Ethnohistory Field School Report 2011

Scowlitz:

A Preliminary History

Stephanie Bellissimo

University of Saskatchewan

Although today's Scowlitz band was created by the Canadian Federal government in 1881 the Scowlitz people have a rich and extensive history that dates back thousands of years. It, along with nineteen other bands, make up the Sto:lo Nation. The main reserve of the Scowlitz Band is situated on the banks of the Harrison River at the point where it flows into the Fraser River adjacent to an ancient village site.[1] Archeological findings in Scowlitz have deepened the Scowlitz community's understanding of their pre-contact history. However, there has yet to be written an academic work aimed at bridging the gap between ancient and contemporary Scowlitz in order to create a more complete history of the people who inhabit the area. Using extant records and original oral interviews with Scowlitz community members, this essay will attempt to connect Scowlitz's ancient past with its history of the colonial era. This purpose will be achieved through the examination of traditional Scowlitz lands, the place of their legends in contemporary society, and the history of their community during the period in which the Scowlitz band was established. This essay seeks to demonstrate that many traditions and myths from the ancient era have survived and still hold an important place in contemporary Scowlitz society.

Andy Phillips, the current chief of Scowlitz, posed the question "how many of us know our true history?"[2] He believes that there has been diversity within the Scowlitz

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[1] Charles Hill-Tout, *The Salish People*. (Vancouver: Talonbooks, 1978) p. 148
[2] Andy Phillips, (Scowlitz Chief, Seabird Island Band Office, British Columbia) interviewed by Stephanie Bellissimo and Ben Clinton-Baker, May 10, 2011

community over traditional practices because there is a divide over whether or not traditional practices are useful in the modern world. He finds this problematic because he believes they should practice their customs and know their history. One of the examples that he used to illustrate this point was that Scowlitz youth had always been told to go to church as children, but that the Scowlitz people did not know what their way of life was before Christianity came to the community. Andy understands that Scowlitz has a rich history that dates back to the ancient era. One of his goals as chief is to make a "trail" so that Scowlitz youth can understand their history. He posed the question to them "What does it mean to come from Scowlitz?"[3] He wants Scowlitz youth to learn the importance of knowing their family roots, traditional customs, traditional names, the uses of cedar and the importance of the drum. He also thinks it is important to teach the youth to take only what they need, for instance, when they fish or hunt.[4] Andy wants to make sure that these traditions are not lost in contemporary society.

The place of canoe races in Scowlitz society is one example of this trend. Canoe races used to be a very popular tradition within the Scowlitz community. Up to thirty people would take their canoes to the Harrison River to race, but now only six or seven members of the community participate. It is important to Andy that the Scowlitz community finds a place for their traditions and history in their modern day life.

Chief Phillips's believes that the myths and traditions from Scowlitz's ancient period are important in contemporary society because it reminds the community what life was like prior to the infiltration of Euro-Canadian society. There have been many archeological findings on Qithyil Island, which is situated in the middle of the Harrison

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[3] Andy Phillips, (Scowlitz Chief, Seabird Island Band Office, British Columbia) interviewed by Stephanie Bellissimo and Ben Clinton-Baker, May 10, 2011
[4] Ibid

River, and makes up a part of the Scowlitz reserve. These findings have allowed Scowlitz residents to feel a stronger connection to their history and to the land that they live on. Clarence Pennier, who initiated the 1992 excavations on Qithyil Island, described the ancient village remains and burial sites as a relationship between Scowlitz and the wider landscape.[5] Findings are also important because they have helped bond the community together by linking individuals to common ancestors. Each of my informants proudly talked about their ancestors and the ancient village found on Qithyil Island. These ancient findings have proved to the Scowlitz community, and the province, that their ancestors occupied the land for thousands of years, and that Scowlitz was an historically important area.

The Scowlitz Archaeological Project, which uncovered many of these findings, began in 1992. The project was a collaboration between the University of British Columbia and Simon Fraser University. For years, the Scowlitz community found artifacts on Qithyil Island and feared that remaining artifacts would begin to erode on the riverbanks.[6] Field school students from both universities were invited to excavate and study the area during summer months until 1999.[7] They made some exciting discoveries, and the use of carbon dating showed that people lived in the area earlier than they had initially anticipated. They produced records that indicated that people had occupied the area up to three thousand years ago. The ancient village consisted of four pit house depressions and two smaller depressions. These smaller depressions could have been a

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[5] Natasha, Lyon, Andy Phillips, Dave Schaepe, Betty Charlie, Clifford Hall, and Kate Hennessy. Scowlitz RRN Project, 12 May 2011. Article for *The Midden*. "The Scowlitz Site Online: Launch of the Scowlitz Artifact Assemblage Project." p. 1

[6] Nichole Oakes, Natasha Lyons, Scowlitz Archaeological Times, May 1999 p. 1

[7] Natasha Lyons, Andy Phillips, Dave Schaepe, Betty Charlie, Clifford Hall, Kate Hennessy, Scowlitz RRN Project, 12 May 2011, Article for the Midden "The Scowlitz Site Online: Launch of the Scowlitz Artifact Assemblage Project" p. 1

house or a place of cultural significance. They also found a flat surface, where archeologists speculate a plank house, similar to today's longhouses, once stood.[8] The data from the Scowlitz Archeological Project also implied that 1500 years ago Scowlitz ancestors began to use the site to bury their dead.[9] Hundreds of mounds were found on Qithyil Island. Betty Charlie and Clifford Hall, two active participants in the Archeological Project and residents of Scowlitz, explained that areas A through N of the site contained approximately 250 mounds, and then after that they lost count.[10] Archeologists believe that the village stopped being used approximately 1000 years ago. At that time it became a site where Scowlitz ancestors hunted, gathered, and fished.[11]

The burial mounds have been an important discovery for the Scowlitz community. Before the Scowlitz Archeological Project, none of the mounds on the mainland of British Columbia had been dated. The only mounds in British Columbia that were dated were the mounds found on Vancouver Island.[12] Mound 1, the largest mound on Qithyil Island site, has dates that suggest that an individual was buried there between 460 AD and 640 AD.[13] Sandra Morrison and Heather Myles, participating field school students, believed that the mounds provided a strong indication that a hierarchical system existed during the ancient Scowlitz era.[14] Betty Charlie and Clifford Hall explained that the

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[8] David Schaepe, Michael Blake, Susan Formosa, Dana Lepofsky, "Mapping and Testing PreContact Sto:lo Settlements in the Fraser Canyon and Fraser Valley (2004-2005), December 2006 p. 18
[9] Nichole Oakes, Natasha Lyons, Scowlitz Archaeological Times, May 1999 p. 2
[10] Betty Charlie, Clifford Hall, John Pennier (Scowlitz Residents, Scowlitz British Columbia) interviewed by Stephanie Bellissimo and Ben Clinton-Baker, May 2011
[11] Nichole Oakes, Natasha Lyons, Scowlitz Archaeological Times, May 1999 p. 2
[12] Michael, Blake, Gary Coupland, Brian Thorn, "Dating the Scowlitz Site" *The Midden*, vol. 25 no. 1, February 1993 p. 7
[13] Ibid p. 7
[14] Sandra Morrison, Heather Myles, "The Sacred Mounds of Scowlitz" The Midden, vol. 24, no. 4, October 1992 p. 4

archeological findings led them to conclude that royalty existed in ancient Scowlitz.

Betty stated:

> and back then they did have royalty in there families. We found that out when we went into mound 1. Twelve or twelve to fifteen feet high and he (the ancestor they found in the mound) was all geared down with everything. Copper, jade, dentaila rachelle beads, stone beads…he had everything on." [15]

Clifford's father used to tell him that everyone along the Fraser River used to come down to Scowlitz to have big meetings and that the man that was decorated from mound 1 must have been important to that process.[16]

There is further evidence that suggests that Scowlitz was an important trade centre in the area. The ancestor found in mound 1 was decorated in material that could not be found on Scowlitz land. Betty stated, "You don't find abalone here, dentalia shell, copper, he had it all on. He was just totally… totally decked out in everything. So, it had to be a trade centre."[17] She believed that many people ventured down to Scowlitz in canoes to trade. Scowlitz is at a crossroads because it is situated where the Fraser and Harrison Rivers intersect. Its easily accessible location made it a great place to meet in order to trade. Based on this knowledge, Morrison and Myles speculated that the Scowlitz area would have been excellent for fishing, transportation and trade, and that it was likely the location of a powerful village.[18]

The traditional lifestyle of Scowlitz was disrupted by the introduction of Euro-Canadian society in the nineteenth century. The lives of First Nations people rapidly

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[15] Betty Charlie, Clifford Hall, John Pennier (Scowlitz Residents, Scowlitz British Columbia) interviewed by Stephanie Bellissimo and Ben Clinton-Baker, May 2011
[16] Ibid
[17] Ibid
[18] Sandra Morrison, Heather Myles, "The Sacred Mounds of Scowlitz" The Midden, vol. 24, no. 4, October 1992 p. 2

changed when the government introduced the Indian Act.[19] First Nations recognized that adapting to Euro-Canadian practices could ensure their existence as a people and, therefore, allow them to keep their cultures intact.[20] John Lutz explained this process through the example of Aboriginal responses to the wage labour market. He explained that Aboriginal participation in the wage labour market was "moditional," meaning a mixture between modern and traditional. First Nations participated in the labour market to ensure that their cultural traditions survived. One reason they participated was to earn enough money to be able to hold potlatches.[21] While many traditions endured the process of adapting to newcomer society, it is also the case that some were lost.

It is important to outline the attack that the Canadian government waged on the Scowlitz community, and other First Nations, in an attempt to stamp out their traditional lifestyle. The government initiated a policy that forced Aboriginals onto reserved land in 1859. The use of reserves created localized collective identities and political authority, which caused Native identities to be tied to geographic location in new ways.[22] Band lists were created and governed by the Indian Act, which kept track of which band each Native person was from. This classification system was a form of social control that limited Aboriginal mobility and created new identities that were based on geographical

[19] The Federal government created the Indian Act in 1876. This was legislation that dealt with the entire Native population of Canada. It established the relationship between Natives and the Federal government. It cast Natives as children and the government as the parent. The government, as the parent, had the responsibility to make decisions for the Native population. This resulted in the government creating Department of Indian Affairs (DIA) in 1880. The DIA created a series of policies in the 1880s that aimed at "civilizing" the Indian population in order to assimilate them into Euro-Canadian society. J.R. Miller, "Compact, Contract, Covenant: Aboriginal Treaty-making in Canada." (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2009) p. 190

[20] Derek Whitehouse, "The Numbered Treaties: Similar Means to Dichotomous Ends" Past Imperfect. Vol. 3, 1994 p. 38

[21] John Lutz, Makuk: A New History of Aboriginal-White Relations (Vancouver: UBC Press, 2008) p. 23

[22] Keith Carlson, *Aboriginal Identity and Historical Consciousness in the Cauldron of Colonialism: The Power of Place and the Problem of Time* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2010) p. 158

location.[23] In 1881 the government surveyed Scowlitz land, allotted them 330 acres of land, and officially classified them as the Scowlitz Band. [24]

  Band creation not only formed a type of classification of First Nations peoples for the Federal government, it also helped incorporate elements of Euro-Canadian society into the daily lives of First Nations peoples. In 1858 Edward B. Lytton, Secretary of State for the Colonies, initiated a policy aimed at eliminating the traditional way of life of Native peoples. His assimilationist policy forced Natives onto permanent reserves and contradicted their hunter-gatherer way of life.[25] In 1859 the reserve land framework was established, and dictated which lands could be included within Native reserves. The lands were to include village sites, burial grounds and cultivated potato patches. By 1862 the provisions expanded to include "isolated provisional grounds," which resulted in the protection of some fishing sites that were important to Native families and communities.[26] Lytton saw many positive aspects to having Natives permanently settled on reserved land. Lytton believed that the policy would lessen the conflict between Native peoples and European settlers because Natives would only have designated lands from which they could extract resources. The policy was also a means of socially manipulating Native peoples so that they could be assimilated into Euro-Canadian society.[27] To become a part of Euro-Canadian society, First Nations needed to practice both agriculture and wage labour.

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[23] Ibid p. 18

[24] Department of Indian Affairs Annual Reports, 1881 p.175

[25] Keith Carlson, *Aboriginal Identity and Historical Consciousness in the Cauldron of Colonialism: The Power of Place and the Problem of Time* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2010) p. 168

[26] Ibid p. 171

[27] Ibid p. 169

The pinnacle of European settlement on the mainland of British Columbia occurred in 1858. First Nations in the region had been involved in the land-based fur trade for up to eighty years prior to this date. However, Indigenous society was mainly still concerned with subsistence activities like hunting and fishing. After heavier interaction with Euro-Canadians, many First Nations traditions began to change. The implementation of the Indian Act meant that Natives moved further away from their traditional subsistence to practice wage labour.[28] They were originally pressured into agricultural practices by the Canadian government, which shared the view of anthropologist Lewis Henry Morgan. Morgan asserted that all societies passed through stages of savagery and barbarism before they became civilized. He claimed that First Nations, as hunters and gatherers, were still in the savage phase. The Canadian government believed that First Nations were capable of advancing to the barbarism stage, which Morgan asserted was characterized by domestication and cultivation.[29] The government attempted to hasten the transition by encouraging First Nations to practice agriculture. Farming never succeeded on a significant scale for a variety of reasons. It was not compatible with some of the other parts of their productive subsistence economy, the land base allocated was too small and often on poor agricultural and even if reserves were large enough, they were devided into small individual allotments,. Natives preferred wage-labour to farming because it provided them with steadier incomes.[30] For instance, in 1883 the Fraser River overflowed and harmed the agricultural output in the region.

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[28] Rolfe Knight, *Indians at Work: An Informal History of Native Indian Labour in British Columbia, 1858-1930* (Vancouver: New Star Books, 1978) p. 10

[29] Derek Whitehouse. "The Numbered Treaties: Similar Means to Dichotomous Ends" Past Imperfect. Vol. 3, 1994 p. 29

[30] Rolfe Knight, *Indians at Work: An Informal History of Native Indian Labour in British Columbia, 1858-1930* (Vancouver: New Star Books, 1978) p. 13

Many Natives of the Fraser Valley agency felt discouraged and went to work on the railroad where they could make up to $2 per day.[31]

Europeans also subscribed to John Locke's view of ownership, which stated that land could only be owned when labour had been applied to it. Locke believed that "as *Much Land* as a Man Tills, Plants, Improves, Cultivates, and can use the Product of, so much is his property."[32] Euro-Canadians used this view to justify their claims to ownership of much of North America. They did not believe that Natives applied labour to the land because they practiced a hunter-gatherer lifestyle that did not fit within European models of labour. Consequently, Europeans did not believe that Natives owned the land on which they lived. When Europeans surveyed land and used it for agricultural purposes they believed that it became their property.[33]

Anthropologist, Homer Barnett, was representative of this view because he believed that Aboriginals were simply hunters, fishers and small-scale farmers. He believed that if First Nations peoples practiced larger-scale farming, had good houses and boats, then they would cease to be Indians, because, according to the beliefs at the time, real Indians did not "work."[34] Ideas like those of Locke and Barnett helped entrench the stereotype of the "lazy Indian," who did not participate in European models of labour. Scholars like John Lutz and Rolfe Knight have dispelled the myth of the "lazy Indian" by demonstrating that the Euro-Canadian economy depended on Aboriginal labour in the

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[31] Department of Indian Affairs Annual Reports, 1883 p. 45
[32] John Locke, Two Treatises of Governments, (Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1967) p. 308
[33] John Lutz, Makuk: A New History of Aboriginal-White Relations (Vancouver: UBC Press, 2008) p. 7
[34] Ibid p. 31

18th and 19th century.[35] The Scowlitz band was just one of many Native groups that was active in the workforce.

The Scowlitz band participated heavily in the labour market. When the Scowlitz reserve was established, the Department of Indian Affairs (DIA) documented that Scowlitz residents made their living by hunting, fishing, working on the river steamboats and on farms belonging to white settlers. The document also stated that the Scowlitz were interested in cultivating their own land and in having their own livestock.[36] As time went on Scowlitz became involved with other endeavors that allowed them to secure a spot in the wage economy. At the end of the 1880s the Scowlitz community concentrated heavily on growing their own fruit trees; producing apples, pears, plums, cherries and peaches, which proved very profitable for the reserve. The annual reports of the DIA state that most of the orchards were destroyed in the flood of 1894, but were replanted in 1896.[37] In subsequent years the annual reports suggested that there were good orchards on the reserve.[38]

Logging was also a profitable vocation for the men of the Scowlitz community. There were several mills in the area surrounding the Scowlitz reserve at the end of the nineteenth century and beginning of the twentieth century.[39] By 1904 members of the

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[35] Ibid p. 8; Rolfe Knight, *Indians at Work: An Informal History of Native Indian Labour in British Columbia, 1858-1930* (Vancouver: New Star Books, 1978) p. 22

[36] Department of Indian Affairs Annual Reports, 1881 p. 175

[37] Department of Indian Affairs Annual Reports, 1910 p. 255

[38] Department of Indian Affairs Annual Reports, 1913 p. 290

[39] There were several mills in the area surrounding the Scowlitz reserve at the end of the nineteenth century and beginning of the twentieth century. Henry Cooper built the first water-powered mill on the left hand side of the Harrison River in 1870 to produce lumber from local cedar and fur trees. In 1892 Joseph Martin and Sons built a second mill situated on the east side of the Harrison River south of the Canadian Pacific Railway line. Then, in 1901 John Fulbrook and Joseph Innis built a seven-machine shingle mill on the left bank of the Harrison, right across from Martin's mill. Arthur Tretheways later bought Martin's mill in 1898. It burnt down in 1903 and he sold the location to Sir Douglas Cameron's Manitoba based Rat Portage Lumber Co. in 1904. Rat Portage constructed a new mill on the spot in 1908. It was a large mill that

Scowlitz band had been employed as sawmill workers and loggers for Harrison Mills and smaller nearby businesses for approximately twenty-five years.[40] Allen Williams, Scowlitz elder, discussed that many of the residents worked as loggers in the woods as far away as Vancouver, and that they sent logs down the river to the mills. They would boom the logs, meaning that they would string logs together in a bundle and drop them in the water. During that time period men would be "running around on logs" with cork boots on.

Scowlitz women did not participate in the logging industry. This did not mean that they did not work to help sustain their families. They often participated in seasonal work at the hop yards in Sumas and Lyndon in the summer months, picking berries and cucumber with their children. They came home at the end of the summer to start preparing for winter. Men aided in this process when they could not secure steady employment. For example, 1886 was a difficult year in the salmon fisheries, so many Natives from the Lower Fraser Agency secured work at the hop yards in Washington.[41] They ended up staying there to work for a longer period of time, which resulted in them not being home to cut much hay to feed their livestock.[42]

By the beginning of the twentieth century the main occupations in the Scowlitz community listed in the DIA annual reports were farming, dairying, fishing, hop picking

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employed over two hundred men and four hundred other men in surrounding logging camps. It closed down in 1910. After the mill closed down the area's mill influence decreased. Fred, Thirkell, and Bob Scullion. *Vancouver and Beyond: During the Golden Age of Postcards, 1900-1914*. Heritage House Publishing Co., 2000. P. 34-35

[40] Rolfe Knight, *Indians at Work: An Informal History of Native Indian Labour in British Columbia, 1858-1930* (Vancouver: New Star Books, 1978) p. 121

[41] Department of Indian Affairs Annual Reports, 1886 p. lxii

[42] Department of Indian Affairs Annual Reports, 1887 p. 111

and logging.[43] The DIA reports continually showed satisfaction with the agricultural progress of the Scowlitz band. In 1905 the DIA annual report remarked "some of them [Scowlitz residents] have splendid farms, competing closely with their white neighbours."[44] The Indian Agents were particularly impressed by how well Scowlitz did with dairying. The reports remarked that in 1900 a man named James from the reserve milked twelve cows.[45]

Although the government recognized that the Scowlitz band made progress with the agricultural aspects of the Indian Act, the community still did not find farming to be an easy task. In 1913, Chief Joe Hall explained to Commissioner MacDowell, during his interview for the McKenna-McBride Commission, that he thought it would be beneficial if a farming instructor came to the reserve to teach them how to farm. He discussed with MacDowell that the reserve only received a few tools to get started, but no further assistance. Hall believed that the Scowlitz needed assistance from the Indian Department to get the mainland ready for farming, because their horses were too small and too little in number to plough the land.[46] The reserve was set up by the government to be farmland, but Scowlitz residents were not farming, instead they became wage earners in the labour market. The government decreased the size of the Scowlitz reserve because community members were not using the land for agricultural purposes. After the First World War,

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[43] Department of Indian Affairs Annual Reports, 1903 p. 263
[44] Department of Indian Affairs Annual Reports, 1905 p. 269
[45] Department of Indian Affairs Annual Reports, 1900 p. 244
[46] McKenna McBride Reports, 1913 p. 413-416

veterans wanted land, and to accommodate this demand the government gave away the best farmland on the north side of the reserve, near the railroad tracks, in the 1930s.[47]

Receiving wages resulted in residents from Scowlitz incorporating aspects of European society into their daily lives. They took their earnings down to the Kilby general store to purchase items. Wage labour employment made it more difficult for the Scowlitz to prepare everything themselves like they had done in the past. Allen explained that it was more convenient to go to the store to buy berries than go out and pick them. He recalled that Kilby "used to let us run a bill there. We got maybe forty dollars and he would let us run a bill, sign a check and give it to him."[48] Betty recalls that her family would take a tobacco tin full of money down to the Kilby store to purchase groceries.[49]

The Kilby General Store was the place where many people within the surrounding area shopped. Residents from Chehalis and Chilliwack ventured down by canoe, car or horse to visit the general store. Betty discussed how the Kilby store was a meeting place for people in the area "and he [Kilby] knew it too, he knew what to order. I think he had the biggest supply of vanilla in B.C."[50] Vanilla, or "black magic," was a fond memory for many of my informants. They recalled going down to the Kilby store to purchase and drink black magic.[51] The Scowlitz reserve was not just an important meeting place in the ancient era; it continued to be important in the post-colonial era as well.

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[47] Allen Williams (Scowlitz Elder, Scowlitz British Columbia) interviewed by Stephanie Bellissimo and John Lutz, May 17, 2011; Betty Charlie, Clifford Hall, John Pennier (Scowlitz Residents, Scowlitz British Columbia) interviewed by Stephanie Bellissimo and Ben Clinton-Baker, May 2011

[48] Allen Williams (Scowlitz Elder, Scowlitz British Columbia) interviewed by Stephanie Bellissimo and John Lutz, May 17, 2011

[49] Betty Charlie, Clifford Hall, John Pennier (Scowlitz Residents, Scowlitz British Columbia) interviewed by Stephanie Bellissimo and Ben Clinton-Baker, May 2011

[50] Ibid

[51] Ibid

Education was another important provision that fell in line with the government's civilization policy. Originally, First Nations educated their youth about procreation, the preservation of their community, how to sustain the community through hunting, gathering and fishing, about their identity, and how to defend against external threats. These things were taught through leading positive examples in the home, through stories, and through rite-of-passage ceremonies that imparted knowledge to them.[52] Allen recalled that the community helped raise the children by making sure they developed good character.[53] The Canadian Government attempted to undermine traditional Indian teachings by using education to assimilate Native peoples to Euro-Canadian society. The government thought that this would put an end to First Nations' dependence on Indian Agents, farm instructors, and financial assistance.[54] The government viewed First Nations culture as backwards, and thought that residential schools would eliminate their culture and help them become a more advanced people.

The school that most Scowlitz youth attended was St. Mary's Residential School in Mission, B.C. In 1885, it was reported that forty-two children from the province of British Columbia attended St. Mary's.[55] Boys were taught farming and girls were taught needlework and housewifery.[56] St. Mary's was often overcrowded and this resulted in many Native youth becoming sick. By the beginning of the twentieth century there were complaints from Scowlitz residents that their children were coming home from school

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[52] J.R. Miller, *Shingwauk's Vision: A History of Native Residential Schools* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1996) p. 17

[53] Allen Williams (Scowlitz Elder, Scowlitz British Columbia) interviewed by Stephanie Bellissimo and John Lutz, May 17, 2011

[54] J.R. Miller, *Shingwauk's Vision: A History of Native Residential Schools* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1996) p. 184-185

[55] Department of Indian Affairs Annual Reports, 1885 p. 169

[56] Allen Williams (Scowlitz Elder, Scowlitz British Columbia) interviewed by Stephanie Bellissimo and John Lutz, May 17, 2011

with consumption. The Scowlitz recalled that the children slept in one large room together, which resulted in spreading of illnesses.[57] In 1913 Joe Hall commented that the medical care at St. Mary's was lacking. He remembered attending St. Mary's when he was young, and that he only saw a doctor once during his stay. He stated that he was afraid to send more children there, and that if it were less crowded that he would be more willing to let the Scowlitz youth attend the school. Instead, he sent the children to Sechelt Boarding School and they were in much better health.[58]

Not all Scowlitz youth attended St. Mary's Residential School. Some families were discouraged from sending their children to St. Mary's because they had to provide clothing for their children. At the Coqualeetza School the children were clothed by the school, so there is more of an incentive for parents to send their children there.[59] As well, the Indian Department wanted to send children on the reserves to different schools in order to separate families. The government sent some children to be educated at Sechelt Boarding School, and St. Mary's. For example, Allen Williams attended to Sechelt Boarding School, but his sister went to St. Mary's, and a couple of his cousins went to Sechelt as well.[60] Scowlitz resident, John Pennier, recalled that he went to St. Mary's for ten years, a school in Kamloops for one year, and attended a school in Agassiz for one year.[61] The government also separated pupils within the schools themselves. At St. Mary's the boys and girls were not allowed to communicate, even if they were from the same families. They were taught in separate classrooms, ate at separate dining halls and

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[57] McKenna McBride Reports, 1913 p. 417

[58] Ibid p. 418

[59] McKenna McBride Reports, 1913 p. 418

[60] Allen Williams (Scowlitz Elder, Scowlitz British Columbia) interviewed by Stephanie Bellissimo and John Lutz, May 17, 2011

[61] John Pennier (Scowlitz Resident, Scowlitz British Columbia) interviewed by Stephanie Bellissimo, Keith Carlson, Ben Clinton-Baker, Martin Hoffman) May 10, 2011

slept in separate dorm rooms.[62] The government aimed to separate the youth so they

would experience different training, and to ensure that they were divided and therefore

obedient. Separation led to conflicting interests like feuds between family members and

other band members. The less unity that First Nations had meant that the government had

more power over them.

The Harrison Mills School was built on reserve land in 1901 due to the high

demand by mill workers in the area for a place to educate their children.[63] Therefore, it

was not a residential school created strictly for Native use. Originally, Natives were not

allowed to send their children to the Harrison Mills School because white men would not

allow it.[64] Eventually the school was extended to include Native pupils. Allen Williams

stated that he attended the Harrison Mills School temporarily. He missed too much school

and at the age of eight he was sent to Sechelt Boarding School.[65]

There were many different schools that Scowlitz youth attended to be educated in

the ways of the white man. In 1894, Native children were described by DIA reports as

reaping the benefits of education. Most of the youth could speak, read and write in

English.[66] Wiping out First Nation languages was one of the fundamental methods that

the government used to eliminate Indian culture. Today the traditional *Halq'emeylem*

language of the Sto:lo people is almost extinct. Only a few members of the community

can still speak it. When the youth used their own language in residential schools they

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[62] Carlson, Keith et al. *Coast Salish Historical Atlas* (British Columbia: Douglas and McIntyre Ltd., 2001) p. 68

[63] Fred, Thirkell, and Bob Scullion, *Vancouver and Beyond: During the Golden Age of Postcards, 1900-1914*. Heritage House Publishing Co., 2000. P. 34-35

[64] McKenna McBride Reports, 1913 p. 419

[65] Allen Williams (Scowlitz Elder, Scowlitz British Columbia) interviewed by Stephanie Bellissimo and John Lutz, May 17, 2011

[66] Department of Indian Affairs Annual Reports, 1894 p. 208

were punished by being placed in isolation, or were given work during recess.[67] They were forced to speak English, which nearly resulted in the destruction of their language.

The dichotomy lies in the fact that Natives chose to send their children to residential schools as a way to keep their cultural identity intact. In 1908 the DIA annual report declared, "most of them [Scowlitz residents] are anxious to have their children educated, many of whom attend St. Mary's Mission boarding school."[68] The Scowlitz understood that it was inevitable that their lives would rapidly change with the increase of white settlement to British Columbia and wanted their children to be able to succeed. They did not consent to the attack on their own culture In residential school, the youth learned aspects of Euro-Canadian culture and ultimately these tools allowed them to undermine the system. Later on in the twentieth century many First Nations leaders entered the political arena with knowledge of both First Nations and Euro-Canadian cultures.[69]

Religion was another tool the Canadian Government used to civilize the Native population. They did this by building churches on reserve land, using missionaries, and by sending Native youth to residential schools run by religious orders. By 1886 the DIA annual report stated that there was a church built on every reserve in the Lower Fraser Agency.[70] By 1898 it was reported that the church on the Scowlitz reserve was being used regularly. Indian Agents described the Scowlitz residents as "a temperate and moral

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[67] Carlson, Keith et al. *Coast Salish Historical Atlas* (British Columbia: Douglas and McIntyre Ltd., 2001) p. 68

[68] Department of Indian Affairs Annual Reports, 1908 p. 269

[69] J.R. Miller, "Compact, Contract, Covenant: Aboriginal Treaty-making in Canada." (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2009) p. 233

[70] Department of Indian Affairs Annual Reports, 1886 p. lxii

people."[71] The denomination of the Scowlitz reserve was Roman Catholic. Census returns always matched the number of individuals who were Catholic. For example, in 1894 the census returns showed that there were fifty-one individuals living on the Scowlitz reserve, and they were all practicing Roman Catholics.[72] Joe Hall commented in 1913 that the priest came to the reserve church once every two months because he was working alone and had a large area of land to cover in the Fraser Valley Agency.[73]

The fact that the Roman Catholic Church was influential in the region did not mean that the people on the Scowlitz reserve entirely abandoned their traditional beliefs. They practiced dualism in the sense that they believed in both the teachings of the Church and their own traditions. The traditions of the Scowlitz continued to occupy an important place in society. For example, Scowlitz legends continued to allow the Scowlitz community to form relationships with their surrounding landscape, as well as their ancestors.

Early anthropologist Charles Hill-Tout recorded the origin stories of the Scowlitz people through oral interviews. Through these interviews he was able to learn that ancient Scowlitz people were divided into three septs, each coming from a different origin. Two were *tel sweyil* (sky born), while the third descended from the sturgeon. According to the stories, the first Scowlitz man came down from the sky with two animals by using a red parachute. The two animals who accompanied him were *Skaiaq* (mink) and *Cwometsel* (otter). He also brought with him a feathered ring called *celmoqtcis.*[74] The man landed on a rocky point at the mouth of the Harrison River, on the opposite side of where the

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[71] Department of Indian Affairs Annual Reports, 1898 p. 218
[72] Department of Indian Affairs Annual Reports, 1894 p. 260
[73] McKenna McBride Reports, 1913 p. 417
[74] Charles Hill-Tout, *The Salish People*, (Vancouver: Talon Books, 1978) p. 150

Scowlitz people would later settle. He constructed a raft and tied it to the point of the river with a cedar rope. He was able to catch salmon on this raft using a dip net. The next day the Scowlitz man took the feathered ring and dropped it into the water. The otter and the mink went to fetch it and brought it back in their mouths. The man then put on the *sxwaixwe* mask and performed a dance, which caused the two animals to become children, one a boy, and the other a girl. The children married and many people sprang from their union. They were poor in the beginning; they did not even have any clothes to wear. The boy learned how to make bows and arrows and began to hunt. He brought home the skins to his wife, which she used to make clothes and blankets.[75]

One of Hill-Tout's informants, Pat Joe, claimed to be the only descendent left of the first Scowlitz man. During the interview he showed Hill-Tout the piece of rope that the first Scowlitz man used to tie the raft from which he fished. Hill-Tout explained:

> It was the best specimen of native rope I have ever seen. The Indians never make these ropes now. This specimen was about three-quarters of an inch in diameter, and was very finely made, not a single end or join in the whole length was visible, and the strands of cedar were twisted with the evenness and regularity of those of hempen rope. I tried to secure this specimen, but the old man would not hear of parting with it on any consideration; he was keeping it to be buried with his body along with the sacred relics he had inherited from the first founder of his family.[76]

Pat Joe's rope was important to him because it fostered a connection to one of his ancestors, the first Scowlitz man. He did not want to give up this totem because it was something that was tied heavily to his identity. Pat Joe also possessed the skins that mink and otter left behind when they transformed into children. The Scowlitz community believes that those who have the skins in their possession will be very successful at

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[75] Ibid p. 150

[76] Charles Hill-Tout, *The Salish People*, (Vancouver: Talon Books, 1978) p. 150

trapping mink and otter. Pat Joe had many skins in his house when he was interviewed,

which demonstrates that he was indeed a successful hunter.[77] The Scowlitz believed that

his hunting abilities were the result of his possession of the mink and otter skins. This

demonstrates that Pat Joe was able to form a connection to the land and animals through

the use of Scowlitz myths.

The location where the first Scowlitz man fell to the earth is an important place

within the Scowlitz territory. This location, an ancestral rock, holds very implicit

meanings for the Scowlitz community because it allows them to connect to their ancestral

past. Allen Williams, a Scowlitz Elder, discussed his spiritual connection to this

particular location. During our interview he took my professor, John Lutz, and I, to a spot

on the Fraser opposite Qithyil Island to show us the location of the ancestral rock where

the first Scowlitz man fell from the sky. He stated:

> **Allen**: Yeah, well my, we had the *sxwaixwe* masks in our family so there is
> a rock right over here. They blew it up, you can hardly see the rock at that
> point now. See where the light green trees are. There is a rock there. There was
> one above it where our *sxwaixwe* mask …
> **John**: That was the spot where the masks came down from the sky?
> **Allen**: We were going out fishing one day with my brother and I told him
> look and there was light coming out of the water just over on that side and it
> was going up river and it was a beam of light and I told him look, you see it?
> He didn't want to say nothing but there was a beam of light coming out…[78]

The story that Allen told bridges the gap between ancient and contemporary Scowlitz by

highlighting the spiritual and geographical importance the ancestral rock continues to

have in modern Scowlitz society. The province of British Columbia destroyed the

ancestral rock because it was seen as a potential hazard to boats.[79] Although the rock is

[77] Ibid p. 151
[78] Allen Williams (Scowlitz Elder, Scowlitz British Columbia) interviewed by Stephanie Bellissimo and John Lutz, May 17, 2011
[79] Ibid

no longer on Oithyil Island, the spot where it once resided is still historically important to

the Scowlitz community because it reminds them of their rich past and their ancestors.

Qithyil Island is an important location on their reserve because it reinforces that

the community occupied it before reserves were established. During our interview, Betty

Charlie and Clifford Hall laid out dozens of artifacts that they found on the island. Such

artifacts are visual proof that the island was occupied for thousands of years prior to

European settlement. They then explained the spiritual connections that they experienced

on the site. Betty stated:

> **Betty**: The one area over there… is a lot of children. (Referring to the mounds)
> **Stephanie**: Really?
> **Betty**: Yeah….There had to be some kind of epidemic gone through. When
> we used to….We used to dock the boats and walk on the trailer up to where
> we would be doing the archaeological work and everyone would stop
> walking because they could hear children crying… We weren't the only
> ones who heard them.[80]

Lucille Hall shared a similar experience that further demonstrates that ancient Scowlitz is

an important part of contemporary Scowlitz society. :

> We were down at that beach years ago. And um, before they did the dig over
> there [inaudible?] a whole bunch of us had a bon fire. It was dark out and
> we were just sitting down at the beach there and we heard drumming and
> singing across there and we were all looking out there in the dark wondering
> why all the natives over there were singing. And we were wondering about that. I
> said "Its dark over there." We thought it was coming from upriver and it
> was echoing but it sounds like its from those bushes over there. We got scared
> so we went home and a few years later they dig over there and they found all
> that stuff. It just freaked me right out. We heard drumming and singing
> on the beach. So I said we got to go.[81]

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[80] Betty Charlie, Clifford Hall, John Pennier (Scowlitz Residents, Scowlitz British Columbia) interviewed by Stephanie Bellissimo and Ben Clinton-Baker, May 2011
[81] Betty Charlie, Clifford Hall, John Pennier (Scowlitz Residents, Scowlitz British Columbia) interviewed by Stephanie Bellissimo and Ben Clinton-Baker, May 2011

The fact that the Scowlitz community continues to find spiritual significance in their stories, demonstrates that although they adapted to overcome the challenges posed by newcomer society, they have not forgotten what is culturally important to them.

The Scowlitz community has evolved through disruptive processes and has managed to retain its' cultural distinctiveness despite governmental efforts to make First Nations more "civilized." Andy Phillips is determined to bring Scowlitz traditions to the forefront as a way to celebrate their history, and illustrate that they have overcome the many challenges of colonialism. One of the ways that he plans to make Scowlitz traditions more accessible is by building a new longhouse for the community. He described the longhouse as an "important icon and figurehead in the community."[82] There used to be longhouses on Scowlitz reserve land, but they were accidently destroyed by a fire.[83] Andy wants to rebuild them so that the community can have a place to perform their traditional ceremonies, much like they did in the past.

Andy also hopes to strengthen the community by teaching the residents the importance of their history. A new skateboarding park and playground near the band office is being built to facilitate interaction between Scowlitz youth and elders. Andy hopes that this will help bridge the gap between the elders and youth so that the children can hear stories from the elders and the elders can bring messages to the youth.[84] Andy also finds importance in preserving the *Halq'emeylem* language. He believes language and Sto:lo identity are intimately intertwined. In our interview he stated, "If you don't

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[82] Andy Phillips, (Scowlitz Chief, Seabird Island Band Office, British Columbia) interviewed by Stephanie Bellissimo and Ben Clinton-Baker, May 10, 2011

[83] Allen Williams (Scowlitz Elder, Scowlitz British Columbia) interviewed by Stephanie Bellissimo and John Lutz, May 17, 2011

[84] Andy Phillips, (Scowlitz Chief, Seabird Island Band Office, British Columbia) interviewed by Stephanie Bellissimo and Ben Clinton-Baker, May 10, 2011

have language you don't have identity."[85] He discussed pumping resources into teaching

the youth their traditional language so that they can carry Sto:lo traditions into the future.

There are still a few *Halq'emeylem* speakers left within the Sto:lo community. The fact

that the Sto:lo language survived the residential school system and assimilationist

colonial policies, demonstrates that First Nations fought against adversity and have kept

their culture alive.

Andy is currently using an online tool to encourage Scowlitz youth to learn about

their history, the Reciprocal Research Network (RRN). The RRN is a website that

connects seventeen museums within Canada, the United States, and the United Kingdom.

The website contains pictures of artifacts, such as weaved baskets, found at the ancient

Scowlitz site of Qithyil Island. The website also contains descriptions of Scowlitz history.

Betty Charlie stated, "I think this project (RRN) is good for the younger generation at

Scowlitz, and can help them understand where they came from. I think it might help them

lead better lives if they know where they came from; it will help them know where they

are going."[86]

Knowing where one comes from has always been important to the Scowlitz

community. This is especially true when they choose chiefs. In the past a young member

of the community was trained to be the next chief. However, today chiefs are selected

through elections. Andy explained the traditional way of picking a chief is comparable to

an apprenticeship where the chosen individual would learn the reasons why a chief chose

to do certain things. For example, Andy chose not to involve Scowlitz in the treaty

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[85] Ibid

[86] Natasha Lyons, Andy Phillips, Dave Schaepe, Betty Charlie, Clifford Hall, Kate Hennessy, Scowlitz RRN Project, 12 May 2011, Article for the Midden "The Scowlitz Site Online: Launch of the Scowlitz Artifact Assemblage Project" p. 2

process. He stated that he would like the next chief to understand his reasons for this choice. He believes that this traditional way of leadership could help promote First Nations interests, because every new leader would continue the policies of older chiefs. Andy hopes to make a library of past chiefs as a way of beginning this process. He also discussed that he wishes to have a young person apprentice to be the next chief.[87]

Conclusion

Andy posed the question, "what does it mean to come from Scowlitz?" Scowlitz has an extensive history that dates back thousands of years. There have been many important traditions and myths that have been passed down from this ancient era, and still continue to be acknowledged and practiced by Scowlitz residents today. Visual reminders of their past are seen all over the reserve and allows residents to remember their history and their great ability to overcome adversity through the preservation of their traditions. Qithyil island, its burial mounds and artifacts are a constant reminder to the community that Scowlitz was once a powerful meeting place within the area. Old fruit trees are scattered around the reserve that reminds the community of their hardworking forefathers who grew fruit in order to sustain their families. The Kilby store is another physical marker that reminds community members of their post-colonial past.

The fact that many of their traditions survived thousands of years is a remarkable feat. This is especially true when the impact that colonial society had on the Scowlitz in the nineteenth century is considered. Euro-Canadians viewed First Nations culture as backwards because it was different than their European lifestyle. They did not understand the Native hunter-gatherer lifestyle and they used this fact to argue that Natives did not

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[87] Andy Phillips, (Scowlitz Chief, Seabird Island Band Office, British Columbia) interviewed by Stephanie Bellissimo and Ben Clinton-Baker, May 10, 2011

hold claim to the land. Euro-Canadians infiltrated the province of British Columbia and the government set up assimilationist policies that aimed to exterminate First Nations culture in order to make them more civilized. This was done through initiatives like the reserve system, which classified First Nations tying them to geographical locations in order to keep them under social control. First Nations on reserve land entered the labour market at higher rates in order to sustain their families. For the Scowlitz this meant taking employment as loggers, creating orchards, travelling to hop yards, and engaging in farming activities. Residential schools were established to eliminate Indian culture in order to create youth that were educated in Euro-Canadian, Catholic models. The Scowlitz faced many experiences that attempted to wipe out their culture, history and identity. Despite this, they were able to hold onto elements of their history and traditions, which presently hold an important place within their community.

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Appendix

Figure 1.1 Chief List of the Scowlitz Band (Information from Alice Marwood)

NAME	OTHERBD	BAND	YEAR	SPOUSE	AGE	OTHERNAMES	SOURCE
Coutameld, Capt John	Harrison	Scowlitz	1870	Mary		John Kootlelmentow	Petition to Musgrave
Capt John		Scowlitz	1874				Petition

							to Provincial Security
Capt John Skwul.tlay.milt	.ukw	Scowlitz	1878				Census 1878
Casimir		Scowlitz	1891-01	Celestine Skrou	65		1901 census
Hall, Joe		Scowlitz	1924-1949	Celestine Josep			Band List
Pennier, Clarence		Scowlitz	1985-1989				Chf 1979 BC Supreme Ct-CNR
William, John		Scowlitz	1996				
Pennier, John		Scowlitz	1997				

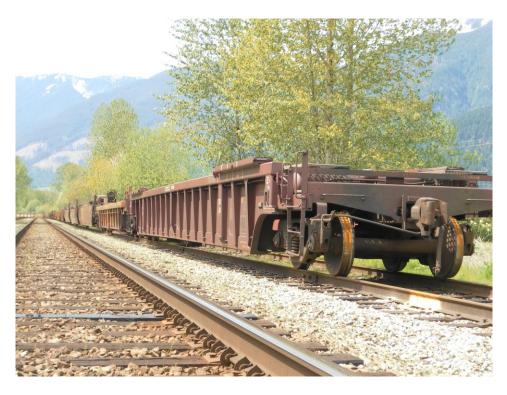Figure 1.2 Photograph of the Scowlitz Reserve

Figure 1.3 Logging that can be seen just off reserve land. Logging has been the main
vocation of Scowlitz residents.

Figure 1.4 An old mill in the area. It resides just across from the Kilby General Store.
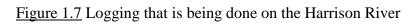
Figure 1.5 A view of the CPR tracks on Scowlitz land

Figure 1.7 Logging that is being done on the Harrison River

Figure 1.8 Elder Allen Williams and myself walking on the reserve while conducting an

interview

Figure 1.9 Allen Williams and I in his home looking at his family portraits
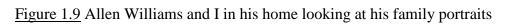
Figure 1.10 A collection of artifacts brought in by Betty Charlie and Clifford Hall. They found them on Qithyil Island.

Figure 1.11

Figure 1.12 Kilby Store