape contains only a short discussion of who her brothers and uncles are and how her family is related to other

The native Indians came from near and far by canoe and wagons, B.C.E.R. [British Columbia Electric Railway] to pick the hops; the crop took 4 to 6 weeks approximately in late August and September each year. They were under the management of Billy Hall, who made the arrangements with the Chiefs of the Tribes as far north as the Thompson River, Lillooet, Merritt, Nicola Valley and south to Washington, Capilano, Squamish and even Saanich, V.I. [Vancouver Island]...³⁹

In a later interview, Mrs. Gunn noted that “Billy Hall had a lot of authority in who got hired and fired at Hulbert’s Hop yards.”⁴⁰ This negative power, the authority to fire a worker, complicates the image of Hall not only as someone who provided opportunities for Aboriginal workers but who could also take those opportunities away; however, Hall did not record any such incident in his journals. Other *Stó:lô* people recognized that Hall was “the boss” as well. Mrs. Martha James, in an interview with Gerald Charlie, provided some additional information about Hall. When asked by Charlie if “they had a manager, to take care of everything,” Mrs. James replied, “Well, I think Mr. Hulbert and Mr. Hall, used to [be] the ones that used to hire the pickers. It was Louise’s father, Billy Hall.”⁴¹ She also indicated that Hall was the one responsible for paying the Indians.

Although Hall was seen to be the main Indian boss by those who worked for him, in his journals he records working with at least three other people who performed similar functions as labour brokers for the Hulbert Hop Gardens. Whereas when Mrs. Gunn, who spoke about Hall in the 1970s, suggested he was the Indian boss for a huge geographic region (as discussed above), Hall’s own journals suggest that his principal region was much smaller, and that he worked in coordination with other bosses to ensure a solid coverage of Aboriginal communities for his employer. But it also appears that Hall was the regional coordinator for all the Indian bosses from the larger area. Hall explains that each Indian boss had his territory from which to

Stó:lô families in a different part of the Fraser Valley. Although Louise’s interview is lost to time, her father’s own words provide anyone studying them with significant information about his role as the Indian boss at the Hulbert Hop Gardens. Gerald Charlie and Val Sutherland [O’Connell], “Hopyard Interviews.”

³⁹ Anna I. Gunn, Interview conducted October 1976. Ibid.

⁴⁰ Anna I. Gunn, Interview conducted February 18, 1977. Ibid.

⁴¹ Anna I. Gunn. Interview conducted July 1976. Ibid.

arrange Indian labour, all centered largely on the Fraser River. Figure 4-3 is a map of the Upper Fraser Valley and the Fraser Canyon showing the territories of each of the Indian bosses mentioned by Hall in his journal.

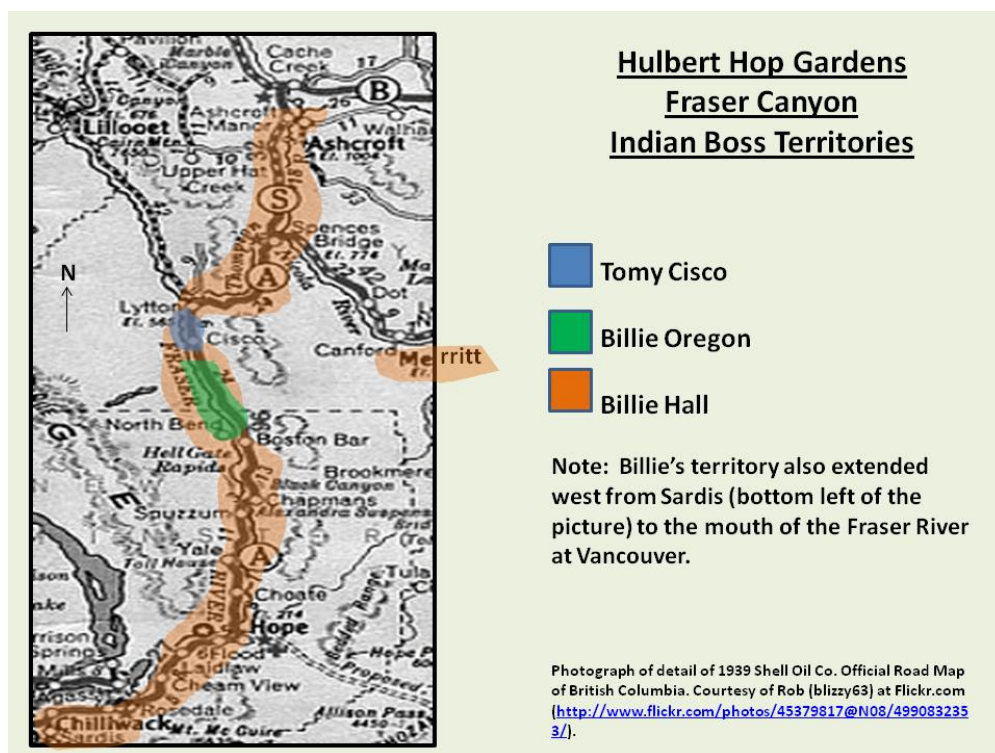


Figure 4-3 Map of Indian Boss Territories.

Hall looked after the “downriver” portion, from Musqueam at the mouth to as far inland as Yale; Billie Oregon of Inkitsaph, B.C., took care of the portion of the river between “B.B. [Boston Bar]” to Kanaka Bar, and Tomy Cisco was responsible for the most northerly territory, the section of the Fraser River between Cisco and Lytton.⁴² On other trips to arrange hop pickers, Hall went even farther inland to areas around Merritt and Ashcroft, B.C.⁴³ These Indian bosses were paid

⁴² Compiled from several entries in the 1923 journal; see, for example, May 22–25, 1923, June 9, 1923, June 26–27, 1923, and August 18, 1923. Note also that Billie Oregon and Tomy Cisco are mentioned in the Hulbert Letter Books as early as 1902 (Oregon) and 1903 (Cisco); these are longstanding relationships. Hall, Chief Billie, “1923 Journal,” n.d., Stó:lô Nation Archives.

⁴³ See, for example, page titled “Trip to Lytton, Merrit, & Ashcroft” wherein Hall recorded the expenses for his trip “getting pickers.” Hall, Chief Billie, “1928 Notebook,” n.d., Stó:lô Nation Archives.

by Hulbert for their work (and the expenses they incurred for related travel and accommodation costs), but Hall's journal also suggests that, as with the election or appointment of a man to chief of his reserve, Indian Affairs was required to confirm the hire of this labour leader. After being informed by telegram of Tomy Cisco's sudden death in July 1926, Hall travelled to Lytton four days later to meet with Cisco's widow and to discharge an important duty:

July 25th Sunday. Wether [weather] fine. I got up at 7 oclock [sic]. And Had Breakfast. And 9 oclock A.M. I went to See Mr. Graham. The Indian Agent. And He requested me to Bring in Hans Wallace before him. I had to take a car to get Hans up to Lytton to Sware [swear] him in As Indian Boss. And to be one Boss. The Train was Late 2 ½ Hours that gave me a chance to come home. Arriving Home at Chilliwack [Chilliwack] At 6 oclock [sic] P.M.⁴⁴

From Hall's description, it is unclear who performed the swearing in, Hall himself or Mr. Graham, the Indian Agent, but regardless, the act of becoming an Indian boss was something requiring Indian Agent recognition. Unfortunately, Hall does not give any further information about what he meant by the Indian boss being "one boss."

In Hall's journals, the exact nature of how these men related to each other in their roles as Indian bosses for Mr. Hulbert is not revealed. The entries suggest that Hall may have been a lead Indian boss, working with Hulbert to direct the work of these other labour brokers. In one instance, Hulbert visits Hall, and together "we decided to write to Billie Oregon and have him work on his own grounds[,] that is from Kanaka Bar to B.B. [Boston Bar]."⁴⁵ The three Indian bosses also work together, such as in August 18, 1923, when the three of them conduct their "work amongst the Indians" together.⁴⁶ On many occasions, Hall communicates by letter to Cisco and Oregon, suggesting at least some level of cooperation.

⁴⁴ Hall, Chief Billie, "May 15, 1926 Journal," n.d., Stó:lô Nation Archives.

⁴⁵ See entry June 9, 1923. Hall, Chief Billie, "1923 Journal."

⁴⁶ Hall, Cisco, and Oregon waited to go to Lytton until there was a large gathering of people for a "potlatch" on August 18, 1923, in order to recruit from those gathered. Ibid.

Hall's journals also reveal that there were times when Hall engaged people (who were paid directly by Hulbert) other than the above-mentioned individuals to find hop pickers for him. In late March 1925, Hall spends five days travelling to Lytton and back, and when he returns to Tzeatchen, he meets Harry Stewart, a local man, who Hall "find[s] that he has engaged some Hop pickers for me."⁴⁷ The following year Hall recorded a lengthy exchange between him and Stewart about the difficulty getting pickers:

I had An interview with Hary Stewert in regards to Hop Pickers. He claimed Mr Hulbert did not pay for his time while down to See the pickers that are down at the Cannerys [sic]. And he thought it would be better to quit. But will see me Later. [Stewart said:] Mr Hulbert paid my expences [sic] allright [sic] but did not pay me for my time while I was down getting Pickers at the Cannerys [sic]. My time is worth a hundred dollars a week. My Answer to Hary. I will See Mr Hulbert and Have a talk with him. And I will see you later And Hary Said This[:] We have Sold our Timber. To Mr Mooney And the Men will be buisy [busy] Logging [sic]. And their wives will will [sic] have to go allong [sic] with them And I will hinder no one from going to pick for Mr. Hulbert. They are going to log in the Sloughs And that Slough may go dry. Then we may have to Close down When we all can go and pick. And if the Slough do [sic] not go dry we shall have to log All Summer. I am a thinking that we will be short of Pickers. If that Happens I [Hall?] had better look Some where ells [else].⁴⁸

It must have been difficult to find enough pickers for the 1926 harvest, perhaps due to competition from the newly established John I. Haas Hop Company, also located in Sardis, in 1925⁴⁹; two months after this exchange with Stewart, Hall "hired Susan Wm. to get Some [sic] pickers Around the [Chilliwack] Landing."⁵⁰ Interestingly, Susan William is the first and only woman noted by Hall to be involved in the hiring process and is only recorded as working for Hall/Hulbert for the month of August 1926.

⁴⁷ April 4, 1925. Hall, Chief Billie, "1925–1926 Journal," n.d., Stó:lô Nation Archives.

⁴⁸ May 17, 1926. Hall, Chief Billie, "May 15, 1926 Journal."

⁴⁹ "Fraser Valley Growers," in "Brewer's Gold: Looking Back at the Hop Industry in Chilliwack, British Columbia Canada."

⁵⁰ I was not able to locate any additional information about who Susan Williams was or any possible connection she may have had with the Hulbert Hop Gardens. July 29, 1926. Hall, Chief Billie, "May 15, 1926 Journal."

Hall wrote often in his journal about hiring Aboriginal hop pickers. Above all, the act of hiring pickers seems to have occurred only through personal communication between the Indian boss and the prospective picker. Seemingly, no one was engaged to come and pick who did not have a personal interaction with someone responsible for arranging labour. From the evidence in Hall's journals, by and large, the hop yards found Aboriginal workers through the actions of the Indian bosses, in that it was the Indian bosses who approached prospective pickers and not the other way around. Hall also recorded a few instances when Aboriginal people went to him in order to gain employment as pickers. On one occasion, a friend approached Hall to request that his brother be hired as a picker. On another, Hall visited a woman to ask for some money, perhaps because she owed him personally. Unable to pay, the woman promised Hall to come and pick hops, seemingly in order to be able to provide Hall with the money after which he had come looking.⁵¹ Although the actual harvest of hops takes place in late summer (August or September), Hall's journals reveal that engaging pickers was a year-round activity, which very often required travelling to communities to hire pickers. Often in winter, when the weather was at its poorest, Hall would engage the workers in and around the Chilliwack area, including his own reserve.⁵² Then in early spring, he travelled to more northern communities like North Bend and Lytton, both to meet with his fellow Indian bosses and potential labourers alike.⁵³ In late spring and early summer, Hall was often required to repeat his travels to the same communities, perhaps to firm up travel and other arrangements as the harvest drew near.⁵⁴

⁵¹ See the entry for June 21, 1923. Hall, Chief Billie, "1923 Journal."

⁵² In January 1925, Hall travels to Hope to arrange pickers. On January 27, 1926, Hall goes south from Tzeachten to Cultus Lake to engage pickers. Then the next day, he "took the Names of the Tzeachten Indians as Hop Pickers." Hall, Chief Billie, "1925-1926 Journal."

⁵³ March 14-17 Hall is in Lytton and North Bend, B.C., to arrange pickers. Hall, Chief Billie, "1924-1925 Journal," n.d., Stó:lô Nation Archives.

⁵⁴ See, for example, the entry for June 7, 1926, when Hall travels to Lytton to see Tomy Cisco. Hall, Chief Billie, "May 15, 1926 Journal."

Unfortunately, Hall does not provide much of a description of how he engaged Aboriginal pickers for the Hulbert Hop Gardens or much about his work with the other Indian bosses. From one of the entries, however, Hall does hint that, at least on this particular occasion, he was able to hire pickers through his attendance at a large and possibly ritual or ceremonial gathering, which may have attracted people from many communities. On August 15, 1923, Hall writes, "I was to go up country [to Lytton] this evening But on receiving Tomy's letter to say that he wants me up there for the 18th at the Big Pottach [potlatch]. I have canceld [*sic*] my Trip until the 17th."⁵⁵ Although Hall did arrive on the 18th, he does not provide a description of his work nor of the event that drew him to Lytton.

The entries for Hall's visit to Lytton to meet with Tomy Cisco and hire pickers in April 1926 are typical examples of what Hall records in his journals about working with other Indian bosses. He arrives in Lytton on late on April 27, meets up with Tomy Cisco, and they "put up for the night at Globe Hotel. [Where] Mr. A.F. Hantier is the Proprietor."⁵⁶ His entry for the next day is brief and, most likely, written first thing in the morning, describing what they will do, not what they did: "April 28th, Wednesday. wether [weather] very hot. Tomy and I are working amongst the Indians today. We are leaving for Chilliwack [*sic*] by the CNR at 21:22a.m. [the following day]."⁵⁷ "Working amongst the Indians" is how, in several entries, Hall describes his work in regard to hiring hop pickers. On the third day, Tomy Cisco and Hall arrived in Chilliwack at 4:50 am, and, after breakfast and "a sleep," they "went down to see Mr. Hulbert and had an interview [meeting] in regard to Hops and the buildings. Tomy allso [*sic*] got money for himself (\$20.00) and Alex George (\$10.00)... 1 day [of work] for me."⁵⁸

⁵⁵ Hall, Chief Billie, "1923 Journal."

⁵⁶ April 27, 1926. Hall, Chief Billie, "1925–1926 Journal."

⁵⁷ April 28, 1926. Ibid.

⁵⁸ April 29, 1926. Ibid.

One thing Hall does record in his journal is that, although the pickers he and others engage are to work for Mr. Hulbert, the Indian bosses and the pickers they have hired appear to be linked as a labour unit. For example, in 1923, Hall records that an Indian boss from a rival hop company is “Trying Hard to get Tomy [Cisco] and *his* Pickers Because they cleam [claim] that he is fired [from the Hulbert Hop Garden] [emphasis mine].”⁵⁹ This entry suggests that, if Tomy Cisco had been “fired” by Hulbert (which he was not), it would be fair for him to take the Aboriginal workers that he had engaged to another hop company. In a 1926 entry, Hall links himself with the pickers from the Lytton area that he had hired. They had finished the harvest and Hall was ensuring their safe return to their homes:

Thursday wether [sic] wet. We did not leave here untill [sic] 15 minutes to 9 oclock [sic] A.M. and we were on the road all day. This [is] a freight Train we are on. There are 2 Coatches [coaches] for the Indians. We were delayed at Hell's Gate [on the Fraser River] 2 hours. On account of a Rock Slide. Arriving at Lytton at 7 oclock [sic] P.M. I hired a House to put *my* Indians in for the night Cost me \$3.00. I hired a Truck to haul the Indian Bagage [sic] to the House I hired.⁶⁰ [emphasis mine]

Although Hall's journals do not contain much detail about the process of hiring Aboriginal labourers, they do hint at a complex process that created something that was considered a linked group of workers.

Hall appears to have been rather successful in getting commitments from groups of people to come to pick hops at the Hulbert Hop Gardens, as the several lists of names of pickers recorded in his journals indicate. It should be noted that, although Hall hired individuals, it was those individuals *and* their families (including children and elders), who arrived at harvest season to pick hops. Figure 4-4 is a photograph of Aboriginal hop pickers in a hop field taken about 1896, an earlier time than discussed in this thesis. Note the children seated in the front and the older women on the far left; everyone who

⁵⁹ August 9, 1923. Hall, Chief Billie, “1923 Journal.”

⁶⁰ October 7, 1926. Hall, Chief Billie, “May 15, 1926 Journal.”



Figure 4-4 Aboriginal pickers at an unknown hop yard, ca.1896. Photo courtesy of the Chilliwack Museum and Archives (P1365).

had nimble fingers was welcome at the hop yards. This pattern of extended families picking hops together continued throughout the twentieth century, until picking machines replaced human labour in the hop yards.

Hall's journals also record one occasion when one of the other Indian bosses, Hans Wallace, came down to Chilliwack to inspect the hops, seemingly to reassure the pickers that had agreed to pick for Hulbert: "the people requested Hans to come and See the Hops," which he found to be "in good order."⁶¹ "The people" had good reason to be assured that there was a crop to be picked; by assenting in January to provide labour in August or September, Aboriginal people made a verbal contract to come and work the

⁶¹ August 7, 1926. Ibid.

harvest, particularly if they had been issued advances, as happened frequently prior to 1923.⁶²

A payment in advance on the upcoming harvest was something Aboriginal people actively sought and was likely a factor in deciding for which company to pick. In February 1923, Hall recorded several instances of potential pickers approaching him about receiving advances for the picking they would commence in six or seven months, something that they expected. It was an issue that so concerned them that “the Indians held a meeting here in regards to advances Money. Mr. Hulbert also was here. But he simply refused to give out any money to any body [sic] this year.”⁶³ Although Hall was approached by potential pickers seeking advances on wages again in June 1923, Hall’s surviving journals do not record any advances given to pickers in 1923 or after; it appears that the practice of providing advances had ended by the early 1920s.

Perhaps the use of advances to secure a seasonal labour force in the hop industry ended in the early 1920s as a result of “competition” for these seasonal jobs by non-Aboriginal, and in particular, “white,” workers. In 1927, the Dominion of Canada’s Department of Immigration refused to allow Aboriginal workers from nearby Washington State to cross the border for employment in the hop fields of the Fraser Valley.⁶⁴ This may have been in response to pressure from the B.C. Minister of Agriculture, E.D. Barrow, who just a year earlier had expressed a desire that, by the fall of 1927, “practically all of the Indian labor used in picking [hops] will have been replaced by white

⁶² This verbal contract was something Hulbert sought to protect. Many of Hulbert’s letters are written to other potential employers, such as canneries and the captains of ships sailing on the Fraser, and provide the names of specific pickers, so that if they are already working, they are released in time to harvest, or if they were seeking employment, to be refused. See example letter dated June 20, 1903, in which Hulbert notes that he provided advances to specific workers and that they were “bound” to him, and that he would hold them bound “by all legal means.” Henry Hulbert, “Hulbert Letter Books, Volumes 1–9,” n.d., Coqualeetza Cultural Education Centre Archives.

⁶³ Entry dated February 5, 1923. Hall, Chief Billie, “1923 Journal.”

⁶⁴ “Biggest Hop Crop in History Being Harvested,” *The Chilliwack Progress*, September 1, 1927.

labor.”⁶⁵ Although his prediction did not come true, *The Chilliwack Progress* reported in September 1927 that, although the restriction on Washington State Aboriginals meant that some Fraser Valley hop yards “will start operations with a shortage of Indian help,” at two companies, the Canadian Hop Company and the John I. Haas Hop Company, “white pickers” made up almost the entire workforce.⁶⁶ Perhaps some of these “white pickers” were the Mennonite immigrants who began settling in the Chilliwack area in 1927–28 and soon made up a large part of the hop industry workforce in the late 1920s and 1930s.⁶⁷ As a result of the changing racial makeup of the hop-picking workforce, due to restrictions on some groups and encouragement of (“white”) others, perhaps the use of advances to Aboriginal pickers was deemed no longer a necessary business expense in the early 1920s.

The Hulbert Hop Gardens chose not to give out advances in February 1923, because a rival hop company also chose not to, just one example of the competition between hop yards—and their respective Indian bosses—that Hall recorded in his journals. Also in 1923, Hall highlighted two other factors that affected a picker’s choice in deciding for which company to work:

Look to Hope [B.C.] for K. Sampson and Thomas Dick [the] Agasiz [Agassiz] Man [for the B.C. Hop Company] they are telling the People that they are making Small Boxes and Breaking up the Big Boxes. Jim Thomas the Indian Field Boss for the B.C. Hop Co at Chilliwack [sic] is Trying Hard to get Tomy [Cisco] and his Pickers Because they cleam [claim] that he is fired. On the 18th of this month there will be a Big meeting at Cisco. The B.C. Hop Co have Promised their Man Jim Thomas a Special Train.⁶⁸

⁶⁵ “White Labor for Harvesting Hop Crops,” *The Chilliwack Progress*, June 2, 1926.

⁶⁶ “Biggest Hop Crop in History Being Harvested.”

⁶⁷ Making a Living in the Hop Fields. “Brewer’s Gold: Looking Back at the Hop Industry in Chilliwack, British Columbia Canada.”

⁶⁸ This note is entered next to “Tomy Cisco List of Aug. 9, 1923,” a list of hop pickers, but chronologically is in the journal after the August 3, 1923 daily entry. Hall, Chief Billie, “1923 Journal.”

Until at least 1927, pickers were paid by the box rather than by the pound, and the size of the box that pickers were required to fill with hops varied from company to company, as did price per box.⁶⁹ Box size, as it turns out, was a key issue for Aboriginal pickers.

Henry Hulbert, owner of the Hulbert Hop Gardens outlined an incident, sometime around 1902, when Aboriginal pickers at another hop yard went on strike over the size of their boxes. The British Columbia Hop Company (hereafter B.C. Hop Company), also located in Sardis, had recently started operations and instructed pickers to fill a box that was larger than that used at the Hulbert Hop Gardens, without the proportionate rise in fee per box paid to workers. This was such an issue for the Aboriginal pickers employed by the B.C. Hop Company that they went on strike and refused to pick. The strike was settled when Hulbert filled one of his boxes with hops, and then went over to the B.C. Hop Company and dumped it into one of their boxes. The box board that the amount came to was noted, marked, and a declaration was made that, when pickers filled the box up to the line, it would be considered a “full box”; thus a standardized rate, based on box size was established.⁷⁰ Box size was an issue for Henry Hulbert too, in 1927, when he wrote to the Indian Agent at Lytton “regarding the pickers['] demands,” that, “my boxes are of the old uniform size, and have not been made larger of late.”⁷¹ So, when in 1923, the Agassiz Indian Bosses for the B.C. Hop Company told potential pickers that the company was “making Small Boxes and Breaking up the Big Boxes,” this was intended to further entice potential pickers to come and work for their company rather than rival companies.

⁶⁹ In 1922, the prices at both the Hulbert Hop Gardens and the B.C. Hop Co at Agassiz, B.C., were \$1.50/box for American hops, and \$1.75 for English hops. Letter. Henry Hulbert, “To Tomy Cisco, Hulbert Letter Books, Volume 7,” July 26, 1922, Coqualeetza Cultural Education Centre Archives. Wages for pickers continued to be paid by the box until at least 1927, as outlined in Hulbert’s letter to H. Graham, Indian Agent, Lytton, dated April 25, 1927. Henry Hulbert, “Hulbert Letter Books, Volumes 1–9.”

⁷⁰ Henry Hulbert, “To H. Graham, Indian Agent, Lytton, B.C.,” April 25, 1927, Coqualeetza Cultural Education Centre Archives.

⁷¹ Ibid.

Hall's surviving journals do not cover the 1902 period, when the B.C. Hop Company pickers went on strike, nor do they cover the period of April 1927, when Hulbert responded to pickers' demands, nor another strike in the hop industry that occurred in 1929. *The Chilliwack Progress* included in its report of "a big Indian field day" at a local hop yard that included performances and sports events and was "watched and participated in by several thousand people" that "a strike at the Hulbert yards delayed picking for the greater part of a week, but is now settled."⁷² Regrettably, the article's author neglected to provide readers with any additional details about why the pickers went on strike or how the matter was settled. However, based on research outside of Hall's journals, it is clear that Aboriginal workers in the hop industry were united, if not formally organized, in making workplace demands. Billie Hall's perspective on these incidences of worker solidarity on the part of the Aboriginal pickers who worked for and with him is currently unknown; however, as a prolific letter writer, his thoughts may exist in Indian Affairs' files. His perspective, one imagines, would provide further insights into the complexity of Aboriginal labour in the early twentieth century. It should be noted that Knight commented on strikes participated in by Aboriginal labourers in other industries at this time, but they are not a focus of his study. In *Makúk*, Lutz does not delve into the issue of strikes by Aboriginal workers. The evidence uncovered about strikes in the hop industry, and Andy Parnaby's study of Aboriginal longshoremen on Burrard Inlet, B.C., 1863–1939, demonstrate that how Aboriginal people interacted with the industrial workplace is a valuable area of inquiry that not only has been omitted from the scholarship so far but would deepen historical understanding of why Aboriginal people in B.C. chose to work when and where they did.⁷³

⁷² "Hop Picking Season Ideal; Canadian Hop Growers Have Finished Picking," *The Chilliwack Progress*, September 12, 1929.

⁷³ Andy Parnaby, "'The Best Men That Ever Worked the Lumber': Aboriginal Longshoremen on Burrard Inlet, BC, 1863–1939," *The Canadian Historical Review* 87, no. 1 (2006): 53–78.

The B.C. Hop Company's promise to make smaller boxes that Hall documented in August 1923 was accompanied by the second enticement to potential pickers of the arrangement of a "special train." Transportation to and from the hop yards was another factor in deciding for which company to pick. By at least 1911, Hulbert made special arrangements with the Canadian Pacific Railway Company (C.P.R.) to arrange for return travel between the Fraser Canyon and his hop yard for the Aboriginal pickers hired by Hall, with an eye to keeping costs down for the pickers, as outlined in a 1914 letter he wrote to H. Graham, the Indian Agent in Lytton, B.C.:

Dear Sir. Mr. Wm. Hall has given me your letter of the 18th inst. In reply, I wish to say that I have arranged with the CPR for cars to bring the pickers down on the 28th [of August] and for return tickets. Mr. Hall will go up the line at the beginning of the week to collect the Indians engaged by him and bring them down.⁷⁴

Immediately after sending this letter, Hulbert must have decided that he had to provide further clarity with respect to the arrangement with the C.P.R. and sent a second letter to Graham:

I may mention that I arrange with the railway company for cars and return tickets and charge the Indians a single fare rate to Harrison Mills, which single fare rate I do deduct when paying them off [at the end of the hop harvest], at the same time handing them their return tickets.⁷⁵

In several entries, Hall also refers to the arrangements Hulbert made with the C.P.R., and sometimes by car, for the pickers. As Hulbert mentioned in his letters to the Indian Agent, part of Hall's duties as an Indian boss involved personally ensuring that everyone arrived at the hop yards and returned home safely.⁷⁶ In one entry, Hall provides an amusing anecdote about one of the challenges of being responsible for coordinating the

⁷⁴ Henry Hulbert, "To H. Graham, Indian Agent at Lytton, [First Letter] Hulbert Letter Books, Volume 9," August 21, 1914, Coqualeetza Cultural Education Centre Archives.

⁷⁵ Hulbert, Henry, "To H. Graham, Indian Agent at Lytton, [Second Letter] Hulbert Letter Books, Volume 9," August 21, 1914, Coqualeetza Cultural Education Centre Archives.

⁷⁶ See, for example, entries in August 1926 and October 1926, when pickers are brought down from and returned to the Fraser Canyon by train, and an account in the 1928 Notebook, "List of expenses paid to Jimmie Spike for hauling pickers and baggage." Hall, Chief Billie, "May 15, 1926 Journal."

movement of such a large and diverse group of people down from the area around

Lytton:

Thursday wether [sic] wet. I hired Toney Madora to take me out to the 35 mile House for Old Caklatco's money. She forgot it in the House [and wouldn't leave without it]. I offered her \$8.00 to leave it there. But she would not take it. We Arrived Back at Lytton at 11.20 am. Just 15 minutes a head [sic] of the Train. We loaded for Chilliwack [sic] at 11.35 A.M. Stopped [stopped] at [the following communities] Winches Spur[,] Then Cisco[,] Kanaka[,] Inkitsaph[,] Boston Bar[,] Yale[, and] Hope. 1 hour late at Chilliwack [sic] and we were all moved into camp by 6 oclock [sic]. I worked with Frank Roberts for 2 Hours. Then Kate + Mandy + Mat + I went up home for the night.⁷⁷

The ease and low cost of rail transportation appears to have been a deciding factor for pickers in making the decision about which hop yard to pick for, as indicated by Hulbert's letters, and Hall was concerned enough by the B.C. Hop Company's offer of a "special train" to write about it in his journal.

Although Hall's duties as Indian boss included hiring, or contracting, the Aboriginal pickers, and ensuring that they arrived at the hop yards on time to commence the harvest, he also saw that the Aboriginal workers he engaged on behalf of Hulbert had adequate working conditions and received their pay at the end of the harvest season.⁷⁸ Hall and his family worked on the camp buildings for many days outside of the harvesting season. Figure 4-5 is an undated photograph of the camp houses at the Hulbert Hop Gardens, located at the southwest corner of Hulbert's property. These houses were lived in by the Aboriginal families who came from various parts of B.C. for the hop harvest. The photo shows six, long, shed-roofed buildings. Judging by the number of chimney stacks, each building had several small rooms that accommodated entire families.

⁷⁷ August 26, 1926. Ibid.

⁷⁸ October 5, 1926. Ibid.



Figure 4-5 The camp houses at Hulbert's Hop Gardens, undated. Photo courtesy of the Chilliwack Museum and Archives (P1365).

Hall's entries for 1925 and 1926 provide details regarding the work he and his family undertook to maintain the buildings that Aboriginal people used at the hop gardens. Primarily, this included setting up and closing down the camp houses. For example, from August 9 to 26, 1926, Hall recorded in some detail what was required to get the camp ready for its future, though temporary, inhabitants. On the first day, Hall and his son-in-law Mat Cox "went to work in the camp. We Opened up the doors of the House to Sweep the Rooms and set stoves."⁷⁹ Clearly there were a lot of rooms to sweep, as the following day "Mat and the Boys Swept all the Rooms in all the Houses. ... [also] Mat turned on the Water at the camp today."⁸⁰ The sweeping in the "dirty" rooms continued for a third and fourth day, the effects of which were felt by Hall the day after: "I am very sick today And all night last night from the dust that I inhaled in the Rooms

⁷⁹ August 9, 1926. Ibid.

⁸⁰ August 10, 1926. Ibid.

yesterday and I have promised my Self that I will never Sweep those Rooms With out water.”⁸¹ After all the sweeping, the houses then had to be washed, another multi-day process. In the days that followed, Hall, and his work crew of family and other Aboriginals, repapered the buildings and installed steps on one of the buildings. At other times of the year, Hall also fixed locks on the buildings,⁸² inspected stoves and recommended their replacement,⁸³ and repaired the entrance to the camp dance hall.⁸⁴

Hall’s duties also involved taking care of his temporary workforce. He clearly included the responsibility of advocating for the welfare of his pickers in his role as Indian boss. In this example from 1930, as a recently hired Indian boss with the Canadian Hop Company in Sumas, B.C., Hall wrote of his disgust of the treatment of his Aboriginal workers:

We Went to Meet the C.N.R. at 10 minutes to 5 oclock [sic] A.M. To Meet the Indians. There were Not More than 60 on the Train. I moved to Sumas where we [Hall and his pickers] had lots of Trouble with our Rooms [at the hop yard]. Taylor moved us 3 Times[,] Where some of the Indians were Mad and put 4 in Room. 4 [members] of a family and two familys [families] [were put in the same room] where they are cramed [crammed] in like pigs. This I will Bring up With Mr. H.N. Ord [manager of the Canadian Hop Company operations at Sumas]. Allso [sic] a good many [Indians] Complained about the ½ lb over. How can that be Remided [remedied] [?].⁸⁵

Although I am unsure as to what the “½ lb over” complaint is a reference, it is clear that the pickers, and Hall, were upset with the accommodations the Canadian Hop Company provided, and Hall felt that he needed to work with the manager to resolve their situations. If, as is suggested by earlier entries in Hall’s journals, Hall’s “unit” of pickers came over with him to the Canadian Hop Company operations from the Hulbert Hop Gardens when he changed employers, then it may explain particularly why Hall was

⁸¹ August 13, 1926. Ibid.

⁸² November 23, 1925, Hall, Chief Billie, “1924–1925 Journal.”

⁸³ February 20, 1926. Hall, Chief Billie, “1925–1926 Journal.”

⁸⁴ December 3, 1926. Hall, Chief Billie, “May 15, 1926 Journal.”

⁸⁵ August 16, 1930. Hall, Chief Billie, “1930 Journal,” n.d., Stó:lô Nation Archives.

concerned enough about their treatment to record it in his journal. All the duties and responsibilities—and work—that Hall detailed in his journals make it clear that his role as Indian boss was much more comprehensive than being merely one who contracts labour.

By the time Hall completed the entry in the last of his surviving journals in 1933, he was in his seventy-first year, had most likely retired from the hop industry, and was approaching the end of his thirty-plus-year tenure as chief of Tzeachten, a position from which he would retire three years later. After stepping down, Hall returned to the area of his birth, moving first to Bellingham, Washington, and then later to the larger city of Seattle.⁸⁶ Billie passed away on September 17, 1950. As he no doubt wished, Billie was celebrated in the Roman Catholic church of St. Mary's in Chilliwack, under the direction of Father Bernardo. He was laid to rest in the Tzeachten Cemetery, a place Billie so clearly valued, next to his wife, Kate, who had predeceased him by twenty-five years. In a life that spanned eighty-eight years, Billie Hall was witness to incredible changes to Indian country. Newcomers had played a role in his life from the moment his mother and father met, his father just the first of many newcomers that Hall would have the opportunity to interact with: Chinese labourers, French-Canadian missionaries, government officials, and neighbours from a variety of European backgrounds, to name only a few. These newcomers brought many transformations which led to some opportunities for Aboriginal people, who all engaged (willingly or not) in the process of reconciling themselves to a seemingly ever-altering world. As Billie revealed through his journals, in truth not everything, nor everyone, that the newcomers brought to B.C. meant that Aboriginal desires to maintain traditional identities and communities would be ignored. Billie's important life story has illuminated a period that has received little attention from academics to date. His journals from

⁸⁶ According to Hall's obituary, an undated newspaper clipping tucked into the back of Hall's earliest notebook, the "Daybook," Hall spent at least thirteen years after his retirement in the U.S. Hall, Chief Billie, "Daybook," n.d., Stó:lô Nation Archives.

the 1920s reveal that Hall found ways to (re)create his life that allowed him to successfully fit in the mould of traditional *Stó:lô* elite male and leader and provide a new version of “truth” for academics, Aboriginals, and newcomers alike to consider as we work towards reconciliation.

Chapter 5 Conclusions

William A. Hall is not the sort of person early ethnographers turned to as they constructed models of Aboriginal society in what is now British Columbia. Nor is he the sort of person historians have sought out to help them situate colonial processes in Native-newcomer history. And yet Hall, a man the Tzeachten people and Indian Affairs determined was an Indian, led a life that enriches our understanding of that history. The valuable pages of his journals, long preserved by his family and now shared with those interested in his history, provide evidence that colonialism was neither “meted out” nor experienced uniformly across all periods and all places. It is through these types of study, which focus on individual experience, that historians can evaluate and challenge studies that have, whether actively or inadvertently, generalized Aboriginal peoples and their past. In particular, by looking at the categories of class and gender while seeking to comprehend individual experiences, Canadian historians and other academics, Aboriginal people, and anyone else looking for historical meaning, will find new understandings to inform how all Canadians view their shared colonial past.

Carlson has observed that the creation of the reserve system was a colonial initiative that intended to nurture a localized and decentralized *Stó:lô* collective identity, an initiative that Carlson found “privileged an enhanced geographically nested form of tribally and settlement-based collective identity similar to the identities that would have resonated with elite males... where identity and authority were connected to place” in the late eighteenth century.¹ The reserve system also created new opportunities for non-elite males who did not have access to hereditary names and associated resources. Hall, who seems to have been one such man, undoubtedly found that becoming the chief of the Tzeachtens was a means of establishing his own connection to a graphically-based community, albeit one that was colonially created, and a

¹ Keith Thor Carlson, *The Power of Place, the Problem of Time: Aboriginal Identity and Historical Consciousness in the Cauldron of Colonialism* (Toronto; Buffalo: University of Toronto Press, 2010), 158.

means of reinventing himself in the tradition of the *Stó:lô* high-status male. In so doing, Hall was able to take advantage of the opportunity provided by the colonial changes brought to *Stó:lô* territory in order to insert himself in a traditional gender and class role that he may not necessarily have held without colonial interference. Whereas Carlson's research revealed "throughout the contact and colonial periods, new opportunities emerged for people to take advantage of older gender- and status-based divisions to promote change that was set in stark opposition to particular expressions of identity and authority," Hall's experience shows that, equally, some individuals were able to take advantage of "newer" status opportunities, e.g., as federally recognized chief, to promote change that reflected "older" gender- and status-based social positions. Thus the settlement of the Tzeachten Reserve and the creation of a Tzeachten identity separate from the other Chilliwack First Nations is an example of how the Indian reserve system was "simultaneously empowering for, and compromising of, Indigenous identity and governance" as Carlson has determined.

Similarly, the capitalist wage labour economy that came to replace traditional Aboriginal subsistence- and prestige-based economies in B.C. also presented ways to empower and perhaps compromise *Stó:lô* identity and governance. Men like Hall, Hank Pennier, and Michael Cooper were able to assume positions of power over their Aboriginal colleagues in industries as diverse as hop-growing, logging, and fish-canning. In the case of Hall, who held a territory covering hundreds of kilometres and tens of communities and appeared to be in the eyes of his employer personally connected to all who were contracted to the hop garden through him, he maintained, over the decades, a leadership role that may have surpassed almost every political grouping, other than the Allied Tribes of B.C. That Cooper and Hall were also both federally recognized chiefs of their reserves raises interesting possibilities about the linkages between these two types of leadership, something that could change how Aboriginal experiences within the wage labour economy are understood.

The brief collective pieces of information that Hall provides about his life and work and the information provided by John S. Lutz about Cooper, raise intriguing questions about these types of socio-cultural and economic intermediaries. Hall held more responsibilities and had more authority in the Hulbert Hop Gardens than did the average Aboriginal labourer. Today, one might consider Hall a middle manager, supervising and having responsibility for those who reported to him and in turn reporting to senior management. Hall was a labour broker, a boss, for Hulbert. From Hall's journals alone, there is not enough information to draw many conclusions about the impact of Indian bosses on the nature of Aboriginal wage labour or the impact of wage labour on Aboriginal leadership, but his words allow historians to ask different questions from those that have previously been asked about Aboriginal labourers, and perhaps even begin to hint at new questions about the role of labour and capital in Native governance.

As the one responsible for "hiring and firing" Aboriginal labourers at the Hulbert Hop Gardens, as Anna Gunn described him, Hall wielded considerable control over Aboriginal peoples' access to a large seasonal income. His journals do not reveal anything about his decision-making process to determine who was hired or fired. How were these decisions made? Hall was the chief of Tzeachten. Did he use his authority to favour members of his reserve? Or did he exclude people from other reserves with which Tzeachten may have been in disagreement? What influence did his family connections to other *Stó:lō* people have on his decisions about who worked at the Hulbert Hop Gardens? Hall was also a Catholic man living and working in Sardis in the Fraser Valley. The non-Native population of the Fraser Valley was predominantly Protestant at the time, whereas most of the Aboriginal people were Roman Catholic. Might religion have been a factor? And what about personal interests? If Hall did not like or agree with someone, did that mean that that person would be unable to pick for Hulbert Hop Gardens? These questions can also be asked of the other Indian bosses who worked with Hall in engaging Aboriginal people as pickers. Finally, if an Indian boss and the pickers he engaged did function as a work/labour unit, as some of Hall's entries suggest, what additional

dynamics did these units add to a racially segregated workplace such as was the hop industry? In the absence of records like Hall's diary which provide evidence about the role played by these Indian bosses, Knight, Lutz, and other scholars, have not yet considered the implications of the employment of entire communities, or several communities, resting on the shoulders of a few men.

Scholarship on Aboriginal participation in the wage labour economy that developed in B.C. in the early twentieth century has so far largely presented Aboriginal labourers as a uniform group, one side of a dichotomy that places non-Aboriginal owners and managers on the other side. Hall's journals, and Lutz's inclusion of Michael Cooper, reveal a much more complex reality of an Aboriginal workforce that included those who were more than unskilled or semi-skilled labourers. Men like Hall and Cooper demonstrate that there existed a hierarchy (or hierarchies) within the broader group of Aboriginal workers. What were the effects on their traditional communities? Do the lives of these men, and their families, indicate the development of a proto-middle class within Aboriginal communities during the early part of the twentieth century? If so, did they represent a new group within *Stó:lō* societies, or did they fit within the existing hierarchies? And was Hall's mixed ancestry a factor that made him exceptional, or did it matter little and so instead reflect broader trends and activities? And if a middle class of people working as labour brokers like Hall did form a new strata, how did *Stó:lō* culture and community adapt to these changes to traditional hierarchies? Lutz and others have already indicated that the incorporation of Aboriginals into the capitalist economy of the colony and later the province of British Columbia had an impact on "traditional" cultural practices and therefore had a societal impact. Hall's journals demonstrate more variety and stratification within Aboriginal workers than has previously been considered by academia; in turn, academia should consider the effects this variety had on Aboriginal communities.

Finally, both Rolf Knight and Lutz describe the 1930s as a time when everything changed for Aboriginal wage labourers and ushered in the start of a period when opportunities

for Aboriginals to find employment began to diminish. Knight finds that Aboriginal wage workers in the resource-based economy of the time were affected in the same fashion as their non-Aboriginal peers, when the global Great Depression of the late 1920s and early 1930s affected B.C.'s economy.² Citing the many legislative impediments created by the Canadian federal and provincial governments, Lutz demonstrates that "the 'state' played a primary role in shaping aboriginal access to the capitalist, subsistence, prestige, and welfare economies."³ Racism and sub-par education for Aboriginals (compared with the non-Aboriginal population), on top of such legislative restrictions, led to the declining participation of Aboriginals in B.C.'s wage labour economy which was then compounded by the Great Depression.⁴ Ultimately, Lutz argues that, although Aboriginal people did, and continue to, participate in capitalist economies, they do not have the same control over when, where, and what types of opportunities are open to them, as a result of being "'racialized' as 'Indians' and assigned a particular role in the hierarchy of wage relations."⁵

There are likely a large number of factors that interacted to create the conditions that led to the reduction of Aboriginal participation in the wage labour in British Columbia in the 1930s, including not only the economic effects of the Depression, as outlined by Knight, and the increasing legislative and policy framework imposed upon Aboriginal lives by the state, as outlined by Lutz. Labourers were also replaced by increasing mechanization in the period leading up to the 1950s, as exemplified by the hop industry.⁶ Additionally, efforts to make some workplaces, such as in the hop industry, entirely "white" labour forces, seemed to have been making inroads, as Hall notes working with several non-native "checkers" (those who checked

² Knight describes how various resource industries were affected by the recession of this period and the responses of Aboriginal people, finding "far more white working people faced similar conditions. Many single [white] men and families responded to the situation in ways not dissimilar from the emergency strategies adopted by native Indians." Knight, *Indians at Work*, 321–22.

³ The role the state played in determining how Aboriginal people participated in this moditional economy was a key difference between Aboriginals and other rural Canadians, Lutz emphasizes. Lutz, *Makúk*, 233.

⁴ Ibid., 254.

⁵ Ibid., 235.

⁶ "Making a Living in the Hop Fields," in "Brewer's Gold: Looking Back at the Hop Industry in Chilliwack, British Columbia Canada."

baskets of hops as they came in to be measured) at the Canadian Hop Company in 1930.⁷ Furthermore, the mid-1930s also saw the retirement of Hall and the death of Cooper. Lutz notes that, after Cooper's passing, "his successors did not assume his role as labour broker for the cannery."⁸ It is unknown if, after Hall's retirement, the Fraser Valley hop yards continued to employ Indian bosses. But if, like the *Lekwungen* after the loss of Cooper, Aboriginal peoples in other industries ceased to have access to a particular type of middle management, employed to "look after employment of Indians... [and] see that they receive employment and proper pay and living conditions," what might have been the possible effects? Indian bosses functioned as stewards of Aboriginal labourers in many industries, as Lutz indicates. If indeed Indian bosses were eliminated in the 1930s, then the voice of one person, or a few people, who spoke for the collective Aboriginal workforce of a company, was also lost.⁹ It is not difficult to surmise that, if this was the case, it would have made Aboriginal workers more vulnerable in the already changing and unsteady economic and political realities of B.C. in the 1930s.

Billie Hall's journals provide considerable and important details about the role he played in the hop industry of the Fraser Valley in the 1920s and early 1930s. Although in the main the information he provides supports much of what the major academic studies have described about Aboriginal wage labourers in B.C. in the early 1920s, Knight's *Indians at Work* and Lutz's *Makúk*, his journals point out a large hole left in these studies. The Indian boss played a vital role in organizing and supporting Aboriginal workers, the impact of which has not yet received adequate attention by academics. Hall's journals do not provide the definitive story, but they raise critical questions that must be answered in order to truly understand how Aboriginal men

⁷ August 21, 1930. Hall, Chief Billie, "1930 Journal."

⁸ Lutz, *Makúk*, 110.

⁹ Hank Pennier, in his autobiography, suggests that not all Indian bosses were eliminated during the Depression. However, both Pennier and Hall are of mixed ancestry although Pennier, as a non-status Aboriginal person, was more associated with non-Aboriginal society. Unfortunately, Hall's journal alone does not provide enough information to determine if Hall and Pennier are exceptional in the history of Aboriginal labourers in this period, or more typical. More academic research into the individual experiences of Aboriginal labourers in this period would help determine this. Pennier, *Call Me Hank*.

and women engaged with the capitalist economy of the newcomers settling their land in the twentieth century. With additional resources such as the Henry Hulbert Letter Books, which contain letters about his business in general but also copies of his correspondence to Billie Hall, perhaps another scholar can review Hall's journals in a different light and significantly change the scholarship on Aboriginal labour history.

Evidence for Hall's empowerment, as found in his journals and a main theme of this thesis, makes it appear that he benefited positively from colonial changes. Using the skills learned and developed from his interactions with various colonial actors such as missionaries and government officials, Hall appears to have achieved both relative wealth and status, parlaying these achievements into leadership roles among his community, leadership that was recognized and acknowledged by those outside his community as well. However, by no means can it be suggested that Hall was "happy" with the impacts colonialism brought. This thesis purposefully looked at aspects of colonialism that benefited Hall from the perspective of a culturally informed understanding of an elite male in *Stó:lō* society; there were many aspects of colonialism that would have had (or would later have) damaging impacts on Indians and on Hall and his family particularly. Some examples of such negative aspects of colonialism include restrictions regarding how and to whom Indians could sell their produce raised on reserve,¹⁰ the 1927 amendment of Indian Act that "outlawed" fundraising for legal support for Indian land claims,¹¹ and the destructive results of assimilationist policies regarding Aboriginal culture and language (not to mention the thousands of horrific abuses inflicted on children isolated from home, family, and community) as a result of the enforcement of the Indian Act, after 1884,

¹⁰ After an amendment to the Indian Act in 1881, produce from reserve farms was only to be sold with written permission from the local Indian Agent. Sales without permission were punishable by \$100 fine or three months' imprisonment for the purchaser. Leo G. Waisberg and Tim E. Holzkamm, "'A Tendency to Discourage Them from Cultivating': Ojibwa Agriculture and Indian Affairs Administration in Northwestern Ontario," *Ethnohistory* 40, no. 2 (April 1, 1993): 188.

¹¹ The amendment, Section 141, which was in effect from 1927 until it was repealed in 1951, required the Minister of Indian Affairs' approval for anyone (Aboriginal or non-Aboriginal) to request or receive money from a registered Indian for any legal costs associated with Indian land claims. Paul Tennant, "Cut-Offs, Claims Prohibition, and the Allied Tribes, 1916–27," in *Out of the Background: Readings on Canadian Native History*, ed. Kenneth Coates and Robin Fisher, New Canadian Readings (Toronto: Copp Clark, 1996), 293.

requiring children to attend Indian residential schools. Hall also provides evidence in his journals, such as his regular involvement with the Allied Tribes of B.C., that he did not wholly accept the new status quo and that he hoped for a better and different future for his grandchildren and great-grandchildren. Further analysis of any claims made in this thesis would benefit from an examination of the many records by, to, or about Hall that surely are found within the Indian Affairs files at Library and Archives Canada, a task that was not possible within the limits of this thesis.

Class and gender have been employed here as a means to understand Hall's life and his experiences of colonialism; in turn, perhaps, his life experiences also helped change *Stó:lô* understandings of class. Frank Malloway, who carries the name *Siyémches*, in a broad-ranging 1996 interview about *Stó:lô* culture and history, explained that, in some ways, *Stó:lô* society of today does not operate within the boundaries of the traditional class system. He explained "My father used to talk about the different classes: *si:yá:m* and slaves. And the ordinary regular people that didn't have any title. And in a way he was glad that all disappeared.... He said, 'Maybe classes served a purpose, but I'm glad that we don't have those things today.'"¹² The life-story of Hall, who was most likely one of those "ordinary regular people," and his achievement of a standing of respect within and outside his community, can be seen as a "stepping stone" in a changing *Stó:lô* society.

An even more obvious legacy left by Hall is that of leadership, something many of his descendents have pursued, and continue to demonstrate. His son John succeeded him as the federally recognized chief of Tzeachten after Hall stepped down in 1936.¹³ His great-grandson Joe Hall has served on Tzeachten's council for over thirty consecutive years, and at the time of writing, is serving as Tzeachten's chief. Additionally, other great-grandchildren continue his

¹² Siyémches (Frank Malloway), "Through the Eyes of Siyémches Te Yeqwyeqwi:ws," 11.

¹³ J.R. Wright, Associate Director, Program Services Branch, Indian and Northern Affairs, "Re: Chiefs and Councilors of the 25 Stalo Bands Since 1937," December 15, 1978, Coqualeetza Cultural Education Centre Archives

efforts for recognition of *Stó:lô* rights and title through their work for the *Stó:lô Xwexwilmexw* Treaty Association, which is negotiating with Canada and the province of B.C. to achieve a modern treaty. Chief Joe Hall serves as the Senior Political Advisor, and Cathy Hall is one of several Treaty Community Liaison Coordinators, who work to share information with, and receive feedback from, *Stó:lô* communities participating in the treaty association.¹⁴

This thesis breaks new ground in the historiography of Aboriginal people in B.C. with its focus on the individual, its exploration of Aboriginal concepts of class and gender and their role in the understanding of Aboriginal historical actors, and its acknowledgement that Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal history, are for many intents and purposes, best understood together. Arguing that Billie Hall's identity was shaped the interplay of *Stó:lô* concepts of elite masculinity, the form of Indian governance set out by Canada's Indian Act, and his wage labour work in the hop industry has led to interesting reappraisals of the way colonialism was "supposed" to work, and is often assumed to have worked, in relation to how it actually played out on the ground. Historians need to continue to examining important and previously overlooked voices like Billie Hall's for what they reveal about the broader narrative of colonialism in B.C., for from knowledge of this shared past we can build the foundation for genuine future reconciliation.

¹⁴ "Stó:lô Xwexwilmexw Treaty Association", n.d., <http://www.sxta.bc.ca/home.html>.

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