

Ebey's Landing National Historical Reserve:

An Ethnohistory of Traditionally Associated Contemporary Populations



Douglas Deur
2009

United States Department of the Interior, National Park Service
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Cover Photo

“Skagit canoes pulled up onto beach near Coupeville, Whidbey Island Washington, ca. 1895”

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A study completed for Ebey's Landing National Historical Reserve by the
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INTRODUCTION

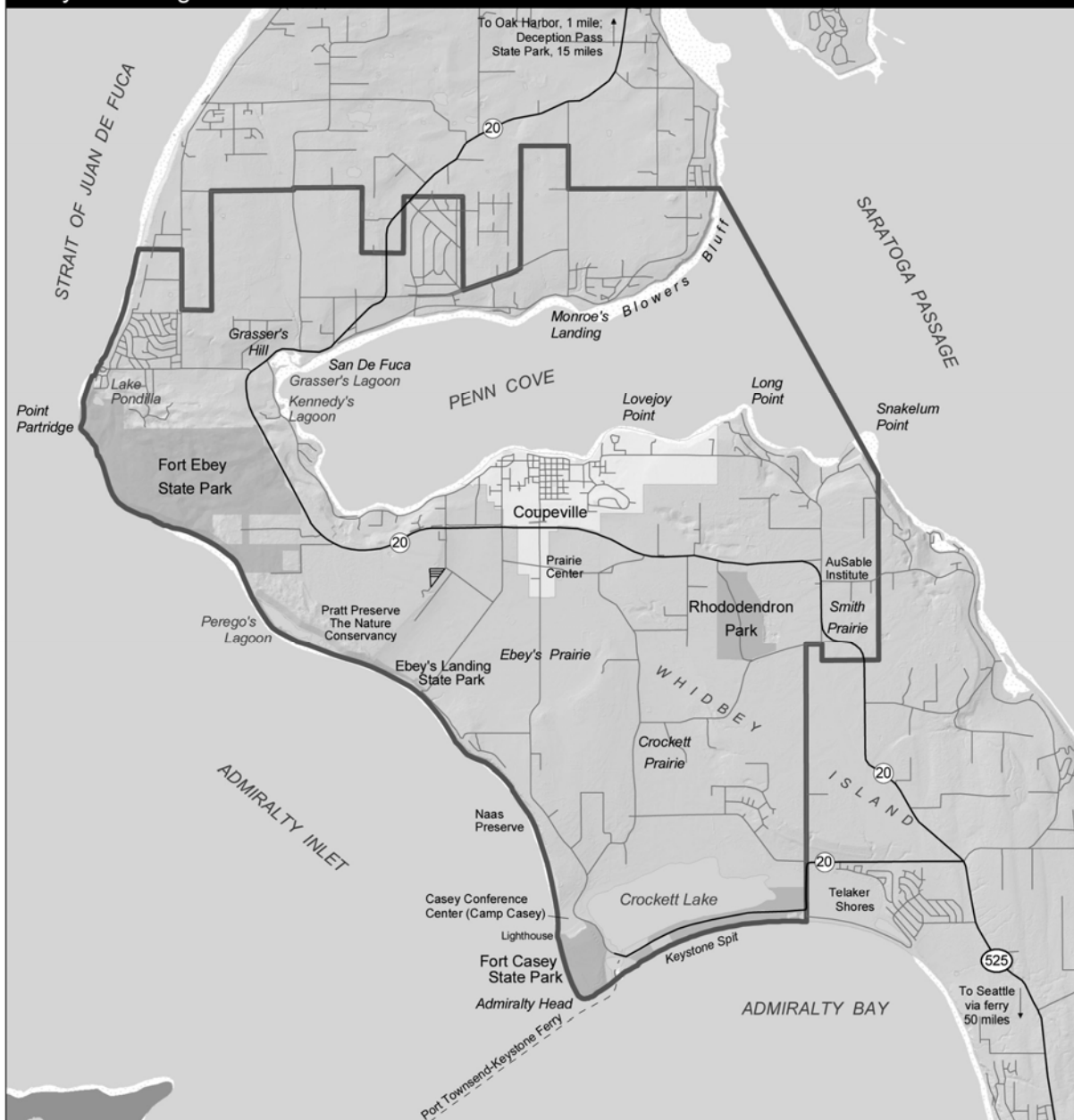
Ebey's Landing National Historical Reserve (EBLA) consists of 17,400 acres of prairies, forest and seashore on Whidbey Island. The Reserve sits at a geographical nexus in northern Puget Sound, where the north-south alignment of the Puget Trough meets the eastern end of the Strait of Juan de Fuca. The commanding position of this place, coupled with its rich marine life, and its deep glacial soils and meadows borne of anthropogenic fires within the Olympic Peninsula rain shadow, have contributed to the enduring use of this landscape by human populations through time. The cultural resources documented within the Reserve attest to this long human history, spanning documented archeological sites from the late Paleolithic, to the rural 19th century farmsteads that arose after Euro-Americans resettled the lands of Puget Sound.

At the time of Euro-American arrival and prior to the establishment of the international boundary between Canada and the United States, the mainland and the islands of Puget Sound were densely inhabited by native communities that were commonly large, basically sedentary, and dependent for their sustenance especially on the many waterways and the coastal lands sitting adjacent. Among the most densely settled portions of the Puget Sound was Penn Cove, sitting at the heart of what is today Ebey's Landing National Historical Reserve. Penn Cove sat at the heart of the traditional homeland of the Lushootseed Salish-speaking people now commonly referred to as "Skagit." Today all of Ebey's Landing National Historical Reserve sits within the judicially established land area of the Lower Skagit (USGS 1978).

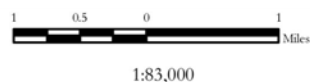
Despite epidemics brought by new diseases and a host of other dramatic changes, native populations at Ebey's Landing coexisted for a time with the earliest Euro-American settlers. Penn Cove became the site of a temporary special Indian Agency in the mid-19th century, and for a time a reservation at this location appeared to be a possibility. However, the special Indian Agency disbanded, no Skagit reservation was given permanent status, and most residents of what is today Ebey's Landing were ultimately displaced to become part of amalgamated tribal communities located outside of Whidbey Island. Many of the descendants of those native people are now members of American Indian tribes in other locations around Puget Sound, especially at Swinomish Indian Reservation, which received the bulk of the mid-19th century Skagit population, but also at Tulalip and a number of other tribal communities that will be discussed in the pages that follow (Roberts 1975: 221). The combined effects of population decline and tribal consolidation in newly created reservation communities insured that the people of the general area were "all related" by the early 20th century. In truth, the lines of kinship and paths of migration together insured that the descendants of Ebey's Landing's historical occupants are likely represented in almost every tribal population on the modern Puget Sound (Ruby and Brown 2001: 15).

Places Mentioned in the Text

Ebey's Landing National Historical Reserve



-  Reserve Boundary
-  Park
-  Primary Road
-  Secondary Road
-  Ferry Route



Data Sources:
 Jones & Jones: cemetery
 Island County: roads
 NPS: Coupeville boundary, ferry route,
 flats, lakes, parks, Reserve boundary,
 shaded relief, shoreline

Produced by:
 National Park Service
 PWRO-Seattle
 GIS Group

Plot date: February 22, 2008
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Despite this history of displacement, historical documentation on the native peoples of Whidbey Island from the late 19th century and early 20th centuries clearly suggests that a few American Indian families managed to continue using, and sometimes occupying, small portions of the area in and around Ebey's Landing. The landscape still possesses a number of features that are of likely historical significance to contemporary tribal members. The remains of Indian habitation sites, cemeteries and even one historically important monument commemorating a prominent Skagit family from Penn Cove have been documented in and around the Reserve. Moreover, members of the nearby Swinomish Indian Reservation on Fidalgo Island have shown a consistent interest in these cultural resources when communicating with EBLA resource managers.

Nevertheless, prior to this study, little had been documented about the identity of contemporary American Indian tribes who are traditionally associated with Ebey's Landing NHR. This ethnohistorical study, therefore, sought to systematically identify all contemporary tribes that are traditionally associated with the Reserve. The study represents a necessary first step for making determinations of cultural affiliation under the terms of the Native American Graves Protection and Repatriation Act (NAGPRA) in the event of inadvertent discoveries of human remains on federal lands in the Reserve. Likewise the results of this study may set the stage for future studies on the traditional uses of land and resources in the Reserve and the conduct of inventories of ethnographically significant cultural resources. This study has also been devised to provide the Reserve's management with the identification of traditionally associated tribes who should be invited to participate in future studies and on-going formal consultations for the purposes of both compliance with various laws (such as the National Historic Preservation Act and the National Environmental Policy Act, for example, in addition to the Native American Graves Protection and Repatriation Act) and fulfillment of the National Park Service's obligation to consult with United States tribes on a government-to-government basis.

Studies of this type have the potential to provide information that will aid the National Park Service in achieving goals that range well beyond compliance. As specified in the original scope of work, this study has maintained an expanded focus, allowing the National Park Service access to information and perspectives that may provide valuable guidance in the future management and interpretation of park lands and resources. This process also has brought together information that may aid in the preservation and interpretation of archaeological resources within the Reserve. Perhaps most importantly, through this traditional affiliation study, National Park Service staff might have access to information that will help to maintain a rapport with traditionally associated American Indian communities, fostering discussions regarding issues of mutual interest, which will endure long after the traditional affiliation study is complete. What follows is an ethnohistorical overview that has been designed to help achieve these multiple goals.

Ebey's Landing National Historical Reserve



METHODS

To achieve the multiple methods of this study, I have conducted a literature review and a review of numerous archival sources. During this research, I have worked in direct consultation with NPS staff, including Dr. Frederick York, Regional Anthropologist for the Pacific West Region of the National Park Service. Olympic National Park Anthropologist, Jacilee Wray, served as a research assistant, conducting a significant amount of archival research in support of this project. Without their assistance, none of this work would have been possible.

At the onset of the current study, I participated in initial communications with potentially park-associated American Indian populations regarding this study, working alongside NPS staff. Working with Dr. York, I made initial contacts with potentially park-associated tribal governments and organizations to share information regarding this research effort and to assess the level of interest in Ebey's Landing cultural resource issues within these communities. Through this process, we sought to identify the administrative structures of these groups, as well as the identity of key executive and cultural resources staff members, in order to help guide future Ebey's Landing consultation efforts.

I then conducted a literature review of published materials addressing potentially park-associated tribes. This review involved a detailed overview of relevant ethnographic and historical sources, as well as a cursory review of relevant archaeological literatures. Specifically, this review involved the identification, documentation, and critical review of published references to traditional occupation and uses of Ebey's Landing and adjacent or comparable landscape features by the American Indian communities of the Puget Sound area. Particular attention was directed toward tribal use and occupation of central Whidbey Island generally, the historical tribal communities of Penn Cove, and the experiences of the principally Skagit community from this study area following relocation to other tribal communities in the mid-19th century. In addition, I conducted a critical overview and assessment of geographical information regarding the tribes of the northern Puget Sound. I also sought to identify, document, and critically review published references to the post-contact history of potentially park-associated tribes, including but not limited to their demographic history, migration, and incorporation into federally recognized and unrecognized American Indian populations. Finally, I sought to identify, document, and critically review published references to the contemporary identity of potentially park-associated tribes.

While this research involved consultation of published historical and ethnographic literatures, special attention was directed toward the largely unpublished archival record regarding the study area. In order to achieve this, we reviewed available

materials in the collections of local, state, regional and national collections, including: the National Park Service Pacific-West Region office (Seattle), the National Archives and Records Administration Pacific Alaska Region archives (Seattle), the Washington State Library and Archives (Olympia, WA), the Washington State Historical Society Research Center (Tacoma, WA), the University of Washington Libraries Special Collections (Seattle, WA), the Western Washington University Center for Pacific Northwest Studies (Bellingham, WA), and the Oregon Historical Society Library (Portland, OR), as well as consulting materials available from the Island County Historical Society (Coupeville, WA), the South Whidbey Historical Society (Langley, WA), and the Jefferson County Historical Society (Port Townsend, WA). Potentially useful materials housed within national collections, such as the Smithsonian Institution, were consulted only through the use of microfilms and other remotely accessible media. Tribal representatives, including those of the Swinomish Indian tribe and Samish Indian Nation provided useful guidance on the availability of archival materials. The Samish Indian Nation tribal archive, in Anacortes, Washington, provided access to a number of relevant documents to aid in this study, and Joan Megan Jones played a critical role in this effort.

Using all of the relevant materials gleaned from these sources, I then conducted a review of existing ethnographic and ethnohistoric information on the American Indian populations who inhabited or made direct or indirect use of Ebey's Landing National Historical Reserve and adjacent lands and waters. I sought to retrieve information on the study's general themes in such well-known published sources as Suttles (1990a), Smith (1941), Haeberlin and Gunther (1930) and Spier (1927). Yet, wishing to delve much deeper into the historical past, I contrasted this literature against the relatively fine-grained information available in a variety of archival sources, such as unpublished ethnographic notes (e.g., Snyder 1955b, Smith n.d.), archived transcripts of interviews with tribal elders (e.g., Dan, n.d.) personal diaries and correspondence of early Ebey's Landing settlers (e.g., Ebey 1855-1857), the notes of former Washington Territorial Governor and Superintendent of Indian Affairs, Isaac Stevens (e.g., 1860, 1857a, 1857b, 1853, 1851), the correspondence and reports of the long-defunct Penn Cove Special Indian Agency (e.g., Fay 1856-71), archival materials from particular modern tribal communities (e.g., Samish Indian Nation 1986; Swinomish Tribal Community 1974), and pertinent documents of the Indian Claims Commission (e.g., 1974, 1972, 1964, 1959a, 1959b, n.d.; Snyder 1955a).

This review and analysis especially sought to identify connections between historical occupants and/or resource users and their descendants who may be identifiable as contemporary American Indian tribes, tribal organizations, Alaskan Native communities, and/or Canadian First Nations. In this document I attempted to 1) illuminate the identity and to summarize the post-contact history of traditionally associated populations in a manner that both refers to and expands upon existing documentation, 2) identify locations within the reserve that appear to be of historical

and/or cultural significance to park-associated tribes, and 3) present an overview of the context of treaties, Indian Claims Commission proceedings, and other federal actions that may have a direct bearing upon NAGPRA consultation and compliance at Ebey's Landing. A few illustrative maps and illustrations have been included to augment and clarify elements of the text.

THE ETHNOGRAPHIC CONTEXT OF EBEBY'S LANDING: AN OVERVIEW

Ebey's Landing provided its native inhabitants with a number of unique opportunities. The narrowness of Whidbey Island in this location, coupled with the protected nature of Penn Cove provided in close proximity the marine resources of both the high-energy outer coast and the slow waters of the interior. As noted previously, the juxtaposition of northern Whidbey Island with the Olympic Peninsula to the southwest placed Ebey's Landing in a rainshadow environment that favored the maintenance of anthropogenic prairies instead of the comparatively uniform forest structure found in many other portions of Puget Sound. Though Ebey's Landing lacked riverine and large estuarine habitats, the availability and diversity of natural resources was impressive. Simultaneously, the westward thrust of Whidbey Island in this location projected Ebey's Landing into a central position at the intersection between the Strait of Juan de Fuca and Puget Sound. The residents of this place thus were stationed at a geographical nexus, where visitors – both welcome and unwelcome – frequented their shores for purposes of trade, social encounters, and warfare.

This unique position also insured that the earliest explorers in the region sometimes encountered the inhabitants of what is today Ebey's Landing and provided frequent, if often superficial, documentation of their culture. Those who beheld the villages of this place commonly spoke of a number of villages found in the area, especially in Penn Cove. In June of 1792, George Vancouver passed through the waters of Puget Sound and ventured east of Whidbey Island. He and his crew became the first explorers to provide a detailed description of the indigenous inhabitants of the study area. Entering Penn Cove, he noted,

"In the morning, the examination of the western branch was pursued, and found to terminate in a very excellent and commodious cove or harbor....On each point of the harbor, which in honor of a particular friend I call Penn's Cove, was a deserted village; in one of which were found several sepulchers formed exactly like a sentry box. Some of them were open, and contained skeletons of many young children tied up in blankets; the smaller bones of adults were likewise noticed....The surrounding country, for several miles in most points of view, presented a delightful prospect, consisting chiefly of spacious meadows elegantly adorned with clumps of trees; amongst which the oak bore a very considerable proportion, in size from four to six feet circumference....The country in this vicinity of this branch of the sea is...the finest we had yet met with...its natural productions were luxuriant in the highest degree,

and it was, by no means, ill supplied with streams of fresh water”
(Vancouver 1792: 165-66).

Despite the presence of an “abandoned village,” Vancouver, as well as his Lieutenant Joseph Whidbey and expedition naturalist Archibald Menzies, noted that the population density of Penn Cove was among the highest to be found in Puget Sound. As Vancouver remarked:

“The number of its inhabitants estimated at about six hundred, which I should suppose would exceed the total of all the natives we had before seen” (Vancouver 1792: 165).

Even a half century later, explorers visiting Penn Cove would continue to echo Vancouver’s comments, noting that the population in this place seemed larger, and apparently more advanced, than others in the area. In May of 1841, Charles Wilkes followed in Vancouver’s route into Penn Cove, reporting,

“The next point visited and surveyed was Penn’s Cove, between Whidby’s Island and the main. This island contains many small villages, and appears to be more thickly peopled than other parts of the sound...here [is a] a permanent settlement, consisting of large and well built lodges of timber and planks, similar to those already described on the Columbia and elsewhere....Upon the whole, the tribe inhabiting Penn Cove are more advanced than any others in civilization” (Wilkes 1856: 61).

Moreover, the available archaeological evidence suggests not only a large contact-era population in this place, but also an antiquity of human settlement that is especially deep. As archaeologist, Andrea Weiser noted, “Based on the 400 projectiles I evaluated from Ebey’s Prairie, I found that the oldest spear points were deposited between 10,800 and 7,000 years ago,” while points can be found for most major periods thereafter (Weiser 2006: 118). The presence of large villages along with small outposts possessing archaeological evidence of “repeated camping episodes probably reflect [the fact] that Ebey’s was a preferred resource gathering area” for a very long period of time (Weiser 2006: 109). Certainly, the native settlements of the Ebey’s Landing area were settlements of magnitude by most measures.

But who were the residents of Penn Cove, encountered by Vancouver in 1792? In the pages that follow, I seek to answer this question, drawing from a wide variety of published and unpublished sources.

Identifying the Skagit

Early writings regarding Penn Cove's native residents are as consistent in their facts as they are inconsistent in their spellings. Reported residents of this Penn Cove and central Whidbey Island include "Skatchet," "Skagats," "Skadjats," "Skadgettes," "Sccadchet," "Scachets," "Shatchets," "Skalitchet," "Skalatchet," "Katchet," "Sachet," "Sacket," "Scatachae," "Shatchet," "Ska'jub" and others (e.g., Hodge 1959: 585; Bagley 1915: 266; Work 1912: 214). Early maps consistently show this portion of Whidbey Island as being occupied by the Skagits, Scachets, Shatchets, Skagats, or "Scatchat Tribe" (e.g. Royal Naval Hydrographic Office 1858). No doubt, these people were what we would call "Skagit" today.

Early ethnographic surveys likewise depict the area as Skagit territory, with villages indicated on the north and south sides of Penn Cove (e.g., Gibbs 1855a). Subsequent ethnographic sources that have sought to identify tribal territories in Puget Sound also usually depict the Ebey's Landing area as Skagit territory (e.g., Waterman 1973; Spier 1936; Curtis 1913). Curtis (1913: 174), for example, described Skagit territory as including "the lowlands of the Skagit delta with the adjacent mainland coast, the northern half of Camano Island, the upper eastern coast of Whidbey Island, and the eastern portion of Swinomish Island."¹ Sources such as Upchurch (1936a) and Bennett (1972) agree that Skagit territory consisted of Whidbey Island from Dugula Bay south to Holmes Harbor where they met the Snohomish, and the delta of the Skagit River, where they fished seasonally.

Penn Cove stands apart in these sources as a center of Skagit settlement. Sources consistently depict Whidbey Island generally and Penn Cove specifically as being the center of habitation for the Lower Skagit (Gibbs 1855a: 433; Bennett 1972: 3). Originally writing in 1854, George Gibbs (1877: 180) noted that the Skagits "live on the main around the mouth of the Skagit River, and own the central parts of Whidby's island, their principal ground being the neighborhood of Penn's Cove" (Gibbs 1855a: 432; 1877: 180).² In his 1854 "Estimate of Indian tribes in Washington Territory, west of the Cascade Mountains," Territorial Governor Isaac Stevens (n.d.a) reported the "Skagit" concentrated on the lower "Skagit river and Penn's cove," the "N'qua-chamish, Sma-léh-hu, Mis-kai-whu, Sa-ku-mé-hu" located on branches of Skagit River, and the "Squi-ná-mish, Swo-dá-mish, Sin-a-ah-mish" on the "north end Whitby's Island, canoe passage [Deception Pass], and Sinamish river." Horr (1974: 36) places Penn Cove in the traditional territory of the "Skagit proper," or, in other words, the Skagit band of the larger tribal group that is commonly referred to as Skagit.³

As will be discussed in more detail elsewhere in this report, a number of oral traditions that are attributed to the Skagit place one of their most important creation sites on Penn

Cove, and mention battles on the mainland and other catastrophic events that kept the Skagit people densely concentrated in Penn Cove since time immemorial.⁴

What has been presented here, however, is a much simplified rendition of the available literatures. There are some ambiguities and even glaring inconsistencies in the ethnographic literature on this point, however, that should be mentioned here.

Importantly, the exact origin and use of the term “Skagit” is somewhat ambiguous in the literature.⁵ The term Skagit is especially problematic, as it has been used in reference to both those communities living on the tidewater islands and mainland, as well as demographically and culturally distinct communities up the Skagit River Valley that spoke a related dialect of Lushootseed. The Indian Claims Commission noted that

“Since the first white contact with the native inhabitants of the Puget Sound area, historical sources have referred to “Skagit Indians” as being located on parts of Whidbey Island and about the mouth of the Skagit River. It is also true that “Skagit” from early times has been used as an identification of one dialect of the Salish language. George Gibbs, Governor Stevens’ able assistant, in pre-treaty times defined “Skagit” as a dialect spoken by at least four tribes. But aside from the usage of “Skagit” as a classification of dialect, Gibbs also described not only “Skagit” as an entity of American Indians but also drew a distinction between “up-river” bands of Skagits and those situated along the mouth of the Skagit River and on Whidbey Island.” This multiple usage of the word “Skagit” in reference sometimes to “Skagit-speakers” and at other times in reference to the Skagits residing on central Whidbey Island and the lower portion of the Skagit River, and at other times used in reference to those Indians residing along the upper portions of Skagit River has given rise to confusion and controversy” (Indian Claims Commission 1959a: 314).

In response to this ambiguity, a number of authors have applied different conventions to differentiate the upland and lowland populations. Spier (1936) and Horr (1974) assigned central Whidbey Island to the saltwater-oriented “Skagit proper” to distinguish them from other linguistically related populations upstream. A few sources, mostly those generated by Puget Sound tribes during early 20th century legal proceedings, differentiate between “Skagit treaty Indians” for the lowland communities, and the “Skagit River Indians” for the riverine communities.⁶ More commonly, some sources apply the terms “Lower Skagit” in reference to the tidewater population and “Upper Skagit” in reference to the largely riverine population. Collins (e.g., 1974c) was especially prominent in the use and popularization of this terminology for the two groups, and made a number of valuable statements that might aid in differentiating the two.⁷ For the purposes of this study, Whidbey Island sits within the

contact-period territory of the “Lower Skagit,” but the term “Skagit” is used generally for this tribal population.

Also, there are many challenges in determining the degree to which the study area was situated within the historical use areas of the “Swinomish.” Conventionally, sources suggest that the Swinomish “lived on the salt water not far from the mouth of the Skagit River, and on Fidalgo [Island] and the northern part of Whidbey’s Island, opposite” (Eells 1985: 19). A small number of sources, including Haeberlin and Gunther’s influential *The Indians of Puget Sound* (1930: 8), place modern-day Ebey’s Landing within the territory of the Swinomish, but also indicate that the northwestern boundary of Snohomish territory sat a short distance to the south of the Reserve. This may reflect a more significant challenge in identifying the tribes of the study area, namely that some writers include the Swinomish as a band of the Skagit, while others seem to identify them as two separate pre-contact tribes. Whether the Swinomish constituted a separate “tribe” in the 1855 treaty, or represented a band of the Skagit is a matter of considerable scholarly and legal debate (Taylor 1971: 3).

A number of sources suggest that the Swinomish might best be called a “subdivision” or “band” of the Skagit (summarized in Taylor 1971). A number of other sources from both the 19th and 20th centuries depict the Swinomish as a subgroup of the Lower Skagit (e.g., Gibbs 1877: 180; Powell 1886; Eells 1887: 8; Smith 1941: 208-209; Bennett 1972: 3). Likewise, in his authoritative *Handbook of American Indians*, Hodge (1959) indicated that the Swinomish were “said to be a subdivision of the Skagit, formerly on Whidbey Id., Northwest Washington, now under the Tulalip School Superintendency. The Skagit and Swinomish together numbered 268 in 1909.” In his similarly authoritative “Indian Tribes of North America” Swanton (1952) says of the Swinomish that they “belonged to the coastal division of the Salishan linguistic family, and are sometimes called a subdivision of the Skagit [living] on the northern part of Whidbey Island and about the mouth of Skagit River.” Yet strangely, when listing “Swinomish” subdivisions and villages, Swanton included Skagit communities as a Swinomish subdivision, noting that the Swinomish subdivisions included

“Skagit, on Whidbey Island, from Oak Harbor south to Snaklem Point, with a village at Oak Harbor. Skwada’bsh on the North Fork of the Skagit River and the eastern part of Whidbey Island lying north of Oak Harbor, with Skwi’kwikwab at the mouth of the North Fork of the Skagit, and Tcotab on a point across Skagit Bay” (Swanton 1952: 446).

Other sources suggest that the Swinomish were a separate tribe altogether from the Skagit (Spier 1936). And some suggest that the Swinomish peoples of the 20th century did not have oral traditions that would have led them to consider themselves as a subgroup of the Lower Skagit (Upchurch 1936aa:284). The few available oral history

transcripts from the early 20th century also suggest that the two populations were somewhat distinct, but interconnected through kinship, political and economic alliances that demonstrated Swinomish reverence for the Skagit: “If, for example, the Swinomish had a big problem, they might ask the Skagit [leaders] to sit in” (Dan n.d.: 9); “even before the Treaty, the Skagit were over the Swinomish as protectors in war” (AJ in Snyder n.d.: 102). Likewise, after thorough literature review, authors such as Suttles (1974) have also placed Ebey’s Landing within Skagit territory, suggesting that the closely-related but still separate Swinomish dwelled to the north, only on the northern fringes of Whidbey Island.

To complicate matters, some authors seem to have vacillated between these two positions, suggesting alternatively that the Skagit and Swinomish were separate and unified, without clear explanation. For example, Eells’ early writings of the 19th century generally suggest that the Skagit and Swinomish are separate, but by the time he compiled his relatively authoritative volume, entitled *The Indians of Puget Sound*, he classified the Swinomish as a Skagit band (1985). The Indian Claims Commission documentation, however, chose to use Eells’ earlier writings as the basis for the claim that these were separate populations (e.g., Horr 1974), but consistently hedged their claims with an acknowledgement that their degree of connection was unclear: “The Swinomish are a division of the Salishan-speaking peoples of northcentral Washington. They are considered by many as a branch of the Skagit tribe” (Indian Claims Commission 1974: 5-6).

No doubt, this ambiguity on Skagit-Swinomish relations is complicated by the fact – as will be discussed in considerable detail later in this document – that a significant proportion of the “Skagit” population relocated to the Swinomish Reservation in the wake of the treaty and had become variously integrated into the Swinomish Tribe prior to the onset of scholarly anthropological studies. Certainly, most sources concur on the point that the Swinomish Tribal Community, as it is understood today, is an artifact of post-Treaty developments and consists of individuals of diverse backgrounds, including many with Skagit ancestry (Taylor 1971).

However, all of this ambiguity should not detract from the general impression that what is today Ebey’s Landing National Historical Reserve sat in what is conventionally called “Skagit” territory. In the 1950s, when the Indian Claims Commission (ICC) sought to review all of the available evidence on tribal identity and territoriality in Puget Sound, this commission took the position that (a) the Skagit tribe was an identifiable and distinct tribe at the time of the 1855 Point Elliott Treaty, (b) the Skagit tribe was distinct from the Swinomish, and (c) central Whidbey Island, including all areas now within Ebey’s Landing National Historical Reserve, were within the Skagit’s traditional territory. Indian Claims Commission maps place Ebey’s Landing NHR in the territory of the Skagit, attributing only the northernmost portion of Whidbey Island

to the Swinomish (e.g. Horr 1974: 21). The ICC established the territory of the Lower or “Whidbey Island” Skagit as encompassing

“lands of Island and Skagit Counties, Washington...namely all that portion of Whidbey Island south from Dugula Bay and north of the entrance to Holmes Harbor and a triangular shaped area on the mainland generally circumscribing so much of the Skagit River as comprises the North Fork, from an apex about three miles north of Mt. Vernon...” (Indian Claims Commission 1959a: 318).

This represented the Indian Claims Commission’s interpretation of the “exclusive” use area of the Skagits, if such a discrete exclusive use area ever existed. Skagit claimants to the Indian Claims Commission noted their historical use of all of Whidbey Island from Greenbanks in the south to Deception Pass in the north, but did not suggest exclusive use of the far northern and southern ends of this range. The ICC also described “the larger villages at Coupeville and at the mouth of the Skagit River” as the “centers of the Skagit population” based on a variety of evidence (Indian Claims Commission 1959a: 319-20).

The exact enumeration of Skagit tribal members within this tribal territory has been similarly complicated by questions of their identity and ethnic boundaries; nonetheless, population estimates have demonstrated a degree of consistency over the years. In 1792, Captain George Vancouver estimated that the Lower Skagit population exceeded 600 (Meany 1957: 166). Some 49 years later, in 1841, Captain Wilkes’s estimated the “Scatchat tribe,” including the residents of Penn’s Cove, Whidbey Island, and the adjacent mainland to account for a population of some 650 individuals (Wilkes 1856). During 1843, Father Jean-Baptiste Bolduc reported personally seeing a gathering of roughly 800 Skagit at Penn Cove, not including most of the children and elderly of the community, suggesting a much larger population in total (though this may have been a group assembled for missionary activity of some other event). In 1844 Tolmie submitted a figure of merely 195 Skagit, probably representing only a fragment of the tribe (Blanchet and Demers 1955; Gibbs 1855a: 434-435). In 1853, Isaac Stevens’ census identified 800 Skagit and 800 “Clalams” (Stevens n.d.a). Likewise, Sterling (1853) indicated that the Skagit tribe had 800 members living on the North end of Whidbey’s Island, Skagit River and vicinity, and thus represented the largest single tribe in the region (Sterling 1853; Tweddell 1953: 12-13).⁸ During that same year, DeLancy Floyd-Jones reported 600 Skagit living on the “North of Whidbey’s Island, Skagit River & vicinity” in 1853 (Floyd-Jones 1853). Yet, only two years later, at the time of the 1855 Point Elliot Treaty, Stevens identified a total of 1300 members of Skagit, including “subsidiary tribes”; Powell(1886: 180), meanwhile reports some 1,475 individuals in all of the Lower Skagit groups combined. This increase in numbers apparently reflects new information about the numbers of individuals in the area or the degree of unity between

previously documented “Skagit” bands and other bands that were formerly enumerated separately (Stevens n.d.a.).

Traditional Leadership and Tribal Identity

More vexing perhaps than the issues of Skagit identity presented above, some authors suggest that the entire concept of a “Skagit tribe” is an artifact of the contact period, and does not properly reflect the pre-contact condition of the people now commonly depicted by that term. The basis of this argument centers on the fact that the villages of the region were largely autonomous units at the time of contact, but appear to have only been fully amalgamated into larger entities that might be termed “tribes,” such as the Skagit tribe, late in their history and in no small part due to the circumstances of contact with Europeans. Whether this undermines our efforts to place the Reserve largely within Skagit territory is very difficult from this vantage point, but the foundations of this claim in terms of pre-contact leadership patterns are sufficiently illuminating that they should be reviewed here, as a prelude to material later in this document.

Virtually every major treatment of Puget Sound Salish communities comments on the enigmatic nature of traditional leadership in this region (e.g., Gunther 1927: 261, Haeberlin and Gunther 1930: 58, Collins 1950: 334, Elmendorf 1960: 313, 1971; Collins 1974a: 112, Smith 1940: 48, Suttles 1958). In these communities, villages appear to have effectively been autonomous in matters of politics and economic relations. Certainly, villages shared many social, economic, and kinship ties that unified them, yet there is little evidence that large groupings of villages were organized under a single leader or that any group of villages possessed a sense of belonging to a larger “tribe” that extended beyond the village level at the time of contact. As Suttles noted of Puget Sound village communities,

“There is the myth, brought west by the makers of treaties with Indians, that the native peoples here, as in the East, were organized by political principles into bands, tribes, and perhaps confederations. But the fact is there were no such principles here” (Suttles 1981: 6).

When speaking of the aboriginal ancestors of the Swinomish tribe, including the Skagit, Tulalip Indian Agent, O.C. Upchurch may have oversimplified traditional leadership patterns somewhat, but was nonetheless providing useful perspective in noting that, “The patterns of political organization in these bands were very simple; therefore the units were small and numerous” (Upchurch 1936a: 289). Suttles expanded on this point considerably in his ethnographic writings:

“ in that aspect of culture that Europeans habitually look to as a basis for classifying people, political organization, the continuum had no unity at all, and no discernible units. Political organization as Europeans understand it was lacking. Here were only autonomous households. These, singly or in small groups, formed recognizable villages, and groups of these villages formed recognizable units that we now call “tribes,” but neither village nor tribe had any formally separate machinery of government. Kinship, community of interests resulting from common residence, community of habitual act, and speech were the bases of recognized units. But weaker ties of the same sorts united tribe with tribe” (Suttles 1954: 29).

Instead of “chiefs” of entire tribes or groups of villages, most sources suggest that “chiefs” operated with only household or village-level authority. Each household had its highest ranked individual, and often the highest ranked individual from the most influential household might serve as a *de facto* “chief” of the community. As Harriette Dover - a Tulalip elder of partial Skagit and S’Klallam ancestry - recalled,

“In each Coast Salish community there was usually one individual who was considered the leader in decision making which affected the community. This individual was usually the eldest male member of the wealthiest upper class household in the community” (Dover in Rygg 1977: 7).

Similarly, Swinomish elder Amelia Dan reported that in the 19th century,

“every tribe had a chief or headman, ‘one ruler’ over everyone else [in the village], all villages [had this]. He usually had more authority than anyone else, was a good speaker, of sound judgment, and had the welfare of his people at heart. He was usually, on the average, wealthier than others; the owner of more property like canoes, potlatch blankets (hand-woven mountain-goat wool, thick and rough like a rug). He was better off. If the chief had sons, his eldest son would succeed him. If he had no sons, a nephew, usually on his father’s side would succeed him” (Dan n.d.: 9).

O.C. Upchurch, a Tulalip Indian Agent who worked extensively with the Swinomish Reservation community in the early 20th century, had the opportunity to discuss traditional systems of leadership extensively with residents, including Skagit residents, of this community. He summarized these accounts in this way:

“A chief was recognized, supported by his advisors who were the leaders of the tribe. The original selection of head man and chief was not a formal act. They were not elected at any one instant but attained their rank through merit and ability in war, chase, council or ceremonial, sometimes as the result of a remarkable feat, and sometimes by wisdom and dignity maintained throughout a number of years. Prestige was usually accorded to men of the higher or ranking class, but occasionally a man of the lower classes had place at the council or even became chief. The succession to the position of chief was customarily hereditary but not necessarily so. To succeed his father or his grandfather a youth must be a man of ability whom the leading men and the tribe respected for his own prowess.

“The fundamental fact of such political organization as is discernible is that it was in reality very democratic; an aristocracy, yes; a benevolent despotism, yes; but not imposed arbitrarily and autocratically upon a slaving populace. Rather it was a government by persons exalted to a position of command by common recognition of their proven ability to lead and their power to accomplish ends for the common good. Powerful leaders, wise in council and brave and resourceful in war, able to command for their people the best fishing waters, good hunting grounds, productive root and berry fields, and rich clam and oyster beds, lived in some comfort and were able to make a show of wealth in a potlatch which measured the dignity to which the tribe and its chief had attained (Upchurch 1936a: 289-290).

These leadership positions appear to have been somewhat fluid in their powers so that, in some communities, the leader was not always apparent to outside observers. As Floyd-Jones reported in 1853,

“In many of [the tribal communities] it is difficult to ascertain whom they regard as the Chief or head man. In some, however, I found that they have but a single leader, whose authority they all acknowledge” (Floyd-Jones 1853).

This fluidity reflected, in part, the fact that different leaders might take a commanding role in the community depending on the circumstances facing the community. As was noted of the Snohomish by the U.S. Select Committee on Indian Affairs, Floyd-Jones’ observations might apply to all groups of the region:

“[They] had leaders rather than chiefs, as the word is used in the Eastern States of a more or less hereditary and authoritarian personage with

executive authority. There were village leaders who adjusted quarrels, marital separations (already referred to), and guided the village or community in their seasonal activities. There were war leaders who had executive leadership in times of war, at least over the warriors" (U.S. Select Committee on Indian Affairs 1988: 87).

What little force a charismatic leader might have over allied villages was contingent on forms of repeated exchange and coercion, if the available ethnographic literature is any indication. These efforts were transitory and apparently did not create permanent "tribal" allegiances:

"The village headman had several political strategies for increasing the rank of his group in the regional competition. One was to obligate the leaders of smaller villages by making periodic gifts to them. When planning a grand affair, he called in all small debts, projecting the appearance of leadership over several villages. Further control over other villages was acquired by making promises of future contributions or by refusals to contribute at times undesirable for his own purposes" (Roberts 1975: 124).

So, if there was some fundamental integrity to the tribal group known as "Skagit" prior to European contact, it was not likely attributable to a specific form of hierarchical leadership that politically unified "Skagit" villages. What these communities did share was a degree of social connection with one-another that exceeded that with neighboring groups and, as an outcome, a certain linguistic homogeneity within the villages of the area.⁹ In the end, dialect differences in Lushootseed – the Coast Salish language of the Puget Sound region – may have been the clearest indicator of the Skagit tribal domain at the time of European contact, but an indicator that appears to have unified them with the Swinomish and other populations usually categorized as distinct from Skagit.

The circumstances of the contact period would clearly give these social connections and dialect similarities new meaning. If the systems of political leadership that defined tribal identity were dynamic, it was apparently changing very rapidly during the era of first European contact, making simple categorization of these polities somewhat difficult. A number of accounts suggest that these leaders' positions were only enhanced by the circumstances of Euro-American contact. Suttles suggested that early white explorers saw leaders and called them "chiefs"; with time, these individuals were appointed these titles formally by missionaries and Indian Agents (Suttles 1954: 33). In turn, the relationships between villages were becoming more hierarchical and more politically integrated:

“An important change in the ranking of individual villages took place during the early contact period. The tendency towards the evolution of a simple hierarchical system was complicated by two factors. First, population dislocation resulting from warfare and disease thoroughly scrambled village loyalties. Secondly, the rise of powerful regional leaders over ordinary village headmen strengthened extra-village ties even further...The new ethnic unit was the extended village-cluster. Change was occurring so rapidly that the village cluster achieved focal importance for only a few decades” (Roberts 1975: 166).

Thus, Roberts (1975) influentially suggested a multiphase process of Skagit tribal coalescence around “village clusters” of related communities during the 18th and 19th centuries. As she explains the “village cluster” concept,

“This was a loose grouping of villages along a river or bay whose people [by virtue of shared kinship, economy, and social circumstances] shared similar political feelings. During the early contact period, from 1792 to 1855, these feelings grew in strength and the members began to operate as units in parts of the Skagit Region” (Roberts n.d.: 2-3).

By Roberts’ model, independent villages were coalesced into “village clusters” at around the time of contact due to the effects of expanding disease, warfare, and trade, and these “village clusters” included the cluster of villages together designated as the “Skagit.” Roberts (1975: 166-70) thus interprets the ethnic label “Skagit” as simply referring to one of these village clusters rather than as a preexisting tribe. In turn these clusters’ identity as the fundamental unit of tribal political structure was locked in place by the treaties of the mid-19th century; thus these clusters were regrouped into multi-cluster reservation communities, and by the early to mid 20th century these groups had coalesced into essentially singular reservation tribes.¹⁰

The role of the Isaac Stevens treaties in this process has been underscored by a number of authors, such as Bennett (1972), who noted that

“When the fur traders and settlers showed a preference for dealing with one Indian as a group representative the position of “chief” began to take shape. The government institutionalized this office when they recognized “chiefs” of tribes in the signing of the Point Elliott treaty” (Bennett 1972: 22).

Documents dating from the mid-19th century addressing the treaty process suggest the degree to which the agents attempted to designate discrete tribes, and name specific leaders as formal chiefs of these tribes for the purposes of administration. In an August 1854 letter to Territorial Governor, Isaac Stevens, Acting Commissioner of Indian Affairs Charles E. Mix wrote specific instructions on this point:

“In concluding articles of Agreement and Convention with the Indian Tribes in Washington Territory, you will endeavor to unite the numerous bands, and fragments of tribes into tribes and provide for the concentration of one or more of such tribes upon the reservations which may be set apart for their future homes” (Mix 1854).

Territorial Governor Stevens, in turn, instructed all of his subordinates to carry out this policy. In a letter from Governor Stevens to Colonel Simmons, a new special Indian Agent for the Puget Sound District who would oversee the Skagit and neighboring tribes, Governor Stevens noted

“You having been appointed a special Indian Agent for the District of Puget Sound, in this Territory, the following instructions are transmitted for your guidance.

“You are expected to enter forthwith upon a tour through the various tribes embraced within your District. For the purpose of acquainting yourself thoroughly with their conditions, instructing them as to their relations with the citizens, and preparing the way to future negotiations. For this purpose you will organize small bands, not at present united, by gathering them into tribes, having reference to their general affinities, and by procuring the selection of head chiefs and assistant or lesser tyees [chiefs].

“You will make a careful census of the various tribes and bands according to the form herewith enclosed; ascertain as near as may be the boundaries of the territory claimed by each” (Stevens 1854b).

Citing this general policy, a number of subsequent sources have suggested that the “tribes” conventionally acknowledged by the anthropological literature are in no small part an artifact of the treaty period. As summarized by Ruby and Brown (2001),

“primarily for convenience and political control, the government lumped [Coast Salish bands] together as a tribe, even though traditionally they had been autonomous village societies” (Ruby and Brown 2001: 16).

By this argument, these “tribes,” as such, may have only existed as discrete political entities for a few decades, in the years from shortly before the treaty until the time when these populations had become integrated into the social fabric of new reservation communities. This strategic “construction” of chieftainships on Puget Sound has been a topic of growing visibility within Coast Salish studies in recent decades, and a recurring theme in the ethnohistorical writing of the region generally (J. Miller 1997; B. Miller and Boxberger 1994).¹¹

In time, as shall be discussed in more detail in the pages that follow, “Skagit” identity faded in reservation communities, giving way to the shared reservation community identity at places such as Swinomish and Tulalip. As Bennett reported, “The Lower Skagit, having no reservation of their own, moved to the Swinomish and/or the Tulalip reservations after the 1855 treaty. Their identity was not maintained in agency records” (Bennett 1972: 10). Through both formal and informal mechanisms, Skagit identity was eclipsed by new social realities.

Skagit Bands

Recognizing that the “Skagit” may have been consolidated from a number of smaller populations, it is worthwhile to consider the identity of the “bands” that have been reported to constitute that tribe. In the view of some scholars, such as Hodge (1959), “tribes” may not have existed prior to European contact, but “bands” of interconnected village groups did. These bands shared certain cultural traits, were closely unified by kinship and other social ties, and appear to have spoken the same dialect of Lushootseed. According to Hodge, then, the term Skagit neither signified a tribe nor a band but was a blanket term used to cover a large number of bands who spoke closely related dialects (Hodge 1959). Amongst these bands he includes the “Kikiallu” and the “Swinamish,” reflecting a common tendency to simply identify the Swinomish as a Skagit band. Yet even Hodge doubted the veracity of the “band” concept as applied to the Skagit, noting that

“probably nothing more is meant of this classification than that the dialects were nearly related and the geographical position close. Nothing like political union appears to have existed among them” (Hodge 1959: 585).

The names reported for Skagit bands in the writings of the 1850s are numerous and not especially consistent between sources. In 1853, Sterling groups together Skagit bands based on their shared language: “The Ska-git, Kickuallis, Squa-sua-mish, and Sock-a-muke speak the same tongue - the Skagit” (Sterling 1853). In 1856, George Gibbs identified the Skagit bands as including the Kikiallu, Nūkwatsamish, Tow-ah-ha, Smali-

hu, Sakumehu, Miskaiwhu, Miseekwigweelis, and Swinamish; he included in the Skagit territory the northern part of Whidbey Island in areas conventionally designated as Swinomish (in Horr 1974: 36). In later publications, Gibbs altered this list slightly, suggesting that

“The Skagits, including the Kikiallu, Nukwatsamish, Tow-ah-ah, Smali-hu, Sakumehu, Miskaiwhi, Miseekwigweelis, Swinamish, and Akwonamish, occupy the remaining country between the Snohomish and Bellingham Bay, with the northern part of Whidbey Island and Perry Island” (Gibbs 1877).¹²

John Wesley Powell appears to have simply paraphrased Gibbs (almost verbatim) when producing his own list of Skagit bands:

“The Skagits, including the Kikiallu, Nukwatsamish, Tow-ah-ha, Smali-hu, Sakumehu, Miskaiwhu, Miseekwigweelis, Swinamish, and Skwanamish, occupy the remaining country between the Snohomish and Bellingham Bay, with the northern part of Whidbey Island and Perry Island. With them a different dialect prevails [than the other tribes of the Sound], though not so distinct but what they can be understood by those already mentioned” (Powell 1886: 180).

Complicating matters, the documentation supporting the Lower Skagit’s request for compensation under *Duwamish et al. v. The United States* in 1947 alludes to its constituent bands on the date of the treaty as being only three: the Squi-na-mish, Swoda-mish, and Sin-a-ah-mish (Indian Claims Commission 1959a, 1959b, 1964).

The exact identities of the Skagit bands that may have dwelled within what is today Ebey’s Landing National Historical Reserve over the course of the 19th century are difficult to ascertain on the basis of archival documents. Some sources, such as Horr (1974) allude to the residents of the Penn Cove area as “Skagit proper,” indicating that their band name was, itself, “Skagit.” Yet, Horr (1974: 36) acknowledges that this name was not used uniformly or consistently in historical writings, and he presumes that the “Do-kwa-tabsh” reported by Eells (1985) and the “Do-qua-chabsch” reported by Mallet (1878) were the principal Skagit band centered on Penn Cove.¹³

Some sources, in addition to those already cited, refer parenthetically to a tribal population called the Me-sek-wi-guilse or Miseekwigweelis. This population may have occupied at least a portion of what is today Ebey’s Landing National Historical Reserve:

“The Me-sek-wi-guilse tribe owned and occupied, at and before the Treaty of 1855, the area from Lyman to Birdsvew, and on Whidbey Island between the lands of the Skagit and the Snohomish tribes from Sneatlum Point to Holmes Harbor” (Sampson n.d.: 28).

Blanchet (1878) and Kellogg (1934: 7-9) also refers to the “Sowkamish” living in the area – this is possibly the same population as the “Sakumehu,” as mentioned in other sources. This tribal name does not appear elsewhere in the historical or ethnographic literature. Kellogg alludes to a Chief Tslalakum of the Sowkamish who dwelled near Ebey’s Landing and helped to repel attacks from S’Klallams. It is unclear whether this group was resident at what is today Ebey’s Landing, or was from a community that simply used the area occasionally.¹⁴

In addition to these bands, a number of others receive frequent mention in the historical literature and correspondence of the 19th century. Kikiallus or “Kikiallu” are sometimes identified as a Skagit “sub-tribe,” formerly living on Whidbey Island and at the mouth of Skagit River. Horr (1974: 36) identifies the traditional territory of the Kikially or “kikiallis” as being on Whidbey Island, apparently on the “lower” island. Hodge (1959: 687) identifies the Kikiallu as a Skagit sub-tribe, formerly living on the north end of Whidbey Island and at the mouth of the Skagit River, which had relocated to the Swinomish Reservation after the Point Elliott treaties. They are regarded by some as an ancestral band of the Swinomish. The testimony of Chief Martin J. Sampson of the Swinomish Tribe to the Indian Claims Commission provided that commission with a cursory outline of Kikiallus history:

“Sometime back in the dim past a band of the Kik-i-allus emigrated from the Utsaladdy area [north end of Camano Island] to where the Model Village is situated just across the Swinomish Channel from LaConner. Here they settled, multiplied in numbers and prospered to such a degree that they extended their holdings to the large territory outlined above. In due time they became known as Swinomish” (Taylor 1971: 4).

The essential ethnolinguistic unity and shared origins of the Kikiallu and Skagit proper is reflected in the accounts of Chief Martin Sampson, who reported that

“The language spoken by ten of the tribes is known as “Skagit”. However, it is basically Kik-i-allus. The mother tongue is Kik-i-allus because legend has it that the Skagit, Squin-ah-mish, and Swinomish migrated from the Kik-i-allus to where they were at the time of the Treaty” (Sampson n.d.: 3).

Some sources allude to a separate population called the Squin-ah-mish or Skwanamish – also a Skagit band:

“The Squin-ah-mish consisted of a small band that lived in the territory between the Kik-i-allus and the Swinomish, namely, the North Fork of the Skagit River from its mouth at Bald Island upstream to Dry Slough, then south on Whidbey to Brann’s Camp. This band was closely related to the Swinomish by association and intermarriage” (Sampson n.d.: 42).

The other Skagit “bands” mentioned by early writers are rarely mentioned in ethnographic or historical accounts consulted for this project, except when authors attempt to provide lists of the Skagit’s constituent bands. Clearly, much confusion existed among early writers as to the identity of tribal populations, and spellings were wildly inconsistent, confounding modern efforts to identify tribal populations mentioned in these early writings.

Exogamy, Intermarriage, and Tribal Identity

If the 19th century coalescence of American Indian tribes complicates the identification of pre-contact populations at Ebey’s Landing, traditions of exogamous marriage also add complexity to this puzzle. Exogamy – a cultural practice of marrying individuals from outside one’s home village – was universally accepted as desirable by the contact-period residents of Puget Sound. Families especially seem to have promoted marriages that would enhance their shared social standing, as with elites from tribes with access to resources or trade networks not found in their home villages.¹⁵ As tribal elder Amelia Dan (n.d.) noted,

“It was preferable to marry outside the tribe; like for instance, [her] family married into the Klallam. Tribal exogamy was preferred and practiced by all classes. It was not only a matter of social prestige to marry outside the tribe, but to one’s personal gain as well as an opportunity to make an alliance outside. The Swinomish [for example] arranged marriages into tribes where hunting and fishing was better than in one’s own territory. The informant gives the Lummi as an example in this connection. Marriages were also arranged with up river people with practicality in mind, mountain-goat wool being an object in these cases.... A.D. believes that the Swinomish made a special effort to stay on friendly terms through marriage, and had established too many connections in this way for there to be enmity or warfare...Extra-tribal marriages were common in order to

establish friendly relationships, protection and more or less permanent trade arrangements. The Snoqualmie-Kikialos bond was like this. Everyone desired the up-river people since the down-river and salt-water people wanted mountain-goat wool fleece with which to make blankets, called *djəwíca* [or “*jhəagwíca*”]. The old Indians said specifically that they married up-river for this reason because this blanket had prestige in potlatching” (Dan n.d.: 9, 13-14).

While these marriages established connections between almost all of the major Puget Sound communities, they also established linkages with more distant communities, such as those east of the Cascade Range.¹⁶

Women were generally – though not uniformly – the cultural ambassadors in this arrangement, marrying and relocating to the man’s home village, and ensuring enduring linkages between her new family’s village and that of her original home. This pattern of relocating to the husband’s village is commonly termed “patrilocality.”¹⁷ As Roberts (1975) noted of the Skagit,

“In the aboriginal Skagit Region flow of women across ethnic boundaries was the cultural norm, though this was not the case for men....In the Skagit Region a new wife was expected to identify with her husband and his people. Though her incorporation may have been slow, the marriage alliance between two villages, as well as her marriage, depended upon it. The birth of a child speeded her assimilation” (Roberts 1975: 125).

The elite social classes of Puget Sound villages especially sought to promote exogamous marriages with members of tribes that provided strategic advantages – social, economic, cultural, and/or defensive. As Haeberlin and Gunther (1930) reported,

“Tribal exogamy is of prime importance to the upper classes. The giving of gifts is rather an exchange than a payment for the bride. Whenever it is mentioned, the permanent residence is patrilocal, even though there may be a short stay at the bride’s home” (Haeberlin and Gunther 1930: 52).

Polygamy was widely practiced in the region and, in some cases, elite men were able to secure avenues to trade throughout the region by marrying women from a number of prominent tribes.¹⁸

This is not to suggest that diffuse exogamy was strictly the rule. In a small number of cases, prominent elite families might direct their offspring to marry into families within their immediate social circle, and close to their home village. This was done in an effort to maintain or consolidate geographically localized patterns of social privilege. As will be discussed in later sections, such marriages occasionally took place between the Penn Cove villages.¹⁹

Nonetheless, the result of this generally diffuse pattern of intermarriage was a remarkable integration of the village communities of the Puget Sound region.²⁰ Following the work of Allen (1976), the Samish Indian Nation noted of the northern Puget Sound Salish in their petition for federal recognition that

“given an equal sex ratio, a [conservative] 50% exogamy rate, and 50% [patrilocality], after five generations only 6% of the individuals in a village will be fully descended from the original inhabitants; the rest will share inheritance with members of other groups. Given that village exogamy was undoubtedly in effect for much longer than five generations, it would be startling to find that any individuals other than full siblings share full descent with any others in the village” (Samish Indian Nation 1986).

The kinship ties of the region appear to have been so intertwined that some authors have urged dispensing with tribal distinctions, but using linguistic distinctions as the only reliable means of defining cultural borders; recently, some have used the linguistic term “Lushootseed” as a collective term in reference to the people of the Puget Sound (Miller 1999). In this light, the concept of what constitutes a “tribe” becomes problematic. Boxberger and Miller have gone so far as to suggest that “Tribes may be regarded as collections of families,” spanning multiple villages that are not necessarily contiguous, and that there is “an element of negotiability in family membership” (Boxberger and Miller 1989: 30). Lane (1985) commented on the degree of this negotiability

“as a result [of exogamy] many people trace ancestry from more than one local group. A person might identify himself as a member of his father’s group on one occasion and that of his mother at another time. Claims of affiliation were equally legitimate in both groups and which identification was emphasized at any particular time depended on a variety of circumstances. In this manner an individual might be identified as Snohomish on one occasion and as Snoqualmie or Skagit on another (Lane 1985: 8).

The people of the Skagit territory were thus interrelated with much of the Coast Salish world, including the Salish peoples of coastal southwestern British Columbia (Barnett 1939, 1955). Indeed, some shared oral traditions suggesting their common ancestry.²¹ Suttles expanded on the cumulative effect of this general cultural pattern:

“The Coast Salish peoples of the inland waterways of southern British Columbia and Western Washington seem to have formed a cultural and social continuum that extended from the northern end of Georgia Strait to the southern end of Puget Sound or beyond... While members of a village might make war upon more distant villages, they obtained wives from and held potlatches for villages immediately around them. Thus a network of marriage relationships and potlatch obligations overlay the whole area. Culture differed gradually in content and in emphasis from one end of the area to the other, but the underlying pattern was the same” (Suttles 1954: 29).

“The Georgia-Puget Basin can be identified as a biological and social continuum because every village was related to neighboring villages by marriages, ties of kinship, and joint participation in economic, social, and ceremonial activities. Hostility between distant villages could and occasionally did exist, but neighboring villages were nearly always friendly. Within the Georgia-Puget Basin, there was considerable linguistic and cultural diversity. Ten or more different Salishan languages were spoken. Slight differences in beliefs and practices from village to village amounted to quite important differences in culture between distant points. Nevertheless, differences in language and culture were no obstacle to intermarriage and do not challenge the identification of the whole area as a continuum in biology and social relations” (Suttles 1981: 3).

As a result of this process, “tribes” and villages might be thought of as aggregations of people of diverse background, with a nucleus of male residents who all spoke the same language, and a community – primarily consisting of women – who were born and raised in different villages and tribes:

“The village was linguistically and culturally diverse. Although it was usually identified as speaking a certain language, it contained many speakers of other languages, and many who were multilingual, as a result of the marriage and slavery patterns” (Samish Indian Nation 1986).²²

These kinship ties served as the foundation for shared labor and resource harvests, giving reciprocal rights and obligations to families in a constellation of villages that defined the geographical parameters of resource use and settlement patterns throughout the region.²³ The extent of exogamous marriage effectively “bound the Skagit Region ethnic groups together into a network of voluntary reciprocities” (Robert 1975: 120). Intermarriage between villages might create options for resource procurement over a relatively broad range of tribal territories, fostering a diversity of resource procurement opportunities and providing some of the impetus for the seasonal round.²⁴ Much of the shared, multi-tribal pattern of use at certain resource sites as reported in the ethnographic literature may have both fostered, and been fostered by, these intertribal marriages (e.g., Twedell 1953; Collins 1949c).

The kinship ties fostered by this pattern of exogamy also provided the Coast Salish with a degree of adaptability in times of crisis. During periods of localized resource scarcity, families could call upon kin in other villages to share resources. It is also apparent that families often regrouped in the villages of one’s extended family to escape warfare or disease, a practice that contributed to the widespread relocation and consolidation of villages in the 19th century. Amelia Dan, for example, recalled stories of people moving extensively between locations on the northern Puget Sound to escape epidemics: “Quite a few others from other villages tried to get away in the same way, and so there was quite a bit of moving about” (Dan n.d.: 2).

The patterns of tribal affiliation in what is today Ebey’s Landing National Historical Reserve were very complex in practice. While identifying the Penn Cove village of “Xobaks” as essentially “Lower Skagit,” John Fornsby (in Collins 1949) identified individuals residing in that community during the mid- to late-19th century who were part of extended families hailing from Lower Skagit, Upper Skagit, Snohomish, and Lummi communities. Strong ties between the Penn Cove “Skagit” and Snohomish families are suggested in a number of archival accounts.²⁵ Simultaneously, the Snoqualmie reported sometimes going to the Coupeville area and places nearby to participate in resource harvests with their Skagit friends and kin (Twedell 1953: 96).²⁶ No doubt, some of the bewildering diversity of visiting and resident tribal populations mentioned by 19th century writers at what is today Ebey’s Landing may reflect these intertribal ties.

More recently, genealogical Investigations undertaken in the course of past ethnographic research on Skagit individuals have shown multi-tribal ancestries that attest to this pattern of exogamy. These sources might suggest that there are Skagit descendants from the study area residing in most, and perhaps all, Puget Sound tribes today (Roberts 1975; Collins 1949c).

None of this should suggest that the attachments between tribal communities and their home villages and territories were somehow fleeting and ephemeral, however. Clearly,

families – the paternal lineages in particular – had very deep histories in their respective communities. And, as early writers noted,

“Their attachment to the place of their nativity is very marked and they always seek to return to the home of their tribe to pass the last days of life” (Floyd-Jones 1853).

The conclusions that can be drawn from this general picture of intervillage kinship relations, however, undermine efforts to identify discrete and well-defined “tribes” for our study area at the time of contact. As noted previously, one anthropologist who reviewed this evidence specifically for the Skagit region, Natalie Roberts, concluded that instead of acknowledging pre-contract “tribes,” we might be instead recognize kinship ties that unify an “extended village cluster in the Skagit Region during aboriginal times” (Roberts 1975; n.d.: 2). Roberts (1975) thus places the Skagit of the study area into a larger “Skagit Region” that was not restricted to the conventionally-defined “Lower Skagit” but included a number of interrelated populations that extend well beyond this group. These populations included Upper Skagit, Lower Skagit, Samish and Swinomish, based on their apparent kinship linkages, shared cultural characteristics, linguistic similarities, and later relocation to the Swinomish Reservation. As Roberts notes,

“During aboriginal times in the Skagit Region, most villagers shared pretty much the same culture. Differences between villages were slight. Outward signs of ethnic affiliation such as dress styles and speech patterns were probably very subtle. Most of the knowledge of the unique characteristics of life in different villages is gone today” (Roberts 1975: 77).

In this region, Roberts noted that “It is clear that in the Skagit Region something like an intervillage community existed beyond the residential boundaries of the village” (Roberts 1975: 99). Various other sources tend to confirm this pattern (e.g., Suttles 1963: 514-15; Elmendorf 1960: 298-305). The concept of a “Skagit” tribe is not entirely undermined by these observations, but must be qualified to suggest an entity that was at once socially permeable and politically variegated. The term “Skagit” is still used throughout this document, as a matter of convention and convenience, and the term is still a valid moniker for those tribal communities that occupied this area and were unified by common dialect, culture, and kinship. Yet, while this document directs particular attention to the experiences of the Lower Skagit, this is done advisedly, recognizing that the Lower Skagit have the most direct, but not exclusive, ties to Ebey’s Landing National Historical Reserve. While it is recognized that a small number of tribal communities have especially direct ties to Ebey’s Landing NHR, particularly Swinomish, it is important to recognize the breadth of the community that might

realistically have personal and familial ties to its lands and resources. For this reason, in both future research and tribal consultation, it will serve the interests of the National Park Service and the tribes to engage the tribal communities of the Puget Sound region broadly.

Other Aspects of Traditional Social Structure

There are a variety of other aspects of traditional Skagit social structure that warrant mention here, as a prelude to sections of this document that follow. In particular, these center on the identities, roles, and prerogatives of the different social “classes” or “castes” in traditional Skagit society, from chiefly elites, to commoners, to slaves. The differentiation between these groups is important in Northwest Coast societies, generally, but seems to have unique importance and manifestations in the case of the Penn Cove Skagit.

Most detailed sources on the Skagit suggest that the Skagit chiefly families that occupied Penn Cove were of uniquely high social standing within the Skagit world, and perhaps among the many other tribal communities within the “Skagit Region” (Roberts 1975; Snyder 1955a, n.d.). As will be discussed in more detail in the sections that follow, the residents of the large villages found at Coupeville and Snakelum Point were of particularly high status, being prominent traders and ceremonial leaders both before and during the fur trade era of the early- to mid-19th century. These leaders, such as Chief Snakelum, possessed both hereditary claims to leadership, great wealth in both resources and ceremonial prerogatives, and the skills required to meet chiefly obligations; their status was only enhanced by residing in this location, which was the locus of Skagit origin stories, and by the perceived powers emanating from association with the protagonists in these stories. The elites, or “chiefs” of these communities served as the nexus of trade relationships that bonded communities throughout the region (Mooney 1976a, 1978). They orchestrated large-scale resource harvests, organized multi-village war parties to repel hostile tribes, and served as prominent intermediaries with the white world during the contact period. The prestige of these individuals elevated the status of their villages, which – in turn – elevated the status of the “village clusters” of which they were a part. It is likely that these villages had visible indicators of their elevated status – such as large longhouses, greater diversity of material goods, and the like – perhaps an explanation for Wilkes’ aforementioned comment that “the tribe inhabiting Penn Cove are more advanced than any others in civilization” (Wilkes 1856: 61). In part, as a result of the elevated status of individual families, households, and village communities, Penn Cove settlements carried a prestige that was uncommon. Moreover, the high status of the families from these settlements appears to have persisted, even after they relocated to other reservation communities.

Living in the households of these elites, or in nearby villages, were a number of individuals of intermediate status. We know from ethnographic sources that at least a portion of this population consisted of specialized tradespeople, such as hunters or fishermen who had expertise in certain kinds of hunting techniques (Snyder n.d.).

Also living in these communities were the slaves of the elites. Confusing the identity of precontact populations and potential human remains that might be inadvertently discovered at Ebey's Landing, these slaves' roots lie within many other tribes throughout northwestern North America. Slaves were acquired directly through combat, or were purchased through intermediaries in other tribal communities: "Slavery was practiced both by enslaving prisoners of war and by inter-tribal raids for the avowed purpose of acquiring slaves" (Upchurch 1936a: 287; see also Donald 1997). Marriette Dover [Shelton], a Snohomish woman born in 1904, recalled oral tradition suggesting that

"The most desirable slaves were considered to be from the most distant areas since this reduced their desire to attempt escape and the possibility that they might be related to someone in their master's community" (Dover in Rygg 1977: 6).

Once acquired, these slaves were incorporated to varying degrees into the social fabric of the tribal community.²⁷ The role of slaves varied, but these individuals clearly played an important role in such tasks as hunting, fishing, and woodworking. As John Fornsby recalled,

"They used to have slaves. One chief on Whidbey Island had two, three, four, six slaves...Before the Whites came, they sent slaves for something, to get wood, to hunt deers and ducks. That is the way they did to slaves. The chief stayed home and let the slave go hunt. Some slaves knew how to make canoes and made big salt-water canoes. They couldn't leave without seeing their boss. They had to travel with them because they were scared the slaves wanted to run away. They wouldn't let them go alone, they stayed with them. Some slaves wouldn't leave their boss, but stayed with him all the time" (Collins 1949: 303).²⁸

Slave ownership has been widely reported for the communities of Penn Cove during the 19th century, as was true of most large settlements within the Puget Sound region (Collins 1949).

Beyond this, patterns of social stratification within Skagit society generally, and Penn Cove Skagit society specifically, were somewhat unique. Within the Skagit context, and

indeed among most of the tribes of this region, there were sharp lines drawn between members of these different social strata, even as members of different castes might dwell within the same village, or in the same household. Some suggest that Skagit social structure was essentially dualistic, with elites being separate from a lower class that included slaves (e.g., Snyder 1964: 118-19; Drucker 1955: 127-28; Collins 1950: 334). In contrast, some authors such as Suttles (1958: 504) have suggested that a three-part division characterized Skagit society. In this view, there was (1) an upper class called “good people” by some of Suttles’ consultants, (2) a lower class sometimes called “worthless people,” and (3) a categorically distinct population of slaves, which occupied the lowest position of the social hierarchy.

Yet, the situation at Penn Cove may have added another social stratum to this general model. Certainly, the communities of Penn Cove had elites, lower-status individuals who often served as specialized tradespeople (such as hunters or fishermen), and a community of slaves. However, they appeared to have a large population of what might be considered a fourth category of individual. When working with Skagit descendants hailing from Penn Cove, Snyder and Roberts’ consultants especially spoke of the “sk^wdabš,” [roughly “skw-dabsh”] a low-status population that seems to have been conceptualized as being distinct from ordinary Skagit society. Indeed, oral history of the region suggests that they may have originated from a separate population that arrived in Skagit territories due to some kind of demographic disruption, and were partially absorbed into Skagit society by the time of European contact. As Snyder (n.d.) summarized their origins and status,

“The sk^wdabš were said to have been geographically concentrated in the Oak Harbor area; they were sometimes suggested to have been a separate population arrived from some other location, but had become integrated into Skagit social life as lower-status members of the Skagit world by the 19th century. Some suggest that they had separate leaders at contact, corroborating the notion that they originated as a distinct tribe; there was no mention of linguistic differentiation, however. Skagit oral tradition suggested that they originated from dogs,²⁹ and thus treated as inferior, but also overseen with paternal concern: “All of the sk^wdabš territory was under Skagit control since the sk^wdabš were not exactly a tribe distinct from the Skagit, and were under Skagit protection....

“They also sometimes lived in small houses at the periphery of Skagit settlements. In some cases, sk^wdabš appear to have gathered natural resources from the less desirable margins of certain procurement areas, such as fishing stations. They were not provided with organized instruction in religious practices or family history. The origin of their name appears to be “sk^wad” [take] “abs” [person], or literally “take a person” or “taken person.” They were not slaves (“stodək), however, and held considerably higher status than Skagit slaves” (Snyder n.d.: 99-102).

As will be discussed in later sections of this document, the sk^wdabš appear to have occupied a number of settlements in the study area, including both pure sk^wdabš settlements and at the periphery of mixed villages that were dominated by Skagit, proper :

“A number of the communities in the Penn Cove area were identified as being partly or mostly sk^wdabš, suggesting ongoing patterns of spatial segregation into the contact period” (Synder n.d.: 101).

The presence of this partially distinct population complicates the picture of historical settlement in the study area, while also perhaps providing partial explanation of the unusual population density of the Penn Cove area as reported at contact (Snyder n.d.: 102).

Despite their lowly status, sk^wdabš could marry into chiefly Skagit families and their descendents could achieve a degree of social standing not available to pure sk^wdabš. This may explain, in part, the admixture of this apparently distinct population into Skagit communities:

“Because of intermarriage the high-calls and low people would gather together in one village....The old-timer big-guns married the slákləbud (matemakers)...The big chiefs married the skwdabš (lower class...) people, and [it was] through intermarriage that the skwdabš are spread out...” “The sk^wdabš could move up in the social hierarchy through a good marriage; some reported that the Chief Goliah was born of a sk^wdabš mother, for example. [Skagit consultants suggested that] “The Skagit married into the sk^wdabš for many different reasons”” (Snyder n.d.: 38, 102).

The spatial segregation of the sk^wdabš was not simply eroding over time, however, and may have been reinforced and even intensified by a number of factors. Importantly, there are episodes mentioned in Skagit oral tradition of sk^wdabš effectively rebelling against Skagit dominance and being ostracized from certain Skagit communities. In some cases, new sk^wdabš settlements appear to have originated from this process, including settlements in the Penn Cove area; both Roberts and Snyder recorded oral traditions regarding a “dispute between villagers on Whidbey Island which led some of the lower class members to establish a new settlement” in this area (Roberts 1975: 108; see also Snyder n.d.:29-31). One of Snyder’s consultants provided a more detailed

description of one such episode, centering on Oak Harbor, a short distance northeast of the Reserve:

“At one time the village on the spit at Oak Harbor was divided into an upper-class section and a lower-class section. But the lowest class finally became tired of having the upper-class lord it over them and they revolted. However, the upper-class group was superior either in numbers or in having warriors or both and it wiped out the lower-class group except for one strong man named *dux^wpi’tce*, who escaped. Ironically, later when the big war with the northern tribes came this man rescued one of the chiefs of the upper-class group” (MS in Snyder n.d.: 107).

These new villages established their own “chiefs” who represented the communities in dealings with other villages, and these leaders appear to have been slowly and grudgingly accepted in to the larger circle of leaders in the Penn Cove region.³⁰

Snyder’s consultants report that the social distinction of *sk^wdabš* had broken down well before her 1950s ethnographic research, so that apparently their descendents simply identified by that time as Skagit or as members of other area tribes.

Perhaps due to the presence of *sk^wdabš*, the high status of the Penn Cove chiefly families, the relatively high population density of the Penn Cove area, and perhaps other factors, this small area seems to have been somewhat unique in its settlement structure compared to other Northwest Coast settlements. Instead of being occupied by villages that each contained the full spectrum of social classes, the Penn Cove area was instead occupied by a number of settlements that were each relatively uniform in their status.³¹ Thus, social variegation existed between closely-situated villages rather than within single villages:

“In aboriginal Skagit society members of a village sometimes shared approximately the same class standing. Stereotypes of individuals of high and low class standing were sometimes generalized to entire villages. If a particular village had a number of high-ranking, wealthy leaders, people outside the village tended to show respect to the rest of their families according to the status of these leaders. On the other hand, if a number of people exhibited immoral behavior, it might ruin the reputations of the rest of their village-mates” (Roberts 1975: 81).

This point will be discussed in more detail in the section of this document addressing specific tribal communities in Penn Cove, “Identifying 19th Century Settlements.”

Despite their differences, each of these communities were bound together by a number of formal and informal social institutions. Among the most prominent of these was the potlatch, which has been so widely documented in the literature of Northwest Coast anthropology that it scarcely deserves further elaboration here (Snyder 1975). As Upchurch described, somewhat insensitively, for the residents of the Skagit Region,

“One of their curious and characteristic institutions was the potlatch. This was the system of self-aggrandizement by giving. Sometimes a wealthy person, a chief, or sometimes a company of individuals would give a potlatch at which great quantities of goods and after the advent of the white man, large sums of money would be distributed to the invited guests. This great social event, often inter-tribal in character, was accompanied by bountiful feasts and elaborate ceremonials, some of which were of deep religious or spiritual significance. The distribution of property by those aspiring to places of highest honor in the tribe and to recognition of greatness for his tribe was practiced extensively within the memory of some now living and persists to the present day in modified and attenuated form” (Upchurch 1936a: 286).

Oral histories suggest that potlatches of this kind were commonly hosted in the villages of the study area, such as the village of “Xobaks” on Penn Cove (Collins 1949: 313).³²



“Potlatch house with people gathered outside” – probably Penn Cove, ca. 1904
O.S. Van Olinda, photographer. University of Washington Libraries, Special Collections Division –
Negative No. VAN400

General Patterns of Settlement and Subsistence

While the preceding pages provide a number of important anthropological details regarding the past residents of what is to Ebey's Landing NHR, in truth, detailed ethnographic and ethnohistorical information relating specifically to the Lower Skagit Indians is relatively scarce. In part, this reflects the fact that the Skagit had been dispersed to a number of reservation communities prior to the advent of professional ethnographic assessments of the Puget Sound area (Bennett 1972). For this reason, this report includes a number of references from more general treatments of Puget Sound Indians, as well as ethnographic studies pertaining to those communities that the Skagit joined in the 19th century, such as the Swinomish and Tulalip Reservation communities. This is done advisedly, recognizing that there were many cultural similarities between the residents of the study area and those tribes that were studied in greater detail in the northern Puget Sound region. In fact, for purposes of ethnographic analysis, Suttles (1974) often grouped together all of the region's Coast Salish, Lushootseed speakers into a single ethnographic treatment, noting that

"I am considering them as a single unit for the following reasons: They shared a common language; and they shared a common pattern in the relation to their habitat, a greater adaptation to life on salt-water channels than that of their Salish neighbors, with an emphasis upon reef-netting for sockeye salmon in the channels" (Suttles 1974: 6). ³³

The indigenous peoples in this region shared a pattern of semi-sedentary life, living in large, multifamily villages in the winter, and then dispersing to a constellation of smaller settlements situated near resource harvesting sites from spring through fall. Both types of settlements were represented in the study area. As Suttles summarizes the winter village:

"The Coast Salish village was the winter residence and home base of several families who went out from spring through fall to fish, hunt, and gather food for the winter. The families of a village were generally related to one another and shared much of the resources of a common territory. But they did not regard themselves as social equals and each tried to better its status by establishing and maintaining ties of marriage with "good" families in other villages. These ties promoted invitations to share in the resources of other villages, ceremonial exchanges of food for durable goods, and social recognition" (Suttles 1981: 8).

The village consisted of one or more households each occupying its own plank house (Suttles 1960: 196; Collins 1950: 333). The houses in these winter villages were often sprawling, multi-chambered structures, made of split planks of western redcedar (*Thuja plicata*). Speaking specifically of the Skagit houses seen in and around Penn Cove, early travelers noted seeing vast, somewhat linear “shed” roofed structures (with roofs sloping in a single direction from the front of the building). As Floyd-Jones noted,

“Sometimes they are built like our common sheds; where this is the case they are of immense length, and sufficient to shelter the whole tribe under a single roof. The Skagit tribe have the largest winter quarters that I have seen” (Floyd-Jones 1853).

The large cedar planks that constituted these houses were prized property, and required tremendous time and skill to construct from the mature cedar trees in the area. When the families left their winter structures in the spring to visit resource harvest sites throughout their traditional territories, they often took the large planks from the walls and roofs of these winter structures, to be used as roofs and walls on the frames of lesser structures at their resource settlements and encampments:

“They rarely move about in summer without taking their lodge with them. The duty of taking them down, of removing and reconstructing them devolves almost entirely upon the women” (Floyd-Jones 1853).

Communities moved regularly from resource station to resource station over the course of the year, timing their movements to the seasonal availability of plant and animal resources.³⁴ As Suttles summarized, “It is clear that the Coast Salish of this region had permanent winter villages from which they moved seasonally, mainly by canoe, to fishing, hunting, and gathering sites” (Suttles 1989: 251). Rights of access to these various resource sites were closely guarded, even as they were shared with families with ties to resident populations. “The Skagit had a custom requiring prior permission to enter and hunt in alien territory; otherwise it was ‘tcaticidsl, “sneaking”’ (U.S. Select Committee on Indian Affairs 1988 : 137). As Haberlin and Gunther noted of northern Puget Sound tribes generally:

“Fishing, hunting and berry picking grounds were tribal property. One tribe could ask permission to use the territory of another, a favor which was rarely refused. If, however, a tribe used the territory of another tribe without asking permission, the act was regarded as an invasion and war might follow” (Haberlin and Gunther 1930: 12).

Access to these resource sites was shaped in no small part by the kinship linkages between village communities. As Bennett (1972: 7).noted, “patterned intermarriage among members of a group of villages formed a network of kinship which supplied the basis for access to various food localities.” Thus, for example, Collins (1974c: 51) notes that the Upper Skagit maintained access to clam beds in the Whidbey Island area, though they did not reside in the area. Resources and associated settlements or encampments were effectively controlled by proximate villages. Chiefs or comparable elites oversaw many of the decisions regarding the timing and quantities of harvest at these sites (Suttles 1990b, 1987a, 1951; Richardson 1982; Rozen 1978).³⁵ Cumulatively, the distribution of these outlying settlements and associated use areas outlined the territory (and occasionally the overlapping territories) of particular villages, multi-village clusters, or tribes (Mitchell 1979).

Among the various resource encampments visited by Penn Cove residents, perhaps none were as important as the fishing communities along the lower Skagit River. The Penn Cove villages clearly retained salmon fishing privileges on Skagit River. While aboriginal salmon trolling is reported for the open waters west of Whidbey Island, it appears likely that the bulk of the salmon harvest was obtained from seasonal journeys to the Skagit River. “The Skagit Tribe of Whidbey Island...had a fishing village situated about one mile above the North Fork of the Skagit River, their only holding in Skagit County” (Sampson n.d.: 1). As suggested earlier, kinship ties between the Penn Cove communities and those along the lower Skagit ensured unfettered access to this critical fishing area:

“The Skagit River...In going up the north fork there was a village at the deepest bend of the fork, the southernmost flow of the north fork of the river. It was a permanent village and the people of the river. It was a permanent village and the people of this village welcomed the Whidbey Island Skagit. They were Whidbey Island Skagit themselves. The people from permanent villages on Whidbey Island would come over here and use these permanent villages habitually year after year for doing their fishing on the river” (Snyder 1955a: 38).

These fishing sites were associated with other, secondary resource gathering areas that were visited concurrently with the salmon harvest. A few of these fishing sites along the lower Skagit were still being used by Swinomish tribal members in the mid-20th century:

“the Whidby Island people had to go up the river in order to get salmon to smoke. They were allowed to stay here at the river fishing villages during fishing. At bebə’lc they cultivated and dried tall eight-foot nettles for gill

nets. The same tribe there used to have fish-traps in the river, which they still run into nowadays” (J.B. in Snyder n.d.: 76).³⁶

Salmon also was obtained through barter with upriver tribes who had direct and regular access to salmon on the upper reaches of Skagit River. For example, John Fornsby (in Collins 1949: 297) reported that “The Upper Skagit took dried salmon down to Squiqui [who resided on the north side of Penn Cove] and he paid them blankets.” Though some ethnographic sources that seek to define tribal territories sometimes place the lower Skagit River outside of the Whidbey Island Skagit territories, it is clear that these places were integral to the overall patterns of tribal resource use.³⁷ No doubt, the large populations seen at Penn Cove during the contact period may not have been possible without access to these Skagit River fishing stations.

Many resource procurement sites were situated on Whidbey Island as well, most oriented toward the unique resources of the island coastline.³⁸ Certainly, central Whidbey Island – with its protected eastern bays and exposed western shoreline – provided a diversity of plant and animal resources within a relatively small area. A number of small settlements and encampments were associated with some of the most important of these resources. These encampments were used by the Penn Cove villages, but other communities – principally those of the Skagit Region – who possessed rights of access through kinship ties and other avenues. As Snyder’s consultants suggested, “People that occupied these temporary villages were always from specific Skagit villages, from specific Skagit permanent villages” (Snyder 1955: 41).

While salmon formed the staple animal food, shellfish gathering and sea-mammal hunting provided important supplementary sources of sustenance for the Skagit (Snyder 1964: 64; Bennett 1972: 4). As will be discussed in later sections of this document, Penn Cove was among the more important shellfish gathering areas in this region.³⁹ Small settlements were found along the shoreline of Whidbey Island, situated for convenient access to the most productive clam beds (Onat 1993; Snyder n.d.). Some of the Whidbey Island clam beds appear to have been tended in order to enhance their productivity: “Horse clam beds were tended by removing large rocks and placing them at the edges of the site” (Roberts 1975: 88). Flatfish were also essential to the Penn Cove villages, and harvested extensively in the shallows of this cove, by fishermen based in both the larger settlements and smaller resource encampments of the Cove (Snyder 1955a, 1955b, n.d.). A number of the small settlements oriented toward clam and flatfish harvesting were also used as base camps for men hunting deer on the beaches and the adjacent prairies.⁴⁰



Women digging clams on one of Puget Sound's many small bays.
 Photographed by Edward Curtis, from Curtis 1913.

Large numbers of shellfish, fish, and deer meat were dried in these encampments for later use: "On Whidbey Island it was said that salmon and clams were sun-dried" (U.S. Select Committee on Indian Affairs 1988: 64). Skagit hunting was so productive, apparently, that dried meat became a trade good for which the tribe was widely known. As Haeberlin and Gunther (1930) note,

"There was much trading in food as well as in other things between the Snohomish and the Snoqualmie. The Skagit carried this even further. They also were good hunters, and after drying large quantities of meat they would load it on canoes and travel down the sound, trading their stores of meat for other supplies" (Haeberlin and Gunther 1930: 20)

The abundance of plant foods in the study area captured the attention of even the earliest European explorers. In 1792, Archibald Menzies reported of Whidbey Islanders that,

“A large Supply of Strawberries and Wild Onions which were found growing Spontaneously close to the Tents. . . . The Continent abounds with the Remains of Indian habitations but whether temporary or fixed we could not find out” (Menzies 1923: 45).

Most of the botanical abundance that explorers noted in this area was found in the prairies. There is abundant evidence to suggest that the prairies of central Whidbey Island were essentially “anthropogenic” - the product of repeated and intentional human activity – even though their presence and maintenance was fostered by the unique microclimate of the Olympic Peninsula rainshadow (Weiser 2006, White 1980; Turner and Bell 1971). The role of resident tribes in modifying the vegetation communities of Whidbey Island was appreciated by a small number of early chroniclers:

“Their (prairies) most striking feature is the abruptness of the forests which surround them, giving them the appearance of lands which have been cleared and cultivated for hundreds of years....The Indians, in order to preserve their open grounds for game, and for the production of their important root, the camas, soon found the advantage of burning” (Cooper 1860a: 23).

These prairie environments were highly prized by the indigenous inhabitants of Puget Sound, and served as a center of traditional gathering activities.⁴¹ These modified environments, and their margins where they intersected the island forests, provided access to most of the staple plant foods utilized by the Skagit and other area tribes. As Gunther noted of the S’Klallam,

“The roots and bulbs as of fern, camas, tiger lily, and Indian carrots are dug on prairies or openings in the forest. Indian rhubarb and horsetail sprouts are obtained in moist places. Berry bushes are generally found on the edge of the forest and fairly near the water” (Gunther 1927: 196).

Berries were gathered in large quantities along the forest and prairie margins:

“On Whidbey Island...blackberries in particular, and probably other berries also, were dried. On Whidbey Island it was said that the blackberries were sun-dried loose and then packed away for winter use” (U.S. Select Committee on Indian Affairs 1988: 64).

Some sources also mention tribal members gathering “flax” in the prairies of what is today the Reserve– an apparent reference to nettle, which was used like flax in making string and cordage for such purposes as fishing nets (N. Turner pers. comm. 2009).⁴² A number of sources mention the use of “grasses” from the shorelines for basketry in this general area (Harrington 1981: 22).

However, among these plants that were gathered in the study area, perhaps none was as important as the bulbs of camas (*Camassia quamash* and *C. leichtlinii*). This plant was used intensively by all tribes of the northern Puget Sound, and maintained in a variety of meadows within the Olympic Peninsula rainshadow. A number of writers commented on the importance of camas in the subsistence practices of central Whidbey Island residents:

“The camas root is a favorite article of food with them. It is a small root resembling in size and shape a small onion. This, when boiled or roasted, is exceedingly nice and resembles in taste the boiled chestnut” (Floyd-Jones 1853).

Camas was of sufficient important that families maintained marked plots of camas in various Whidbey Island prairies, and used a variety of techniques, in addition to burning, to enhance their productivity.⁴³ As Roberts’ consultants recalled,

“Camas root plots were inherited by women through the female line...Mother and daughter visited them annually, dug the roots, reburied the stems, so that new roots could grow, and weeded them. They marked the four corners of the plot by posting sticks” (Roberts 1975: 88).

As was sometimes true of hunting, plant food harvests were often opportunistic and conducted coincidentally with other subsistence activities:

“The women of every village have their favorite places for each variety of food they gather. They never go very far from their own villages unless a whole group of families moves on a fishing, hunting or gathering expedition” (Gunther 1927: 196).

Some of the more productive gathering areas became important multi-tribal gathering areas. Productive camas grounds situated on islands near intertribal territorial margins especially appear to have functioned as multi-tribal use areas, and the western shore of Whidbey Island, in places such as Ebey’s Prairie, appears to have been an example of

this kind of site.⁴⁴ It is clear that the abundance of camas at Ebey's Landing was a draw for tribes from a number of locations throughout Puget Sound.⁴⁵ In May of 1855, Winfield Ebey reported from the Ebey farm that

"There is quite a number of Indians from about Seattle and Port Madison encamped along the beach near my brothers. They are on their regular visit to the Island to dig the 'kamas' which they collect in large quantities from the prairies which after a certain process make excellent food" (W. Ebey 1855-1857).

Visits for camas and other plant procurement appear to have been timed to coincide with prime harvesting seasons, in the spring and fall.⁴⁶ The archaeological record suggests that these practices were of considerable antiquity, with specialized prairie use, and apparently active fire management of vegetation, being apparent in the last 2,300 years or so (Weiser 2006).⁴⁷

At some point during the "proto-historic" period, potatoes were introduced to the region.⁴⁸ The people of Whidbey Island appear to have integrated these new plants more or less seamlessly into their preexisting repertoire of plant management practices. Prairie areas that had once been used only for camas and other native species became the site of combined crops of potatoes and camas. Speaking of the Whidbey Island residents, Floyd-Jones noted,

"The woods are filled with berries; these with a few potatoes constitute their chief subsistence...The potato is the only article of food that they cultivate. These are planted by the women of the tribe and are well cared for. Each family uses about one quarter of an acre of ground and this is prepared with the utmost pains" (Floyd-Jones 1853).

As with camas before, the cultivation of potatoes brought together tribes from different areas around Puget Sound. Places such as Ebey's Prairie appear to have been slowly transformed from camas prairies to combined potato and camas fields by the early- to mid-19th century. As will be discussed later in this document, potato patches were often the result of shared, multi-tribal labor – much like the camas fields that preceded them – and the potato grounds of Ebey's Landing appear to have been maintained by Skagit, S'Klallam, and possibly other tribal groups well into the mid-19th century.

EVENTS OF THE EARLY CONTACT PERIOD

The lands now within Ebey's Landing National Historical Reserve sat at a geographical crossroads, central to trade networks along the coast, and also visible to maritime travelers passing through the intersections between Puget Sound and the Strait of Juan de Fuca. As a result of this prominent position, the residents of the study area encountered European peoples, diseases, and goods, very early in the contact-period history of the region. By the time that ships arrived at Whidbey Island, both European goods and European diseases had already made their mark. As noted by Bennett,

“Although Spanish vessels had sailed into the Strait of Juan de Fuca prior to 1792, none had reached the main territory of the Lower Skagit. The first direct contact with Europeans was in the summer of 1792 when the Vancouver expedition sailed into Admiralty Inlet and then up Saratoga Passage between Whidbey and Camano Islands. Lt. Whidbey, after whom the island was named, was apparently the first white person seen by the Lower Skagit...Indirect contact had occurred prior to this date, as Lt. Whidbey remarked that one headman had two daggers, one Spanish and one English” (Bennett 1972: 10; see also Meany 1957).

Initial epidemic diseases, such as smallpox, had arrived in most communities prior to direct European contact, being passed from community to community through intertribal social and trade networks (Boyd 1999; Harris 1994). As noted previously, Vancouver and his crew witnessed a large number of burials and “abandoned” villages in Penn Cove; a number of authors have attributed these features to epidemics that had already swept through the Penn Cove population prior to Vancouver's arrival (Eells 1985: 332; Gibbs 1977; Roberts 1975: 133).⁴⁹ The effects of the epidemics on the residents of Whidbey Island, as well as the rest of the northern Puget Sound region, were devastating. As Suttles noted,

“Mooney calculates that Northwestern North America experienced its first smallpox epidemic about 1782, nearly a decade before the Spanish sailed into the strait, and that losses everywhere were heavy. Native traditions corroborate the pre-contact date and indicate that several villages were completely wiped out, while all suffered losses. Later epidemics came in 1852 and 1862, but probably with less severity” (Suttles 1954: 42; cf. Boyd 1999; Harris 1994).

Based on more recent and thorough documentation than was available to Mooney, Boyd (1999, 1990) has estimated that major smallpox epidemics swept through the

Puget Sound area in 1775 and 1801, with subsequent epidemics of smallpox or measles, malaria, and other unspecified diseases in the 1820s-1830s and an alarming variety of diseases arriving after the period of widespread Euro-American resettlement in the region. The demographic impacts of these repeated epidemics on the people of the northern Puget Sound were tremendous, and arguably set the stage for rapid Euro-American resettlement of the region. As Boyd notes, "total precontact population for the Georgia-Puget [Sound] Epidemic Area is estimated at 29,599. By 1820, this precontact estimate had been halved, and after a century it had decreased by over two-thirds" (Boyd 1990: 146). The horror and the diverse impacts of these epidemics impacts on the residents of what is today Ebey's Landing National Historical Reserve may never be known. There are hints to be found in the ethnographic record, such as village abandonment and the construction of hasty mass burial sites.

To a degree, the arrival of Vancouver heralded the beginning of the end of the Skagit, drawing Puget Sound and its resources to the attention of European and American interests that would very soon reshape the region. Yet these initial exchanges were largely congenial.⁵⁰ From the beginnings of Skagit interactions with these new visitors, trade served as a mutually beneficial mode of interaction. The residents of Whidbey Island presented Lieutenant Whidbey with woven mats and other trade goods, while receiving a number of items of European manufacture in exchange (Bryan 1963: 15). Similar exchanges would characterize the intermittent contacts with ship-borne traders in the 35 year period from 1792 through 1827. Woodworking tools, weapons, cloth, buttons, and a wide range of other introduced goods were enthusiastically obtained and utilized in ways that revolutionized certain aspects of daily life, while still being largely integrated into a pre-existing native cultural repertoire. In exchange for these items, certain well-positioned village communities mobilized to obtain furs, including beaver and sea otter. Particular villages and village leaders, aided by the geographical position of their territories relative to both fur trading ship routes and fur-bearing species, found themselves newly rich, and with disproportionate access to European peoples and goods. While this period is poorly documented for the study area, it appears that the Penn Cove communities were among those that experienced a surge in wealth and status during this period of sometimes subtle but pervasive change (Bennett 1972).

While the maritime fur trade of the very late 18th and early 19th centuries brought a variety of visitors, diseases, and trade goods to the residents of Whidbey Island, it was the land-based fur trade that brought these peoples into regular and direct cultural exchanges with non-native peoples.⁵¹ Beginning in 1827, with the establishment of Fort Langley on the Fraser River estuary (in what is today the Vancouver metropolitan area of British Columbia) the Indians in northern Puget Sound entered into more regular, if still somewhat intermittent, contact with Euro-Americans (Bennett 1972). Fort Langley effectively established regular trade relationships with a region centering on the lower Fraser, with Whidbey Island on its southern margins (Nelson 1927: 14).⁵² The continuous flow of trade goods, both directly, and through exchanges with those tribes

living more proximate to the fort, had revolutionary impacts on tribal technologies, trade relationships, and the overall balance of power between village communities. John Fornsby described the arrival of the first trade goods obtained from the HBC forts through “Victoria” Indians (probably Songhees) visiting Skagit territory:

“They made a raft on two canoes. That lady, the wife of the Victoria chief, got on the raft and sat on the planks between the canoes. They piled up blankets, caps, shirts, everything-around her so that you could just see her head sticking out. They shoved the canoe out about twenty feet from shore. They hollered, “Come on, everybody, get a pole.” Her husband took things from there and threw them. They call xubálik^u. He threw the blankets for his wife.

“They threw caps fist. That was the first cap that came in. Indians had never seen caps before. My father got one. The people got sticks to catch things. They threw them up high so that the people could get them with their sticks. One man cut shirts up and gave each person a piece. (They didn’t cut the caps.) The Indians here had never seen shirts before. They threw blankets. If four fellows caught the same blanket on their sticks, they tore the blanket into four pieces. Finally they got guns and threw them up, too. They threw a flintlock gun. Someone knocked the gun, and it fell in the water. My father went in the water, felt for the gun, and dragged it out. It was the first gun my father got. It had a flintlock stone in it. My father was lucky.

“The Victoria chief threw those things away because he was married to the Swinomish people. He helped them as the Swinomish helped the Victorias when they went down there.

“The people stayed there two or three days and then went back home. Blankets were pretty scarce. Only the Victorias brought a whole lot of blankets. The Skagit got their first guns and first blankets at that time. These were little blankets with marks on the end.

“The Swinomish went back to Victoria and ex^u [threw gifts away] there. They paid them back” (Collins 1949: 309).⁵³

By 1833, the Hudson’s Bay Company had established Fort Nisqually on the southern Sound, a fort that was linked in turn by overland trails to Fort Vancouver on the lower Columbia River. The Puget Sound fur trade blossomed, and Fort Nisqually quickly became a bustling center of interethnic trade. The people of the Skagit region found themselves not only in regular contact with non-Indian traders for the first time, but effectively tied into a new network of frontier commercial trade that spanned much of the maritime Northwest. Whidbey Island sat at roughly the contact point between Fort Nisqually’s area of operations and the bailiwick of Fort Langley: “with the establishment of Fort Nisqually another trading area was added to the Hudson’s Bay

Company's list: from the Chehalis River to Whidbey Island" (Bennett 1972: 10). All evidence suggests that the Whidbey Island peoples did not suffer due to this peripheral position, and their standing in the fur trade may have even been strengthened by it.

While the study area sat at the contact point between the Langley and Nisqually trading areas, available records suggest that the people of Penn Cove were especially drawn to Fort Nisqually. Skagit chiefs such as Snatelum visited the Fort often, trading beaver skins for muskets, tools, and other goods (Tolmie 1963). The Penn Cove community appears to have been well-known to the HBC traders, and Fort Nisqually traders made occasional sojourns to Whidbey Island.⁵⁴ Relationships between the traders and the Skagit in the Penn Cove area appear to have been amiable:

"Historical evidence indicates that the Skagit Region villagers welcomed the transient white visitors and treated them as guests, exhibiting great hospitality. Village headmen conducted tours for the explorers. They formed liaisons with the traders...Frequently Skagit village headmen made journeys of a day or two to meet the strangers, to see and talk to them" (Roberts 1975: 129).

During the course of HBC visits to Penn Cove and vicinity, the HBC traders came to appreciate the unique prairies of central Whidbey Island and to envision its agricultural potentials. Under orders from John McLoughlin, Fort Nisqually Chief Trader Francis Heron attempted to locate a site for a large HBC grain farm in August of 1833. This grain was to supplement the diet of Fort employees and possibly to use as a trade item. On Whidbey Island, Heron reported locating an "extensive and fertile plain" of "excellent soil" for this purpose, apparently near Ebey's Landing. In addition, a small fur trading post that was to be situated intermediately between Fort Langley and Fort Nisqually: "The length of time required to travel from Fort Nisqually to Fort Langley or Fort Victoria prompted the Hudson's Bay Company to plan a fort for Whidbey Island" (Bennett 1972: 12). The site was surveyed and found to meet all the HBC criteria for the trading post and farm (Nelson 1927: 14; Rich 1959: 744).

However, for reasons that remain unclear (but appear to have involved a series of misdirected orders) McLoughlin did not follow up on Heron's information. HBC staff apparently made continued efforts to initiate agricultural operations at this location but these plans were soon abandoned (Tolmie 1963: 210; 226-29; Rich 1941: 138-39; Bagley 1915: 195). The Lower Skagit remained at the periphery of the trading post territories and did not experience both the positive and negative consequences of a trading post in their midst. Farms were instead restricted to the vicinity of Fort Nisqually at that time, while a relatively small subsistence agricultural operation continued at Fort Langley. The Puget Sound Agricultural Company was formed five years later, in 1838, to formally organize and expand the HBC agricultural effort, in addition to promoting

British settlement of the Oregon Country (Bagley 1915). This Company established a number of small farms in the region, including farms at Nisqually and on the San Juan Islands – drawing attentions to the agricultural potentials of the region but not developing a major agricultural operation within Lower Skagit territory. In this process, the HBC initiated a process of agricultural reoccupation that would eventually transform the Puget Sound landscape and create unprecedented pressures to remove the Sound’s indigenous peoples from their lands.

19th Century Skagit Leaders

A number of authors note that the combined effects of demographic contraction and the arrival of trade wealth – distributed unevenly between tribes – had a number of impacts on the social organization of tribes in the region that predated extensive Euro-American settlement. The ability to muster and amass wealth through unconventional economic avenues increased social mobility for certain segments of the tribal population, and may have augmented or otherwise altered certain status distinctions within and between tribal communities. Slavery and warfare appear to have intensified with new weapons and new trade opportunities. As epidemics and warfare eliminated certain villages, remnant populations often relocated and became part of novel multi-village, and sometimes multi-tribal, village communities in the Skagit tribal area. Finally, traditional patterns of leadership seem to have changed, as leaders were forced to address new challenges, to represent tribal interests to non-Indian traders, and to organize multi-village efforts to trade, participate in ceremonies, and repel raids and warfare brought by neighboring groups (Donald 1997; Roberts 1975; Bennett 1972; Collins 1950, 1949).

Of these changes, the transformation of leadership styles is perhaps most apparent in the written record regarding Whidbey Island’s early inhabitants. As Roberts noted,

“During the early contact period a new generation of Indian leaders arose, earning their positions in three primary roles: as warriors, as traders, and as religious leaders. Warrior leaders occupied key positions because of the onslaught of Northern raids and the prevailing state of martial law. These men acquired great influence. They began to extend their authority beyond the occasional raid” (Roberts 1975: 161).

The most prominent Skagit chiefs of the period dwelled in Penn Cove. Among these, perhaps none was as prominent as “Chief Snatelum,” who was also called Snatlum, Snatlem, Snetlam, Snaetlum, Sneestum, Sna-ke-lum, Snakelum, S’Neat-lum, Neidlum or Neetlum. “Old Chief Snatlum” – sometimes called “Charlie Snatelum” or just

“Charley” in early settlers’ accounts – is depicted as being a man of considerable wealth and status in most accounts. He is also consistently depicted as a resident of Penn Cove, primarily at the place now called Snakelum Point, though with family ties in other Penn Cove villages.⁵⁵ Snatelum was especially documented as a prominent trader, and the Fort Nisqually journals make frequent reference to Snaetelum visiting to trade (Bagley 1915). Many accounts of Skagit history mention the prominence of Snatelum in the trading networks of the time. Roberts (1975) for example, notes that,

“When trading contacts were still restricted by long travel times, saltwater village headmen served as middlemen between their people and the traders. The merchants, not wanting to deal with scores of small dealers, encouraged headmen to collect furs from village-mates, bring them in, and take back blankets, shirts, cloth, and traps for redistribution. Some of these native businessmen achieved considerable wealth. Snatelum, of Whidbey Island, was one of the first in his area to make such arrangements with the Whites” (Roberts 1975: 139).

This leader is mentioned as a prominent example in a number of ethnographic accounts, both published and unpublished, regarding Puget Sound tribes:

“Several Lower Skagit men were well-known fur traders at Fort Nisqually in the last century and served as middle-men for the collection of furs and the distribution of goods ... The first change in the economy with the coming of White men was the hunting of beaver for their skins, which were traded to Indian middlemen such as Snatlem. These middlemen in turn took them to the trading posts, Langley, Victoria, and to Nisqually when it replaced Langley” (Collins 1974c: 9, 38).

“During the contact period non-coercive leadership was transformed after white contact as people who could serve as ethnic intermediaries became exceptionally useful and powerful. Often these people were... economic middle-men (Snatlem, Skagit, who also was a religious and war leader)... These leaders were also successful in consolidation of family groups under their centralized authority and in speaking for the group” (Boxberger and Miller 1989: 33).

As a prominent middleman, “Old Chief Snatelum” was said to have been instrumental in arranging for the earliest missionaries to visit Penn Cove and instruct local communities in Catholic theology. During times of conflict, buoyed by the wealth and prestige he had accumulated through the fur trade, he played a central role as a war leader, consolidating the men of multiple villages from group action. This he did

during raids from the “Northern Indians,” who will be discussed in a subsequent section of this report. He also apparently helped organize reprisals against early Euro-American depredations: “Snatlem, a Lower Skagit leader, assumed some leadership also in the early part of the last century in organizing the Indians to combat the Whites” (Collins 1974c: 9). He is sometimes referred to as a “chief” and other times as an “Indian warrior” in the archival accounts of the 1850s.⁵⁶ Yet, at the same time, Snatelum was credited with helping to keep the peace between white settlers and resident tribes during the Indian wars of the 1850s. He owned slaves taken in battle, who built canoes that augmented Snatelum’s material wealth.⁵⁷ There is some evidence to suggest that Snatelum effectively consolidated the Skagit by staking claim to the territory of multiple village communities of central and northern Whidbey Island (Roberts 1975). Tribal oral traditions regarding Snatelum suggest that he was a man who was of high birth and noble bearing: he was said to have conducted a number of good deeds, using his wealth to help keep families together, or to come to the aid of leaders of other tribal groups during times of conflict (Collins 1949: 304, 305). This created a number of reciprocal obligations among those that he had helped, helping to advance his wealth and status throughout the region.⁵⁸

Upon Snatelum’s death in the 1850s, he was honored in myriad ways. Gibbs (1877: 200) reported that

“The Puget Sound Indians...sometimes constructed effigies of their chiefs resembling the person as nearly as possible, dressed in his usual costume, and wearing the articles of which he was fond. One of these representing the Skagit chief Sneestum stood very conspicuously upon a high bank on the eastern side of Whidbey island” (Gibbs 1877: 200; see also Eels 1985: 332).

This was apparently a memorial carving. Yet, while the prominence of leaders such as Snatelum helped to elevate the status of his entire village and the village clusters of which it was a part, the status was not apparently enduring. Gibbs noted of the Skagit in the mid-19th century,

“They have lately diminished in numbers and lost much of their influence since the death, a year or two since, of their chief S’Neat-lum, or, as he was commonly called, Sna-ke-lum” (Gibbs 1877: 180).

The Snatelum name was passed on to the chiefs descendents, who continued to maintain chiefly roles in the community. (Indeed, it is often difficult to identify in historical documents which “Snatelum” is being discussed; in time, the family adopted this chiefly title as a surname.) George Snatelum, born in roughly 1820 continued to play a chiefly role until the reservation period in roughly 1880. Charlie Snetlum,

apparently a grandson of the great chief, was born in the 1840s and lived until the 1930s. Many members of this family relocated to the Tulalip reservation along with many other Penn Cove Skagit families and have continued to be enrolled with Tulalip in the years since (Roberts 1975: 193). Clearly, Tulalip is among the modern tribes with interests in Ebey's Landing NHR (Wessen 1995).



Snakelum Charlie, a descendent of Chief Snatelum, with his wife and family in 1910. Snakelum continued to live in Coupeville long after most tribal residents had left the Penn Cove area.

Photographer unknown - University of Washington Libraries, Special Collections Division - Negative No. NA890

At around the time of the Point Elliott Treaty of 1855, another Penn Cove headman is mentioned in the records. This leader, commonly called "Goliah" but also identified by such spellings as "sGoláia" appears to have been a man of mixed parentage Goliah, "half 'big people' and half skwdabš, a lower class of Skagit" (Snyder n.d.: 38). Despite this, Goliah is identified as the head chief of the Skagit in the Point Elliott Treaty of 1855. As John Fornsby recalled,

"Goliah was the chief of the Lower Skagit. He was chief at the time people gathered up the Lower Skagit for the Treaty. He was the head chief for the White people. He lived right across from Coupeville on

Whidbey Island on that sand bar. He used to talk pretty good. That man could talk good to the people. I heard him talk when they gathered up lots of people when I was a kid" (Collins 1949: 296).

The identification of a man of mixed parentage as the supreme leader of the Skagit has resulted in a great deal of speculation regarding the ascendancy of this leader. Unlike Snatelum, there are few accounts of Goliah's exploits as a great trader or war leader in the 19th century. Some have suggested that his power was elevated by the very circumstances of his mixed ancestry: "the documentation of Goliah as a separate Skagit chief during the contact period may reflect the fact that he was representing the sk^wdabš rather than the larger Skagit community" (Snyder n.d.: 102). Other sources note that Goliah appears to have been assigned to the Skagit as a leader by Isaac Stevens and the Indian Superintendency of the day. Describing the Skagit, Powell noted,

"They altogether amount to 1,475, and have been assigned Goliah as head chief. This division have no horses, but are altogether canoe Indians. With the exception of the islands and the immediate shore of the main, their country is altogether unexplored" (Powell 1886: 180).

Some sources suggest that Goliah was chosen to be listed as head chief because he was, in fact, a "ceremonial spokesman" for Snaetlum, who was by far the highest ranking Lower Skagit headman at the treaty negotiations (Snyder 1964: 142). However, unlike Snaetlum, Goliah was able to communicate proficiently in English.⁵⁹ As explained by Roberts (1975),

"Goliah had learned to speak English to represent his employer to White settlers and government agencies. The Whites, not comprehending the role of an Indian spokesman, believed Goliah's speaking functions chiefly" (Roberts 1975: 193).

Agency records do suggest that Goliah maintained a very close and positive relationship with the Indian Agency in the two years after signing the Point Elliott Treaty. On February 25th 1857, Indian Agent Robert Fay reported "Head Chief Goliah died. Agency provided a coffin and cloaking for burial" (Fay 1856-61). Like Snatelum's descendents, Goliah's family continued to pass on the chiefly title as a surname. Much of this family relocated to the Swinomish Reservation: "After the Treaty, Goliah went to the Swinomish Reservation" (Roberts 1975: 193).

Upon Goliah's death, there was speculation that Snatelum would be designated by the Indian Superintendency as the official "chief" of the Skagit. As will be discussed in

later sections of this document, Indian Agents opposed this move, perhaps in part because Snatelum's elevated status would have given him disproportionate influence over tribal communities both inside and outside of Penn Cove. Instead, the Indian agents of the time advocated bestowing the title on a man named "Squi-qui" – a name sometimes listed as "Squiqui," "Squy Qui" or "Skwáilwai": "the next chief after sGoláia was Skwáilwai, and he was selected to look for a reservation [for the Skagit people]" (Snyder n.d.: 38). By April, Squi-qui was clearly functioning as the *de facto* "Skagit chief."⁶⁰

Squi-qui was clearly chosen for his position in part because he had served as a successful intermediary between Indian and non-Indian communities. Local Indian Agent, Robert Fay reported in 1857 that

"The Indians of the Skagit tribes have been in rather an excited state for some time, on account of the death of the head chief, Goliah, and Charlie, his brother together with the failure of government to confirm the treaty with them...Squy Quy, who is now head chief, and bearer of these returns and report, is a good friend to the whites, and I think, will exert a good influence with his people" (Fay 1857b).

Squiqui hailed from Čəkʷolá village on the north side of Penn Cove, opposite Coupeville; his family had strong ties to the small adjacent community of HoBqs, but also appears to have resided seasonally on the lower Skagit River estuary (Smith n.d.). While some of Squiqui's family resided at Swinomish by the end of the 19th century, at least a portion of Squiqui's family ultimately moved to Lummi by early in the 20th century (e.g., Buchanan 1914a).⁶¹

It is interesting to note that, of the three chiefs who are most discussed in the early historical literature, Snatelum, Goliah, and Squi-qui, only Snatelum appears to have been of largely upper-class status. "the skʷdabš were really middle-class, not really low, but in-between because they were a well-noted tribe with people like sGoláia [Chief Goliah] and skʷáikʷai [Squiqui]. But they couldn't raise themselves to high-class because they had a spot in their blood, like if they came from slaves" (AJ in Snyder n.d.: 103). By the 19th century, the families of these three leaders' families appear to have been interrelated, in part due to an enduring tradition of strategic marriages between elites.⁶² Also worthy of note, the descendents of these three important leaders located in no fewer than three reservation communities, at Swinomish, Tulalip, and Lummi, in the years after ratification of the Point Elliott Treaty.

“Northern Indians”

Of the many factors that shaped everyday life for the Skagit and other tribes of the Ebey’s Landing area, the “Northern Indians” were perhaps the most intimidating. Early chroniclers commonly applied the term “Northern Indians” indiscriminately in reference to all coastal tribes north of the United States-Canada border at the 49th parallel. This included all tribes of coastal British Columbia and “as far northward as the vicinity of Sitka” (Browne 1858: 10). Raids from these northern tribes and First Nations centered on the taking of slaves and prestige goods, but also sometimes involved the taking of heads and other trophies as testament to their prowess as fighters: “Men were killed and their heads were taken...As a rule, women were not beheaded” (Barnett 1955: 269).⁶³

Raids commonly involved flotillas of vast dug-out cedar canoes, filled with large numbers of men, armed with guns and other weapons recently acquired through the maritime fur trade.⁶⁴ Of these “northern Indians,” Special Indian Agent J. Ross Browne noted:

“Their canoes are sufficiently capacious to contain sixty to one-hundred warriors...In the middle is a large chest, in which they carry their muskets and ammunition. All their munitions of war are kept in the best condition. These war canoes, thus manned, are nearly matched for any equal number of whites that can be brought against them, so dexterous are these Indians in the use of their paddles and fire arms” (Browne 1858: 11).

Intertribal warfare and raiding is widely documented in the region prior to contact. In 1791, for example, a date that preceded most of the history of the Northwest fur trade, Eliza Francisco noted elk hide battle armor and combatants’ skeletons placed on poles along the beaches of the Strait of Juan de Fuca (Wagner, 1933: 179-90). Yet it is clear that the arrival of infectious diseases and firearms in the years after Francisco’s visit abruptly changed preexisting balances of power between tribes (e.g., Ferguson 1984). This facilitated what may have been an unprecedentedly intense period of intertribal warfare and raiding in the first half of the 19th century.

Raiding of the Coast Salish by “Kwakiutl” or Kwakwaka’wakw groups was especially widespread during the contact period. The Lekwildakw band, in particular, were emboldened by access to firearms acquired through the fur trade in their homeland on the north and west coast of Vancouver Island, and perhaps the comparatively severe effects of early epidemics on the Coast Salish of Puget Sound. The Lekwildakw pushed aggressively into Northern and Central Coast Salish territory, displacing Salish bands and establishing new villages along the south central coast of Vancouver Island. The

Lekwildakw continued to raid well into the territories of the Puget Sound Salish during the 1830s, 1840s, and 1850s (Mitchell 1984, 1989; Taylor and Duff 1956).⁶⁵ Oral traditions of these Lekwiltakw raiders appears to have persisted among Skagit descendents, who recall them as especially intimidating enemies: “the raiders that came down here were called yákl̓da...and they were the most fearsome of all” (Dan n.d.: 3-4).⁶⁶ Oral traditions of these raids still persist among many contemporary Lekwildakw elders as well (Adam Dick, pers. comm. 2000).

Yet, the Lekwildakw were not unique in their raiding traditions. Haeberlin and Gunther (1930) note that “Some of the northern Indians, the Haida, Tsimshian and Makah, for example, were very warlike and frequently raided the Sound (Haeberlin and Gunther 1930: 12). Haida raiding was perhaps most commonly mentioned in Skagit sources, while Tlingit raiding was also commonly reported among the Coast Salish of the Puget Sound generally (Kennedy and Bouchard 1983: 90). Stikine Tlingit (Shtax'héen Kwáan) and Kake Tlingit (Keex' Kwáan) are mentioned as participating Tlingit bands in some accounts (e.g. Fay 1856-61).⁶⁷ While these groups traveled remarkable distances to make these attacks, they were drawn to the area in part by the emergence of trading posts and would often combine raiding with fur trading expeditions. Roberts noted that

“Indian groups residing far north of the Skagit Region, as far as the queen Charlotte Islands and the Stikine River, often combined trading ventures to Fort Langley and Fort Victoria with slave raiding missions into Puget Sound” (Roberts 1975: 148; see also Collins 1946: 41-42).

These attacks reportedly had significant impacts on the activities of Puget Sound tribes:

“The frequency of the Northern raids increased so much during post contact times that villages on the exposed coastlines in the Skagit Region fell into a constant state of martial law. Houses which had been standing for generations were burned. Entire villages were wiped out, the inhabitants fleeing in fear to live in the woods, and never daring to return to the old sites again” (Roberts 1975: 148; see also Collins 1946: 43).

Gunther noted of the S'Klallam that women and children seldom ventured far from villages or group camps “especially because they fear marauding northern Indians who are always ready to seize them” (Gunther 1927: 196). Families torn apart by slave raiding sometimes attempted to regroup. Speaking of the Swinomish, Amelia Dan noted that

“The Swinomish rarely married with Vancouver Island people. In this locality they always feared the northerners. They, the northerners, would take captives and then, somehow, (perhaps by sale) discard them along the way; and then they would always be looked down upon. But the people here, if they found one of their people some place that had been taken as a captive, would ‘buy’ him or her from the people that got him from the original raiders, and bring him home and he would regain his former status. The fact that he had been taken as a slave would make no difference when he was returned” (Dan n.d.:13-14).⁶⁸

The effects of this raiding were immediately apparent to early visitors to the Ebey’s Landing area. Even as new fabrics became available for trade, for example, the American Indian communities of the Sound continued an active trade in elk hides, which were sewn in double thickness to produce a kind of arrow-proof body armor (Wagner, 1933). More noticeable, many of the villages of Puget Sound were stockaded for defense purposes in the mid-19th century (Gunther 1927: 184; Gibbs 1877: 192). Speaking of the general configuration of Coast Salish villages, Haeberlin and Gunther (1930) reported that

“Sometimes the village was protected by a palisade of cedar, about fourteen feet high. The Snoqualmie and Skykomish did not have these palisades but the Skagit and Snohomish at Hebolb [Everett Point village] did, while the Priest Point village stood unprotected. Since they had no warriors, being a lower class village, they fled to the forest when attacked” (Haeberlin and Gunther 1930: 15-19).

The villages of Whidbey Island were no exception to this general pattern. Writing in 1841, Charles Wilkes noted of the Skagit of the Penn Cove area,

“The Sachet tribe are obliged to provide for their defense against the more northern tribes, by whom they are frequently attacked, for the purpose of carrying them off as slaves. For protection against these attacks they have large enclosures, four hundred feet long, and capable of containing many families, which are constructed of pickets made of thick planks, about thirty feet high. The pickets are firmly fixed into the ground, the spaces between them being only sufficient to point a musket through. The appearance of one of these enclosures is formidable, and they may be termed impregnable to any Indian force; for, in the opinion of the officers, it would have required artillery to make a breach in them. The interior of the enclosure is divided into lodges, and has all the aspect of a fortress” (Wilkes 1856: 61).⁶⁹

Likewise, Paul Kane reported in May of 1847, as he traveled the coast of Whidbey Island near Penn Cove,

“On approaching the village of Toanichum, we perceived two stout bastions of logs, well calculated for defense in Indian warfare, and built with considerable skill. As our canoe neared the land, I observed them hurrying towards these bastions, and shortly afterwards we heard several shots” (Kane 1925: 227).

Some accounts even mention semi-subterranean houses, or houses with excavated trenches or other earthworks around their perimeters on Whidbey Island:

“The inhabitants of one village of Lower Skagit and another unidentified village on salt water were said to have lived in underground houses. Stories were told to account for this practice, which seemed strange to my informants. Both villages had been attacked by marauders. The residents had run into the woods to escape and remained living in the woods for a while as “wild people.” To avoid other raiding parties, they built an underground house which was invisible from above ground except when they had a fire in it. A White man who first came to Whidbey Island from the Lower Skagit found this house with no one in it. It had recently been abandoned. A member of another village who saw one of the members of the second underground village was supposed to become insane, his body twisting in a bizarre way” (Collins 1974c: 59-60).

As will be discussed in the pages that follow, earthworks – if not wholly subterranean houses – were to be found on Penn Cove, in what is today the Reserve.

Despite these formidable fortresses, the Skagit and other tribes of the area did not apparently feel immune to attack. There are references in archival accounts to the Skagit of the Penn Cove area attempting to anticipate attacks through a network of lookouts on promontories along the coast. Perhaps not surprisingly, the most important lookouts reported by the Penn Cove residents – with their commanding views up and down the Strait of Juan de Fuca and Puget Sound – were later used as fort sites by the United States military, at Fort Ebey and Fort Casey. There is some evidence to suggest that the Whidbey Island Skagit served as lookouts for a larger network of tribal communities, and would dispatch messengers to mainland communities when raiders were spotted from these locations.⁷⁰ When Northern Indian canoes were sighted

or even rumored, members of the community promptly evacuated toward the mainland, where they joined their kin in the villages of the Skagit River (Fay 1856-61).

In some cases, some of these northern raiders were taken alive by their Coast Salish victims; some were taken captive and became slaves themselves. The descendants of these slaves sometimes maintained their affiliation with Puget Sound tribes, received allotments, and ultimately became enrolled members of modern tribes. In some cases, these individuals have been able to claim enrollment with the Tlingit or Haida of southeastern Alaska despite generations of residence in Washington State. A woman named Dolores Palmer, for example, was able to maintain enrollment with the Central Council of Tlingit and Haida Indian Tribes of Alaska (overseen by Sealaska, the Alaska Native corporation of southeast Alaska) as a descendant of a Haida boy from Kasaan, Alaska, who was part of a party that stayed in the Victoria area while raiding the Lummi, and was taken captive by the Lummi (Alaska Native Times 1979).

Some have argued that raiding, especially raiding by the Lekwiltakw, was of sufficient magnitude that it compounded the demographic effects of epidemics in the late 18th and early 19th centuries, and effectively reduced the overall tribal population at around the time of European contact:

“contributing to a decline in population was the increase in raids from northern Indians, especially the southernmost Kwakiutl group, known locally as Yukulta. The Yukulta evidently received firearms a few years earlier than the Salish; they already had muskets in 1792. This advantage, perhaps added to a culture that already valued aggression, enabled the Yukulta to expand from their original homes on Johnstone Strait down Discovery Passage to Campbell River and Cape Mudge, where they replaced the Salish-speaking Comox. From here they raided the Coast Salish, going as far south as Puget Sound, and even ascending the Fraser River a short way. They killed, looted, and carried off women and children as slaves” (Suttles 1954: 42; see also Boyd 1999).

“The Skagit were raided rather frequently I believe by the Yuksta...which is the southernmost Quiattle [Kwakiutl] group. It’s difficult to estimate just how great losses were, there had been villages that have been nearly wiped out by them. But I wouldn’t say that its losses were not as great as losses were by disease” (Snyder 1955a: 118).

The Skagit were by no means defenseless against these attacks. There are accounts of the Skagit organizing retaliatory attacks against the northern raiders, such as the Lekwiltakw, and at least some of these reprisals were effective (e.g. Kennedy and Bouchard 1983: 89-90).⁷¹ Turning the tables on the raiders, the Puget Sound tribes

sometimes took the heads of the raiders and placed them on stakes in front of their stockades to discourage further raiding (Gunther 1927). Early explorers of the Strait of Juan de Fuca and northern Puget Sound, such as Quimper, noted of the stockade villages that “the beaches are strewn with the harpooned heads of their enemies” (Suttles 1989: 256; see also Wagner, 1933: 131).

However, in order for the Skagit to mobilize the number of men required for such an attack, the leaders of the early 19th century had to coordinate efforts between multiple villages. Indeed, some authors have attributed the formation of the chieftainship system seen at contact, as well as the emergent “tribal” identity of certain groups of villages to the pressures caused by attacks by these Northern Indians:

“As the menace from the north grew, warrior powers became highly esteemed. Village headmen Pateus, Snatelum, and Goliah distinguished themselves in battle. Many Skagit Region groups joined together in common defense” (Roberts 1975: 149).

John Fornsby, a Skagit man born in 1855, reported that, even in his youth, both t’sababc people and yuk’wta (Kwakiutl) Indians came to kill the Lower Skagit in the Penn Cove area. He recalled a story of how Chief Snatlum had played a critical role in organizing the Skagit and repelling the Lekwildakw raids in what is today Ebey’s Landing NHR:

“The Lower Skagit fought twice--with t’sabábe and with yuk’wta. t’sabábe people came to kill the Lower Skagit. They came in shovel-nose canoes, some of them. An old man went out early in the morning to swim three or four miles away from Snatlem Point. Then he came back; he came home. It was in the night. He saw two men walking along. This old man got scared. He ran up the hill on the side of the beach. One of the fellows chased him up and tried to catch him. They said, “winum, winum.” It was a different language. He climbed up the hill and went home. He told the folks, “I saw two fellows walk along the beach. They talked different: winum, winum. Shove the canoe out. Shove the canoe out. We must move. They are coming down the bay. We will get out of the way. We are going to get killed.” All of the people at Snatlem Point found out about it; some of them didn’t believe it. Towards morning they saw a whole lot of canoes coming around the point toward Snatlem Point. Old Snatlem said, “We’ll fight right in the canoes.” “All right.” They shoved the canoes out. They had no guns, just arrows and bows. “We’ll pull just straight across to the other side, right close to Coupeville there.” So they kept coming, coming. Old Snatlem hollered, called to them, “If you want to fight, you come along, come along.”

“Shovel-nose canoes can’t stand much sea. Let’s call for wind. Call for wind, Snatlem. You got power for it.” Old Snatlem stood up and sang right in the canoe. The people followed the Skagit across, poling across. They went across to Oak Harbor there. “You got a power to make it blow hard.” The west wind commenced to blow, blow hard. These fellows gave up. You see shovel-nosed canoes can’t travel in waves--waves come from the bow, come from the end.

“Nobody was killed that time. Everybody went out, hiding in the woods. The man swimming in the night saved the people. They lost one shovel-nose canoe. It was getting a hard wind--a west wind. It busted the canoes, and they walked home. They crossed at Muckilteo. Nobody was killed; everyone was all right. Only those people had a hard time to get back to the mainland.

“Old Snatlem was a powerful man. He made it blow hard”
(Collins 1949: 299).

John Forsnby then recounted a story of a separate attack on the Penn Cove residents by Lekwildakw and Haida – attacks that were also repelled by Skagit, organized by Chief Snaetlum:

“The other time, the yúk’wta [Kwakiutl] came to Whidbey Island. My mother’s mother had a good name from Whidey Island people--sedzastálo. I saw her when I was a kid. The Indians got killed by war. The Northern Indians used to come and kill some people for war. The yúk’wta came from way down north. Fort Rupert has two or three tribes that used to come and make war. They came with guns. The people on Whidbey Island didn’t have guns. They came in to that Snatlem Point. My grandma ran up into the woods, and they thought she was a man packing a baby. They shot her. Those people burned the first houses at Snatlem Point. The people from the north came in the morning and tried to kill the people. They burned the big houses over at Coupeville and killed a lot of people. Nothing was left. All the houses were gone. Some people ran away up to the woods and down to the bay. The people from the north took some young boys and made slaves out of them. The Haida (stakí) were against the people here, too...⁷²

“Old Snatlem killed about ten men that time. He was a powerful young man. He caught the people who were staying in one house. He was singing tubeádad [warrior power]. He killed about ten people. Old Snatlem packed the heads--ten of them--packed them out. It took him a long time to come out. They thought he had got killed, but he came out, carrying ten heads--men’s heads and women’s heads. Some of the yúk’wta were hiding in the woods. He killed all in the house, except those

who were hiding in the woods. He cut off ten heads and tied them together. He used to be mean, but he was a good man when he was not mean. The yúk'wta shot the people and killed quite a few Lower Skagit and Snohomish. Those folks down there had guns. The people from here had all arrows and bows. Those fellows he killed were right on the island here, when the yúk'wta killed some Lower Skagit" (Collins 1949: 301).

Emboldened by his military successes, Snaetlum helped to organize a series of unprecedented retaliatory raids into Lekwladakw territory:

"Then they notified all the peoples to go on a raiding party. They went up the Skagit. The lower Skagit and the Upper Skagit went on this raiding party. The Snohomish took two or three canoes; the Lower Skagit, three or four canoes. Some Swinomish went over, too. The Lummi went. My grandmother told me" (John Fornsby in Collins 1951: 300-01).⁷³

Certainly, these coordinated retaliatory attacks served to promote a shared sense of identity between the communities that fought alongside one-another, and strengthened alliances between tribes that endured well after the Northern Indians' raids had ceased.

The raiding of these Northern Indians continued well into the time of Euro-American occupation, and victims included white settlers, such as Ebey's Landing settler Isaac Ebey, among its victims. The new, Euro-American communities of Puget Sound petitioned for legislative and military support to help quell this persistent menace:

"Up to the time of the late war [the Indian wars of 1855-56], they had been in the habit of visiting the Sound during the summer months, and committing petty depredations upon the white settlers and the Sound Indians, in consequence of which a territorial law was passed prohibiting them from entering the waters of the Sound. After this, whenever they were seen, they were ordered away, but unless there was some appearance of force to compel their departure they generally contented themselves to some other point. In these excursions, they come from five hundred to a thousand miles, sometimes hailing as far northward as the vicinity of Sitka" (Browne 1858: 10).

However, Browne's suggestion that the raiding had ceased with the "late war" was premature. Northern Indians continued to threaten the Skagit Region until at least the 1860s, only when organized military campaigns and steamboats mounted with cannons came to the Puget Sound (Roberts 1975: 149). While Northern Indians continued to visit,

sometimes participating in paid labor in the Puget Sound region, they were increasingly intimidated by the military presence and violent attacks became decreasingly common:

“When the White people came, those northern peoples were scared to come and fight. They were scared of Whites. I saw the northern Indians in Utsaladdy [on Utsalady Bay, on the north side of Camano Island] when the first mill was built. They had canoes with sails on them. They had four or five tents in that place. There were about forty or forty-five of them” (Collins 1949: 301).

Occasionally these groups would still participate in raids when traveling to or from paid employment, but these attacks became less frequent with time.⁷⁴ Sources such as Eells (1985: 152) suggest that the village fortifications had largely disappeared by the 1870s, as intertribal hostilities had waned.

S’Klallam and Other Tribes’ Use of Western Whidbey Island

A number of sources suggest that, while the Skagit intensively occupied the land in and around Penn’s Cove, they did not have settlements on the relatively steep western shoreline of Whidbey Island. In fact, some sources go so far as to say that the Skagit’s use of this area was limited generally.⁷⁵ Instead, the area is commonly assigned to other tribes, or is mentioned as a stopover point for tribes traveling along the coast or visiting the Skagit of Penn Cove.

A number of accounts demonstrate that the western side of Whidbey Island, at Ebey’s Landing, appears to have been a popular stopover and camping site for American Indian travelers canoeing between the communities of Puget Sound. Certainly, this was the case in the 19th century. The Ebey diaries make occasional passing reference to S’Klallams encamped on the beach near their homes in the 1850s (Ebey 1917, 1916). However, the visitors were by no means limited to the S’Klallam. Winfield Ebey reported on April 15, 1857,

“This evening Old ‘Seattle’ and six canoe loads of his ‘Tillicums’ are camped on the beach on their way to Lummi to the potlatch of old ‘Chowetsed’ the Lummi Tyee [chief] which I suppose will be a grand affair” (W. Ebey 1855-58).

In December 16 of that year, he reported

“Some Indians of ‘Swinamish’ tribe are encamped on the beach up here. I went to see them this evening and found only some old women. The men gone to Fort Townsend” (W. Ebey 1855-58).

Sources such as Kellogg (1934: 17) mention a meeting between chiefs of the “Snogqualamies” (apparently Snoqualmie) and a number of other chiefs and sub-chiefs from Whidbey Island and other locations throughout the northern Puget Sound, apparently in the vicinity of Ebey’s Landing. Following Blanchet, Kellogg (1934: 7-9) refers to a number of tribal groups using the Ebey’s Landing area, including “Skekwanish” – perhaps the “Skokomish” from Hood Canal, who may have camped and gathered camas in the area. Likewise, occasional references to “Chief Seattle’s people” or “Port Madison” Indians gathering camas and camping near Ebey’s Prairie in early diaries also suggest that the Suquamish and/or Duwamish were occasional visitors to the area (Kellogg 1934: 15-17; Ebey 1916, 1917). Snohomish use is mentioned by White (1980), while references to “Tulalip” use apparently refer to the reservation era, and may have included descendents of numerous tribes (Kellogg 1934: 15-17). Despite the abundance of visitors with diverse tribal affiliations, most sources generally depict the Ebey’s Landing site as being part of the Skagit territory (e.g., Kellogg 1934).

Some sources, however, suggest that the S’Klallam of the Olympic Peninsula at some point became more enduring residents of the Ebey’s Landing area, on the western bluffs of Whidbey Island. Clearly the S’Klallam were expanding their territories at the time of European contact, and Whidbey Island was no less proximate to their territories than other areas that they claimed on southern Vancouver Island (Swanton 1952:419, Gunther 1927:177). These sources imply that the S’Klallam occupation had been relatively recent, perhaps associated with the decline and displacement of Skagits over the course of the early- to mid-19th century. As summarized by Andrea Weiser,

“By most accounts, the S’Clallum were latecomers who began laying claim to the fertile soil of Ebey’s Prairie after the introduction of potatoes and the Skagit had long-term villages near the prairie edge” (Weiser 2006: 21; see also White 1980: 15-16).

Snyder also hinted at a relatively short period of S’Klallam occupation in her Indian Claims Commission testimony:

“The Clallam would travel back and forth and their customary stopping place, whether it was “customary” or not, but at least it was used, was on the west coast of Whidbey Island” (Snyder 1955a: 71).⁷⁶

Curtis (1913) provided perhaps the earliest popular account suggesting that S'Klallam settlements were found along the western shore of Whidbey Island. His words on the topic are few:

“The most powerful and warlike of all the Salish tribes on the coast of Washington were the Clallam, a group comprising about a dozen populous villages on the southern shore of the Strait of Juan de Fuca from Port Discovery on the east to Hoko creek on the west, as well as some settlements on the upper west coast of Whidbey island and the southern shores of San Juan and Orcas islands” (Curtis 1913: 19).

Elsewhere, Curtis (1913: 174) simply states that “A few Clallam villages were on Whidbey island,” but notes too that Coupeville was a major center of Skagit settlement. Despite conducting detailed ethnographic work with the S'Klallam of the early 20th century, Erna Gunther (1927) indicated that she was unable to learn of any S'Klallam settlements on Whidbey Island from her consultants. She noted that

“Curtis states that there were Klallam settlements on the upper west coast of Whidbey Island and on the southern shores of San Juan and Orcas Islands. These have never been mentioned to me. The locations are directly across the Straits from the Klallam territory and may at some time have been fishing stations” (Gunther 1927: 177).

The view that the S'Klallam had permanent settlements on the west coast of Whidbey Island was popularized more recently by the writings of Richard White (1980). Interpolating from the existing, albeit sparse historical evidence, and drawing heavily from a single 1853 *Olympia Pioneer and Democrat* newspaper article, White (1980: 15) determined that the S'Klallam seized part of Ebey's Prairie to grow potatoes and that they built a fortified encampment adjacent to their potato plots.

Historical evidence reviewed in the course of the current study generally supports the notion that the S'Klallam used Ebey's Landing for potato cropping in the mid-19th century, but also hints at a less sedentary pattern of occupation for the S'Klallam at this location and a more congenial relationship between the two tribes generally. Certainly, when the first missionaries arrived in the vicinity of Ebey's Landing in 1840, they found potato gardens were widespread on the prairies of the island, though they did not record specifics regarding their owner's identities (Collins 1946: 88-90). Still, in 1843, Father Jean-Baptiste Bolduc reported going to the Penn Cove area of Whidbey Island and being greeted by “a great number of savage Klalams and Skadjats” who were

encamped together (in Blanchet and Demers 1955).⁷⁷ Sources are ambiguous as to the degree of the two tribes during this period, but circumstantial evidence might suggest that there was a degree of peaceful cohabitation between the two groups, and continued intermarriage between the tribes is also suggested for this period.⁷⁸ Certainly, in other locations, the S'Klallam occupied multi-ethnic settlements and resource procurement stations alongside members of other tribal populations.⁷⁹ While defying scholarly efforts to define discrete tribal territories, it is important not to discount the possibility that the potato patches reflected a new type of multi-ethnic resource encampment, arriving no earlier than the late 18th century, that functioned in a manner comparable to fishing stations and other resource camps that had existed previously.

Additionally, there were reasons for the S'Klallam to continue visiting and using Ebey's Landing into the 1850s and 1860s. Beginning at the time of the treaty, S'Klallams were often provided services by the Penn Cove special Indian Agency and were increasingly drawn to Whidbey Island by the availability of goods and services from Agency staff (Fay 1856-61). In 1857, the Port Townsend Indian Agency reported on "Clalm" use of Whidbey Island, at once confirming its presence until 1856, but also suggesting that the practice was effectively extinguished by northern raiders:

"Until this year they raised good crops of potatoes on Whidbey's island, six miles from the agency. During the present season they have been driven from their potato patches by the northern Indians, who make a practice of robbing and murdering the Sound Indians wherever they can catch them" (in Browne 1858: 7).

The few available original ethnographic accounts seem to imply that there were no permanent settlements in this area. Instead, they depict the "settlements" as encampments that were of enduring use to potato harvesters, hunters, and groups traveling from the open waters of the Puget Sound and Strait of Juan de Fuca that wished to visit the Penn Cove Skagit without having to circumnavigate Whidbey Island. Snyder's notes identify Ebey's Landing as a "Clallam camp?" but does not identify it as a village site (Snyder n.d.). Similarly, as Amelia Dan recalled,

"There was nothing very permanent about the west coast Whidby Island...settlements. There was just open camping where there was fresh water, and with no real villages or wooden houses" (Dan n.d.: 8).

Amelia Dan also shared her belief "that most of the shoreline of the west side of Whidby was used for hunting, generally by the Swinomish only"; it is unclear whether she is speaking of the Swinomish as a distinct population from the Skagit or is conflating the two closely-related groups (Dan n.d.: 8).

The identity of the occupants notwithstanding, Dan's depiction of the west coast of Whidbey Island as a diffusely settled area - used for specialized resource procurement from enduring camps but no permanent large villages - seems to represent a parsimonious explanation of patterns seen in the ethnographic, historical, and archaeological record. On the basis of documentation consulted for this study, S'Klallam use of this area appears certain, but exclusive or enduring S'Klallam use does not.

Missionaries

Very early in the history of the land-based fur trade, the residents of Whidbey Island received the first instruction in Christian theology. Much of their initial exposure to Christianity occurred at the Hudson's Bay Company forts, where small resident missions were established. While these missions did little work in distant tribal communities, such as those of Penn Cove, they nonetheless had indirect influence on the beliefs of these village communities. Certain key Skagit leaders, including Snatelum, appear to have adopted Christianity quite early, possibly in addition to, rather than in replacement of, preexisting native belief systems. In turn, these leaders became ardent promoters of this new religion in their home communities:

"In Lower Skagit territory, on Whidbey Island, several village leaders served as self-appointed Christian missionaries: Tslalakum, Snatelum and Witskalatche. They visited the trading post established at Nisqually house in 1833 and received brief religious instruction from the trader, Dr. William Fraser Tolmie. Tolmie, frustrated by the insurmountable language barrier, finally gave up... The Indian leaders, still interested in receiving further instruction, decided to make a long trip south to the Cowlitz mission to see two Jesuit priests, the Very Reverend F. N. Blanchet, Vicar-general, and the reverend Modesto Demers... In 1839 These priests came north to Nisqually" (Roberts 1975: 142; see also Collins 1946: 52; Sampson 1972: 14).

On May 24th of 1840, Father Francis Norbert Blanchet visited Whidbey Island, apparently at the invitation of Chief Tslalakum. He discovered the residents of the Penn Cove communities to already be well versed in Catholic teachings due to the work of Snatelum and others, and cultivating a number of potato gardens (White 1980: 33; Bryan 1955: 17).⁸⁰ Blanchet reported meeting with Skagit Chief Snatelum at Penn Cove:

“Desiring to visit the Island, I directed my steps toward the north, passed through beautiful prairies, forests of large trees, fields of potatoes, made with no other instrument than a curved stick, and arrived at the house of Netlum [Chief Snaetlum], situated on the eastern point of the Island. It was a house made of logs, 30 x 20, ceiled, and furnished inside with a tapestry of mats, with an opening in the center to let the smoke out. After prayer and chant of canticles, I went to the shore and found 15 lodges of Indians, who had never seen the blackgown...Having given my great Catholic ladder to Netlum, he offered to carry me to Nesqualy in his great wooden canoe, which with 13 men was still light...In coasting along the island I saw forts 18 or 20 feet high, raised by the Indians to protect themselves against the *Yugoltah* [probably Kwakiutl] of Frazier river” (Blanchet and Demers 1955).⁸¹

Blanchet held Catholic services, with hymns in Chinook Jargon, and was surprised to find that some tribal members already had exposure to Christian teachings. During his first service, Tslalakum and his people were joined by a group from elsewhere on the island, led by a chief or sub-chief named “Witskalatche” and a Skagit group led by “Chief Netlam” (Chief Snatelum). The following Sunday, services were accompanied by feasting and the raising of a large cross. As Blanchet’s account suggests, copies of the “Catholic Ladder,” showing the juxtaposition of heaven and Earth and the means of accessing the latter, were given to tribal leaders. As Roberts (1975: 142) notes, “This was the first opportunity Skagit Indian leaders had to receive an extensive explanation of white culture and religion.” John Fornsby provided one of the few oral history accounts of these events from the residents’ perspective.⁸²

Blanchet stayed on the island roughly one year, establishing a rudimentary Catholic mission, and claimed to have baptized 218 persons there. The Penn Cove mission became the base of operations for the missionization of tribes throughout the northern Puget Sound, reaching out into many of the communities of the larger “Skagit Region.”⁸³ Whitney (1942) reported that a group of over 7,000 Indians from the tribes of the area sometimes convened in the area to receive this religious instruction. If Penn Cove had been a densely settled place before the arrival of missionaries, the arrival of the new Catholic mission brought successive waves of multi-tribal visitors that likely dwarfed anything witnessed previously.

By 1841, the mission appeared to be thriving. In May of 1841, Charles Wilkes reported

“The next point visited and surveyed was Penn’s Cove, between Whidby’s Island and the main... The chief possessed chest of valuables, carefully preserved in a corner, the contents of which were shown by him with no

small pride, and consisted of a long roll of paper, on which were many representations of European houses and churches, together with rude sketches of the heavenly bodies, and a map of America. These had been given to him and explained by the Roman Catholic priest, and he seemed to understand the explanation. This whole tribe are Catholics, and have much affection and reverence for their instructors.

“The priests of the Catholic mission made half-yearly visits, baptizing and leaving tokens among these Indians, and have done much good in promoting a good feeling among them. They were constructing a large building for a church, near which was erected a large cross.

“Besides inculcating good morals and peace, the priests are inducing the Indians to cultivate the soil, and there was an enclosure of some three or four acres, in which potatoes and beans were growing. The Indians were also cultivating large quantities of potatoes, in a soil fertile and capable of producing everything. Wild flowers were in abundance, and with strawberry-vines covered the whole surface. The fruit of the latter was large and of fine flavor” (Wilkes 1856: 480-81).

While a permanent mission was proposed for the Penn Cove community, an intermittent presence was all that could be supported by the overextended Catholic oblate.⁸⁴ In the course of the year 1841, Father Demers took over direction of the Penn Cove mission, while continuing his missionary work in a number of other places in western Washington.⁸⁵ The mission continued to be a major attraction to the tribes of the area: “At times, Father Demers would be surrounded by as many as six hundred Indians, occasionally by as many as three thousand” (Sullivan 1932: 37). In 1843, Father J.B.Z. Bolduc took responsibility for Catholic services in the area, expanding the bailiwick of his Victoria, B.C. mission (Keddie 2003: 23). Under Bolduc’s watch, the Penn Cove mission waned and residents began to chafe under a more invasive phase of missionary activity. By 1848, the mission was reported to have been abandoned at Penn Cove, and some tribal families of the area were actively resisting further missionary activity in the area.

This is not to suggest that the Catholic Church was no longer important in the area. Following the Point Elliott Treaty of 1855, the missionaries shifted their attention to the development of reservation-based missions. In September 1857, Father Chirouse moved to Tulalip and began his mission there. From here he worked to missionize other area tribes (Sullivan 1932: 41, 56). This effectively consolidated mission functions for many of the tribes of the region, including the Skagit:

“Every evening Father Chirouse would instruct the Indians, and soon many of them were sufficiently instructed to receive Baptism... tribes...used to come to priest point for instruction in those early days --

Nooksack, Lummi, Swinomish, Skagit, Duwamish, Kikiallus, and Stilliguamish. Though these tribes spoke different languages, yet all could understand the Snohomish. Father Chirouse, who soon mastered this language, used it as his medium of instruction" (Sullivan 1932: 43).

Chirouse was especially responsible for the shift in traditional burial customs during the mid- to late-19th century. Apparently referring to the reservation communities of the period, Sullivan recalls,

"Under Father Chirouse's guidance, the Indians gave up their ancient custom of placing the dead in canoes, and then raising them up on trees. He established and blessed a cemetery, and the Indians showed much respect for it, and pride in its appearance" (Sullivan 1932: 47).

The influence of these early missionary contacts has had a persistent influence on the religious life of area tribes. Writing of the Swinomish in the 1930s, Upchurch noted that

"In religion these Indians have been objects of missionary endeavor for seventy-five years. The first effort was made by early Catholic fathers who traveled the Hudson's Bay Company trails, and their influence persists today, marked by a modest church built by Indians at La Conner. Other denominations of lesser influence came later" (Upchurch 1936a: 293).⁸⁶

By 1880 the Tulalip Indian Agent reported that 2,460 Indians within the jurisdiction of the Agency were practicing Catholics. Of those that remained, some 438 Indians were said to persist in their traditional religious beliefs (O'Keene 1880a: 6). The persistence of aboriginal religious practices among the Coast Salish groups of this area has been noted by many different authors – most of them anthropologists (Kew 1990; Suttles 1987b; Amoss 1978, 1977; Collins 1946; Wike 1941). The Indian Shaker religion, which combined aspects of traditional religious beliefs with missionary Christianity into an essentially coherent body of religious beliefs and practices, swept through Puget Sound tribal communities after its establishment in the early 1880s.⁸⁷ While the Indian Shaker Church has declined in many communities, it persists in many area communities as an important category of religious expression into the present day (Amoss 1982, 1974b; Barnett 1957; Gunther 1949).⁸⁸

IDENTIFYING 19TH CENTURY SETTLEMENTS

While published sources may vary in their identification of the precise configuration of Skagit country, they are almost all in agreement in asserting that “Penn Cove was very intensively populated” (Snyder 1955a: 30). Most sources that identify communities at the village level within Puget Sound mention villages in and around Penn Cove (e.g., Swanton 1952; Haeberlin and Gunther 1930; Curtis 1913). Most sources also suggest that these Penn Cove communities were significant multi-tribal gathering areas, used for social gatherings, ritual exchanges, trade gambling, and other purposes. Trade and gambling contests at the Penn Cove villages were reported to be quite large, bringing together residents of communities from far and wide, and lasting over the course of several days.⁸⁹

If sources agree that Penn Cove was densely inhabited, there has been somewhat less coherence in their description of which villages were actually located within what is today Ebey’s Landing NHR. Haeberlin and Gunther (1930), for example, reported one substantial village in the vicinity of Penn’s Cove, named *Dubtsa’dale*, and another substantial village north of Penn’s Cove on the eastern side of Whidbey Island, named *Duq!dotse*. Meanwhile, comparatively detailed summaries as Swanton (1952) allude to “Ho’baks on the upper end of Penn’s Cove, not far from San de Fuca, Btsa’dsali at Coupeville, Ba’asats between Coupeville and Snaklem Point west of Long Point, and Teubaa’ltced on the north side of Snaklem Point 4 miles from Coupeville” (Swanton 1952: 446). None of these accounts provides much detail regarding the exact scale of these villages, the identities of their inhabitants, and other information critical to understanding pre-contact use of the study area.

However, a handful of unpublished sources give us a much more detailed view of settlements as they existed during the time of European contact. In particular, the unpublished fieldnotes and testimony transcripts of Sally Snyder, amassed for the Indian Claims Commission process in the 1950s, provide a wealth of previously unpublished detail regarding Skagit settlements, especially in the Penn Cove area (Snyder 1955a, 1955b, n.d.). What follows in the sections below are detailed accounts of places used and occupied by American Indians within the study area, principally derived from Snyder’s notes, but much augmented with other sources - most unpublished - that address tribal settlement in this area.

It is important to note that the patterns of use and occupation on Whidbey Island were almost certainly dynamic, especially during the period of initial Euro-American exploration and settlement. The descriptions that follow then, are a “snapshot” of indigenous use of the landscape as it existed during a particular period of time. Fortunately, the Indian Claims Commission requested of Snyder that she define the

specific period of time being depicted in her ethnographic notes. In response, Snyder indicated that the villages and other traditional use areas identified in her ethnographic notes depict the status of particular villages in the early 19th century:

“It goes back to about 1825 or 1830, anyplace with some villages it would be 1800. Some of these, one or two villages, I know to have been left abandoned by 1850 or shortly before” (Snyder 1955a: 38).

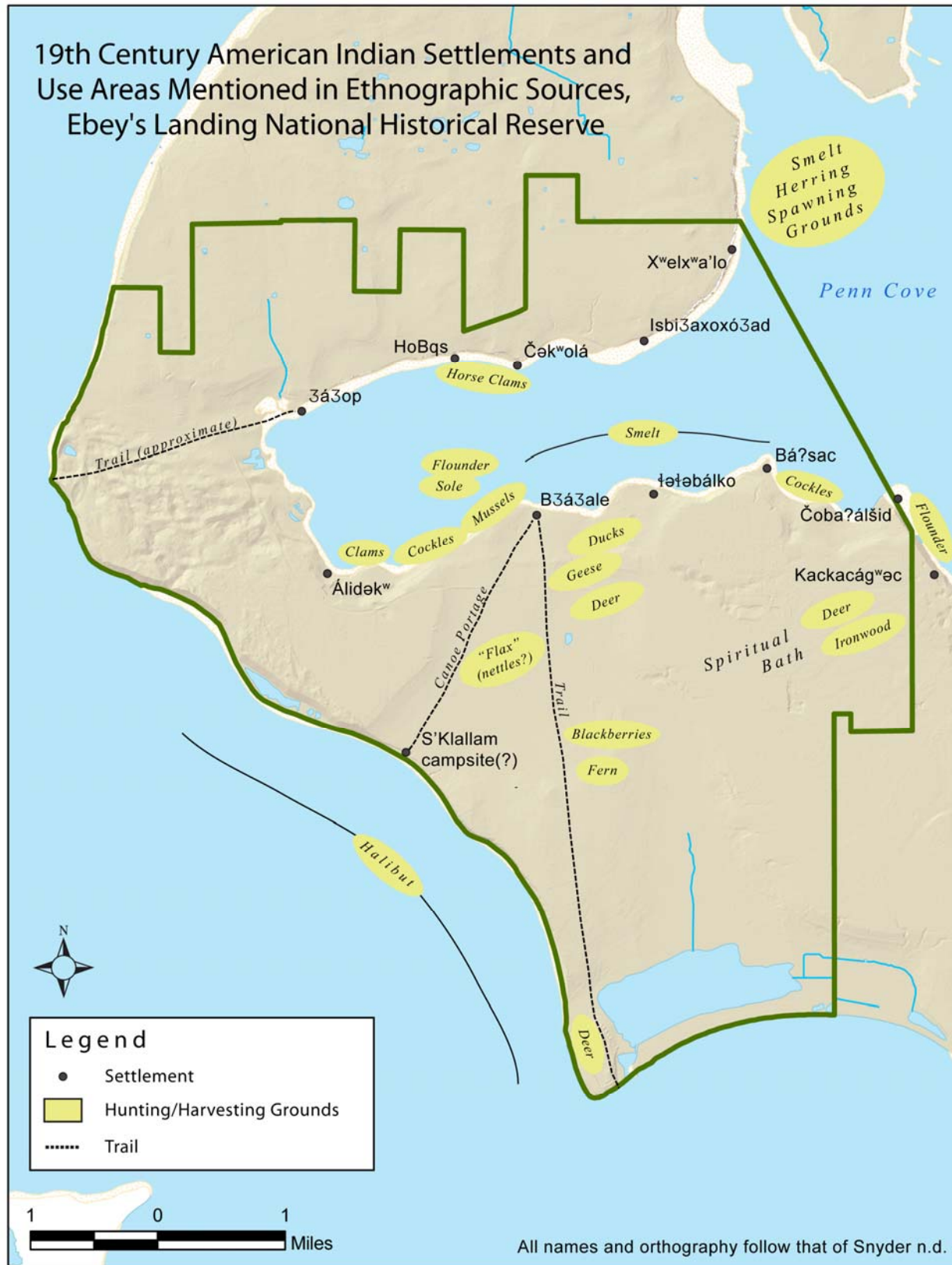
Likewise, it is important to note that the villages being described here did not exist in isolation from a much larger network of settlements and traditional use areas lying well beyond the borders of our current study area. As noted elsewhere, the Skagit relied heavily on resources from outside of the study area, and the density of settlement seen at Penn Cove would arguably not have been possible without regular migrations to such locations as fishing stations on the Skagit River. Indeed, while there is ample evidence that the larger villages of Penn Cove were occupied year-round during the contact period, some have suggested that the occupation of these villages may have been seasonal. As one consultant told Snyder,

“The Skagit had their winter village on the river below Mount Vernon and their summer village at Coupeville.... They say in the early days in the summer they were all together on Snakelum Point, then later they separated and the younger generation moved across [to San de Fuca]” (RS in Snyder n.d: 111).

This seems to match what is known about Skagit settlement patterns generally, as described by such sources as Hodge (1959: 585), who describes the Skagit being spread between two major settlements areas – one on the Skagit River “particularly about its mouth” and the other being located on the middle portion of Whidbey Island, especially at Penn’s Cove.

Finally, in interpreting the significance of the information that follows, it is important to bear in mind the somewhat unique social structure of Skagit villages. As noted previously, there was a sharp distinction between high-status “true Skagit,” lower-status “sk^wdabš” and a range of other community members of varying status, such as intermediate status hunters or low-status slaves. Each had a particular position in the social order and a particular location within the settlement system. In many Northwest Coast villages, members of diverse social standing might all live together within the larger community. Within densely-settled Penn Cove, there appear to have been entire villages that consisted almost exclusively of high-class Skagit, for example, or sk^wdabš:

19th Century American Indian Settlements and Use Areas Mentioned in Ethnographic Sources, Ebeys Landing National Historical Reserve



“A number of the communities in the Penn Cove area were identified as being partly or mostly sk^wdabš, suggesting ongoing patterns of spatial segregation into the contact period” (Snyder n.d.: 101).

In addition, people of intermediate status had a variety of options in Penn Cove that might not have existed elsewhere. Those who were of combined high- and low-status parentage could find a home there, as could hunting or fishing specialists of intermediate status:

“a few [individuals] that were half high-class and kind of half low-class would live in places in Penn Cove. The middle or low-class were helpers – like hunters or fishers, but they might have slaves [of their own]” (Snyder n.d.: 104).

The cumulative result was a network of settlements in Penn Cove that were socially diverse in the aggregate, compared to many other Northwest Coast settlement sites. Just as individuals of diverse status relied on one-another for various social and subsistence tasks within conventionally smaller Northwest Coast villages, here on Penn Cove, with its clustering of socially distinct villages, village communities appear to have relied on one-another, and a number of functional and personal ties connected each of these settlements. Thus, in contrast to a typical Northwest Coast village containing individuals of diverse social status, the Penn Cove situation almost suggests a small “city” consisting of interdependent but socially segregated districts aggregated around a common geographical center. So while the Penn Cove villages are discussed separately below, it might be most appropriate to represent these communities not as isolated village communities, but as districts within a much larger Penn Cove “village cluster,” using the terminology of Roberts (1975). What follows, then, is a discussion of each of this “village cluster’s” constituent communities.

Čoba?álšid [Snatelum Point Village]

Čoba?álšid, the village at Snatelum Point, was a place of particular importance to the Lower Skagit. The village is mentioned by multiple published and unpublished sources, perhaps more than any other Skagit village on Whidbey Island (e.g., Smith 1941, Curtis 1913; Snyder n.d.; Stevens n.d.b). Curtis (1913) provides the spelling “Chabaalshid” for this village, while Marian Smith reports the village variously as “TcubaaltEd” (Smith n.d.) and Tcubaáltced (Smith 1941); a placename list of unknown

provenience, probably compiled by Isaac Stevens, reports the name of a major village in this general area called Cho-mahlst, S'cho-bahlst, or To-ho-wall – apparently a reference to the same place (Stevens n.d.b).

A permanent village was reported at this site by a number of Sally Snyder's Skagit consultants, consisting primarily of a vast, multi-chambered longhouse. Some referred to this village by such monikers as "the Skagit headquarters" and suggested that "it's the main village where all Skagits come," (Snyder n.d.). They also recalled oral traditions that give Čoba?álšid special standing in Skagit cosmology; importantly, they noted that their oral traditions mentioned this site as the place where the Creator brought the first human, K'ək'édib, to Earth. Their accounts suggest that this place, central to Skagit creation, was the foothold for human occupation of the surrounding landscape by the descendents of K'ək'édib, the first man. In this location, their stories recall, the descendents of K'ək'édib founded a longhouse that was incrementally expanded into a sprawling three-sectioned structure, and which was continuously occupied by his descendents until the time of European contact:

"There were three main family groups living in the long house (of 200 to 500 ft. long) there, and all three families were descended from the first and original K'ək'édib. The family occupying the section toward the point was Čitčitks and it has many more living descendents than the other two families. The Abzudadag^wábac occupied the middle of the house, and were the 'high-ups'. The family in the house-section furthest from the point was the Absilalag^wab which is the family name of the original Skagit" (Snyder n.d.: 37).

As the families outgrew this structure, they occupied new places along the shoreline, gradually peopling much of the Skagit world:

"Their children spread along the beach north[east]ward into Bžážale and into places between Čoba?álšid and Bžážale. A child of K'ək'édib moved to Bžážale" (Snyder n.d.: 37).⁹⁰

These consultants reported that this single extended longhouse still sat at this location into the period of Euro-American resettlement, and some could recall the names of the individual families who lived there in the 19th century. As the site appeared in the mid-19th century,

"The high-class Skagit lived here at Snaetlum Point, which was their original home... The sudadag^wábac was the middle of the house or tribe

where the big guns lived...this was like at the one big house at Snaetlum Point. (The highest class group was distinguished by living in the middle house-section – although they might only own part of the house)” (Snyder n.d.: 38).

“There was a single house within a stockade. It was divided into three segments, West to East: bsəlala’g^{wəp} [Back], bsududa’g^{wəbəc} [Middle], bsčə’čt’qs [Point]” (AJ in Snyder n.d.: 41).

Some suggested that the vast, multi-chambered longhouse reported at Čoba?álšid was constructed incrementally to accommodate growing housing needs in the community:

“Over at Snaetlum Point they had to keep enlarging the house; and to make new additions was up to the chief. Everyone would pitch in and help and ‘pay’ for it so that the new family wouldn’t have the complete economic responsibility. Every home had a leader of some sort” (Snyder n.d.: 40).

Other consultants implied that these may have been separate houses at one time, and that the wealthiest and most powerful family, the Absudadag^{wábəc}, owned the entire central house, which became the core of the entire settlement: “Each family group there (three) had a house, but the middle family (Absudadag^{wábəc}) had the big house that the others lived in” (Snyder n.d.: 39).

The high-ranking Abzudadag^{wábəc} or “Absudadag^{wábəc}” apparently became the founding family of the Skagit upper class. The family name – originating from Snaetlum Point village – would in turn become emblematic of high status generally throughout the Skagit world, implying both lofty status and central position within the symbolically charged longhouse interior:

“The Absələlágəps and Absudadag^{wábəc} were right at Snaetlum Point, and the latter were higher in rank...The Skagits are the only ones that ‘practiced’ that Absudadag^{wábəc} or rather, are the only ones that had a group called that. They attach quite a meaning to it now, but actually it’s more a description than a designation, and the term as it has been translated gives the wrong impression of its real meaning. The word describes the position, physical location, or the people at the Point (Snaetlum). The Absudadag^{wábəc} means that they were the ones nearest the shore” (Snyder n.d.: 38-39).

“The only family referred to as Absudadag^wábac were at Snaetlum Point. It refers to one of the three positions in the smokehouse there” (AS in Snyder n.d.: 40).

These associations with high status meant that Čoba?álšid, itself, was regarded as the highest ranking village in Skagit territory: “Čoba?álšid was the highest village of all (highest class) because of the Absudadag^wábac who were the highest class family of Lower Skagit” (JJ in Snyder n.d.: 39). The village was also known as being “pure Skagit” and, in fact, at least one of Snyder’s consultants appears to have used the term “Snaetlum Point people” as a synonym for “pure Skagit,” as differentiated from the lower-status sk^wdabš, who were excluded from this village (Snyder n.d.: 102).



“Skagit potlatch house near Coupeville, Washington, ca. 1899” An example of the sprawling longhouse structure style reported at contact at Snaetlum Point.
Photographer unknown - University of Washington Libraries, Special Collections Division - Negative No. NA564

As the name implies, the chiefly family by the name of Snaetlum originated from this village. Snyder's consultants consistently reported that the village was "the main Skagit village, the home of [Snaetlum]" (Snyder n.d.).⁹¹ Many of the famous deeds of Old Chief Snaetlum during the contact period took place here, or were staged from this village. The families of Goliah and Squiqui also apparently had ties to this village.

While lower-status individuals were not altogether absent from Čoba?álšid, they were relegated to structures outside of the main longhouse:

"Before the stockade were the camps of lower class people who served as 'scouts' and were not allowed inside. They were called bsqoqohi'čədəqs" (AJ in Snyder n.d.: 41).

The Skagit in this community appear to have recognized a separate caste of specialized hunters among their ranks, of intermediate social standing. They were said to live "on the point" at Čoba?álšid, apparently separate from the main longhouse:

"It's as if one of the Absudadagwábac who lived in the middle section of the long-house at Čoba?álšid wanted to go hunting, he'd tell one of the hunters" (Snyder n.d.: 38-39).

"The Edges, who were hunters, were kind of low-class...[they] came from T'it'idGs, a little Skagit tribe at Snaetlum Point where they had married into the Snaetlum family" (Snyder n.d.: 38).

Despite its generally high status, this village was no more immune to raiding by northern tribes than any other in the Skagit world. The village was fortified with earthworks and other structures:

"At Snaetlum Point they had a ča?áltkw that covered the whole village. It is a fort...they would dig it...have a 'dike' on both sides with lipped up sides. There would be long three to four foot spikes on the bottom just at the side toward the beach from where the enemy always raided" (Snyder n.d.: 40).

"here they had dug where the house walls would be to fit the boards in...when they cleared for the house, they would have the dirt up like hills all around the house for protection" (Snyder n.d.: 37).

A number of subsistence activities were mentioned in reference to Snatelum Point. The waterfront was an especially important resource gathering area. A location ambiguously described as being at the “mouth of Snakelum Point” called Šu’šuk’us - perhaps on the northeastern side of the peninsula - was said to be a clam and mussel bed regularly used by the Lower Skagit (Snyder n.d.: 88). The cliffs south of the point were also of importance for hunting:

“They used to drive deer over cliffs in back of Snaetlum Point and at West Beach, and used the čxwals (a ‘lead’ for deer), driving the deer into net across runway by hitting tree trunks with clubs to frighten them” (Snyder n.d.: 40).

Snyder’s notes allude to a “spiritual bathing” site somewhere in the area south of Snatelum Point (Snyder n.d.: 19).

A number of burials were also mentioned at Snatelum Point and, in light of the high status of its residents, “canoe-burial was the general practice around Snaetlum Point” (Snyder n.d.: 38). Land near the point continued to serve as a subterranean burial area following the end of canoe-burial practices under Catholic missionary influence, in the 19th century. Locations adjacent to the old Snatelum Point village, apparently including bluffs behind the village, continued to be used as a burial into the late-19th and early 20th century, despite the general dislocation of the tribal population. John Forsby reported:

“I was about eight or nine when my mother died. She got sick and died. She was buried over at Snatlem point. There are a lot of Lower Skagit buried over there. I stayed with my grandma and grandpa” (Collins 1949: 303).

Consultants reported that important Skagit leaders, including George Snaetlum (Charley Snaetlum’s father) and DuGwdákdid (old George Snaetlum’s father) are buried on the uplands near this point.

The combined effects of epidemics, raids from northern tribes, and the absence of a formal reservation at Penn Cove contributed to the relocation of members of the Penn Cove villages, primarily to Swinomish, but also to Tulalip and other reservation communities. For a time, survivors of other Penn Cove villages regrouped at Čoba?álšid, largely abandoning their old villages elsewhere on the cove. As one of Snyder’s consultants recalled,

“Snaetlum Point...there was a large village. That was one of the most recently populated. I believe that it was just about the most recently populated on Whidbey Island, since people were leaving from across Penn Cove and going into Snaetlum Point. With the white occupation of Penn Cove they did retain Snaetlum Point until,-- it was rather recent. It was the last house that I know of that was still standing, the last long house. It was partially burned and then rebuilt” (Snyder 1955a: 33).



“Skagit house frames, Snaetlum Point, Penn Cove, near Coupeville, Washington, ca. 1903”
Photographer unknown - University of Washington Libraries, Special Collections Division - Negative No. NA696

Yet, in time, Čoba?álšid would also be abandoned. The most pivotal single event contributing to the demise of Čoba?álšid appears to have been a raid from the northern tribes, who burned the venerable longhouse: “At the last attack of the Northerners they burnt Snaetlum Point” (Snyder n.d.: 39). Members of the community rebuilt a portion

of the structure for those who wished to stay, but most apparently moved to Swinomish at this time:

“they had to rebuild it. They built one section for AJ’s grandparents, but they never lived there. They came over here (to X^wiwúc, Swinomish) on account of (the men of the family) were married to Swinomish women” (Snyder n.d.: 39).

This rebuilt longhouse was still standing long after the tribal communities of Penn Cove had been largely displaced. One of Snyder’s consultants who recalled seeing the longhouse, mentioned that the rebuilt structure

“was between one-hundred and two-hundred feet long. The cross-beams were logs of about two feet in diameter. Charley Snaetlum, (‘Long Charley’), yalácid; a man called ləbáixus; another called gwésaxət; and a man with the English name of Snapps are the ones that AE knows that lived there” (Snyder n.d.: 40).

This relatively new longhouse appears to have been used well into the early 20th century as a ceremonial structure and a gathering place for both local and relocated Skagit families.

Bzáʒale [Coupeville Village]

Bzáʒale, at the present site of downtown Coupeville, was said to be a “Lower Skagit village,” from which a number of Snyder’s consultants’ families hailed. While usually reported as Bzáʒale [roughly pronounced “Bdzá-dzaley”] in Indian Claims Commission documents, the name is variously reported as Obzáʒale, Bećáʒale, Xwbecáʒale, Xwəbecáʒale (Snyder n.d.), SubItsa’dsali (Smith n.d.), Batsádsali (Smith 1941), and Dubtsa’dale (Haeberlin and Gunther 1952). The root of the name clearly means “snakes” in the Skagit language; the variable spellings reflect different attributes as it relates to snakes: “The name means something like “snakes” ... “lots of snakes” or “snake home”” (Snyder n.d.: 22, 24), while Smith reported that “SubItsa’dsali” implies “where the snake goes in” (Smith n.d.).

Of Bzáʒale, Snyder’s Skagit consultants reported that it was

“a village that was situated at the present town of Coupeville, which was one of the largest in the area. It was a village for getting flounder and sole and cockles....to the southeast there were grounds for getting geese and duck. Then again going east from Coupeville was a temporary fishing ground for getting smelt which were caught generally off the shores between Coupeville and Long Point on Penn Cove”(Snyder 1955a: 31).

The purported direct and titled descendent of the “first human” in Skagit tradition, K’ek’édib, apparently lived in the community of Bʒáʒale at the time of European contact. The name K’ek’édib continued to be passed on between generations on Penn Cove, possibly as a chiefly title passed down through successive generations of descendants. One consultant noted that “There was a man who was a Lower Skagit, k’ek’édib [a.k.a. k’wəsqédəb] who lived here and handled transactions for the people of Penn Cove,” while another referred to this K’ek’édib as the “owner” of Bʒáʒale in the 19th century (Snyder n.d.: 24). Snyder’s consultants suggested that this village’s historical inhabitants were high status people tied to Snatelum Point. “The absilalágwəb [elite family] from Snaetlum Point lived there...they were not skwdabs,” the “lower-class” members of Skagit society (Snyder n.d.: 22, 24). Large long houses once lined the shoreline here. These were apparently removed by Euro-American settlers of the 19th century: “There were permanent houses that were destroyed when the whites built the town” (Snyder n.d.: 24).

Other small settlements sat a short distance away from Bʒáʒale. A village called Báʔsac [roughly pronounced “Ba-asats”], Báʔseʒ, Ba’asats or Ba-asats was reported on Long Point - the point between the communities of Bʒáʒale [Coupeville] and Čobaʔálšid [Snatelum Point] (Snyder n.d; Smith 1941, n.d.; Haeberlin-Gunther 1952). It was recalled as “a permanent village with a good gravel beach” and for reasons that are not clear from the ethnographic notes, “báʔsac was called ‘shipyard’ in the old days” (Snyder n.d.). Elsewhere, Snyder (1955a: 33) reports that it was “a permanent village on Long Point... It was complete with homes and cemetery.” One of Snyder’s consultants noted that the village was owned by an individual or group called “dəxʷćalkwəb.” Some sources report this village as the major village on the south side of Penn Cove, but it appears that this reflects some degree of confusion, and may represent the entire complex of settlement from Coupeville to Snatelum Point, with its midpoint at roughly Long Point, was effectively the demographic “core” of this Skagit heartland. Consultants recalled that a number of burials were located at Báʔsac, some from Čəkʷolá: “They had a graveyard at Čəkʷolá that washed out and then they moved the bodies to Báʔsac and HoBqs” (Snyder n.d.: 17).

A “temporary camp-site” called ʔəʔəbálko (roughly pronounced “Thle-thle-bálko,” and also identified as ʔəʔəbáuiko or ʔəbáuiko) was found a short distance west of Báʔsac. This campsite had a small mineral or “salt water” spring; the name is said to mean “salty water” in Skagit. “It was small, but had a good wide beach and good clam-beds” (AJ in Snyder n.d.: 90). A tribal member Charley Billy was said to have lived permanently at the location of the former camp in the late 19th or early 20th century.

Čək^wolá [north Penn Cove Village]

The village of Čək^wolá [roughly pronounced “Chekw-olá”] was reported to be a “a fairly large village, a permanent village, with a cemetery behind that belonged to this village” (Snyder 1955a: 30). This village was situated almost due north of Coupeville, on the north bank of Penn Cove in an area sometimes referred to as “Monroe’s Landing.” Skagit interviewees suggested that “a big smokehouse was originally there” (Snyder n.d., 1955a). The adjacent beach was very popular for harvesting “horse clams” (*Tresus nuttalli* and *Tresus capax*) and this site was said to be “the principal village for getting horse clams on Whidbey Island” (Snyder n.d.: 30).

The leader known as Kwalátəb, “a Skagit chief and treaty signer, was from here”; he is also described by one of Snyder’s consultants as the “owner” of the village. During the treaty, Čək^wolá was one of the villages represented by Chief Goliah. Fornsby (in Collins 1949: 296) reported that his mother’s cousin Goliah, the Skagit leader of mixed skwdabš and Skagit ancestry, lived across from Coupeville on a sand bar – apparently a reference to this village. Goliah is a signatory of the Point Elliot Treaty, in which he is identified as “Chief of the Skagits and other allied tribes” (see Appendix 1).

At least one longhouse was located at this site well into the period of white occupation, and was occupied for a time by a man name of Bill Bole, who maintained the structure:

“Bill Bole lived across from Coupeville at where the boats used to land. There was a big house there that was Bill Bole’s that was put up before he died. He had all kinds of people to help him put up the big thirty-foot timbers” (Snyder n.d.: 29).

As with many villages in this area, Čək^wolá was fortified to protect it from northern raiders. The village had been fortified with a

“small ditch...some kind of trap for the hide-out. The pit of the trap was deep enough, six feet or so, to jump into...might have been a hiding place in case of war” (Snyder n.d.: 29).



“Skagit canoes pulled up onto beach near Coupeville, Whidbey Island Washington, ca. 1895”
at a location near Čək^wolá,

Photographer unknown - University of Washington Libraries, Special Collections Division - Negative No. NA686

One of Snyder’s consultants thought that at least some of the earthworks were once used as sweat lodges, but that some were also defensive.

The village population was said to consist of a mixture of low-status sk^wdabš and “true Skagit.” Apparently being a place of mixed classes, Čək^wolá was sometimes apparently a destination for Skagits during conflicts between those of high and low status (especially the sk^wdabš). One of Snyder’s consultants noted that “They were supposed to have had an argument with the Skagit at Čoba?álšid over difference of class, and that’s why they were sent to [Čək^wolá, at] Penn Cove and the River” (JJ in Snyder n.d.: 104). Another of Snyder’s consultants provides a somewhat cryptic account of this process:

“The Skagit had some of their people move to Čikwolá from Snaetlum Point. They moved there because of the let-downs [failed insurrection?]. So Čikwolá became part skwdabš and part “real” Skagit....It’s because of the let-downs that they move out of a síab village. The lower class had the let-down, and they were trying to run over the higher-ups...The let-down is what causes a little allied band to come about and still remain under the protection of the same tribe (from which they came)” (Snyder n.d.: 29, 103).

The main pre-contact burial site at Čək^wolá washed out, at some time in the years following the smallpox epidemics of the early 19th century. At this time, tribal members reportedly relocated some human remains to burial sites at HoBqs and Bá?ac on Penn Cove. This may be the burial site reported by Snyder’s consultants, when noting that “Here at Čək^wolá there was a graveyard in back of the home of q^walátəb [a.k.a. Chief Kwalátəb]” (Snyder n.d.: 18). At some point, Skagit families also relocated certain burials from this site to a place called Gwaxwú, on Camano Island. Epidemics had dramatic effects on this community, as was true of all Penn Cove villages, and burials are said to be found at this village that were hastily constructed in the 19th century:

“The skeletons found there recently [ca. early-1950s] were the result of the big smallpox epidemic. They were just dumped there. During the epidemics people would just bury bodies anywhere” (Snyder n.d.: 30).

Other Sites of Importance

A number of other, generally smaller settlements were mentioned by ethnographic consultants for past studies. A place called HoBqs or Hobu’x was described as a permanent village “north and across the bay from Coupeville” (Snyder n.d.; Smith 1941, n.d.) Likewise, John Fornsby reported a major village called “Xobaks...right across from Coupeville...There were houses there” (Collins 1949: 305-06). (A village said to be close to the “Barstow’s” place on Penn Cove was listed as “Ha-ha-náb-sum” – perhaps the HoBqs community [Stevens n.d.b]). HoBqs was said to have been principally a skwdabš village. A single smokehouse was recalled in this village by Snyder’s Skagit consultants. Squiqui [sk^wáik^wai] was said to have owned the smokehouse in this village in the 19th century, and his son – sometimes referred to as Billy Barlow – lived there as well. Squiqui was a first cousin of Fornsby’s grandmother: “He lived across from Coupeville. I used to stay there with my mother’s sister... Old Squiqui had a house there. And my aunt, her family, too, had a big home. They always stayed there for a long time” (Collins 1949: 296, 305). The village was among those represented by Chief

Goliah [sGoláia] during the treaty negotiations. A number of burial sites were reported at HoBqs: "There were a lot of Indian graves at HoBqs...all of the graves were right at the village" (JJ in Snyder n.d.: 59).⁹²

Skagit consultants also reported a village, 3ázop, meaning literally "head of a bay" in Skagit, at the present location of the town of San de Fuca. Speaking of this village, Snyder's consultants reported that

"at San de Fuca was a permanent village that was used by others on the island in the summer for getting mussels. And from this village there led a trail straight over to Ocean Beach on the extreme west coast of Whidbey to a look-out for the enemy" (Snyder 1955a: 30).

Nearby Xwelx^wa'lo was identified as an important camp or minor village near San de Fuca - it was said to have been the home of Chief Goliah at one time. This village (or one very near to it) was reported by a different name, Nobaks, in the ethnographic notes of Marian Smith (n.d.). Yet another small encampment of unknown significance, Qacqáca'g^wæc, was reported near San de Fuca. It is possible that these were individual encampments around the lagoon and tidal flats just west of San de Fuca, situated for access to clam grounds and other resource sites. South of here, in the southwest corner at the head of Penn Cove, Snyder's consultants reported a "temporary camp for clam-digging" called Álidæk^w, near what is today Good Beach Lane west of Coupeville (Snyder n.d.: 16).

A trail linked the communities of Penn Cove to the Fort Casey area, in the southern portion of the Reserve. Speaking of Fort Casey, Snyder's consultants recalled

"At the hill was the Skagit look-out for Northern Indians, the enemies... this place was also the testing-ground for young scouts. In later years when the war's started with the yæx[†]da [Northern Indians], they had to train warriors to run from Snatelum Point along the beach to B3ázale [Coupeville village] and then to Fort Casey" (Snyder n.d.: 11).

Ethnographic consultants in past studies alluded to a camp on the west side of Whidbey Island, in the location of Ebey's Landing, but provided relatively little information on the site and its significance. Some allude to this as a possible S'Klallam encampment in the 19th century, but could not recall a name for this site. Place names and other specific information about this site were not forthcoming from sources consulted regarding the S'Klallam. One might interpret the Skagit information to indicate that Ebey's Landing was a campsite used by a number of visitors who chose to visit them from the west and

did not wish to make the arduous journey by canoe to the east end of the island. A trail connected Ebey's Landing to Penn Cove and canoes could apparently be portaged from one side of the island to the other at this point (Snyder n.d.).

A village called Isbizaxoxóʒad is described as having been located on a point on the northeastern edge of Penn Cove, where the shore turns northward toward Oak Harbor. Snyder's consultants noted that "there is a high bluff around this place" and that "the name means something like 'where the old people used to single out'" (Snyder n.d.: 64). Snyder reported of it, implying that the name might suggest that older people stayed here when younger members of the community traveled during the course of the seasonal round:

"south past Blowers bluff and turning into Penn Cove there was a village which I don't know whether it was permanent or temporary. It was a very old place. The name translated means "where old people single out". I don't know what the significance of it is except that it would appear to me that it might have been a permanent village since the old people stayed in those places in the summer" (Snyder 1955a: 30).

Just beyond the eastern edge of the Reserve, Kackacágwəc is described as "a temporary hunting and camping site for deer [hunters]" (Snyder n.d.: 65).⁹³ Íkwik'ocid, now known as Harrington's Lagoon just east of the Reserve, was a fishing area for the Skagit and possibly visiting tribes (Snyder n.d.: 61). Also a short distance east of the Reserve is a place known locally as "Races Lagoon" or "Race Lagoon," Xəlgwás in Skagit – the English name being a possible reference to the area being used for canoe races in the early 20th century and apparently sooner. Xəlgwás was said to be "a temporary camping-ground, but with permanent buildings to stay in. It had good clam beds and lots of deer" (AJ in Snyder n.d.: 92). Some consultants suggested that the site was occupied in the summer by an outside group called BisiGwigwilc, who jointly occupied the site with the Skagit and sometimes intermarried with them (AS in Snyder n.d.: 92). These people were said to be viewed as lower status, and comparable to the sk^wdabš. Near there is Tx^wi'k^wk'óci an "important [Lower Skagit] camp at the next lagoon north of Races Lagoon; this may be the same site identified by other consultants as "Twixkwixqwósid [spelling approximate], "A short beach...a camping site for clams and deer." Also in this area is Bisík'wiw'wisid, "a little lagoon near Races Lagoon" that may have housed a minor settlement (Snyder n.d.: 62-63).

A settlement called "BáxoB" or "Kww'kwatsob," as well as an associated canoe ford located near Greenbank, some five miles south of the Reserve's southern boundary, appears to have been the southern extent of regular occupation and use by Penn Cove residents.⁹⁴ Among the northernmost places mentioned as being within the Penn Cove

communities' core sphere of influence was the Swan Lake area, roughly three miles north of the Reserve's north boundary. Speaking of the community living near Swan Lake, northwest of the Reserve, Snyder's consultant recalled that the area was named "Səwúkəbolic," literally "swan town" for the abundance of swans that congregated at the marsh there:

"The people were canoe builders due to its location. But it was primarily a camping-site and part of a kind of short-cut (canoe portage?) from Oak Harbor to open water. There on the outside of Whidby they used to hunt for deer and did early fishing [i.e., before the salmon entered the rivers]" (Snyder n.d.: 82).

A number of traditional encampments and use areas that were regularly used by Penn Cove residents were mentioned eastward as far Skagit Bay.

It is important to note that many of the settlements on the fringes of this Lower Skagit territory were reported to be mixed communities, combining Skagit and other tribal groups as part of what was apparently the permanent tribal population. A village at Crescent Harbor, just east of Oak Harbor, was a gathering area for both Skagit and Kikialos. The communities of Holmes Harbor were said to house both Skagit and Snohomish. Likewise, the Skagit and Swinomish had a mixed village at Dugualla Bay, on the northern edge of the Skagit's Whidbey Island territory. To the south, Greenbank was said to be occupied by both Skagit and Snohomish (Snyder n.d.: 47, 69).

Resource Procurement Areas within Ebey's Landing

In addition to settlements, past ethnographic consultants have alluded to a variety of natural resource procurement areas in and near what is today Ebey's Landing National Historical Reserve. The general configuration of these resource gathering areas, as apparent from Snyder (1955a, 1955b, n.d.) and other consulted archival sources, is also depicted in the map on page 72. Ethnographic sources are the sole source of data for this section; no attempt is made here to summarize patterns of resource utilization that are apparent archaeologically for this area. No doubt, such a comparison may prove to be a fruitful future research topic.

Penn Cove was widely recognized as a fishing area of great importance to the resident tribal communities prior to their relocation to reservations. Unlike other waterways that were not so central to tribes' core settlement areas, Penn Cove was considered an exclusive fishing area for the cove's resident communities. When asked by the Indian Claims Commission whether "the water area was free to everybody to use" in Skagit territory, Sally Snyder reported,

“Only large bays like the middle of Skagit Bay would be. But not in Penn Cove...For fishing the Skagit would use their own harbors like Crescent, Oak and Penn Cove” (Snyder 1955a: 36-37).

Penn Cove represented one of the Skagits’ principal fishing grounds for flatfish, including sole and flounder (Smith n.d.; Snyder n.d.). The residents of Penn Cove speared flounder and sole in the Coupeville and Snatelum Point areas (e.g., Snyder 1955a: 33). Consultants noted that flounder were speared in this area using poles of roughly 16 feet in length, with four ironwood prongs. This fishing was sometimes accomplished at night by torchlight, during low tides (Snyder 1955b). As noted previously, Bzázale was reported to be “a village for getting flounder and sole and cockles,” suggesting that the flatfish harvest was one of the contributing factors to that village’s location and significance (Snyder 1955a: 32). Similarly, consultants reported that smelt were taken with dipnets of roughly 20” width, between Coupeville to Long Point, where smelt drift with the tide toward shore. “Going east from Coupeville was a temporary fishing ground for getting smelt which were caught generally off the shores between Coupeville and Long Point on Penn Cove” (Snyder 1955a: 32). Minor smelting grounds were also reported at the head of Penn Cove (Snyder 1955b). Areas just outside and slightly to the north of the mouth of Penn Cove, in the Blowers Bluff area, were said to be exceptional for a variety of fish:

“Passing out of Oak Harbor past Maylor Point is one of the main smelt and herring spawning grounds at which point the Indians fished, right at the point...Herring was limited to Holmes Harbor and to an area just north of Penn Cove” (Snyder 1955a: 30, 47).

Meanwhile, the west coast of Whidbey Island presented very different opportunities and challenges to indigenous fishermen. The open waters provided access to salmon and halibut grounds. Halibut fishing was said to have been especially important in this area. Snyder (1955a) described the methods of fishing used for halibut in this area:

“From Fort Casey to Deception Pass.... 40 fathom line, that usually has a pole at -- below the line it has a weight, a rock weight at the end, -- at each end of the line is a spreader that is baited with hook -- at each end of the spreader is a line with a baited hook. The hook is two pieces made of wild cherry wood, and the hook is baited sometimes with salmon, but usually with octopus” (Snyder 1955a: 47-48).

Snyder (1955a:47) reports that halibut continued to be taken from this area well after Penn Cove residents were relocated to Swinomish and elsewhere:

“Fishing [by Swinomish reservation residents] continued in Deception Pass and on the outside for quite a period of time...It ceased sometime in the 1930's or so. I don't know why (Snyder 1955: 48).

Salmon was taken in this area, but it is unclear to what degree this was done aboriginally. Snyder indicates that this area may have been fished using reef net technologies; she notes that all nets were of nettle fiber and equal to modern nets. Certainly, following the introduction of metal fish hooks, “All the west coast of Whidbey Island the salmon was trolled with the hook and line,” though it is possible that this practice was common before contact (Snyder 1955a: 24).

Native consultants also depicted Penn Cove as one of the principal shellfish gathering areas within Skagit territory. Penn Cove serves as the primary digging ground for horse clams (Smith n.d.; Snyder n.d.). The Skagit gathered “butter clams” on the sandy beaches of Whidbey Island (Snyder 1955b). The area between Long Point and Snatelum Point was a popular place for gathering cockles (Snyder 1955b). This area was apparently used by residents of multiple villages, who camped there for several days while gathering:

“there was a permanent village on Long Point... It was one of the main places for getting these cockles which I spoke of, which are a rather rare commodity and which were cherished by the Indians. They would leave their own village for a week or so and go up there” (Snyder n.d.: 33).

Mussels were gathered “all over” Whidbey Island, including the Coupeville area (Snyder 1955b).

Shellfish were said to have been gathered in a number of locations in the Cove, including popular clam beds at the landmark called Šu'šukus (at Snatelum Point) and points along the southern shoreline of Whidbey Island, such as Long Point. Small encampments were established at some of the best clam digging grounds. For example, southwest of Coupeville, “on Penn Cove there was a small camping place, being the southernmost beach of Penn Cove, a camping place and a place for getting clams” (Snyder 1955a: 30). As was often the case on the Northwest coast, clams served as a “risk reducing” resource, being used in particular abundance when other resources failed. At these times, the shellfish harvest from Penn Cove was apparently insufficient to support the resident communities. Thus, “when food is scarce at home,” the residents of Penn Cove fanned out to other clam gathering locations, including K'ta'səb



“Skagit man with basket on beach” apparently gathering shellfish
on the western shore of Whidbey Island

O.S. Van Olinda, photographer. University of Washington Libraries, Special Collections Division -
Negative No. UW23394

(Holmes Harbor), Kía'sid (north of Greenbank), Ske'wuks (a point across from the mouth of the Skagit River), and Kíta'səb (a lagoon north of Greenbank) (Snyder 1955b).

A number of hunting areas were to be found on the prairies and other areas in the hinterland of the Penn Cove villages. A number of sources note that Whidbey Island, generally, was a valued hunting site and was visited by tribal populations from a number of communities, both on and off the island. Early survey reports for the region note that

“In the woods on [Whidbey Island's] southern and northern extremities is found the white deer. They are taken in great numbers by the Indians, and their venison is a favorite and much used article of food” (Henry 1860: 260).

Ethnographic consultants for past studies, such as John Fornsby, also reported that the Skagit hunted portions of Whidbey Island extensively: “The Lower Skagit always had something to eat ... There were lots of deer on Whidbey Island. They pretty near ate fresh meat everyday” (Collins 1949: 302).

Predictably, prairie clearings and other grazing areas were principally targeted for hunting:

“deer was taken...from the area south of Coupeville over the prairie down to Fort Casey on Whidbey, that would be south across the lake, Crockett Lake” (Snyder n.d.: 31).

“Then deer was taken...from the area south of Coupeville over the prairie down to Fort Casey on Whidbey, that would be south across the lake, Crockett Lake” (Snyder 1955a: 30-31).

The west side of Whidbey Island was an especially popular place for hunting deer: “From [Penn Cove] the west side of Whidby was used for deer” (Snyder n.d.: 67-68).⁹⁵ As noted elsewhere, this area appears to have been hunted by a number of groups in addition to the Skagit. Some sources suggest “Swinomish” or “Snohomish” use of this area for hunting: “most of the shoreline of the west side of Whidby was used for hunting, generally by the Swinomish (AD in Snyder n.d.: 105). Others suggest that “Klallam, Twana and others hunted on the west shore of Whidby from Bush Point to Skagit Head” (GD in Snyder n.d.: 109).

The beach margins were also hunted for deer, as well as serving as base camps for hunting in prairies adjacent to these beaches: “The area between Bʒáʒale and Álidək^w was hunting-grounds, and the beaches were spotted with many small camps” (Snyder n.d.: 24). Similarly, consultants reported that

“there is a village right between Harrington’s Lagoon and Snaetlum Point, just about half way [perhaps Kackacágwəc]. It was a temporary camp from which deer were taken, toward Smith Prairie and the interior of the island” (Snyder 1955a: 33).

A number of clam digging encampments also seem to have served double-duty as deer hunting camps:

“Harrington’s Lagoon... was a temporary camping place for getting clams, and in back to the interior of the island for deer. South again,

another temporary camping place right at Race Lagoon, that was for getting clams and deer in the interior of the island, and also for getting cockles" (Snyder 1955a: 34).

It seems likely that the clam harvests would be coincident with the deer hunt, with women undertaking the former while men participated in the latter activity.

Cliffs near these beachfront camps were often used for deer drives – especially adjacent to Snatelum Point. Bow and arrow, snares, nets, clubs, and a number of other hunting tools were reported for hunts in these areas. Deer snares also served to catch game on the western shoreline of Penn Cove:

"Net spread in runway. Hunters hit trees with clubs, frighten into nets, then club and shoot them with bow and arrows...Nets cover width (4') of runway to entangle horns. A'lidək^w and head of Penn Cove" (Snyder 1955b).

Consultants reported waterfowl hunting within the study, but there were few specific references to this practice. One consultant noted that "to the southeast [of Coupeville] there were grounds for getting geese and duck" (Snyder 1955a: 32). Seal hunting appears to have been commonplace in this general area, but prime hunting sites were principally situated on offshore islands and rocks outside of the Reserve.⁹⁶

The "patchy" plant communities in what is today the Reserve also provided a wealth of gathering opportunities. The prairies, termed "Baquab" in Skagit, were especially important for plant gathering, in addition to the prairie hunting mentioned previously:

"Back of the area, or back of the shore from this point, to Snaetlum Point was quite an area that was prairie-like, and was used for hunting deer, for getting blackberries, wild currants, both of which were eaten, and another type of bulbs that were used for spiritual purposes, flax for medicinal purposes, strawberries. There is quite an inventory there of things that they used from this prairie" (Snyder n.d.: 32).

Camas digging is especially mentioned in reference to the prairies of the Ebey's Landing area, though relatively little detail was forthcoming on the specifics of this practice from ethnographic sources (Weiser 2006; Stevens n.d.b). Presumably, both camas and bracken fern were being alluded to by Snyder (1955) when she spoke of general root digging in these prairies:

“The roots were found in what my informants call Baquab and that is open prairie where the soil is rather shallow and sandy. Those were the root-digging areas, and they weren’t cluttered up with trees and forests. There were only a few of those but they were large in extent, on Whidbey Island but there were only a few and most of them were not in the vicinity of the villages at all. They were away from the salt water toward the interior. And all of the Lower Skagit would go to these two or three prairies and dig roots” (Snyder 1955a: 46-47).

These root grounds were apparently of such importance that tribes from elsewhere visited these prairies seasonally to gather. This was not only done to acquire camas, as is widely acknowledged, but was done specifically for the fern root harvests as well:

“The Upper Skagit used several species of fern: the sword fern, the brake fern, another variety of fern, as well as a kind of lichen (č’q’é) which grows on the trunks of trees. These roots also grew near Birdsvie on the main Skagit River and in a very large meadow near Coupeville in Lower Skagit territory on Whidbey Island. These areas did not have individual plots which were inherited. Any woman who had relatives at basla?alux, the village at Birdsvie, at duwaha, or in the Lower Skagit villages at Coupeville could obtain roots when she visited them during the summer” (Collins 1974c: 55-56).

Little ethnographic information was forthcoming on the specifics of traditional plant management methods in the Reserve, as have been documented more generally for the Coast Salish of northern Puget Sound (Suttles 2005). Snyder’s sources note that both clam beds and root grounds were owned, but of these, root grounds were especially important: “Root beds were more inclined to be privately owned than the clam beds by the Swinomish” (Snyder 1955a: 180).

A small number of other specialized plant gathering areas appear to have been found in scrub-shrub areas and forest margins. Speaking of the aforementioned “village right between Harrington’s Lagoon and Snaetlum Point,” for example, (Snyder 1955) notes that this “was used as a place for gathering ironwood which is syringia, a hard wood and which was used for implements and for cooking” (Snyder 1955a: 34). Ironwood (probably *Holodiscus discolor*) gathering areas were also reported on the shoreline and inland from this site, in what is today the Reserve. As noted previously, this wood was used to produce fishing gear used in Penn Cove. Nettle (*Urtica dioica*), used for the production of fishing nets, string, and other purposes, was also gathered in the interior of the island, a short distance inland from the southern Penn Cove villages.

Spiritual or ceremonial sites were also reported in and around what is today the Reserve:

“The Lower Skagit had certain areas within their territory set aside that they called Kwiat. That means “pure”. It also means “strong” and “dangerous” --Kwiat --dangerous.

“These areas were not used unless you were going out for a Guardian Spirit....These areas are mostly in the interior, in remote places. And in the words of my informant, “where people don’t walk”. In other words, where there is not an Indian trail and it is practically anywhere. Some places are well known for well,--being populated by a large number of Spirits. One place is Swantown, and another place on Whidbey is Badaskud” (Snyder 1955a: 34-35).

A spiritual bathing area of this type was reported a short distance south of Long Point, in the Reserve.

Trails and canoe fords also crossed Whidbey Island from Penn Cove to the outer coast on the west side of the island. A trail crossed from Bʒáʒale to Ebey’s Landing – apparently the principal trail used by those traveling from places on the open Sound to Penn Cove by land. This trail appears to have still been used well used into the era of Euro-American settlement.⁹⁷ Another trail led from Bʒáʒale to Fort Casey. This trail was apparently used principally as a route between the Penn Cove settlements and the lookout used to detect northern Indian raiders at Fort Casey; it appears to have sometimes served as a hunters’ trail as well. Another trail was reported between the San de Fuca area, near ʒáʒop, and the westernmost point of the island at Fort Ebey – apparently another 19th century lookout location for northern raiders. The absence of a trail or ford between the Álidəkʷ area on the head of Penn Cove and the west side of Whidbey Island is a noticeable omission in light of this being the narrowest point across the island in this area. The steepness of the bluff on the outer coast in this area, and the resulting absence of adequate canoe landing areas, likely explains the absence of a major trail in this area. Clearly, the beaches served as trails between communities. A number of other trails of varying levels of importance likely existed, but were not recorded in the available ethnographic documentation.

Burial Traditions on Penn Cove

While this study did not involve focused investigation of burial traditions among the communities that formerly occupied what is now Ebey’s Landing National Historical Reserve, certain archival and published accounts make references to burials in the area.

These are included here to aid the National Park Service in meeting NAGPRA consultation mandates.

Canoe burial was widespread and appears to have been standard practice for tribal elites. Canoe burial areas were typically situated a short distance from certain villages, within view of the water. Canoe burial grounds were especially reported at Snatelum Point, where the Čoba?álšid village community was of unusually high status and, according to oral tradition, of unusual antiquity. As noted previously, “canoe-burial was the general practice around Snaetlum Point” (Snyder n.d.: 38). Amelia Dan (n.d.) spoke of the importance of canoe burials historically:

“Around here it was the common practice to use a canoe in the same way as modern caskets. A well-to-do family would have a specially built nice new large canoe for their dead, and ordinary person used a small canoe. And that denoted a class difference, the reason why they used canoes for burial and put them up high (in tree) was so that the wild animals wouldn’t get at them. If they buried the dead, the coyotes would get them sooner or later. Around here, they never buried their dead in the ground. This little island, Dead Man’s Island [apparently on the south end of Lopez Island], was the most recent burial place and they did that - canoe burial - out there” (Dan n.d.: 2).

Meanwhile, simple burials in middens and on the foreshore have been reported for slaves and those of especially low status within villages containing individuals of diverse status. Little has been recorded regarding the burial traditions of those communities that were largely low-status sk^wdabš, as was apparently common on Penn Cove. As noted elsewhere, the remains of defeated enemies, especially those of defeated northern raiders, were sometimes scattered or staked out on the waterfront in front of fortified villages to discourage further attacks. It is unclear whether these human remains were later interred in some other manner.

As a counterpoint to canoe burials, various kinds of “box burials” are reported for the Lower Skagit. As noted elsewhere, Vancouver mentioned seeing at Penn Cove “several sepulchers formed exactly like a sentry box...[which] contained skeletons of many young children tied up in blankets” as well as the skeletons of adults (Vancouver 1792: 165). Collins notes that this kind of “box burial” was widespread in the region, and shared by the Lower Skagit peoples’ neighbors, such as the Upper Skagit, who “had several types of burial, one being similar to this box burial described for the Lower Skagit” (Collins 1974c: 27). In the box burials noted by Vancouver, the arm and leg bones were missing from the adult skeletons, leading to speculation that they had been removed and used for some utilitarian purpose; the actual reason for the missing limb bones remains unclear.

In addition to Čoba?álšid, Snyder's consultants referred to "Indian cemeteries" at Čək^wolá, Bá?šac, and HoBqs villages on Penn Cove – communities that will all be discussed in more detail in the pages that follow. It is likely that each of the major villages had its own burial site at some time, but these villages are the only ones to have received mention in the course of Snyder's ethnographic interviews in the 1950s. As is mentioned elsewhere in this document, the primary burial site at Čək^wolá washed out at some time in the 19th century. Tribal members reportedly relocated some human remains to burial sites at HoBqs and Bá?šac at that time. During the period of Euro-American resettlement of the Penn Cove area, a portion of the burials at Penn Cove were relocated to other places outside of the modern Reserve boundary.

The circumstances of the contact period changed burial traditions significantly. As epidemics raged through these communities in the late 18th and early to mid-19th centuries, burial rituals were necessarily abbreviated at times. Canoe burials persisted, but rapid, impromptu burials were sometimes necessary when large numbers of people died at the same time. Some sources suggest that communities burned longhouses when the families that formerly occupied the house had been largely decimated due to disease and there were no survivors to maintain the home (Roberts 1975). Likewise, Amelia Dan noted that

"To her knowledge, she has never even heard of the Indians practicing cremation. But after white contact, and if they had a smallpox epidemic, they might burn everything in a village and leave it (the village) and everything behind. In that way they might burn the dead bodies there" (Dan n.d.: 2).

Moreover, it is likely that raiding practices may still be reflected in human remains from this same general period. Remains from these conflicts, including those of both local and raiding tribes, may still be buried in and around Ebey's Landing National Historical Reserve. It seems likely, but has not been confirmed, that the remains of nonresident raiders were ultimately disposed of in ways that were distinct from resident populations.

Only during the last two to three decades of large-scale American Indian occupation at Penn Cove were residents under the direct influence of Catholic missionaries. Under their influence, a small number of tribal families transitioned to Christian traditions and subterranean burial. In a few cases, preexisting burial sites appear to have become interspersed with subterranean burials. The exact chronology of this transition remains ambiguous, and while a small number of families may have been adopting

subterranean burial practices by the mid-19th century, it was still reported as being rare by the time that Penn Cove's residents had largely moved to other tribal communities.⁹⁸ Amelia Dan reported that

"She has only heard of a recent instance of coffin burial, before fifty years ago. It was the burial of Charley Jim in the present-day type (full-length) coffin. He lived out on Whidby and she believes that he is buried in some white men's cemetery out there. He was a coffin-maker by trade himself, and probably supplied them to the Indians after canoe-burial was abandoned (prior to 1900)" (Dan n.d.: 4).

One burial site within the study area, near Snatelum Point, continued to be used for subterranean burials well after canoe burials had been largely abandoned. This site was not reoccupied and was left largely intact, perhaps having a certain status in the eyes of white settlers as a proper "cemetery" instead of a burial ground. Descendents of the Penn Cove villages living in reservation communities in the 1910s, aided considerably by the Indian Agents of the time, were able to purchase this cemetery from a private landowner. This Indian cemetery is discussed later in this document.

TREATIES, CONFLICT AND DISPLACEMENT: EBEY'S LANDING IN THE 1850s

While the residents of what is today Ebey's Landing National Historical Reserve had experienced dramatic and transformative changes in the first decades of the 19th century, nothing could have prepared them for the changes that would transform every aspect of daily life in the mid-19th century. The trade wealth that had briefly buoyed the Skagit was disappearing almost as abruptly as it had arrived. Following the boundary settlement between the United States and Britain under the 1846 Oregon Treaty, the Hudson's Bay Company retreated northward into Canada. Even as the number of fur-bearing animals dwindled in Skagit territory, access to trading posts steadily declined. By 1855 there were no longer HBC trading facilities in western Washington.

Simultaneously, relations between the Skagit and the arriving settlers were souring noticeably. Increased outside interest in the agricultural potential of Whidbey Island had brought a wave of potential settlers. As noted previously, the Puget Sound Agricultural Company had actively promoted agricultural resettlement of the northern Sound since 1838, but arguably intensified its efforts in the following decade, facilitating a surge in Anglo-Canadian settlement in the region. Now, in the wake of the 1846 Oregon Treaty, a small but steady stream of potential Anglo-American settlers was spreading across the landscape. Much evidence suggests that the resident Skagit sought to repel further incursions into their territories. Amidst this decline in Indian-white relations, the Catholic mission established by Blanchet at Penn Cove had been abandoned. Paul Kane reported on May 7, 1847,

"In the afternoon we touched at Whitby's Island, which divides the Straits of De Fuca from Puget's Sound. A Catholic mission had been established on the island some few years before, but was obliged to be given up, owing to the turbulent disposition of the Indians, who, though friendly to the Hudson Bay Company as traders, look with great suspicion upon others who attempt to settle there, fearing that the whites would attempt to dispossess them of their lands" (Kane 1925: 227).

A year later, in 1848, the Skagit are reported to have hosted a vast multi-tribal council in the vicinity of Ebey's Prairie to discuss how to respond to Euro-American encroachment on Puget Sound tribal lands. As recounted by some sources, "Sixty deer were killed for the feast...and one would be settler was chased off of Ebey's Prairie by several of the men" (Weiser 2006: 28). Some of the assembly burned down the cabin of a settler who was trying to establish himself near Snakelum Point. Despite this, the resident Skagit reportedly rejected the violent methods being promoted by some tribal leaders, citing the potential defensive value of the new settlers against the Northern Indians; instead,

they reluctantly agreed to not violently expel new settlers (Roberts 1975: 177; Kellogg 1934: 17, 26)⁹⁹

These efforts to repel permanent Euro-American settlement were successful for a short time. As a number of authors have suggested, the Ebey family represented the first family to successfully homestead in the area: "No permanent settlement was attempted on Whidbey Island or vicinity until 1850 when the Ebey family arrived and filed claim" (Bennett 1972: 12; see also Ebey 1917: 239). "The first permanent White settlement in the Skagit area was made in 1850 in Lower Skagit territory on Whidbey Island" (Collins 1974c: 32). The Ebeys represented the vanguard of early settlement in Skagit territory, in a place that was widely considered to be among the most appealing agricultural areas in all of western Washington. As one early chronicler noted of this portion of Whidbey Island,

"There are on the sound many islands worthy of mention, the most important of which is Whidby's island, which may be called the garden of the Territory. On this island is a considerable quantity of prairie land, which at an early day was taken up by the settlers" (Henry 1860: 260).

Certainly, once the Ebey family was established there, this seems to have eliminated certain psychological obstacles among potential Euro-American settlers, and resettlement began in earnest. Indeed, Bancroft reported that no other portion of Western Washington was as rapidly occupied by Euro-American settlers than Whidbey Island. With a population growing from the Ebey family nucleus in 1850, the fall 1853 census identified 195 white settlers living in what is today Island County (Bancroft 1890: 28, 62). While most of these individuals were agricultural settlers, arrived via the Oregon Trail, a small but steady stream of gold prospectors passed through the new agricultural community as well, traveling to and from minor gold rushes in distant places such as Ruby Creek and the Cascade Mountains.¹⁰⁰

The arrival of so many new settlers in the Ebey's Landing area had a proportionately unsettling effect upon the local residents. As Roberts (1975) has noted,

"The settlers and miners who began arriving after 1850 were met with far less enthusiasm [than were the early traders and missionaries]. Their presence provoked a direct confrontation over who was to own the land...The White immigrants didn't reach the Skagit area until 1850, the same year that Congress passed the Oregon Donation Land Act, giving each settler a 320 acre claim (or 640, "a square mile," for a man and wife) if he lived on it for a number of years. Between 1850 and 1855 handfuls of settlers spread themselves around Whidbey Island, first taking up the tillable prairie lands where the Indians had planted camas bulbs and

potatoes. The prime lands where the Indians had planted camas bulbs and potatoes. The prime land was quickly spoken for, and later comers had to be satisfied with small portions of prairie and large wooded acreage" (Roberts 1975: 129, 174).

This is certainly apparent in the early diaries of the Ebey family. For example, on February 17th, 1853, Rebecca Ebey wrote:

"The Indians are bothering us a great deal about their potatoes which our cattle and the cattle belonging to their neighbors, destroyed for them last summer through their own neglect in not fencing or guarding them through the summer and fall. They have been to see the agent and he will not pay them. Their potatoes were estimated at 300 dollars by three competent judges. The neighbors therefore met together and concluded it would be best to pay them half the amount at this time and get them to wait for the balance, rather than have any difficulty with them now when our settlement is weak; but to see that the same will not be to do again, and make them build good fences around their potatoes" (Ebey and Ebey 1917: 135).

This process of displacement has especially been examined in the area by Richard White (1972, 1980).¹⁰¹ As the American settlers began displacing native communities on Whidbey Island, some tribal leaders appealed to their old trading partners, the British, to help them retain control over their territories:

"As an ally of the Indians the heavily besieged British were practically useless. Unable to defend their own claims they were in no position to aid the upper Sound villages. In the heavily forested Sound country, cleared land was at a premium and the small fertile plots of the Indians were particularly desirable to Americans seeking to plant their initial crop" (White 1972: 38).

By 1855, a significant majority of the land in what is today the Reserve had been taken as donation land claims, including much of the Penn Cove shoreline as well as all of the major prairies. Tribal access to the formerly important prairie areas of Whidbey Island steadily eroded, as much as that land was rapidly reoccupied by one of the earliest and most productive agricultural areas in what would become western Washington. Even as late as 1854-55, when the Point Elliott and Point No Point treaties were being negotiated, central Whidbey Island was one of perhaps only 9 isolated areas of white settlement in what is now the state of Washington (Lane and Lane 1977).

Camas and potato grounds were quickly lost in the process, as were many key hunting areas. This not only enhanced tribal dependence on marine resources, but pressured many tribal members into new economic pursuits. Many Indians provided transportation to settlers, helping to canoe them and their belongings around the Sound and its tributaries. Indeed, the Ebeyes depicted tribal control on their transportation as monopolistic and acquired a canoe in part to free themselves of obligations to local Indians (Ebey 1916; White 1972: 39; Osmundson 1964: 63).

By the 1850s, the Skagit and other tribal communities also were finding work as laborers for new agricultural settlements on the Puget Sound, particularly at Ebey's Landing and at the small HBC agricultural operations in places such as the San Juan Islands:

"The early settlers on Whidbey Island engaged the local Indians in all manner of tasks. The Ebey's employed Indian women to dig potatoes, wash clothes, pick and plant onions, and so forth. They employed Lower Skagit men to work on the house, chop wood, dig potatoes and onions, and carry the mail.... Payment seemed to be a compromise between Indians wants and white inclination: blankets, potatoes, old clothes, bolts of cloth and so forth" (Bennett 1972: 14; see also Ebey 1916, 1917).

Farmers also hired Indian laborers to build fences and ditches on lands that they still claimed as their own (Osmundson 1964: 88).

This shift to wage labor did not involve many members of the larger tribal community, but was nonetheless significant in a variety of ways. With the rapid disappearance of the fur trade, wage labor became one of the only avenues for obtaining goods, from tools to bullets to imported cloth and clothing, that had become fundamental to the Skagit peoples' way of living in the 19th century. So important was this access that many resident men from Penn Cove appear to have not only worked on local farms, but relocated temporarily to places some distance away to seek agricultural employment. Thus, for example, Charles Griffen, Chief Agent for the HBC's Belle Vue Sheep Farm on San Juan Island, noted a remarkable number of "Skatchets" and "Klalams" who often visited San Juan Island during the 1850s. These individuals worked as laborers there for both British and American interests, including the Belle Vue Sheep Farm, where Skagits were especially important in constructing the original sheep farm facilities. An excerpt from the April 1854 journal of Hudson's Bay Company agent, Charles Griffen, gives some sense of Skagit participation in these pursuits:

"Monday 3^d Sheep lambing fast..."Tom" (Skatchet Boy) & Klalam "Charley" with young lambs and wethers. "Slavie" and Frank (Skatchet) clearing at Park-- "Old man" & Jim (2 Skatchets) hauling pulling up logs....

Monday 10th... Five Cowichins who I engaged yesterday with "Slavie" opening a road in the centre of the Island to get to Prairies in order to extend our sheep run Skatchets carrying plank, shingles etc. ...

Thursday 13th ... Four Skatchets carrying small gravel [to] my house...

Monday 17th ...two Chimsians & 1 (Jim) Skatchet, making a Park for cattle...

Wednesday 19th Beautiful fine clear day-- Holland & the 3 Skatchets & 4 Cowitchins opening another Road..." (Griffen 1854-61).

Seasonal multi-tribal communities of laborers sometimes appeared alongside these agricultural communities. Tribal designations sometimes blurred – it is significant to note that the Griffen journals from four years later mention a continued significant Indian presence at his farm, yet seldom uses tribal designations and never refers to the "Skatchets." Instead, he refers to all tribal workers collectively as "the Indians," a term that differentiates them from Euro-American and Hawaiian laborers on the Belle Vue Farm (Griffen 1854-61).

Timber harvesting also rapidly became a part of the Puget Sound economy. Some tribal members were enlisted as labor for various frontier mills that served the agricultural communities of the region:

"With the advent of the white man, about 1850, [traditional subsistence practices were] violently upset by new ideas and new conditions. First in importance was an unsuspected value given to timber. The establishing of mills throughout the country, the development and exploitation of the Indian as a labor supply, and of his property as a reservoir of material, laid the foundation for several fortunes of present West Coast residents, and for the utter discomfiture of the Indians" (Upchurch 1936a: 291).

At around this time, "with the establishment of the logging industry Indians were hired to work as greasers - applying oil to logs and equipment to facilitate logging operations – as well as mill hands (Collins 1949: 307; O'Keene 1880a: 8). A small number entered the fledgling oystering and dogfishing industries (Gedosch 1968), and in only a few years some were entering new labor-intensive agricultural operations working as cranberry and hop pickers (Suttles 1954: 77; Marian 1878: 6; Collins 1949: 329-30)" (Bennett 1972: 14).

Certainly, relationships between the early settlers and area tribes were often congenial in the earliest years of Euro-American settlement. Early diaries and correspondence make many references to positive interactions, most centering on the relationships between settlers and their Indian employees or trading partners.¹⁰² However, these varied and sometimes tense early interactions were only a foretaste of more dramatic changes and conflicts that would reshape the human geography of Whidbey Island in the tumultuous decade that followed. What follows is a thematic overview of some of the major themes in Indian-white relations during this important period. These sections have been organized so that they are coherent by theme, though there are minor repetitions in the chronology of the eventful period from 1851 to 1861.

Treaties

In 1850 and 1852 British Columbia Governor James Douglas had negotiated a series of treaties with the Straits tribes of Vancouver Island through which they ceded all of lands to facilitate Euro-American reoccupation. These tribes retained only their “accustomed” village, camp, and fishing sites, most of which later became Indian reserves (Suttles 1954: 41). Clearly, the United States was eager to proceed with similar negotiations south of the international border. In 1854 the U.S. Congress appropriated funds to negotiate new treaties. At about the same time, Congress designated Washington as a territory, separating it from the larger Oregon Territory. Isaac Stevens was appointed Governor of this Territory, and was also authorized to act as Superintendent of Indian Affairs within its boundaries (Roberts 1975: 183).

In preparation for the treaty negotiations, Stevens made repeated visits to Penn Cove, which – with its large resident population in addition to a variety of visitors from other tribes – gave him opportunities to meet with tribal representatives from throughout the region. Stevens notes show that a diversity of tribes had gathered there among the resident Skagit; indeed, his notes describe a population of no fewer than 1,050 “Lummi, Nook-Sahk, [and] Sa-mish” from “Chag-choo-sa Island” at the mouth of “Lummi River” who were temporarily living at “Penn’s Cove” at around the time of the 1855 Point Elliott treaty (Stevens n.d.a). Indeed, Isaac Stevens indicated that he was able to “see nearly all the Indians” of the District between the Olympic Mountains and the Cascade Range by visiting only four places on Puget Sound. These included “Whitby’s Island” as well as Steilacoom, Seattle, and Bellingham Bay (Stevens 1854a).

Much has been written about the treaties negotiated by Territorial Governor and Superintendent of Indian Affairs, Isaac Stevens, in 1854-55. While much of the historical background to these treaties is beyond the scope of the current document, it is important to briefly retrace the history of the treaties as they relate specifically to the

study area. The lands within the modern Ebey's Landing NHR are within the lands addressed by the "Treaty of Point Elliott," also known as the "Treaty with the Dwamish, Suquamish, Etc.," which was signed on January 22, 1855, at Point Elliott, near present-day Mukilteo, Washington, and ratified some four years later, on March 8, 1859. The lands now within Ebey's Landing National Historical Reserve sit within the lands ceded under this treaty. To the west, the S'Klallam were signatories to a separate Stevens treaty, the "Treaty of Point No Point," also known as the "Treaty with the S'Klallam" which was negotiated on Point No Point on the northern tip of the Kitsap Peninsula, signed on January 26, 1855 and ratified March 8, 1859.

The treaty process served to extinguish tribal claims to much of northwestern Washington, thereby opening the land for uncontested Euro-American resettlement. The treaties were designed to address all tribal claims to the portions of the territories described in each, leaving only small reservations and eliminating any remaining tribal claims to all other portions of the landscape (see Lane 1974). Simultaneously, the reservation system created by the treaties served to concentrate the tribal population in a small number of locations around Puget Sound. In turn, this was expected to eliminate perceived strategic threats from the Indian communities and to facilitate rapid cultural, religious, and economic conversion of the Sound's tribes. In the geographically concentrated reserve system, Indian agents were to have both improved surveillance of tribal activities, while also being able to efficiently deliver agency services, such as food and other goods

To achieve these ends, Stevens advocated concentrating as many bands as possible on one reservation (Coan n.d.: 138-39).

"It is... proposed, if practicable to remove all the Indians on the East side of the sound as far as the Snohomish: admit as few Reservations as possible, with a view of finally concentrating them in one" (Stevens n.d.a: 5).

Yet, during his earliest visits to the Puget Sound tribes, Stevens discussed the potential for tribal relocation to reservation communities, but encountered resistance to the loss of village sites in particular:

"They have all...singled out a few spots in their domains, which, they wish to reserve: and contemplate the sale of the rest of their lands to the whites. These spots are not only permanent places of residence, but are hereditary. Near them are the graves of their relatives and friends, and they cherish an affection for them, which, I have scarcely ever seen equaled. Those are their homes, and from them they roam about the

Sound in every direction, going where the fish, roots and berries abound most at the different seasons of the year” (Stevens 1853).

Recognizing that the successful cession of tribal title required that *all* Puget Sound tribal communities were represented by in the treaty process by appropriate headmen, Stevens was presented with a formidable challenge. As noted previously, tribal political structure did not traditionally account for the designation of a small number of head chiefs. Village communities were scattered, politically diffuse, and varied widely in their receptivity to the treaty process. In order to overcome this, Stevens and his colleagues decided to manipulate tribal patterns of leadership in bold and novel ways. At the onset of the treaty process,

“Stevens was...instructed to unite the numerous Indian bands in the Territory into a few large tribes, hopefully six or eight for the entire territory. If possible, he was to negotiate six or less treaties which would include all of the Indians. The treaties were to provide for the consolidation of separate bands and tribes on a single reservation (Lane 1974: 5-6).

Following the Indian policies of his day, Stevens also believed that the treaty process was to serve the purpose of enhancing the authority of Indian village headmen, so that the government could hold specific leaders responsible for the conduct of their people and for adherence to treaty provisions (Roberts 1975: 183). In light of this, Stevens appointed certain high status men as “head chiefs” and accepted them as duly authorized representatives of specifically designated “tribes,” even when the constituent communities of these tribes had not necessarily granted their consent for these leaders to represent them. This is not to suggest that these men were not, in some manner, qualified representatives of people:

“Governor Stevens’ party gave these men formal written commissions as chiefs and sub-chiefs...Most were wealthy...[they were] respected war leaders, religious leaders, or traders, some a combination of these” (Roberts 1975: 192-93).

In the years that followed, this created innumerable legal challenges to the treaties. Reflecting on over a century of legal challenges to the veracity of the Point Elliott and Point No Point Treaties, the Chief of the BIA’s Division of Tribal Government Services wrote in 1974 that,

“The problem was that the Indian organization in this area was village, rather than tribal oriented. To simplify this situation, Governor Stevens and Agent Simmons created “tribes” and chose the “head chiefs.” The various bands and village groups were arbitrarily assigned a “head chief.” These government-appointed “head chiefs” not only signed the treaty for their respective “tribe,” but for all other groups which had been declared subordinate to them. The result of this policy is that there are twenty-two named tribes in the preamble of the point Elliot Treaty and only thirteen of them are represented among the eighty-two signatories. Furthermore, two tribes are represented by fifteen signatories, but are not mentioned in the preamble” (White 1974: 2).

Some groups came forward claiming that they were not represented, or were misrepresented, in the treaty process and could not therefore be bound to the conditions of the treaties. Others indicated that their communities had been inappropriately grouped with, and made subordinate to, other tribal populations with which they had had little or no direct affiliation prior to the treaties. A few have contended that their ancestors could not have understood the implications of the treaties, as they were largely negotiated in Chinook Jargon, which was nobody’s native language.¹⁰³ These issues continue even into the present day, and explain in no small part the number of federally unrecognized Puget Sound tribes – such as the Duwamish, Mitchell Bay, Snohomish, Snoqualmoo, and Steilacoom tribes – that have sought separate federal acknowledgment in recent years.

Most sources suggest that members of Skagit communities were well-represented at the Point Elliott treaty negotiations. In his notes, Stevens (n.d.a.) documented the presence of 112 Skagit men, 140 Skagit women, and 97 children at the Point Elliott treaty grounds immediately prior to negotiations; he also noted 52 individuals who were “absent” but who were apparently expected at the proceedings. The largest group arrived some ten days before the treaty was signed, camping at Point Elliott and participating in councils and negotiation for much of that time: “On January 12, 1855 the Skagits under their head chief Goliah, arrived to day and were received in great form by the Snoqualmoos” (Stevens n.d.a: 13).¹⁰⁴ The 18 signatories of the Point Elliott Treaty who were represented as Skagit included:

- 1) Goliah, “Chief of the Skagits and other allied tribes,”
- 2) Kwallattum, or “General Pierce, Sub-chief of the Skagit tribe,”
- 3) Kwuss-ka-nam, or “George Snatelum, Senior,”
- 4) Hel-mits, or “George Snatelum, Skagit sub-chief,”
- 5) S’kwai-kwi, “Skagit tribe, sub-chief,”
- 6) Kleh-kent-soot,

- 7) Sohn-heh-ovs,
- 8) S'deh-ap-kan, or "General Warren,"
- 9) Ske-eh-tum,
- 10) Patchkanam, or "Dome,"
- 11) She-hope, or "General Pierce,"
- 12) Charley,
- 13) Sampson,
- 14) Hatch-kwentum,
- 15) Yo-i-kum,
- 16) T'kwa-ma-han,
- 17) D'zo-lole-gwam-hu,
- 18) Pat-sen.¹⁰⁵

As noted previously, though Goliah was clearly a talented leader, he was also reported to be of mixed Skagit and low-status "sk^wdabš" parentage, which raises interesting questions regarding his designation as "head chief." Certainly, Goliah's authority at the Point Elliott treaty negotiations seems to have been pronounced. Some sources note that Goliah "signed" for all Skagits, including people along the Skagit river system who might be conventionally designated as "Upper Skagit." This implied a level of authority matched only by three other treaty signatories – Chowitsut (of the "Lummi and other tribes"), Patkanim (of the Snoqualmoo, Snohomish, and other tribes"), and Sealth (or "Seattle" – "of the Duwamish and Suquamish Tribes") (Lane 1974: 19). Roberts (1975) contends that this was a strategic decision on the part of the United States negotiators:

"It seems likely that one reason why these four men -- Chowitsut, Snatelum (or Goliah, his spokesman), Patkanim, and Sealth -- were chosen to occupy the role of paramount chiefs, giving speeches for their people at the conference, was that they were among the four most friendly to the Whites. At the conclusion of the conference, the whites presented gifts to the Indian people, funneling them through these four, strengthening the Indians' paramount positions even more" (Roberts 1975: 194)

The Point Elliott Treaty served to create the rudiments of the modern reservation system, as well as determining which tribes would be able to stay in their traditional homelands, and which tribes would be forced to relocate. If "the treaties were to provide for the consolidation of separate bands and tribes on a single reservation," it quickly became apparent that more than one reservation would be required if the United States had any hope of insuring Indian compliance (Lane 1974: 6). The Tulalip reservation was originally conceptualized as the single, concentrated reservation envisioned by Stevens.¹⁰⁶ The Point Elliott Treaty established the Lummi, Suquamish (or "Port Madison"), Swinomish (Swin-a-mish), and Tulalip reservations, while keeping

open the possibility of additional reservations through presidential proclamation; this was done to appease bands which “refused to be moved to the large central location” (Meeker 1905: 263). Nonetheless, both treaties included language indicating that any of the reservations approved in the treaty might be eliminated by Presidential action, and residents relocated to, as stated in the Point Elliott Treaty, a “general reservation” for all tribes of the region (see Appendix). Unfortunately for the Lower Skagit, their homeland was not included in the list of tribes receiving reservations. Reservations specifically designated for four other signatory tribes – Duwamish, Skagit, Snohomish, and Snoqualmie – were not included in the treaty language.

This is not to suggest that Whidbey Island was not considered for a reservation. During treaty negotiations, Whidbey Island’s west shore was surveyed for the creation of a large central reservation, where multiple tribes would be gathered. However, the steep western shore and other features apparently convinced Isaac Stevens and George Gibbs that the island wasn’t suitable. While the eastern shore of the island could accommodate boats, any transportation to or from communities on the open Sound would be restricted by the island’s unique geography. Reporting on the treaty preparations of January 12, 1855, George Gibbs reported,

“Mr. Gibbs with a party of Indians examined the shore of Admiralty inlet from Pt. Elliott southward for some miles with a view to its fitness for a central reserve. The banks were found to be bluff with the exception of one or two small points and unfit for landing in canoes, an absolute requisite in choosing ground for the Indians. The country too was broken and very heavily timbered. In consequence, it was deemed proper to turn the examination in another direction” (Gibbs 1855b).

No doubt, the concentration of early Euro-American settlers, who had already established themselves on all the desirable and untimbered portions of this island, also contributed to their decision to abandon Whidbey Island as a reservation site.

The absence of a treaty reservation at Penn Cove, in light of its widely acknowledged population density at the time of the treaties, is a noteworthy oversight. A smaller Skagit reservation was clearly considered for Penn’s Cove, as one of the additional small reservations made as a concession to particular bands, but for reasons that remain unclear, this was not codified in the Point Elliott treaty (Stevens 1857b).¹⁰⁷ Governor Isaac Stevens compiled a list of proposed reservation locations in 1854; on this list, the Skagit section was conspicuously left unfinished, stating only “Skagit, Kikiallis etc.- one near mouth of Skagit River, one near mouth of ----” (Stevens n.d.a: 4). Stevens did not identify Penn Cove, and only this one proposed mainland reservation is referenced (Stevens n.d.a). Ultimately, no independent Skagit reservation would ever be

designated, a point that remained a sticking point in relations between Skagit descendents and the U.S. during subsequent legal claims.¹⁰⁸

As the most proximate reservation, with stronger kinship ties to the Skagit than the other reservation communities, the Swinomish reservation became the de facto “Skagit reservation” in the view of many officials. It was generally assumed, though not initially codified in any written documents encountered in the course of this research, that

“The Swinomish reservation, located in Swinomish territory, was intended to serve all the Indians of the Skagit drainage system as well as the Indians resident of Whidbey and Fidalgo islands” (Lane 1977: 4-5).

Accordingly, sources of the 19th century occasionally refer to the Swinomish Reservation instead as the “Skagit Reservation” (Fay 1861). Or, as Powell stated, “The Skagit reservation, as agreed upon in the treaty, was the peninsula forming the southeastern extremity of Perry Island” (Powell 1886: 180; see also Gibbs 1877).

Lacking a reservation of their own, the densely settled Skagit of Penn Cove faced the potential of dislocation. Alas, dislocation was all but insured by article 4 of the Elliott Point Treaty, which specified that the signatory tribes were to remove themselves to the new reservations within one year of the treaty’s ratification. A number of tribal communities resisted relocation and were able to secure Special Indian Agents, who reported to the reservation-based Indian Agency system, but resided off-reservation with or near these large tribal communities. In time, a number of these communities were able to secure their own, small reservations, in defiance of Stevens’ original vision:

“At the time that the treaty was negotiated, it was the intent of the government representatives to ultimately concentrate all the Indians of western Washington on a single reservation. The four reservations provided in Article 2 of the treaty were intended to be temporary homes for the Indians until such time as it might prove feasible to remove them to a general reservation for all the Indians of western Washington.

“This plan was never carried out. In fact, it proved necessary to provide additional reservations to those initially contemplated by the Stevens treaties” (Lane 1977: 3).

No doubt, the tribal population at Penn Cove was reluctant to relocate, especially prior to the treaty’s ratification. With such a large tribal population residing outside of designated treaty reservations, the Western Washington Indian Agency conceded, providing a special Indian Agent to the Penn Cove community. This Agency reached

its zenith in the years leading up to Point Elliott Treaty ratification in 1859. The Agency is little documented, and yet appears to have been one of the 19th century's largest and most important officially sanctioned off-reservation communities on Puget Sound. And it sat squarely within what is today Ebey's Landing National Historical Reserve. What follows is an account of life at this Agency, derived almost entirely from unpublished archival documents.

Indian Wars

Following his treaty-making efforts in western Washington early in 1855, Governor Stevens traveled to east of the Cascade Range to seek similar treaties with the tribes of what is today eastern Washington. Through the summer of 1855, Stevens and Oregon Territorial Governor, Joel Palmer, sought to hastily devise a single overarching treaty with the Nez Perce, Umatilla, Cayuse, Walla Walla, and Yakama. Unlike the western Washington treaties, this process quickly ran afoul. The eastern tribes openly opposed the plan to relocate them into multi-tribal reservations and negotiations quickly degenerated into a series of skirmishes between U.S. forces and each of these tribes. In eastern Washington, these skirmishes soon escalated to become a conflict commonly called the "Yakama Indian War," which lasted through 1858.

News of Indian wars east of the Cascade Range quickly reached the fledgling frontier settlements of Puget Sound, causing widespread panic. Settlers were aware of social and kinship ties between the Sound tribes and those of the interior, but likely envisioned a degree of collusion that was not justified by available facts. Upon hearing of the wars east of the Cascades, Winfield Ebey wrote in November 4, 1855:

"This intelligence calls for immediate action from everyone. After considerable consultation it is agreed for me and a small com. to go tomorrow and hunt up the Scaget Indians and if possible bring them into the settlements or at all events to learn their feelings in regard to the whites. As it is feared they are tampered with by the hostile Indians" (W. Ebey 1855-1857).

During these early consultations, the Skagit Indians indicated no interest in participating in the Indian wars of the east. They reportedly offered to either give up their weapons or retain them and help fight the Yakama (Kellogg 1934: 44). Chief Snatelum is often cited as having helped maintain peaceful relationships between area tribes and the Euro-American settlers during this precarious time.¹⁰⁹ Still, during the beginnings of the war, some Whidbey Island settlers reported that the Indians from



The Crockett Blockhouse, constructed near Fort Casey in 1855, as it appeared in 1927. Early settlers constructed such structures in a number of locations in what is today Ebey's Landing National Historical Reserve during the interethnic hostilities of the mid-1850s.
 Asahel Curtis photo - University of Washington Libraries, Special Collections Division - Negative No. WAS0213

Penn Cove and Holmes Harbor were becoming bolder and feared uprisings all the same. Ambiguous warnings, sometimes interpreted as threats were heard from local tribes: "some of the Skagits warned the Whites that they should be on guard in readiness for trouble" (Roberts 1975: 206; Kellogg 1934: 48). A few skirmishes erupted in southern Puget Sound as tensions between disaffected tribal members and alarmed settlers reached a fever pitch. Blockhouses were constructed as a general protection measure on Whidbey Island and settlers intermittently occupied these for the duration of the war:

"During the so-called Indian war of 1855, the whole white population of Puget Sound, including the settlers on Whidbey Island, moved into blockhouses for protection, although the serious Indian rebels resided

primarily south and east of Seattle. A contingent of soldiers was stationed as far north as Fort Whatcom, where Bellingham now stands" (Roberts: 1975: 179).

Two blockhouses were hastily constructed on the Crocket land claim on Crockett Prairie, in what is today the Reserve; others were soon built elsewhere, on the land claims of John Alexander and Jacob Ebey. The specifics of the blockhouses in what is today the Reserve are discussed by Gail and Michael Evans-Hatch in their Historic Resources Study for Ebey's Landing NHR (2005: 89-92).¹¹⁰ The diaries of certain individuals who were present during these hostilities, such as Isaac and Rebecca Ebey (1916, 1917) and Winfield Ebey (1855-1857) provide particularly rich retellings of these events, going well beyond the level of detail warranted here, but could be consulted for further information (see also Cahail 1901).¹¹¹

Amidst the conflicts, Territorial Governor Stevens quickly sought to defend the small and isolated settlements of western Washington using a variety of mechanisms. Most significantly, he sought to relocate all Puget Sound tribes to defensible and easily monitored locations where they might not be a threat to settlers and might avoid unmonitored exchanges with eastern Washington tribes. These locations were positioned along the tidewater, facilitating the effective depopulation of interior valleys and waterways. Among these locations was Penn Cove, which quickly became a refugee camp of immense proportions. As reported by Roberts,

"The Indians were commanded to gather at a series of points along the salt water, where local agents directed them to encampments at Bellingham Bay, Port Townsend, Penn Cove, Holmes' Harbor, Port Madison, Fort Kitsap, Fox Island, and Puyallup...The natives were encouraged to surrender their arms temporarily and remain at these locations in return for food, if they needed it. By the end of November, 1855, almost all of the Skagit Region people had crossed over to Penn Cove, Whidbey Island" (Roberts 1975: 201-02).

Likewise, Coan states that

"The Skagit Indians were moved from their native place along the Skagit River to Penn Cove on Whidbey Island. They were visited, in Nov. 1855 by R.C. Fay and agreed to move to this island. By the end of November, almost all of these Indians had crossed to Penn Cove. At a council after the removal, the local agent explained the policy of the government to some twelve hundred Indians who seemed to be satisfied with the plan" (Coan 1920: 247).

Still, in some cases, relocation was accomplished only under the threat of force. Kellogg (1939: 44) records that companies of volunteer soldiers were organized on Whidbey Island, and First Lieutenant S.D. Howe was dispatched to the mainland to “go out and bring in the Skagit Indians.” The tribes they encountered were told that additional soldiers were to be found at the Whidbey Island blockhouses and were given only three days to begin their move to Penn Cove. Chief “Charley” Snatelum is reported to have assisted Howe, perhaps out of a desire to help avoid violent conflicts in the region. As Howe reported in November of 1855: “Charley seems well disposed and says that his people are also....Colonel Simmons [Indian Agent M.T. Simmons] is expected down soon to have a talk with them which I think will have a good effect”(reported in Kellogg 1939: 44). The refugee camp that emerged did not perhaps house every Indian from the region, but did certainly house a significant portion of the resident tribal population from Skagit River, northern and central Whidbey Island, and many of the adjacent islands and waterways. Once again, as during the intertribal events of the precontact era or during the Catholic missionary events of the 1830s and early 1840s, Penn Cove became a multi-tribal population center of unrivaled scale and importance for this portion of Puget Sound. With the involvement of the Penn Cove Special Indian Agency, which will be discussed in more detail in the pages that follow, this community maintained an uneasy peace with local settlers, with populations rising and falling in number, from late 1855 through the end of the eastern Washington Indian wars.

Despite the absence of hostile action from the Penn Cove residents, the diaries and correspondence from the mid-1850s shows a growing distrust of growing Indian population in the Penn Cove area. Relations with local tribes clearly were strained. Indian agents of the region responded with calls to hasten federal efforts to deliver on certain treaty provisions, hoping that this might help stabilize Indian-white relations (Simmons 1855). With this came a growing crescendo of requests from Whidbey Island settlers for military protection for from late 1855 through early 1857 (e.g., Smith 1857). Isaac Stevens expressed great “determination to protect the Indians from any indiscriminate abuse” at the Penn Cove camp (Stevens 1856). He urged residents of the island to exhibit patience and restraint:

“Our citizens have realized the sound policy of Acting Governor Mason in moving all the friendly Indians from the Eastern shore of the Sound to the neighboring Islands, and making the county eastward a war ground. The result is that...not an insult has been offered to a friendly Indian on the Sound and not only are they under the protection of the Indian offices but of the white people of the Territory” (Stevens 1856).

Despite the great tensions of this period, however, Whidbey Island never experienced any violence or bloodshed. "Not a single White person from Whidbey Island was fatally injured in the war" (Kellogg 1934: 51). As recalled by Jeffcott (1940), the biggest threat to the volunteer soldiers at Whidbey Island may have been boredom:

"The Indian war, as far as Whatcom was concerned, proved pretty much of a dud, and time hung heavily on the shoulders of the dashing young officers in the fort. With money supplied by the government, Pickett built a road from the fort to Sehome, which was much used by the officers and men in seeking diversion from the monotony to life in the barracks" (Jeffcott 1940: 423).

If the great Yakama Indian War had not brought violence directly to the shores of Whidbey Island, however, it did set into motion the events that would bring about the death of one prominent Ebey's Landing resident. Eager to rid Puget Sound of potentially hostile tribes during the height of the war, U.S. forces sought to expel many of the northern tribes that had come to the area to trade, work, and raid. In October of 1856, a group of "Northern Indians" camped in the Port Gamble area was asked to leave and, refusing, found themselves under fire from the steamer, *Massachusetts*. Following two days of battle, they had lost a reported 27 persons and had a roughly equal number wounded in the fighting. Especially troubling, in their estimation, was the loss of one of their headmen. They would soon return for revenge, arriving at the home of Isaac Ebey the following year (Kellogg 1934: 51-57). As will be discussed in the pages that follow, the northern raiders would have an influence on early settlement and Indian-white relations on Whidbey Island that was much larger than this single incident.

Ebey's Death and the Persistence of Northern Raiders

From the earliest settlement on Whidbey Island, homesteaders appear to have been aware of the presence of the "Northern Indians." The fortifications of the resident tribes were hard to ignore, and the oral traditions certainly must have been imposing. In some of the earliest writings on the subject, these northern tribes seem to be viewed with a mixture of fear and awe. Winfield Ebey wrote in April 26, 1855:

"A couple of canoe loads of Northern Indians arrived looking for work. They...are considerably larger Indians than any I have yet seen. Shortly after another canoe arrived from Victoria en route for Nisqually. This last

arrival had with them a 'Tyee' [chief] who is a great artist in the way of making silver rings bracelets &c. I have engaged him to make a ring for me. After their arrival we were treated with quite a gambling game between the residents and the Victoria 'Siwashes' [Indians, lit. "savages"] the latter winning. The stakes which consisted of divers coats shirts pants &c. Hard ---- Prisoners all right. With the new arrivals of Indians the prisoners &c. our village has had more lively appearance...than common" (W. Ebey 1855-57).

Yet only a few weeks later, on May 21, 1855, Winfield Ebey wrote of settlers doing battle with some of the very same tribal groups:

"We found there had been since we left some disturbance from the Northern Indians. A good many of them were in the Sound at different places. Two men were robbed on the Island. Mr. Libby and a fellow called Paddy Dogli. The Indians robbed the former [man's] house and then shot at him but did not hit him. They then left the Island. The neighbors went in pursuit of them but did not succeed in overtaking them. The Revenue Cutter has now gone down the Straits to look out for them but I suppose they are all leaving the Sound as I have seen several canoe loads passing across" (W. Ebey 1855-1857).

Certainly, hostile acts against settlers appeared to increase significantly in 1855, and the Yakama Indian War erupted only a few months later. Summer was apparently the season when these attacks took place (Browne 1858: 12). Reports of attacks around the Sound filtered to the Whidbey Island community from the crew of the Revenue Cutter and other ships that began to patrol the waterways of the area. While that war was the proximate cause for blockhouse construction at Ebey's Landing, available journal accounts suggest that the raiding of the "Northern Indians" was an important contributing factor in the construction of certain blockhouses. Writing from Fort Nugent, just north of the Reserve, 9th Infantry Sergeant R. White reported to his superiors of growing fear on the Island:

"Sir I have to inform you that the citizens on this Island are very much excited on account of Captain Webster who arrived here on Friday, yesterday from Bellingham Bay the citizens are holding a meeting to Day on this Island. Besides they are building a Blockhouse... The Indians are between Victoria and Bellingham Bay. They have not been any nearer to this island as yet. We have no fear of them we have not seen any danger as yet" (White 1855).

These “northern Indians” were also making direct threats on military posts and the Indian Agents nearby during this period, effectively fostering cooperation between these institutions and local tribes. John Ross Browne noted,

“In the latter part of August, 1856, a military post was established at Bellingham bay...The officer in command, Colonel Pickett...is determined to give the northern Indians some trouble in carrying into effect a threat recently made by them – that, having carefully examined his fort, they meant to take it, and, at the same time, his head. These northern Indians have also sent notice to [Tow-whik-son (Bellingham Bay) Indian Agent] Colonel Fitzhugh of their intention to take his block house and his head...His chief source of protection is the fact that the Sound Indians under his charge are more afraid of the northern tribes than he is himself, and for their own safety will always give him notice of the enemy’s approach” (Browne 1858: 12).

A small number of boats, including the steamer “Massachusetts” were called into service to guard northern Puget Sound from Indian attack at around this time.¹¹² In late 1855 and early 1856, this ship’s crew conducted a number of operations against raiding northern Indians, whom they discovered to represent a number of tribal communities from southeast Alaska and northwestern British Columbia. Most prominent of these was the attack on encamped northern Indians at Port Gamble in October of 1856. Following the expulsion of the survivors from the Sound, *Massachusetts* commander Swartwout reported that they were approached by British Columbia Governor, James Douglas, who “had a talk with several of the principal Indian Chiefs, from whom he ascertained that they belonged to the Stickenes, Hanagars, and Kake Tribes¹¹³ [Tlingits] from near the Russian settlements, and who are considered the most ferocious and warlike of all the Northern Indians” (Swartwout 1856). Swartwout later returned to their Port Gamble campsite to find their abandoned camp:

“From the most reliable information I can obtain I should judge there were about fifteen or twenty of these Northern Indians belonging to the Hyder Tribe [Haida, of British Columbia] who escaped but as they have lost all their property and canoes and are aware that this ship has returned to the Sound, they will I think, not dare to commit any further depredations, so long as we remain here” (Swartwout 1856).

A few of these escaped Indians were believed to be in the vicinity of Whidbey Island.¹¹⁴

When Whidbey Island residents learned the circumstances of the attack, panic erupted, with fear of reprisals from these Tlingit or Haida raiders being of primary concern. After several unsuccessful attempts to bring a permanent military force to their community through informal channels, the residents of central Whidbey Island formally petitioned military commander Colonel Casey for a stationed military presence to address the threat:

“Whidbey Island Dec. 6, 1856

“Memorial from citizens asking for a military force.

To Col. Casey from citizens

“In consequence of the recent hostile occurrence between a party of hostile northern Indians and the US Steamship Mass. Much fears are entertained by us that they will seek revenge for their loss and defeat on the defenseless exposed and frontier settlement of this Island.

“While the military stations at Port Townsend and Bellingham Bay are well and properly located as a check upon and points to operate from against the Indians within our own borders yet it is feared their presence would add but little to the security of life or property on this Island.

“Our population here consists mostly of farmers with many families – women and children. It would be very difficult for us to assemble at one or two points for mutual protection and defense without great sacrifice of time and property. We would therefore to the end that a better feeling of security may be given you would temporarily or otherwise station on this Island a small military force if at your disposal until measures can be effected to prevent the incursions of those Northern Indians who have for years past kept up a system of robbery and marauding on our defenseless and exposed settlement. It is believed that suitable quarters for a limited number of men can be had on the Island with the Government incurring but little expense.

“Hoping you will give this matter the consideration it requires. We subscribe ourselves...” (Whidbey Island Citizens 1856).

The petition was signed by some 31 heads of household, including Isaac, Jacob, and Winfield Ebey.

The military took this request seriously. Fort Steilacoom Commander, Silas Casey reported to his own commanders on January 1st, 1857,

“I have been requested to call your attention to the exposed condition of the settlement on Whidbey Island and to ask you if consistent with your views to station some troops at that point. There is a good deal of uneasiness among the settlers and there seems to be reason to fear that the

northern Indians may make an attack upon them to obtain revenge for the killing of some of their tribe at Port Gamble by the Steamer Massachusetts. From the character those Indians bear, we are justified in the conclusion that they will seek for revenge in some quarter. Whidbey's Island is in the most defenseless condition of any settlements on the sound; it is easy of access to the Indians and would afford then more plunder than could be obtained at any other pursuit within their reach. And for these reasons among others it is believed that that point is in danger of an attack. Your own knowledge of the character of the Indians and of the condition of the Island makes any further statement unnecessary" (Casey 1857).

After a quick assessment, the military determined that it was unable to devote resources at the level requested by the settlers, but began discussing the option of enhanced patrolling of the Whidbey Island coastline by the military steamers.¹¹⁵

In spring of 1857, news began to arrive in both the Indian and white settlements of Whidbey Island of a large number of northern Indians arriving in Puget Sound and raiding tribal communities. Both communities clearly felt exposed and vulnerable to attack. Winfield Ebey wrote in his diary on May 10th, 1857,

"Learned from the Indians that some 3 or 4 Indians were killed near Port Madison a few nights since. Supposed to be done by the N[orthern] I[ndians]. It created quite a feeling among the 'Scagits' and some excitement among the 'Bostons' [American settlers]...Numerous reports are constantly in circulation relative [to] them coming down in numbers. God only knows what is to become of us. I cannot believe we are to be murdered by them but we may. We are in His hands to do with use as He wills" (W. Ebey 1855-1857).

Continuing an apparently pre-contact tradition of evacuating to the adjacent mainland, the Skagit and other tribal groups residing on Penn Cove temporarily evacuated their villages to avoid these raiders: "In the spring of 1857 the Penn Cove encampment was abandoned altogether" (Roberts 1975: 205). Penn Cove Indian Agent, Robert Fay's diaries note the movements of tribal members and information during this tense spring: "May 3rd 1857 Rumor Northern Indians great excitement among the Indians news brought by some women coming from McDonalds Island...May 27th 1857 Indians leaving for the River, rumor of Northern Indians twelve canoes" (Fay 1856-61). Fay's journals mention a number of area Indians being killed by these northern raiders through that spring and into summer.¹¹⁶

Clearly, when Colonel Isaac Ebey was killed and beheaded by northern tribes on August 12, 1857, the attack had not been entirely unanticipated. A number of first-hand accounts are available from the day of the attack and those that followed immediately thereafter. Carl Engle, a son of Isaac Ebey's neighbor, recalled

"My father's claim adjoined that of Col. Isaac N. Ebey who filed in 1850 and is generally regarded as the first permanent white settler on the island and one of its most honored pioneers. The murder of Colonel Ebey by a group of Haidah Indians on August 12, 1857 is one of the most tragic episodes in the island's history. Colonel Ebey and his family were then living in what they affectionately called "The Cabins" not far from Ebey's Landing. There had been considerable trouble with the Haidahs for several months which occasionally flared into open warfare. On the afternoon of the murder, a group of Indians had come to the Ebey house but had left without causing undue alarm. At the time, United States Marshall George W. Corliss and his wife were visiting the Ebey's before returning to Olympia. Several hours after the family and their friends retired, the Indians attacked. Mrs. Corliss jumped from a window and ran to my father's place and then to the home of Colonel Ebey's parents to give the alarm. All of the group staying at "The Cabins" escaped except Colonel Ebey. He went outside at the first sound from the Indians and was shot down and beheaded without warning. The news of his death shocked not only people of the island but those on the mainland as well. John Crockett made the coffin for Colonel Ebey, and my father dug the grave. The murderers were never caught" (Engle n.d.).

Families retreated to the new blockhouses, while troops and volunteer militias scoured the Sound for the perpetrators. The killers were not apprehended, in part because they reportedly retreated quickly into British waters, where they knew U.S. jurisdiction was absent.¹¹⁷ Captain Hyde of the U.S. Revenue Service took hostage seven northern Indians who had been visiting Port Townsend and sent out canoe-loads of women to inform the perpetrators that the hostages would be hung if they did not return; other northern Indians were later taken prisoner, but guilt could not be established for any of them and they were released.¹¹⁸

In the days that followed, the communities began to assess the impacts of Ebey's death. Winfield Ebey wrote on Aug. 14, 1857:

"Three days have passed since my last writing. Oh! so full of trouble. Three long weary torturing days. Until tonight I have been unable to write out occurrences as they have happened. My Brother Isaac is dead. My noble high minded brother is no more. Shot and beheaded at his own

door by the murderous Northern Indians. Oh! the agony I have suffered for three long days and still suffer. It seems more bitter than death...." (W. Ebey 1855-1857).

A few days later, Winfield Ebey reported that – for reasons that remain ambiguous – certain groups of northern Indians unrelated to the attackers departed with the stated intention of avenging Ebey's death: "three canoes loads of 'Simsean' [Tsimshian] Indians going north on the hunt of the murderer of my brother" (W. Ebey 1855-1857).

Meanwhile, news of the attacks was making its way through the Indian superintendency of Washington. Special Indian Agent J. Ross Browne (1858) reported to the Secretary of the Interior:

"News had just reached this point, through Governor Stevens, of the murder of Colonel Isaac N. Eley [sic], late collector of customs in the district of Puget's Sound, by a band of northern Indians, at his residence on Whidbey's Island. Great alarm prevailed among the settlers on the sound, and it was reported that several of the families had fled from the vicinity of Port Townsend, and were on their way to Oregon. Vague rumors also reached us of anticipated hostilities on the part of the Sound Indians" (Browne 1858: 2).

A team of Indian Affairs agents were dispatched to assess the situation at Ebey's Landing shortly after learning of the attack. Indian Agent J. Ross Browne (1858) reported on the incident, suggesting unambiguous connections between the attack on northern Indians at Port Gamble and the reprisal on Isaac Ebey:

"groups of tribal members from various northern tribes often camped on the beaches fronting Port Townsend, with the protection of non-Indians who hired their men and sometimes lived with their women."¹¹⁹

"Frequent petty difficulties arose between this class of outlaws, known as the "beachcombers," and the more respectable citizens who were hostile to the visits of the northern Indians. Nothing serious, however, occurred till the night of August 12th last, when a party of them, who had been seen prowling around the shores of Whidbey's island for some days previously, made a descent upon the premises of Col. Isaac N. Eley [sic], and murdered that unfortunate gentleman in the most cruel manner. The crime was more atrocious as he had never, in any manner, molested or offended them; but on the contrary, from a naturally kind disposition, had been in the habit of giving them food and clothing whenever they applied to him...On the 3d of September I crossed over to

the island at Eley's Landing, and made a personal inspection of the premises. The house, a small log hut, partially boarded, was thoroughly ransacked. The furniture had all been taken away by the relatives of Colonel Eley, and the place had the appearance of an utter wreck. A more desolate scene it would be difficult to imagine...

"About two years ago the United States steamer Massachusetts undertook to drive out of the Sound a party of these [northern] Indians, but they declined going and made battle. It was deemed necessary to chastise them, and they were fired upon. Some five or six were killed. Since that period they have been heard to make threats of vengeance. The relatives of those who were killed were seen at Vancouver's island for months after, holding lamentations and making war signs. They threatened to have the head of a white Tyee [chief] for each of their number killed...

"There can be no doubt that the immediate cause of this murder was the act of the steamer Massachusetts. That a vessel of the United States should kill a party of Indians, knowing that it is the custom of this race never to forget an injury, and immediately after take its departure, and leave the settlers to bear the consequences, evince either a want of regard for the common principles of humanity or unpardonable lack of judgment...

"Passing over from Eley's landing on foot we reached Coop's landing, on the eastern side of the island, after a pleasant walk of two miles. There are several settlements on this part of Whidbey's island, nearly all of which have been abandoned since the murder of Colonel Eley. The land is exceedingly rich, and the face of the country beautifully diversified with woods and prairies. It is, beyond doubt, the finest agricultural country in Washington Territory" (Browne 1858: 12-13).

Diverse groups of people were seen streaming out of the Puget Sound area, in an effort to avoid further hostilities. Some tribes hastily moved out of the area temporarily, fearing interethnic violence in the months ahead. Upper Cowlitz groups, for example, were noted to be moving inland to visit the Yakama. Meanwhile, as Browne's account suggests, a number of white settlers fled to Oregon with their families to avoid further attacks.

For those settlers who remained, the attack on Isaac Ebey seemed to only compound their worst suspicions and prejudices about the region's Indians. Much of this was turned into a homicidal antagonism toward all northern Indians, no matter their tribe or country of origin. As Kellogg recalled,

“The community resented for many years the fact that nothing more had been done to the Indians who were taken into custody. R.C. Hill states, however, that “for several years thereafter, a Northern Indian never set foot on the soil of Whidbey Island without biting the dust”” (Kellogg 1934: 58).

Yet, ironically, the raiding of these northern tribes became the basis for expanded calls to forcibly remove traditional victims of these raiders - the Penn Cove Indians - from their homeland. Browne reported to the U.S. Congress, in the wake of Ebey’s attack,

“It was painfully apparent...that the disastrous results of the late war had engendered a feeling of suspicion and insecurity greatly militating against any friendly relations between the settlers and the Indians throughout the Territory. Although there was really no connexion between the murder of Colonel Ely and the condition of the tribes inhabiting the Territory, yet so great was the shock produced by this tragic event, that the most trivial occurrences were at once magnified into premonitions of further bloodshed” (Browne 1858: 2).

Likewise, Roberts (1975: 208) found that “For years after Ebey’s death, Whidbey Island settlers harbored ill feeling towards Northern Indians. Some of this may have affected their attitude towards local Skagit Region and Snohomish Region Indians.” These sentiments may have been important contributing factors in the decision to not maintain a permanent reservation at Penn Cove, as was being considered by some Indian Agents of the day; the expectation of a reservation community at Penn Cove is considered in the pages ahead addressing the Penn Cove Special Indian Agency.

After Ebey’s death, raiding by these northern tribes continued largely unabated for several more years - a point made frequently in the unpublished diaries and correspondence of the day. For example, Isaac Ebey’s cousin, George Beam, recorded the continued presence of northern Indians in the spring of 1859:

“A great many northern Indians going up the Sound all the time...More Northern Indians went up to stay, the Indians have taken one hundred and fifty dollars worth of supplies from the Dungeness light house and made there (sic) escape...The Northern Indians came up to Smith Island yesterday. Supposed to be three hundred in number” (Beam 1858-1860).

The residents of San Juan Islands also had skirmishes with both northern Indians as well as local S’Klallams in that same year, leading to a petition reminiscent of that

signed by the Ebeyes and other Whidbey Island settlers two years beforehand.¹²⁰ Rumors emerged that the northern tribes from British possessions were somehow in league with the Hudson's Bay Company to help drive American settlers from the San Juans and other Puget Sound locations. As Brigadier General W.S. Harney reported to his superiors at Army Headquarters on August 7, 1859:

“I was also informed that the Hudson's Bay Company had threatened at different times to send the northern Indians down on them and drive them from the island. This statement has since been confirmed to me by some of the most reliable citizens of the Sound” (Harney 1859a: 1).¹²¹

Under the specter of northern Indians, and with Ebey's death serving as a rallying point, military commanders were able to marshal budgets to construct new military forts around the Sound, and to expand operations for the small fleet of warships. These military operations were to have the twofold task of protecting settlers from the perceived threat of northern Indians while also protecting American interests from the perceived threat of British incursions on the San Juan Islands¹²² These new military facilities would scarcely experience the combat for which they were designed; instead, in the years ahead, they slowly transformed into the system of military installations known in later decades, oriented toward other foreign foes. Raiding by northern tribes largely disappeared by the late 1860s, from the combined effects of U.S. military buildup on the Sound, expanded British military presence in their own possessions' waters, and a combination of disease and cultural assimilation – roughly coincident with the Alaska Purchase – that reshaped the cultures and histories of the northern tribes.

Penn Cove Special Indian Agency

In the wake of the Point Elliott Treaty, with the Yakama Indian War raging east of the Cascade Range, the fledgling Indian superintendency of Western Washington was forced to confront a series of challenges. With only four reservations approved in the treaty, a number of tribal communities resisted relocation – especially prior to ratification of the treaty. Sitting at the densely-settled traditional core of Skagit settlement, Penn Cove proved to be no exception. This reluctance to abide by the provisions of the treaty was growing increasingly menacing due to the events of the Yakama Indian War, and the arrival of a large refugee population at Penn Cove much complicated Stevens' earlier plan to relocate that community. Instead of aggressively demanding relocation, the superintendency chose to establish the Penn Cove Special Indian Agency to oversee both resident Skagits as well as the many different communities of the Skagit region that coalesced at this place during the Yakama Indian

War. This Agency operated from 1855 through at least 1861. No doubt, in light of Stevens' vision of consolidated tribal communities, this Agency was deemed to be a temporary and politically expedient operation, designed to lessen tensions associated with forced Skagit relocation to mixed reservation communities, and to oversee the burgeoning community that was forming there as the mainland was depopulated by war. The Agency thus allowed for the persistence of Skagit settlement on Penn Cove well after the signing of the Point Elliott Treaty; the Agency also became the nucleus for a much expanded tribal community, incorporating populations that had relocated to Penn Cove from various locations around northern Puget Sound for reasons both related and unrelated to the war east of the Cascades.

For the full duration of its operations, Penn Cove Special Indian Agency was overseen by a single special Indian Agent, Robert Fay. Born in Vermont, Fay first arrived on Puget Sound in 1851.¹²³ By no later than spring, 1855 – only a few months after the signing of the Point Elliott Treaty – Robert Fay was helping to distribute goods to tribes on Whidbey Island and was operating as a special Indian Agent to the Penn Cove community by November 1 of that year. Robert Fay was assigned the formal title of “Special Agent to the Skagets, Snoqualmies, etc.” and worked under the command of M.T. Simmons, Indian Agent for the Lower Sound District (Stevens n.d.a). Fay's mandate, as stated even on his receipts for salary payments, was: “For the maintenance of friendly relations with the Indians on Penn's Cove Reservation” (Stevens 1857b). Fay reported having two employees working for this special Penn Cove Agency during a portion of his tenure – J.H. Hall and R. Bailey.

Fay was given responsibility for overseeing all of Penn Cove's Indian residents, as well as “Skagit” living in locations other than Penn Cove. Yet, in light of the demographic disruption and mobility of the times, Fay's responsibility included a number of tribes that were not always classified as Skagit. Browne (1858) noted of Penn Cove Special Indian Agency that,

“This agency embraces the Scagget tribes, numbering about one thousand three hundred and forty. Formerly, there were distinct tribes in this region known as the Ki-ki-a-lis, Schew-dau-mish, Sko-naw-mish, and a portion of the Stil-i-gwa-mish. Subsequently these became merged in the Ki-ki-a-lis. The Scaggets proper, being the more powerful race, subdued all these minor tribes, and at present they are mixed together and come under the general denomination of Scaggets” (Browne 1858: 13-14).¹²⁴

In light of his responsibility for all of these groups, most of which had not previously lived at Penn Cove, Fay's diaries make frequent reference to his visits to other tribal communities from his Penn Cove base of operations, including tribal communities at Oak Harbor, Utsallada, and on the Skagit and Stillaguamish Rivers (Fay 1856-61). It is

clear that some of these visits were undertaken to help support Stevens' policy of tribal consolidation during the Yakama Indian War.

In addition to these tribal communities, the Special Indian Agency records make a few references to Snoqualmies who were located, perhaps only temporarily, at the Penn Cove special Agency and received occasional assistance from agency staff (Simmons 1860). S'Klallams appear to have visited the agency, and to sometimes receive goods from it. However, the S'Klallam usually relied instead on the Port Townsend Agency – the most proximate agency to the Penn Cove special Agency – which was established largely to provide services for S'Klallam communities. Thomas J. Hanna was the local Indian Agent at Port Townsend at this time, while the resident tribes there were sometimes noted as being “Dunganess and Clalms, numbering in all eleven hundred” with Duke of York as their chief (Browne 1858: 7). Nonetheless, S'Klallams, Snoqualmies and others made frequent visits to Penn Cove, contributing to the growing multi-tribal character of that community through the 1850s. Journals of the time mention a number of other tribes visiting Penn's Cove visiting: Snohomish, Swinomish, Upper Skagit, Lummi, Clallam, Samish and others were reported to visit Penn Cove resident Skagits, though not necessarily the Penn Cove agency. For example, Fay's diary demonstrates the degree to which the Penn Cove community had maintained, and perhaps even enhanced, its multi-tribal flavor following the creation of the agency. A few brief excerpts from the early years of the Special Agency make this clear:

1856

- July 4th - Samis Indians arrived from McDonald Island.
- July 6th - Swidomish Indians arrived.
- July 8th - Nook-wu-champs and other up the River Indians arrived.
- July 23rd - Some of the Swidomish Indians left for Canoe passage.
- Sept. 10th - the Catholic Priests arrived to visit the Indians at agency some of the Snoqualmie and Shohomis Indians came to our place.

1857

- Jan. 17th - Some Snohomish Indians came to our agency for the purpose of gambling
- Jan. 22nd - Two canoes eighteen Indians in all from the Swinomish.
- Feb. 3rd - C'acarda Indian Doctor of the Stillaquimes went home from our agency.
- Feb. 27th - Some Swinomish Indians who had visited agency returned home.
- June 7th - This evening Chouetsoot Lummie with two canoes twenty four in all men of this tribe arrived. Blacked and armed business not known (Fay 1856-61).

Penn Cove also served as an important gathering area for members of the multiple Skagit communities. More than once, the special Agency records mention groups of Skagits converging temporarily at Penn Cove to hold councils – a practice that almost certainly continued pre-contact traditions: “Jan. 11th 1857, Head Chiefs of different tribes of Scagets met today to have a talk. Eight canoes arrived this morning” (Fay 1856-61).

While Penn Cove would never officially become anything more than a special Indian agency, it is clear that its status was ambiguous in the minds of many Indian agents of the time, and some fully anticipated that it would in time become another reservation community. Certainly, various references in the journals and reports of the day reflect that expectation. In his reports, Fay often just refers to Penn Cove as the “Indian Location,” but at other times he unambiguously refers to the community as the “Indian Reservation at Penn’s Cove” (Fay 1856-61). This kind of wording continued to be found for much of the life of this special Indian Agency, with, for example, Treasury Department records referring to a “Penn’s Cove Reservation” as late as 1860, though there no record has been found in the course of this research setting aside land for the purpose of this reservation (Fay 1860b: 61).

From its earliest records, it is clear that the agency played a multifarious role in the tribal community, at once providing foods and goods that would usher the tribes away from their traditional resource base, while also helping to maintain the status of headmen from the tribe who had maintained congenial relations with white authorities. During an inspection tour of the Puget Sound tribal communities in 1855, the year of the Point Elliott Treaty, Indian Agent M.T. Simmons visited the Penn Cove community, distributed goods there:

“I...proceeded down the Sound and arrived at Penn’s Cove, Whidbey’s Island on the 10th. The next day the 11th, I distributed a portion of the goods intended for distribution by me to the helpless and destitute of the Skaget Tribe...I left the remaining goods, together with the package destined for this place, to be distributed by R.C. Fay the Local Agent in charge; Goliah, Squi-qui, George Sneetlum and Charley Goliah, were present at the distribution and at the counsel which I held with them” (Simmons 1855).

The ledgers and journals from the Penn Cove Agency show that Fay gave out thousands of items of food, clothing, and tools during his time as special Indian Agent. This property was commonly given to acknowledged leaders, such as Goliah, Squi-qui, the Duke of York (Clallam) and Prince Albert (Skagit), who Fay sometimes expressed, might distribute the goods according to the needs and customs of the communities. He also paid Skagit men for such services as “canoe service to Point Townsend” “canoe to

Skagit River and back to the Penn Cove” or “detecting liquor sellers” (Fay 1856-61). Fay’s duties also involved policing both Indian violations of Territorial laws and settler’s violations of the law as it related to dealing with Indians; a small jail was established at Penn Cove specifically for Indian offenders (Simmons 1860).

While relocation to Penn Cove was often compulsory for many tribal groups, it was also not so distant as to be unknown to those who gathered there. And while many tribes living away from Penn Cove might not have been willing to relocate to the new Point Elliott Treaty reservations, some were willing to relocate to the familiar communities of Penn Cove. From the beginning of the Penn Cove agency, Fay was instructed to encourage this migration, which would help to concentrate Indians in this location and to effectively depopulate the hinterlands of Whidbey Island and the adjacent islands and mainland for reasons that do not always seem to be tied to the war. Though these communities were willing to relocate, they did not immediately renounce their claims to, and uses of, resource sites throughout this region. For reasons both political and financial, Fay did little to restrict seasonal movements to these resource sites, so long as the communities agreed to return to Penn Cove when done. It was against this backdrop that Agent Fay made his first official report from the special Indian Agency:

“I received my letter of appointment to take charge of the Skagit Indians the 1st November, 1855, with instructions to collect them at Penn’s Cove. I immediately complied with the instructions. I visited the different bands composing the tribe, directing them to come to a certain point on Penn’s Cove. They expressed themselves willing to do so, and did leave their camps for that purpose...

“I informed them that they would be furnished with a portion of flour and molasses to assist them to live, as they were taken from their different grounds and had not the same facilities for procuring food that they otherwise would have had. They appeared perfectly satisfied. They numbered at this time about 1,200. Some were so far up the river they could not come down on account of the ice, and did not arrive till last March; then I had under my charge about 1,400 Indians, including men, women and children...

“In the month of April and part of May, the Indians were allowed to go up the rivers to plant their potatoes...They then returned to the Reservation, and since then have numbered from 1,100 to 1,200.” (Fay 1856).

Certainly, Fay’s diaries make constant references to ‘Indians departing and returning’ to locations all over the Sound for berries, fishing and other subsistence purposes. Drawing just a few entries from his diaries of 1856-57, the importance of these resource sites, especially those along the Skagit River, is made abundantly clear:

1856

May 29th - Indians returning to this place from the river.

July 7th - Indians arrived from the Rivers.

Aug 26th - A few Sachetts arrived from the river.

Aug. 27th - Indians returned to the river.

Sept. 11th - The Indians coming from the rivers about 1000...now in.

1857

March 23rd - Six canoes Skaget Indians leave for the River to prepare potato ground.

Dec. 16th - Visited Indians at Penn's Cove they are now coming in from the River (Fay 1856-61).

While the Indian superintendency sought to lure tribes away from these resources sites, it was simply not practical to do so. Not only did custom and a range of social and economic factors motivate the tribes to return to these areas, but the tribes also clearly were concerned about their food security during this turbulent period. Tribal communities simply could not be supported by the goods supplied by the Indian agents, and families were unlikely to risk starvation by abandoning traditional hunting, fishing, gathering, and cultivation sites. The Washington Indian superintendency had a very limited budget, and most of those funds were being directed to the approved reservation communities of the Sound. Food and other supplies were so scarce that a number of individuals, including Fay, were discussing the option of closing the Penn Cove special agency by spring of 1857, principally on fiscal grounds:

"In a letter of instructions I received from Mr. Nesmith, superintendent of Indian affairs, dated June 3, 1857, he instructed me to dispense with all employes not actually required, and to make any suggestion that I might deem proper. I take the liberty, therefore, of suggesting the propriety of doing away with the location at Penn's Cove, as far as closing the house and discharging the assistant is concerned. My reasons are, that, in the first place, if no food or goods are to be given to the Indians, there is no necessity for an assistant; in the second place, it will reduce the expenses of my supervision about two hundred and twenty-five dollars per quarter. A portion of my time would be spent at Skaget Head, with Mr. Bailey, and for the time I was at the cove my board would be but a small item" (Fay 1857b: 336-37.)

Moreover, the tribes of the Penn Cove area appear to have recognized that their status was in administrative limbo in the absence of a ratified treaty. The Indian agents responded in part with an aggressive campaign to develop intensive agriculture at Penn Cove and other Indian agencies throughout the Sound. Isaac Stevens wrote to a frustrated Robert Fay in March of 1857:

“It will be somewhat uncertain whether the Treaties are confirmed... Under these circumstances it will be best to render some little assistance to the Indians to get in their crops in the usual way. I will provide all the seed they will put in and take care of, over and above seed of their own, which they may have reserved for planting.

“Urge them to put in as large a crop as their limited means will allow. Should I receive information of the confirmation of the Treaties and the necessary authority be sent me in season, I will do everything in my power to get in a good crop on the reserves” (Stevens 1857b: 1).

The agricultural experiment was only partially successful. Some crops were planted and the community tended these through the spring. Yet by that summer, some crops had been largely abandoned at Penn Cove as families once again returned to their usual resource procurement sites, including potato patches that they had maintained prior to the treaty in distant locations. Penn’s Cove Local Indian Agent, Robert Fay (1857b) reported,

“they have been allowed to go and come from the location, as a general thing, when they pleased, (always letting it be known to me or my assistant where they were going, and what for.) They have left the location, generally, either to hunt, fish, procure clams, dig their potatoes, plant potatoes or cultivate them” (1857b: 336).

Just as the special Indian Agency sought to manipulate traditional subsistence patterns, the Agency actively sought to manipulate the social structure of the Skagit bands and other groups under their jurisdiction. Reporting to Isaac Stevens on a plan being discussed between Indian Agents for his agency to formally designate Snatelum as the “Head Chief” of the Skagit, Fay expressed his opposition, saying that

“he would then have control of his own tribe and [others]. I think this ought to be avoided and would suggest should it meet with your approval that Squy-quy be made Head Chief either with or without a Boston [i.e., English] name – a Boston name might please him – he has two or three Indian names already” (Fay 1857a).

Stevens agreed to the plan. Thus the Agency effectively undermined traditional leadership patterns that had predominated within the community prior to this time, replacing the unmatched high-status Skagit leader Snatelum with a leader of mixed parentage. Squi-qui, Stevens and Fay apparently recognized, would perhaps hold less sway in some tribal circles but would work cooperatively with the Agency. Later that year, Fay (1857b) proclaimed in his official annual report from the Agency,

“Squy Quy, who is now head chief, and bearer of these returns and report is a good friend to the whites, and, I think, will exert a good influence with his people; he is dignified and manly in his deportment, and has heretofore been considered one of the most influential chiefs of the tribe” (Fay 1857b: 336).

From this time, through the end of the Agency period, Squi-qui was identified as the “head chief” of the Skagit in most Agency documents.

By the end of 1857, despite the many challenges, the Penn Cove Special Indian Agency, and a small number of special agencies around Puget Sound, were being hailed as successful experiments in managing the large numbers of Indians in this region. They were, however, still regarded by the Indian superintendency as a temporary solution, that would merely help usher in a period of more aggressive consolidation of these tribal communities into a small number of reservations. Writing to M.T. Stevens on December 2, 1857, Isaac Stevens authorized Fay to continue operating from Penn Cove and the other special Indian Agencies in his district:

“Sir,

“In the distribution of goods to the destitute Indians of Pagis, Hills, Fay’s and Fowlers charges which you have recently been directed to make, you will examine carefully into and report when the quantity of supplies which will be required to subsist them the ensuing winter.

“It is known that Hill’s and Fay’s Indians have raised large crops of potatoes and laid up a large quantity of salmon. It is doubted, as sure they have their usual range and there is no foreseeable contingency that the range will be restricted hereafter, whether they will hereafter need much if any food except perhaps some of the old people.

“It is also doubted whether there is any necessity of keeping up Hills reservation after the expiration of the present treaty. I see no difficulty in Capt. Fay taking charge of the Indians now under Hill and supplying what little they may need from Penn’s Cove. You will report on the above matters.

“The policy of the Dept. is to bring the funding of Indians to a close at the earliest practicable period- to reduce the compatible with efficiency and (especially) to reduce the number of Indian employees” (Stevens 1851).

Stevens approved a modest budget to assist the special Indian agencies in their operations for the coming year.

If the policy of maintaining special Indian Agencies had been successful from an administrative viewpoint, there were many reasons to question the outcomes of this policy for the Indians, themselves. Newly introduced diseases, ostensibly coupled with the rapidly changing demographic and dietary conditions of the tribes, contributed to growing mortality rates at Penn Cove. Fay (1857b: 336) reported very high mortality in 1857: “Many deaths have occurred among them during the last eight months...there were twenty-two deaths, within my own observation, from the 18th of February to the 22nd of March,” which he attributes to old age, consumption, and the secondary effects of venereal diseases. The winter of 1857-58 was not better. By 1858, he notes,

“There is at all times more or less sickness among these Indians, but during the past winter there has been an unusual amount, attended with considerable fatality...The prevailing diseases, as near as I can understand them, seem to be consumption, influenza, coughs, syphilis, and a disease resembling in some respects the rheumatism, the patients becoming paralyzed in their limbs, suffering intensely from pain, linger for a time emaciated, and finally die. I have known but few to recover who have been attacked with this disease” (Fay 1858a: 240).

By 1858, the Penn Cove community had continued to grow rapidly, as tribal populations from the surrounding countryside relocated at the special Agency. So many different tribal communities had relocated to Penn Cove that the population far exceeded both the number and the diversity of pre-treaty times. Reporting to his superiors in 1858, Fay noted that

“The number of Indians attached to the different tribes under my supervision will fall, I think, a little short of three thousand. The Skagits, with the tribes Sno-dom-ish, Ke-ka-alons and Scho-nam-ish, probably number thirteen hundred and fifty; the Sno-ho-mish, Sno-qual-mie, and Ski-quam-ish, about fifteen hundred” (Fay 1858b: 590).¹²⁵

Penn Cove Special Indian Agency had become a sizeable community, with the resident population of the Cove that likely exceeded the contemporaneous non-Indian populations of King, Pierce, and Whatcom counties combined (Forstall 1996). The continued crowding and questionable sanitary conditions at this community only compounded the Agency's financial difficulties, which were substantial. Browne (1858) provides a portrait of life at this agency as it existed in 1858:

"No provisions have been issued to any of these Indians since the superintendency was removed to Oregon. Previous to that period, a little flour was issued to the sick and destitute. Clothing and blankets were also issued by Superintendent Stevens, but none since the appointment of his successor.

"These various tribes obtain an abundant supply of fish and berries. They also cultivate a considerable quantity of potatoes by their own unaided labor. This year they will raise about one thousand five hundred bushels.

"Much sickness prevails among them at present, chiefly consumption and venereal. The general epidemic which has scourged the whole Pacific coast, influenza, has caused several deaths among them" (Browne 1858: 14).

Provisions were supplied only to those who were "aged and sick, and quite unable to procure food for themselves" (Fay 1858a: 239). To complicate matters, Fay (1858a: 240) reported that the potato patches were exhibiting reduced productivity, as the same patches were being used year after year without fallow, and some riverine patches had been washed away by floods. Salmon, likewise, was said to be in decline:

"The salmon, which is considered their main article of food during the winter, they were short of last winter, there being almost a destitution of them in these waters...I do not think there were one thousand pounds dried by the Skagits during the past season. What few they got were of an inferior quality" (Fay 1858a: 240).

As a result, Fay did little to restrict the tribes' free movement to and from subsistence resource sites throughout the region. Fay (1858a) reported that

"Owing to the unsettled state of affairs in consequence of the non-ratification of the treaties made with these Indians, is an apology for their traveling about over a large extent of country for the purpose of hunting, fishing, &c., which they are availing themselves of constantly, yet, as far as I can learn, harmlessly" (Fay 1858a: 238)

During this year, the agency also intensified a campaign to control traffic in liquor to Indians, most of which was apparently routed through Port Townsend and brought to Ebey's Landing, where it was then carried to Penn Cove. Alcohol was reported to be related to various conflicts between tribal members. In June of 1858, Fay (1858a) reported,

"Within the past month I have established a sort of police at a point upon the island, viz: Ebey's landing, this being a point where the liquor would be most likely to be landed from Port Townsend, having suspicion at the same time that an old negro living there had some connivance perhaps with other parties at Port Townsend in furnishing my Indians with liquor; and only the other day one of my spies reported that this negro had left for Port Townsend, and would, in all probability, return in the evening. I repaired to the spot and there awaited his return, and then made known to him my suspicions, and in fact charged him with selling liquor to the Indians; this he denied. I then examined the contents of his canoe and found a demijohn of whiskey, or something like it. He said it was intended for his own use. I however took the same into custody and emptied it out upon the beach, notifying him at the same time that the citizens over in that neighborhood were keeping a vigilant watch upon his movements, and if they detected him trafficking with the Indians, they would administer a goodly dose of "lynch law" to him, after which I would take him in charge, and have him sent to Steilacoom, there to be taken care of by the military at that post for a lengthy period of time, perhaps with a ball and chain to his feet" (Fay 1858a: 239).

Efforts were made to provide religious instruction to the Skagit, as part of the larger effort to shape social mores, but this does not always appear to have been successful: "Aug. 28th 1857 visited Indians and priest at Penn's Cove, the Priest was not received very warmly by the Skagit Chiefs" (Fay 1856-61).

Despite many challenges, Fay (1858a) reported generally congenial relationships between area tribes and non-Indian settlers. As he noted in his reports, the settlers

"manifested a feeling of co-operation by treating the Indians under my charge kindly, thereby securing the respect of the Indians, who seem to have an appreciation of this treatment, in their attachment for the whites living here" (1858a: 240-41).

The tribes increasingly served as laborers to the adjacent non-Indian landowners who began to encircle their communities. Some served as agricultural laborers, while others provided canoe transportation through the waters of Penn Cove and the larger Puget Sound.¹²⁶

By the end of 1858, the Yakama Indian War had largely drawn to a close; however, the task of caring for all of tribal groups gathered at Penn Cove was daunting, and rapid relocation to their treaty reservations seemed unlikely. The beginning of 1859 began with a modest disbursement of funds to support the Special Agency's operations. By January 29th 1859, Robert Fay was once again delivering quantities of blankets, clothing, flour and molasses to the Indians in his charge (Fay 1856-61).

Still, things were not going well. The Washington Territory Indian Agency correspondence from the late 1850s contains frequent complaints about Fay's book keeping from his superiors; both goods and money could not always be accounted for. Moreover, there are several references in his journals to newly-arriving settlers beginning to occupying lands that the Indians were cultivating for potatoes and other crops for the Agency (Fay 1856-61). In Fay's journals and correspondence, there seemed to be growing frustration with the administrative challenges of this very large and impromptu Agency community, and a growing sense that a lasting Penn Cove Reservation was not going to materialize. Fay and others began more actively petitioning for the relocation of Penn Cove's Indian residents to reservations elsewhere on Puget Sound.¹²⁷ And matters did not improve. By August, Fay's supervisor, Indian Agent M.T. Simmons reported to Fay that

“appropriations for Indian services in this Territory for the current fiscal year it will be necessary to reduce the expenses much below anything that has been experienced heretofore” (Simmons 1859c).

The scale of Fay's giving to tribal members plummeted in the months ahead.

By 1860, the Washington Indian superintendency was largely eliminating resources for this special Indian Agency. As the Indian wars of the east came to a close, the administration of Indian affairs in western Washington was being centralized: special agencies were being disbanded in a number of places in Puget Sound, while Fay's supervisor was promoted to Puget Sound District Indian Agent. Fay operated under instructions only to provide Agency support to the sickest and most destitute tribal members to be found at Penn Cove. Fay wrote to Agent M.T. Simmons on March 31, 1860 that he was following these guidelines:

“There has been many cases of sick and destitute Indians during this quarter, and I have been forced to give them something at times, but in all cases I have endeavored to distribute what I gave them, so that those able to work should receive no benefit from it” (Fay 1860a: 1).

Later that year, with prospects dimming at Penn Cove and many Penn Cove Indians now migrating to Swinomish, M.T. Emmons assigned Fay to help initiate farming operations on “the Skagit Reservation” at Swinomish. Fay relocated to Swinomish temporarily, apparently bringing various Penn Cove men with him to help convey materials.¹²⁸ He maintained facilities on Penn Cove through the year, however, and returned to Penn Cove at the conclusion of his duties.

By 1861, the Penn Cove offices were being disbanded. As Swinomish did not have a resident administrator, many of Penn Cove’s administrative functions were moved to Tulalip at this time. Indian Agent M.T. Simmons wrote to Fay from Tulalip Agency on April 7, 1861.

“Sir,
“ I have received notice to be ready to turn over every thing that belongs to the Agency Monday week. I want you to come forth with all of your accounts...don’t neglect it. Let’s have every thing Squared up” (Simmons 1861).

Fay stayed on at Penn Cove through that year. He continued to provide modest assistance to the now declining resident tribal population, and continued to oversee agricultural operations that year, such as “fencing the ground upon which [the] Indians desire to plant their potatoes” (Milles 1861: 1). Penn’s Cove still served as a multi-tribal meeting ground even after its formal administrative functions had ceased (Fay 1861).¹²⁹ With no Agency services, continued crowding, and growing pressure to relocate, a steady stream of tribal members began to leave Penn Cove for Swinomish, Tulalip, and elsewhere, often relocating to those places where they had kin. A steadily shrinking population remained at Penn Cove, increasingly finding themselves a minority population on their own traditional lands. Those who remained found their options for traditional habitation and subsistence significantly curtailed by the intensified resettlement of northern Puget Sound. The families that stayed increasingly found themselves economically dependent on wage labor from the farms, mills, and other operations that now appeared in the Skagit homeland.¹³⁰

NEW TRIBES AND NEW LIVES: THE RELOCATED PEOPLES OF EBNEY'S LANDING

As the Skagit relocated away from Penn Cove, they found themselves with limited options. Only four reservations had been approved under the Point Elliott Treaty, including Swinomish, Lummi, Port Madison, and Tulalip. Of these, only Tulalip was planned as a permanent reservation community. Moreover, none of them were truly home to the Skagit. As a Suquamish reservation, Port Madison had only tenuous kinship ties to the Skagit. While some Skagit had preexisting ties to the Tulalip's Snohomish community and Lummi, these were not shared broadly, or by all families. Of the four reservations, Swinomish and Tulalip were the closest and best options for many Skagit families. Based on a combination of preexisting ties, available economic opportunities, Indian Agency services, and a host of other considerations, the people of Penn Cove began to move to each of the four treaty reservation communities, Swinomish especially.

In time, Isaac Stevens' vision for a single consolidated tribal reservation at Tulalip would give way to a system of small reservations throughout the Puget Sound region, with Tulalip retaining an exceptional role as a large and uniquely multi-tribal community. Though Stevens and the larger Indian agency bureaucracy clearly intended for Swinomish and other smaller reservations be temporary communities, ultimately "the Swinomish Indian reservation, like the others provided for in the Point Elliott treaty, became a permanent reservation" (Lane 1977: 3).¹³¹ The families that moved to each of these reservations were able to stay in place, and to establish permanent homes on a diversity of reservations. In time, these confederated, reservation-based tribal communities began to develop their own distinctive histories and political lives. Increasingly, tribal members began to identify – not so much as "Skagit" for example – but as members of these new reservation communities. In part, this was the consequence of the Indian Agency and reservation bureaucracies, which did little to preserve the integrity of pre-contact tribal cultures and societies. As Bennett notes,

"Not having their own reservation, the Lower Skagit proper went to live on both the Swinomish and Tulalip reserves... and tribal identity was often lost in the paper work of the agency" (Bennett 1972: 15).

Yet, much of this shift in identity was the predictable outcome of living in the same small communities for generations, sharing in group economic, social, and cultural activities. Some families clearly maintained attachments to the Penn Cove area and other portions of their historical territories long after removal, but intermarriage with

people from other areas, and changing patterns of land use and occupation changed these relations with tribal territories subtly in the decades after relocation. Still, the new social relationships, and the new levels of social integration between tribal groups that emerged in these new reservation communities clearly echoed the exogamous social realities of Skagit life as it existed in the contact period. What follows is a cursory sketch of this transition based on archival materials; no doubt, a full retelling of this story would require original ethnographic research with the Skagit descendents in contemporary Puget Sound tribes.



Downtown Coupeville, ca. 1890. The frontier community effectively displaced remnant tribal settlements along the Penn Cove waterfront, particularly B3á3ale.

Photographer unknown - University of Washington Libraries, Special Collections Division - Negative No. UW5579

Life on the Swinomish Reservation

As the Penn Cove Special Indian Agency disbanded, a sizeable portion of the Skagit community at Penn Cove moved roughly 13 miles to the north-northeast, to the newly created Swinomish Indian Reservation – one of the four reservations created under the Point Elliott Treaty. Like many reservation communities, the site was chosen in part due to its lack of natural resources or amenities that were coveted by the Euro-American settlers of the day. The reservation's lack of resources effectively hampered tribal relocation to the site, as well as the future development of a stable tribal economy. As Swinomish was described by Upchurch,

“The reservation is of poor soil, barren except for a poor quality of timber and of value chiefly as a base from which to go fishing, clam digging, and to any field of labor that offers livelihood” (Upchurch 1936a: 292).

When the Skagit moved to Swinomish they joined other tribes consolidated from around northern Puget Sound, including most notably, the Swinomish, the Kikiallus, and the Skagit. Yet, a number of other tribal populations were reported to have gathered there from throughout the Skagit Region, including the “Squinomish,” the No wha ha, and the Upper Skagit (Upchurch 1936a).¹³²

Though the reservation was situated in the historical territory of the Swinomish people, it represented only a portion of their former territory, and a number of Swinomish families were compelled to relocate there from settlements outside of the newly established reservation. The Swinomish, themselves, were much reduced from their historical numbers and represented a consolidated group of survivors of multiple epidemics, hailing from multiple village communities. As Martin Sampson reported, a 1838 epidemic had been responsible for the consolidation of the Swinomish from a diverse number of bands:

“That’s all there was of all these Swinomish Indians who were left in 1838. West Beach was wiped out. Sullivan’s Slough was wiped out. It left us with one little group...which was part and parcel of the Swinomish” (Indian Claims Commission 1974: 11).

Each tribal community arriving anew at Swinomish located in a different portion of the reservation and remained spatially segregated, at least in part, for generations afterwards. The large number of Lower Skagit arriving at the reservation became concentrated in an area called Snee Oosh on the western side of the reservation, facing

Simlik Bay: "Around the west shore of [Swinomish] reservation a place known as Sneeose is where the Skagit Tribe has located" (Indian Tribes of Washington 1924: 41). Some say that Chief Goliah who had helped to choose this site, though the widely reported 1857 date of Goliah makes it likely that the person in question was his son and chiefly heir. There he was still recognized as a headman and, apparently, overseer of certain Skagit matters:

"Golia, one of the four recognized by the Government as head chiefs (on the Swinomish reservation), came to Snee-oosh during the despairing period with all his worldly goods, including his dead, and when told by Joshia and other Swinomish leaders that all the land along the waterfront was taken, unloaded his dead on Dead Man's Island and moved on to Fir Island where he spent the remaining years of his life" (Sampson n.d.: 84).

Still, despite Goliah's prominence, there was a significant loss in power, autonomy, and status associated with relocation to a reservation situated in another tribe's territory - as was true with many of Puget Sound's relocating tribes. For the historically powerful and affluent Lower Skagit, this was particularly jarring:

"Although once more numerous and wealthy, the Lower Skagit villagers were now relative newcomers. The reservation had been Swinomish territory. To avoid conflict, Lower Skagit families seem to have looked for homesites on the western shores of the reservation, away from the old established villages along Swinomish Slough" (Roberts 1975: 228).

While some families relocated quickly - arriving almost immediately after the disbanding of the Penn Cove Special Indian Agency, a number of families still resided at Penn Cove, only gradually moving to Swinomish. In its early years, the Swinomish reservation seemed tentative, and its future uncertain. While services were made available by visiting Indian agents from Tulalip and elsewhere, there was no resident Indian agent or comparable administrative structure. A variety of factors pushed them away from Penn Cove and pulled them toward friends, family, and the limited services at Swinomish:

"The migration of Indian families to the Swinomish Reservation lagged for many decades after the treaty signing. Most Indian families stayed in their traditional homesites as long as they possibly could, until forced out by White settlers. Others, like Lower Skagit village headman Charlie Snatelum, managed to stay until they died" (Roberts 1975: 227-28).

During the same period, without a resident Indian Agent, the reservation was under growing incursion from non-Indian settlers. In 1863, two settlers by the names of Calhoun and Sullivan attempted to take land claims on Swinomish Slough, and were only repelled after considerable effort (Schiach 1906: 101).¹³³ Many other settlers attempted to occupy reservation lands through the remainder of the decade. In order to guard tribal interests against such incursions and encourage the adoption of European agriculture with a minimum of expense, the Tulalip Indian Agency assigned a series of men who served as “resident farmer” or “assistant farmer” to the Swinomish. Their duties were largely agricultural in orientation, but these individuals sometimes assisted in some agency functions, such as disbursal of food and tools, in a manner similar to the Special Indian Agency at Penn Cove. Speaking of the Swinomish Reservation, the Tulalip Indian Agent noted that

“This reservation last spring was under the charge of George Morse, assistant farmer. On this reservation are the Skagets, Swodomish, &c, to the number of twelve hundred...There has never [been] any large amount of these Indians resid[ing] upon their reservation. For this no one can blame them. An Indian will very readily live anywhere, if there is any inducement for doing so. Without some one to be with them, constantly in charge, to instruct them and reach them the importance of cultivating industrious habits, and obeying the instructions of those placed in charge of them, you can but expect that they will soon retrace their steps, and renew all of their old habits” (Tulalip Indian Agency 1863: 457).

The Tulalip Indian Agency reportedly played a role in the enforcement of potlatch prohibitions and other cultural restrictions at Swinomish and other area tribal communities.¹³⁴ Still, the distance from Tulalip, coupled with the absence of resident Agency staff made enforcement largely impractical, allowing a number of cultural traditions to persist at Swinomish with only occasional concealment being required.

Consolidation at Swinomish was hastened during periods of crisis off of the reservation, however. Among the most important of these were epidemics that continued to plague the native population of Puget Sound. A smallpox epidemic spread through the Sound in 1863 (Sullivan 1932: 3; Boyd 1999).¹³⁵ While Swinomish was affected by this epidemic, the epidemic especially affected certain smaller communities in the hinterland; survivors commonly regrouped at Swinomish.

During this same period, the Catholic Church began to look to the new reservations as an opportunity to consolidate their missionary energies. At the national level, Catholic and Protestant denominations had maintained a rivalry as to their missionary activities in different parts of the country. In the 1860s, President Ulysses Grant effectively established a policy of granting particular churches local monopolies over missionary

activities within different regions of the country. As Roberts noted, at this time, the precedent set by the Catholic Church missions in Puget Sound determined the outcome of this debate, and “the work of the French Catholic priests in Southern Puget Sound received an official sanction” (Roberts 1975: 145). By 1868, Father Chirouse, the missionary based at Tulalip, had organized the construction of a church at the Swinomish reservation, which became the center of officially sanctioned religious expression for the community.¹³⁶ During periods when the “resident farmer” position was not filled, Father Chirouse appears to have stepped in as a *de facto* representative of the Tulalip Indian Agency. For some tribal families that had not yet moved to Swinomish, but had adopted the Catholic faith after nearly four decades of missionary activity in the region, this church provided yet another incentive to relocate at Swinomish. Father Chirouse reported baptizing several “Skadgettes” who arrived at the reservation in the years that followed (Chirouse in Sullivan 1932).

By the beginning of the 1870s, Swinomish was at an important crossroads. The reservation was under almost constant siege by non-Indian settlers seeking to claim lands. On September 1, 1870, Tulalip Indian Agent, George Hill, reported to the Superintendent of Indian Affairs,

“I have been much annoyed by the persistent attempts of certain parties to jump or appropriate certain parts of this reservation to their own use. One of them, a Mr. J.J. Connor, not complying with your proclamation warning trespassers off from Indian lands, it became necessary to remove by force” (Hill in Lane 1977: 7-8).

Simultaneously, some in the national Indian Office were pushing for implementation of Isaac Stevens’ consolidation policy – effectively eliminating Swinomish and other temporary reservations to allow a full and final consolidation of Puget Sound tribes at Tulalip. By this time, almost all the lands available for government disbursement to settlers and tribes within the Skagit Region had been allocated and occupied, including almost all of what is within today’s Ebey’s Landing National Historical Reserve (Roberts 1975: 175). Much to the chagrin of the Indian Agents, farming had still not taken hold in the community, even if tribal members had established a small logging camp. Indian Agents’ reports from the time make frequent requests that the reservation be sold to encroaching settlers so as to make more land available to settlers and expedite tribal removal (Sullivan 1932: 104-105).

After what appears to have been considerable internal debate, the Indian Office determined that Swinomish could persist. On September 9, 1873, President Grant signed an executive order establishing the legal boundaries of the Swinomish Reservation (Kappler 1904b: 925). The effect of this executive order was monumental for the Swinomish community. As Roberts (1975) notes,

“The Enabling Act....was taken as a public statement that the Swinomish Reservation was to be a permanent home for the Skagit Region Indians. Before that time, government officials had been contemplating selling off the Swinomish land and moving the Indian residents to either Lummi or Tulalip” (Roberts 1975: 233).

Residents of the community began to invest more labor in the construction of permanent structures, as well as gardens and other features of settled life. For some native people who had not been willing to move to Swinomish before this time, a newfound sense of certainty regarding the reservation’s future eased concerns about relocation. Though the reservation did not have permanent staff other than the resident farmer, encroachments by non-Indian settlers had been largely abated. By the mid- to late-1870s, writers depict the reservation as a very different place than it had been only a decade before. In a letter written by Father Chirouse on May 21, 1877, to the Bureau of Catholic Indian Missions in Washington, D.C., he noted,

“Last Monday, fourteen Swinomish Indians came to Tulalip in a large canoe to take me to their reservation, and until today I have been complying with their earnest requests to be taught and have the Sacraments administered.... During the last two years, the Swinomish have made remarkable progress in Christianity and civilization. We are obliged to enlarge their little church, as many of the members have to stay outside during service, especially on Sundays and holydays. They have also made many improvements in their reservation by building new houses and cultivating the soil. Some of their children asked me to take them to our school at Tulalip. My heart is pierced with pity for I know that I have not the means to support them, but I intend to take some thirty of forty of these poor children, and go with them among the white people of the Sound to secure some help for them from the charitably disposed” (Chirouse in Sullivan 1932: 104-05).

The late 19th century largely followed this pattern, with gradual pulses of migration to Swinomish by area tribal members, increasingly large and settled tribally distinct communities, and a pattern of “benign neglect” by the Tulalip Indian Agency. Under the oversight of Tulalip, the Dawes Allotment Act served to privatize the lands of the reservation; private lands were distributed to individual tribal members at Swinomish from 1884 and 1906, at which time all of the available reservation lands had been allotted. Each of the major tribal groups gathered at Swinomish, including the Skagit, maintained its own separate settlement area and often participated in resource

procurement activities separately, even as the different groups often came together for church services, recreational events, and the like. As Roberts (n.d.) noted,

“Between 1870 and 1930 when the Skagit Region people were moving to the Swinomish Reservation, members of the different tribes and bands experienced many conflicts. It took many decades for a sense of unity to grow among members of the reservation community. Community began in the informal social and recreational sphere...” (Roberts n.d.: 7).

A school, the Swinomish Day School, was established in 1894, bringing together the children of the community regularly within a common schoolroom for what may have been the first time. Contrary to the denominational leanings of Swinomish, the government school was said to have a protestant theological component to its teachings.¹³⁷

In rural areas outside of the reservation, a host of pressures conspired to force many remaining tribal members to relocate to reservations, including tensions with the non-Indian community and a lack of economic options; those with kin at Swinomish often chose to relocate there.¹³⁸ Simultaneously, the last major smallpox epidemic in the early 1890s swept through Puget Sound (Roberts 1975: 154; see also Boyd 1999). Once again, this epidemic hit the reservation community, but seemed to have served to consolidate tribal members on the reservations as hinterland populations were decimated:

“The year 1890 was also marked by a smallpox epidemi[c] which raged almost exclusively among the Indians during the summer. Scores of them died of the dread disease, the mortality being unusually high. The woods were full of afflicted and dead Indians. Corpses floating down the river were often seen. People at last became afraid to venture into the woods or along the shore and the county hired men to hunt for these unfortunates and attend to them, bury the dead, and burn potlatch houses and other property that the infection might be stopped” (Schiach 1960: 150).

By many accounts, the Coast Salish population reached its nadir in the late 19th and early 20th century, with this epidemic as the likely cause of the last great decline in population (see Barsh 1996). Survivors commonly regrouped at Swinomish and other reservations where they had kin and access to modest services from the Indian agencies.

For some families of the period, who had been relatively isolated in small and remote tribal communities, integration into these existing reservation communities was welcome, even when they had little prior affiliation with the host tribe. Social and cultural practices appear to have been familiar and often welcoming during this period

of rapid social change - when tribes had transformed from culturally robust and affluent village societies to socially and economically marginal minorities in the course of a few decades. Speaking of the experience of her Snohomish family at Swinomish, Harriette Dover recalled,

“Some of our Snohomish tribe Indians were married in LaConner, Swinomish Reservation. My father and my brother, my brother was married, and they were the ones that paid the money that feeds all of these maybe a dozen Indians for a couple of days. The elders, they like that, cause they camped down in the long house, and that’s a place like where they were born and where they spent their childhood, and it’s nice. They’re all together” (Dover in Rygg 1977: 84).



Potlatch house on the Swinomish Reservation, circa 1905
Edmond Meany, photographer - University of Washington Libraries, Special Collections Division -
Negative No. NA1229

The early 20th century represented a period of increased social freedom but often declining economic fortunes. Indian Agents slackened their controls on certain social and ceremonial practices during this period. In 1910, some of the tribes of the region, most notably the Swinomish, secured permission from the Indian Agents to selectively revive their traditional dances. After this, the Swinomish erected a new smokehouse or “Potlatch House” on their reservation, and used this smokehouse as a major center of social and ceremonial life through much of the 20th century. Ceremonies were originally undertaken in a purported effort to celebrate the Stevens treaties of 1855; while “Treaty Days” celebrations continued for many years, ceremonies were soon being carried out without requiring such pretexts.¹³⁹ However, even as cultural freedoms rebounded somewhat, access to traditional fishing sites and other resource procurement areas was eroding steadily. Moreover, while the privatization of lands under the Dawes Allotment Act was meant to foster tribal economic opportunity and initiative, the fragmentation of these often marginal lands often had the reverse effect. Without options for the cultivation or development of private allotments, a number of individuals reportedly lost allotment lands to taxation.¹⁴⁰ Economic fortunes lagged well behind those of the Swinomish’s non-Indian neighbors. The absence of any form of local tribal government only compounded these problems; even simple administrative tasks required the involvement of the Tulalip Indian Agency, and the absence of local services was a growing source of dissatisfaction among residents. As Richard Peters of the Swinomish Reservation reported to Roberts:

“The government promised the people they could keep the various ways of using the land, but they lost that. The treaty promised education and hospital care and compensation in land elsewhere, but the government did not live up to that either” (Peters in Roberts 1975: 210).

Responding to the absence of both political authority and economic options, the Swinomish began to organize around land claims issues, seeking redress for lands and resources that had been taken without due compensation. The Swinomish Indian Tribe initiated the first organized Swinomish land claims process between 1916 and 1918, aided by the leadership of tribal member Martin Sampson. Each of the four primary constituent tribal groups at Swinomish decided to pursue these cases independently. As Roberts (1975) notes,

“For many years the reservation community had no representative governing body. In 1912, the BIA agent reported that the Swinomish community as a whole held no business councils or committees. In 1916, the aboriginal tribes (Swinomish, Samish, Lower Skagit, and Kikialus) formed business organizations in order to begin legal proceedings suing the government for compensation for broken treaty promises and losses of

land, but the reservation community still operated as a unit only in the social-recreation and religious sense" (Roberts 1975: 269).



Drummer and dancer, Swinomish Treaty Days celebration, January 22, 1939
Seattle Post-Intelligencer photo - University of Washington Libraries, Special Collections Division -
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In the early 1920s, the Bureau of Indian Affairs helped organize the first formal council at Swinomish. This government was in many respects the "culmination" of the slow social integration at Swinomish, being the first body to represent all of the major constituent tribes of Swinomish and to address some of their common interests (Roberts n.d.: 7) As tribal member Tandy Wilbur Sr. recalled of this organization,

"It was a kind of business council. They had one representative from each of the four tribes-- the Samish, the Swinomish, the Skagit, and the

Kikialus. There was one at-large member. And they made up a five man council to kind of do business for the tribe. And then the agent met with them. This was a kind of haphazard way of trying to get them organized and involved in tribal affairs” (Wilbur in Roberts 1975: 270).

This council continued work initiated by the original Swinomish Indian Tribe land claims committee. The Swinomish Tribal Council pursued land claims on behalf of these five constituent tribes from 1925 to 1934, working in cooperation with the Northwest Federation of American Indians. During this period, economic fortunes began to rebound slightly. The Swinomish became more actively involved in commercial fishing, while aspirations for large-scale agricultural operations seem to have been abandoned by the Tulalip Indian Agency. As Tulalip Indian Agent, O.C. Upchurch (1936a) described the economic life of Swinomish residents during this period,

“The principal source of income on the Reservation is fishing, in which the men are expert both as gill netters and as trap men. Some of them cut wood and timber products but both the supply and the market are limited. One extensive farm operation and several subsistence gardens contribute to their support and seasonal and occasional day labor completes their doubtful economic security. All live in houses as good as they can afford, though some are very poor. Their houses are usually poorly furnished but many are well kept. For some years there has been complaint of the living conditions and squalor of the La Conner Indian fishing village and its remedy has been made a subject of petition and plea from several angles and to various authorities” (Upchurch 1936a: 292-293).

With the passage of the 1934 Indian Reorganization Act, both the Swinomish tribe and the Tulalip Indian Agency saw opportunities to correct a number of longstanding problems in the community. In the summer of 1934, the Swinomish established a constitution and bylaws under the Indian Reorganization Act. As noted by Tulalip Indian Agent, O.C. Upchurch,

“Swinomish leadership has been traditionally of a popular type. The introduction of formal democratic government into the Swinomish state is therefore only reducing to written form an expression of the will of the people. After popular discussion the first step in reorganization was to set up a pattern of government defined by a constitution. This was done with the approval of the Secretary of the Interior and was ratified by the adult

Indians of the Reservation as provided for in an act of Congress of June 18, 1934" (Upchurch 1936a: 295-296).



The Swinomish gillnetting fleet, circa 1903
Asahel Curtis photographer - University of Washington Libraries, Special Collections Division -
Negative No. A. Curtis 06812

Under this constitution and bylaws, the community, for the first time, defined its membership as a single unified tribal group, without its structure being shaped by the identity of the reservation's five major treaty-era tribes.¹⁴¹ The constitution, as stated in its preamble, was designed to "promote the general welfare, encourage educational progress, conserve and develop [Swinomish] lands and resources" and to secure the right to exercise, for the first time, "home rule" (quoted in Upchurch 1936a: 300). The

Swinomish Indian Tribe experienced a period of economic and community development that was moderated somewhat by the Great Depression, but was still transformative. The tribe was able to secure loans and other funding to support a number of economic ventures, including a new fishing operation on tribal tidelands, as well as the construction of new housing for tribal members.¹⁴² While the Swinomish Reservation functioned more or less independently from 1936 onward, the Tulalip Indian Agency continued to maintain a strong administrative presence in the community for many years after reorganization.¹⁴³

As a number of historical, ethnographic, and Indian agency sources suggest, the passage of time, combined with the new governmental structure at Swinomish, served to slowly blur distinctions between the constituent tribal groups of the reservation. Even as some factional differences remained, increased intermarriage and a sense of shared interests – such as concerns over fishing rights and reservation economic development – made these differences less imposing.¹⁴⁴ By the second half of the 20th century, Swinomish families were usually genealogically tied to multiple original tribes, with people of mixed Skagit, Swinomish, Snohomish, and other ancestry. As Tandy Wilber Sr. explained:

“Maybe at the very beginning around 1880 or somewhere around there, when they first were thrown together, there might have been strong feelings about their lineage or something, but as time went along, they started intermarrying more and more. You know, I’ve heard many times over there, at gatherings, at funeral gatherings or any other kind of social gathering, people say, “We’re all related, we’re all related every one.” It’s true too, their relation, if you look it up” (Roberts 1975: 299).

By the late-20th century, some families reported that some families that identified with their ancestral tribes, rather than principally as “Swinomish” were subject to some degree of derision in tribal political and social life (e.g., Scrol 1998: 37).

Migrations to Tulalip and Other Reservation Communities

While it is clear that a significant number of Penn Cove families relocated to Swinomish, it is also clear that many moved to other tribal communities on Puget Sound, especially Tulalip. As noted, the Snatelum family moved to Tulalip after originally being enrolled at Swinomish, and some Tulalips of Skagit ancestry clearly

view Tulalip as the principal tribal home of modern Skagits (Gorlich 1988).¹⁴⁵ The reasons for relocation were many. Some families received word at the time of the treaty process or soon thereafter that reservations such as Swinomish were only temporary, and that all tribal members would in time be sent on to Tulalip. As was widely appreciated at the time, “the purpose of the Tulalip Reservation was to eventually settle thereon all the Indians west of the Cascade Mountains” (Buchanan 1913: 14). In order to minimize disruption to their families, some opted to proceed directly to Tulalip without an intermediate step.

Yet there were many other reasons to relocate to Tulalip. Some families had strong connections to Snohomish and other tribal groups that were present in great numbers at Tulalip, and chose to join kin there. In other cases, some families moved to Swinomish, but were unable to find satisfactory lands or allotments there. This was especially the case after allotments had been distributed on some of the best lands at Swinomish. Richard Peters of Swinomish Reservation, for example, reported that at Tulalip “Some people [originally from Swinomish] did acquire 160 acre plots. One of my father’s other relatives went to Tulalip and Mud Bay because there weren’t enough land deals to go around (Peters in Roberts 1975: 210). Others moved to Tulalip due to the availability of significant church, school, or administrative facilities at that reservation.

A number of families moved back and forth between reservations, especially Tulalip and the smaller reservation communities, such as at Swinomish. As Roberts (1975) noted,

“There was a tendency for families to shift from one reservation to another if chances of receiving an allotment improved and if it had kinship ties to exploit. Eventually most Indian families settled down and became known to agency personnel as belonging to a particular reservation. The agents apparently did not hold individuals to strict administrative rules about who should go where. The government was most concerned with attracting to any reservation those who refused to move away from their traditional homes. Once an Indian took up residence at and became known to the agency personnel of a particular reservation, received annuities or an allotment, and got his name on the books, that was apparently sufficient to identify him and his descendants as being members of that reservation community. To remain members, descendants would need to reside on or near the reservation or visit frequently and participate in community social events” (Roberts 1975: 279).

With the various pressures and incentives for relocation, tribal members often moved to Tulalip, only to move away to another location: “The record indicates that entire bands

or major portions of them, remained off-reservation, or returned to their home territories after an initial stay at Tulalip” (Lane, 1985: 4). The 1885 Tulalip reservation roll includes an impressive number of “Skagit” families. However, even when these individuals stayed at Tulalip, they sometimes changed their identified tribal affiliation from year to year.¹⁴⁶

The scale and scope of these migrations between reservations became apparent in the very early 20th century, when the various reservations under the Tulalip Indian Agency were given the task of creating a formal tribal roll. Edward Bristow, the Farmer in Charge at Swinomish, reported to Tulalip Indian Agent Charles Buchanan in 1902 that some families, including some of the Snatelum family, had moved to Tulalip despite being enrolled at Swinomish:

“I am making very fair progress in Registering the Indians of this Reservation however, there are some questions that I desire to submit to you in connection with this business. As follows... George Seatlum holds an allotment here, but lives, as you are aware, at Tulalip. Should he be registered here? There are some Indians that are on the census rolls who only stay on the reservation a part of the time and it will be hard to get the required statistics concerning their families. What shall I do about them? “I am making better headway in registering than I had anticipated, I have already 90 names registered” (Bristow 1902).

If relocation to the Tulalip Reservation was a practical choice for many families, it was also not an easy place to make a living. Like Swinomish, the Reservation was chosen in no small part because the land it occupied was considered undesirable for white resettlement. In an 1883 report by H.B. Stewart, U.S. Deputy Surveyor, he expressed a dark view of the role of the Tulalip Reservation:

“Possessed of few resources which are likely to kindle the flame of jealousy in the whites, (the Tulalip Reservation) is preeminently the most proper selection which the government has ever made for an Indian reservation. Where, unable to support himself, he can be supported by the Government until the social and natural forces, which he has neither the power nor the knowledge to avert, have put an end to his wants and his race” (quoted in Buchanan 1913: 13).

The absence for subsistence and settlement opportunities for the tribes being concentrated at Tulalip was not lost on tribal members. Harriette Dover, a Tulalip woman of partial Skagit and S’Klallam ancestry¹⁴⁷, recalled that

“When the Coast Salish arrived at the Tulalip Reservation, there were no accommodations of any kind. Individuals were given allotments of land, usually eighty acres, and instructed to farming techniques. Food allotments were irregular and consisted of the barest necessities. To supplement their impoverished situation, the Coast Salish cut cord wood, picked hops, and worked as unskilled laborers for the increasing numbers of white farmers...The Indians lived through a terrible period of High death rates. Of course, most of them didn’t live through it. I’m always really, really astounded that there were some Indians that did survive. I’m remembering how, from my earliest memory, [born 1904] how just the awful death rate. There’d be one, maybe two or three and maybe four Indians dying each week” (Dover in Rygg 1977: 13).

Through the late-19th and early 20th centuries, the Tulalip Indian Agency oversaw administration of the four reservations created in the Point Elliott Treaty - Tulalip, Swinomish, Lummi, and Port Madison – plus newly created reservations such as Muckleshoot (Bennett 1972: 16). As the geographical and administrative core of the agency, a number of services were located there. As has been noted previously, Father Chirouse based his missionary work from Tulalip, even while maintaining small churches at Swinomish and other tribal communities in the Tulalip Agency. Built by Catholic missionaries in the 1860s, the Tulalip Training School was established there as well: “provision was made for an agricultural school and for an industrial school to be established as the central agency [and] open to all children of the tribes who signed the treaty” (Bennett 1972: 15). Starting with a small number of students, the population of resident students gradually grew to almost 200, with students from all of the major reservation communities in the Tulalip Agency (Roberts 1975: 245). As shall be discussed later in this report, the school continued to operate until 1932. The provision of Indian Agency services at Tulalip was unmatched in the smaller reservation communities – from policing and the distribution of tools in the early reservation era to the provision of social services in more recent times.

Drawn to Tulalip for a variety of reasons, many tribal members –including a number of Skagit families - determined to set down roots. A number of these tribal members took homestead claims under the Indian Homestead Act of 1884 and Section 4 of the General Allotment Act of 1887 (Lane 1985: 4). As at Swinomish, a number of these allotments were on economically marginal lands. By the time of the Great Depression, a number of families were forced to sell their allotments or lost them for unpaid taxes. Still, as they became integrated into the larger multi-tribal community, many continued to reside at Tulalip.

The available archival record suggests similar, if much smaller, migrations of Penn Cove Skagit families to a number of reservation communities on Puget Sound. As

noted previously, such families as the Squiquis moved to Lummi, joining kin on that reservation. As some families chose their reservation community based on kinship, others chose their reservation home based in large part on economic opportunity. A number of tribal people from the study area did not initially relocate to reservations, but worked in places such as the Pope and Talbott lumber mill at Port Gamble (Boxberger and Miller 1989). First built in 1853, this mill hired so much Indian labor that the small, largely S'Klallam tribal community there soon swelled into a considerable settlement. A few individuals from the Penn Cove area appear to have married into families at Port Gamble, which was situated close to such employment opportunities. Thus, Skagit families appear to have relocated to all four of the original reservations proposed in the Point Elliott Treaties.

A small number of families from Puget Sound tribes also migrated to reservations outside of the Puget Sound (Haeberlin and Gunther 1930: 11). The Quinault especially adopted a small number of these individuals onto their rolls. For several years, these Quinault adoptions created legal complications; some tribal organizations contended that the Bureau of Indian Affairs was slow to recognize new adoptees as being formally enrolled at Quinault and thus continued to treat them as Indians without tribal affiliation.¹⁴⁸ A small number of Puget Sound families, especially those with preexisting kin ties to tribes east of the Cascades, sometimes relocated to the reservations of eastern Washington, especially Yakama. While Canadian kinship ties are mentioned in archival accounts, there does not appear to be a record of extensive outmigration to, or intermarriage with, Canadian First Nations.¹⁴⁹

Meanwhile, the S'Klallam, who had briefly used and possibly occupied the lands in the western portion of the Reserve in the mid-19th century, were in an especially uncomfortable position following ratification of the Treaty of Point No Point. Under the terms of this treaty, the S'Klallam and other signatory tribes were required to move to the Skokomish Reservation situated at the head of Hood Canal. The Skokomish are widely reported to have been on generally poor terms with S'Klallam at the time. Instead of relocating, the S'Klallam consolidated around preexisting settlement sites that also possessed economic opportunities for tribal members. Over the course of the late 19th century, the S'Klallam became concentrated in three main tribal communities, one situated at the mouth of the Elwha River, and the other two situated at village sites near major sources of employment at Port Gamble on the Kitsap Peninsula and Dungeness on the Olympic Peninsula. In 1874, the Dungeness community was able to arrange for the purchase of nearby land at Jamestown. Once this land was purchased, tribal members held property individually, maintaining a distinct but federally unrecognized tribal community that was overseen, often casually, by the Skokomish Indian Agency. As already mentioned, some S'Klallam tribal members established a small settlement at Port Gamble near the Port Gamble mill on the Kitsap Peninsula. This community also persisted with ambiguous legal status for many years, until 1934, when funds became available under the Indian Reorganization Act for purchases of

land for landless Indians. The community was able to secure funding and established the Port Gamble Reservation in 1936, securing title to their settlement and formally obtaining status as a federally recognized tribal community. The S'Klallam of the Port Angeles area used similar methods to acquire lands for their community. Formerly occupying lands near the Port Angeles waterfront, this community was able to purchase some 372 acres of timber and farmland on the mouth of the Elwha River using Indian Reorganization Act funds. The tribal community of the Port Angeles area moved to these lands in the years that followed. However, of these three constituent S'Klallam communities, only the Port Gamble community was able to obtain federal recognition prior to the late 1960s (Strauss 2002, chapters in Wray 2003).

Other Remnant and Unrecognized Tribal Communities

All historical sources suggest that, despite the widespread relocation to Swinomish, Tulalip, and other reservations, a small number of families stayed in the Coupeville area. This is apparent in ethnographic accounts as well, though much of this information is incomplete, anecdotal, and confounded by the mobility of tribal families during the early 20th century. For example, it has been reported that Tom Squiqui married George Snatlem's daughter and resided across from Coupeville in the late 19th and early 20th centuries. John Fornsby reported during interviews in the 1940s that the family was still in the area, but had recently relocated to Swinomish: "The son of that lady and Tom Squiqui, Dick Squiqui, is right there in La Conner" (Fornsby in Collins 1949: 302). Still, relatively little has been written about the exact identity of the people in this remnant tribal community at Penn Cove as it existed in the early 20th century.

However, details regarding the identity of this community are available through archival sources. In the early 20th century, the Bureau of Indian Affairs assigned Special Indian Agent Charles E. Roblin the task of enumerating tribal descendents in the Puget Sound region. Tribal descendents identified by Roblin were included on a tribal roll, commonly known as the "Roblin's rolls." Between 1916 and 1919, Roblin visited communities throughout the region. These rolls are uniquely useful in establishing the whereabouts of off-reservation tribal communities during the early 20th century – a time when most tribal communities had already moved to reservations.

On Whidbey Island, Roblin documented no fewer than 36 American Indians – 23 of them living on Penn Cove, in what is today Ebey's Landing NHR. While this was a very small number in light of the historically high numbers of tribal members living on the Island, the number does point toward a very small remnant tribal "community" of a sort on the Island. As of 1919, Roblin recorded only nine Skagit individuals still living at Penn Cove of the total population of 23. They included the Jim family (Charlie, Mary

and their son, August), the Smith family (Lizzie, Monroe, and Bertha), as well as Laura Wyakes. They also included Charley and Mary Snakelum, who Roblin identified as “full blood” Indians (Roblin 1919b). Also in Coupeville, Roblin identified two Duwamish or “D’Wamish” families, including Charles Kittles, Emily Percival-Kittles, as well as Edward, Carl, Aleck, Susan Kittles. Also living in Coupeville were Snoqualmies, including the Hastie family (Richard, Frank and Edith), William Gildow, Charlotte Gildow - Smith, Ralph Smith, and Alfred Smith. All of these Snoqualmies were apparently related to Snoqualmie chief Pat Keenum, and appear to be ancestors of the modern, federally unrecognized Snoqualmoo Tribe. It is possible that others dwelled in the area, but were missed in Roblin’s surveys. The diversity of tribal population, despite its very small size, may reflect the historical circumstances of Penn Cove, which served as social and trading center, mission, temporary reservation, and special Indian Agency site in rapid succession through the mid-19th century.

A number of other families and individuals were identified elsewhere on the island – most being located in Oak Harbor. Roblin identified two other Skagit individuals, Ellen H. Morse-Dyer, and Charles Y. Dyer, in Oak Harbor. Also included on his rolls were self-identified “Kikealis” families – a designation that some attribute to a Skagit band, but Roblin attributes to Snohomish. These individuals included Agnes Short-Parry-Surby (or Agnes B. Parry-Hammond), Louise Short-Maxwell, Flora Short-Vandervoort, Ellen Short-Weed, and Annie Short-Hudson, as well as the children of these women, Eddie Weed and Eddie Hudson; Foster E. Surby and Van D. Surby; a Clallam woman, Susie Tom, and a “Mitchell Bay” woman, Henrietta Barlow Sharts (Roblin 1919b).

In sum, Roblin’s 1919 rolls of Indians in the state of Washington, who were not enrolled in a federally recognized tribe, identified the following individuals living on Whidbey Island:

Skagit

Ellen H. Morse-Dyer (½ Skagit) and Charles Y. Dyer (¼ Skagit), Oak Harbor
Charlie Jim, Mary Jim and children, August Jim, Maggie Jim-Wyakes (deceased)
and Laura Wykes or “Wyakes” (all full Skagit), Coupeville
Lizzie Arnold Smith (½ Skagit), children, W. Monroe and Bertha (both ¼ Skagit),
San de Fuca
Charley Snakelum and Mary Snakelum (both full Skagit), Coupeville

D’Wamish

Charles Kittles, Emily Percival-Kittles, children Edward and Carl (all full
D’Wamish), Coupeville
Aleck and Susan Kittles, child Carl (all full D’Wamish), Coupeville

Snoqualmie

Richard Hastie, Frank Hastie and Edith Hastie, Coupeville

William Gildow, Charlotte Gildow - Smith, Ralph Smith, and Alfred Smith,
Coupeville.

Mitchell Bay Tribe

Henrietta Barlow Sharts (½ Mitchell Bay), Holmes Harbor

Clallam (S'Klallam)

Susan Tom

Kikealis (Snohomish)

Agnes Short-Parry-Surby (½ Snohomish), and family Agnes B. Parry-Hammond,
Foster E. Surby, Van D. Surby, Oak Harbor

Louise Short-Maxwell (½ Snohomish), Oak Harbor

Flora Short-Vandervoort, (½ Snohomish), Oak Harbor

Ellen Short-Weed, deceased (½ Snohomish) child Eddie Weed (¼ Snohomish),
Oak Harbor

Annie Short-Hudson, deceased (½ Snohomish), child Eddie Hudson
(¼ Snohomish), Oak Harbor

It is clear from Roblin's notes and other available archival materials that the Penn Cove tribal community was mobile and seemingly still in rapid decline. Roblin's census notes mention families who had recently left Penn Cove, with cryptic notes such as recently departed resident, "William E. Williams.....Father's name was "John" a Skagit Indian lived at Coupeville" (Roblin n.d.c). In many cases, these individuals were moving to area reservations.

It appears likely that a number of the Skagit families on this list were enrolled at Swinomish, or would soon be enrolled there, even though they lived off reservation. As noted previously, the Snakelums were Swinomish enrollees by the 1920s. The 1925 Swinomish census also noted 20 Skagit families living off-reservation within the Swinomish Agency, but does not specify their locations (Tulalip Indian Agency 1925; Dickens 1925).

However, Whidbey Island was not the only place where Skagit families were reported during this period. Indeed, the lists of unenrolled Indians being considered for federal status through Roblin's rolls included no fewer than 15 pages of Skagit individuals, from Skagit and Island Counties, and 13 pages of S'Klallams, most in the three in the communities mentioned previously, in both Clallam and Kitsap Counties.

The residents of what became Ebey's Landing NHR appear to have taken up residence with a number of federally unrecognized tribal populations outside of the Lower Skagit territory. Skagit individuals and families are reported in a remarkably large number of



Coupeville residents Chief Snatlum and his wife, Katie Snatlum, ca. 1900.
University of Washington Libraries, Special Collections Division - Negative No. UW19171, NA578

rural communities in Skagit and Island communities. Several families were located in towns such as Anacortes, Sedro Wooley, La Conner and Marblemount. A few were located in such places as Prairie, Concrete, Deming, Van Horn, Sauk, Bow, Lyman, Rockport, Oak Harbor, Arlington, Irondale, Camano Island, and Conway. A few had moved to regional cities: Seattle, Tacoma, Bellingham, and Vancouver, B.C. A few others had gone as far away as Vallejo, California and Bozeman, Montana. Roblin identified a number on individuals who were part Skagit but primarily identified as residents of other tribes, from which they derived most of their traceable ancestry.¹⁵⁰

Most “Skagits” reported by Roblin in Skagit County appear to be, in fact, Upper Skagits, residing in the Skagit River drainage as well as possibly along the Sauk and Suiattle Rivers. A small number of Lower Skagits with kinship ties to these communities seem to have joined them in the late-19th century, so these “Skagits” cannot be wholly discounted as potential descendents of the Penn Cove village population. Writing in 1919, Charles Roblin reported,

“There are a number of full-blood Skagit Indians, and Indians of affiliated tribes and bands, on the Skagit, Sauk, and Suiattle Rivers, in Skagit and Snohomish Counties, Washington. On the whole, these Indians are doing very well, and there is no suffering among them. Many of them have been allotted in the Washington National Forest, on the Skagit and Suiattle Rivers. Others have taken forth section allotments or homesteads on the public domain. While those Indians are nominally under the jurisdiction of the Superintendent of the Tulalip School, yet they are not enrolled or enumerated at that school, and supervision is difficult. The schedule of unenrolled Skagits, submitted herewith, is large (Roblin 1919c: 3; Roblin 1919a: 1).

A number of these Upper Skagits became part of the Sauk-Suiattle tribe, a group that was formally organized as a political entity by 1943 but remained federally unrecognized until 1974. This group experienced persecution and displacement from arriving Euro-American settlers and early industrial foresters in these upriver areas during the late 19th and early 20th centuries. They were effectively a landless and mobile tribe during this period, and many left to join other tribes. Some were able to obtain allotments under the oversight of the Tulalip Indian Agency, based in part on their documentation in Roblin’s rolls. In the 1920s, the Tulalip Indian Agency reported that “Many have been allotted in Washington NF, on the Skagit and Suiattle rivers. Others have taken fourth section allotments or homesteads on the public domain” (Tulalip Indian Agency 1925). In the 1920s and 1930s, the Bureau of Indian Affairs attempted to secure land for a reservation for a proposed “Skagit-Suiattle Reservation,” to house landless Indians, including a number of upper Skagit families who worked in the

timber industry and lived in lumber camps in the Darrington area and elsewhere in the upper Skagit Valley (La Vatta 1937; BIA 1937). This plan did not come to fruition.

Enduring Attachments

As a number of authors, most notably Suttles (1963) have noted, intervillage ties were remarkably persistent between Coast Salish communities, continuing to link families through social and kin ties well after dispersal to new reservations through Puget Sound. Various accounts suggest that reservation families, such as those at Swinomish and Tulalip, continued to maintain contact with each other, as well as with friends and family members who continued to live in the Penn Cove area.¹⁵¹ Many carried out social visits while traveling through the Sound for work or other reasons. Within Puget Sound, the tribes had many opportunities to maintain contact with one-another and to revisit lands of historical and cultural importance.

The archival record makes it clear that strong social ties continued to unite all of the tribes with significant Skagit membership. Marriages between Swinomish and Tulalip families were not uncommon, as were marriages uniting these tribes with families at Lummi and other reservations. Through the 1920s and 1930s, organized social events, especially at Swinomish and Tulalip – many of them sanctioned or even supported by the Indian Agents – continued to reinforce bonds between these two tribes and the families that had been divided between them. As at Swinomish, the Tulalip held annual Treaty Day events. The Tulalip Treaty Day events waned by the late 1920s, and so the councils of the tribes under the jurisdiction of the Tulalip Indian Agency decided in 1930 to combine their efforts to have a fair on the Swinomish Indian Reservation, at the Swinomish Potlatch House in LaConner. Tandy Wilber Sr. exclaimed to Roberts: “By the 1930’s they were going great guns up there in the [Swinomish] Smokehouse” (Roberts 1975: 320). Sometimes, events were also held at the Lummi Potlatch House on the Lummi Reservation (Upchurch, 1936; Ducles 1930). Some of the ceremonies carried out there showed evidence of remarkable cultural resilience despite enforced assimilation under the watch of the Indian agencies, and served to perpetuate forms of traditional knowledge through the multi-tribal exchange of information.¹⁵²

The large numbers of Indian laborers that gathered for work in canneries, agricultural operations, and mills also contributed to ongoing social exchanges and integration between the tribal communities of Puget Sound. As noted previously, the Indian communities of Puget Sound began working for non-Indians in limited ways from the time of the fur trade, but expanded their participation in the labor market considerably as the fur trade came to an end. A number of tribal members secured employment in early fishing operations, sometimes working as independent fishermen selling to early agricultural settlers in the region. John Fornsby recalled

“Oh, the Whites liked fish. The first White folks bought them when they came. My father used to sell lots. He came up to the mouth of the river, fished lots, went down and sold them” (Collins 1949: 307).

By the 1880s and 1890s, tribal members were playing an important role in the early commercial salmon industry on the Puget Sound, with men providing boating and fishing expertise and some women finding employment in canneries. Indeed, as Boxberger (1988) has argued, American Indian participation in early commercial fishing was an intermittent but essential ingredient in the development of that industry. The canneries of the region employed large numbers of Indians, bringing together residents of multiple reservations for the duration of the fishing season. Meanwhile, the men who operated fishing boats made repeated visits to the canneries over the course of the fishing season, delivering their catch, buying provisions, making repairs, and the like. Impromptu tribal settlements often appeared, or dramatically expanded, alongside these canneries. Women and men were able to reconnect with friends and family from other reservation communities; in many cases, people met their future spouses from other communities at these canneries (Boxberger 1988).

Hop picking in the agricultural areas of western Washington also brought people of diverse tribal backgrounds together in new configurations. Many tribal elders who lived in the late 19th and early 20th centuries spoke of hop picking in their youth: For example, Harriette Dover recalled,

“When I was young, a lot of Indians didn’t even have a one-room shack. They lived in tents. They’d go hop-picking in September down to the Puyallup Valley, that was really their only income. Once in awhile some few Indians would get to work for some settler, planting potatoes or corn or whatever” (Dover in Rygg 1977: 18).¹⁵³

Hop fields became a “great meeting place between Puget Sound peoples, and trade and social activities sometimes coincided with the hops harvest (Gunther 1927: 213). As John Fornsby reported, these hop picking times brought together not only Puget Sound tribes, but tribes and Canadian First Nations from an even larger field:

“Those West Coast people come from islands up on the northwest coast, from islands off Vancouver. They came down in the early days when they first raised hops down at Puyallup. They never came before. I never saw them when I was a kid. They just came down when they raised hops. They are just the same kind of people as us, only they speak a different language.

“When we got picking hops in Puyallup, they moved us up to Nisqually and then to Chehalis. We kept on going. I had a pretty good boss, Quarry, from Puyallup. His father had a place at Puyallup. Jimmy Pinkums was another man who wanted me to get pickers.

“Those people back of Seattle talked a different language. All I saw of those people was when I went hop-picking. They had nice hops at Chehalis” (Collins 1949: 330).



Indian and non-Indian hop pickers working together on a Whatcom County farm, ca. 1900
Photographer unknown - University of Washington Libraries, Special Collections Division -
Negative No. NA887

As a number of writers have noted, the patterns of tribal subsistence fishing and other resource procurement tasks, as well as reservation labor, were often timed around the availability of off-reservation commercial fishing and agricultural activities. In this way, the participation in these industries for a time fit into a sort of modified “seasonal round” that included travel to traditional subsistence sites when traveling to or from canneries located around Puget Sound. As the Samish Indian Nation noted in their petition for federal recognition,

“[Commercial fishing] and other seasonal work, such as picking hops, strawberries and peas, fitted aboriginal patterns well...The canneries employed hundreds of people, including Chinese and Japanese as well as Indians from Lummi, Swinomish, Tulalip, Neah Bay, and Canada” (Samish Indian Nation 1986).

As noted previously in this document, some tribal members also worked in some of the earliest sawmills on Puget Sound. A number worked at the Port Ludlow saw mill in the 19th century, and moved their families, often seasonally, to a small tribal settlement near this mill. In addition to hiring Indian laborers for many mill jobs, the mill also purchased dogfish from local Indians for lamps; the mill operated from 1852-1891, closed briefly and then reopened, running from 1897-1935 (Boxberger and Miller 1989). The Port Gamble Pope and Talbot mill had a similar multi-tribal community that developed near that facility: “The mill at Port Gamble, Pope and Talbott, was established in 1853, and had a history similar to the Port Ludlow mill” (Boxberger and Miller 1989: 9). As with the canneries, these mills served as a nexus of social interaction between tribal men, while the associated communities brought together families of diverse tribal background.

Boarding schools also brought together children from multiple tribes, reinforcing and forging new bonds between Coast Salish tribal communities that had relocated to reservations. Most prominent among these was the Tulalip Training School. Sampson (n.d.) recounts the history of the Tulalip boarding schools, which evolved out of the early Catholic mission school system:

“When the Catholics withdrew in 1901, the Government continued the small school in the mission building until it burned in 1902. A small new government school was opened in 1905...Up to 1905, the capacity of the Tulalip School was limited to a mere handful of Indian children...The Tulalip Training School opened in 1905, and continued until 1932, when the students were transferred to the public schools of the state, the Federal Government carrying out the provisions of the Treaty by making per capita payments to our public schools in behalf of the Indian children attending.

“Many of the Swinomish children who had been attending the Tulalip School were enrolled in the LaConner schools the following year. Others were transferred to the Chemawa Training School in Oregon” (Simpson n.d.: 88).

The curriculum at the Tulalip Training School included half a day of basic academic studies and half a day working in vocational training positions that supported school functions, including work in “the bakery, the laundry, the infirmary, the furnace room or steam plant, the garden, and various carpentry and machine shops” (Roberts 1975: 245). Use of the Lushootseed language and any outward expressions of traditional Coast Salish culture were forbidden in this school, as was common of boarding schools nationally. A comparable boarding school, the Cushman Training School, operated out of Tacoma and provided instruction to tribal children especially drawn from southern Puget Sound; some tribal members also attended Chemawa, near Salem, Oregon. Though boarding schools such as these have been generally recognized for their destructive effects on tribal societies, they did also provide opportunities for socializing and intermarriage between tribes after new reservation tribes had been established.¹⁵⁴



Boys at the Tulalip Boarding School, circa 1912
Ferdinand Brady, photographer - University of Washington Libraries, Special Collections Division -
Negative No. MOHAI 88.11.2

Continued Use and Significance of Whidbey Island Following Displacement

As the tribes hailing from what is today Ebey's Landing NHR became settled on reservations, their increasingly restricted movements effectively served to sever ties between these peoples and their respective homelands. Especially in non-Indian communities, tribal associations with areas off of the reservations were often forgotten. As Richard Peters of the Swinomish Reservation reported to Roberts:

"White people don't realize, even when you tell them, that the Indians didn't used to be just here on the Reservation, but all around. The Lower Skagits had villages at Snatelum Point, Monroe's Landing, Crescent Harbor, and Utsaladdy [Camano Island]" (Peters in Roberts 1975: 210).



"Potlatch house, tents, and canoes on shore, probably Whidbey Island, ca. 1904" showing families camping temporarily at a former village site.

O.S. Van Olinda, photographer. University of Washington Libraries, Special Collections Division -
Negative No. VAN402

Still, though the people of Penn Cove and other nearby villages of the 19th century relocated to reservation communities at Swinomish, Tulalip, and elsewhere, a number of these families maintained connections to the study area that persisted through time, and may persist in various ways into the present day. A number of oral history accounts suggest that the people who relocated to these reservations often returned seasonally to places on Whidbey Island to gather shellfish and berries, as well as to visit places of enduring cultural and historical significance. As Roberts (1975) notes, the people of Swinomish, who were especially close to the study area, made this trek especially often:

“During the early reservation period, Indian families continued to visit clam and mussel beds on Fidalgo and Whidbey Islands, sometimes going quite far on the occasion of an especially low tide. Indian hunters frequently canoed to Whidbey Island and Cypress Island, whose mountainous slopes still teemed with deer” (Roberts 1975: 239).

However, people from other reservation communities also visited the area. Personal recollections of these treks were especially rich in the oral history transcripts of Harriette Dover. Harriette Dover’s father, William Shelton, was born in the 1860s and moved from one of the Whidbey Island villages to Tulalip when he was young. Harriette Dover was a youth at around the turn of the century, and recalled these visits as pleasurable times,

“When I was little, my father and mother liked to go camping out on Whidbey Island. We’d go all summer long every weekend. My father worked all week at the Agency. We’d go Friday night, camp on Whidbey Island, where my father grew up. My mother grew up on Guemes Island, but she lived the same kind of a life in the long house there as my father did on Whidbey Island.

“My sister and I used to just run up and down the beach barefooted. My father and all of these uncles and cousins could have a tent up and have a fire going in just minutes.

“My mother and them would always have potatoes which they baked in the hot sand. If it’s early summer, you’d have canned wild blackberries, oh, pure paradise! You wake up early in the morning and you hear the waves on the beach. I remember my father or my mother would wake us or we’d just wake up. Outside you could hear the fire snapping, and everybody is talking and visiting. We’d wake up, and my

mother would say, 'listen to the waves talk, they're laughing a little' "
(Dover in Rygg 1977: 53-54).

Her family reported picking berries there, but also gathering medicinal plants and other resources.¹⁵⁵ Harriette Dover also recalls that some families continued to camp at Whidbey Island and cut wood for use on steamships and for white residents of the Puget Sound:

"The boats were steam and they had to burn wood. They'd stop at Mukilteo and then cross to Whidbey and buy it at different places. Different ones would have cord wood stacked up and sell it by the cord. That was their income and wasn't very much" (Dover in Rygg 1977: 18).



"Potlatch house with canoes on shore, Whidbey Island, ca. 1904"
O.S. Van Olinda, photographer. University of Washington Libraries, Special Collections Division -
Negative No. VAN401

During this period, a small number of longhouses still stood on Whidbey Island and were sometimes occupied briefly during social, subsistence, and occasionally ceremonial tasks. These remaining longhouses, commonly called “potlatch houses” stood along the shore of Penn Cove and were occupied for group ceremonial activities involving resident and reservation Indians through the early years of the 20th century.

Apparently, the final truly Skagit potlatch of the early reservation period was held in one of these longhouses at what is now Ebey’s Landing NHR; the exact date of this event was not apparent in consulted sources. According to John Fornsby, this potlatch was hosted by Kwaskédib, also known as George Snatlem, Jr.¹⁵⁶,

“The last time the Lower Skagit gave a potlatch, they called the Lummi. This was the last time. White people were here then, but there was no law then. They didn’t care what the Indians did. They gave the potlatch across from Coupeville. I was down there with the Lower Skagit. Some Skagit came. My father went down there. They had lots of people-some Snohomish - lots of people in that place. They had lots of blankets and money that they gave away.

“The Lummi landed at the beach. Everyone went down and packed up their things. The Lummi didn’t have to carry things-only their blankets. They brought something to eat. They helped those people who gave the potlatch. The Indians from the Skagit took down fresh salmon. Ha, that is why they had a good time down there. They cooked the salmon with potatoes. They had a big pot with coffee. Before that they drank cold water. They had no sugar and no flour. The Skagit and the Lummi sang right in their canoes. They both stood up in their canoes and sang . They sang their power songs. K’wáxk’ud they sang. The Lummi sang k’wáxk’ud, the best song they got. They had a good time.

“Some fellows sang héyida [a ceremonial song]; they had a drum. They other fellows stopped; the man at the other end started to sing. There was a man way up on the end of the building. They had blankets way up on the top of the house. They just dropped one for the person called. They gave away a whole lot of things, \$2.50 for each man. My father got a blanket. I got one blanket that time. My mother’s relation, who was giving things, gave me one blanket. He put a little white blanket around me. I was a little boy and I packed wood into the house so they gave me a blanket.

“The agent in Tulalip stopped them from giving things away. They just wanted to pay the other people and give something away. The agent said, “you mustn’t give people things. Don’t you do it.” I was over ten years old when the agent stopped them. They had a few potlatches among themselves after that, but not a big time.

"I was working in a camp with my relative cousin Charley Hilaire, in Tulalip. Then I went with his folks to dig clams near Coupeville (Collins 1949: 313-314).

While the use of Whidbey Island for large ceremonial gatherings of this kind would cease under the influence of Indian Agents, supplementary subsistence use of the island, as well as the use of temporary encampments for social gatherings persisted. These patterns continued into the 1920s and perhaps even intensified briefly during the Great Depression of the 1930s, as some families increased their reliance on subsistence



S'Klallam boys, Benny Anderson and Claude George, carrying clams and fish gathered on the Olympic Peninsula, 1939. Subsistence economies slowly transitioned into cash economies, a process that stalled briefly during the Great Depression.

Seattle Post-Intelligencer photo - University of Washington Libraries, Special Collections Division - Negative No. PI-23828

resources in the face of economic challenges. A number of Skagit descendents from Swinomish, Tulalip, and perhaps other tribal communities reported continuing to visit their traditional homelands for extended summer visits, involving social gatherings, berry picking, and other forms of resource procurement (Samish Indian Nation 1986). Small resource encampments, such as those used prior to contact for clam digging, hunting, and berry picking, were still used by these families; in some cases, former village sites appear to have been used in this manner.

Still, obstacles were emerging at this time that effectively displaced the traditional use of these areas. Richard Peters of Swinomish explained:

“In 1923-4 no trespassing restrictions were put up on Whidbey Island. After these younger people got there, the sons and daughters of the pioneers, they didn’t know the Indians. The older people knew the Indian and respected him” (in Roberts 1975: 284).

Certainly, a small number of families appear to have continued visiting resource procurement sites on Whidbey Island through much of the 20th century. However, traditional use areas and campsites appear to have been fewer, increasingly marginal, and located to avoid direct conflicts with non-Indian residents and landowners.

However, in one arena, non-Indian communities seemed to accept and even endorse tribal members’ return to lands within what is now Ebey’s Landing NHR: Indian canoe races. Canoe racing appears to have been a popular form of entertainment, involving tribal communities of the area, as early as the late-19th century. Some races appear to have taken place in the Penn Cove area. However, in the first few decades of the 20th century, the non-Indian communities of the region, including Coupeville, actively sought to develop and promote the Indian canoe races in their area. This was done in part as a tourist promotion effort, but also served as festival entertainment for these communities. These events were unique for their scale and in their potentials to foster cooperative efforts between the Indian reservations and the non-Indian communities that had effectively resettled their traditional homelands. As Roberts (1975) summarized these events,

“During the later years of the early reservation period, around the 1920’s and 1930’s...The town councils, Chambers of Commerce, and civic clubs of Anacortes, Bellingham, Everett, Coupeville, and Victoria put up prize money for Indian canoe races, inviting Indian teams from all over coastal Washington and British Columbia. Sometimes they even arranged for crews’ lodging.... Canoe racing and preparation for it was an extremely important community event at Swinomish. The “skipper” of the canoe began a training program two months in advance of a race, making team

members run three miles every morning, give up smoking and drinking, and work out every day. The skipper and eleven paddlers split the prize money....Canoe racing sponsorship is one of the earliest formal cooperative relationships between the Swinomish Reservation community and neighboring White towns.... By 1906 Skagit Region Whites had begun to talk about pioneers and Indians as part of "the old days." Indian canoe races became a tourist attraction for about three decades. Mutual interest in them drew White towns and the Indian reservation community together in a common effort" (Roberts 1975: 258-60).



A group of tribal men in a game testing their strength near Coupeville, during a 1905 ceremony. Photographer unknown - University of Washington Libraries, Special Collections Division - Negative No. NA861

Coupeville's canoe races were among the most prominent and, with a high level of community sponsorship, Coupeville offered prizes to the winning crews. For example, according to Tulalip Indian Agent Upchurch, in 1938 "At the International races at Coupeville the prize for first place is \$10 per man, for second place \$5 and for third \$3"

(Upchurch 1938). Each canoe team consisted of roughly 12 men. Racing occurred at different dates each year, but typically between July 20 and August 10, when the men could take breaks from commercial and subsistence fishing.



A Seattle Post-Intelligencer photo of the “International Indian War Canoe Race” in Coupeville, August 10, 1936

Seattle P-I photo - University of Washington Libraries, Special Collections Division - Negative No. PI-23809

Tribal histories that address this period generally allude to the multi-tribal character of these events: “Indians came from Vancouver Island and all over the Sound” (Samish Indian Nation 1986). For many families, the canoe races appear to have been their primary reason for continued use of certain places within their ancestral homelands, and Penn Cove was prominent among these places. Social events, and even abbreviated potlatches were held coincidentally with these events, recapitulating the social gatherings that had occurred in these same locations only two or three generations before.



VANOLINDA, PRINTER, COUPEVILLE, WASH.

"Skagit Indians cooking food for potlatch, Coupeville, Whidbey Island, 1904"
O.S. Van Olinda, photographer. University of Washington Libraries, Special Collections Division -
Negative No. VAN398

Word of these events spread broadly, so that the National Automobile Association began to express interest in promoting the Coupeville event "I understand the Tulalip Indians, whenever they hold a potlatch at Coupeville during the summer, have war canoe races and invite Indian crews from the vicinity of Victoria and Vancouver, B.C." (Tiedemann 1938a). Men such as Chief Andrew Joe, Swinomish canoe racer and canoe builder, as well as Swinomish Chief Martin Sampson, a promoter of the canoe races,

became minor national celebrities (Tiedemann 1938b). Even the magazine, *Popular Science*, devoted a small article to the phenomenon:

“With a skill handed down through generations of expert craftsmen Andrew Joe, Chief of the U.S. Indian Police on the Swinomish Reservation, carved out the speedy and graceful war canoe...for use of his tribe’s crew in a recent championship race between Indian tribes, held at Coupeville, Wash. Using only old-time and comparatively crude Indian-made tools, forty-five-year-old Joe spent eight months of careful, intensive work on the 250-pound craft, which has an exceptionally thin hull worked to a uniform thickness throughout. One of the twelve places in the canoe was reserved for Andrew Joe” (Popular Science 1938: 134).

Indian Agents of the time seem to have had mixed responses to this level of publicity, typically promoting tribal participation in the races while seemingly attempting to discourage much national-level publicity for the events, if available correspondence is any indication. These events, with all of their publicity and multi-tribal flavor, continued to be a central part of Coupeville community life through the 1930s; the events appear to have been eclipsed by the events of the World War II era, but rebounded thereafter, continuing through the 1960s.

Tribal Cemetery

While the NPS has documentation of a tribal cemetery near Snatelum Point, relatively little information was forthcoming regarding this cemetery from consulted archival sources. In 1914 a letter to the national Superintendent of Indian Affairs regarding the “Cemetery for Indians buried outside of reservations near Coupeville, Washington,” Tulalip Indian Agent Charles Buchanan (1914a) reported working with the “Farmer in Charge of Swinomish Reservation” regarding the continued presence of burials in the area. At this time, these burials appear to have been in jeopardy from encroaching settlement.

A large number of Swinomish representatives had communicated with Buchanan and indicated that they would receive burials from the Coupeville area. At this time there had apparently been a proposal to relocate some of the human remains to Swinomish. There were rumors that the Swinomish had originally resisted this, but the tribal community later denied

“that they ever refused sepulture to the bodies of dead Indians from Whidbey Island and that such an act on their part would be absurd

because all of the Indians buried on Whidbey Island were more or less blood relatives of the said Swinomish Indians” (Buchanan 1914a).

Buchanan then added “That is a fact.” Yet, Buchanan also noted two men at Lummi, Tom Squiqui and Johnny Alexis, were also making some effort to secure land for a burial site, apparently associated with Coupeville area burials.

In a letter to the Superintendent of Indian Affairs, dated a few days later, Buchanan noted that he was making efforts to acquire land, apparently to protect the burials near Coupeville:

“I located the owner of said land some time ago but he refused to entertain any proposition touching said land until he could have a timber “cruiser” go over the land, “cruise” the timber thereupon and give the owner definite information as to what was on the land and what it was worth. Under date of November 27th, 1914....the owner, Mr. J.H. Smith, of Hamilton, Washington, offers his three lots, 57 acres, for \$900.00 if sold soon” (Buchanan 1914b).

In time, Buchanan’s efforts appear to have been successful. The tribal cemetery is still located in the Snatelum Point area, consisting of a forested tract within a residential community, with a filtered view toward Penn Cove. Inferring from available archival sources, it appears likely that this cemetery may be the same “burial site” noted outside of the Snakelum Point village during that community’s transition from canoe burials to subterranean burials in the 19th century.

Simultaneously, the “Snaklin Monument,” sitting southwest of Snakelum Point just north of Parker Road has been identified as a likely burial site for at least two chiefly members of the Snatelum family. Looking much like a headstone, the monument was constructed prior to 1918, apparently by members of the Snatelum family. The monument is not currently located in its original site; it appears that the monument was moved to its current location sometime after 1937 and now sits some distance further away from the water than was true of the original monument. While the presence of human remains at this site has not been formally confirmed, both archival and oral history sources suggest that human remains were located at the original monument site and were moved along with the marker stone. This monument was refurbished in the 1970s with considerable involvement from local non-Indian residents. In recent years, unidentified people, apparently people of American Indian ancestry, have left commemorative objects, such as flowers, at the monument – reflecting in part the site’s reputation as a burial site (Wessen 1995).

Indian Claims Commission

From very early in the history of Puget Sound's reservation tribes, there was a widespread sense that the tribes had not been adequately compensated for the lands and resources that had been appropriated during Euro-American resettlement. The circumstances of the Stevens treaties, as many suggested, excluded many tribal communities from the negotiation of land cessions and appropriated many lands without adequate representation of all tribes with interests in the lands and resources ceded at the time. Some noted that the terms of the treaties were poorly understood by the negotiators due to the use of Chinook Jargon – no tribe's native language – as the sole language of negotiation and, in part for this reason, many tribal resources and rights had been lost or misrepresented in the final treaty. Yet, even with the flaws of the Stevens treaties, tribes asserted that the terms of the treaties had not been adequately met, and that compensation was required for unfulfilled federal obligations. In many communities, notably Swinomish, early efforts to seek redress for these tribal claims provided some of the first incentives for the organization of tribal government, and served to unify the sometimes fragmented tribal communities in a way that few other issues could. Many key leaders of this early organizational effort became the tribal leaders of the mid-20th century. Harriette Dover described the grassroots organizational efforts made to support the original Swinomish land claims in 1927:

“My father went to Swinomish and around and got the few Snohomish elders that were living and brought them all down here. Some of them stayed with their relatives, but most of them wanted to stay in the long house. So my parents and lots of these Indians brought blankets and pillows, featherbed mattresses, feather beds down there to the long house. My father and brother and their cousins brought cords of alder wood to keep the altars warm in the long house. Every day, every morning, all day long, and my mother and all the women are cooking noon-day meal and supper for these dear elders” (Dover in Rygg 1977: 85-86).

The United States' position was that if the treaties were contested, all tribes represented by the treaty would have to be party to any legal claims: “The U.S. Government said if we bring suit, if the Snohomish tribe is bringing suit against the government it'll have to be all of the twenty-two tribes under the Point Elliott treaty” (Dover in Rygg 1977: 86). This was a tall order, in light of the ambiguous status of many of the “treaty tribes” that had sometimes been aggregated together for the purposes of treaty negotiations and had then promptly dispersed to a number of reservation communities throughout western Washington. Yet, the Puget Sound tribes rallied, organizing a variety of legal

actions in the first half of the 20th century that served to define, and often defend, tribal claims on lands and resources. Perhaps most important of these was *Duwamish et al. v. The United States*, a major lawsuit brought before the U.S. Court of Claims that sought to redress the loss of critical resources, while representing nearly all of the major tribal communities that were signatories to the Point Elliott treaty. This lawsuit would be of great importance to Skagit families in the years ahead, when the Indian Claims Commission would use the 1934 *Duwamish et al. v. The United States* court decision (79 C. Cls. 530) as their principal precedent in accepting the “Whidbey Islands Skagit” as an identifiable tribal population, capable of legal recourse for claims under the Point Elliott Treaty (Indian Claims Commission 1959a: 315). The lawsuit was also pivotal in that it had demanded of the Puget Sound tribes a level of intertribal political organization that had not existed heretofore, and facilitated the emergence of the Inter-Tribal Council of Western Washington Indians as a political force in the region. This would be especially important two decades later, when the federal government sought to “terminate” the Indians of western Washington as was being done throughout many parts of the United States – effectively eliminating tribal governments and federal services to tribal communities in an effort to abruptly integrate Indians into the American mainstream. In response to this threat, the Inter-Tribal Council flexed its political muscle in a way that had seldom been seen in preceding years:

“In 1953, the Eisenhower Administration proposed the termination of federal relationships with all the Indian tribes in Washington State (HJR108). The fight against termination led by the Inter-Tribal Council of Western Washington Indians, and the bill was stopped” (Select Committee on Indian Affairs 1988: 7).

Unlike many tribes throughout the United States, the western Washington tribes with federal status did not undergo the social, administrative, and economic upheaval that typically arrived in the wake of Eisenhower-era termination policy.

Running parallel to the termination process, the Indian Claims Commission sought to address unresolved Indian land issues. In the years immediately after World War II, the United States government sought to bring closure to the largest and most pressing unresolved tribal land claims throughout the country. In 1946, congress passed the Indian Claims Commission Act, inviting meticulous research on the historical claims of individual tribes and proposing financial settlements for outstanding claims against the United States. The Indian Claims Commission effectively superseded the less comprehensive Court of Claims process that had addressed Indian claims in preceding years. The constituent tribes of the various Puget Sound reservations initiated land claims at this time. As had been true with previous land claims efforts, the organization of claims for the Indian Claims Commission (ICC) process was problematic, as treaties had been created with “tribes” of uncertain structure, which had abruptly been

reorganized into a number of reservation communities that had not existed as organized political entities prior to the treaties. Proceedings were slow and yielded little.

For the Skagit, as with many other Puget Sound tribes, the organization of a claim under the ICC process was complicated significantly by the dispersal of tribal descendents between multiple reservations. With the bulk of the Skagit concentrated at Swinomish, the Swinomish community originally proposed a strategy whereby the Swinomish tribal government, under the title of “Swinomish Tribal Community” would represent Skagit claims, in addition to those of Swinomish. This proposal met with a number of objections from both the ICC and tribal members – especially those based in other tribal communities. Some sources referred to internal disputes between ethnic Swinomish and Lower Skagit on the Swinomish Reservation over whether, and how, to pursue a land claims case.¹⁵⁷ The Swinomish Tribal Community moved forward with a case representing Swinomish and Skagit claims, while dissenting Skagit proceeded with a separate case.

In 1951, the Swinomish and Lower Skagit organized their petitions, supported by the research and expert testimony of Sally Snyder.¹⁵⁸ The Swinomish petitioned the U.S. for \$41.5 Million in damages, seeking repayment for lands lost in the treaty process at fair market value, repayment for the loss of fishing rights promised in treaty,¹⁵⁹ the United States inability to provide lands to tribal members as promised in treaty, and the uncompensated taking of Donation Land Claims, which were excluded from most tallies of tribal “ceded lands” (Indian Claims Commission 1951).¹⁶⁰ A central pillar of their case was that

“[when] this Treaty was made with these Indians... these Indians had no understanding of the contents of the Treaty; that they were uneducated and uninformed, and because of the mechanics of the Treaty-making that the position of these claimants - it was impossible for them to have understood the Treaty or the clauses therein” (Snyder 1955: 4).

As part of this claim, the Swinomish Tribal Community was making claims for the lands of its constituent tribes, including the territories of the Skagit lands – territories that include what is today Ebey’s Landing National Historical Reserve.

The Indian Claims Commission initially accepted both the Swinomish Tribal Community and the Skagit claims, and assigned them both individual docket numbers, even though the claims clearly overlapped geographically. After review and deliberation, the Indian Claims Commission determined that the Swinomish Tribal Community did not have the authority to represent Skagit claims independently. The Chief of the BIA’s Division of Tribal Government Services wrote later that,

“There is a group of Indians on the Swinomish Reservation which is identified as the “Swinomish Tribal Community.” This group is federally recognized and organized under a constitution and bylaws approved by the Secretary of the Interior on July 27, 1936, and includes descendants of the many different tribes which make up the population of the reservation. This organization filed a claim under the Indian Claims Commission Act before the Indian Claims Commission (Docket No. 293) on behalf of the several tribes who settled on the Swinomish Reservation, including the Swinomish, for lands that these tribes once owned. On May 17, 1955, the Indian Claims Commission stated that these claims were being pursued in other dockets by Indian entities more representative of the aggrieved historic bands and dismissed docket 293” (White 1974: 2-3).

Herbert Taylor (1974) made a succinct summary of the federal governments’ objections to the practicality of reservation tribes representing treaty era ethnolinguistic groups on their rolls when asked to summarize the Swinomish claim:

“The Swinomish Tribal Community is an artifact of post-treaty days. If the Swinomish Tribal community had the right to bring suit for aboriginal possession, their claims would extend to both coasts of Puget Sound as well as a considerable number of islands and would include the drainages of the Stillaguamish, the Skagit and the Samish, among other rivers” (Taylor 1971: 8).¹⁶¹

As he noted, many other tribes – not the least of which being Tulalip – would share overlapping claims in this same geographical area of interest.

Meanwhile, as the one reservation and Indian Agency originally created to house all Point Elliott Treaty tribes, the Tulalip had also been considering a claims process that would represent all of these tribes to the ICC. The ICC took issue with this position as well, arguing that even the Tulalip’s resident tribe, the Snohomish, could not be appropriately represented by a Tulalip tribal organization.

“The Indian Agency for the whole region including the Swinomish and Lummi Reservations as well as several landless tribes, was located at Tulalip up through the 1940s, after which it was moved to Everett and renamed the Western Washington Agency. The fact that many Snohomish were going to Tulalip for Indian services did not mean they were being served as Tulalip, it was simply that the Indian Service school,

hospital, and offices were all there” (Select Committee on Indian Affairs 1988 : 7).

The ICC arguably recognized that it would be challenging for Puget Sound tribes to organize effective claims in light of these kinds of obstacles. The ICC openly acknowledged that “through intermarriage and affiliation with these and other Indian groups, [tribes such as] the Swinomish have lost their original tribal identity” and that claims would have to be made by organizations comprised of descendants from single treaty “tribes” rather than these federally recognized reservation tribes (Indian Claims Commission 1974: 6).

In this context, the Lower Skagit were forced to organize and represent themselves. Skagit families that had been only in tenuous contact, if they were in contact at all, were compelled to regroup across reservation boundaries. The Skagit descendants formed a new organization, the “Lower Skagit Tribe of Whidbey Island Skagits” and submitted their claim to the Indian Claims Commission; (results in Horr 1974, 5: 306-14.) Research to support this effort was commissioned by the tribe; Sally Snyder conducted the bulk of this commissioned research, and this important research has informed many sections of this report. Despite the challenges of bringing forward this claim, the Skagit met the minimum criteria for participation in the ICC process. When considering the Skagit claim to the Commission (Docket 294), the ICC determined that

“We find that the petitioner group is an identifiable group of American Indians within the meaning of the Indian Claims Commission Act (60 Stat. 1049) and as such is entitled to maintain this cause of action” (ICC 1959a).

However, this was only the beginning of the process. Through a long and meticulous process that took over a decade, the ICC reviewed the research, expert testimony, and other evidence regarding the Skagit claim. In the end, the ICC would accept the Skagit claim as valid, and would determine that all areas in what is today Ebey’s Landing National Historical Reserve were situated in Lower Skagit lands. However, the compensation for these lands arguably was not what had originally been envisioned by the many tribal members who had devoted so much effort to the claim. As was commonly the case, the ICC determined that the Skagit were to be compensated for their lost lands at their real market value at the time of the Point Elliott Treaty, when the lands of the area were of very little monetary value. Thus, in October of 1971, the Lower Skagits received \$75,856.50 for all lands ceded by the Point Elliott Treaty.

In 1972, the Indian Claims Commission summarized their findings regarding the Lower Skagit, as represented in Docket Number 294. Their determination, while long, is

worthy of extended quotation here, as it speaks to many of the key themes addressed in the current study. In their summary, the ICC determined that:

“This group identifies itself as the lower Skagit tribe of Indians. They have also been known as the Skagit Indians and Whidbey Island Skagits. Lower Skagit needs to be differentiated from the Upper Skagit Tribe, which has separate Docket No. 92.

“The Lower Skagits do not have a reservation and the United States does not recognize them as an organized Tribe. They are considered only to be individual descendants of members of the Tribe as it existed at the time of the Treaty of Point Elliott. The Indian Claims Commission recognized the Lower Skagits as an identifiable group entitled to bring a claim against the United States but they have not been recognized for any other purpose. They are not incorporated under State law and have no tribal property or other tribal assets.

“The Lower Skagit Indian group are without a land base. After the Swinomish reservation was established, a number of Lower Skagits moved there. Others became affiliated with Lummi and Tulalip. Under the Treaty of Point Elliott of January 22, 1855, ratified March 8, 1859 (12 Stat. 927), an opportunity was provided for bands and Tribes included in the treaty to occupy reservations established under the treaty. The Swinomish Reservation was one of these and tribal groups making up the reservation included Swinomish, Kikiallus, Suiattle, Upper, and Lower Skagit.

“There is no membership roll for either Lummi or Swinomish and the latest official roll at Tulalip is January 1, 1935.

“Although there are a number of Indians of Lower Skagit blood living on the Swinomish and probably on Lummi and Tulalip reservations also, they are identified only as Skagit and no division is made between Lower and Upper Tulalip [in the] basic roll. There is only one person listed as Skagit on the 1-1-1942 Swinomish census, three (3) on the 1-1-1942 Lummi census and 31 on the 1935 Tulalip Basic roll.

“Many Lower Skagits did not become affiliated with any recognized reservation group but continued to live off reservations. These Indians were eligible to receive homesteads, however, and under the Act of 1862, known as the Citizens Homestead Act, fee patents were issued for any homesteads received by Indians. Later acts provided for restricted fee patents, followed by the Indian Homestead Act, permitting the obtaining of land in trust status and then the Indian Allotment Act with similar provisions. No records are available showing whether any fee patented homesteads were issued to individual Lower Skagit Indians. Agency records of trust or restricted allotments on Western Washington reservations do not indicate if any were issued to Lower Skagits.

“A number of individuals with Lower Skagit blood live on reservations but the majority reside in other areas of Western Washington. For this reason, population figures for Lower Skagits are not available and population trends are unknown.

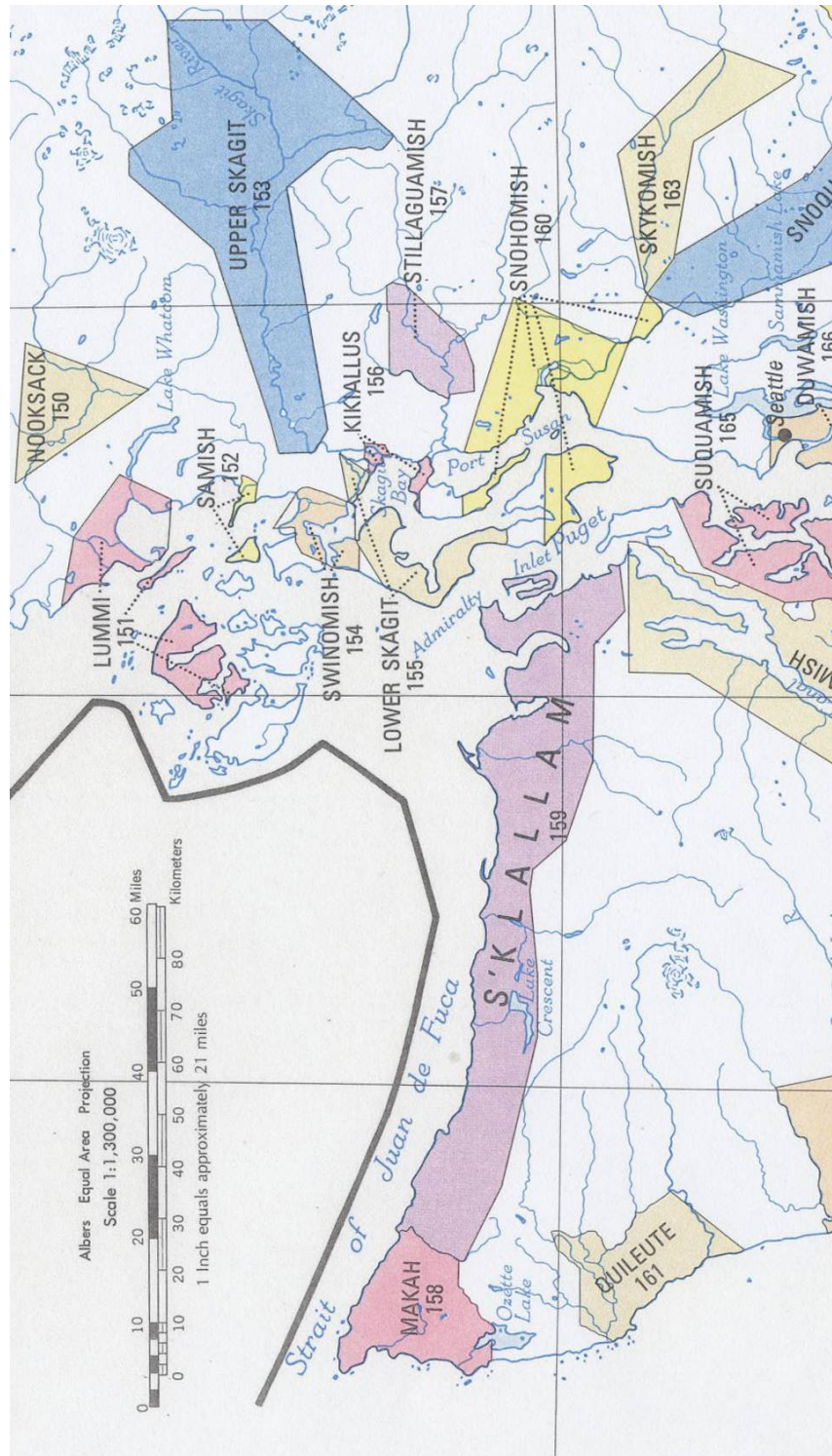
“Tribal membership of Lower Skagit membership was estimated at 300 at the time of the Treaty according to the Findings of Fact of the Indian Claims Commission. There are no Agency records on Lower Skagit membership or population and apparently no Bureau censuses were made of them. Membership in the present Lower Skagit organization is made up of individuals claiming various degrees of Lower Skagit blood, but the organization has not maintained any record of those considered to be members so it is difficult to estimate.

“The Lower Skagits have maintained an informal organization for many years in connection with their claim against the United States. The Lower Skagits were one of the tribal groups which joined together in the suit brought in the Court of Claims under the Act of February 12, 1935 (43 Stat. 886, Ch. 214). This case was identified as “Duwamish et al v. the U. S. 79 Ct. Claims 530”. The organization functions on an informal basis. It has no constitution or By-Laws and meetings have been held only to discuss matters affecting its claim. Usually only a few members attend these meetings. At this time there are no elected officers. Two members act as representatives of the group.

“The Indian Claims Commission issued a final award on October 13, 1971 for \$74,856.50” (Indian Claims Commission 1972).¹⁶²

The Lower Skagit organization that had initiated the petition was small, diffuse, and appeared to have lost some of its original momentum in the intervening years since filing their claim with the ICC. By 1972, there were serious questions as to how the funds from the Skagit claim, modest though they were, would be distributed to the relatively diffuse and inactive Skagit tribal organization, with its scattered membership. The Swinomish Tribal Community for a time continued seeking permission to represent Lower Skagit interests in a number of venues pertaining to the claim, including the disbursement of Skagit ICC funds. The Swinomish Tribal Community appears to have made specific proposals to the Bureau of Indian Affairs along these lines:

“The Swinomish Tribal Community was established under the Indian Reorganization Act in 1936 to govern the affairs of the Swinomish Indian Reservation. The Swinomish Indian Reservation is physically closer than any other Reservation to most of the Lower Skagit aboriginal villages and camps... Given Indian social patterns and limited transportation means of early Reservation and even I.R.A. days, it is reasonable to expect that most Lower Skagits settled on the Swinomish Reservation...



“Indian Land Areas Judicially Established 1978,” showing judicially established lands of northwestern Washington, as determined by the Indian Claims Commission.
U.S. Geological Survey 1978

“The Acting Area Director of the Portland B.I.A. office agrees with our position. In his letter of July 5, 1974, to the Commissioner he states the following about the Lower Skagit plan: “Since virtually all of this group are affiliated with the Swinomish Tribal Community, we feel that this proposal has considerable merit and should be given serious consideration” “ (Swinomish Tribal Community 1974: 2-3).

The Swinomish maintained a formal “Lower Skagit Tribal Representative” that was to oversee this process (Indian Claims Commission 1974; Swinomish Tribal Community 1974). While the Swinomish clearly did influence the process of ICC funds distributions to Lower Skagit claimants, the majority of whom were enrolled with that tribe, the archival record makes it unclear as to what level of authority they had in this process. There is evidence that Tulalip organizations may have also sought the authority to oversee some of the ICC disbursement process for its constituent tribes.¹⁶³

In light of the small amount of funding from the ICC, Skagit claimants decided to forego large per capita payments and used a significant amount of the funding for projects of shared interest. As noted by the Swinomish Tribal Community, a sizeable portion of the money was to be used to commemorate the key Skagit tribal leaders from the time of the Point Elliott Treaty:

“The Lower Skagit Plan set aside \$18,000 or about 28% of the claims money to be “contributed as part of a suitable memorial to the Skagit Chief Goliah, who signed the Point Elliott Treaty on behalf of the Skagit Tribe, the exact nature of the memorial to be considered and approved by the Skagit Tribal membership or by their designated representatives” (Swinomish Tribal Community 1974: 4).

While the consulted archival record makes no explicit reference to Chief Snatelum, it appears possible that some portion of the ICC funding may have ultimately been used to support the maintenance or expansion of the “Snaklin Memorial,” in what is today Ebey’s Landing National Historical Reserve.¹⁶⁴

INTO THE MODERN ERA

At the same time that the Indian Claims Commission was considering the petitions of the Skagit and other area tribes, the Puget Sound was undergoing a dramatic transition. World War II brought a wave of development and industrialization that abruptly swept away many preexisting economic patterns, while also placing some tribal communities, such as Tulalip, in unprecedentedly close proximity to urbanizing non-Native settlements. During World War II, many tribal men entered military service. Simultaneously, both men and women entered manufacturing employment in unprecedented numbers, gaining employment in Boeing and other defense-related manufacturing firms. A number of Swinomish Skagit also appear to have worked locally, helping in the rapid development and expansion of military bases on northern Puget Sound:

“Swinomish men were engaged in defense-related employment during World War II, such as the construction of the Oak Harbor Naval Air Base on Whidbey Island” (Roberts 1975: 330).

As families relocated to urban areas or military bases to work in these professions, members of the extended family often found work in the service sector. While women had sometimes worked as domestic help in the early 20th century, they entered this field much more in the years during and immediately after the War.

In the post-War years, the tribes entered a period in which such phenomena as the Indian Claims Commission, the proposed termination of western Washington Indians, and unresolved fishing rights issues transformed tribal governance. The administrative demands of leadership effectively forged the tribal bureaucracies of the modern day. These demands also fostered the development of tribal leaders who had to be as adept at navigating modern tribal legal affairs, for example, as they had been at maintaining traditional social cohesion within their respective tribes. As Boxberger and Miller note,

“as whites settled in greater numbers [in the early 20th century], leaders emerged who fostered local family interests. By the 1950s, requirements of leadership increasingly included technical abilities and knowledge of bureaucratic operations” (Boxberger and Miller 1989: 33).

This was especially true of the region’s federally recognized tribes, but a similar transition was also reshaping the leadership of the many federally non-recognized populations that were found throughout western Washington. In the Puget Sound

region, these unrecognized groups represented tribal populations that, for a variety of reason, had resisted relocation to the federally established reservations such as Tulalip. In other cases, these were tribal groups, or even extended families, that took exception to the leadership of the federally recognized tribe of which they were a part, using citing historical distinctiveness between factions within these tribes. The unrecognized tribes often emerged from the arbitrariness of the Stevens treaty process, with its emphasis on grouping sometimes unrelated tribes under singular names and leaders. (Tollefson 1992a, 1992b).

By the 1960s, as tribal identity experienced a resurgence nationally and the Bureau of Indian Affairs fielded a growing number of claims for tribal status, the modern leadership of these unrecognized tribal groups was well positioned to advance the interests of their tribes. It is revealing that the majority of the tribes in the general vicinity of Whidbey Island, and almost all of the smaller tribes, obtained federal recognition in the 12 years between 1968 and 1980. Prior to the late 1960s, only one S'Klallam community, Port Gamble, had obtained federal recognition. Yet Port Gamble had cooperated with the two unrecognized S'Klallam tribes in the 1950s and 1960s as part of the Indian Claims Commission process. By the mid-1960s, the S'Klallam communities at Jamestown and Lower Elwha were well organized and actively petitioning for federal status. At Lower Elwha, the lands that had been purchased by the tribe in the 1930s were formerly established as the Lower Elwha Reservation, and the tribe was granted federal recognition on January 19, 1968. In 1975 the Jamestown S'Klallam Tribe adopted a constitution, and proceeding with a petition for federal recognition; the Jamestown community was granted federal recognition in 1980. The contemporary three-part division of the modern S'Klallam was thus formally in place, and officially recognized, by the United States government.¹⁶⁵ Similar forces were at work to the east of the Reserve. Sauk-Suiattle obtained federal recognition in 1975, while Upper Skagit received recognition in 1976.¹⁶⁶ Despite some discussion of a separate federal recognition effort by the Lower Skagit during this period, no letter of intent to petition was sent to the Bureau of Indian Affairs and the group does not appear to have undertaken any material steps toward recognition in the recent past.

Only one modern, recognized tribe residing near the study area did not achieve their federal status during in this small window of time. The Samish, who resided at both Lummi and Swinomish, sought independent status through the 1980s. In 1987, their petition for federal recognition was denied, citing apparently erroneous information suggesting that the Samish were a subgroup of the Lummi. As Boxberger and Taylor noted,

“Occupying the area south of Bellingham Bay, about the mouth of the Samish River, parts of Fidalgo Island and the Southern San Juan Islands, 113 members of this group were present at the negotiations for the Treaty of Point Elliott. The original, hand-written draft of the treaty and the

notes George Gibbs made at the treaty grounds list the Lummi and Samish. What appears to have happened is that the line listing these two groups was dropped in transcribing the final draft of the treaty. The Lummi got a reservation, the Samish didn't. In 1987 the federal government decided that the Samish were subordinate to the Lummi and therefore not entitled to recognition as a separate and distinct tribe" (Boxberger and Taylor n.d.: 9).

The Samish appealed their case in the late 1980s, with a formidable array of legal, historical, and ethnographic documentation. The group was unusually successful, and achieved federal recognition as a tribe separate from the Lummi and Swinomish through this appeal in 1996.

Meanwhile, the Snoqualmoo Tribe of Whidbey Island, which is still federally unrecognized, has its administrative base within the study area, but their direct ties to this area have comparatively little historical depth. Not to be confused with the federally-recognized Snoqualmie Tribe, the Snoqualmoo's historical homeland was located in the Snoqualmie Valley; the two tribes – Snoqualmoo and Snoqualmie – emerged from the same pre-contact populations and some sources represent the Snoqualmoo as a splinter group of the Snoqualmie. The roughly 300-member Snoqualmoo tribe claims tribal status due in part to descent from Pat-Ka-Nam, one of the Point Elliott Treaty signatories, who was identified in that treaty as "Chief of the Snoqualmoo, Snohomish and other tribes." In the 1840s, one of Pat-Ka-Nam's daughters, a woman named Julia, married a non-Native settler and moved to Whidbey Island near Coupeville.¹⁶⁷ Roughly half of the modern Snoqualmoos claim descent from this couple. The descendents of this family opted to not relocate to Tulalip as some other Snoqualmie descendents did in post-treaty times. This tribe submitted a petition for federal recognition to the Bureau of Indian Affairs' Branch of Acknowledgement Research in April of 1980; in recent years they have been reported to be considering a congressional effort to obtain recognition (Lambert 2004). Despite their relatively recent arrival on Whidbey Island, this tribe sometimes becomes involved in cultural heritage and site protection efforts on the island.

Meanwhile, the Skagit presence remained strong on the existing reservation communities of northern Puget Sound, especially Swinomish and Tulalip. The Snatelum family, and its many descendents continued to be a visible cultural force at Tulalip, while individual members of that family sometimes married or moved into other reservation communities with ties to Tulalip. The Squiqui family continued to reside in multiple reservations, most notably Lummi, while Goliah's descendants were especially visible at Swinomish.¹⁶⁸ Yet, in each of these reservation communities, successive generations of intermarriage insured that these Skagit leaders' families were

well integrated into a diverse array of pre-contact tribal identities that extend well beyond Skagit territory.¹⁶⁹

Despite this social integration, the reservation tribes of the region still acknowledge the diversity of their membership. Reservation-based tribal governments have been able to maintain a degree of cultural continuity by placing elders from their constituent tribes in advisory roles to more conventional administrative programs, especially in the case of cultural resource management (Kasten 1987). Often, they assign individuals descended from specific treaty-era tribes to address cultural resource or NAGPRA issues within those original tribal territories.¹⁷⁰

The relative abundance of employment opportunities in nearby urban areas has facilitated outmigration of many families into the metropolitan areas and suburbs of the Puget Sound region through the late 20th century and into the early 21st. Here, tribal families continue to maintain a degree of interconnectedness despite their integration into a much larger and socially diverse urban population (Mooney 1988, 1976b). Yet tribal members, especially tribal youth, find themselves increasingly integrated into social networks that extend well beyond reservation boundaries in this rapidly urbanizing region. The advent of internet and other communications technologies have eliminated some of the incentives for relocation and produced an increase in on-reservation employment in non-traditional economic activities. At present, it is difficult to discern how the balance between these centripetal and centrifugal demographic pressures might reshape the reservation communities of the future.

The increasingly urbanized tribal population of the last half century appears to have continued to make limited use of the study area. Even as families relocated to the Seattle area for employment, “they could still go across to Whidbey Island...and dig clams, get mussels” (Dover in Rygg 1977: 250). While hunting was not possible in the urban areas, tribal members could easily retreat to familiar rural areas during their free time: “These Indians had Whidbey Island too, for hunting, and ducks were plentiful on one of those bays on Whidbey Island” (Dover in Rygg 1977: 250). A small number of Tulalip enrollees reportedly moved back to southern Whidbey Island and commuted to Seattle by ferry.

In this vein, a small number of formal and informal social events have continued to bring Skagit descendants back to the Ebey’s Landing area. Among these, the resurgent canoe racing traditions of Coupeville may be the most visible example. By most accounts, the canoe races were popular through the 1930s, but seem to have been eclipsed by the events of the World War II era: “The canoe races in Anacortes and elsewhere were important Indian events into the 1930s” (Samish Indian Nation 1986). Efforts to hold canoe races were intermittent and of mixed success in the post-war years. As Roberts noted in 1975, “The Indians have tried to revive canoe races many times in recent years” (Roberts 1975: 260). Still, a tradition of inter-tribal Indian canoe

races persisted into recent times (Miller 1998). Coupeville has recently made efforts to revive the canoe racing tradition and to serve as a center of inter-tribal canoe racing into the present day as part of the "Penn Cove Water Festival." A number of Skagit descendents have continued to participate in these events. Indeed, the Snatelum family has continued to play a role in these festivals, participating in drumming, blessings and other events in recent years. The Coupeville Museum maintains displays on the canoe racing tradition, as well, giving tribal history a level of visibility that was rare in local historical narratives even a decade ago.¹⁷¹

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

In the search for a conclusion, we come full circle. Clearly, the lands within what is today Ebey's Landing National Historic Reserve sit within what has widely and conventionally been described as "Skagit" or "Lower Skagit" territory. Indeed, Penn Cove, at the heart of the Reserve, also sat at the geographical and cultural heart of the Skagit people historically. Based on the superficial regional treatments of Puget Sound tribal history, this much is certain.

Yet it is clear, for many of the reasons that were outlined above, that many other tribal groups visited, used, and perhaps occupied these lands at different periods. The S'Klallam and other tribal groups appear to have regularly camped on the west coast of Whidbey Island and gathered camas and other resources there; the S'Klallam, at least, appear to have briefly maintained potato gardens there in the 19th century. During the contact period, Penn Cove served as a missionary outpost of a sort, only to become the site of an impromptu multi-tribal "reservation" and Special Indian Agency through the 1850s and early 1860s. Moreover, it is unclear to what degree the "Skagit" that are so commonly and casually assigned to this portion of Whidbey Island, represented a single or unified population prior to the Point Elliott Treaties. Tribal leadership only occasionally extended its reach to guide multiple villages' destinies, while traditional ties of kinship and patterns of movement insured that the "Skagit" were well integrated into myriad neighboring tribal groups.

Moreover, following the ratification of the Point Elliott and Point No Point Treaties of 1855, the sizeable tribal population from what is today the Reserve found itself without a local or purely "Skagit" reservation. They gradually relocated to a number of reservation communities beyond the Skagit homeland. While this was often done under duress, the Indian Agencies seldom administered these movements in an especially coherent or organized way. Tribal members had their choice of several reservation communities: families moved to join other family members in reservation communities, relocated to the edge of frontier settlements in search of employment, or moved to places that simply seemed convenient and familiar. The written record of these movements is short on specifics. Only certain prominent names, such as those of Penn Cove headmen, Snatelum, Goliah, and Squiqui, are easily tracked through the blizzards of Indian Agency correspondence from this period. And, as this small sample of three demonstrates, the Penn Cove people did not move as a unified group, but chose to follow their individual fortunes in different tribes - with the descendents of these three leaders concentrated in Swinomish, Tulalip, and Lummi respectively, only a few generations after ratification of the Point Elliott Treaty.

Subsequent legal and policy documents, from tribal constitutions to Indian Claims Commission findings, continue to assert that the Skagit were a distinct population, and once occupied the lands of central Whidbey Island. Yet, as becomes abundantly clear in the mid- to late-20th century, the political and social loyalties of Skagit descendents were tied less and less to their “Skagit” identity and more to modern reservation communities, within which they were becoming an increasingly integrated part. There is no Skagit tribe with which to consult, but there is the Swinomish, the Tulalip and others, that represent Skagit interests from the vantage point of integrated multi-tribal reservation communities. This is the underlying context of most contemporary Puget Sound tribal organization today.

So while this document directs particular attention to the experiences of the Lower Skagit, it does so cautiously and advisedly, recognizing that many tribal populations may accurately claim that they have some historical tie to what is today Ebey’s Landing National Historical Reserve. It is almost certain that all Puget Sound area tribes, and a good many tribes from outside of this area, have families or individual members who can trace some portion of their ancestry back to Penn Cove.

Yet the conclusions of this document are clear. Certain tribes have particularly close and unique ties to the Reserve. Foremost among these is the Swinomish Indian Tribal Community, where a disproportionately large percentage of the Penn Cove Skagit population relocated in the 19th century, and where the Skagit still comprise a large and important segment of the overall tribal population. A close second to Swinomish is The Tulalip Tribes, where a large number of Skagit, including the prominent Snatelum family, relocated in the 19th century, joining members of numerous tribes throughout the region. For any matters addressing the western portion of the Reserve, near Ebey’s Landing proper, the three S’Klallam tribes – Port Gamble, Jamestown, and Lower Elwha – have a clear potential interest based on the historical use of the western Reserve by the S’Klallam.

Simultaneously, evidence gathered in the course of this research suggests that many other tribes have at least some families on their rolls that are likely to claim descent from Ebey’s Landing residents of the 19th century. These would include, but not necessarily be limited to, the Lummi Indian Nation, Sauk-Suiattle Indian Tribe, and Upper Skagit Indian Tribe. Two other tribal communities have clear longstanding ties to the former residents of the Reserve and may have interests in its past, present, and future: they include the Samish Indian Nation and the Suquamish Tribal Council. All represent federally recognized tribes and have some membership that can trace a portion of their ancestry back to the Skagit of Penn Cove. All of these tribes might have a potential place in the consultation efforts of Ebey’s Landing NHR.

For reasons that should be obvious at the conclusion of this document, in both future research and tribal consultation, it may serve the interests of the National Park Service

and the tribes if the NPS attempts to engage the tribal communities of the Puget Sound region with a recognition of the breadth of attachments between Ebey's Landing and the descendents of its once numerous resident tribal population. All formal or informal agreements with the NPS aside, the data presented in this report might point the direction for future consultation on NAGPRA and a wide variety of other compliance mandates – identifying both historically associated tribes and their unique histories as they relate to this remarkable place. Contact information for each of these tribes is included in the appendix, while Ebey's Landing National Historical Reserve likely has additional information as to their identities and contemporary contact information

This is not to suggest that this document is the final word on area tribal history, nor that its findings necessarily provide a complete picture. Quite the contrary: many questions endure regarding the tribal history of Ebey's Landing, as well as the experiences of its former residents during and after their relocation to reservations around Puget Sound. And, while historic tribal voices have been incorporated into this document as opportunities allowed, there is still much that could be gained from the incorporation of contemporary tribal voices into a broader study of Ebey's Landing. In light of the proximity and the enduring associations of Swinomish and Tulalip Reservation residents with the Ebey's Landing area, it is likely that oral history interviews could considerably expand upon and clarify many of the themes discussed in this document. Ethnographic references to the periods of relocation, intermittent tribal use of remnant longhouses in the early 20th century, and the early 20th century canoes races are likely to be fruitful. So too, the experiences of tribal members through the 20th century, as they navigate changing economic circumstances, changing identities, and changing relationships with Ebey's Landing, would be of great interest in clarifying and developing on many points made in this document. Meanwhile, inquiries made by the author with elders of the Lekwildakw – the “Kwakiutl” raiders of British Columbia who often attacked the Skagit of Whidbey Island – also indicate that there is still considerable oral tradition regarding raiding activities in the northern Puget Sound area. No doubt, the accounts of these elders might be of value in understanding the complex history of this region. Most of these elders are affiliated with the Cape Mudge First Nation, Campbell River First Nation, and other Georgia Strait First Nations, and might be accessed with the involvement and consent of the Nuyumbalees Cultural Centre in Cape Mudge, British Columbia.

So too, this document points toward a number of research opportunities related to the archaeological record of Ebey's Landing. Much could be gained by systematically reviewing the archaeological record of the Reserve with reference to the ethnographic information presented here regarding settlement patterns and resource use, as well as additional information derived from the same archival sources. And especially productive research could be anticipated using the methods of historical archaeology, in order to address such critical periods as early European contact, missionization, and the Penn Cove Special Indian Agency – periods in which the peoples, ideas, and goods

found at Ebey's Landing expanded and diversified with awesome speed. Clearly, there is much yet to be learned about the tribal history of Ebey's Landing National Historical Reserve. It is my hope that this document will not represent a final step in this process of exploration, but as a tool for encouraging further discovery, and for fostering dialogue on points of mutual interest between the managers of Ebey Landing and the descendents of its many native inhabitants.

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Appendices

Appendix 1: Treaties

Including

TREATY WITH THE DWAMISH, SUQUAMISH, ETC., 1855.
(The “Treaty of Point Elliott”)

TREATY WITH THE S'KLALLAM, 1855.
(The “Treaty of Point No Point”)

TREATY WITH THE DWAMISH, SUQUAMISH, ETC., 1855.

(The “Treaty of Point Elliott”)

Jan. 22, 1855. | 12 Stat. 927, Ratified Mar. 8, 1859 | Proclaimed Apr. 11, 1859

From: Kappler 1904b: 669-73.

Articles of agreement and convention made and concluded at Múcklte-óh, or Point Elliott, in the Territory of Washington, this twenty-second day of January, eighteen hundred and fifty-five, by Isaac I. Stevens, governor and superintendent of Indian affairs for the said Territory, on the part of the United States, and the undersigned chiefs, head-men and delegates of the Dwámish, Suquámish, Sk-táhl-mish, Sam-áhmish, Smalh-kamish, Skope-áhmish, St-káh-mish, Snoquálmoo, Skai-wha-mish, N' Quentl-má-mish, Sk-táh-le-jum, Stoluck-whá-mish, Sha-ho-mish, Skágít, Kik-i-állus, Swin-á-mish, Squin-áh-mish, Sah-ku-méhu, Noo-whá-ha, Nook-wa-cháh-mish, Mee-sée-qua-quilch, Cho-bah-áh-bish, and other allied and subordinate tribes and bands of Indians occupying certain lands situated in said Territory of Washington, on behalf of said tribes, and duly authorized by them.

ARTICLE 1.

The said tribes and bands of Indians hereby cede, relinquish, and convey to the United States all their right, title, and interest in and to the lands and country occupied by them, bounded and described as follows: Commencing at a point on the eastern side of Admiralty Inlet, known as Point Pully, about midway between Commencement and Elliott Bays; thence eastwardly, running along the north line of lands heretofore ceded to the United States by the Nisqually, Puyallup, and other Indians, to the summit of the Cascade range of mountains; thence northwardly, following the summit of said range to the 49th parallel of north latitude; thence west, along said parallel to the middle of the Gulf of Georgia; thence through the middle of said gulf and the main channel through the Canal de Arro to the Straits of Fuca, and crossing the same through the middle of Admiralty Inlet to Suquamish Head; thence southwesterly, through the peninsula, and following the divide between Hood's Canal and Admiralty Inlet to the portage known as Wilkes' Portage; thence northeastwardly, and following the line of lands heretofore ceded as aforesaid to Point Southworth, on the western side of Admiralty Inlet, and thence around the foot of Vashon's Island eastwardly and southeastwardly to the place of beginning, including all the islands comprised within said boundaries, and all the right, title, and interest of the said tribes and bands to any lands within the territory of the United States.

ARTICLE 2.

There is, however, reserved for the present use and occupation of the said tribes and bands the following tracts of land, viz: the amount of two sections, or twelve hundred and eighty acres, surrounding the small bight at the head of Port Madison, called by the Indians Noo-sohk-um; the amount of two sections, or twelve hundred and eighty acres, on the north side Hwhomish Bay

and the creek emptying into the same called Kwilt-seh-da, the peninsula at the southeastern end of Perry's Island, called Shális-quihl, and the island called Chah-choo-sen, situated in the Lummi River at the point of separation of the mouths emptying respectively into Bellingham Bay and the Gulf of Georgia. All which tracts shall be set apart, and so far as necessary surveyed and marked out for their exclusive use; nor shall any white man be permitted to reside upon the same without permission of the said tribes or bands, and of the superintendent or agent, but, if necessary for the public convenience, roads may be run through the said reserves, the Indians being compensated for any damage thereby done them.

ARTICLE 3.

There is also reserved from out the lands hereby ceded the amount of thirty-six sections, or one township of land, on the northeastern shore of Port Gardner, and north of the mouth of Snohomish River, including Tulalip Bay and the before-mentioned Kwilt-seh-da Creek, for the purpose of establishing thereon an agricultural and industrial school, as hereinafter mentioned and agreed, and with a view of ultimately drawing thereto and settling thereon all the Indians living west of the Cascade Mountains in said Territory. *Provided, however,* That the President may establish the central agency and general reservation at such other point as he may deem for the benefit of the Indians.

ARTICLE 4.

The said tribes and bands agree to remove to and settle upon the said first above-mentioned reservations within one year after the ratification of this treaty, or sooner, if the means are furnished them. In the mean time it shall be lawful for them to reside upon any land not in the actual claim and occupation of citizens of the United States, and upon any land claimed or occupied, if with the permission of the owner.

ARTICLE 5.

The right of taking fish at usual and accustomed grounds and stations is further secured to said Indians in common with all citizens of the Territory, and of erecting temporary houses for the purposes of curing, together with the privilege of hunting and gathering roots and berries on open and unclaimed lands. *Provided, however* That they shall not take shell-fish from any beds staked or cultivated by citizens.

ARTICLE 6.

In consideration of the above cession, the United States agree to pay to the said tribes and bands the sum of one hundred and fifty thousand dollars, in the following manner—that is to say: For the first year after the ratification hereof, fifteen thousand dollars; for the next two year, twelve thousand dollars each year; for the next three years, ten thousand dollars each year; for the next four years, seven thousand five hundred dollars each years; for the next five years, six thousand dollars each year; and for the last five years, four thousand two hundred and fifty dollars each year. All which said sums of money shall be applied to the use and benefit of the said Indians, under the direction of the President of the United States, who may, from time to time, determine

at his discretion upon what beneficial objects to expend the same; and the superintendent of Indian affairs, or other proper officer, shall each year inform the President of the wishes of said Indians in respect thereto.

ARTICLE 7.

The President may hereafter, when in his opinion the interests of the Territory shall require and the welfare of the said Indians be promoted, remove them from either or all of the special reservations hereinbefore made to the said general reservation, or such other suitable place within said Territory as he may deem fit, on remunerating them for their improvements and the expenses of such removal, or may consolidate them with other friendly tribes or bands; and he may further at his discretion cause the whole or any portion of the lands hereby reserved, or of such other land as may be selected in lieu thereof, to be surveyed into lots, and assign the same to such individuals or families as are willing to avail themselves of the privilege, and will locate on the same as a permanent home on the same terms and subject to the same regulations as are provided in the sixth article of the treaty with the Omahas, so far as the same may be applicable. Any substantial improvements heretofore made by any Indian, and which he shall be compelled to abandon in consequence of this treaty, shall be valued under the direction of the President and payment made accordingly therefor.

ARTICLE 8.

The annuities of the aforesaid tribes and bands shall not be taken to pay the debts of individuals.

ARTICLE 9.

The said tribes and bands acknowledge their dependence on the Government of the United States, and promise to be friendly with all citizens thereof, and they pledge themselves to commit no depredations on the property of such citizens. Should any one or more of them violate this pledge, and the fact be satisfactorily proven before the agent, the property taken shall be returned, or in default thereof, of if injured or destroyed, compensation may be made by the Government out of their annuities. Nor will they make war on any other tribe except in self-defence, but will submit all matters of difference between them and the other Indians to the Government of the United States or its agent for decision, and abide thereby. And if any of the said Indians commit depredations on other Indians within the Territory the same rule shall prevail as that prescribed in this article in cases of depredations against citizens. And the said tribes agree not to shelter or conceal offenders against the laws of the United States, but to deliver them up to the authorities for trial.

ARTICLE 10.

The above tribes and bands are desirous to exclude from their reservations the use of ardent spirits, and to prevent their people from drinking the same, and therefore it is provided that any Indian belonging to said tribe who is guilty of bringing liquor into said reservations, or who drinks liquor, may have his or her proportion of the annuities withheld from him or her for such time as the President may determine.

ARTICLE 11.

The said tribes and bands agree to free all slaves now held by them and not to purchase or acquire others hereafter.

ARTICLE 12.

The said tribes and bands further agree not to trade at Vancouver's Island or elsewhere out of the dominions of the United States, nor shall foreign Indians be permitted to reside in their reservations without consent of the superintendent or agent.

ARTICLE 13.

To enable the said Indians to remove to and settle upon their aforesaid reservations, and to clear, fence, and break up a sufficient quantity of land for cultivation, the United States further agree to pay the sum of fifteen thousand dollars to be laid out and expended under the direction of the President and in such manner as he shall approve.

ARTICLE 14.

The United States further agree to establish at the general agency for the district of Puget's Sound, within one year from the ratification hereof, and to support for a period of twenty years, an agricultural and industrial school, to be free to children of the said tribes and bands in common with those of the other tribes of said district, and to provide the said school with a suitable instructor or instructors, and also to provide a smithy and carpenter's shop, and furnish them with the necessary tools, and employ a blacksmith, carpenter, and farmer for the like term of twenty years to instruct the Indians in their respective occupations. And the United States finally agree to employ a physician to reside at the said central agency, who shall furnish medicine and advice to their sick, and shall vaccinate them; the expenses of said school, shops, persons employed, and medical attendance to be defrayed by the United States, and not deducted from the annuities.

ARTICLE 15.

This treaty shall be obligatory on the contracting parties as soon as the same shall be ratified by the President and Senate of the United States.

In testimony whereof, the said Isaac I. Stevens, governor and superintendent of Indian affairs, and the undersigned chiefs, headmen, and delegates of the aforesaid tribes and bands of Indians, have hereunto set their hands and seals, at the place and on the day and year herein-before written.

Isaac I. Stevens, Governor and Superintendent. [L. S.]

Seattle, Chief of the Dwamish and Suquamish tribes, his x mark. [L. S.]

Pat-ka-nam, Chief of the Snoqualmoo, Snohomish and other tribes, his x mark. [L. S.]

Chow-its-hoot, Chief of the Lummi and other tribes, his x mark. [L. S.]

Goliah, Chief of the Skagits and other allied tribes, his x mark. [L. S.]
Kwallattum, or General Pierce, Sub-chief of the Skagit tribe, his x mark. [L. S.]
S'hootst-hoot, Sub-chief of Snohomish, his x mark. [L. S.]
Snah-talc, or Bonaparte, Sub-chief of Snohomish, his x mark. [L. S.]
Squush-um, or The Smoke, Sub-chief of the Snoqualmoo, his x mark. [L. S.]
See-alla-pa-han, or The Priest, Sub-chief of Sk-tah-le-jum, his x mark. [L. S.]
He-uch-ka-nam, or George Bonaparte, Sub-chief of Snohomish, his x mark. [L. S.]
Tse-nah-talc, or Joseph Bonaparte, Sub-chief of Snohomish, his x mark. [L. S.]
Ns'ski-oos, or Jackson, Sub-chief of Snohomish, his x mark. [L. S.]
Wats-ka-lah-tchie, or John Hobtsthoot, Sub-chief of Snohomish, his x mark. [L. S.]
Smeh-mai-hu, Sub-chief of Skaiwha-mish, his x mark. [L. S.]
Slat-eah-ka-nam, Sub-chief of Snoqualmoo, his x mark. [L. S.]
St'hau-ai, Sub-chief of Snoqualmoo, his x mark. [L. S.]
Lugs-ken, Sub-chief of Skai-wha-mish, his x mark. [L. S.]
S'heht-soolt, or Peter, Sub-chief of Snohomish, his x mark. [L. S.]
Do-queh-oo-satl, Snoqualmoo tribe, his x mark. [L. S.]
John Kanam, Snoqualmoo sub-chief, his x mark. [L. S.]
Klemsh-ka-nam, Snoqualmoo, his x mark. [L. S.]
Ts'huahntl, Dwa-mish sub-chief, his x mark. [L. S.]
Kwuss-ka-nam, or George Snatelum, Sen., Skagit tribe, his x mark. [L. S.]
Hel-mits, or George Snatelum, Skagit sub-chief, his x mark. [L. S.]
S'kwai-kwi, Skagit tribe, sub-chief, his x mark. [L. S.]
Seh-lek-qu, Sub-chief Lummi tribe, his x mark. [L. S.]
S'h'-cheh-oos, or General Washington, Sub-chief of Lummi tribe, his x mark. [L. S.]
Whai-lan-hu, or Davy Crockett, Sub-chief of Lummi tribe, his x mark. [L. S.]
She-ah-delt-hu, Sub-chief of Lummi tribe, his x mark. [L. S.]
Kwult-seh, Sub-chief of Lummi tribe, his x mark. [L. S.]
Kwull-et-hu, Lummi tribe, his x mark. [L. S.]
Kleh-kent-soot, Skagit tribe, his x mark. [L. S.]
Sohn-heh-oos, Skagit tribe, his x mark. [L. S.]
S'deh-ap-kan, or General Warren, Skagit tribe, his x mark. [L. S.]
Chul-whil-tan, Sub-chief of Suquamish tribe, his x mark. [L. S.]
Ske-eh-tum, Skagit tribe, his x mark. [L. S.]
Patchkanam, or Dome, Skagit tribe, his x mark. [L. S.]
Sats-Kanam, Squin-ah-nush tribe, his x mark. [L. S.]
Sd-zo-mahtl, Kik-ial-lus band, his x mark. [L. S.]
Dahtl-de-min, Sub-chief of Sah-ku-meh-hu, his x mark. [L. S.]
Sd'zek-du-num, Me-sek-wi-guilse sub-chief, his x mark. [L. S.]
Now-a-chais, Sub-chief of Dwamish, his x mark. [L. S.]
Mis-lo-tche, or Wah-hehl-tchoo, Sub-chief of Suquamish, his x mark. [L. S.]
Sloo-noksh-tan, or Jim, Suquamish tribe, his x mark. [L. S.]
Moo-whah-lad-hu, or Jack, Suquamish tribe, his x mark. [L. S.]
Too-leh-plan, Suquamish tribe, his x mark. [L. S.]
Ha-seh-doo-an, or Keo-kuck, Dwamish tribe, his x mark. [L. S.]
Hoovilt-meh-tum, Sub-chief of Suquamish, his x mark. [L. S.]
We-ai-pah, Skaiwhamish tribe, his x mark. [L. S.]
S'ah-an-hu, or Hallam, Snohomish tribe, his x mark. [L. S.]
She-hope, or General Pierce, Skagit tribe, his x mark. [L. S.]

Hwn-lah-lakq, or Thomas Jefferson, Lummi tribe, his x mark. [L. S.]
Cht-simpt, Lummi tribe, his x mark. [L. S.]
Tse-sum-ten, Lummi tribe, his x mark. [L. S.]
Klt-hahl-ten, Lummi tribe, his x mark. [L. S.]
Kut-ta-kanam, or John, Lummi tribe, his x mark. [L. S.]
Ch-lah-ben, Noo-qua-cha-mish band, his x mark. [L. S.]
Noo-heh-oos, Snoqualmoo tribe, his x mark. [L. S.]
Hweh-uk, Snoqualmoo tribe, his x mark. [L. S.]
Peh-nus, Skai-whamish tribe, his x mark. [L. S.]
Yim-ka-dam, Snoqualmoo tribe, his x mark. [L. S.]
Twooi-as-kut, Skaiwhamish tribe, his x mark. [L. S.]
Luch-al-kanam, Snoqualmoo tribe, his x mark. [L. S.]
S'hoot-kanam, Snoqualmoo tribe, his x mark. [L. S.]
Sme-a-kanam, Snoqualmoo tribe, his x mark. [L. S.]
Sad-zis-keh, Snoqualmoo, his x mark. [L. S.]
Heh-mahl, Skaiwhamish band, his x mark. [L. S.]
Charley, Skagit tribe, his x mark. [L. S.]
Sampson, Skagit tribe, his x mark. [L. S.]
John Taylor, Snohomish tribe, his x mark. [L. S.]
Hatch-kwentum, Skagit tribe, his x mark. [L. S.]
Yo-i-kum, Skagit tribe, his x mark. [L. S.]
T'kwa-ma-han, Skagit tribe, his x mark. [L. S.]
Sto-dum-kan, Swinamish band, his x mark. [L. S.]
Be-lole, Swinamish band, his x mark. [L. S.]
D'zo-lole-gwam-hu, Skagit tribe, his x mark. [L. S.]
Steh-shail, William, Skaiwhamish band, his x mark. [L. S.]
Kel-kahl-tsoot, Swinamish tribe, his x mark. [L. S.]
Pat-sen, Skagit tribe, his x mark. [L. S.]
Pat-teh-us, Noo-wha-ah sub-chief, his x mark. [L. S.]
S'hoolk-ka-nam, Lummi sub-chief, his x mark. [L. S.]
Ch-lok-suts, Lummi sub-chief, his x mark. [L. S.]

Executed in the presence of us –

M. T. Simmons, Indian agent.
C. H. Mason, Secretary of Washington Territory.
Benj. F. Shaw, Interpreter.
Chas. M. Hitchcock.
H. A. Goldsborough.
George Gibbs.
John H. Scranton.
Henry D. Cock.
S. S. Ford, jr.
Orrington Cushman.
Ellis Barnes.
R. S. Bailey.
S. M. Collins.
Lafayette Balch.
E. S. Fowler.
J. H. Hall.
Rob't Davis.

TREATY WITH THE S'KLALLAM, 1855.

(The "Treaty of Point No Point")

Jan. 26, 1855. | 12 Stats., 933., Ratified Mar. 8, 1859 | Proclaimed Apr. 29, 1859

From: Kappler 1904b: 674-77.

Articles of agreement and convention made and concluded at Hahdskus, or Point no Point, Suquamish Head, in the Territory of Washington, this twenty-sixth day of January, eighteen hundred and fifty-five, by Isaac I. Stevens, governor and superintendent of Indian affairs for the said Territory, on the part of the United States, and the undersigned chiefs, headmen, and delegates of the different villages of the S'Klallams, viz: Kah-tai, Squah-quaihtl, Tch-queen, Ste-tehtlum, Tsohkw, Yennis, Elh-wa, Pishtst, Hunnint, Klat-la-wash, and Oke-ho, and also of the Sko-ko-mish, To-an-hooch, and Chem-a-kum tribes, occupying certain lands on the Straits of Fuca and Hood's Canal, in the Territory of Washington, on behalf of said tribes, and duly authorized by them.

ARTICLE 1.

The said tribes and bands of Indians hereby cede, relinquish, and convey to the United States all their right, title, and interest in and to the lands and country occupied by them, bounded and described as follows, viz: Commencing at the mouth of the Okeho River, on the Straits of Fuca; thence southeastwardly along the westerly line of territory claimed by the Makah tribe of Indians to the summit of the Cascade Range; thence still southeastwardly and southerly along said summit to the head of the west branch of the Satsop River, down that branch to the main fork; thence eastwardly and following the line of lands heretofore ceded to the the United States by the Nisqually and other tribes and bands of Indians, to the summit of the Black Hills, and northeastwardly to the portage known as Wilkes' Portage; thence northeastwardly, and following the line of lands heretofore ceded to the United States by the Dwamish, Suquamish, and other tribes and bands of Indians, to Suquamish Head; thence northerly through Admiralty Inlet to the Straits of Fuca; thence westwardly through said straits to the place of beginning; including all the right, title, and interest of the said tribes and bands to any land in the Territory of Washington.

ARTICLE 2.

There is, however, reserved for the present use and occupation of the said tribes and bands the following tract of land, viz: The amount of six sections, or three thousand eight hundred and forty acres, situated at the head of Hood's Canal, to be hereafter set apart, and so far as necessary, surveyed and marked out for their exclusive use; nor shall any white man be permitted to reside upon the same without permission of the said tribes and bands, and of the superintendent or agent; but, if necessary for the public convenience, roads may be run through the said reservation, the Indians being compensated for any damage thereby done them. It is, however, understood that should the President of the United States hereafter see fit to place upon the said reservation any other friendly tribe or band, to occupy the same in common with those above mentioned, he shall be at liberty to do so.

ARTICLE 3.

The said tribes and bands agree to remove to and settle upon the said reservation within one year after the ratification of this treaty, or sooner if the means are furnished them. In the mean time, it shall be lawful for them to reside upon any lands not in the actual claim or occupation of citizens of the United States, and upon any land claimed or occupied, if with the permission of the owner.

ARTICLE 4.

The right of taking fish at usual and accustomed grounds and stations is further secured to said Indians, in common with all citizens of the United States; and of erecting temporary houses for the purpose of curing; together with the privilege of hunting and gathering roots and berries on open and unclaimed lands. *Provided, however,* That they shall not take shell-fish from any beds staked or cultivated by citizens.

ARTICLE 5.

In consideration of the above cession the United States agree to pay to the said tribes and bands the sum of sixty thousand dollars, in the following manner, that is to say: during the first year after the ratification hereof, six thousand dollars; for the next two years, five thousand dollars each year; for the next three years, four thousand dollars each year; for the next four years, three thousand dollars each year; for the next five years, two thousand four hundred dollars each year; and for the next five years, one thousand six hundred dollars each year. All which said sums of money shall be applied to the use and benefit of the said Indians under the direction of the President of the United States, who may from time to time determine at his discretion upon what beneficial objects to expend the same. And the superintendent of Indian affairs, or other proper officer, shall each year inform the President of the wishes of said Indians in respect thereto.

ARTICLE 6.

To enable the said Indians to remove to and settle upon their aforesaid reservations, and to clear, fence, and break up a sufficient quantity of land for cultivation, the United States further agree to pay the sum of six thousand dollars, to be laid out and expended under the direction of the President, and in such manner as he shall approve.

ARTICLE 7.

The President may hereafter, when in his opinion the interests of the Territory shall require, and the welfare of said Indians be promoted, remove them from said reservation to such other suitable place or places within said Territory as he may deem fit, on remunerating them for their improvements and the expenses of their removal; or may consolidate them with other friendly tribes or bands. And he may further, at his discretion, cause the whole or any portion of the lands hereby reserved, or of such other lands as may be selected in lieu thereof, to be surveyed into lots, and assign the same to such individuals or families as are willing to avail themselves of the privilege, and will locate thereon as a permanent home, on the same terms and subject to the same regulations as are provided in the sixth article of the treaty with the Omahas, so far as the

same may be applicable. Any substantial improvements heretofore made by any Indian, and which he shall be compelled to abandon in consequence of this treaty, shall be valued under the direction of the President, and payment made therefore accordingly.

ARTICLE 8.

The annuities of the aforesaid tribes and bands shall not be taken to pay the debts of individuals.

ARTICLE 9.

The said tribes and bands acknowledge their dependence on the Government of the United States, and promise to be friendly with all citizens thereof; and they pledge themselves to commit no depredations on the property of such citizens. And should any one or more of them violate this pledge, and the fact be satisfactorily proven before the agent, the property taken shall be returned, or in default thereof, or if injured or destroyed, compensation may be made by the Government out of their annuities. Nor will they make war on any other tribe, except in self-defence, but will submit all matters of difference between them and other Indians to the Government of the United States, or its agent, for decision, and abide thereby. And if any of the said Indians commit any depredations on any other Indians within the Territory, the same rule shall prevail as that prescribed in this article in cases of depredations against citizens. And the said tribes agree not to shelter or conceal offenders against the United States, but to deliver them up for trial by the authorities.

ARTICLE 10.

The above tribes and bands are desirous to exclude from their reservation the use of ardent spirits, and to prevent their people from drinking the same, and therefore it is provided that any Indian belonging thereto who shall be guilty of bringing liquor into said reservation, or who drinks liquor, may have his or her proportion of the annuities withheld from him or her for such time as the President may determine.

ARTICLE 11.

The United States further agree to establish at the general agency for the district of Puget's Sound, within one year from the ratification hereof, and to support for the period of twenty years, an agricultural and industrial school, to be free to children of the said tribes and bands in common with those of the other tribes of said district, and to provide a smithy and carpenter's shop, and furnish them with the necessary tools, and employ a blacksmith, carpenter, and farmer for the term of twenty years, to instruct the Indians in their respective occupations. And the United States further agree to employ a physician to reside at the said central agency, who shall furnish medicine and advice to the sick, and shall vaccinate them; the expenses of the said school, shops, persons employed, and medical attendance to be defrayed by the United States, and not deducted from the annuities.

ARTICLE 12.

The said tribes and bands agree to free all slaves now held by them, and not to purchase or acquire others hereafter.

ARTICLE 13.

The said tribes and bands finally agree not to trade at Vancouver's Island, or elsewhere out of the dominions of the United States, nor shall foreign Indians be permitted to reside in their reservations without consent of the superintendent or agent.

ARTICLE 14.

This treaty shall be obligatory on the contracting parties as soon as the same shall be ratified by the President of the United States.

In testimony whereof, the said Isaac I. Stevens, governor and superintendent of Indian affairs, and the undersigned chiefs, headmen, and delegates of the aforesaid tribes and bands of Indians have hereunto set their hands and seals at the place and on the day and year hereinbefore written.

Isaac I. Stevens, governor and superintendent. [L. S.]
Chits-a-mah-han, the Duke of York, Chief of the S'klallams, his x mark. [L. S.]
Dah-whil-luk, Chief of the Sko-ko-mush, his x mark. [L. S.]
Kul-kah-han, or General Pierce, Chief of the Chem-a-kum, his x mark. [L. S.]
Hool-hole-tan, or Jim, Sko-ko-mish sub-chief, his x mark. [L. S.]
Sai-a-kade, or Frank, Sko-ko-mish sub-chief, his x mark. [L. S.]
Loo-gweh-oos, or George, Sko-ko-mish sub-chief, his x mark. [L. S.]
E-dagh-tan, or Tom, Sko-ko-mish sub-chief, his x mark. [L. S.]
Kai-a-han, or Daniel Webster, Chem-a-kum sub-chief, his x mark. [L. S.]
Ets-sah-quat, Chem-a-kum sub-chief, his x mark. [L. S.]
Kleh-a-kunst, Chem-a-kum sub-chief, his x mark. [L. S.]
He-atl, Duke of Clarence, S'klallam sub-chief, his x mark. [L. S.]
Lach-ka-nam, or Lord Nelson, S'klallam sub-chief, his x mark. [L. S.]
Tchotest, S'klallam sub-chief, his x mark. [L. S.]
Hoot-ote St, or General Lane, S'klallam sub-chief, his x mark. [L. S.]
To-totesh, S'klallam sub-chief, his x mark. [L. S.]
Hah-kwia-mihl, S'klallam sub-chief, his x mark. [L. S.]
Skai-se-ee, or Mr. Newman, S'klallam sub-chief, his x mark. [L. S.]
Kahs-sahs-a-matl, S'klallam sub-chief, his x mark. [L. S.]
S'hote-ch-stan, S'klallam sub-chief, his x mark. [L. S.]
Lah-st, or Tom, S'klallam sub-chief, his x mark. [L. S.]
Tuls-met-tum, Lord Jim, S'klallam sub-chief, his x mark. [L. S.]
Yaht-le-min, or General Taylor, S'klallam sub-chief, his x mark. [L. S.]
Kla-koisht, or Captain, S'klallam sub-chief, his x mark. [L. S.]
Sna-talc, or General Scott, S'klallam sub-chief, his x mark. [L. S.]
Tseh-a-take, or Tom Benton, S'klallam sub-chief, his x mark. [L. S.]
Yah-kwi-e-nook, or General Gaines, S'klallam sub-chief, his x mark. [L. S.]
Kai-at-lah, or General Lane, Jr., S'klallam sub-chief, his x mark. [L. S.]
Captain Jack, S'klallam sub-chief, his x mark. [L. S.]

He-ach-kate, S'klallam sub-chief, his x mark. [L. S.]
T'soh-as-hau, or General Harrison, S'klallam sub-chief, his x mark. [L. S.]
Kwah-nalt-sote, S'klallam sub-chief, his x mark. [L. S.]
S'hoke-tan, S'klallam sub-chief, his x mark. [L. S.]
Paitl, S'klallam sub-chief, his x mark. [L. S.]
Wen-a-hap, S'klallam sub-chief, his x mark. [L. S.]
Klew-sum-ah, S'klallam sub-chief, his x mark. [L. S.]
Se-att-home-tau, S'klallam sub-chief, his x mark. [L. S.]
Tsat-sat-hoot, S'klallam tribe, his x mark. [L. S.]
Pe-an-ho, S'klallam tribe, his x mark. [L. S.]
Yi-ah-hum, or John Adams, S'klallam tribe, his x mark. [L. S.]
Ti-itch-stan, S'klallam tribe, his x mark. [L. S.]
Soo-yahntch, S'klallam tribe, his x mark. [L. S.]
Ttseh-a-take, S'klallam tribe, his x mark. [L. S.]
He-ats-at-soot, S'klallam tribe, his x mark. [L. S.]
Tow-oots-hoot, S'klallam tribe, his x mark. [L. S.]
Tsheh-ham, or General Pierce, S'klallam tribe, his x mark. [L. S.]
Kwin-nas-sum, or George, S'klallam tribe, his x mark. [L. S.]
Hai-ahts, John, S'klallam tribe, his x mark. [L. S.]
Hai-otest, John, S'klallam tribe, his x mark. [L. S.]
Seh-win-num, S'klallam tribe, his x mark. [L. S.]
Yai-tst, or George, S'klallam tribe, his x mark. [L. S.]
He-pait, or John, S'klallam tribe, his x mark. [L. S.]
Slimm, or John, S'klallam tribe, his x mark. [L. S.]
T'klalt-soot, or Jack, S'klallam tribe, his x mark. [L. S.]
S'tai-tan, or Sam, S'klallam tribe, his x mark. [L. S.]
Hut-tets-oot, S'klallam tribe, his x mark. [L. S.]
How-a-owl, S'klallam tribe, his x mark. [L. S.]

Executed in the presence of us –

M. T. Simmons,
C. H. Mason, secretary Washington Territory,
Benj. F. Shaw, interpreter,
John H. Scranton,
Josiah P. Keller,
C. M. Hitchcock, M. D.,
A. B. Gove,
H. A. Goldsborough,
B. J. Madison,
F. A. Rowe,
Jas. M. Hunt,
George Gibbs, secretary,
John J. Reilly,
Robt. Davis,
S. S. Ford, Jr.,
H. D. Cock,
Orrington Cushman,
J. Conklin.

Appendix 2:

Modern Tribes with Historical Ties to EBLA*

Communities with Significant Skagit Membership

Swinomish Indian Tribal Community

P.O. Box 817

La Conner, WA 98257-0817

(360) 466-3163

Fax: 466-4047

The Tulalip Tribes

6700 Totem Beach Road

Marysville, WA 98271-9715

(360) 653-4585

Fax: 653-0255

S'Klallam Communities

Jamestown S'Klallam Tribe

1033 Old Blyn Highway

Sequim, WA 98382-9342

(360) 683-5375 or 1109

Fax 681-6711

Lower Elwha Klallam Tribal Council

2851 Lower Elwha Road

Port Angeles, WA 98362

(360) 452-8471

Fax: 452-3428

Port Gamble S'Klallam Tribe

P.O. Box 280

Kingston, WA 98346

(206) 464-7281

Other Tribes with Connections to EBLA

Lummi Indian Nation

2616 Kwina Road
Bellingham, WA 98226
(360) 734-8180
Fax: 384-4737

Samish Indian Nation

P.O. Box 217
Anacortes, WA 98221
(360)293-6404
Fax: (360)299-0790
Samish@samishtribe.nsn.us

Sauk-Suiattle Indian Tribe

5318 Chief Brown Lane
Darrington, WA 98241
(360) 435-8366 and 436-0131

Suquamish Tribal Council

P.O. Box 498
Suquamish, WA 98392
(360) 598-3311
Fax: 598-6295

Upper Skagit Indian Tribe

2284 Community Plaza Way
Sedro-Woolley, WA 98284
(360) 856-5501
Fax: 856-3175

***It is clear that a number of other federally recognized tribes have families on their rolls that have direct ties to the study area, especially in Washington State, but these tribes are not listed here individually. The many Canadian First Nations and Alaskan communities whose ancestors visited or raided the tribal communities of Whidbey Island are not listed here, but the names of these groups are indicated in the report text.**

NOTES

¹ Similarly, Horr (1974: 36) reports of the Skagit that

“This is properly the name of the people at the mouth of the Skagit River, but has been used for a group of bands, both those on the islands opposite and on the wide drainage area of the river and its tributaries.”

²Gibbs also noted of this population that

“Their chief [is] S’Neat-lum, or, Snake-lum...Concerning the tribes north of the Sina-ho-mish [including the Skagit], nothing but estimates founded on the opinions of the two settlers in that district, could be gathered” (Gibbs 1855a: 432-36).

³ Suttles (1974) identified Whidbey Island as being outside of the exclusive or significant resource use areas for the Lummi, Samish, Semiahmoo, Songish, and Saanich.

⁴ Chief Martin Sampson related oral traditions of battles long ago that led to the dense occupation of Whidbey Island. In these traditions, most Skagits used to live on the mainland but were aggressors in what became the first war on the mainland. The Skagit were tricked and defeated by “clever brothers”.

“The Skagit fell dying in their tracks and his older brothers and father finished them off with war clubs. The Massacre of Whats-al-ul was avenged. The remaining members of the Skagit Tribe moved to Whidbey Island and the Kik-i-allus Tribe moved unto Ut-sa-laddy” (Sampson n.d.: 68).

⁵ Some sources suggest that the name Skagit was originally the name of a village at Maylor Point, near modern-day Oak Harbor, and that the name of the village was applied in time to the entire tribe (Smith n.d.).

⁶ For example, the Indian Tribes of Washington (1924) reported in congressional testimony that “The Skagit treaty Indians are located up in Island County, State of Washington. The Skagit River Indians are a different tribe from the Skagit Tribe” (Indian Tribes of Washington 1924: 44).

⁷ For example, Collins (1974c) notes that

“The Lower Skagit, as the name implies, were one of the nearest neighbors of the Upper Skagit. They occupied villages on the delta of the Skagit River and on Whidbey Island. Most of their villages were located on salt water and their economy accordingly showed some differences from that of the Upper Skagit. Linguistically the two Skagit bands were very similar, although, despite their name, the Lower Skagit were not “closer” to the Upper Skagit in terms of intermarriage or visiting than several other peoples. For the following reasons they were better known than the Upper Skagit and were sometimes confused with them... The way of life of the Lower Skagit disintegrated earlier than that of the Upper Skagit because the lands of the former were settled by Whites much earlier. Accordingly we know less about the Lower Skagit culture despite some good accounts by early explorers and missionaries and the work of anthropologists such as Haeberlin and Gunther” (Collins 1974c: 9).

⁸ The Skagit far outnumbered the 8 other tribes mentioned by Sterling (1853), with the Snohomish in second place (250 people) on the Southern end of Whidbey Island and vicinity, and the “Sno-qual-a-muke” or Snoqualmie in third at some 225 people.

⁹ Mr. William Martin, a full-blooded Skykomish man, reported of the languages:

“Skagit is the same (as the Snohomish), they could understand it but it was different... The Snohomish and the up-river people had some difference in speech, but not as much as the Snoqualmie, who were definitely different. Skagit had different words, but understood them (i.e. understood the speech of the Skagit). [They] did not understand Lummi” (U.S. Select Committee on Indian Affairs 1988: 38- 39).

¹⁰ Roberts (1975: 425) expresses uncertainty as to whether the Swinomish and Lower Skagit were historically part of the same “village cluster” or truly represented two separate clusters at the time of European contact.

¹¹ Despite this, some use the term “chiefdom” in reference to Salish communities (Tollefson 1987).

¹² Elsewhere, Gibbs (1856: 433) reports some of these bands as distinct tribes: “Below the Skagits again, occupying land on the main upon the northern end of Whidby’s Island,

Perry's Island [Fidalgo] and the Canoe passage, are three more tribes, the Squinamish, Swodamish, and Sinaahmish."

¹³ This is not consistent with Eells' own geographical information, however. Eells (1985: 19) identified southern Whidbey Island as being within the territory of the "Du-gwads-habsh," which he reports as one of four bands of the Snohomish. He also identified Whibey Island, as well as Fidalgo Island and the adjacent mainland, as being in the territory of the Swinomish, which he identifies as one of the five constituent bands of the Skagit.

Some sources suggest that the Snohomish only occupied Southern Whidbey Island in the mid-19th century. The result of demographic upheaval and the availability of resources on the island (e.g. Boxberger and Miller 1989).

¹⁴ Similar S'Klallam outposts have been documented at Cattle Point on San Juan Island.

¹⁵ For a detailed account of the motives for, and outcomes of, Skagit exogamy, see Roberts (1975).

¹⁶ A number of Puget Sound residents of the last century reported at least some small amount of ancestry from tribes east of the Cascade Range. For example, a Snoqualmie woman, Sarah Sheldon recalled information regarding "[her] maternal great-grandmother [who] was Wenatchee and part Snoqualmie, and was married to a Skagit. She was there on the Skagit living" (U.S. Select Committee on Indian Affairs 1988: 71). These linkages were severed for a time in the 19th century by the circumstances of white resettlement and the establishment of reservations:

"They formerly had some communication with the Indians beyond the mountains; but it is supposed to have been discontinued in the consequence of obstructions to their trails" (Powell 1886: 180).

These connections arguably resumed, however, following the development of new social venues that linked tribes on either side of the mountains, such as the residential school system.

¹⁷ Yet, as Lane (1985) correctly points out, these practices were sometimes "ambilocal," involving residence at either the husband or wife's home village, depending upon a variety of circumstances:

“Local group exogamy was preferred in this region, particularly among people of higher status. Residence was ambilocal; a woman might move to her husband’s village at marriage or the man might move to his wife’s place of residence. Residence might shift during the course of a marriage, or through remarriage” (Lane 1985: 8).

¹⁸ As Upchurch noted in 1936,

“Polygamy was practiced within the memory of informants now living and was used by chiefs to cement political friendships with neighboring tribes. It also served the leading men economically by increasing the industrial force of the household” (Upchurch 1936a: 286).

¹⁹ In other cases, it is possible that the perceived threats of social integration and interaction may have exceeded the benefits. This is sometimes hinted by accounts of interior groups, such as the Upper Skagit. John Fornsby reported that

“It is funny with those Upper Skagit. They never wanted to go down to salt water. Only the people of sikwigwilt moved down to Camano Island every year. They liked it down there. People up here were scared that somebody would take them for slaves or kill them. Oh, sometimes they went down and dug clams and took some up the river. They were just like wild fellows and stayed up there all the time” (Collins 1949: 302).

²⁰ A number of oral traditions allude to the role of intermarriage and shared kinship in defining the relationships between communities of the Puget Sound (e.g. Haeberlin and Gunther 1930: 74).

²¹ According to Bowman, the oral traditions of northern Puget Sound suggests a common ancestry of all area tribes, who became separated following a great flood at a place called, in northern Lushootseed, “Sq̓əl̓éx̓ən” (Bowman 1970). Coast Salish consultants speaking with John Peabody Harrington (1981: 18) recounted a story of the origins of the San Juans and other islands of the northern Puget Sound in a great earthquake that cause the land to shake into pieces, separating the lands and perhaps the peoples into distinct geographical domains from an originally singular population. Harrington’s (1981: 202) consultants noted the languages of the Lummi, Snohomish, and probably Skagit were essentially the same, reflecting their shared origin.

²² This diversity of membership may have also contributed to diversity of political structure within individual villages and village groups. When speaking of the aboriginal ancestors of the Swinomish tribe, including the Skagit, Upchurch noted that,

“ One would expect people of similar language, similar habits and occupations, and similar traditions, confined to this comparatively small area, to maintain not more than one political organization, yet as many as nine existed independently” (Upchurch 1936a: 289).

²³ These patterns are suggested by descriptions of labor parties and mult-village fishing expeditions from Penn Cove to the Skagit River area, such as those of John Fornsby:

“Once we went up to the house of Kwaskédib. (That was a big potlatch house, a long house, above Skagit City.) Kwaskédib hired the house built. Some Lower Skagit helped him. It must have been five or six men who built the house. The Lower Skagit came up there and fished there in the spring. When they got done drying fish, they went back home again, down to Whidbey Island, the chiefs and everybody” (Collins 1949: 295).

²⁴ There is some evidence to suggest that villages linked by intermarriage were thought of as an “outer circle” of stakeholders in the village community, with resource access privileges and minor ceremonial prerogatives (Tweddell 1953). This was reflected in Snohomish accounts of their traditional longhouse structure as well, which provided a “seat” for Skagit representatives among others:

“The outer circle of Snohomish friendships, symbolized by the potlatch houses they regularly were invited to attend, as distinct from occasional potlatches when a marriage was consummated with a family in an outlying tribe, included for instance the Snoqualmie, Kikialos, Stillaguamish, Skagit, Swinomish, Duwamish, Suquamish, and some others” (U.S. Select Committee on Indian Affairs 1988 : 85).

²⁵ Winfield Ebey, for example, reported meetings between the two groups at Penn Cove in May of 1855: “On Sunday last a grand meeting of these Indians the Scagits and Snohomish was held at the Cove” (W. Ebey 1855-1857). General sources, such as Haeberlin and Gunther (1930), report that the Skagit were customarily on good terms with the Snohomish as well.

²⁶ Holmes Harbor, Hackney Island, Rocky Point, Sandy Point and Clinton were all reported to be areas of shared resource use between Snoqualmie and Skagit (Tweddell 1953: 95).

²⁷ In the course of NAGPRA consultation in this region, human remains that appear to be from slave populations are commonly treated no differently than those of tribal members by tribal representatives.

²⁸ Inter-marriage with slaves from other ethnolinguistic groups was apparently not uncommon. John Fornsby (in Collins 1949: 305) reported that "Our mother's sister married a slave. She lived at xobaks on Whidbey Island."

The following example provided by John Fornsby demonstrates the difficulties encountered by the children of a slave. The events take place in villages on Penn Cove, in what is today the Reserve:

"My cousin Charley Hilaire talked about our people married to slaves. Our mothers' sister married a slave. She lived at xóbaks on Whidbey Island. There were houses there. Old Squiqui had a house there. And my aunt, her family, too, had a big home. They always stayed there for a long time.

"A slave bought her for his wife. They tried to stop her, but they couldn't. They didn't like that. They told my aunt, "Don't take that man. When you get a child, somebody might get mad and talk to him right across, call him 'slave.' Then they might get mad and kill each other." My aunt wouldn't give up; she liked to take that man. The slave got things; he bought her.

"They had a boy, my cousin. His father was a slave; his mother was not. He shot a fellow who called him "slave." He killed him because he called him "slave." My cousin got mad and shot the fellow. An Indian woman, a relation of the mother of this fellow, was married to a White man. That White man came into the house and killed my cousin. My cousin was asleep right in bed. That was bad, This was right across from Coupeville, at Xóbaks. There was no law then.

"When those ladies married slaves, those other people their relations didn't like them to be married to slaves. When they had a row, they said, "You are married to a slave." My aunt's girl wanted to get that name, *sadzastálo*, of my grandmother. The chief didn't want her to get that name, because she was half-slave. They wouldn't let her. "She can't have it; her father was a slave" (Collins 1974c: 128; see also Collins 1949: 305-06).

²⁹ Speaking of the origin stories pertaining to this population, Roberts (1975) notes,

“A more mythicized version begins with the cohabitation between an unmarried upper-class girl and a lower man or slave, also represented as a dog. When she became pregnant, the girl was exiled by her people. Not aware of her lover’s identity, they let her take along her dog as a companion. When the offspring were born, they were plainly dog-like, but as they grew up, they became more and more human. Working very hard, they eventually became prosperous. At last the girl’s family honored them, recognizing their near equality. The community they founded made atonements for the misdeeds of their mother, sponsoring potlatches to erase the memory, so they could stand shoulder to shoulder with the best siab [leader] in the area” (Roberts 1975: 108; see also Snyder n.d.:29-31,132).

³⁰ People who were once economically and socially marginal were able to obtain new levels of power in this disrupted social context:

“Chiefs in newly formed villages, descendants of commoners, were but grudgingly admitted to the potlatch circle as invited guests. Especially if they had suddenly become exuberantly wealthy, they were looked upon as conniving vulgarities without right to such good fortune” (Roberts 1975: 107; see also Snyder n.d.: 100).

³¹ These patterns were apparently similar in Swinomish territory prior to the creation of the Swinomish Reservation:

“The Caste system was very much in evidence until the coming of Christianity. The principal village of the chiefs was the original one across from LaConner while the lower caste lived at Dugualla Bay. These two classes did not mix, but the middle classes moved at will, free to associate with all others” (Sampson n.d.: 44-45).

³² For the traditional chiefs of Penn Cove, potlatches involved elaborate ritual roles and preparation. John Fornsby (in Collins 1949) recalled

“When chiefs give potlatches, they have to sing heyida. That is when they sing heyida. Only a few of them have it. My mother’s side used to have heyida. The Lower Skagit on Whidbey could sing that song. Chief Squiqui was one, and some other fellows. Chief Squiqui was a cousin of my mother’s. He lived first right across from Coupeville” (Fornsby in Collins 1949: 324).

³³ For an overview of the cultural patterns within this general area, see Suttles 1954.

³⁴ Seasonal mobility, according to John Fornsby, involved movement between Penn Cove villages, the mouth of Skagit River, and other “salt water camps”:

“Johnny’s father spent only the winter months at their home village. The rest of the year, the family moved about, staying now in their house at Skagit City, located near the mouth of the river, and now at their salt water camp 5 miles below Utsaladdy, on Camano Island” (Collins 1949: 291).

While migration between these kinds of settlements was regular and patterned, early non-Indian writers mistook this pattern of resource use as haphazard, and a hallmark of Indian idleness. This view, importantly, was expressed by Territorial Governor Isaac Stevens, the architect of the Point Elliott and Point No Point Treaties:

“All these Tribes live on the different water courses; or the bays and Inlets of the Sound, subsisting on Roots and Berries, and various species of fish which abound in the waters. But few of these Indians ever leave this basin, but roam about the Sound leading for the most part an idle life” (Stevens 1853).

³⁵ On the range of resources used by the Coast Salish in this region, see Krieger 1989.

³⁶ Snyder notes that “For those Skagits traveling to and from Skagit River from Whidbey Island, Strawberry Point was an important temporary landing place” (Snyder n.d.: 48).

³⁷ For example, Swanton (1953: 441-42) shows a large number of subdivisions and villages belonging to the Skagit in the Whidbey Island area, but does not include the mouth of the Skagit River in their territory (see also Taylor 1971: 8).

³⁸ Indeed, some have argued that the Skagit had a generally more “marine” orientation than some other Puget Sound tribes, due to their concentration on islands facing the open waters of the Sound. Haeberlin and Gunther (1930: 25) noted of Puget Sound tribes that “the people of this area were interested in both land and sea hunting, the Skykomish, Snoqualmie, and Skagit being concerned more with the former.”

³⁹ As Roberts noted, “For hundreds of years the Indians had been accustomed to dig in the prolific clam, horseclam, and mussels beds along the shores of Fidalgo, Camano, and Whidbey Islands” (Roberts 1975: 284).

⁴⁰ Hunting appears to have been both a practice of importance and of considerable time depth on Whidbey Island. As Weiser noted of the archaeological assemblage for the Ebey’s Landing area:

“Hunting is strongly demonstrated by the large number of projectile points varying in style, size, and age found scattered across Ebey’s Prairie and surrounding ridges” (Weiser 2006: 123).

⁴¹ T. T. Waterman (1973) noted that, along the shores of Puget Sound, the most common Salish placename contained the stem *ba’kwob*, which translates as “prairie,” indicating a open place among the trees. Similarly, Harrington’s (1981) Coast Salish notes mention a number of named camas prairies on the islands of the region.

⁴² Some sources also discuss the use of nettle, alongside fireweed, dog hair and other fibers, within the elaborate weaving traditions of the Coast Salish (e.g., Gustafson 1980). The keeping of packs of dogs for their hair and the shearing of these dogs, is widely reported for this area; Joseph Whidbey reported observing on the east side of Whidbey Island “40 dogs in a drove, shorn down to the skin like sheep” (Vancouver 1798, 1: 284).

⁴³ Suttles (1960: 300) indicates that the most productive camas, fern, and clam beds were “owned by extended families with control exercised by individuals.”

On the use of fire in this region to enhance fern and camas productivity, see for example Weiser (2006), Suttles (2005), Turner and Peacock (2005), and White (1980). Suttles’ notes allude to women of the area collecting bulbs in a “Lummit tl’appsht” which he translates as an “Indian gunnysack. they put camas or anything they wanted to pack, made of woven cedar bark.” also made from...a flat plat similar to but dif. from cattail” (Suttles notes, in author’s possession).

⁴⁴ Speaking of Decatur Island in the nearby San Juan archipelago, George Gibbs noted that “Like other islands in the vicinity it is claimed by several tribes, the Lummis, Swinomish and Clalms all of whom hunt upon it in mutual peace” (Gibbs 1859). Similarly, the Indian Tribes of Washington (1924) testified that

“The east shore of Fidalgo Bay....were natural prairie land and a great place for lakamas, or bulbs, greatly used for food. Indians from many tribes would come there to dig and put up said bulbs for winter use. This particular place was the home village of the Samish Tribe” (Indian Tribes of Washington 1924: 41).

Multi-tribal use areas of this kind seem to have been common in this general region of Puget Sound, situated in the rainshadow of the Olympic Range Mountains.

⁴⁵ Information on camas procurement is abundant in the literatures addressing nearby tribal groups, and can be consulted for additional information on likely Skagit patterns of camas use and management. Sampson (n.d.) recounts Swinomish legends centering on harvests of camas. Stern (1934) describes camas digging among the Lummi:

“Diggers lay out little plots in the shallow soil where camas grow, cut the earth in small sections, lift the soil with the sticks and collect the bulbs in their baskets. They crush the soil directly afterwards and plant the seeds broken from the stems. Small sections are lifted consecutively until the whole plot is finished. It is customary for the women to return to the same places yearly” (Stern 1934: 42).

Gunther reports that S’Klallam gathered camas in May, during the time that flounder and halibut are fished, but when salmon are not (Gunther 1927: 197, 201). Camas procurement was apparently so important to the S’Klallam that, in their language, the summer month following the camas harvest was termed “qwīa’tctin” or “finished digging camas” (Gunther 1927: 228). Among the Chimacum, Bishop (n.d.) noted that,

“Roots and herbs and a small plant called lackamus, that resembled an onion, were harvested for winter consumption. The roots were ground into powder and used as flour to make bread which was baked in holes lined with hot stones” (Bishop n.d.b: 6).

⁴⁶ Accordingly, when writing in reference to one of the archaeological features at Ebey's Prairie investigated by Weiser (2006), she noted, "The presence of charred *Camassia* sp. and *Allium* sp. bulbs in Feature 4 suggests early spring or fall seasonality of the site, based on ethnographic information of bulb harvesting and processing" (Weiser 2006:110).

⁴⁷ Based on her archaeological research at Ebey's Prairie, Weiser (2006) concluded that

"people have been using Ebey's Prairie for a variety for activities over a broad time scale (~10,000 to 2500 BP). Many of these activities are represented in the ethnographic and ethnohistoric records. An increase in the number of features since ~2330 cal. BP illustrates that people may have used part of Ebey's Prairie more intensively over time, shifting from primarily hunting to multiple uses, including plant processing. Further, the increased presence of plants which thrive in open, nonforested ecosystems in the last 2330 years suggests that people were burning the Ebey's landscape to discourage forests and encourage economically important plants, such as camas thousands of years before European contact...The radiocarbon data demonstrate that the western portion of Ebey's Prairie was used repeatedly over several thousand years from about 7475 to 1670 cal. BC" (Weiser 2006: 10, 62).

⁴⁸ While it appears unlikely that the Hudson's Bay Company posts were the original source of potato in Coast Salish communities, it is also clear that the presence of HBC posts at Langley, Victoria, and Nisqually brought new opportunities for the agricultural use of these prairie areas for the tribes of the region:

"From these posts, the Upper Skagit secured guns, steel traps, blankets, lengths of cloth, sugar, flour, and molasses. They also obtained potatoes and peas along with the knowledge of how to plant them. Before Whites actually came into their area to live, the Upper Skagit had planted these crops in their prairie areas where they previously had obtained their root plants. They also cleared land about their houses for these plants" (Collins 1974c: 38).

⁴⁹ As noted, Vancouver's expedition reported seeing a cemetery devoted to infants among the Penn Cove villages:

“In one of which was found several sepulchers formed exactly like a sentry box. Some of them were open, and contained the skeletons of many young children tied up in blankets; the smaller bones of adults were also noticed, but not one of the limb bones could be found” (Vancouver 1801: 167).

Eells (1985: 332), Gibbs (1977) and, much later, Roberts (1975: 133) attribute this unusual cemetery to the epidemics that were reported to have passed through the area shortly before Vancouver’s arrival.

“At Penn Cove Mr. Whidbey, one of Vancouver’s officers, noticed several sepulchers formed exactly like a sentry-box. Some of them were open, and contained the skeletons, of many young children tied up in baskets. The smaller bones of adults were likewise noticed, but not one of the limb bones was found; which gave rise to an opinion that these, by the living inhabitants of the neighborhood, were appropriated to useful purposes, such as pointing their arrows, spears, or other weapons” (Gibbs 1877: 200).

⁵⁰ Joseph Whidbey, who accompanied Vancouver aboard the HMS *Discovery* and for whom Whidbey Island was named, encountered two large Indian villages on the shoreline of Whidbey Island. These, authors such as Collins (1949) have identified as Skagit. Vancouver describes his observations as follows:

“Having advanced about four miles, they found, on a low projecting point of the western shore, a village containing a numerous tribe of the natives. But as my orders, as well as the general inclination of the officers were to prevent by all possible means the chance of any misunderstanding, it was the uniform practice to avoid landing in the presence of considerable numbers; and as it was now the dinner time of our party, Mr. Whidbey very prudently made choice of the opposite shore, in the hope of making a quiet meal without the company of the Indians. Having reached the place where they intended to land, they were met by upwards of two hundred, some in canoes with their families, and others walking along the shore, attended by about forty dogs in a drove, shorn close to the skin like sheep. Notwithstanding their numbers, it was important to land for the purpose of taking angles; and they had the satisfaction of being received on shore with every mark of cordial friendship. Mr. Whidbey, however, thought it prudent to remain no longer in their society than was absolutely necessary; and having finished the business for which he had landed, he

instantly embarked, and continued his route up the inlet until the evening, when he landed for the night about nine miles within its entrance. In the morning they again pursued their inquiry, and soon after they had landed to breakfast, they were visited by a large canoe full of Indians, who were immediately followed by a hundred more of the natives, bringing with them the mats for covering their temporary houses, and, seemingly, every other article of value belonging to them" (Vancouver 1801: 161-62).

Vancouver goes on to note of the resident tribes that,

"On landing, which they did without the least hesitation, their behavior was courteous and friendly in the highest degree. A middle-aged man, in all appearance the chief or principal person of the party, was foremost in showing marks of the greatest hospitality, and perceiving our party were at breakfast, presented them with water, roasted roots, dried roots, dried fish, and other articles of food. This person, in return, received some presents, and others were distributed amongst the ladies and some of the party. The chief, for we must distinguish him, had two hangars, one of Spanish, the other of English manufacture, on which he seemed to set a very high value. The situation of the spot where they had landed was delightful; the shores on each side of the inlet being composed of a low country, pleasingly diversified by hills, dales, extensive verdant lawns, and clear spaces in the midst of the forest, which, together, with the cordial reception they had met from the natives, induced Mr. Whidbey to continue his examination on shore; on this occasion he was accompanied by the chief and several of the party, who conducted themselves with the greatest propriety, though with no small degree of civil curiosity in examining his clothes, and expressing a great desire to be satisfied as to the color of the skin they covered; making signs, that his hands and face were painted white, instead of being black or red like their own; but when convinced of their mistake by opening his waistcoat, their astonishment was inexpressible. From these circumstances, and the general tenor of their behavior, Mr. Whidbey concluded that they had not before seen any Europeans, though, from the different articles they possessed, it was evident a communication had taken place; probably by the means of distant trading tribes. The people, who had been met in that inlet removing with their families, and all their moveable property, were not unlikely to be of this commercial description; particularly, as their voyage was towards the seacoast, where, in some convenient situation near to the general resort of Europeans, they might fix their abode until an

opportunity was afforded them to barter their commodities for the more valuable productions of Europe, which are afterwards disposed of the inhabitants of the interior country at a very exorbitant price. This circumstance tends, in some degree, to corroborate an opinion hazarded on a former occasion to this effect (Vancouver 1801: 162-64).

⁵¹ On the early history of European and American relations with the communities of the Skagit region, see such sources as White (1980), Roberts (1975), and Wagner (1933).

⁵² For a detailed account of Fort Langley and its relationship with communities in the study area, see MacLachlan (1998) and Nelson (1927).

⁵³ Within decades, these trade goods had become thoroughly integrated into preexisting patterns of trade and redistribution. For example, Old Chief Snatelum used “big copper pots, one gun, and ten blankets” in one 19th century transaction mentioned by John Fornsby (in Collins 1949: 305)

⁵⁴ The various tribal communities in the region that shared kinship ties with the Penn Cove villages seem to have sometimes had their earliest encounters with non-native traders through the Penn Cove connection. Collins, for example, noted of the Upper Skagit,

“Since some of the Upper Skagit had Lower Skagit spouses, were partly of Lower Skagit descent, and visited Lower Skagit villages in the summer, they very possibly heard about the White traders if they did not receive actual trade goods from Nisqually House. John Fornsby, one of my informants, for example, was related through his mother’s family to the Lower Skagit trader, Snatelum or Neidlum, mentioned in the Nisqually House journal” (Collins 1974c: 32).

⁵⁵ Some of the most important chiefly families lived at Čəkwolá [on Penn Cove, across from Coupeville] for a time:

“The children of DuGwdákdíid [George Snatlum’s father] and sGoláia [Chief Goliah] lived at Čəkwolá and HoBqs about 1850 or so...George Snaetlum (Charley’s father) and DuGwdákdíid (old George Snaetlum’s father) moved out of Čəkwolá to Snaetlum Point” (Snyder n.d.: 30).

⁵⁶ For example, in Penn Cove Special Indian Agent Fay's journals, for January 29th 1857, he notes, "George Snatlam Indian warrior ...came to see Fay" (Fay 1856-61).

⁵⁷ According to Roberts (1975),

"Snatelum, built his power by acting as a middleman in the fur trade between Whidbey Island and Nisqually House. A man of great wealth, he owned a huge longhouse, as well as five slaves, captured in warfare. Some of his slaves knew how to carve big salt-water canoes, enriching his fortune even more. As Snatelum grew older, he came to have arrogant dominion of a type previously unknown in the Skagit Region. Eventually he boasted personal ownership of the whole territory occupied by his villagers and their allies...He died in 1852, and his large funeral was attended by even the Klallams, former enemies of the Lower Skagits. After his death, his people were said to have diminished in numbers somewhat and lost much of their former influence...His son carried on some of it" (Roberts 1975: 162; Collins 1946: 47-54).

John Fornsby recalled an anecdote about Snatelum's involvement in the slave trade of the 19th century:

"That woman [Don Steele's grandmother] belonged to Samish people. Chief Snatlem had gone to some trouble for the Samish chief. The Samish chief owed him something. This chief was coming down. Snatlem wanted his money. "Well, you give us one of these women. We are going to take her." Snatlem took that lady and sold her to Puyallup people. She ran away from the Puyallup and traveled in the night. It was all brush inland, so she traveled in the night when the tide was out. She traveled on the beach (that is best) all night. She camped in the daytime so nobody could see her. In the night she traveled again. She came to Snohomish; somebody put her across the river.

"She came here right to this river. My father used to stay across from Skagit City. She came there. She knew that my mother could help her. That is why she came there. I think my mother was some relation on one side to that slave. Her father used to stay over around Edison. She wanted to marry one of my grandfathers; she married my grandfather. She wanted to pay money and blankets to the Puyallup people.

"Old Snatlem was a close relation of my mother's; he was a first cousin to my mother's mother. When they talked, they talked good to old Snatlem. My mother talked good to her relation, Old Snatlem.

“The Puyallup man was coming looking for her. When she ran away, he knew where she was. He wanted his money back.

“My grandfather gave Snatlem big copper pots, one gun, and ten blankets-lots. My father paid the balance. If it weren’t for my father, she would have been sent way off. The youngest of my grandfathers got that lady. This slave married my youngest grandfather, sqáyxe. She was lucky to get that name; lucky to get that man, sqáyxe liked that slave a lot” (Collins 1949: 304-305).

⁵⁸ Nisqually House journals from the early 1830s make frequent reference to a “Skagit Chief” who is commonly referred to as “the Frenchman” due to his eagerness to adopt European customs of those he encountered (Bagley 1915). This chief was apparently not Snatlum, as he sometimes traveled with that chief, but may be one of the other chiefs alluded to in this document; his wife apparently spoke Spokane and may have hailed from Washington’s interior.

⁵⁹ Among the “chiefs” to give speeches during the ceremonies preceding the signing of the port Elliot treaty was Goliah of the lower Skagit; Chief Seattle of the Duwamish-Squamish was another. When asked to speak at the treaty negotiations, Goliah did little more than express agreement with Stevens’ statements regarding the desirability of the treaty process:

“My mind is the same as the Governor’s. God has made it so. I have no wish to say much. I am happy at heart. I am happy to hear the Governor talk of God. My heart is good and that of all my friends. I give it to the Governor. I shall be glad to have a doctor for the Indians. We are all glad to hear you and to be taken care of by you. I do not want to say more.” (Cheers were given to Goliah)” (Gibbs 1855b).

Governor Isaac Stevens recorded similar words from the S’Klallam gathered at Point No Point several days later. According to Stevens’ notes, Chits-amah-han, or the Duke of York, proclaimed,

“My heart is good, (I am happy) since I have heard of the paper read, and since I have understood Gov. Stevens, particularly, since I have been told that I could look for food where I pleased, and not in one place only (Stevens n.d.a: 25-26).

⁶⁰ For example, in April of 1857, Winfield Ebey wrote of ‘Ski Qui’ who is at present the Tyee [chief] of the ‘Scagets’ (W. Ebey 1855-1857).

⁶¹ Squiqui was said to have had special ceremonial prerogatives, including singing the héyida song. As John Fornsby reported,

“That héyida was the first song I sang at Tulalip. Héyida comes from the upland, from the back. There might be a lake or some place where their home is. Just the chiefs sing the héyida. I told those White people, “It is just the chief Indians who sing that song.” That héyida. Easily get things; it is worth money. That is the way it goes, and the way the k’wáxk’ud goes too. It makes it easy to get things. When you get héyida, you are lucky. Some of your friends will give you something that is worth money. When chiefs give potlatches, they have to sing héyida. That is when they sing héyida. Only a few of them have it. My mother’s side used to have héyida. The lower Skagit on Whidbey could sing that song. Chief Squiqui was one, and some other fellows. Chief Squiqui was a cousin of my mother’s. He lived first right across from Coupeville (Collins 1949: 324).

Fornsby was related to both Snatelum and Squ-qui:

“Snatlem was my uncle on my mother’s side, a close relation to my mother. That was where my mother belonged, right in there at Snatlem Point. I used to stay with my relations when I went down at Snatlem Point. My mother wanted to go down there and stay for a while.

“Squiqui was my grandmother’s first cousin. His father died a long time ago, a relation to kwaskédib. He lived across from Coupeville. I used to stay there with my mother’s sister. The Upper Skagit took dried salmon down to Squiqui, and he paid them blankets” (Collins 1949: 297).

⁶² In a few cases, elite families might sometimes choose to marry their children to other elites close to home rather than to have them strategically marry high-status people in distant communities. This was apparently done by the high-status members of the Penn Cove villages. As John Fornsby recalled

“They didn’t want to let their youngsters marry way off. They let them marry close; they didn’t care. Some people send their children away. Whidbey Island people didn’t want to send their children away. They wanted them to marry right there so that they would get lots of Skagit, so

that they could look after their relations. I saw Tom Squiqui marry George Snatlem's daughter. They were second cousins. Squiqui, Tom's father, was my grandmother's first cousin. George Snatlem's daughter didn't like Tom Squiqui. He wanted to marry her; he didn't give up. He stayed right there. Finally old Squiqui, his father, said, "They are going to keep that woman till she dies."

"Finally Old Chief George Snatlem said, "Well, I guess that's all right. I'll give them one canoe worth \$100 to haul her things over. Old Squiqui said, "That's all right. That's good."

"Squiqui gave lots of blankets-thirty or forty-to the relatives of George Snatlem. George Snatlem gave Squiqui the same kind of blankets. Chief George Snatlem gave his daughter a salt-water canoe, with the head way long and the short tail, and a slave. I watched them when I was a kid. When George Snatlem's daughter went with her man, they paid lots of blankets. Lots of relatives helped. They gave their relations one blanket apiece.

"George Snatlem paid them back one canoe. That was pretty good. They paid both sides. George Snatlem paid his daughter some blankets. He paid most so that she will come and see him sometimes, so that they will take care of her. She went with her man across from Coupeville. They got a talking by the chiefs.

"Tom Squiqui gave something back to his father-in law after that.

"They weren't ásk'up[foolish]; they paid the people.

"The son of that lady and Tom Squiqui, Dick Squiqui, is right there in La Conner. They want me to go and stay with them - with Dick Squiqui's daughter, some of Squiqui's grandchildren" (Collins 1949: 302).

⁶³ Elaborating on this point, Barnett (1955) notes,

"It is not easy to understand how a human head could be cut off with such dispatch without a metal knife, and informants could not provide much enlightenment on this point" (Barnett 1955: 269).

⁶⁴ While women might take part in both raiding and in defense of villages against raids, written sources indicate that this was relatively infrequent:

"The men maintained the tribal defense and offense in war although some quite heroic deeds are attributed to women just as might occur and often does in our own culture" (Upchurch 1936a: 287).

⁶⁵ On the chronology of Lekwildakw raiding and fortress construction on Puget Sound, Suttles reported that

“Stockades were seen by observers in the 1840s, and Indian traditions indicate that they were built early in the 19th century for defense against the Lekwiltok Kwakiutl. The absence of Spanish reports of them suggest that in the 1790s the Lekwiltok had not yet begun their raiding into Central Coast Salish territory.

“I must conclude from the Spanish accounts of the 1790s that the threat of conflict, if not the reality, was probably an important feature of Central Coast Salish life even before the Lekwiltok menace. This threat may well have promoted the system of alliances and exchanges that culminated in the potlatch, though I am not convinced that it alone could have been responsible for it.

“In 1792 in Northern Coast Salish territory the British expedition...saw a deserted village built like a fortress in a rock, which suggests that the raiding common later to the south may have begun there by that time (Suttles 1989: 161; see also Meany 1942: 221).

⁶⁶ Collins’ Skagit consultants still told ominous stories of raids by the “yúk’wta” during this period:

“If the yúk’wta may be identified as Barnett’s Yukwiltaw, they are the southernmost group of the Kwakiutl (Barnett, 1938, p. 140) and are the same as Boas’ Lekwiltok. [Who inhabited the coastal region] in British Columbia from Knight Inlet to Bute Inlet” (Collins 1949: 299).

⁶⁷ Amelia Dan reported names for these groups that were used by the Swinomish and possibly Skagit:

“In the old stories, the people tell of the Haida coming down, using the term ‘Haida’ for these people...The Alaskan Indians that came down were the *ǵstaíbalxw*, from the ‘land of short people’; and another group down from the west coast of Vancouver Island was the *sau’ke*” (Dan n.d.: 13-14).

⁶⁸ This is not to suggest that the social order was not significantly rearranged by the effects of raiding. Even for the survivors, raids could have significant consequences for their social standing:

“One of the requisites for upper-class status was family continuity maintained by tradition; lower-class people, in the words of one informant, were people who had “lost their history.” Very likely children orphaned by epidemics or raids from the north “lost their histories” and were added to the ranks of the lower class” (Suttles 1954: 45).

Similar points regarding orphans and social displacement can be gleaned from the work of Collins (1966).

⁶⁹ This line is stated differently in other printings of the journals, suggesting some editing of the original text:

“To protect against their enemies, the natives at one point on the island had large fortified enclosures, 400 feet or more in length made of pickets, 30 feet high. Enough space was left between the pickets, which were planted in the ground, to accommodate the barrel of a musket. The interior of these fortifications was divided into lodges” (Wilkes 1856: 286; see also Bancroft 1875: 212).

⁷⁰ On the basis of various historical and ethnographic accounts, Roberts (1975) concluded,

“The Lower Skagits posted lookout guards throughout the year at special vantage spots, such as a large rock at the mouth of the Skagit River. Because of their outlying position and their vulnerability to attack, the Whidbey Island villagers served as a buffer between the northern raiders and other Skagit Region villagers, sending out warning messengers when the raiders were spotted” (Roberts 1975: 89-90).

⁷¹ As Suttles noted,

“Much of Coast Salish warfare during the first half of the 19th century was against the Lekwiltok Kwakiutl. Traditions that I recorded in the 1940s among the Northern Straits suggested that the building of stockades and

other defenses dated back to the increase in Lekwiltok raiding in the early 19th century. But I also recorded traditions of conflict between neighboring Coast Salish groups” (Suttles 1989: 253).

⁷² John Fornsby added of these events,

“The Indians, yúk’wta, were bad. They came right in front of Bellingham, where they have the little island. The Lummi saw only two men in the canoe, but the rest were hiding. They were just barely moving. Only two men were paddling. The yúk’wta came along and landed on the Island. They had shotguns with big caps on the guns. They shot. They killed quite a lot of people; they took some young boys for slaves.

“An old fellow just like me had his children in his canoe. The old man’s daughter was a strong lady. The yúk’wta came along. The strong lady pulled the yúk’wta over and tipped their canoe. They all swam. The yúk’wta were killed, all drowned.

“My grandfather, my youngest grandfather, sqáyxe, had gone to see his relatives at Lummi. The yúk’wta tried to catch my grandfather, but he had a fast canoe. They chased my grandfather and his wife, chased them for a long way and tried to catch them. But they never caught them. They gave up. Their canoes were no good, I guess. They got one of my grandfather’s daughters. I think she got caught that time when they were over at Lummi. She was young that time when that tribe caught her.

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

“The youngest of my grandfathers went along. He had one canoe with five or six in his canoe. That is why he went; he wanted to try to catch his daughter. My grandmother was along, too. (They took a strong woman to cook. They wanted a woman to cook; that is why they took them along. And they watch the canoes when the men get out on the shore.) Old Snatlem went over, too.

“The yúk’wta lived at the mouth of a big river. That mouth of the river got dry. They had to push the canoes way out. haóked was their chief. They talked kind of funny-talked different, those people. They had long heads.

“There was a woman there on top of the house. She was hollering, “I want to find out where those people are from.” She talked our language Plain Skagit language. Those people over there couldn’t understand her. My grandfather thought it might be his daughter, hollering to the people. I guess that woman was a slave there; she belonged to this people down here. This slave from the Skagit never got away. The yúk’wta watched that woman. She told our people, “Kill some of those people.” They knew she wanted to go away with them, but she couldn’t get away (Fornsby in Collins 1949: 300-01).

⁷³ Similarly, Suttles noted,

“The Salish tribes themselves may have felt the need in time to maintain peace while dealing with the whites, but also they felt a growing need for co-operation among themselves against the Kwakiutl. According to accounts...the Salish finally retaliated by sending against the Kwakiutl one or two expeditions that involved the co-operation of parties from several tribes. Evidently tribes from the Nanaimo to the Suquamish and Skagit participated” (Suttles 1954: 46).

⁷⁴ Gunther (1927: 271-72), Curtis (1913: 22-24), Eells (1985: 143) and others describe battles between S’Klallam and Tsimshian who were working at the Port Ludlow mill. The S’Klallam made a decisive counter-attack on Tsimshian who were camped at Puget Sound in September of 1867 after working at the Port Ludlow mill, bringing most of these hostilities to an end.

⁷⁵ Snyder provides regrettably ambiguous, and now antiquated, information on the areas not used by the Skagit on western Whidbey Island:

“The old Skagit had no knowledge of the west shore of Whidbey Island at a point opposite Arbuckles Resort down to the center of the section of Whidbey Island that leads toward Mutiny Bay” (Snyder 1955a: 52).

⁷⁶ The question of whether this site represented a village, or merely a resource camp is ambiguous from Snyder’s testimony.

⁷⁷ The two populations spoke mutually intelligible forms of Lushootseed Salish. Traditionally, Gunther (1927) notes, the S'Klallam

“recognize their linguistic affiliation with the Lummi and the people of southern Vancouver Island. They also claim that they can understand Swinomish and Skokomish, but are aware that these languages differ dialectically from their own” (Gunther 1927: 181-82).

⁷⁸ As Ruby and Brown (2001: 15) note, there were many disruptive effects of “Clallam Indians from the west and combative Indians from coastal British Columbia” raiding the Stillaguamish, Snoqualmie and Skagit in the early 19th century. Still, the S'Klallam and Skagit appear to have been on friendly terms during at least a portion of this history. Harriette Shelton Dover recalled of her father, Sehome, a S'Klallam leader:

“Our father paid periodical visits to his other home at Dungeness, the Clallam tribal village; also the Skagit tribal villages near Coupeville on Whidbey Island. He had many close relatives in all of them” (Dover 1954).

⁷⁹ Villages of mixed ethnic identity and language were apparently common in the region, especially in boundaries between larger ethnolinguistic territories. Such sources as Gunther (1927: 178) mention a mixed Klallam and Makah community at Hoko River.

Places such as fishing stations were important social gathering sites, too, and fostered extensive contacts with and ties to adjacent tribes. Gunther (1927) notes that, in some cases, S'Klallams intermarried with the people at these stations and ultimately became permanent residents on the eastern shores of Puget Sound:

“A few years before 1850 a group of Klallam from Clallam Bay, who always went to Lummi territory to fish, settled there near Marietta. They intermarried with Lummi and received allotments there when the reservation was created” (Gunther 1927: 179).

⁸⁰ Roberts notes that

“In May, 1840, Fathers Blanchet and Demers visited Whidbey Island, at the invitation of Indian leader Tslalakum. They discovered that the three Indian leaders had already been preaching in their home villages... On

this occasion the priests performed mass baptisms. Some of the Swinomish villagers returned home from these encounters and decided to build a small church (Roberts 1975: 143; also see Whitney 1942; Collins 1949: 48-49).

Bennett (1972: 12) asserts that

“The first missionary visit to Whidbey Island for which there is record was made by Father Blanchet in May, 1840... He apparently went to the island as a result of a visit by a group of Indians from Whidbey Island to his mission station on the Cowlitz River...When Capt. Wilkes passed through the area in 1841 he reported the Lower Skagit were in the process of building a church, and one of the headmen showed him a chest of valuables, among which was a roll of paper on which Father Blanchet had drawn a map demonstrating how to get to heaven” (Bennett 1972: 12).

⁸¹ Subsequent writers have erroneously asserted that “The missionaries also showed the Lower Skagit how to plant potatoes” (Bennett 1972: 12; see also Kellogg 1934).

⁸² Fornsby recalled,

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

“They had something like a map hung up. It told where you go when you die. Old Chief Snatlem had one. It told people where they go when they die, where their souls go. It had God at the head, the old devil’s place down below. There was the devil where people are going if they are not good. People were afraid. Some believed it; some didn’t. Just like now. They kept that picture in church. The chief told the people about the picture. It was hanging at the end of the church” (Collins 1951: 310-11).

Regarding the cross, Sampson notes

“In 1840, the Jesuit priest, Father Blanchet, came north from Nisqually to Whidbey Island to preach. The large wooden cross presently attached to the Alexander Blockhouse at Coupeville is said to be the original one erected by Father Blanchet at the meetings there” (Sampson n.d.: 17).

⁸³ Speaking of the Upper Skagit, Collins (1974c) noted,

“The Upper Skagit of this region had learned something of Christian practices through their relatives among the Lower Skagit who had received some instruction from two of their leading men, Snatlem and Witskalatche, and also directly from Vicar-General F. M. Blanchet who had visited Whidbey Island in 1840 (Bagley 1932:89). Snatlem was a trader or middle-man between the White men at Nisqually House and his own people. The men at Nisqually House, even though they were laymen, gave religious instruction. There was at this time still no resident missionary in the region between Nisqually House in the southern Puget Sound region and Fort Langley in the north. When Blanchet made his first visit to Whidbey Island, he found that Snatlem and Witskalatche had already taught their fellow villagers to make the sign of the cross and to sing verses of certain hymns. Further these men had showed and explained the Catholic Ladder, which was a large chart with dates of Christian events and some simple illustrations (ibid.: 89)....Blanchet held Mass and baptized 122 children at Snatlem’s village on this trip. According to Upper Skagit tradition, not all of the Indians accepted Catholic instruction. Some rejected it after hearing it; others did not go to hear it” (Collins 1974c: 33).

⁸⁴ Suttles (1954) provided background on these themes:

“In 1837 two Roman Catholic priests, Blanchet and Demers, arrived on the Lower Columbia and established a mission on the Cowlitz River in Coast Salish territory. In 1839 they were visited by several Puget Sound Indians; between that year and 1843, Devers, Blanchet, and Bolduc preached to Indians at Nisqually, Whidbey Island, Fort Langley, and Victoria. Probably the first priest that Straits people saw was Devers in 1841. The priest baptized children, taught prayers and hymns in Chinook jargon,

and distributed and explained the “Catholic Ladder,” a piece of wood with groups of notches and symbols carved on it to represent the passage of time and the principal events since Creation. The first response of the natives was one of apparent enthusiasm; native leaders gathered their followers for worship and enforced obedience of some of the rules. But this initial enthusiasm waned and plans to establish a mission on Whidbey Island did not materialize” (Suttles 1954: 39-40).

Sources such as Sullivan (1932) provide overviews of early Catholic Church history in western Washington:

“In time the Indians of Puget Sound began to desire a resident priest for themselves. Western Washington, prior to 1850, formed part of Archbishop Blanchet’s diocese of Oregon City. In May, 1848, the Archbishop appointed Father Veyret established his headquarters at Fort Steilacoom, Where he built a church.

“In the same month, May, 1848, the Oblates, who had recently come to Eastern Washington, began work also on Puget Sound, at Budd’s Inlet, about a mile north of Olympia, when they secured a half section of land, and erected St. Joseph’s mission.¹ This donation claim of Father Pascal Ricard, gave rise to the name Priest Point, for the promontory on the east shore of Budd’s Inlet.²

“Archbishop Blanchet, delighted to receive additional helpers, authorized the Oblates, August 23, 1848, to attend the Indians of the entire sound. (Sullivan 1932: 37-38; see also Bancroft 1890: 372; Meany 1923: 232).

⁸⁵ Blanchet and Demers had arrived in the region and worked in missions together elsewhere prior to the Penn Cove venture. Sullivan (1932) says of Demers “In 1841, Father Demers had visited and instructed many tribes on the Sound, traveling from one Indian nation to another, accompanied by Chief Tsalalakum, and several other great chiefs” (Sullivan 1932: 37).

Sampson (n.d.) notes

“Father Demers came north from the base mission on the Cowlitz Valley to serve the employees of the Hudson’s Bay Company and the Indians, holding missions at Nisqually as early as 1839. It is interesting to note that the Skagits from Whidbey Island had already made the long trip to the Cowlitz Mission for the Word” (Sampson n.d.: 15).

⁸⁶ Speaking of the remaining American Indian population in Skagit County, Sampson says unequivocally, "Catholicism was, and is, the major adopted religion of the Indians of Skagit County" (Sampson n.d.: 13).

⁸⁷ Indian Agent Upchurch noted that the hybridization of traditional and introduced values among Puget Sound tribal communities was best represented by the Indian Shaker movement:

"The mixed concept of spiritual things which has resulted is difficult either to comprehend or describe, but is probably best expressed by the Indians in the practice of the Shaker Religion" (Upchurch 1936a: 293).

⁸⁸ On contemporary ceremonial traditions, and their roots in pre-contact traditions, see, e.g. Miller 1999.

⁸⁹ These gambling functions at the Penn Cove villages are implied by the oral history of the area's tribes. In explaining the spirit powers that are said to help people to be good gamblers, Gunther (1927) reported the story of a S'Klallam man:

"A man from Washington Harbor had gone over to Whidby Island to gamble and had lost everything he took with him. He paddled home in a fog, drifting along without caring whether he lost his way or not. He struck a rock with his paddle and this became his power. After arriving at home he did not eat for many days. This made him an expert at the disk game, *slaha'IEm*" (Gunther 1927: 274).

This game was generally played at large social gatherings. She reports that gambling is common at potlatches of other gatherings where strangers are present. Large quantities of goods changed hands and there was a class of "professional gambler" that traveled between communities (Gunther 1927: 273-78). Winfield Scott Ebey observed one of these games in the Penn Cove area on April 13, 1855:

"I have been somewhat interested today watching the Indians gambling. A couple of squaws with but very slight intermission gambled all day occasionally their husbands who set by would take their place for a moment. I believe one of them came off a couple of dollars the better. Men, women and boys have been engaged the most of the day at that exercise" (W. Ebey 1855-1857).

⁹⁰ Snyder's Skagit consultants reported a number of other locations where ancestors were said to have been placed by the creator to initiate Skagit villages; similar stories were recounted for the Greenbank, Holmes Harbor, Oak Harbor, Dugualla Bay, Mount Vernon, and North Fork Skagit communities, for example (Snyder n.d.).

⁹¹ John Fornsby (in Collins 1949: 297) reported that "Snatlem was my uncle on my mother's side, a close relation to my mother. That was where my mother belonged, right in there at Snatlem Point."

Snyder's consultants made some biographical references to this Čoba?álsid family:

"The Indian name for 'Snaetlum' is Tušdíʔəb...An [Absələlagəps] woman married Snaetlum, Díʔab. There was some good to that woman, although she was lower class than Snaetlum...The Lower Skagit chief, sdiʔʔəb, lived here. He was the father of Chas. Snaetlum" (Snyder n.d.: 38-41).

⁹² John Fornsby recalled events at HoBqs of the late 19th century:

"They had a boy, my cousin. His father was a slave; his mother was not. He shot a fellow who called him "slave." My cousin got mad and shot the fellow. An Indian woman, a relation of the mother of this fellow, was married to a White man. That white man came into the house and killed my cousin. My cousin was asleep right in bed. That was bad. This was right across from Coupeville, at xóbaks. (Collins 1949: 306).

⁹³ Snyder (n.d.: 65) noted that the location of this village might have been reversed with that of Twixkwixqwósid, as one of her multiple consultants insisted that they had been.

⁹⁴ Sitting roughly five miles south of the Reserve's southern boundary, Greenbank was the site of a village called "BáxoB" or "Kww'kwatsob." Snyder's consultants recalled that a canoe portage crossed the narrowest part of the island here, connecting the east side of Whidbey Island with the fishing areas at West Beach (Snyder n.d.: 21). Likewise, Amelia Dan noted that

"The only portage that [she] knows of was one used just by the Skagit as a short-cut from Greenbanks across the narrowest part of Whidby to the fishing-grounds at West Beach. They used rollers of small logs or poles

over which to move the canoe. They would just use a few and keep moving them forward" (Dan n.d.: 21).

The Greenbank portage was apparently an important one, and its use may have diminished the amount of traffic along the portages passing through the Reserve:

"This was used by both Skagit and Snohomish in normal times, and by anyone in distress when the British Columbia Indians came raiding in the Sound. The portage was used going either way. It was called səxwto'gwɪł "place where you could drag your boats" (Select Committee on Indian Affairs 1988: 211).

A variety of traditional use areas were reported in the immediate vicinity of Greenbank. Some of these appear to have been important resource procurement sites for the Skagit and possibly other groups:

"...there isn't another either temporary or permanent camp site heard of [south of the settlements near Penn Cove] until we get down to a place a little bit south of North Bluff, and this is still on the east shore of Whidbey, which was a camping place at which clams and mussels and flounder and sole were taken, and deer were hunted in this whole area from behind this village. It was a summer village to which people on the island would come and take their deer. But deer was taken from behind practically every one of these temporary villages on Whidbey" (Snyder 1955a: 30-34).

The small lagoon just north of North Bluff was called K'ta'səb, and was

"used by the Penn Cove people for hunting and clam-digging when food was scarce at home..[it was] a temporary camping-site on Whidby. Clams, mussels, and other bottom fish on the shore. Deer was in back of it...It was used for...clams, deer-hunting, and getting flounder, crabs and [shell]fish. Just temporary mat-houses were put up here" (Snyder n.d.: 67-68).

Ceremonial and spiritual sites were also reported for this area. Snyder's notes recall oral traditions of a man from Snatelum Point who was able to acquire spiritual powers for the Skagit during a time when these powers were lost; he did so by undergoing bathing

and spiritual preparation in Lake Hancock, a tidal lake west of Greenbank (Snyder n.d.: 19).

Sources disagree on whether Greenbank was Snohomish or Skagit. A few sources depict the site as principally Snohomish:

“Tweddell’s Snohomish consultants recalled of Whidbey Island that Greenbank belonged to the Snohomish. The Skagits owned from a half to one mile north of the Greenbank canoe portage on northwards. Mrs. William Shelton. Other informants all agree, including John Brown of Sandy point. The Skagit center was around Penns Cove” (U.S. Select Committee on Indian Affairs 1988: 132).

“Mrs. Elizabeth Shelton gave the name of this place as ‘kww’kwatsob. This was Snohomish territory. From here north was Skagit territory. Along this shore was the mat house summer area” (U.S. Select Committee on Indian Affairs 1988: 197).

Sally Snyder’s Indian Claims Commission testimony placed Greenbank at the southern end of Skagit territory and suggested that this site was jointly claimed by Snohomish and Skagit: “It would put the minimum [Skagit] boundary south of Greenbank at least for a mile, since Greenbank was definitely occupied [by Skagits]” (Snyder 1955a: 51). It appears that, minimally, Skagit from Penn Cove occupied and used this site, probably alongside Snohomish families, for extended periods of time.

⁹⁵Snyder notes that

“Natives distinguish between a ‘small island deer’ that lives on the lowlands and islands from the ‘large mountain deer’, but apply the same term to both....The small island deer is only a racial isolate of the black-tailed deer of Western Washington. The Whidby Island variety is so small that they were referred to as ‘Jack Rabbit Deer’” (Snyder 1955b).

⁹⁶Based on general ethnographic patterns for this region, is likely that seabird egg harvests were also conducted in these locations. Important seal hunting grounds for the Lower Skagit of the Penn Cove area were reported on a small point near Oak Harbor, near the present day Whidbey Island Naval Air Station. A village at this location was inhabited largely by lower-status “skwdabs.”

Barnett (1955) indicates extensive use of offshore islands by the Saanich of southeastern British Columbia. Some offshore islands were used for sealing, while others were used to pen dogs that were sheared for their wool. The places used in this way appear to line the Canadian side of the border, suggesting possible bias in the recordation of traditional territories. (Certainly, Suttles [1974] identified uses of areas in the San Juan Islands by the same peoples.) No uses of the Whidbey Island area are mentioned.

⁹⁷ The use of these canoe portages is mentioned occasionally in the Penn Cove Special Indian Agency documents and correspondence. For example, proceeding to Port Townsend, Indian Agent Robert C. Fay reported, "I Proceeded to Penns Cove, Whidbys Island. I made a portage across the Island and the necessary preparations for an early start the next day" (Fay 1861: 1).

⁹⁸ For a detailed account of continuity and change in Coast Salish burial traditions into the early 21st century, see McKay 2002.

⁹⁹As told by Roberts (1975),

"During the period from 1850 through 1854, the Indians chafed as the Whites occupied Whidbey. Congress had passed a law giving away plots in their territory before they had ceded it to the U.S. Government. Settlers came pouring in. Yet no arrangements with the Indians had been made. Some of the Puget Sound Indian leaders favored putting up a military resistance, Patkanim, leader of the Snoqualmie villages and their allies, sponsored a grand council of village headmen and their followers on Whidbey Island, providing 60 deer for the feast (Kellogg 1934:17). He argued that the Indians should drive the Whites out while there were still few of them. The leaders from the northern part of Puget Sound disagreed with him, placing high value on the protection the Whites afforded them against the Northern Raiders. The Skagit Region leaders, especially the leaders of salt-water villages, joined with the opposition to Patkanim.

"Some of them [Skagit Region Indians] burned down the log cabin of a harness maker who attempted to establish himself at Snatelum Point on Whidbey Island" (Roberts 1975: 177; see also Kellogg 1934: 17, 26).

¹⁰⁰ Discoveries of gold brought miners through Skagit territory in the early 1850s (to Ruby Creek, the Cascade Range mountains, and elsewhere) and again in 1858-61 to the Fraser River.

¹⁰¹ As White (1972) summarizes some of these transformations,

“The pigs that came with the Americans thrived on camas, which as Mrs. Ebey, a settler on Whidbey Island, put it, “is excellent for both Indians and hogs” ... Camas was an important food source for the Indians and George Gibbs claimed the hogs of a single farmer could wipe out a whole village supply of the root. Losses of camas, potatoes, and game made the Indian even more dependent on the undisputed staple of his economy, salmon” (White 1972: 38-39).

¹⁰² According to Cahail (1901), in the 1850s,

“The logging was done by the Indians and a few white men. On one voyage Captain [Howard Bently] Lovejoy took two Indian boys, sons of two Chiefs, to China to show them the Orient. One of the boys was ever afterwards called “China Johnnie.” Later our Indian boys were given a trip to California by Captain Lovejoy. Chief Tom Squi Squi’s son was one of them. Chief Shelton still speaks of the Captains and their influence for good over the Indians. They were kind to them, always friends...

“In 1854 Captain Lovejoy and Captain Simeon B. Kinney were loading their vessels again for San Francisco. Calista Kinney, aged sixteen, had sailed with her father. They anchored at Skagit Head and allowed the Indians to go aboard. Miss Calista was evidently the first white woman they had ever seen. They examined her minutely and discussed her eagerly among themselves. They gave her the Indian name “Kollis Tolla”, meaning “good woman”. To this day the Indians remember her. They still like to interview her daughter, Mrs. Nell Watson” (Cahail 1901).

Charitable acts between both Indians and settlers appear often in the diaries of the time. Cahail notes one incident in 1857, in which a man by the name of John Alexander died, for example, and “A casket was hollowed out of a cedar log by his son and some Indian friends” (Cahail 1901).

Similar accounts appear in documents addressing subsequent decades, though the tribal population by this time is smaller and more marginalized than these 1850s examples. For example, Sampson (n.d.) reports,

“Mr. O.K. Pressentin of Sedro-Wooley, who has had more than a trifling acquaintance with Indians and pioneer problems having come up the Skagit River to Birdsvie in 1878, reminisces:

“There were times when supplies were short and the going tough. When the Indians stopped they could tell by a few shrewd glances around without asking a lot of questions how things were going with us.

“If it were during a lean time they would be off to the river and soon return with fish, or some kind of game from the woods.

“The next time they passed by, the shoe might be on the other foot and we could return the favor with perhaps potatoes or fruit.

“No Indian ever refused us a reasonable accommodation. We depended on them, particularly for transportation of supplies, at first. The earliest settlers up the Skagit River could never have stayed if it hadn’t been for the Indian’s help” (Sampson n.d.: 77-76).

¹⁰³ Ezra Meeker (1905) quotes Owen Bush, an early resident of the Olympia area:

“I could talk the Indian languages, but Stevens did not seem to want anyone to interpret in their own tongue, and had that done in Chinook [Jargon]. Of course, it was utterly impossible to explain the treaties to them in Chinook” (Meeker 1905: 207).

¹⁰⁴ In preparation for the treaty negotiation, Indian Agent M.T. Simmons reported that a large number of Skagits had gathered to participate in the Point Elliott negotiations:

“I found at Ft. Pallut the Scagets instead of being on the reservation as previously arranged by myself, much talking ensued, they wishing to receive their presents here, I advised them very friendly to go where I had appointed, after some little conversation they all consented, and arrived on the appointed ground, this being north of Hope Island and east of Deception passage. I examined the reservation ground, do think is a very good one, it will require some attention.

“On counting I found 87 old and 350 young men, 167 old and 313 young women, 207 boys, 134 girls, 87 male and 85 female babies, 25 of all sexes and ages reported to be absent, 10 of the absent being sick and 3 blind. Reported that they were contented with the treaty they had made.

“I made a few remarks to them advised them to be good, true and faithful they received their presents, being quite pleased with the same.

“They desire to receive their annuities in the articles heretofore mentioned by others. After listening to a religious chant, bid them adieu and left the ground, add to the list of annuities some wine to be used on Sacrament days” (Simmons 1855: 3).

¹⁰⁵As Roberts (1975) notes,

“Eighteen signatories of the point Elliott Treaty described themselves (or were described by the Recording Secretary) as belonging to the “Skagit Tribe” (Point Elliott Treaty 1855:6-9). These people from salt-water villages on Whidbey and Camano Islands are today known as Lower Skagit. Three signators called themselves “Swinamish,” and others called themselves “Kik-ial-lus,” “Noo-wha-ha,” and “Nook-wa-chah-mish,” all cluster names” (Roberts 1975: 220).

The full list of chiefs from this area, not restricted to Skagit, was as follows: Goliah (Skagit), Kwallattum, or General Pierce (Skagit), Kwuss-ka-nam, or George Snatelum, Sen. (Skagit), Illel-mits, or George Snatelum (Skagit), S’kwai-kwi (Skagit), Kleg-kent-soot (Skagit), Sonh-heh-ovs (Skagit), S’den-ap-kan, or General Warren (Skagit), Ske-dh-tum (Skagit), Patchkanam, or Dome (Skagit), Stats-kanam (Squin-ah-nush), Sd-zo-mahtl (Kik-ial-lus), Dahtl-de-min (Sah-ku-meh-hu), Sd’zek-du-num (Me-sek-wi-guilse), Shehope, or General pierce (Skagit), Ch-lah-ben (Noo-qua-cha-mish), Charley (Skagit), Sampson (Skagit), Hatch-kwentum (Skagit), Yo-i-kum- (Skagit), T’kwa-ma-han- (Skagit), Sto-dum-kan (Swinamish), Be-lole (Swinamish), D’zo-lole-gwam-hu (Skagit), Kel-kahl-tsoot (Swinamish), Pat-sen (Skagit), Pat-the-us (Noo-wha-ah), Pat-the-us (Noo-wha-ah).

¹⁰⁶ Tulalip was described by Indian Agents of the time as

“a beautiful spot fronting on the Sound, with low shores adjoining, with some arable land and good fisheries, and was as well suited to the wants of the Indians as any one location that could be found” (in Meeker 1905: 263).

¹⁰⁷ Basing her information primarily on Harris (n.d.: 25-26), Bennett concluded that the Lower Skagit were, in fact, not represented at the Point Elliott treaty negotiations as a result of confusion on Stevens’ part as to their tribal identity. In turn, she suggests that this was a principal cause of the absence of a Skagit reservation in the Penn Cove area,

as well as the ultimate displacement of the Lower Skagit to Swinomish, Tulalip, and other area reservations:

“Apparently unaware that the Lower Skagit proper were not a part of the Swinomish, Stevens served notice on the Swinomish group assuming the Lower Skagit would be included by this invitation... they were not. After the treaty was signed, Stevens was informed of his error and promptly sought an Indian of the Lower Skagit group to sign; the Indian who did so was unaware of what the paper meant, and misunderstandings between the government and the Lower Skagit lasted for a number of years” (Bennett 1972: 15).

Information reviewed in the course of the current study does not fully support this claim. Certainly, a number of Lower Skagit were present at the treaty negotiations. On Steven’s map from the treaty proceedings, all of the study area lies within Skagit, rather than Swinomish territory; while “Swinomish” signatories are listed separately from “Skagit” (Stevens n.d.a).

¹⁰⁸ This point was made centrally in some of the earliest compensation claims from the Skagit and other Puget Sound tribes:

The “Skagit Tribe [were] located in Whidby Island, just a little way from Swinomish. They were a big body of Indians who signed the treaty. One of their head chiefs was there, one of the alleged signers, and 18 of the subchiefs signed the treaty, but they never got any reservation...as near as they could estimate...there were about 850. They never got allotments” (Indian Tribes of Washington 1924: 43).

The absence of a reservation even on the Skagit delta, where Stevens clearly considered the option of a reservation, in part reflects the desirability of this land for non-Indian agricultural use, and federal policies that sought to eliminate impediments to agricultural development. Certainly, early surveys of the Skagit delta made it sound no less verdant and promising than the lands of Whidbey Island:

“The mouth of the Skagit and the vicinity adjacent is also very productive, and the land will not be difficult to clear, for the growth is small, being a sort of underbrush” (Henry 1860: 159).

¹⁰⁹ Speaking of the Upper Skagit, Collins recalls,

“The Upper Skagit took little, if any, part in the Indian wars of 1855-59. They had little reason to feel threatened at this time since there were no White settlers in their area. It is very probable, however, that they had word of the warnings of Snatlem in this respect. He had become alerted as settlers came to Whidbey Island” (Collins 1974c: 40).

¹¹⁰ Contrary to Evans-Hatch and Evans-Hatch (2005: 89), who attribute blockhouse construction principally to fear of “northern Indians,” the wealth of correspondence reviewed in the course of the current research suggests that the Yakama Indian War may have been the principal cause, though certainly the threat of northern raiders was of important and secondary concern.

¹¹¹ Cahail (1901) provides some valuable summations of diary accounts that are illuminating regarding this period, even as they weave in and out of the war narrative. One account, regarding the Lovejoy family, provides one such example:

“[in 1854] Captain Lovejoy settled his family on Whidby Island at Lovejoy’s Point. U.S. Grant signed deeds for homesteads and donation claims for Captain Lovejoy, John Alexander and Captain Thomas Coupe. The Coupe family were wonderfully good friends of young Mrs. Lovejoy. When she was afraid of the Indians, she would go to the Coupe home. Mrs. Coupe always reassured her by saying that the Indians would not harm her...Through the years when he was away from home on long voyages, the eighteen-year-old son of Chief Squi Squi was among the ‘friendly Indians’ who looked after the welfare of Mrs. Lovejoy. He slept on the floor inside the kitchen door. When marauding Indians prowled about the premises he would tell them that they must go away because this was the daughter of Captain Kinney. Often after dark the Indians would insist that the baby (Howard) be brought to the window that they might see a white baby.

Mrs. Lovejoy was always fearful of the Indians but was never molested by them. At that time a thousand Indians lived where Coupeville now stands. They were constantly passing the door...

“Mrs. Lovejoy, especially, was held always in high esteem by the Indians. They constantly showed their devotion in many different ways and probably never understood her fear of them. During the “Potlatch” celebrations which lasted several days while the Indians made the welkin ring with their hideous, weird noises and loud beating of drums, Mrs.

Lovejoy would gather up her ax and saw and other tools in the door yard and take them into the house, draw down the blinds, lock the doors and remain in terrified seclusion until the “Pow-Wow” was over... During the Indian War Mrs. Lovejoy took her children to the [John] Alexander Blockhouse and slept with them there on the floor, going home in the morning. The Indians on Whidby were often excited but they were never violent. They never hurt anyone” (Cahail 1901).

¹¹² Browne notes that while other ships were involved with these campaigns, they were not a formidable fleet. He refers primarily to one other boat in this “fleet”: “One ship, a marginally seaworthy mail boat that had been retrofit for policing the Sound, the Constitution, also served this protective function” (Browne 1858: 12).

¹¹³ The Stikine or “Shtax’heen Kwáan” Tlingit hail from the Wrangell, Alaska area. The Kake or “Keex’ Kwáan” Tlingits hail from Kake, Alaska. The identity of the “Hanagars” remains ambiguous, but may represent the Hinyaa Kwáan (Klawock Tlingit) or Xunaa Kwáan (Hoonah Tlingit).

¹¹⁴ The Commander of the Massachusetts, Commander Samuel Swartwout, reported to Silas Casey on December 8, 1856:

“Please accept the sincere thanks of the officers and crew attached to this vessel for the highly complementary manner in which you allude to their recent engagement with the Northern Indians at Port Gamble...

“His Excellency Governor James Douglas of Vancouver Island had a talk with several of the principal Indian Chiefs, from whom he ascertained that they belonged to the Stickenes, Hanagars, and Kake Tribes [Tlingits] from near the Russian settlements, and who are considered the most ferocious and warlike of all the Northern Indians. As these Indians did not come from the British Possessions, common courtesy forbade my landing them on Vancouver Island contrary to the wishes of Governor Douglas. I therefore decided after consulting with Governor Douglas that the most just, humane and economical course for me to pursue would be to transport these prisoners of war to some Island in the gulf of Georgia, to the Northward of the English settlement at Nanaimo, providing them with means to return from thence to their own country. I consequently after purchasing six large canoes at Victoria got underway and proceeded to the Island of Lasqueti in the Gulf of Georgia, about twenty two miles to the Northward and Westward of Nanaimo where I landed the Indians in their canoes on the 29th, furnishing them with

fifteen days provisions as they had some four hundred miles to travel before reaching their country. I told them to proceed to their home immediately and never to visit Puget Sound again. That if they or any of their tribes should come there again I would fire into their canoes with the Great Guns and sink them. They assured me their Tum-Tums [hearts] were good towards me, acknowledging they had behaved badly, having been governed by evil council, and said they would proceed to their country without delay and not make their appearance any more in the Sound. They were on board of this ship five days and nights during which time they conducted themselves in an orderly manner and appeared to be very much humbled and subdued.

"I returned to Port Gamble on the 1st and was informed that a few "Indians" showed themselves on the beach the next morning after I sailed, but upon being observed fled immediately into the woods and had since left in small canoes holding only three or four persons. I examined the woods in the vicinity of their late encampment but found no Indians there. From the most reliable information I can obtain I should judge there were about fifteen or twenty of these Northern Indians belonging to the Hyder Tribe [Haida, of British Columbia] who escaped but as they have lost all their property and canoes and are aware that this ship has returned to the Sound, they will I think, not dare to commit any further depredations, so long as we remain here...

"As soon as our Boilers are repaired I shall make a cruise down the Sound in direction of Whidbey Island, for the purpose of ascertaining if possible the whereabouts of those Indians who escaped" (Swartwout 1856).

¹¹⁵ Infantry Captain G.O. Haller reported to Lieutenant John Nugent at Fort Steilacoom on December 8, 1856,

"A large number of highly [respectable] citizens who have settled upon Whidbey's Island, have accumulated considerable property, stock, & c. which with the valuable improvements on their claims, would be much exposed to the depredations of the Russian and British Indians in the event of a descent, and might tempt them to plunder the Island. This does not take into consideration the danger to life, as many would probably leave their homes. The locations of the Troops at Bellingham Bay and Port Townsend will not produce the moral effect upon these Indians, which they do upon the Indians residing in their immediate neighborhood. These Indians can approach without being seen at either station, and

hastily destroying what they do not carry off, can disappear without a trace by which to pursue them. The settlers believe themselves to be very much exposed, but there is no practical harbour on the west side of that shore for a military station, and the Reserve of Maj. Larnard, late deceased, at or near Penn's Cove is too remote by water communication (being fifty or sixty miles from Port Townsend to afford protection to the numerous settlements on the mainland from Port's Gamble and Ludlow around to Cape Flattery, to locate there. Should it be convenient for an US Naval Vessel to cruise among the islands north of this place, and occasionally anchor in Penn's Cove, it would not only give a feeling of security to the inhabitants of that island, but produce a great moral effect upon these Northern Indians, if not avert the difficulty now with good reason, apprehended there and indeed throughout Puget Sound" (Haller 1856).

The threat of the northern tribes was part of the original justification for placement of a military barracks near Port Townsend – a precursor to what later became Fort Worden. The barracks was situated within view of the Whidbey Island settlements, which could be seen and monitored in clear weather. The construction of military facilities in the Port Townsend area in the 1850s insured a powerful and vigilant control on certain aspects of Indian life (Fay 1859-61).

¹¹⁶ After Ebey's death, Fay's response seems muted, and perhaps unsurprised, noting only "Aug. 13th 1857 Sent express to [Skagit Head Indian Agent] Baylie's to inform him of Ebey's death" (Fay 1856-61).

¹¹⁷ As Browne notes,

"There were also significant challenges to policing, in that these tribes hailed from British and Russian territories and generally retreated to them after an attack. The ships of the United States had limited authority and generally could not pursue retreating Indians into these waters (Browne 1858: 12-13).

Browne used this incident as an opportunity to criticize United States security policies generally on the Sound, and to compare them unfavorably against those of the Hudson's Bay Company:

"The British Hudson's Bay Company have had no difficulty in maintaining their supremacy over these races; but they pursue a different course. Whenever one of their subjects is murdered they pursue the murderers, compel them to surrender, and execute them on the spot. The Indians well understand that no matter where they may go they will be followed and captured, and, so sure as they deserve it, will suffer death. Our government adopts a different policy. It sends up a war steamer to the Sound; this vessel drives out a few Indians, fires several rounds of ammunition into the trees back of Seattle, causes a general reverberation of large and small guns around the shores of the Sound, winds up by killing some four or five Indians, informs the settlers that there is no use in staying any longer, as the enemy have all left, gets up a head of steam, and paddles back to Mare island, where she rests from her labors for the space of one or two years" (Browne 1858: 12).

¹¹⁸ Kellogg 1935 reports of these events,

"The word of the tragedy spread rapidly over the Island. Crowds assembled. Over at Port Townsend Captain Hyde of the U.S. Revenue Service arrested seven Northern Indians who were found in the neighborhood and sent a canoe filled with "Kloutchmen" [women] up to the San Juan Islands. These Kloutchmen, or squaws, were to notify the marauding party, should they be able to find them, that the seven Indians taken as hostages would be hung at noon, August the 15th, if the murderers were not turned over to the authorities. Within a few hours a total of eighteen Indians were in chains at Port Townsend and word came over that the citizens were resolved to hand over all they could catch. They requested that the Island people come over for a mass meeting. The people of the Island were removing their families to the various block houses....On Saturday the 15th of August, over fifty people from the Island went to Port Townsend where they passed a resolution to kill all Northern Indians who might come into the country from that time on. To their surprise and disgust that day, Judge Chenoweth released eight of the eighteen Indians and at noon none had been hung" (Kellogg 1934: 57-58).

¹¹⁹ Port Townsend, as Indian Agent Browne called it, was "notorious as a resort for "beachcombers" and outlaws of every description" (Browne 1858: 8).

¹²⁰ The San Juan Islanders' petition reads as follows:

"To General Harney, Commander in Chief of the Pacific Division of the United States Army:

"The undersigned, American citizens on the island of San Juan, would respectfully represent: That in the month of April, in the year one thousand eight hundred and fifty-eight, the house of the United States inspector of customs for this island was attacked and fired upon in the night by a party of Indians living on this island, and known as the Clallams, and had it not been for the timely aid of the Hudson's Bay Company, the inspector would have fallen a victim to their savage designs. In the month of July following we found on the beach, close to the above mentioned Indian camp, the bodies of two white men, apparently Americans, who had, when found, cotton cords about their necks which had been used to conceal them under water. Last fall another daring murder was committed in the middle of the day, and in the plain sight of us all here, without the slightest chance of our rendering them assistance. Only ten days ago another body found on our shore had been the victim of foul play. Inclusive with the above dangers that we are exposed to from neighboring Indians, we are continually in fear of descent upon us by the bands of marauding northern Indians, who infest these waters in large numbers, and are greatly retarding the progress of the settlement of this island...With a view of these facts, and for the essential advantage of having this and the surrounding islands immediately settled, we most earnestly pray that you will have stationed on this island a sufficient military force to protect us from the above-mentioned dangers until we become sufficiently strong to protect ourselves" (American Citizens on the Island of San Juan 1859: 1).

¹²¹ Some 11 days later, on Aug. 18, 1859, Harney again reported to Headquarters:

"Some Indian disturbances occurred at Whatcom, on the Sound, about the 7th instant, in which one white man was killed. The steamer "Massachusetts" proceeded immediately to the spot and arrested the ring leaders. Four Indians were killed in the melee at Whatcom, and the remaining offenders have been turned over to the civil authorities" (Harney 1859b: 1).

¹²² Fort Bellingham was one of the installations that was most enhanced under this policy. A secondary function of this buildup was the protection of American interests

in the San Juan Islands. In a letter written by Assistant Adjutant General Pleasonton to E. Pickett, new Commander for Fort Bellingham, dated July 18, 1859, he reported:

“The object to be attained in placing you thus is two-fold, viz: first, to protect the inhabitants of the island from the incursions of the northern Indians of British Columbia and the Russian possessions. You will not permit any force of these Indians to visit San Juan island or the waters of Puget Sound in that vicinity, over which the United States have any jurisdiction. Should these Indians appear peaceable you will warn them in a quiet but firm manner to return to their own country, and not visit in future the territory of the United States; and in the event of any opposition being offered to your demands, you will use the most decisive measures to enforce them; to which end the commander of troops stationed on the steamer *Massachusetts* will be instructed to render every assistance and cooperation that will be necessary to enable your command to fulfill the tenor of these instructions.

“Second. Another serious and important duty will devolve upon you in the occupation of San Juan Island, arising from the conflicting interests of the American citizens and the Hudson’s Bay Company establishment at that point” (Pleasanton 1859b: 1).

The Steamer *Massachusetts* continued to serve on regular patrols through this period with a similarly twofold mission. In a letter to Silas Casey, Assistant Adjutant General A. Pleasanton wrote on July 18, 1859,

“The steamer “MASSACHUSETTS” will proceed without delay to Bellingham, to be used in establishing company “D”, 9th Infantry on San Juan island;.....After the ship has received the necessary stores and supplies, she will be instructed to cruise in the sound among the islands frequented by northern Indians, who will be warned not to come into any of the waters under the jurisdiction of the United States,.....Any opposition by these Indians will be speedily checked, and the requirements of these instructions will be maintained by force, if necessary” (Pleasanton 1859a: 1).

Only after the signing of the 1871 Treaty of Washington were these military operations completely relieved of their duties relative to the San Juans. By this time, northern Indian raiding was largely a thing of the past.

¹²³ A brief biography of Robert Fay is provided in Cahail (1901):

"Captain Robert C. Fay, pilot, was born in Cuttingsville, Vermont, in 1820. In 1845 he sailed as Mate on the ship "Harvest" with Captain Coffin, master. They sailed out of Tarpaulin Cove, February 18, 1845, bound on a whaling voyage to the Pacific Ocean for a full cargo of sperm oil. This proved to be a voyage of three and one-half years. (The original log books as kept by Captain Fay are still preserved.) January 1st, 1846, found them still in quest of whale in the neighborhood of the French Rock. They registered at Pitcairn Island. In April 1848, they were homeward bound. On Wednesday, July 5th, 1848, at 11 a. m. they came to anchor back in Nantucket Bay.

"The next record says that Captain Fay was in San Francisco in 1849, and sailed from there with Captain Isaiah Folger as Master on the schooner "Exact" which landed the first settlers at Alki Point, November 13, 1851. From that time on Captain Fay remained on Puget Sound taking an active interest in the arrival of all newcomers. We find his name mentioned many times in old records where he helped different families in building their homes and did much to avert serious trouble among the Indians during the uprising of various tribes in 1855-1856.

"There are papers preserved recording his experiences with the Indians. He issued them rations daily. He was successful in combating the problem of those few white men who dealt in the liquor traffic, fatal to the keeping of peace among the Redmen and the Whites. He was appointed Government Indian Agent for the Puget Sound Country.

"Colonel Simmons, in charge of Treaty Affairs, designated Captain Fay as agent to assemble the chiefs of the tribes to hold a conference. (The original records of these meetings with reports made by Captain Fay and speeches made by the Chiefs are still preserved). On September 12, 1860, Captain Fay married the widow of John Alexander and spent the remainder of his life in Coupeville. He died February 25, 1872.

"Letters written to Captain Fay by his sister at the beginning of war talk between the North and South are still preserved in the possession of Ida Alexander Sill. "Robert, we do wish you would come home. We can foresee much trouble and need your gracious presence. It is so hard for us all to understand why a man of your education, ability and family pride should insist on still remaining out in a country inhabited only by savages and those people who are content to give up everything they had here to reside in huts, without schools, churches, or the social life a member of the Fay family should enjoy.

““Have you no explanation to offer? Your conduct in this matter is indeed a problem which we do not discuss other than between myself and our brother Winslow” (Cahail 1901).

A man by the name Richard H. Fay served as Indian Agent at the Umatilla Reservation in the early 1880s. It is unclear whether he was related to Robert Fay.

¹²⁴ He also notes that “At Scaggets Head, thirty-five miles distant by canoe, under charge of R.S. Baily, are the Sno-how-mish, Snow-qual-my, Ski-qua-mish, Stil-i-qua-mish, proper, and a few minor tribes, scattered at large on the main land” (Browne 1858: 14).

¹²⁵ Fay (1858a) reported these tribal names and numbers consistently in other reports of the year, noting just under three-thousand tribal members under his jurisdiction,

“The Skagits, with the tribes Sno-dom-ish, Ke-ka-alons and Scho-nam-ish, probably number thirteen hundred and fifty; the Sno-ho-mish, Sno-qual-mie, and Ski-quam-ish, about fifteen hundred” (1858a: 238).

¹²⁶ George Beam’s diaries from 1859 and 1860 suggest the significance of Indian labor to the early farms of Whidbey Island:

“An Indian long John came to hoe my potatoes...Polk and myself with the help of two Indians we bound and stacked the oats that was down... We had to pay the Indians one Dollar and a half each per day...Was up in the woods where there is some Indians making rails for Hills” (Beam 1858-1860).

The 1860s diary entries of Coupeville resident Louise Swift suggest that these Indians continued to provide essential transportation: “We took a canoe with Indians to paddle us for Whidbey Island...Mr. Swift went for the Indians to come with a canoe and take us to Utsalady [Camano Island]” (Swift 1863-1869).

¹²⁷ James Swan, that productive chronicler of this period, tagged along with Fay during one of Fay’s efforts to petition Skagit headmen on this issue. Writing in June of 1859, James Swan (n.d.) recalled

"I...walked to Penn's Cove where Capt. Fay held another talk with the Skagit chief relating to their reservation. Took a couple of sketches and then walked back to Captain Fay's farm where I passed the night."

¹²⁸ The Penn Cove special Indian agency also continued to confront continued threats from northern tribes. Fay wrote to Indian Agent Simmons on June 5, 1860 of an

"attack made on Northern Indians by some of the Snohomish...Two large canoes filled with Northern Indians numbering thirty in all... men were seen in the vicinity of Point Ringgold [Marrowstone Point, on Marrowstone Island] by two men from Port Townsend, apparently looking for water as they were constantly going in and out from shore" (Fay 1860b: 1).

¹²⁹ Councils were still held there during this year. Fay notes, for example, a case in which the tribes arranged

"an appointment with the Clallams previously agreed upon by the Skaquamishes tribe to meet on Whidbys Island to settle the difficulty...between these two tribes. We left Dungeness, arriving at Port Townsend in the evening, and Monday morning proceeded to Penns Cove to await the arrival of the Indians" (Fay 1861: 2).

¹³⁰ Relations between the resident Indians and settlers appear to have remained remarkably congenial during this transitional period. In a letter from Coupeville resident Louise Swift, dated April 24, 1864, she noted to a friend who apparently had not been to Penn Cove,

"I suppose you think the Indians must be wild and savage but they are far from that. Most of them are harmless. They never come to the house except to trade" (Swift 1863-1869).

¹³¹ Indian Claims Commission documents describe the Swinomish in these general terms:

"Under the Point Elliot Treaty, four separate reservations were established. One of these was on Fidalgo Island, in the former Swinomish

territory, and was known as the Perry's Island or Swinomish reservation. Many of the Swinomish eventually settled here, as did many other Puget Sound Indians" (Indian Claims Commission 1974: 6).

¹³² Tulalip Indian Agency Superintendent O.C. Upchurch (1936) conducted extensive research on the early Swinomish and reported that

"The Swinomish people with whom we deal today are a composite of remnants or fragments of seven originally distinct bands of Coast Salishan stock whose various habitats, judging from the earliest reports of white visitors and the most trustworthy accounts of present day narrators among the people themselves, were as follows:

(1) The Swinomish, from whom the reservation and the slough take the name, occupied the north end of Whidby Island from Dugula Bay to Ts'chudz, or Deception Pass, the eastern part of Fidalgo Island to Fidalgo Bay, where they met the Samish, and both sides of Swinomish Slough north to Telegraph Slough where they met the Stkitabish or No wha ha. Their principal village was on Swinomish Slough at La Conner. Recent excavation reveals shell refuse to a depth of several feet at this ancient village site, and an ancient gambling bone was found at an undisturbed depth of two feet.

(2) The Squinomish, a small band closely related to Swinomish, held the northern mouth, estuary, and delta of the Skagit River, forming a sort of buffer between the Swinomish and the Skagit.

(3) The Skagit, from whom the river, the county and the village of Skagit are named, occupied Whidby Island from Dugula Bay south to Holmes Harbor where they met the Snohomish, and the central mouths, sloughs, and delta of the Skagit River to the point of the river's separation at Skagit City were claimed, visited, and used as fishing grounds in season. The principal village of the Skagit tribe was located at Sneatlum Point just below what is now the town of Coupeville.

(4) The Kikiallis occupied the territory from Mount Vernon south to Stanwood, where they met the Stillaguamish, and the northern end of Camano Island to the village of Camano, where they met the Snohomish. Some narrators claim that this tribe had holdings on Whidby Island; others deny this. The Kikiallis had their principal villages at Utsaladdy on Camano Island and at Fir in the Skagit River delta.

(5) The Samish, a band related linguistically to the Clallam, the Songish of the Vancouver Island, and the Lummi, have their name perpetuated in Samish Bay, Lake, Island, River and Village. I am inclined to believe that

the word Samish is a different pronunciation of the name Songish of the Vancouver Island band. So many generations have passed since their separation that it is doubtful whether it could be authentically determined today. The Samish held Samish Island, Guemes Island, eastern Lopez Island, Cyprss Island, and Fidalgo Island west of Fidalgo Bay where they met the Swinomish. On the shores of the mainland in the vicinity of Edison they met the No wha ha, sometimes called Upper Samish, along a wide front.

(6) The No wha ha, called Upper Samish, (although they are not linguistically related to the Samish as closely as they are to the Snohomish or some of the other interior bands) Occupied the country from southern Lake Whatcom on Samish Lake and Samish River south to where Mount Vernon now stands, where they met the Kikiallis on the South and the Nook-wah-chah-mish on the southeast, and around the shore to Hw.Hw.Piats, or Bayview, on Padilla Bay and to Telegraph Slough where they met the Swinomish. They ranged easterly to the vicinity of what is now Sedro Wooley where they met bands of what are now known as Upper Skagits. Their principal villages were on the Samish River and what is now the village of Bayview.

(7) The Upper Skagits, a term now used to include such bands as the Sah'-ku-mehu, Nook-wah-chah-mish, Spa-mee-hwu, and Me-see'-qua-guilch, occupied the valley of the Skagit River and its tributaries from the vicinity of what is now Sedro-Wooley east to the mountains. Very few representatives of the Upper Skagit bands moved down to the Swinomish Reservation and are now included in our present discussion.

"Usually all these tribes or bands were friendly, hunted and fished together, often inter-married, maintained interchange of products, and extended inter-tribal invitations to social and ceremonial functions. Sometimes unhappy acts brought difficulties which usually meant war, but for the most part all these bands were united defensively and offensively against the northern tribes who engaged in slave raids and led war parties against them (Upchurch 1936a: 2284-286).

¹³³ Schiach also notes of this period that,

"At the time [1863] this settlement was made the Swinomish Indians were in rather bad repute among the whites. It was said that a year or two before a surveyor named Hunt, while on his way from Penn's Cove, Island County, to Whatcom, was killed by them, they fearing he might

work some evil incantation upon them with his instruments (Schiach 1906: 101).

¹³⁴ Speaking of the period when Penn Cove residents were migrating to Swinomish and other area reservations, John Fornsby (in Collins 1949: 314) reported, "The agent in Tulalip stopped them from giving things away.... They had a few potlatches among themselves after that, but not a big time."

¹³⁵ This 1863 epidemic, in addition to organized colonial military action against the Canadian First Nations in the lands immediately north of the international border in 1863, much reduced the interactions between Skagits and their kin to the north (Arnett 1997; Hill-Tout 1907).

¹³⁶ Though the church was constructed largely to proselytize tribal members, the Catholic settlers at La Conner attended services at this church until they constructed their own church in 1872 (Sullivan 1932: 103).

¹³⁷ Sampson (n.d.) reported that "Protestantism was introduced to the Swinomish Reservation in 1894, when the Federal Government built and subsequently operated the Swinomish Day School" (Sampson n.d.: 23).

¹³⁸ This did not only apply for the Skagit, but for other populations, such as the Samish, who relocated at Swinomish:

"According to the treaty the Samish were to have come on to the Lummi Reservation, but very few chose to do so. Instead they maintained themselves in an independent village on Samish Island until about 1875, when they were forced to move to Guemes Island. On Guemes they built a great native-style house divided into three segments, which held as permanent residents more than fifty people. Here the Samish held several potlatches and carried on spirit dancing and other native practices with little interference from whites. They were probably much more dependent on native subsistence techniques during this period than were the Lummi and upon seasonal employment with whites; I do not believe that they did any farming at all. About 1905 the Guemes village was abandoned, partly because the big house was falling down and the younger people preferred to live in small white-style houses, and probably partly because it was becoming more difficult to make a living there. Many of the Samish had ties with the Swinomish, so most of them moved on to the Swinomish Reservation. While they were not numerous,

the Samish were probably influential in maintaining native culture in this area" (Suttles 1954: 97).

¹³⁹ In response to forced cultural changes, the American Indians of the region adapted, using officially sanctioned holidays as an opportunity to continue some of the ceremonial and social activities that had formerly been associated with the potlatch. Among these were the "Treaty Day" celebrations, which continued to bring together tribes from throughout the region. The Tulalip Indian Agency wrote a formal memo in 1928 on the "Treaty Day celebration on the Swinomish reservation":

"The visiting Indians from the Canadian side were members of the Chillawack tribe. The totem poles supporting the roof of the potlatch house, or smoke house as it is commonly called, all have some significance. Each pole has its meaning and a long story is attached to each one. They were carved by Swinomish Indians...Who made the totem poles I am unable to state.

"The names of some of the leading men present at the celebration are Bill Jake, a member of the Kickyallis tribe. Charlie Jules, Sam Dan and George Snatelum of the Snohomish tribe. Charlie Bal-lloe of the Swinomish tribe, and Frank Hillaire of the Lummi tribe" (Tulalip Indian Agency 1928: 1).

¹⁴⁰ As John Fornsby recalled,

"I had twenty acres of timber land and tide lands. My wife wanted to deed it to her grandchildren. I lost it. John Wilbur, my stepson, lost it. He didn't pay taxes on it. He got crazy from drinking too much and spent lots of money so that I lost that land. He paid no taxes. I thought all the time he was paying taxes. I never asked him. Twenty acres of marsh, that was good land. It was quite a lot of money lost, wasn't it? (Collins 1949: 332).

¹⁴¹ As Tulalip Indian Agent, O.C. Upchurch, proclaimed,

"The Swinomish Indian people have been inspired by the present Commissioner of Indian Affairs, John Collier, and enabled by an act of Congress of June 16, 1934, to establish for themselves a corporate form of government with a degree of independence...[their reorganization] has

been consummated by the following concerted acts in which all adult members of the Swinomish tribe have participated: (1) November 17, 1934, voted to accept the Reorganization Act; (2) November 16, 1935, ratified the Constitution and By-laws which were approved by the Secretary of the Interior, January 27, 1936; (3) May 4, 1936, adopted the Law and Order Regulations approved by the Secretary, November 27, 1935; (4) May 6, 1936, Submitted the names of judges to the Commissioner of Indian Affairs to be appointed, as provided in the adopted code; (5) July 25 by unanimous vote ratified their Corporate Charter issued by the Secretary of the Interior" (Upchurch 1936a: 283).

The preamble of this new constitution read as follows:

"We, the Indians of the Swinomish Reservation, in order to establish a more perfect tribal organization, promote the general welfare, encourage educational progress, conserve and develop our lands and resources, and secure to ourselves and our posterity the power to exercise certain rights of home rule, in accordance with and by the authority of the act of Congress of June 18, 1934, do ordain and establish this constitution for the Swinomish Indians" (quoted in Upchurch 1936a: 300).

¹⁴² Tulalip Indian Agent O.C. Upchurch (1936a) provides considerable context and detail regarding the transformation that occurred at this time:

"The activities of white people among the Swinomish people and their neighbors so subdued their spirits, destroyed their bodies and ruined their country that within ten years the population was reduced one-half and their moral degeneration was appalling. The recovery has been more than fifty years on the way, but under the inspiration given by the Indian Reorganization Act and the development of an independent economy by means of their fish traps in accordance with their former traditional occupation, these people are becoming again self-confident, self-sufficient citizens with ideals comparable to their old time culture...

"In April 1936 the Government authorized...rebuilding [the LaConner fishing village]. Twenty modern houses in a model village with water, sewer and lights are under construction. The removal of float houses and shacks from the site will soon be completed and all the occupants housed in the new quarters. A number of other homes will also be repaired and repainted.

“ In 1934 the Swinomish Tribal Council borrowed \$1500 and constructed a small fish trap on their tribal tide lands. An early storm destroyed the structure but not until it had proven its value and about \$1200 worth of fish had been marketed in addition to a liberal distribution to members of the tribe. In 1935 the same council borrowed \$4200, rebuilt this trap, and added a second. These traps operated until July 17 when the Indian operators were arrested by order of the State Fish Commissioner for operating traps in violation of state law of Washington. They had made enough to repay their loan and after several months delay, in which they lost the season’s fishing, the Superior court of Skagit County decided in favor of the Indians since the traps were located on Indian land between high and low tide and therefore were not within the jurisdiction of the State. They have this year rebuilt their traps and have earned enough to propose other cooperative enterprises” (Upchurch 1936a: 291-93).

¹⁴³ Tulalip Indian Agents often asserted their continued administrative functions during this period, despite the emergence of a number of new tribal governments in the early decades of the 20th century. As Tulalip Indian Agent, F.A. Gross, noted,

“The Tulalip Agency embraces that part of the Indian country in the State of Washington bounded by Canada on the north, the Cascade mountains on the east, the city of Tacoma on the south and a point approximately thirty-five miles west of Port Angeles, Washington, on the west. Approximately 4,300 Indians are enrolled at this jurisdiction and have their affairs administered through this Agency” (Gross 1947: 1).

¹⁴⁴ As Roberts (1975) noted,

“As time passed into the twentieth century, the significance of tribal and band identification declined somewhat relative to the importance of reservation affiliation. The ties between families forming the social and religious community on the Swinomish Reservation became steadily stronger. Persistent internal rivalries between bands and tribes and factional disputes between families within the community were tempered by growing loyalty to the reservation community in its confrontations with White institutions” (Roberts 1975: 279).

¹⁴⁵ A 1920s census of tribal members showed that Charlie Sneatlum and his wife Katie (English) Sneatlum, both full-blooded Skagits, resided in Coupeville, but were enrolled at Swinomish (Tulalip Indian Agency 1925). The Swinomish 1925 rolls include enrollment numbers for “Charles Sneatlum (61855) plus wife, Katie Sneatlum (61854)” (Dickens 1925). The census also noted 20 Skagit families living off-reservation within the Swinomish Agency, but does not specify their locations.

¹⁴⁶ For example, a number of allottees at the Tulalip reservation with ancestry in more than one of these tribes identified themselves as “Snohomish” or “Skykomish” on the 1881 tribal rolls but changed their identification to “Skagit” by 1883 (see enrollment tables in Lane 1985).

¹⁴⁷ Harriette Dover’s father was Sehome, a renowned S’Klallam leader, while her father’s mother was a Ucluelet woman from the west coast of Vancouver Island (Dover in Rygg 1977: 42). Her biography, as those of so many people of her time, points toward the high level of social integration and intermarriage between generally acknowledged American Indian tribes and Canadian First Nations in this region.

¹⁴⁸ Roblin continued to explore this point long after conducting his influential 1919 roll of such Indians:

“For many years Thomas G. Bishop, and the “Northwestern Federation of American Indians” had made claim that there were many thousand Indians in western Washington who had never shared in any of the benefits derived from any of the treaties of early days and who were entitled to some recognition by the Government and some remuneration for lands taken from them, either in the shape of an allotment on the Quinaielt Reservation, or by the payment of the cash equivalent of such an allotment. These were supposed to be “Indians” who were not enrolled at any agency on the coast...In all the adoptions by the Quinaielts which have been approved by the Department, a condition has been imposed that the applicant relinquish all rights with the tribe with whom he has been previously enrolled, where such enrollment existed; but where such enrollment with another tribe did not exist, no such condition has been imposed, and the approval has been unconditional” (Roblin 1926: 1, 3).

¹⁴⁹ Roberts (1975) notes that

“Members of the Swinomish Reservation have marital partners from Canada, Alaska, and Oregon, even from the eastern and southwestern

tribes. At traditional religious ceremonies held today communities from southern Puget Sound to Northern Vancouver Island are represented" (Roberts: 1975: 150; Collins 1946: 39).

Marriages between villages brought reciprocal visitation, barter, and alliances between these sometimes distant communities.

¹⁵⁰ There has been some suggestion that Roblin misidentified some individuals as Skagit, as he mistakenly assumed that a number of other tribes, such as the Samish, were effectively Skagit bands (Samish Indian Nation 1986).

¹⁵¹ John Fornsby noted that his family continued to visit Whidbey Island relatives socially: "When I got to be a big boy, I went to live with the Lower Skagit. Then I used to go along with my relations on my mother's side down on Whidbey Island" (Collins 1949: 303).

On the diverse causes and effects of change within familial relationships in the 20th century Coast Salish world, see the papers in Lewis (1970).

¹⁵² A 1947 *Seattle Times* article on the Treaty Day dances reported

"Dance of the magicsticks - the skwedeelitch. Indians had talked about this for days. It was Tommy Bob's night to dance away his grief....lost his son Tec. Sergt. John K Bob, 20 in action with the army in Germany two years ago.

"The magic sticks had come from a "certain cedar" on Guemes Is. They had been fashioned by two men who worked an entire day without eating...In the sticks lay the power to "find things, to heal the sick, to predict death, to warn of danger...To derive full benefits from the magic sticks, Tommy Bob danced four nights this year. He will dance four nights each year at Treaty Day time for the next three years. Then he will put away the sticks in a hollow cedar where no one may find them. That will be his fulfillment of a ritual handed down through the centuries...Each man on the sticks grasped the other to keep from being thrown off the path or into the fires, which burned brightly with the juices of salmon slabs tossed in to "nourish the stick sprits." It was said that the sticks through an Indian out the door Tuesday night. The power within them was discussed in whispers... After an hour, at an instant of explosive drumming, Tommy Bob stopped, heaving and groaning. He said he felt "much better." A big spirit would cry for him hereafter.

“As Indians of the Swinomish Res. Staged the ceremonial dances of their observance of Treaty Day, the gleaming chromium of a public-address-system microphone stood out in stark contrast to the frenzied gyrations of the dancers, the boom-boom-boom of ancient drums and the vibrant rhythm of tribal chanting” (Seattle Times 1947).

¹⁵³ Similar patterns of hop picking were reported around much of the Sound, including on the Olympic Peninsula. Bishop (n.d.) provides a few useful details when describing hop picking on that Peninsula:

“Mr. William Bishop planted hops on sixty acres of his claim. He hired the Indians of LaPush, Neah Bay and those who lived at the mouth of Chimacum Creek to pick them.

“At one end of the hop field was built the hop shed where the Indians lived. This shed was about one hundred feet long with a platform six feet wide running along each wall. These platforms were used as bunks. Whole families would come to pick the hops and to make room for them all the children slept at both the head and the foot of the bunk.

“Through the center of the shed were the fires for cooking their meals.

“The season lasted about six weeks. One of the men was called the pole-puller. He was the strong man and his job was to pull all the poles the hops were strung on and put them on the ground so the hops could be picked. The next year all the poles would have to be replaced.

“The Indians all had a great time visiting together and many a fight occurred to liven things up (Bishop n.d.b.: 7).

¹⁵⁴ The destructive effects of these Puget Sound boarding schools have been mentioned in a number of accounts of the period. As Bennett (1972) noted,

“When the Indian children were removed from their families to attend school, the aboriginal family structure began to break down. The native authority structure underwent alterations as a result both of schooling and the agents’ insistence on nuclear family dwellings” (Bennett 1972: 22).

Harriette Dover shared personal memories of children being punished for using their own language or acting too “Indian”:

“Dr. Buchanan had a strap too and it was bigger than the matron’s. Worse! They had to take off all of their clothes and lay over a stool. He’d strap them all over their bodies and that kind of a strap could really tear up their skin. It wasn’t until years that we found out that had been outlawed in the penitentiary, that kind of strap. It did too much damage, but it was used on us. What they did to the boys, they’d shave off their hair and put girls dresses on them and then they’d work and go to school in those dresses. Oh, months they were punished. They were locked up at night, the door unlocked in the morning and there they were in their dirty dresses, shaved off hair” (Dover in Rygg 1977: 140).

¹⁵⁵ Dover recalled one incident of medicinal plants used in the course of an injury during berry picking time:

“Once we were picking berries and my cousin Louie cut his leg. His name was Louis, but we all called him Louie. I guess the ex got caught on something, ‘cause it hit him right on his shin. My mother was standing there. We looked around in the woods, and lands it hurt, but he didn’t cry. My mother gave us some leaves to my sister and I and herself, and we chewed it and spit it on Louie’s leg. I thought that was such fun. I mean, I was sorry that he was hurt, but that “glum, glum, glum’ and spit on it. My mother held his leg up and we spit on it, and my, as soon as that spit, that green stuff, as soon as it hit the flesh and it was wide open, it was a deep cut, the flesh had opened up. As soon as it hit the whole thing turned white and it stopped bleeding. I don’t remember what that was. All I remember is ‘glum, glum, glum’ and spit on poor Louie” (Dover in Rygg 1977: 56-57).

¹⁵⁶ Fornsby identified Kwaskédib (George Snatlem, Jr.,) as the grandson of the man who built the potlatch house. He “gave a potlatch below Mount Vernon. That was the last time they held a potlatch down there” (Collins 1949: 318). Kwaskédib was reported to be a man of both Upper and Lower Skagit ancestry, continued to host potlatches even as they were starting to be outlawed. His grandfather had built a potlatch house and hosted potlatches years before (Collins 1949: 318).

¹⁵⁷ Swinomish tribal member, Natalie Liehburg recalled of this period,

“In the period 1870-1900 the Lower Skagits were wealthy when they moved onto the reservation. When they moved on, they began to dominate the scene.

“There existed a council of 4 or 5 this represented the Lower Skagit, the Upper Skagit, and Kikialus, the Samish, and the Swinomish. When Tandy Wilbur Sr. came onto the scene in the 30’s he represented the Lower Skagit’s. He was also able to claim Upper Skagit and Swinomish. Martin Sampson was actually an Upper Skagit somehow or other he has come to be called (and he calls himself) the Chief of the Swinomish

“When the aboriginal L[ower] Skagits did not bother for a claims case they said the reason for this was that most of what they “owned” was “water” anyway so why should they bother.

“Sampson says that Wilbur and the STRC should go back to Whidbey Island and leave the reservation to the aboriginal Swinomish or in other words – L[ower] Skagits get out” (Liehburg 1972: 1).

¹⁵⁸ Sally Snyder, an anthropologist, was called forward by both Swinomish and Lower Skagit as their principal expert witness. Herbert Taylor helped gather alternative ethnographic evidence to support the federal government’s position in the ICC process.

¹⁵⁹ Sally Snyder and other ICC expert witnesses effectively set the stage for later legal actions, and arguably helped set the tone for the Boldt decision regarding tribal treaty rights to fishing, when examining fishing rights as part of this larger claim. As Snyder indicated in her testimony in support of the Swinomish claim:

“This particular claim or cause of action against this tribe has the unusual significance in that this tribe... came from an area that was densely populated and this tribe depended in a large degree upon the salt-water and the riverine economy for their subsistence. That is why we have set out a separate cause of action, a separate set of allegations concerning the fishing rights. We will show that these tribes of Indians have been deprived of these fishing rights and that they have been damaged in the sum of five million dollars” (Snyder 1955: 5).

¹⁶⁰ As Taylor (1971) noted,

“On August 8, 1951 the Swinomish Tribe of Indians, through their then attorney of record, Warren J. Gilbert, filed a petition (Docket No. 233) in

which they requested compensation for lands and fishing rights taken from them as a result of the treaty of January 22, 1855" (Taylor 1971: 1).

¹⁶¹ Taylor also added the observation that the Swinomish have consistently acknowledged that "the membership of the Swinomish Indian Tribal Community includes the modern-day descendents of the Kikiallus, Swinomish, Suquamish, Samish, Lower Skagit (also known as Whidbey Island Skagit) and, to a lesser degree, Upper Skagit" (Taylor 1971: 4). These groups were not conflated for a variety of tribal functions, and thus conflation was not deemed appropriate for claims by the ICC:

"The current leadership of the Swinomish Tribal Community recognizes the existence of a separate entity, the Swinomish aboriginal tribe which includes only members who can trace their ancestry to the Swinomish Tribe in pre-treaty times" (Taylor 1971: 6).

¹⁶² The summary of findings also notes that

"Because Indians of Lower Skagit descent are dispersed throughout the Pacific Northwest, there is no statistical records of their educational level, school population, of other educational data.

"A majority of individuals of Lower Skagit descent live in off reservation communities. The reservations where some may be living are small and surrounded by non-Indian communities with which they have frequent contact. As a result the Lower Skagits are not culturally isolated" (Indian Claims Commission 1972).

¹⁶³ A variety of organizations have also appeared on the Tulalip Reservation through the mid- to late-20th century that purport to represent the interests of all Point Elliott Tribes, as well as to have a role in financial settlements associated with these tribes. The United States federal government has generally dismissed these kinds of claims. During the height of ICC deliberations, the Interior Department Solicitor, J. Reuel Armstrong, determined that

"The Indian title to the unallotted lands on the Tulalip Indian Reservation in the State of Washington, which reservation was set aside pursuant to a treaty concluded in 1855 between the United States and a large number of tribes or bands located west of the Cascade Mountains, is now vested in the Indians located on the reservation who organized and incorporated

pursuant to the provisions of the Indian Reorganization Act of 1934 under the corporate name of "The Tulalip Tribes of the Tulalip Reservation...

"The Tulalip Reservation was unquestionably established for the benefit of all the tribes and bands who were parties to the treaty. The obvious purpose of the treaty, however, was not to remove tribal entities intact, but to gather or consolidate the individual members of the treaty groups who desired to avail themselves of the privilege on the reservation. None of them, however, was required to do so. In essence, the treaty constituted nothing more than an offer to each individual member of the several tribes, which they were privileged to accept or reject...

"No particular tribe or band, as an entity, removed to the reservation. The individuals who did remove possessed the blood of one or more of the treaty tribes or bands, and hence were truly representative of the treaty tribes and bands" (Armstrong 1956).

Similarly, during 1988 Select Committee on Indian Affairs hearings, it was claimed that

"The contemporary Tulalip Tribes Inc. is a business corporation that erroneously describes itself on its letterhead as the "successor-in-interest to all Point Elliott Treaty tribes...Raymond Bitney said it again clearly in a November 28, 1953 letter to the Commissioner on Indian Affairs: The Tulalip Tribes, Inc. Is a community group organized under the Indian Reorganization Act and is supposed to be composed of the people with Indian blood who reside on the Tulalip Reservation. There is no Tulalip Tribe and never has been, so that the group has no treaty rights, no aboriginal rights or authority to take over properties or authorities created under the Point Elliott Treaty of 1855" (Select Committee on Indian Affairs 1988 : 6).

¹⁶⁴ Wessen (1995) has written an informative overview of the Snaklin Memorial based on a selection of archival sources as well as original oral history interviews. Wessen makes no mention of the use of Indian Claims Commission disbursement funds for the maintenance of the memorial, though the report's treatment of this period is brief and inconclusive.

¹⁶⁵ This modern, tripartite division of the S'Klallam clearly reflects pre-contact village groupings (Harrington 1980: 244).

¹⁶⁶ The process of seeking federal recognition is typically long and arduous for these tribes. The specific circumstances of each tribe's recognition effort are beyond the scope of the current document, but each recognition story is worthy of consideration in its own right. A biography of Esther Ross by Ruby and Brown (2001) detail the efforts of the Stillaguamish to obtain federal recognition and the challenges that faced the tribe once recognition was secured. This document is part of a growing literature on the recognition process and is somewhat representative of the experiences of many Puget Sound tribes.

¹⁶⁷ Julia's surname was not mentioned in consulted sources.

¹⁶⁸ Estate files in the National Archives refer to a number of members of the Sneatlum family alive in the mid 20th century including: George Freeman Sneatlum, Maria Georgiana Sneatlum, Charles Arnold Sneatlum. BIA probate case files in the National Records Archive and Administration offices in Seattle note members of the Squiqui family residing at Lummi in the 1960s. The surnames of this family included Acker, Lee, Dixon, and others.

¹⁶⁹ The legal and policy documents of the late 20th century continuously confront the notion that modern tribes are effectively amalgams of widely acknowledged pre-contact tribal groups. As Herbert Taylor (1971) noted,

“At the very least, descendants of the following aboriginal bands or tribes are to be found registered with the Swinomish Tribal Community: The Kikiallus, the Swinomish, the Suquamish, the Samish, the Lower Skagit and the Upper Skagit. It is quite probable that a more exhaustive search would unearth additional tribes and bands represented among the membership of the Swinomish Tribal Community. Many of these tribes and bands no longer have an effective tribal organization of their own” (Taylor 1971: 6).

A small number of sources allude to continued cross-border social and kinship ties between northern Puget Sound tribes and Canadian First Nations (B. Miller 2001, 1997). Additional research would be required to ascertain ties between these First Nations and the aboriginal Skagit population from Ebey's Landing.

¹⁷⁰ Likewise, tribes have increasingly built traditional concepts into tribal ordinances and policy (Miller 1995).

Prior to the passage of the Native American Graves Protection and Repatriation Act (NAGPRA), there were a number of inadvertent discoveries of human remains in the area:

“The remains of the Swinomish who lived on the site of the present Naval Base, before the first epidemic of smallpox, were unearthed during the building of the base, placed in a large box and buried in the base of the airfield tower (Taylor 1971: 4; see also Sampson n.d.).

Informal measures taken by these tribes to address burial protections prior to NAGPRA, such as the involvement of families with clear descent from places where human remains are encountered, have worked their way into modern tribal NAGPRA protocols.

¹⁷¹ In recent years, multi-tribal canoe events on Puget Sound have undergone a noteworthy renaissance. While canoe racing is arguably less central to tribal canoeing traditions today as it was historically, to some degree the canoe racing tradition has transformed into the phenomenon of multi-tribal canoe journeys. These widely attended events have brought together canoeing tribes from throughout western Washington; becoming a widespread phenomenon since the “Paddle to Seattle” that was timed to celebrate the Washington state centennial, these events have been increasingly important to area tribes since the early 1990s.