

**Giant Trees, Iron Men:  
Masculinity and Colonialism in Coast Salish Loggers' Identity**

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By

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## Abstract

First Nations people in Coastal British Columbia have harvested and commodified the forest for centuries. With the arrival of European settlers and the inception of a commercial logging industry, Coast Salish men became highly respected and sought-after employees at logging camps up and down the coast. With attention to the twentieth century, this thesis analyzes the long history of Coast Salish forestry to highlight how cutting down trees provided Coast Salish men the ability to affirm masculine identities in both the pre and post-contact periods. In the theatre of a logging camp, Coast Salish men could ascend the racial and social limitations placed on their masculinity through skill and hard work. This thesis analyzes the various ways that First Nations men in British Columbia responded to the multiple forms of oppression placed on their identities as men by the Colonial and then Canadian governments. Colonial patriarchy took multiple forms, which created a system of hypocrisy where Coast Salish men were simultaneously expected to act like ‘men’ but were categorically denied access to certain types of masculinity. Coast Salish men could attain certain types of masculine agency through the sort of rugged masculinity valued in logging camps, but when they tried to assert their land and resource rights against patriarchal systems, they were paternalistically treated like children by the Canadian State. By analyzing Coast Salish logger’s remembrances of their time in ‘the bush,’ this thesis is a study in Indigenous historical consciousness. Considering both the continuities and changes present in Coast Salish forestry and ideals on masculinity, in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, constructs an understanding of not only the colonial processes that oppressed, but also the avenues where Indigenous people carved out opportunities for themselves. Ultimately, this thesis argues that Coast Salish men were able to transcend some of the most oppressive aspects of colonialism by embracing an industry and a social environment (logging and logging camps) where they could perform an expression of masculinity that they found fulfilling, and that was simultaneously valued and accepted by colonial society.

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To my wife Vanessa, and my son Finnegan.  
Without whom my life would lack a compass.



## Table of Contents

<b>Permission to Use .....</b>	<b>i</b>
<b>Abstract.....</b>	<b>ii</b>
<b>Acknowledgements .....</b>	<b>iii</b>
<b>Table of Contents .....</b>	<b>v</b>
<b>List of Illustrations.....</b>	<b>vi</b>
<b>Preface.....</b>	<b>vii</b>
<b>Chapter One: Entering the Woods – An Introduction to Coast Salish Logging .....</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>Chapter Two: “The Sooner you learn to be truthful and manly, the sooner you will be fit to be a Chief”: Coast Salish Assertions of Masculinity in the Web of Government Patriarchy, 1890-1935 .....</b>	<b>25</b>
<b>Chapter Three: Coast Salish Masculinity in the Rise and Fall of the Commercial Logging Industry.....</b>	<b>61</b>
<b>Conclusion: Coast Salish Logging and Masculinity .....</b>	<b>87</b>
<b>Illustrations.....</b>	<b>91</b>
<b>Appendix.....</b>	<b>109</b>
<b>Pre-Contact Coast Salish Forestry and Wood Working .....</b>	<b>109</b>
<b>Bibliography .....</b>	<b>112</b>

## List of Illustrations

1 Tla'amin Traditional Territory and Reservations .....	91
2 S'ohl Temexw: Stó:lō Traditional Territory .....	92
3 Sketch Showing Chilliwack Indian Reserves .....	93
4 Survey Map of 'Lot 450.' .....	94
5 Powell River Pulp and Paper Mill, circa 1912.....	95
6 Chief Tom .....	96
7 Official survey map from 1888 JIRC survey of Sliammon IR#1 .....	97
8 Timber Surrender at Sliammon IR #1, 1916.....	98
9 Official survey map from 1888 JIRC survey of Harwood Island .....	99
10 Harwood Island Logging Survey, 1933 .....	100
11 Sketch map showing Tretheway's logging skid road that ran across Chehalis #3 .....	101
12 Sketch of Soowahlie Logging Surrenders, 1926.....	102
13 Tla'amin Logging Crew-note the young boys on the bottom right.....	103
14 Spar Tree Steam Logging Operation .....	104
15 The Bob Family on Harwood Island.....	105
17 Danny Francis .....	107
18 Tla'amin Logging Crew on logging truck.....	108

## Preface

In the spring of 2012, I set foot in the Tla'amin's territory to take part in the USask/SFU Tla'amin Ethno history/Archaeology fieldschool. It was my first time doing a project that required intensive ethnohistorical fieldwork, and I was equally nervous and excited to apply some of the skills I had learned on top of the hill at Simon Fraser University. I had no idea what to expect, and there was no way to know how life altering the experience would turn out to be. At the field school, I was tasked with exploring the social, cultural, and environmental changes that came to the Tla'amin's territory after the establishment of the commercial logging industry there in the late nineteenth century. After discussing my topic with field school professors Dr. Dana Lepofsky, Dr. Keith Carlson, Dr. Miles Powell, and Omeasoo Wāhpāsiw, as well as with Tla'amin community leaders Michelle Washington and Melvin Mitchell, I narrowed my topic down to be a mix of environmental and labour history that involved interviewing as many retired Tla'amin loggers that would invite me into their homes. Part of the project planning required me to write down my expected conclusions. Here, I wrote that I would likely uncover a story of hard work in spite of racial and social oppression; I expected that these men, due to their Aboriginal identity, were treated as second-class citizens in the context of the logging camp. I could not have been more wrong.

The following thesis explores that miscalculation, but on a much bigger and broader scale. The story that Tla'amin men told me was one of success and social parity, and I was told a very similar one when attending the Stó:lō Ethnohistory Fieldschool in 2015. The spirit of this thesis is an exploration of how we sometimes underestimate the power of history to change the way we see the world around us.



## Chapter One: Entering the Woods – An Introduction to Coast Salish Logging

The forest has always been an important place for Coast Salish identities. Indeed, even after the formation of settler society and the creation of a commercial logging industry in Coast Salish territory, Coast Salish men looked to the giant trees of coastal forests to inform their identity as men. Identities are social constructions. They are formed and mobilized to maintain boundaries both within and beyond families and communities. People project and assert identities, and in turn others ascribe identities (sometimes unwanted ones) back onto them. Identities, therefore, are unstable over time, and are invariably contested. Twentieth century Coast Salish men negotiated their identity within the contested context of both race and gender. Logging camps became forums where Coast Salish men maintained greater agency over the dynamics of their identity as both men and First Nations people.<sup>1</sup> By asserting and performing masculinity – through skilled manual labour as loggers – these men were able to assert an identity as men that was accepted by both Coast Salish and settler societies. Coast Salish men developed identities that transcended the stigmatized identity of being “Indian” within the settler social constructs of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries.

For Coast Salish men, pathways to masculinity have long been complex – in part defined by their identity as Aboriginal men, but also by the constraints and legacies of settler colonialism. Scholars are increasingly interested in the way masculinity can be deployed as a way of decolonizing Aboriginal people’s identities, and to help us better understand the ways that contemporary Aboriginal men’s ancestors understood, lived, and performed masculinity before the arrival of Europeans. Building from this rapidly growing body of scholarship, this thesis examines the continuities and changes that came to Coast Salish lived experiences of

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<sup>1</sup> In this thesis, I use several terms to describe First Nations people. When speaking specifically about an individual band, I use the official name (for example, “Tla’amin,” “Soowahlie,” “Chehalis”). To refer to regionally, culturally, or politically affiliated bands, I use terms such as “Coast Salish” or “Stó:lō.” When speaking generally, I use the terms “First Nations,” “Aboriginal,” or “Indigenous.” In British Columbia, First Nations people often use the term ‘Aboriginal’ when they are defining their identity as pertains to political rights (i.e. “Aboriginal right to fish”). Thus, the term Aboriginal, in the context of British Columbia, is not necessarily interchangeable with the use of ‘Aboriginal’ to define First Nations, Inuit, and Métis persons in other contexts. As my work is centered in British Columbia, I chose to use ‘Aboriginal’ in this way so that the people I collaborated with for this project will feel appropriately represented. I use Indigenous as a most general description of Aboriginal people broadly. I prefer to use “Indigenous” to discuss rights or ideologies that permeate many Indigenous cultures over a much larger geography than British Columbia. It is my hope that using terms in this way will make this thesis more readable, and also help people build off of my work by understanding what is specific to a group of people in, say, the Fraser Valley, and what is able to be applied in a broader geographical or political sense.

masculinity in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. Some Coast Salish men embraced notions of settler colonialism that were not incompatible with pre-contact Salish masculinity – strength, hard work in the forest, competition, and completing dangerous tasks, to name a few. Further, working as a masculine logger provided some Coast Salish men with the ability to escape the rougher edges of settler colonial racism.

Imagine the world of a Coast Salish logger in the late nineteenth Century.<sup>2</sup> Traditional territories were transformed into shadows of their former vastness (See Illustrations 1 and 2). International industrial interests began appropriating forests on British Columbia Crown-Lands at an alarming rate. Within a generation, Aboriginal people were prohibited from cutting down trees in their territories unless they were employees of a corporation that had been granted a permit or had been given permission to log on their own reserves from the Provincial Government. Over the course of the past half-century, much scholarly attention has been directed toward studying how these new colonial laws infringed on Aboriginal rights and title. Less well understood is the way these developments also impacted individual Aboriginal people’s identities, and how industrial developments altered a First Nation logger’s ability to contribute to and remain an important part of their community’s socio-cultural systems.

Their world seriously challenged, many Coast Salish men focused their gaze on new opportunities that most closely resembled those that were under attack. Working as a commercial logger provided opportunities; men could still use their skills and spiritual powers by following in the footsteps of their ancestors. Logging camps provided an avenue for youths (sometimes as young as nine, but commonly between twelve and fourteen years of age) who wanted to escape residential school oppression and earn an income to help their families.<sup>3</sup> Many young boys followed their fathers, brothers, uncles, and grandfathers into the forest, and sought their advice and training to improve their chances of success in the logging camps. As such, young boys entered into a dangerous industry where a man’s success (as both an employee of the firm and as a member of the social community that developed within the camps) was intimately tied to what historian Scott L. Morgensen refers to as “colonial masculinity.”<sup>4</sup> Colonial masculinity was what

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<sup>2</sup> Coast Salish is a language family consisting of several mutually unintelligible languages spoken by culturally related Aboriginal nations in the southern coastal region of British Columbia.

<sup>3</sup> Which will be discussed in more detail in Chapter two.

<sup>4</sup> Scott L. Morgensen, “Cutting to the Roots of Colonial Masculinity,” in *Indigenous Men and Masculinities: Legacies, Identities, Regeneration*, eds. Robert Alexander Innes and Kim Anderson (Winnipeg: University of Manitoba Press, 2015), 38.

emerged after European and Indigenous notions of masculinity became entangled in the colonial period. European masculinity was class based; there were many different class stratifications based on wealth, religion, and ancestry. Each of these classes performed and defined masculinity in different ways. Coast Salish masculinity was also class based and variable. Elite men, common men, and slaves all subscribed to different understandings of their masculine identities. As such, colonial masculinity continued to value different masculinities in different contexts. Coast Salish loggers quickly had to “become men” while working in logging camps, and while this occurred within the context of colonial resource extraction it was not entirely foreign in its expression to the sort of status-enhancing activities that had formerly been associated with pre-contact Coast Salish masculinity. In the collision of Indigenous and settler worlds, Coast Salish men were finding innovative means to what were largely traditional ends.<sup>5</sup>

Recent scholarship on Indigenous masculinity has focused on ways that imperial and colonial systems disrupted and supplanted existing Indigenous systems.<sup>6</sup> These studies highlight how the colonizers reflexively implanted hetero-normative and patriarchal societies based on European Christian values, adding nuance and context to understanding the ways that some Indigenous societies changed after the onset of colonial and imperial rule. However, some of these studies place Indigenous gender norms or activities that fit within imperial or colonial norms as something that resulted from solely colonial coercion, not something that could have existed prior to contact. Leah Sneider, for example, asserts that, due to the negative impacts of colonialism, scholars need to look through “a critical lens through which we can assess contemporary practices to identify and heal Indigenous communities from colonial influences, even those disguised as ‘traditional.’”<sup>7</sup> Morgensen similarly argues that across the expansive continent of North America, Europeans encountered Indigenous peoples who continually challenged European gender norms and definitions of femininity and masculinity.<sup>8</sup> He cites these discrepancies as “sites of conflict” where European people directed coercive colonial tactics to

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<sup>5</sup> Keith Carlson, “Innovation, Tradition, Colonialism, and Aboriginal Fishing Conflicts in the Lower Fraser Canyon,” in Ted Binnema and Susan Neylan, eds., *New Histories for Old: Changing Perspectives on Canada’s Native Past.*, 145-174 (Vancouver: UBC Press, 2007), 147.

<sup>6</sup> For an example of this scholarship, see: Robert Alexander Innes and Kim Anderson, eds., *Indigenous Men and Masculinities: Legacies, Identities, Regeneration*, (Winnipeg: University of Manitoba Press, 2015).

<sup>7</sup> Leah Sneider, “Complementary Relationships: A Review of Indigenous Gender Studies,” in *Indigenous Men and Masculinities: Legacies, Identities, Regeneration*, eds. Robert Alexander Innes and Kim Anderson (Winnipeg: University of Manitoba Press, 2015), 74.

<sup>8</sup> Morgensen, “Colonial Masculinity,” 42.

overcome Indigenous pre-contact gendered identities. These studies make important contributions to an emerging field, and open the door to studies that examine gendered activities (in this case pre-contact logging and wood working), so as to assess degrees of hybridity and syncretism, and thereby avoid the still too prevalent propensity to create binaries between traditional Indigenous and post-contact colonial gender identities. Following from ethnohistorian Keith Carlson's study examining cultural continuity within the dynamic historical change associated with nineteenth century Coast Salish collective identity,<sup>9</sup> this thesis seeks to avoid muting the importance of a pre-contact masculinity associated with Coast Salish woodworking in the formation of more recent expressions of masculinity in the wage labour economy. In this way, this thesis breaks new ground by examining the way pre-existing Indigenous pathways to masculinity created both opportunities and challenges for Coast Salish loggers. Central to this thesis is how Coast Salish men made identity choices that were adaptive to changing times, but would still have been recognizable to their ancestors from a century earlier.

I define masculinity as a socially constructed, and performed, identity. For both Coast Salish and non-Aboriginal men in the early and mid-twentieth century, providing for one's family was an expectation of "a man" and a means of confirming one's position in society. Indeed, completing the transition from relying on one's family to providing for it marked an important milestone in masculine identities. Many of the men I interviewed told me that they had learned from their father's and grandfather's that being responsible, hard-working providers was essential to manhood, and that manhood was essential to their understandings of being Indigenous.<sup>10</sup> As many men looked to labour activity associated with resource extraction as a means to provide, asserting title to land and resources became an expression of masculine identity. Claiming rights to resources became a response to government paternalism – a system used by those with an authoritative power (Canadian State) to subjugate and suppress subordinate populations (Aboriginal people) by limiting their freedoms and insisting that they are acting within the best interests of the suppressed population.<sup>11</sup> Control over land and resources became a

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<sup>9</sup> Keith Carlson, *The Power of Place, The Problem of Time: Aboriginal Identity and Historical Consciousness in the Cauldron of Colonialism* (Toronto: University of Toronto, 2010).

<sup>10</sup> This will be discussed in greater lengths in Chapter Three.

<sup>11</sup> For more on paternalism and Aboriginal people in Canada, see: Mary Ellen Turpel, "Patriarchy and Paternalism: The Legacy of the Canadian State for First Nations Women," *Canadian Journal of Women and the Law* Vol. 6, no. 1 (1993), 182; Paulette Regan, *Unsettling the Settler Within: Indian Residential Schools, Truth Telling, and Reconciliation in Canada* (Vancouver: UBC Press, 2011), 4. Paulette states that paternalism "became a

means for Aboriginal men to assert masculinity in the face of this type of Government oppression. As Joy Parr has previously argued, the capitalist economy of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries aimed to prop up the patriarchal identities of the masculine breadwinner – even if these notions were challenged by diverse gender and ethnic realities in certain towns and industries.<sup>12</sup> These manifestations of masculinity could also be seen at the community level; many First Nations families and village communities worked as collective economic units, where money coming in from resource extraction was alternatively collected by the Indian Agent and placed in the band’s account at Ottawa, or distributed evenly throughout the community. As I will discuss in the next chapter, timber was often harvested to provide the materials and funding to build important community buildings, such as longhouses or fishing weirs in the pre-contact period, or churches, houses, barns, and community halls post-contact. In this way, a Coast Salish logger could contribute to his identity as a masculine provider and the material betterment of his community.

In terms of a performed identity, logging camps provided a platform for men to express masculinity in nearly every task associated with the occupation. Logging camps were hierarchal; not only did loggers view certain positions as prestigious (and more highly paid) than other positions in the logging camp, but in addition each man knew who was an experienced hard working ‘highballer,’ and who was a ‘greenhorn.’<sup>13</sup> Certain positions came with prestige, and performing dangerous tasks, or performing ‘bull work’ and bringing in large amounts of timber provided men with the opportunity to prop up their masculine identity. Within logging camps, supervisors and bosses leveraged masculinity to promote hard work and productivity, pitting those who appeared weaker, slower, and timider as lesser men.<sup>14</sup> This was especially important for Aboriginal men. If an Aboriginal man could express his masculine identity and receive acceptance from non-Aboriginal men, it provided a means to transcend the social limitations that existed outside of the logging camps.

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rationale and justification for acquiring Indigenous lands and resources, and drove the creation of prescriptive education policies.”

<sup>12</sup> Joy Parr, *The Gender of Breadwinners: Women, Men, and Change in Two Industrial Towns 1880-1950* (Toronto: University of Toronto, 1990), 7-8.

<sup>13</sup> A ‘highballer’ is an industry term indicating a logger who is highly skilled and widely respected. One earns this title by performing dangerous jobs efficiently so as to harvest above average amounts of timber. ‘Greenhorns’ are inexperienced loggers; they are usually young.

<sup>14</sup> Erin Kathleen Melvin, *Peripatetic to Domestic: Gender and Change in Logging Camps on Vancouver Island, 1900-1955* (Queen’s University, Kingston, ON, ProQuest Dissertations Publishing, 1999), 6-7.

Manifestations of masculinity unfolded in a variety of relationships. This thesis uses different notions of masculinity, at different historical circumstances, to make assumptions on why commercial logging remained important to Coast Salish men's identities throughout the twentieth century. Anthropologist James C. Scott defines relationships formed by racial subordination as "public performances...of those subject to elaborate and systematic forms of social subordination: the worker to the boss, the tenant or sharecropper to the landlord, the serf to the lord...a member of a subject race to one of the dominant race."<sup>15</sup> Scott explains that on the surface these relationships look skewed and unbalanced, but argues that these narratives are "unlikely to tell the whole story about power relations."<sup>16</sup> Sometimes, Coast Salish masculinity was formed via resistance to racist patriarchal dominance. Coast Salish men could attain some acceptance as masculine men, in the eyes of white men, while working as loggers, but they were still subjected to racist notions that placed some white men as inherently superior. This is most clearly exemplified by looking at the relationship between the Indian Agents and members and chiefs of First Nation communities; as professional white men, Indian Agents likely perceived themselves as prescribing to a more elite form of masculinity that would have been unattainable by First Nations men. This meant that when Coast Salish loggers asserted their right to access land and resources on the same terms as white men, they were oppressed by the imposition of patriarchal dominance over their land and identities. Put more simply, Coast Salish men were perceived as 'manly' within the confines of forest work, but when they asserted rights that challenged the supremacy of non-native control over Indigenous space, they faced paternalistic oppression over their identity as men. This form of masculinity is discussed at length in Chapter Two.

This thesis is a historical study of Coast Salish men's understandings of their identities over time, and as such, it is a study in historical consciousness. Building off of the work done by historians Keith Carlson and Peter Seixas, I aspire to contextualize Coast Salish logger's historical consciousness by asking larger questions about identity and masculinity in the colonial maelstrom that loomed large over Coast Salish people in the twentieth century.<sup>17</sup> As such a study

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<sup>15</sup> James C. Scott, *Domination and the Arts of Resistance: Hidden Transcripts* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1990), 2-3.

<sup>16</sup> Ibid.

<sup>17</sup> For more on historical consciousness studies, see: Carlson, *The Power of Place*, 30-31; Peter Seixas and Thomas Morton, *The Big Six Historical Thinking Concepts* (Toronto: Nelson, 2013).

of memory, I have not sought to validate or challenge these men's reflections through other mediums. That is to say, I have not tried to confirm or deny their assertions that they were successful highballers in the commercial logging industry, or that they were highly regarded for their masculinity and success as loggers by their fellow non-Native loggers, or by the women in their families. I have not examined logging company employment and payroll records, nor have I systematically interviewed the families and friends of Coast Salish loggers to assess whether loggers' assertions about their manliness and their success as 'providers' were shared, appreciated, and valued by others. These are interesting questions, but they are beyond the scope of this thesis. Rather, I am primarily concerned with analyzing how these men remember their experiences as both Aboriginal men and Aboriginal loggers, and what this says about their sense of self in the contested waters of settler colonial society.

The transformation from pre-contact to post-contact logging was somewhat of a syncretic process for Aboriginal loggers in coastal British Columbia. With their economic world undercut, Coast Salish loggers inevitably explored new ways to assert themselves within and beyond Indigenous society. New opportunities in wage-labour<sup>18</sup> logging provided Coast Salish men with an occupation that was not entirely dissimilar to traditional means of providing for one's family and community. Coast Salish men could still use the forest to provide the necessities, but it was now in the means of generating cash. It created an opportunity for Coast Salish men to engage with the settler economy, while still relying on the same resources as their ancestors.<sup>19</sup> Further, Coast Salish men could use these opportunities to affirm masculine identities after the colonial regime complicated traditional ways of doing so.

Many studies excessively emphasize contact as representing a strict line of cultural demarcation, leaving little room for discussions on how certain aspects of Indigenous culture and society permeated the post-contact world. To shift away from traditional narratives, I argue that logging (by which I mean a wide variety of activities associated with the extraction of timber and wood products from the forest) is an Indigenous occupation.<sup>20</sup> Before the arrival of Europeans and the formation of settler societies in Indigenous spaces, cutting down trees and modifying

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<sup>18</sup> The term 'labour' is used in this thesis to indicate an activity where someone is using skills, or working physically or manually to provide a service or commodity. It is often accompanied by a modifier that indicates how this work is being mobilized (for example, wage labour).

<sup>19</sup> For a detailed discussion on pre-contact forest use, please see Appendix 1.

<sup>20</sup> 'Commercial Logging' refers to the European logging system of large-scale logging camps, sawmills, and clear-cutting.

them into objects such as canoes, paddles, house planks, house posts, and masks, provided Coast Salish men a way to ascend social structures, increase their social power, and affirm masculinity.

Coast Salish woodworkers deployed their skills and affirmed masculinity in different ways in the pre-contact world. Some men became experts in the forest by utilizing *spirit power*. These powers, associated with specific “spirit helpers” were acquired when young boys ritually fasted and ventured out on vision quests in their pursuit of masculinity. Certain types of spirit power manifested themselves and became publically expressed during Winter Dance ceremonies when a boy was entering manhood.<sup>21</sup> One Stó:lō<sup>22</sup> Coast Salish legend states that a woodworker named Syetx̄imeltxw discovered his spirit power while cutting down a cedar tree. When the tree hit the ground, the trunk split in half and revealed a ceremonial mask and rattle. On the direction of his wife, Syetx̄imeltxw brought the items home wrapped in a blanket.<sup>23</sup> Once in his possession, these items gave the man spiritual power, where he was “able to get everything easy.”<sup>24</sup> With his newly acquired spirit power, Syetx̄imeltxw could carve a dugout canoe in only two days (as opposed to several weeks), which allowed him to become a sought after craftsman. As anthropologist Jay Miller explains, “Spirits were divided into those with career powers – those who enhanced mundane abilities – and those involved with curing, who intervened in social affairs to either to heal disease or to snuff out life.”<sup>25</sup> Woodworkers often received spiritual power from entities like cedar trees, woodpeckers or beavers; spiritual skills were learned alongside the manual training that a woodworker received.<sup>26</sup> Carlson argues, “In earlier times, these helpers provided people with vocational direction and professional expertise. Healers, warriors, clairvoyants, and others all acquired special vocational skills and powers from their guardian spirits.”<sup>27</sup> By garnering Spirit Powers, ordinary woodworkers could become what Miller and Carlson both define as ‘Task Masters,’ occupational leaders who used their skill and knowledge to organize resource gathering activities or construction projects. Through born talent

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<sup>21</sup> Jay Miller, *Lushootseed Culture and the Shamanic Odyssey: An Anchored Radiance* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1999), 57.

<sup>22</sup> The Stó:lō is a modern political amalgamation of many distinct, but historically and culturally linked, Stó:lō communities in the Lower Fraser Valley of British Columbia. Their traditional territory stretches from the mouth of the Fraser River into the Fraser Canyon.

<sup>23</sup> Dominic Charlie, “Story of the Mask,” qtd. in Oliver Wells, *The Chilliwacks and their Neighbors* (Vancouver: Talon Books, 1987), 182.

<sup>24</sup> Ibid., 182.

<sup>25</sup> Miller, *Lushootseed Culture*, 57.

<sup>26</sup> Ibid., 96-109.

<sup>27</sup> Carlson, *The Power of Place*, 73.



and manifested spirit power, woodworkers became vocational experts and task masters in their communities.

The historical record also suggests that this was not the only means for a Coast Salish woodworker to succeed in his community. Anthropologist Homer Barnett stated that woodworking was “not esoteric or supernaturally sanctioned,” and that woodworkers could use their skills to ascend social structures, much like a hunter could do so by providing ample amounts of meat.<sup>28</sup> Barnett noted that Tla’amin Chief Tom (discussed in the next Chapter) remembered one man who used his skill at procuring and carving cedar to “come Hegus” in Tla’amin society.<sup>29</sup> Barnett did not reference Chief Tom mentioning spirituality as part of this man’s social ascension. Barnett also references a common family from Sechelt (south of Tla’amin) who became prominent after gifting the entire community with canoes.<sup>30</sup> This type of social mobility is also plausible in Miller’s discussion of social standing. While stating, “Ordinary people, without a venerable pedigree or speciality career, made up the commoners,” Miller concedes “A man from the low class, if he were very smart and good, could become the headman if people liked him.”<sup>31</sup> These examples suggest that men do not necessarily require strong spirit power related to woodworking to change their status or form their identity as men within Coast Salish society.<sup>32</sup>

Both of these methods of forming a man’s identity in Coast Salish society existed simultaneously. The Coast Salish believe that spirit power is more attracted to elite families, giving any child born into the upper echelons of Salish society a significant social advantage.<sup>33</sup> A common-born man could access the same spirits as an elite man, but the elite were perceived to have easier access and ultimately stronger connection to spirit power. Thus, two equally skilled but socially variant woodworkers’ social standing and identity would be determined by the

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<sup>28</sup> Barnett, 107.

<sup>29</sup> Ibid., 107; Personal communication with Drew Blaney, 9 April 2015. Blaney explained, “Today it is known as “Chief” but Hegus historically referred to the leader of their family or village. So Grace Harbour would have a different Hegus than Theodosia, etc. Anyone can gather a ‘Hegus’ status in Tla’amin. He probably cut down trees to offer people the supplies to build homes, canoes, fire wood and such, so the people saw him as a Hegus.”

<sup>30</sup> Barnett, 107-108.

<sup>31</sup> Miller, *Lushootseed Culture*, the first quote is from page 23, the second from 94.

<sup>32</sup> One person could access and attain spirit power from a variety of sources. For example, a skilled woodworker might not have specific spiritual power related to woodworking, but he might have spiritual power that helped him be an articulate speaker, which also would help him create opportunities for social ascension. The point I am making here is that one could become socially powerful without spirit power by using the forest and its products to provide for their family and community, thus gaining a reputation and increasing their ability for social mobility.

<sup>33</sup> Miller, “Back to Basics: Chiefdoms in Puget Sound,” *Ethnohistory* Vol. 44, No. 2 (1997): 379.

strength of their spirit power. Anthropologist Wayne Suttles explained that “wealth came to some persons because of their hereditary rights, to others because of spirit powers (and practical skills) acquired through their own efforts.”<sup>34</sup> For the common yet exceptionally talented woodworker, working hard and providing essential goods provided a means to ascend socially in lieu of inherited or obtained spiritual power. Suttles confirmed this, stating, “poor-boy-meets-spirit-and-makes-good stories are numerous...so we may assume that a man without inherited [access to resources] and without ritual knowledge could also become wealthy and obtain high status.”<sup>35</sup> They may not have been able to become a spiritually sanctioned ‘Task Master,’ but they could rise socially, possibly to the level of being addressed by others as ‘Hegus’ (a respected tribal expert and leader). Spirit power and hard work thus enforces an element of fluidity in Coast Salish society. When these spirit powers are being realized (typically as children transitioning into adulthood), young Coast Salish boys learn that applying these spiritual powers, along with hard work, contributes to their masculinity and thus serves to shape their identity.

Understanding the role of a woodworker in pre-contact Coast Salish society is important for understanding what happened after the arrival of Europeans on Salishan shores. Many early coastal trading forts and settler establishments in British Columbia relied on Aboriginal woodworkers to provide the timber for their construction.<sup>36</sup> Upon the implementation of a European-style commercial logging industry in Coast Salish territory, Coast Salish loggers provided a significant portion of the labour. Coast Salish men worked as independent hand-loggers, and also in bigger operations run by non-Aboriginal people. But this was much more complicated than simply Coast Salish woodworkers exploiting a new market. The establishment of the colonial system in Coast Salish territories subverted pre-contact systems of social identity. The ways that boys became men (by gaining spirit power and developing skills) were generally overlooked or dismissed by the colonists, who sought to either ignore Indigenous people or

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<sup>34</sup> Wayne Suttles, *Coast Salish Essays* (Vancouver: Talon, 1987), 11.

<sup>35</sup> *Ibid.*, 8. Suttles’ referenced “fishing sites” as an example, but it is clear that he was discussing resources in general.

<sup>36</sup> John Sutton Lutz, “After the Fur Trade: The Aboriginal Labouring Class of British Columbia 1849-1890.” *Journal of the Canadian Historical Association* Vol. 3, No. 1 (1992): 87-88. Lutz documents the centrality of Lekwungen labour in procuring the materials to build Fort Victoria; Charles R. Menzies and Caroline F. Butler, “Working in the Woods: Tsimshian Resource Workers and the Forest Industry of British Columbia.” *American Indian Quarterly* 25, no. 3 (2001): 412. Menzies highlights how Tsimshian woodworkers provided not only the timber, but also much of the labour, for the construction of Fort Simpson; Morag Maclachlan, and Wayne Suttles, eds., *The Fort Langley Journals 1827-30* (Vancouver: UBC Press, 1999), 32-35. The Fort Langley Journals indicate that Stó:lō people provided cedar for the external coverings of Fort Langley in the summer of 1827.

alternatively sought to inculcate within Aboriginal people the normative European attitudes and methods of transitioning from boyhood to manhood. Missionaries told Aboriginal people that the spirits they believed in were either not real or evil, and that they should adopt Christian beliefs. Residential School systems sought to destroy a child's knowledge of their culture, thus creating a blank canvas on which the colonizers infamously aimed to "kill the Indian...and save the man."<sup>37</sup> Further, many of the ancient Coast Salish rites of passage affirming masculinity, such as potlatching, warfare, and intertribal raiding, became illegal.

By the twentieth century, working as a commercial logger meant much more than a steady paycheck to Coast Salish men. It affirmed masculine identities and transcended the social and racial discrimination between Indigenous people and settler society. In his memoirs penned in the 1960s, Stó:lō logger Henry Pennier explained that within the industry non-Aboriginal loggers considered him 'one of the boys' as long as he pulled his weight and worked hard: "Way back in the bush amongst the big trees doing a man's work...I was just good old Hank."<sup>38</sup> Working as commercial loggers provided Coast Salish men with the opportunity to provide for their family by using the forest (albeit in new ways), while utilizing new methods of confirming masculinity in the turbulent wake of colonialism.

Logging camps provide an excellent window into how some Aboriginal men understood their masculine identities. Isolated camps were almost exclusively populated by men, allowing an individual to frame his identity in terms of his relationship to other men and the surrounding environment.<sup>39</sup> When one also considers the paternalistic attitudes of the Canadian Government towards Aboriginal people during this period, commercial logging provided a theatre where Coast Salish men could not only stand on equal ground with white men, but often become industry professionals who were in high demand all over the Coast. As Morgensen explains, within other colonial contexts, Europeans and their settler descendants were typically "positioned relationally

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<sup>37</sup> Captain Richard H. Pratt, "The Advantages of Mingling Indians with Whites," *Americanizing the American Indians: Writings by the "Friends of the Indian" 1880–1900* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1973), 260–271. Capt. Pratt was an American discussing the state of the American Indian, but this ideology was believed and used in the Canadian context, most famously under the authority of Duncan Campbell Scott in the early Twentieth Century.

<sup>38</sup> Henry Pennier, *Call Me Hank*, eds. Keith Carlson and Kristina Fagan (Toronto: University of Toronto, 2006), 86. This sentiment was also indicated in several of my oral interviews.

<sup>39</sup> Melvin, in her analysis of how logging camps influenced family dynamics, discussed how logging camps provided a place for men to form their masculine identity in isolation from normative societal femininity. Her thesis does not discuss Aboriginal men and masculinity. Rather, she focuses largely on logging camps as being populated by men of European descent. See: Melvin, *Peripatetic to Domestic*, 6.

to Indigenous people as manly and moral patriarchs, while subordination framed Indigenous male leadership in an unmanly status that could be read as undeserving of self-government.”<sup>40</sup> In this thesis, I argue that the crisis of masculinity that eclipsed Coast Salish society in the colonial period, logging provided a venue where Aboriginal men could not only provide for their communities and families, but also for their personal identity by overcoming settler ideals on masculinity, power, and control.

### **Historiography**

The story of the inclusion of Coast Salish loggers in the writing of British Columbian labour history began in earnest out of a provocative trade-press publication in 1978. Independent anthropologist Rolf Knight’s *Indians at Work* challenged historiographical orthodoxy by demonstrating that Aboriginal labourers remained an important component of British Columbia’s work force well beyond the heydays of the fur trade and into the twentieth century.<sup>41</sup> Knight’s book directly challenged historian Robin Fisher’s academic monograph *Contact and Conflict* (1977), which held firm to the interpretation that Aboriginal people had played a “peripheral role in British Columbia’s economy” after the decline of the fur trade.<sup>42</sup> Central to Knight’s work was his argument that First Nations people’s identity as working class labourers would have eventually transcended their cultural identity, had government policies and academics not worked against Native people’s class interests to counter this perspective. Not surprisingly, Knight’s argument remained on the margins of British Columbian historiography until modern treaty negotiations revealed that Aboriginal people sought much more than renegotiations of space and protection of culture; they sought the restoration of productive economical systems that would allow them to re-engage the employment market and escape welfare dependency that characterized the decades following the end date of Knight’s “informal” history.

But even Knight admitted that he only tangentially discussed Aboriginal loggers. As have many of the historians who have discussed Aboriginal labour history since then. This is not a fault – the complex field of Aboriginal labour has many different facets and occupations to examine. Any lack of discussion of Aboriginal logging is usually paralleled by equally valuable

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<sup>40</sup> Morgensen, “Cutting to the Roots of Colonial Masculinity,” 44.

<sup>41</sup> Rolf Knight, *Indians at Work: An Informal History of Native Indian Labour in British Columbia, 1858-1930* (Vancouver: New Star, 1978), 11-12.

<sup>42</sup> Robin Fisher, *Contact and Conflict: Indian-European Relations in British Columbia, 1774-1890* (Vancouver: UBC Press, 1977), 210.

histories of Aboriginal labour in other occupations. My research reveals that many of the male members of Coast Salish communities were actively involved in logging for at least some of their lives. The time has come to tell their stories.

Recent scholarship has begun to address the void in the historiography pertaining to Aboriginal wage labour in logging. John Lutz's theoretical framework of 'moditional economies' (*modern* and *traditional*), a dynamic mixing of pre-contact economical and societal structures within the emerging capitalist economy, allows historians to consider the ways that Aboriginal people controlled how they accepted or rejected certain elements of western economics.<sup>43</sup> Lutz's framework also highlights the ways that First Nations labourers engaged the capitalist economy for cultural motivations that were opaque to non-Native observers.<sup>44</sup> Lutz contends that since at least the 1860s "Aboriginal people made up a significant part of the logging crews"<sup>45</sup> and that "the forest industry has continued to be a major employer of Aboriginal people in the province, but it is difficult to chart changing patterns after 1954."<sup>46</sup> The Stó:lō and Tla'amin loggers interviewed for this thesis worked as commercial loggers predominantly in the second half of the twentieth-century. From their recollections, Coast Salish loggers made up a significant portion of the labour force until the industry's decline in the late twentieth-century. I intend to add their voices to the conversation started by Lutz that focused on an earlier era.

Anthropologists Charles R. Menzies and Caroline F. Butler, in their discussion of North Coast Tsimshian forestry and employment in commercial logging, argue for placing Aboriginal people as active agents that played a significant role in the induction and development of the resource extraction industry in British Columbia.<sup>47</sup> Menzies and Butler highlight the Tsimshian's ability to negotiate a meaningful role in commercial logging employment from the arrival of Hudson's Bay Company traders, who sought cedar posts for fort construction, to modern heli-logging and silviculture. While their analysis focuses on the fact that Aboriginal people were actively and meaningfully employed in several arenas of the logging industry (mill work, beach combing, hand logging, commercial logging), I aim to more clearly elucidate what working as a logger means to the identity of individual Aboriginal men.

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<sup>43</sup> Lutz, *Makuk*, 23.

<sup>44</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>45</sup> *Ibid.*, 185.

<sup>46</sup> *Ibid.*, 215.

<sup>47</sup> Menzies, "Working in the Woods," 410.

Historian Andrew Parnaby, in his discussion of Squamish mill-workers on the Burrard Inlet, called for historians and anthropologists to include wage-labour as an important element in Aboriginal societies. He maintains that focusing too much on traditional (or pre-contact) social and cultural elements creates a discourse that neglects the significance of wage-labour to Aboriginal society. Aboriginal involvement in wage-labour, he proposes, bolsters a “phenomenon that suggests change, not continuity; modernity, not custom,” which often runs against narratives that champion self-determination and the “persistence of a customary way of life.”<sup>48</sup>

While my approach takes Parnaby’s concerns into account, my work instead draws on inspiration from Carlson’s studies that encourage us to account for, and embrace, the idea of continuity within change and change within continuity.<sup>49</sup> This framework allows historians to recognize that Indigenous people sometimes employed innovative means toward traditional ends.<sup>50</sup> As such, this thesis explores the ways that Coast Salish men perceive employment in commercial logging as an innovative adaptation to colonial-induced change, while still being consistent with tradition and without being burdened by the negative intellectual legacies of traditionalism.

Historians have increasingly focused on gender to reveal the interconnectivities and underpinnings of race and class. These categories cannot be viewed as distinct and isolated within historical analysis. Gender Historian Joan Scott championed the use of gender, race, and class together in historical analysis as an example of “a scholar’s commitment to a history that included stories of the oppressed and an analysis of the meaning and nature of their oppression and, second, scholarly understanding that inequalities of power are organized along at least three axes.”<sup>51</sup> In the context of an Coast Salish logger, to comprehend self-perceptions of identity we need to discuss race and class to determine why and how occupations play a major role in constructing masculinity. Equally, we need to examine how notions of gender inform perceptions of race and class. And finally, all of these identity informers need to be viewed through the

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<sup>48</sup> Andrew Parnaby, “‘The best men that ever worked the lumber’: Aboriginal Longshoremen on Burrard Inlet, BC, 1863–1939,” *The Canadian Historical Review* 87, No. 1 (2006), 53.

<sup>49</sup> Carlson, *The Power of Place*, 27.

<sup>50</sup> Carlson, “Innovation, Tradition, Colonialism, and Aboriginal Fishing Conflicts in the Lower Fraser Canyon,” in Ted Binnema and Susan Neylan, eds., *New Histories for Old: Changing Perspectives on Canada’s Native Past* (UBC Press, 2007): 145-174.

<sup>51</sup> Joan W. Scott, “Gender: A Useful Category of Historical Analysis,” *The American Historical Review* 91, no. 5 (1986), 1044.

complex discourses of colonialism, ethnocentrism, and racism. Fleshing out these complex notions of identity allows historians to analyze the consistencies and changes to Aboriginal identity in the transition from pre-contact to the colonial period, and in Aboriginal historical consciousness.

Studies on masculine identities in Colonial and frontier spaces have focused primarily on Aboriginal masculinity through historical and modern racial binaries. Historian Robert Hogg's *Men and Manliness on the Frontier* discusses how certain Victorian notions of masculinity permeated to the margins of the British Empire.<sup>52</sup> Hogg's analysis of masculinity in British Columbia often references the way Aboriginal men became binaric comparisons for which white men could use as social, cultural, and gendered 'others' to construct masculine opposites. While his argument accounts the formation of white masculinities, he does not consider how Aboriginal men's performances of their own notions of masculinity inevitably informed, and thus complicated, non-Aboriginal men's understandings of their masculine identities. Similarly, Carolyn Podruchny discusses how European voyageurs working in the North American fur trade adopted certain masculine ideals from Aboriginal men to develop standards for their own masculinity, while still distinguishing themselves as superior men.<sup>53</sup> Through hard work and strength, Podruchny argues, "voyageurs could claim a stronger manhood than their British masters and Aboriginal neighbours."<sup>54</sup> But what happened if Aboriginal men not only fit within, but exceeded, European ideals pertaining to masculinity? Much like Coast Salish loggers, Hogg's frontiersmen and Podruchny's voyageurs constructed their masculine identity by working hard in dangerous environments. By examining masculinity generally, but overlooking this particular dimension of historical enquiry, these arguments create opportunities for additional examinations of more nuanced ethnohistorical representations of masculinity on the frontier of British Columbia.

This thesis draws inspiration from Joan Scott, who used philosopher Jacques Derrida's notion of deconstruction to highlight the benefits of analyzing the way any "binary opposition operates...rather than accepting it as real or self-evident in the nature of things."<sup>55</sup> In doing so,

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<sup>52</sup> Robert Hogg, *Men and Manliness on the Frontier: Queensland and British Columbia in the Mid-Nineteenth Century* (New York: Palgrave MacMillan, 2012), 2.

<sup>53</sup> Carolyn Podruchny, *Making the Voyageur World: Travelers and Traders in the North American Fur Trade* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska, 2006), 11.

<sup>54</sup> Ibid.

<sup>55</sup> Scott, *Gender*, 1065-66.

binaric comparisons become redundant, and historians can instead examine how things become engrained in our historical consciousness. Flipping the binary and viewing masculinity from an Aboriginal perspective provides insights into the ways that Aboriginal men perceive the construction of their masculine identities in the post-contact world. As Homi Bhabha explains, historians can “focus on those moments or processes that are produced in the articulation of cultural differences.”<sup>56</sup> In what he describes as a performance of “terms of cultural engagement,” notions of cultural hybridity create space for both the colonized and the colonizer to alter, shift, or reinvent assumed cultural identities.<sup>57</sup> Logging camps, I argue, became venues for the production of cultural hybridity - Coast Salish men embraced certain notions of settler culture, but non-Aboriginal loggers were forced to re-evaluate assumed racial and cultural identities of Coast Salish men. While logging, Coast Salish men could no longer be perceived as masculine opposites to non-Aboriginal men, forcing settlers to reconsider their own understandings of masculinity.

Historian Elizabeth Vibert directly addresses the issue of using certain elements of Aboriginal societies to create notions of masculinity recognizable within different cultural contexts. Vibert discusses how Aboriginal buffalo hunters became the iconic representation of the European imagined Aboriginal masculinity; fishermen from coastal communities were perceived, she notes, as less masculine, more effeminate, and therefore less worthy.<sup>58</sup> However, Vibert does not explain how these notions of masculinity complicated or confirmed Aboriginal masculinity. Regardless, Vibert’s analysis of outsider’s perceptions of Indigenous masculinity help push the pendulum toward an analysis of Aboriginal gender identity, even if it remains marginal to her focus.

The Colonial era brought many changes to Coast Salish social and economic systems. Yet, even in the midst of these dramatic changes, cutting down trees remained an activity that many Aboriginal men regarded as contributing possibly to their identities as men. The pre-contact importance of logging, and the new opportunities for Aboriginal loggers after contact, facilitated the continuity of logging as an important method for asserting masculine identities.

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<sup>56</sup> Homi Bhabha, *The Location of Culture* (New York: Routledge, 1994), 2.

<sup>57</sup> *Ibid.*, 2-7.

<sup>58</sup> Elizabeth Vibert, “Real Men Hunt Buffalo: Masculinity, Race, and Class in British Fur Traders’ Narratives.” *Gender and History* 8, no. 1 (1996), 5.



Earlier works by historians of Aboriginal labour history have built a foundation from which we can now more narrowly focus our lens and flesh out some of the themes that exist within these broader frameworks. My contribution is to bring, for the first time, the tools of in-depth ethnohistorical fieldwork in communication with British Columbia Labour and Gender history.

“Giant Trees, Iron Men” is a history of pre- and post-contact Coast Salish masculinity and identity as shaped by the forest industry. This thesis contributes to the emerging subfield of ‘New Ethnohistory’ by using community-centered and culturally-guided research to gain perspective on how Aboriginal people understand their own history. It builds on the foundation of applying historical methodology to anthropologic and ethnographic fieldwork, while recognizing Aboriginal knowledge and historical consciousness within their own historical contexts.<sup>59</sup> In his analysis of Stó:lō identity over time and space, Carlson states that “too often the racial and/or ethnic issues of Native- newcomer history work to obscure important class and/or status and gender issues within Indigenous society.”<sup>60</sup> Colonialism and Indigenous-Newcomer relations, while often front and center in scholarly research, are not always paramount in the historical consciousness of Aboriginal people.<sup>61</sup> Viewing Aboriginal history from this perspective allows historians to more deeply complicate ‘contact’ and colonialism, which leads to a better understanding of the way that Indigenous societies understood and reacted (and continue to understand and react) to historical change in their territories. As such, this is a study in Coast Salish historical consciousness. Assessing historical change from this vantage point reveals that cultural and societal change not only resonated from “coercive colonialism,” but also from Aboriginal motivations.<sup>62</sup>

Social and gender historian Adele Perry, in her study of the formation of race in Early British Columbia (*On the Edge of Empire*, 2001) calls for historians writing the history of colonialism to realign their methodology to “adequately comprehend” the relationship between Aboriginal people and settler society.<sup>63</sup> Perry argues that gender analyses provides an excellent platform for “rethinking our fraught relationship to race and place.”<sup>64</sup> The following chapters

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<sup>59</sup> Keith Thor Carlson, John Lutz, and David Schaepe, “Turning the Page: Ethnohistory from a New Generation,” *University of the Fraser Valley Research and Review* 2, Vol. 2 (2009), 2.

<sup>60</sup> *Ibid.*, 29.

<sup>61</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>62</sup> *Ibid.*, 3.

<sup>63</sup> Adele Perry, *On the Edge of Empire: Gender, Race, and the Making of British Columbia 1849-1871* (Toronto: University of Toronto, 2001), 196.

<sup>64</sup> *Ibid.*, 194.

take Perry's notions seriously by examining the construction of gender and social identity from the perspective of Aboriginal people. First Nations people in British Columbia faced assimilation on multiple fronts; colonial rule challenged social, cultural, racial, and gender identity.

Examining the ways that Aboriginal people embraced or rejected changes in these categories illuminates the ways that Aboriginal people worked to construct their identity in the face of the challenges imposed by colonialism.

In 2005 anthropologist Wendy Wickwire called for "a stronger Indigenous voice in mainstream historiography," condemning historians for relying too much on archival content and not paying sufficient attention to "living storytellers."<sup>65</sup> The potential of such a shift, Wickwire argued, would "enable us to read both the archival and contemporary collection...through a broader lens."<sup>66</sup> The intervening fifteen years have seen a blossoming of the sort of analysis for which Wickwire called. Such research inspires this study.

Through the University of Saskatchewan, I was privileged to be able to engage in ethnohistorical fieldwork as both an undergraduate and graduate student. Participating in two separate ethnohistorical fieldschools (one in each of this thesis's focus communities) has allowed me to conduct oral-historical interviews as well as extensive primary research at the Stó:lō and Tla'amin Archives. An ethnohistorical approach provides the researcher with the ability to view history from an Aboriginal perspective.<sup>67</sup> Lutz contends that many historians "rely primarily on non-aboriginal statements about Aboriginal peoples' reasons for going to work...What histories would have been written had we asked Aboriginal people?"<sup>68</sup> Incorporating Aboriginal voices and knowledge into historiography (and other academic structures) can result in broader analyses that are not only more inclusive, but more relevant to modern issues (such as Treaty rights, land claims, land use, environmental policy, etc.). Anthropologist Julie Cruikshank argues that not recognizing the validity of Indigenous knowledge creates a system where "Indigenous peoples... face double exclusion, initially by colonial processes that expropriate land, and ultimately by neo-colonial discourses that appropriate and reformulate their ideas."<sup>69</sup>

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<sup>65</sup> Wendy Wickwire, "Stories from the Margins: Toward a More Inclusive British Columbia Historiography," *The Journal of American Folklore* 118, no. 470 (2005), 455, 456.

<sup>66</sup> *Ibid.*, 466.

<sup>67</sup> This does not mean speaking for Aboriginal people, but using a historian's skill and training to bring analysis and research forward in combination with Aboriginal knowledge.

<sup>68</sup> Lutz, *Makuk*, 46.

<sup>69</sup> Julie Cruikshank, *Do Glaciers Listen? Local Knowledge, Colonial Encounters, and Social Imagination* (Vancouver: UBC Press, 2005), 259.

One of the essential sources in this thesis is Henry ‘Hank’ Pennier’s memoirs *Call Me Hank*. Pennier was a Stó:lō logger who worked in coastal logging camps from the age of thirteen until his forced retirement (due to injury) in 1959. I discovered *Call Me Hank* shortly after my first stint of fieldwork with the Tla’amin, where I interviewed several retired loggers. Had I not spoken directly with retired Tla’amin loggers, Pennier’s words may not have resonated so deeply. It was becoming clear to me that something much larger, both geographically and theoretically, was being negotiated when Coast Salish men cut down trees. In using oral history to inspire a “broader lens” during archival and secondary research, this thesis brings the voices of Coast Salish loggers together to make broader arguments about the importance of logging to Coast Salish concepts of masculinity and identity.

The voices of Coast Salish loggers from the late-nineteenth and early-twentieth centuries are only available through various archived oral history interviews and primary documents. Many of the retired Tla’amin loggers I interviewed were the descendants of loggers and knew much about their father’s and grandfather’s histories. The New Westminster Indian Agency’s letterbooks (both the Stó:lō and the Tla’amin’s territories were in this Agency), and correspondence from the various Indian Commissions, reveal that Coast Salish loggers frequently requested permission to cut and sell timber on their reserves.<sup>70</sup> Sources such as these allow historians a glimpse into the attitudes and perspectives of the deeper past in the years before contemporary informant’s personal memories. As Indian Agents were the go-to government representative for First Nations people in British Columbia, the correspondence between these two parties reveals much of the day-to-day happenings and events on Reserves. These sources are used in conjunction with oral history, to make assessments on the importance of logging during the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries.

Much work has been done to complicate our understanding of the transition of Aboriginal societies during the colonial period. Historians often focus on the agency Aboriginal people retained that allowed them to accept or reject certain elements of colonial society to suit their own societal needs.<sup>71</sup> Others have shown the way ancestral precedent and traditions served to

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<sup>70</sup> The Red and Black Series (Record Group 10) contains many references to Aboriginal logging in the early colonial period, as do the correspondences from the Joint Indian Reserve Commissions (1876 and 1912).

<sup>71</sup> Lutz, *Makuk*; Codere, *Fighting With Property: A Study of Kwakwaka'wakw Potlatching and Warfare, 1792-1930*. Seattle: University of Washington, 1950.

guide the sort of choices Coast Salish people made as they adapted to colonial situations.<sup>72</sup> Others still have revealed that European exploration, mercantilism, and the later inception of a settler society must be analyzed in the context of pre-existing Indigenous geographies and trade systems.<sup>73</sup> Facilitating such analyses, however, requires largely focusing on the decisions of elite members of Indigenous societies. Such approaches, while useful, shed little light on the experiences of those Coast Salish people who formed an integral and important part of these societies but did not have the same access to hereditary or spiritual power as did the elite. These non-elite members of Coast Salish society, like the Coast Salish loggers mentioned above, could perform valuable services and provide many important material and cultural goods to gain importance and social standing. Like the hereditary elite, this group of woodworkers also broadened their gaze upon the arrival of Europeans, and their notions of wage-labour economics, and found new ways to use their skills in a quickly changing world. This new world, in some ways, created a levelling out of ancient status divides within Coast Salish society. The wage-labour system cared not if a man had acquired spirit power, and colonial employers cared little whether a logger carried hereditary rights to leadership within his community. What did matter was masculinity, and all that implied.

In this system, Chiefs worked alongside commoners. And as loggers were often paid by how many trees they fell, a low-class man, through hard work and skill, could access wealth and power in Indigenous society in ways that he was somewhat limited in before the arrival of Europeans. Anthropologist Helen Codere explained that access to wage labour in the mid-to-late nineteenth century dramatically increased the amount and size of potlatches, due to the influx of money in Aboriginal communities.<sup>74</sup> Codere argued that, in the shadow of colonial oppression of Indigenous systems, aggressive potlatching served to replace the societal function of declaring masculinity through warfare and raiding.<sup>75</sup> Through the finances raised through the wage economy, Aboriginal people used potlatches to ‘wage war’ on rival Nations. In this way, wage labour employment became central to a man’s ability to exert a masculine identity in the early colonial period.

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<sup>72</sup> Carlson, *The Power of Place*; Suttles, *Coast Salish Essays*.

<sup>73</sup> Joshua Reid, *The Sea is My Country: The Maritime World of the Makahs, an Indigenous Borderlands People* (New Haven: Yale, 2015); Harris, *The Resettlement of British Columbia: Essays on Colonialism and Geographical Change*.

<sup>74</sup> Codere, *Fighting With Property*, 119.

<sup>75</sup> *Ibid.*

The prominent belief of settlers in the colonial period was that Aboriginal people lived within- and often as part of- an untouched, pristine wilderness awaiting the civilizing influence of settler society. Racial and ecological notions were mutually reinforcing, and Aboriginal people were placed as part of these spaces – wild, savage, and in the way of progress. Historian William Cronon argues that the marginalization of Aboriginal people from both space and stories was “a necessary requirement of the narrative.”<sup>76</sup> Recognizing that Aboriginal people used, and worked, in these landscapes would have created a counter narrative that questioned the legitimacy of white privilege over Indigenous space. This meant that while Aboriginal people laboured in the many wage industries in British Columbia, they were marginalized by stories that required them to be seen as lazy, unindustrious, and a part of a dying culture. For settlers, these stories created clear boundaries of what being Aboriginal meant; Aboriginal people did not work, and they were a part of nature. This allowed them to be socially ‘othered’ by non-Aboriginal society. In these terms, many non-Aboriginal people viewed Aboriginal identity as locked in a historical vacuum, leaving little room for change.

Viewing Indigenous men through this ideology created a colonial framework that facilitated the emasculation of Aboriginal men. Late nineteenth and early twentieth-century settler ideals about the frontier and imperialism were tied to understandings of masculinity. As Kevin Kemper, a professor of Native American Studies and Journalism, demonstrates in his discussion of Apache masculine identities in early America, settler ideology required men to assert their masculinity by taking “what they want and [forcing] others into submission” on the frontier.<sup>77</sup> He argues that this “rhetoric simultaneously has asserted the ideology of colonial masculinity and misrepresented Indigenous masculinity to inflate and then emasculate the images of manhood” of Aboriginal people.<sup>78</sup> The frontier (Indigenous space) provided a platform for settler men to assert their masculinity by tackling a savage environment and consuming resources. But since these spaces were already used and occupied, Aboriginal men became victims of a settler narrative that stripped them of their masculinity. In the ideology that surrounded expansionism and the ‘manifest destiny’ of non-Aboriginal people over Indigenous

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<sup>76</sup> William Cronon, “A Place For Stories: Nature, History, and Narrative,” *The Journal of American History* vol. 78, no. 4 (1992): 1365.

<sup>77</sup> Kevin R. Kemper, “Geronimo! The Ideologies of Colonial and Indigenous Masculinities in Historical and Contemporary Representations about Apache Men,” *Wicazo Sa Review* Vol. 29, No. 2 (2014), 45.

<sup>78</sup> *Ibid.*, 55.

space, Aboriginal men were feminized in settler perceptions of land use. The ensuing assimilative attack on Aboriginal ideology surrounding gender and labour created a space where Aboriginal men sought new ways to confirm their masculinity in both traditional Indigenous systems and in newly established colonial ones. I argue that the logging camp provided a space where a Coast Salish man could satisfy both.

This analysis complicates many of the notions that we associate with the changes that came to Coast Salish societies after the arrival of Europeans. It allows us to delve into deeper, and more meaningful conversations over how Aboriginal people resist or accept change, and in turn how they understand such change. Examining the ways that masculinity associated with being a logger provided an Coast Salish man with a means of social mobility both within settler society and within Coast Salish society pushes us away from a simplistic story of European domination and Aboriginal assimilation. Recognizing that Aboriginal people came to the table with their own ideas relating to society, class, labour, and gender creates a narrative that elevates Aboriginal people beyond mere passive pawns in an imperial and colonial project.

Researching and writing history gathered from ethnohistorical research contributes to the national priority of building reconciliation between Canada's Indigenous people and settler populations by constructing a fuller understanding of not only the colonial processes that oppressed, but also the avenues where Indigenous people carved out opportunities for themselves. It accomplishes this by constructing a broader understanding of how wage labour shaped Aboriginal notions of masculinity, which in turn impacted Aboriginal men's identities in the wake of colonialism. Indigenous studies scholars Robert Innes and Kim Anderson argue that contemporary Indigenous men "are making strides to regenerate positive ways of expressing the diverse range of Indigenous masculinities...they are seeking out identities that can contribute to the decolonization of Indigenous peoples."<sup>79</sup> On Canada's west coast in the twentieth century, Coast Salish men recognize that working as loggers allowed them an element of continuity (working with and profiting from wood), as well as an opportunity to side step settler attitudes that placed them as subordinates in the colonial scheme. In this light, commercial logging can be seen as somewhat of a decolonized 'colonial' activity, in terms of men's identities.

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<sup>79</sup> Robert Alexander Innes and Kim Anderson, "Who's Walking With Our Brother's?" in Robert Alexander Innes and Kim Anderson, eds., *Indigenous Men and Masculinities: Legacies, Identities, Regeneration*, (Winnipeg: University of Manitoba Press, 2015), 11.

The following chapters examine how certain Coast Salish men expressed, performed, and understood masculinity and identity within the context of logging. They also tell a story about negotiations of identity and masculinity within complex and somewhat liminal spaces. Chapter Two focuses on the history of logging in the Tla'amin and the Stó:lō's respective territories—similar, yet distinct, Coast Salish communities. The Stó:lō experienced a colonial and settler presence much earlier than the Tla'amin, but the Tla'amin went from having virtually no permanent European presence in their territory to a booming industrial town on the site of one of their villages virtually overnight. The documentation supporting this chapter is largely derived from correspondence between Coast Salish Chiefs and the Department of Indian Affairs, and petitions made by individual Coast Salish communities. Sometimes, the voices of individual Coast Salish men can be gleaned from these sources, such as when individual men signed their name on petitions to log, or when they wrote letters to the Indian Agent directly. But to avoid assuming that the Chief (or Indian Agent) spoke for all of the men in a community, this chapter focuses on the communal struggle to maintain and control access to timber in the late nineteenth and Early Twentieth Century. This chapter narrates the ways that Aboriginal people negotiated the changes that settler colonialism and the creation of Indian reserves brought to the Coast Salish's access to trees. It discusses the challenges that government paternalism and patriarchy placed on Coast Salish men's ability to perform a particular form of masculinity. To best demonstrate certain aspects of Coast Salish history, this chapter highlights the history of timber use in several different Coast Salish communities. The Tla'amin segment of the chapter appears largely in a chronological narrative, while the Stó:lō sections are constructed around specific communities and events. I decided to write this way for a variety of reasons. The Stó:lō traditional territory is vast and encompasses many different First Nations. After researching the logging history in many different Stó:lō nations, I chose individual communities that had a marked and lengthy struggle to cut timber on their reserves. Many of the loggers discussed in Chapter Three come from these communities, which allows Chapter Two to provide a microhistory suitable for providing context for my discussion of modern Coast Salish loggers. I also was able to apply this geographically variant approach because there is a wealth of information already published on Stó:lō history. There is much less so for the Tla'amin. Choosing to write a more classic form of narrative for the Tla'amin made sense. But trying to write the narrative that allowed for the voices of many different Stó:lō communities to come through cleanly and clearly in a chronological fashion created a story that

muted the voices of some, while amplifying others. This was not the story I wanted to tell. By allowing each case to be discussed in its own right, I allow the reader to more easily keep track of the people and places I am discussing.

Chapter Three discusses the most recent generations of Coast Salish loggers. This chapter focuses on how individual Coast Salish men negotiated the modern mechanized commercial logging industry in the mid to late Twentieth Century. This chapter describes shifting notions of Coast Salish masculinity and identity within the context of the mid-twentieth century's mass industrialization of the logging industry. My research suggests that notions of logging and masculinity were not bound to older logging methods; modern loggers expressed many of the same sentiments about their careers in the woods, positing that conceptions of masculinity and strength were not restricted by machinery and time.

Contrasting and comparing the experience of cutting down a tree over time forces us to reconsider how Aboriginal people understood, and continue to understand, contact and colonialism. This is a conversation of continuity and change, of acceptance and resistance. It is a story negotiated deep in the woods, where iron men fell giant trees.



## Chapter Two: “The Sooner you learn to be truthful and manly, the sooner you will be fit to be a Chief”: Coast Salish Assertions of Masculinity in the Web of Government Patriarchy, 1890-1935

Colonial patriarchy over Indigenous identity took multiple forms and expressions in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Government officials, namely Indian Agents, dealt with Aboriginal people through ideologies that pitted Aboriginal men as subordinate to white-male identity. Coast Salish men wrestled with notions of white patriarchy; they were told, on the one hand, that they needed to act ‘manly’ by engaging with and working in settler wage economies. On the other, when Coast Salish men attempted to enter into the capitalist system by utilizing forest resources on their reserves, they were treated like children by Indian Agents and government officials, who paternalistically micromanaged resource use (or disuse) on Aboriginal lands. This system placed Coast Salish masculinity in a web of hypocrisy- they could only access certain types of masculinity within the colonial system.

Colonial agents, like the Indian Agents discussed in this chapter, built on a long tradition of newcomers and settlers assuming patriarchal superiority over Aboriginal people. Policy Analyst Alice Ormiston argues that the official “construction of a paternalistic relationship to Aboriginal peoples was initiated in Canada starting from 1830,” but precedents for paternalistically managing Aboriginal people began centuries earlier.<sup>1</sup> Historian Jon William Parmenter, in his analysis of 18<sup>th</sup> century French-Iroquoian relations, states that the French forged paternalistic relationships with the Iroquoian people, who referred to each other as “Fathers,” and “Children.”<sup>2</sup> Historian Sylvia Van Kirk notes that while the British cared much less about sustaining kinship ties established by the French, they continued to deal with First Nations people as children, via a policy Van Kirk defines as “Benevolent Paternalism.”<sup>3</sup> By the time that men like Indian Agent Frank Devlin (who served most of the Coast Salish territory in

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<sup>1</sup> Alice Ormiston, “Educating ‘Indians’: Practices of Becoming Canadian,” *The Canadian Journal of Native Studies* Vol. 22, No. 1 (2002), 2.

<sup>2</sup> Jon William Parmenter, “Pontiac’s War: Forging New Links in the Anglo-Iroquois Covenant Chain, 1758-1766,” *Ethnohistory* Vol. 44, No. 4 (1997), 618. Parmenter discusses how these kinship terms brought certain advantages and disadvantages to the Iroquois. Regardless, he documents the mobilization of paternalism by the French to engage with certain aspects of Indigenous society in the early colonial period. He argues that these monikers worked in a kinship system, but in this system Indigenous people were always children, and the French always the superior father-figure.

<sup>3</sup> Sylvia Van Kirk, *Many Tender Ties: Women in Fur Trade Society, 1670-1870* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1983), 14.

the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries) came to Coast Salish territory, this ideology was firmly situated in the attitudes of the Canadian State. Carlson argues, building on Bhabha's notions of cultural mimicry, that Coast Salish people became victims of a colonial system where the colonizers pushed them "to become almost, but not quite, like their colonizers."<sup>4</sup> This system served to protect the superiority of the colonizers; ideals on social identity, such as masculinity, constantly shifted, ensuring that Aboriginal people could never quite attain the same social levels as white men.<sup>5</sup>

This chapter seeks to capture the frustration of those men who sought to control their land, timber resources, and masculine identity in the web of these complicated social ideologies. Working against government paternalism and patriarchy provided a means for Coast Salish men to assert their masculinity by demanding that the government recognize their right to use trees to engage the settler economy in ways other than wage labour. By protecting Coast Salish land rights, these men also performed another aspect of masculinity; they sought to not only exercise the same masculine rights to land and resource ownership as did white men, but to continue using the forest in ways that were important to Coast Salish notions of masculinity. In this context, Coast Salish men cut down trees in a new way – for cash or wages – but cutting down a tree still provided the means for a Coast Salish man to assert his masculinity.

The Canadian province of British Columbia (established in 1871) continued the policies of the earlier colonial government in denying the need to address the issue of Aboriginal title. Settlers and industrial interests were quickly appropriating land and resources in Aboriginal territories. The presence of sawmills offered economic opportunity for Coast Salish loggers, but as industrial and agricultural interests strengthened their grip on Aboriginal space, Coast Salish men found their ability to access and regulate the resources of their territory become ever more tenuous. Once colonial systems were in place, Coast Salish loggers had to attain permission from the Department of Indian Affairs (DIA) before cutting any timber on their reserves. The provincial government of British Columbia and federal government of Canada, via the DIA, enforced patriarchal and paternalistic laws that subjected First Nations people to consult and confirm with government officials before utilizing timber for any purpose. Without independent

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<sup>4</sup> Keith Carlson, "Don't Destroy the Writing': Time- and Space-based Communication and the Colonial Strategy of Mimicry in Nineteenth-Century Salish-Missionary Relations on Canada's Pacific Coast," forthcoming, 8.

<sup>5</sup> *Ibid.*, 9.

access to land and resources, Coast Salish men became limited in their ability to independently provide for their families and communities. Avenues to masculinity became tied up in this bureaucratic system of racial subordination over Indigenous identity.

Coast Salish territory and masculinity became tangled in the ‘Indian Land Question,’ the legacy of the colonial government’s failure to sign treaties with all of British Columbia’s Indigenous nations. The province of British Columbia sought to address this complicated question by creating Indian reserves in lieu of treaties. The Joint Indian Reserve Commission (JIRC) in 1876 was its first attempt. The dominion and provincial governments appointed Commissioner Gilbert Malcolm Sproat to travel the province and meet with tribal leaders and determine their land needs.

Such a plan was fraught with problems. Although empowered to create reserves on the spot, and despite being generally sympathetic to Indigenous people, Sproat’s efforts at protecting Indigenous interests were severely compromised. Settler interests simply carried more weight with the elected officials, who appointed Sproat, than the disenfranchised Indigenous population ever could. By the time of his appointment, much of the farmland in the Fraser River Valley had been occupied by settlers, creating a situation where the Stó:lō had little hope of expanding their reserves beyond the tiny postage stamp parcels that had survived the reduction of the earliest Indian reserves created under the authority of Governor James Douglas in the late 1850s and early 1860s (See Illustration 3).<sup>6</sup> After the boom and bust of the Gold Rush of 1858, the arrival of thousands of British settlers seeking farmland, and the growth of logging and sawmill operations not only solidified British claim to the area vis a vis the United States, but also firmly embedded British land and resource management systems over Indigenous space.<sup>7</sup> Opportunities to expand the Indian reserves without incurring settler opposition were few, and non-Native support for expanding Indian reserves was practically non-existent.

While there were fewer settlers in the Tla’amin’s territory, international industrial interests recognized the region’s potential. The Tla’amin’s territory hosted an abundance of old-growth timber, and their position on the Malaspina Strait provided easy water access to

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<sup>6</sup> See Carlson, “Indian Reservations,” in *A Stó:lō Coast Salish Historical Atlas*, ed. Keith Carlson (Vancouver: Douglas & MacIntyre, 2001), 94-95. Here, Carlson states “The first reserves in Stó:lō territory were created in 1858 as a direct response to the Fraser River gold rush...Governor James Douglas, lacking the financial support needed from Britain to continue the treaty making process...applied the interim solution of creating Indian Reserves to defuse cross-cultural tensions over land rights” (94).

<sup>7</sup> Carlson, *A Stó:lō Coast Salish Historical Atlas*, 94.

burgeoning markets and sawmills in Vancouver and New Westminster. By the 1870s, many non-Aboriginal handloggers were working in Tla'amin forests, and by the turn of the century steam powered equipment had become the norm. While no concentrated population of settlers came until the early twentieth century, logging camps, skid roads, and logging railways criss-crossed Tla'amin lands.<sup>8</sup> By the time that Sproat visited Sliammon in 1879, the Provincial Government had already granted a pre-emption of the land at the mouth of Powell River, effectively encompassing the Tla'amin village of Tees'kwat and a sizable tract of Tla'amin territory, to an investor named R.P. Rithet (See Illustration 4).<sup>9</sup> The surveying of a large tract of their territory alarmed the Tla'amin. Unlike other Coast Salish spaces, the Tla'amin's territory had never been surveyed and reserves had never been created for them during the early colonial period.

The correspondence and Minutes of Decision from the JIRC indicate that access to timber was extremely important for Coast Salish people. By the 1870s, many Coast Salish men either worked independently as loggers or alongside white loggers in coastal logging camps. When Reserve Commissioners came to discuss land, many Coast Salish bands insisted that timbered spaces be included, sometimes even referring directly to valuable stands of timber. Indeed, within Stó:lō territory at villages like Union Bar, Scowlitz, Chehalis, Chilliwack, Leq'á:mel, and Soowahlie, as at Sliammon, timber made up a significant portion of the conversation surrounding the creation of their reserves.<sup>10</sup> After a few decades of European

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<sup>8</sup> Golden Stanley, "Sliammon – Myrtle Beach," *Golden Stanley Fonds*, No. 8, file 57, Powell River Museum and Archives, Powell River, BC. Accessed June 2013. Golden Stanley was an amateur historian who documented many of the early logging operations in and around Powell River. This fond contains a brief written history, as well as a detailed map of Sliammon and the Powell River area logging operations.

<sup>9</sup> R.C. Cridge, Surveyor, "Lot 450, New Westminster district," July 1878, *Darryl Muralt Collection*. Powell River Historical Museum and Archives, Powell River. There seems to be some dispute about the date of the pre-emption to Rithet. Some online timelines cite the lease as being awarded in 1873, and Lyana Patrick's MA Thesis, *Storytelling in the Fourth World: Explorations in Meaning of Place and Tla'amin Resistance to Dispossession* (University of Victoria, 2004) states that it was 1875. I have decided to go with 1878, as during my research the only survey map that I could locate was the one cited here. The Department of Land and Works Archive Inventory also does not show any earlier survey for 'Lot 450' in their archives. It is possible that the lease was given earlier, and that it simply was not surveyed until later. It is also possible that events around 1878, such as the Joint Indian Reserve Commission, required that certain sensitive areas be re-surveyed, but this is purely speculation, as I have found no evidence to support that theory.

<sup>10</sup> In Union Bar, Sproat surveyed a Stó:lō logging camp as part of the Union Bar Band's reserves, and he also noted that a Stó:lō man named 'Indian Billy' had purchased another logging camp from a sawmill at Hope (Sproat, Minutes of Decision, Yale Indians, Union Bar Subgroup, 1879, Provincial Collection, Binder 4, File 591-80, "Materials produced by the Joint Indian Reserve Commission and Indian Reserve Commission, 1876-1910," *Union of British Columbia Indian Chiefs Archives*, pp. 7-8); Chief Captain John of Scowlitz directed Sproat to survey a large stand of cedar near Harrison Landing, and a few years later he also stopped Commissioner Peter O'Reilly and demanding that more timbered land be allotted to the Scowlitz for their use; Chief Captain Bob of Chehalis demanded the land next to the Harrison Lake Sawmill (Sproat, Minutes of Decision, Harrison River Indians, 1879,

presence in their lands, Coast Salish people understood the value of timber in the settler economy. They sought to control these spaces so they could make effective use of the mercantile timber by developing their own industry, rather than see it given to a white settler, where they would only make a fraction of the money through wage labour. Participating in the logging economy, as a wage labourer, limited a Coast Salish man's ability to exercise a masculine identity independently from colonial systems. Thus, Coast Salish assertions over land and resources became a way to resist the imposition of oppressive government paternalism and colonial patriarchy.

In the eyes of the Canadian state, the creation of reserves in British Columbia opened up all other spaces for non-Indigenous settlement and activity. Under these new spatial limitations, a Coast Salish woodworker had few options when seeking to ply his trade. He could no longer freely cut trees in his territory because he was required to ask for permission from the DIA. As permission was only intermittently and inconsistently awarded to First Nations loggers, many found employment in operations owned and operated by white settlers. The government and the DIA paternalistically insisted that Coast Salish people refrain from utilizing resources on their reserves so that they would be available for future generations.<sup>11</sup> They often pushed Aboriginal people to take up western-style agriculture even though many Coast Salish reserves were not suited for growing crops. Regardless of the limitations that a Coast Salish logger faced, many

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Federal Collection, Volume 5, "Materials produced by the Joint Indian Reserve Commission and Indian Reserve Commission, 1876-1910," *Union of British Columbia Indian Chiefs Archives*, p. 38-39), and he also later demanded that O'Reilly increase the size of the Chehalis reserve to include a large tract of timber next to the reserve (<sup>10</sup> Peter O'Reilly, Minutes of Decision, Chehalis Band, June 7 1884, Federal Collection, Volume 10, "Materials produced by the Joint Indian Reserve Commission and Indian Reserve Commission, 1876-1910," *Union of British Columbia Indian Chiefs Archives*, pp. 75-76); The Bands at Chilliwack, which Sproat called the "Chilliwack Indian Subgroup," negotiated to have a "timbered pasturage for common use of the Indians." They also received a "large timbered island downstream from the mouth of the Harrison River" (Gilbert Malcolm Sproat, Minutes of Decision, Chilliwack Indians, 1879, Provincial Collection, Binder 4, File 591-80, "Materials produced by the Joint Indian Reserve Commission and Indian Reserve Commission, 1876-1910," *Union of British Columbia Indian Chiefs Archives*, p. 54-55); the Leq'á:mel, at Nicomen Slough, were allotted forty acres of land, on which they were to have exclusive timber rights. The Leq'á:mel even asserted that the land was surveyed "specifically to include the cedar trees" (Gilbert Malcolm Sproat, Minutes of Decision, Nicomen Slough Indians, 1879, Provincial Collection, Binder 4, File 591-80, "Materials produced by the Joint Indian Reserve Commission and Indian Reserve Commission, 1876-1910," *Union of British Columbia Indian Chiefs Archives*, p. 75); The Sechelt, Soowahlie, and Tla'amin examples are discussed in detail later in this chapter.

<sup>11</sup> Johnny Leon to Frank Devlin, February 17 1900, National Archives, RG10, Reel C-12121, Vol. 7854, File 30153-12. This letter is an excellent example of how Coast Salish loggers responded to government paternalism. Leon responds to Indian Agent Frank Devlin's assertions that they should leave the timber for future generations by reminding him that they also need to provide for the current generation of men, women, and children, while simultaneously reserving timber for the future.

continually pushed the government to recognize their rights to timber. It must have been frustrating for a Coast Salish logger to be restricted to merely working *for* white men on lands that his ancestors managed as they saw fit. Coast Salish men were rarely allowed to independently cut down and sell trees on their lands, but white settlers could do so as long as they owned the land or had permits. The irony is staggering, and it was not lost on Coast Salish loggers.

### Coast Salish Timber Tangled in the Dense Forest of Indian Law

In October of 1878, Sproat wrote to the Chief Commissioner of Land and Works reporting that there had been a disturbance among the “Sliammon Indian Tribes respecting the cutting of timber in the neighbourhood of their villages.”<sup>12</sup> As more and more white loggers entered into the Tla’amin’s territory, the Tla’amin were becoming increasingly concerned about their ability to maintain control over the timber around their villages. The Tla’amin complained that white loggers were cutting trees too close to their villages, and requested that the Government immediately survey their lands. And although Sproat reported this to the DIA, the Tla’amin’s requests were ignored. The Tla’amin took the situation into their own hands by seizing all of the logs cut by white loggers in vicinity of their villages.<sup>13</sup> Sproat recommended that he be given the authority to go directly to Sliammon to hear their grievances and settle any disputes between the Tla’amin and the white loggers. The Government, however, cared little for the Tla’amin’s land and timber rights, and Sproat’s authority was not extended to include the Tla’amin’s territory.<sup>14</sup> He did not travel up the coast to survey the Tla’amin’s territory until the summer of 1879.

What is striking about the Tla’amin’s timber protest was that rather than outright rejecting the commercial logging industry, Tla’amin men instead injected themselves into the Province’s logging industry, and thereby made a significant contribution to local sawmills in Comox and Sechelt. Sproat reported to the Provincial government that the Tla’amin loggers “get

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<sup>12</sup> Gilbert Malcom Sproat to the British Columbia Chief Commissioner of Land and Works, October 21 1878, Provincial Collection, Binder 2, File 2383-78, “Materials produced by the Joint Indian Reserve Commission and Indian Reserve Commission, 1876-1910,” *Union of British Columbia Indian Chiefs Archives*, pp. 1-3.

<sup>13</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>14</sup> *Ibid.*, 1-7. Sproat reported the incident to the Department of Indian Affairs, and he reminded them that, “you are aware, however, that I have no authority to act in that part of the province. If you send me authority, I will soon settle any question there may be there on an opportunity offering to enable me to go up the coast.”

out a good many millions of feet of logs yearly by hand logging, and as they have to sell them at the regular prices, their addition to the sawmill supplies of the province...is very useful.”<sup>15</sup>

Sproat also advocated that the Tla’amin be given handlogging rights on their territory, arguing that the coastal terrain was not well suited to the government’s preferred occupation for Indigenous people – agriculture.<sup>16</sup>

Given that Tla’amin men were so heavily involved in (and profiting from) the industry, it seems illogical that they would stage a protest *in spite of* the existence of white loggers on their lands. Rather, Tla’amin loggers appear to have been protesting to protect their resources and their livelihoods. They understood that more white loggers meant more competition at local logging camps and at local mills. They understood the value of their timber. The Tla’amin tolerated the presence of white loggers because it provided them with lucrative access to the logging industry, but when non-Aboriginal loggers overstepped their bounds by cutting too close to the Tla’amin’s villages. Toleration turned to trepidation, and the Tla’amin claimed their trees by asserting their masculinity through control of their space and resources.<sup>17</sup>

These early negotiations were defining moments. While trees were being negotiated, so were identities. The Tla’amin were being challenged on multiple fronts. The Canadian and Provincial Government sought to alter Coast Salish society by limiting them spatially, economically, and culturally. The response of Tla’amin loggers cannot just be analyzed in terms of protecting access to a resource- they were defending their right to stand on equal footing with the non-Aboriginal men who cut trees in Tla’amin forests.

At the turn of the twentieth-century, Coast Salish loggers were limited in their ability to cut timber freely on their reserves, due to the Canadian State’s aggressive patriarchal control

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<sup>15</sup> Ibid.

<sup>16</sup> Ibid.

<sup>17</sup> The Tla’amin understood that their world was quickly changing. Indeed, Indian Land Commissioners had travelled as far up the coast as Sechelt to demarcate Indian Reserves in December of 1876. The Sechelt had requested to maintain control over the timber on their territory, something which the local white loggers and mill owners fully supported (Gilbert Malcom Sproat, Alexander Caufield Anderson, Archibald McKinley, Indian Reserve Commissioners, to the British Columbia Chief Commissioner of Land and Works, December 7<sup>th</sup> 1876, Provincial Collection, Binder 1, File 3138-76, “Materials produced by the Joint Indian Reserve Commission and Indian Reserve Commission, 1876-1910,” *Union of British Columbia Indian Chiefs Archives*, pp. 1-7). Upon speaking with white men who carried timber licences in the Jervis Inlet, the commissioners reported that they heard “no objections to urge against a compliance with the desire of the Indians; on the contrary, [local sawmills] will be glad of an opportunity of buying all the logs which either Indian or white loggers can offer.” White loggers did not likely oppose the Sechelt because they had been working alongside them for over a decade already. Mill owners cared little for who owned the permits as long as they had a steady supply of timber. With their neighbours asserting their claims with the Provincial government, the Tla’amin sought the same spatial recognition.

over Indigenous space and resources. The process to get a timber licence required permission from an Indian Agent, which in turn was predicated on a host of factors, not the least of which was attaining the signatures of a majority of the male members of the band, and not even this guaranteed the DIA's approval. Government paternalism ensured such outright permission was seldom given to Coast Salish loggers. But maintaining access to timber was increasingly important as most Tla'amin and Stó:lō men worked as loggers for at least part of the year. Many of them started as young boys, and logging camps were where they learned to be men. Working in a camp provided an income, but Coast Salish men wanted to work as independent loggers on their own lands.

By 1894, in addition to working at logging camps, Tla'amin men were working on Provincial lands, cutting timber under independent hand-logging licences.<sup>18</sup> But when loggers from Coast Salish reserves approached the Provincial Government for permission to log the timber stands on their newly created Reserves, they were told, "no logs could be cut on an Indian Reserve without the consent of the Indian Department... [and] under no circumstance would they be permitted to cut green timber."<sup>19</sup> Regardless of the government's denial of Aboriginal resource rights, many Coast Salish men continually pushed to be able to harvest their own timber.

In 1898, the Tla'amin petitioned the British Columbian government for "permission to cut sufficient logs and exchange them for lumber etc. to enable us to construct a new church."<sup>20</sup> They requested that the government front the money to purchase "axes, saws, spades, mattocks, etc. suitable for cutting logs," which would be paid for once the Tla'amin loggers had cut and sold enough timber.<sup>21</sup> The prospect of constructing a church provided Tla'amin loggers with the ability to construct a community building (the old one being unfit for use), and also permission to cut and sell timber from their own land with a brand new outfit of tools. In January of 1898, Tla'amin men gathered, likely on the sagging and rotten floor of their dilapidated Catholic

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<sup>18</sup> Frank Devlin, Indian Agent, to A.V. Vowell, British Columbia Superintendent of Indian Affairs, March 19 1888, National Archives, RG10, reel C-14264, vol. 1451, file 614-616.

<sup>19</sup> Ibid. This quote is taken from an official letter from A.V. Vowell to Frank Devlin, which outlined that this policy was to pertain to all First Nations people in British Columbia. Devlin was responsible for ensuring this message was delegated to each Chief in his district.

<sup>20</sup> Chief Charley, Tla'amin Chief, to Frank Devlin, Indian Agent, January 17 1898, National Archives, RG10, Reel C-12126, Vol. 7861, File 30167-24.

<sup>21</sup> Ibid.



church, and signed the petition requesting permission to commence logging operations. There was “not one dissident voice” as the Tla’amin men made their mark.<sup>22</sup>

The Tla’amin were given permits to log enough trees to pay for the construction of a church in March of 1898. Tla’amin loggers were responsible for cutting and bucking the timber, and when they had sufficient logs cut to make a boom, they would secure the services of a team of oxen, owned by a local settler, to pull the logs to the ocean at Sliammon Bay. The government agreed to arrange and forward the funds necessary for the hauling. But, by May of 1899, no team of oxen had arrived at Sliammon. This did not stop the Tla’amin loggers from constructing a full boom of logs. Despite their lack of oxen, Tla’amin loggers “got out a boom which measured 193,671 feet [Board Measure] ... by fastening a long rope with a clevice to the end of the log and then 30 to 40 Indians getting hold of the rope and hauled the logs to the water, sometimes over ½ a mile.”<sup>23</sup>

Tla’amin loggers were familiar with hauling logs by hand- before the arrival of oxen and steam equipment, Coast Salish loggers moved all of their timber in this fashion (See discussion of pre-contact logging in Appendix 1). But hauling enough logs to fill a log boom was certainly a daunting task. But this blend of modern logging and pre-contact methods is an excellent example of continuity through dramatic change. The Tla’amin loggers wielded modern tools with the goal of building a Roman Catholic Church where they could participate in their new form of spirituality, yet when the modern instruments and methods failed them, they returned to tried and tested ways of working the woods. The Tla’amin loggers used a traditional method for an innovative means. Much like they did in the days before the arrival of Europeans, Tla’amin loggers used their skill and work ethic to enhance their access to a spiritual realm. They were building a Catholic church, not a longhouse suitable for a winter dance or a potlatch. But the intertwining of traditional methods and modern spirituality suggests that logging provided a syncretic way to work within Coast Salish cultural understandings while working toward a new goal. And in some ways, the ideology and prestige that came along with constructing a church suggests that a certain degree of hybridity existed between pre- and post-contact spiritual and cultural beliefs.

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<sup>22</sup> Frank Devlin to A.V. Vowell, February 14 1898, National Archives, RG10, reel C-14264, volume 1451, file 530-533.

<sup>23</sup> Frank Devlin to A.V. Vowell, May 11 1899, National Archives, RG10, Reel C-12126, Vol. 7861, File 30167-24.

Hauling the amount of logs required to fill a standard boom left the Tla'amin loggers exhausted, but also proud. They had done the near impossible. In the absence of western technology, Tla'amin men had demonstrated their masculinity by doing the 'bull-work' labour that was so valued within logging camps. But one log-boom was not enough for their church. They requested that the department make good on their commitment to provide a team of oxen to do this arduous work. Devlin agreed. He told A. V. Vowell, the Superintendent of Indian Affairs for British Columbia, "It will not be possible for the Indians to complete the work without a team."<sup>24</sup> The services of Thulin Bros., a logging firm from Lund (several kilometers north of Sliammon IR1), was contracted to haul the Tla'amin logs in June of 1899. With this news, the Tla'amin loggers went back to work invigorated. They could now put all their effort into felling trees, without having to worry about the hauling.

By the middle of July Chief Charley and his team of loggers were still waiting for Thulin's oxen to haul their logs. Chief Charley demanded that Devlin "send a team to haul the logs at once"<sup>25</sup> as Thulin was not living up to his promise. For over a year, the Tla'amin had been labouring vigorously to get their logs to market and pay for the materials for their church. Patience was wearing thin. Apparently it had been for Devlin as well, because on July 18, 1899, Devlin wrote to Chief Charley with a stern warning:

There is one thing I want you and all the Sliammon Indians to understand and that is that you have disappointed me very much over these logs and I can assure you and them that I will be very cautious before ever again entertaining the idea of permitting Indians to log on the Indian Reserve.<sup>26</sup>

Devlin paternalistically accused Chief Charley of lying about Thulin's promise to bring the oxen to Sliammon. Devlin brazenly told Chief Charley "that the sooner you learn to be truthful and manly, the sooner you will be fit to be a Chief at Sliammon and have your men under proper control."<sup>27</sup> He maintained that Thulin would still come, but that it might take him a while longer than expected. Chief Charley and his loggers believed they held up their end of the bargain – they had worked long and hard to cut and haul their logs in spite of the Department's inability to maintain their side of the agreement. Devlin's claims that Chief Charley could not control his

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<sup>24</sup> Frank Devlin to A.V. Vowell, April 17 1899, National Archives, RG10, Reel C-14266, vol. 1453, File 314.

<sup>25</sup> Frank Devlin to Chief Charley, July 18 1899, National Archives, RG10, Reel C-14266, Vol. 1453, File 537-8.

<sup>26</sup> Ibid.

<sup>27</sup> Ibid.

men do pan out in the historical record. In fact, Chief Charley had done just the opposite. Devlin himself previously claimed that “Every able bodied Indian on the Reserve” went to work to get the logs cut and into the log boom at Sliammon Bay.<sup>28</sup>

By the middle of August 1899, Thulin’s promised team had still not arrived at Sliammon. But the Tla’amin did not sit idly by. Fuelled by Devlin’s emasculating remarks, Tla’amin loggers again strained their muscles by pulling logs with coarse hemp ropes. Chief Charley took it upon himself to travel the 110 kilometers through treacherous waters to visit Devlin in his office at New Westminster and tell him in person that they no longer required Thulin’s oxen.<sup>29</sup> One wonders if Devlin’s stern words echoed in Chief Charley’s head – his men had worked hard to keep their commitment. There was likely no doubt in their minds they had proven they were “truthful and manly.”

By the end of the fall, the Tla’amin had completed their booms and their logs were ready for market. Thulin’s oxen showed up in the early days of September, but by then the majority of the Tla’amin’s timber was already in the water.<sup>30</sup> The Tla’amin men had done what Devlin believed to be impossible. They had put their heads down – performing the ‘bullwork’ that was highly symbolic of masculinity in the logging industry – and completed the job regardless of the lack of oxen or steam engines. The Tla’amin loggers had literally completed the job by doing the work of animals – something that may have been perceived by the DIA and local settlers as reinforcing notions of Indigenous culture as “savage.” In settler ideology, perhaps, Tla’amin men were still not evolved enough to participate as equals in the logging industry. However, for the Tla’amin, these methods of timber extraction did not carry such negative connotations. Much like their ancestors had before them, they used skill and muscle to demonstrate their masculinity. Their church materials arrived in the fall of 1900, and their new church was officially opened in November of 1901. Indian Agent Devlin and Father Chirouse of the Oblates of Mary Immaculate were in attendance alongside the Tla’amin. As Chief Charley looked around the Tla’amin’s new church, and upon the proud faces of the men who laboured to build it, he likely felt like quite a man.

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<sup>28</sup> Frank Devlin to A.V. Vowell, June 11, 1898, National Archives, RG10, Reel C-14265, Vol. 1452, File 97.

<sup>29</sup> Frank Devlin to Charlie Thulin, August 17 1899, National Archives, RG10, Reel C-14266, Vol. 1453, Files 633-4.

<sup>30</sup> Frank Devlin to Charlie Thulin, February 6 1900, National Archives, RG10, Reel C-14266, Vol. 1454, File 341. The Thulin Brothers Logging Company only hauled enough logs from Tla’amin to realize a payment of \$66.

## Turned Away From Tees'kwat: Industrialization and Settlement in Tla'amin Territory

With the completion of the church, the Tla'amin's lease to cut timber on their land came to an end. Tla'amin loggers returned to handlogging, or working as paid labourers in non-Native run camps around the region. But by 1909, they were again battling government paternalism by seeking permits to make productive use of their timber. On May 21, 1909, Chief Thomas Timothy and Chief Charley drafted a petition to allow Tla'amin loggers to cut timber damaged from a forest fire on their Reserve. They highlighted, in a letter to their new Indian Agent, R.B. MacDonald, the importance of logging to their ability to feed their families:

Logging has been our only means of making a living for a good many years, and each of us owns a costly outfit of tools for the business, but most of the available timber has been cut or taken up under licence, so that we are now facing a condition which means something like starvation for us, unless we are allowed to cut and sell the timber on the reserve.<sup>31</sup>

But the push for permission to log on their reserve must be discussed in a much larger context. By 1910, the Tla'amin were becoming increasingly less isolated from settler society. Chief Thomas Timothy and Chief Charley stated in the petition that more and more land around the Sliammon's reserves was being pre-empted and occupied by white settlers every year. The pinnacle of this migration and occupation of Tla'amin lands was the construction of the Powell River Pulp and Paper Mill on 'Lot 450,' the site of the Tla'amin winter village Tees'kwat at the mouth of the Powell River (See Illustration 5).

By 1909, most of the Tla'amin had moved from various smaller regional settlements such as Tees'kwat to Sliammon IR1. But Tla'amin oral tradition, as provided by Agnes McGee, states that there was still a small population of Tla'amin who lived at Tees'kwat. Moreover, many still went there annually to harvest the late summer salmon runs.<sup>32</sup> Tla'amin Elders Thomas August, Bertha Treakle, and Vince Timothy also explained that when the Powell River Company arrived to survey the site for the mill, they told the remaining Tla'amin that if they moved to Sliammon

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<sup>31</sup> Sliammon Indians to R.B. McDonald, Indian Agent, May 21 1909, National Archives, RG10, Reel C-12126, Vol. 7861, file 30167-24.

<sup>32</sup> Agnes McGee, interviewed by Maynard Harry, September 7 1995, Traditional Land Use Study MIS 1, *Sliammon Treaty Society Archive*.

permanently, Tla'amin men would be given jobs at the mill once it was constructed.<sup>33</sup> This, at least, was a mixed blessing. As most Tla'amin men were already working in the logging industry, promised employment at the mill meant that they could attain meaningful and long-term employment without having to leave their families for seasonal work in distant logging camps. The Tla'amin also likely saw the mill as a potential market for their timber, which would be more cost effective and convenient than shipping their logs to distant sawmills.<sup>34</sup> They would lose any remaining authority over Tees'kwat, but regaining control of this site must have seemed impossible once the industrial equipment arrived. Correspondence in the Indian Affairs archives reveals that the Tla'amin had pushed since the 1870s to have Tees'kwat surveyed as part of their land, but the 1878 pre-emption to Rithet caused the Government to look the other way.<sup>35</sup>

With the final population of Tees'kwat displaced, the Powell River Company went ahead with their plans for the mill. By 1912, they had constructed a massive industrial complex that was the largest pulp and paper mill in Canada and would in a few decades time be expanded to become the largest pulp and paper mill in the world.<sup>36</sup> The mill was a major draw for settlers coming to Canada's Pacific coast – thousands of migrant workers came to Powell River (mainly from Minnesota and Oregon) seeking jobs at the mill and in the subsidiary occupations that sprung up around it. Powell River was a bustling town by the time that the first rolls of paper come off the line in 1912. But while the town was a beacon of hope for some, it represented a broken promise to others.

No Tla'amin men were given jobs when the mill opened and started smashing the region's massive trees into pulp and transforming them into paper.<sup>37</sup> The loss of economic

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<sup>33</sup> Thomas August, Bertha Treacle and Vince Timothy. Interviewed by Karen Galligos and Kerri Timothy, May 2 1996, Traditional Land Use Study 3.4.5. *Sliammon Treaty Society Archives*.

<sup>34</sup> Leslie Adams told me that his father, and other Tla'amin loggers, acquired the services of a local white logger to get their logs to market. This non-Aboriginal logger would attach the Tla'amin's log boom to his own, and when the tugboat arrived to take them to market all the logs would be shipped together. Adam's said that this man did so as a gesture of goodwill, and that he would not accept payment for this service.

<sup>35</sup> Tees'kwat was where white loggers cut too close to Tla'amin villages, resulting in the Tla'amin protest and seizure of logs cut by white men in 1878. Indian Land Commissioner Sproat also wrote the Provincial government to remind them that the Tla'amin were complaining about white loggers being given permits to log around their village sites before any surveys were done in the Tla'amin's territory.

<sup>36</sup> At the Powell River Mill Townsite in Powell River, a Heritage BC marker proclaims "The plant, Western Canada's pioneer producer of wood pulp newsprint, started in Powell River in 1912 and has expanded into the world's largest single newsprint mill."

<sup>37</sup> Tla'amin oral histories state that no Tla'amin men were hired at the mill. Leslie Adams told me that prior to the 1960s, no Tla'amin men received any employment at the mill, but some did work in the Powell River Company's logging operations at Stillwater. As Chief, Adams lobbied the mill to hire Tla'amin men, something which became more common in the late 1960s.

opportunity was quickly overshadowed by the vast numbers of settlers who were now calling Powell River home. In less than five years, Tees'kwat went from being a Tla'amin settlement adjacent to series of non-Native logging camps to a town of several thousand industrial labourers. The construction of the mill was predicated on damming Powell River, which ended the annual salmon run, an extremely important Tla'amin food source. Pollution from the mill also created a wide swath of 'dead beaches' on the shores of the Malaspina Strait, where shellfish were inedible and herring would not spawn. The mill's construction destroyed staple foods, and the settlement that it garnered forced the Tla'amin to become more insular on their reserves. The influx of settlers represented a serious challenge to the Tla'amin's ability to control their territory, which caused them to rely much more heavily on their timber resources on their reserves.

While the Tla'amin sought to find a way to harvest their timber within the complicated web of bureaucracy, the 'Indian Land Question' remained unanswered in British Columbia. In February of 1915, land commissioners came to Sliammon to discuss reserve boundaries and land use. The Tla'amin sought permission to be able to cut timber freely on reserve so they could repurpose the land for western-style agriculture, as did many other Coast Salish nations that the commissioners visited.<sup>38</sup> Chief Tom (See Illustration 6) opened the meeting by addressing the commission. In his address, he spoke strongly of being able to cut their timber:

We want to clean up our land on the Sliam-mon reserve... There is lots of big timber on my place, and I want to find out if I can cut this big timber because I want to clean up my land. We sometimes try and cut this big timber. This place is not very good- it is all big timber and we want to cut this big timber sometimes and we report it to the Indian Agent and also to the government at Ottawa, and it looks as if they don't want us to cut this timber.<sup>39</sup>

A statement was also read from Willie Bob, Jim Timothy, Bob George, Felix, and Dominic: "We want to cut the timber...we ask our agent this winter to cut timber from our land, but he said 'no' – he did not like us to cut any timber from our land...We are willing to go farmer – we are willing to work on our land."<sup>40</sup> But the commissioners refused to discuss logging, stating that "Indians all along the coast have spoken to us about cutting the timber...the commissioners have

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<sup>38</sup> Canada, "New Westminster Agency," in *Royal Commission on Indian Affairs for the Province of British Columbia* (Toronto: Queen's Printer for Ontario, 1913), 283.

<sup>39</sup> Ibid.

<sup>40</sup> Ibid., 291-2.

told them that when their final report goes in they will deal with this question.”<sup>41</sup> Even though the Tla’amin followed the proper government protocols when seeking to cut timber, the Royal Commission (McKenna-McBride) never addressed The Tla’amin’s concerns over their timber, leaving them to continue pushing the Provincial government to recognize their resource rights.

In 1916, Tla’amin loggers changed their tactics when approaching the government. The Tla’amin requested that Indian Agent Peter Byrne attend a meeting at Sliammon to discuss the prospect of surrendering some cedar timber. Surrendering timber on a portion of the reserve allowed a non-Aboriginal firm to cut and sell the timber from an Indian reserve for a rental and stumpage fee, with the land remaining part of the reserved territory (See Illustrations 7 and 8). This was sometimes the reluctantly accepted method, and these agreements often included clauses that required that local First Nations men be given preferential employment in the camp. Many Coast Salish loggers lacked modern equipment, such as steam donkeys or oxen, to haul the timber out of the forest. Surrendering the timber meant that Tla’amin men could access the resources on their territory through a non-Aboriginal firm; Tla’amin men would do the logging, and the logging firm would use their machinery and equipment to get the timber to market. The Tla’amin told Byrne that they wanted the logging firm Peers and Anderson, as doing so would ensure that Tla’amin logging crew would receive jobs at the camp.<sup>42</sup> Peers and Anderson were given the go ahead, and logging started in the spring of 1917. Not only did the lease to Peers and Anderson ensure that Tla’amin loggers would get preferential access to employment on their own land, but it also brought in consistent royalties for the timber cut on their reserve.<sup>43</sup> Not all of the Tla’amin agreed that this was the best use of Tla’amin timber. The lease split the Tla’amin. One faction favoured letting outside interests log on their reserve as long as Tla’amin loggers worked in the camp, the other opposed the lease because they believed that the money would go directly to Ottawa and remain there, never to be distributed amongst the Tla’amin.<sup>44</sup> As a result of the dispute, some Tla’amin loggers refused to work in the Peers and Anderson camp, which brought more white loggers into Tla’amin land to cut timber. Regardless, the majority of

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<sup>41</sup> Ibid., 283.

<sup>42</sup> Peter Byrne to J.D. Maclean, September 14 1916, National Archives, RG10, Reel C-12126, Vol. 7861, file 30167-24.

<sup>43</sup> “Correspondence and Statistics Regarding Timber on Sliammon Reserve,” National Archives, RG10, Reel C-12126, Vol. 7861, file 30167-24. Logging Royalty and Scaling papers appear frequently in the RG10 files, with the Tla’amin realizing several hundred dollars each few months.

<sup>44</sup> Peter Byrne to Duncan Campbell Scott, Deputy Superintendent General of Indian Affairs, October 30 1917, National Archives, RG10, Reel C-12126, Vol. 7861, file 30167-24.

the logging was carried out and controlled by Tla'amin men, but it was mixed crew, rather than a totally Tla'amin operation.

When the initial timber lease ended, the Tla'amin engaged Peers and Anderson to continue their operation at Sliammon, although this time they negotiated directly with Peers and Anderson to receive a cash stipend on every log cut from their reserve, prior to any funds being sent to Ottawa.<sup>45</sup> They also negotiated to receive 10% of the initial sale price up front.<sup>46</sup> But the department dragged their feet. They responded in April of 1918, stating that they had received three different offers for the Tla'amin timber, and that a public notice should be advertised to gather Tenders.<sup>47</sup>

Once the word was out that the Tla'amin's timber was up for sale, prospective logging firms started visiting Sliammon to evaluate the timber. This, however, did not go over well with Chief Tom. He wrote to Byrne reporting that,

We see people come to our reserve to look at timber...they will make trouble for us. When we signed the paper for selling the timber, we thought it was for Peers and Anderson, who we know for a long time. They help all the people...and give our boys work. We do not want you to send any other white men...Peers and Anderson have been here, and make no trouble, and we do not want them to go away.<sup>48</sup>

Peers and Anderson also had a stake in keeping their operations going at Sliammon. They had been logging with the Tla'amin for several years by 1918, and they had helped to construct the logging infrastructure at Sliammon IR1. It was in the best interest of both parties to continue working together. It should be noted that Peers and Anderson wrote to the government to explain that working with the Tla'amin loggers was incredibly difficult. Peers and Anderson noted, "Parties who are not familiar with the difficulties they will encounter from the Indians will possibly put a higher figure."<sup>49</sup> They also complained that they had to meet the "Indians...

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<sup>45</sup> Peers and Anderson Co. to Peter Byrne, November 15 1917, National Archives, RG10, Reel C-12126, Vol. 7861, file 30167-24.

<sup>46</sup> Sliammon Indians to Peter Byrne, December 7 1917, National Archives, RG10, Reel C-12126, Vol. 7861, file 30167-24.

<sup>47</sup> H.J. Bury, Provincial Timber Inspector, to Duncan Campbell Scott, April 15 1918, National Archives, RG10, Reel C-12126, Vol. 7861, file 30167-24. This was the usual process when Aboriginal Bands surrendered their timber. It was announced in local and regional newspapers, and then the highest bidder would receive the licence.

<sup>48</sup> Sliammon Indians to Peter Byrne, June 11 1918, National Archives, RG10, Reel C-12126, Vol. 7861, file 30167-24.

<sup>49</sup> Peers and Anderson Co. to Duncan Campbell Scott, June 7 1918, National Archives, RG10, Reel C-12126, Vol. 7861, file 30167-24.



unreasonable requests.”<sup>50</sup> He does not state what these requests were, but it appears that Tla’amin men sought to run the operations on their lands, while Peers and Anderson thought they would be in control. From the Tla’amin perspective, it is likely that since they owned the land, and the majority of the loggers were Tla’amin, it was their operation. The Tla’amin men were to be the bosses, even if the permit was not in their name. This was likely hard for Peers and Anderson to accept. In the end, the Tla’amin motioned to allow Peers and Anderson to purchase the rights to their timber on July 5, 1918, stating, “Peers and Anderson...helped us when we get no help from the government, and treated us right. We also petition that out of the money from the sale of our timber, the government complete the Council Hall and repair the water supply, besides helping the old blind men and women without husbands.”<sup>51</sup> This allowed Tla’amin men to continually cut timber from Sliammon until the 1930s.<sup>52</sup> And again, the proceeds from logging provided important buildings and services to the community.

#### Hardwood Island

At the same time they operated at Sliammon, Peers and Anderson, along with a man named A.A Plummer, worked with Tla’amin loggers to harvest timber on the Harwood Island Indian reserve (See Illustrations 9 and 10). Much like at Sliammon, in exchange for getting permission to construct a logging camp on Harwood, Peers, Anderson, and Plummer would do all of the hauling for the Tla’amin loggers.<sup>53</sup> Chief Tom firmly told Duncan C. Scott, the Deputy General of Indian Affairs for Canada, that the permit only “be given to Messrs. Peers & Anderson and A.A. Plummer, for we know these men and they have always used us right...we do not want any other white men on our land who we do not know.”<sup>54</sup> This was to be a Tla’amin run logging operation that would last for a duration of three years. Logging on Harwood commenced in the spring of 1919, but by December the Tla’amin reported that they wanted to

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<sup>50</sup> Ibid.

<sup>51</sup> Sliammon Indians to the Department of Indian Affairs, July 5 1918, National Archives, RG10, Reel C-12126, Vol. 7861, file 30167-24.

<sup>52</sup> This timber lease did not stay with Peers and Anderson for the entire duration, it changed hands and was sold to several different logging firms. Regardless, the permit carried the caveat that Tla’amin men be employed at any logging operation under timber lease at Sliammon.

<sup>53</sup> Chief Tom, Tla’amin Chief, to R.R. Maitland, Barrister, July 24 1918, National Archives, RG10, Reel C-12126, Vol. 7861, file 30167-24. Chief Tom requested that R.R. Maitland discuss the terms with the Department of Indian Affairs “on his behalf.”

<sup>54</sup> Sliammon Indians to Duncan Campbell Scott, November 26 1918, National Archives, RG10, Reel C-12126, Vol. 7861, file 30167-24.

back out of the deal because Plummer was not giving them “a square deal” on the mercantile value of the timber.<sup>55</sup> Indian Agent Peter Byrne informed the Department that Peers, Anderson, and Plummer failed to commence operations on Harwood because they believed that the timber was “faulty and of little or no value for saw logs.”<sup>56</sup> No timber was removed from Harwood under the agreement until 1922. Unhappy with the return from the first booms of logs, the Tla’amin stated they would “not allow any logging to be carried on, nor any camp to be built until this matter of the price to be paid is first settled.”<sup>57</sup> No agreement had been made, and by the spring of 1923 the contract had expired. The Tla’amin continued to handlog on Harwood, stockpiling the wood until a buyer could be found.<sup>58</sup>

Nearly five years after the Tla’amin sought permits to cut timber on their island, they again petitioned the government to harvest their timber. On March 20, 1924, the Tla’amin drafted a petition that would finally allow them to begin working in earnest on Harwood:

We the Sliammon Indians desire to log timber on Harwood Island B.C., which is part of the Sliammon Reserve...we are not permitted by the Indian Department to carry on logging operations as we desire on Harwood Island, although the Island and the timber thereon belong to the Sliammon Indians, and we ask for a decision in our favour and that any restrictions that may exist limiting our power to deal as we choose with our Harwood Island property be withdrawn.<sup>59</sup>

It is clear that by the mid 1920s the Tla’amin were more confident in their assertions against government paternalism. They had been logging for several years under similar terms, and they now wanted to engage the timber market without the shadow of government patriarchy that fell on Tla’amin trees. In addition to the petition, the Tla’amin also asserted that they “did not signed

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<sup>55</sup> Sliammon Indians to Duncan Campbell Scott, December 20 1919, National Archives, RG10, Reel C-12126, Vol. 7861, file 30167-24.

<sup>56</sup> Peter Byrne to J.D. Maclean, January 31 1920, National Archives, RG10, Reel C-12126, Vol. 7861, file 30167-24.

<sup>57</sup> William Daly, Barrister and Solicitor, to Indian Agent, National Archives, RG10, Reel C-12126, Vol. 7861, file 30167-24. The Tla’amin acquired the services of Daly to write to the government on their behalf.

<sup>58</sup> The Tla’amin’s new Indian Agent, Charles Perry, stated that the Tla’amin wanted permission to “be allowed to handlog the timber” themselves, and that they were “most agitated on the subject” (Charles C. Perry, Indian Agent, to J.D. Maclean, January 15 1924, National Archives, RG10, Reel C-12126, Vol. 7861, file 30167-24). Peers, Anderson, and Plummer, insisted that it was poor market conditions that kept them from commencing the logging operations with the Tla’amin, and they told the Department that the Tla’amin should go ahead and handlog independently until the market rebounded. At which time, they would happily purchase the timber and commence operations on Harwood (Charles C. Perry, Indian Agent, to J.D. Maclean, March 19 1924, National Archives, RG10, Reel C-12126, Vol. 7861, file 30167-24).

<sup>59</sup> Sliammon Indians to Department of Indian Affairs, March 20 1924, National Archives, RG10, Reel C-12126, Vol. 7861, file 30167-24.

[sic] no papers about Harwood Island... We want to cut Harwood Island our self. Signed, Sliammon Indian Boys.”<sup>60</sup> Throughout 1924, the Tla’amin repeatedly claimed that they did not agree to let Peers, Anderson, and Plummer log freely on Harwood- these men were only supposed to do the hauling. Chief Tom claimed that if any other deal had been made over the timber, a copy of the agreement would be in their files, but Chief Tom claimed to have no such file.<sup>61</sup>

The timber lease for Harwood Island had changed hands several times, and by 1925 it was in the hands of a businessman named J.E. Meedler.<sup>62</sup> It is clear why the Tla’amin were so adamant about not giving permission for white men to log on their reserves – they had made a deal with Peers, Anderson, and Plummer to haul the logs, not do the logging. A telegram on January 23, 1925 reported that Meedler had begun cutting timber and constructing a sawmill on Harwood.<sup>63</sup> Meedler told the Tla’amin that he had permission to be there, and after his crews had damaged some of the Tla’amin’s buildings, they quickly protested Meedler’s presence.<sup>64</sup> In the end, Meedler’s financial situation forced him to quit at Harwood. But nobody, save the Tla’amin, knew what was supposed to happen with the Harwood timber. Duncan Campbell Scott stated that Peers and Anderson were responsible for the original contract, and that regardless of who owned the timber lease, it was the Tla’amin who were meant to be logging.<sup>65</sup> W.E. Ditchburn, the Superintendent of Indian Affairs for British Columbia, argued that since the initial timber lease had expired, and that the transfers had been “made without any authority of the Superintendent General of Indian Affairs and therefore carried no weight,” the tender should be put up for public auction.<sup>66</sup> All timber licences for Harwood were cancelled.

The Tla’amin sought to surrender the timber on Harwood in February 1927. The new agreement would give a logging company five years to work with the Tla’amin to get the timber

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<sup>60</sup> Ibid.

<sup>61</sup> Chief Tom to Charles C. Perry, July 14 1924, National Archives, RG10, Reel C-12126, Vol. 7861, file 30167-24.

<sup>62</sup> Charles C. Perry to Duncan Campbell Scott, January 23 1925, National Archives, RG10, Reel C-12126, Vol. 7861, file 30167-24. Apparently, immediately after securing the timber lease, Peers and Anderson sold it to J.A. Smith and A.J. Anderson, who then sold it to J.B. Meedler.

<sup>63</sup> Charles C. Perry to Duncan Campbell Scott, January 23 1925, National Archives, RG10, Reel C-12126, Vol. 7861, file 30167-24.

<sup>64</sup> Ibid.

<sup>65</sup> Duncan Campbell Scott to Charles C. Perry, January 30 1925, National Archives, RG10, Reel C-12126, Vol. 7861, file 30167-24.

<sup>66</sup> W.E. Ditchburn, Indian Commissioner, to Duncan Campbell Scott, March 11 1925, National Archives, RG10, Reel C-12126, Vol. 7861, file 30167-25.

out. However, not a single commercial response was received, likely in response to the depressed state of the timber industry at the time. In light of the lack of interest in their timber, the Tla'amin explored other options to harvest the timber independently. Indian Agent Charles Perry reported that the Tla'amin were "considering...the possible sale of the island outright. Or the handlogging of the island by the Indians and the subsequent leasing of the island for various purposes, such as fox farms, stock grazing, summer resorts, etc. But the Indians were desirous, if possible, to sell the timber first."<sup>67</sup> It had been almost a decade since they initially sought to log at Harwood. The Tla'amin were growing impatient, and with no certainty over the future over the timber on Harwood, they expanded their gaze and considered the different outcomes for their island.

On January 6<sup>th</sup> 1928, the majority of the Tla'amin men met at Sliammon and unanimously passed a petition for permits to handlog Harwood at their own discretion.<sup>68</sup> The Tla'amin chose not to sell Harwood. Instead, they wanted to finally attain the freedom to "cut wherever they felt inclined to do so."<sup>69</sup> But rather than allow the Tla'amin to make effective use of their resources, the government instead pushed the Tla'amin to consider selling the island outright.<sup>70</sup> In November of 1928, a timber prospector made an offer to establish a camp on the island, and to harvest the timber under the terms offered several years earlier.<sup>71</sup> On December 6, 1928, the provincial government granted Patterson a timber lease for Harwood Island, without consent of the Tla'amin.<sup>72</sup>

The Tla'amin quickly protested the government's actions. They stated that the only way they would allow a new timber lease was if they received no less than \$3 per thousand feet of

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<sup>67</sup> Charles C. Perry to J.D. Maclean, September 12 1927, National Archives, RG10, Reel C-12126, Vol. 7861, file 30167-25. In one interesting offer, the General Manager of the Powell River Mill sent a letter of interest in purchasing the island to make it a resort for the people of Powell River.

<sup>68</sup> Sliammon Indians to Charles C. Perry, January 6 1928, National Archives, RG10, Reel C-12126, Vol. 7861, file 30167-25.

<sup>69</sup> Ibid.

<sup>70</sup> Charles C. Perry to Duncan C. Scott, May 22 1928, National Archives, RG10, Reel C-12126, Vol. 7861, file 30167-25. The Tla'amin placed the value of their island at \$70,000, and they agreed to surrender Harwood for sale for a period of one year, after which they would be allowed to re-assess the market and choose to log the island on their own.

<sup>71</sup> A.D. Patterson to Department of Indian Affairs, November 14 1928, National Archives, RG10, Reel C-12126, Vol. 7861, file 30167-25.

<sup>72</sup> J.D. Maclean to A.D. Patterson, December 6 1928, National Archives, RG10, Reel C-12126, Vol. 7861, file 30167-25.

timber.<sup>73</sup> The provincial government felt that since the Tla'amin had agreed to \$1.75 in 1919, which the Tla'amin protested in 1921 stating that they had never agreed to this price, they should now be expected to accept the same.<sup>74</sup> In July of 1929, George S. Pragnell, the Inspector of Indian Agencies, visited Sliammon to hear their grievances over the new timber deal. Pragnell stated that the Tla'amin were very anxious about their timber being sold without their consent. The Tla'amin escorted Pragnell to Harwood, where he noted that the island contained "fairly good timber, and better as one gets away in."<sup>75</sup> Pragnell reported that the Tla'amin "talked to [him] of not allowing operations to be carried on,"<sup>76</sup> a warning that he claimed Indian Agent Perry seemed very troubled over. While Pragnell cautioned that any act of violence "was not the way to get any consideration from the Department, and that they would get themselves into serious trouble," his report favoured the Tla'amin's position and he regarded Chief Tom as "a good, sensible man."<sup>77</sup>

The provincial government, however, paternalistically argued that they had the Tla'amin's best interests in mind. By now there had be a revolving door of appointments as Indian Agents. Their newest appointee, Fred J. Ball, anticipated that he would be able to "smooth things over... much of the opposition and antagonism to this deal will disappear as soon as they receive some visible benefit."<sup>78</sup> Thus, logging commenced on Harwood under the new lease, with Tla'amin loggers working both in his camp and as independent hand loggers along the shore. But the Tla'amin were not happy with the deal, apparently un-swayed by Ball's paternalistic notion that he could simply solve the problem by giving the Tla'amin cash. In April of 1930 they sought the services of a lawyer from Powell River. Thomas Taylor, on behalf the Tla'amin, penned a letter to Scott stating that the Tla'amin had continually refused to log Harwood for less than the full value of the timber.<sup>79</sup> The DIA advised Taylor that the

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<sup>73</sup> Sliammon Indians to Department of Indian Affairs, April 12, 1929, National Archives, RG10, Reel C-12126, Vol. 7861, file 30167-25.

<sup>74</sup> H.J. Bury, Supervisor Indian Timber Lands, to J.D. Maclean, May 10 1929, National Archives, RG10, Reel C-12126, Vol. 7861, file 30167-25.

<sup>75</sup> George S. Pragnell, Inspector of Indian Agencies, "Inspection Report, Vancouver Agency No. 1: Sliammon Reserve No. 1," July 15 1929, National Archives, RG10, Reel C-12126, Vol. 7861, file 30167-25.

<sup>76</sup> Ibid.

<sup>77</sup> Ibid.

<sup>78</sup> Fred J.C. Ball, Indian Agent, to Duncan C. Scott, March 31 1930, National Archives, RG10, Reel C-12126, Vol. 7861, file 30167-25.

<sup>79</sup> Thomas T. Taylor, Barrister and Solicitor, to Duncan C. Scott, April 29 1930, National Archives, RG10, Reel C-12126, Vol. 7861, file 30167-25.

Department had acted within its bounds, and that they had “doubtless advised the Indians accordingly.”<sup>80</sup> Again in March of 1932, they acquired the services of Andrew (Andy) Paull, a University educated Squamish man from the reserve in North Vancouver and head of the Progressive Indian Tribes of British Columbia.<sup>81</sup> Paull wrote to the Superintendent General of Indian Affairs, T.G. Murphy, to seek closure of all timber leases given to non-Aboriginal logging firms on Harwood Island.<sup>82</sup> He had reviewed the evidence, and stated, “Putting it mildly...the whole thing was morally wrong.”<sup>83</sup> Paull argued that Harwood was an important resource for the Tla’amin, as even though they live mere miles from the Powell River Mill, they “do not secure employment there except in some logging operations.”<sup>84</sup> Mobilizing a discourse that sought to convince non-Indigenous people that allowing First Nations to engage in economic activities was actually in their best interest as well, Paul argued that without access to their timber the Tla’amin would become dependent on the state. Additionally, he warned that “it will always remain in their memory, that at one time the Government of Canada done them a great injustice, by selling their timber.”<sup>85</sup> Without logging, the Tla’amin faced a situation where they would become dependent on government welfare, something that undermined their ability to maintain their masculine identities as providers.

By 1933, the timber market had collapsed as British Columbia was thrust into the Great Depression. On July 19, Chief Tom told Indian Agent Ball that they would not accept any less money for the remaining timber than was previously agreed upon, and that he wanted Harwood to revert back to Tla’amin control. After fifteen years of battling, Chief Tom and his Tla’amin loggers vied to hand-log Harwood for firewood.<sup>86</sup>

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<sup>80</sup> A.F. Mackenzie, Acting Assistant Deputy and Secretary of Indian Affairs, to Thomas T. Taylor, May 9 1930, National Archives, RG10, Reel C-12126, Vol. 7861, file 30167-25.

<sup>81</sup> Paull was a well-known Aboriginal rights activist, and was trained in Law, although he never took the Bar (as it required him to enfranchise and give up his Aboriginal status). For More on Andrew Paull, please see: Brendan F.R. Edwards, “I Have Lots of Help behind Me, Lots of Books, to Convince You”: Andrew Paull and the Value of Literacy in English,” *BC Studies* 164 (2010): pp. 7-50.

<sup>82</sup> Andrew Paull, Secretary of The Progressive Native Tribes of British Columbia, to T.G. Murphy, Superintendent General of Indian Affairs, March 9 1932, National Archives, RG10, Reel C-12126, Vol. 7861, file 30167-25.

<sup>83</sup> Ibid.

<sup>84</sup> Ibid.

<sup>85</sup> Ibid.

<sup>86</sup> Fred J.C. Ball to T.G. Murphy, July 19 1933, National Archives, RG10, Reel C-12126, Vol. 7861, file 30167-25.

Harwood had been bitter sweet for the Tla'amin; it provided some employment and gave them consistent payments in royalties and stumpages. But Harwood was to be a Tla'amin run logging operation, where they would control the way that they sold their timber on the market, and thus demonstrate their masculinity by asserting their right to equally engage the market alongside non-Aboriginal men. In the end the government would not give the Tla'amin this much control over their land and resources. They preferred that Tla'amin men be employees under non-Aboriginal men. Tla'amin logger Ernest 'Ernie' Harry, who logged for over fifty years, five of which were spent on Harwood, recalled that the government cheated the Tla'amin:

What did Sliammon get out of Harwood Island? Nothing. Sure, they give you five thousand dollars for the stumpage...you take ten acres of land...say a million feet of timber and...if he tells you 'I'll give you \$10,000 for the stumpage,' he's stealing right? When it comes to a million feet of timber, he's making probably \$250,000, you only make \$10,000...Now we know what the price of timber is and we should get compensation out of that.<sup>87</sup>

In the end, tired of bureaucracy and protesting, they chose to use Harwood for firewood. At least then, Tla'amin men could use their timber to keep their families warm, without the hassle of dealing with inconsistent government policy.

Since the creation of their reserves, the Tla'amin pushed to control the timber resources on their land. Revenue from the forest was an important income for the Tla'amin even though government policy kept them from being fully in control of the way that their timber was harvested and sold. By 1918, Tla'amin loggers had built a church, saved a school, constructed a council hall, fixed the water supply, and provided aid to their elders. Allowing non-Aboriginal logging firms to operate on Tla'amin lands, although fraught with problems, allowed the Tla'amin to continue the tradition of turning the forest into a way to provide. By using their timber resources as a way to leverage the government to allow them to work their own land and resources, they were able to maintain the prestige that came with being a woodworker in pre-contact Coast Salish society, even if this was done under an umbrella of government patriarchy and paternalism. Many things were different, but the forest still provided a way for Tla'amin men to assert their masculinity in their society.

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<sup>87</sup>Ernest Henry, *Tla'amin Traditional Land Use Study*, MIS 11.12, Sliammon Treaty Archives.

## “We Boss the Country”: Timber Rights and Logging on Harrison Lake

“God made the world and everything in it. But God did not say that if anybody sold any timber that he would get in jail,” was the message that Chief George of the Stó:lō community of Chehalis wanted the Indian Agent, Frank Devlin, the same man who questioned Tla’amin Chief Charley’s masculinity several years later, to hear.<sup>88</sup> It was the spring of 1893, and the Chehalis wanted to harvest the timber on their reserve. But Chief George was not asking for permission. He firmly believed that the Stó:lō were well within their rights to cut down trees as they saw fit:

This land belongs to us as well as the water and timber and things general... This year we made up our minds to clear some land. But it is bad to burn the timber so we cut them into logs to sell to mills. Now that is the reason you want to stop us from doing this. The government want the land cleared you are the man that is taking care of us why don't you help us, that's what you are there for to help the Indians. We have not cut a half of an acre yet on our Reserve, why did you not stop the white people from cutting on our reserve it was all right while they were cutting, they could cut every stick if they wanted to do so and there would not be one word said about it... Timber don't belong to the white people any more than it does to us. You say that we have money in the bank. But we don't see the good of it if we can't get it.<sup>89</sup>

Chief George was frustrated. On the one hand, the government wanted them to clear land for agriculture, but on the other they did not want the Chehalis cutting and selling timber. They preferred instead to manage resources on First Nations land as they paternalistically deemed appropriate. Chief George highlighted the desire to not only have equal rights with white settlers, but that Government of British Columbia should acknowledge and protect their Indigenous right to access timber. From the Chehalis’ perspective, the DIA was doing nothing but hindering their ability to access the same resources that their ancestors freely utilized, while white loggers seemingly cut trees at will in the region. The double standard was too much for Chief George and he gave his loggers permission to “go ahead and work.”<sup>90</sup> Risking government retribution was less of a concern than having his men lose the ability to work and provide much needed finances to their community, thus hindering their ability to maintain their identities as masculine providers.

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<sup>88</sup> Chief George to Frank Devlin, March 8 1893, National Archives, RG10, Reel C-12121, Vol. 7854, File 30153-12.

<sup>89</sup> Ibid.

<sup>90</sup> Chehalis Indians to the Department of Indian Affairs, February 15 1893, National Archives, RG10, Reel C-12121, Vol. 7854, File 30153-12.



Chief George's stern letter came after members of the Chehalis band petitioned the government to issue permits for them to cut timber on their reserve. But they were not asking permission. The letter, signed by fourteen Chehalis loggers, was written to inform Devlin that they had collectively decided to get to work harvesting timber on their reserve in order to put food on the table: "We made up our minds to go logging on our Reserve as it is the best thing that we could do as we did not make much last summer down at New Westminster...we got hard up for grub...and before we commenced we spoke to the Chief and...he thought about the matter and he said it was a good idea."<sup>91</sup> Devlin replied to Chief George, denying the Chehalis permission to harvest their timber.<sup>92</sup> Devlin later travelled to Chehalis, where he reported that

They are very much dissatisfied and there is no question they are very badly off. Their reserve is utterly worthless for farming...there is plenty of timber on it and the Indians have requested me to write to the Dept. and obtain permission for them to cut the timber and sell the logs to the mills.<sup>93</sup>

After meeting with Chief George and the other Chehalis men, Devlin recommended to the department that they be allowed to harvest their timber. Devlin endorsed a Chehalis logger named Johnny Leon to get the permit, as "he appears to be the best worker among the crowd."<sup>94</sup> For Chief George and Johnny Leon, Devlin's validation was an afterthought; they had been cutting timber since they first wrote to inform two months earlier.<sup>95</sup> By the end of the year, Chehalis logs were being run through the mills in New Westminster, providing Chehalis loggers with much needed cash to support their families.

By January of 1900, Johnny Leon went from being Chehalis' hardest worker to Chief of Chehalis. He wrote Devlin to request permits to log 1,000,000 feet of timber at Chehalis.<sup>96</sup> Devlin wrote to A.V. Vowell recommending that the permit be granted, as "this would give them employment during the spring and also during next winter and would enable them to provide for themselves and families."<sup>97</sup> But by February, no permits had been issued. The government

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<sup>91</sup> Ibid.

<sup>92</sup> Frank Devlin to A.V. Vowell, April 17 1893, National Archives, RG10, Reel C-12121, Vol. 7854, File 30153-12.

<sup>93</sup> Ibid.

<sup>94</sup> Ibid.

<sup>95</sup> Ibid.

<sup>96</sup> Johnny Leon to Frank Devlin, January 24 1900, National Archives, RG10, Reel C-12121, Vol. 7854, File 30153-12.

<sup>97</sup> Frank Devlin to A.V. Vowell, February 6 1900, National Archives, RG10, Reel C-12121, Vol. 7854, File 30153-12.

paternalistically reminded the Chehalis that they needed to be responsible with their timber and save it for future generations. Chief Leon asserted that they needed to cut timber in order to provide for themselves, as well as future generations: “We realize [our timber’s] value, and that it is the chief resource of the Chehalis Reservation and we would like to save some of it for our children, but in providing for the future we must also remember the present.”<sup>98</sup> Chief Leon told Devlin that some of his people had asked him to get money from their funds in Ottawa, but he thought that it “would be better to have them cut saw logs and keep themselves in provisions, and work, instead of asking the Department to give them some of their money and have them sit...through the winter eating it up.”<sup>99</sup> Being a provider (for themselves and their family) was an important element in the Chehalis’ definition of their masculine identity; they did not want to sit by idly, spending their funds while a profitable commodity sat unused. Chief Leon wanted to work, and he worried that the increasing amount of forest fires would render the timber useless to his children anyway. The Chehalis Chief asked for haste, as his men were eager to get to work and provide their community with “help at once.”<sup>100</sup>

Chief Leon’s words clearly present the importance of timber to the Chehalis economy. They relied on their timber to provide for their families. Chief Leon aimed to keep his men from leaving the reserve to find work elsewhere, especially when they had such a marketable commodity at home. He wanted to allow his men the ability to provide by using the resources on their land, rather than travel far afoot to distant camps. They sought to be independent, providing by asserting control over their land and resources. He did not want them to work as labourers under the control of someone else while they could work for themselves at home. They were granted permits on April 23 1900.

Although permission to log was granted, by the time word came to Chehalis, all of the men who were “young, strong, and fit for work in a logging camp”<sup>101</sup> had moved on to jobs at logging camps supplying timber to the Harrison Sawmill Timber and Trading Co. They told Devlin that they were being paid good wages, and that they planned to save their timber for times when they were not employed elsewhere. That time came in 1902, when the Chehalis requested

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<sup>98</sup> Johnny Leon to Frank Devlin, February 17 1900, National Archives, RG10, Reel C-12121, Vol. 7854, File 30153-12.

<sup>99</sup> Ibid.

<sup>100</sup> Ibid.

<sup>101</sup> Frank Devlin to A.V. Vowell, March 18 1902, National Archives, RG10, Reel C-12121, Vol. 7854, File 30153-12.

that the DIA release \$500 from their funds in order to buy four horses to aide them in their logging operations.<sup>102</sup> Chief Leon stated that the timber they were cutting was much too large for their small horses to haul, and since they had already cut the timber they wanted to get the horses as soon as possible. Denying them the capacity building that would have been associated with the purchase of horses, the department pushed the Chehalis to instead acquire the hauling services from a non-Aboriginal owned team. But Chehalis balked. They insisted that they acquire their own animals, and in the end they were successful. Four new horses arrived that spring at Chehalis to help pull the massive logs to the Harrison River.<sup>103</sup> Attaining the tools necessary to remain independent was important; they could then log with the same advantages of a white logger, which allowed them to remain a competitive, but independent, entity in the industry. Moreover, it enabled them to be more than consumers of white services; it gave them economic independence and capacity.

Chehalis loggers continued to work both on and off reserve throughout the early 1900s, other than during a brief depression in the industry in 1908.<sup>104</sup> When the Royal Commission on Indian Affairs for British Columbia (McKenna-McBride Commission) visited Chehalis in January of 1915, Chief Johnny Leon told the commissioners that he was “sorry” that when his people tried to harvest the resources on their land, they were punished by the government, fined, or put into jail.<sup>105</sup> Another Chehalis man, Andrew Phillip, told commissioners that the Chehalis “are the original owners of the territories, we are the Aborigines, we boss the country. We used to make an easy living from it...the provincial government has no rights in reserves.”<sup>106</sup> Chief Leon and Phillip contended that they did not want their money to go to Ottawa anymore; they wanted all the proceeds from work on their land to stay in Chehalis, which would allow them to take care of their people properly. Their patience had run thin. Years of lobbying the government for rights to something they already believed they owned left them dismayed. Chehalis loggers worked hard to provide for their communities, but the money was only theirs in theory. They had to ask permission to use it, and they had to provide reasons for doing so. In such a system, the

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<sup>102</sup> Chief Leon to Frank Devlin, February 6 1902, National Archives, RG10, Reel C-12121, Vol. 7854, File 30153-12.

<sup>103</sup> Frank Devlin to J.D. Maclean, July 8 1902, National Archives, RG10, Reel C-12121, Vol. 7854, File 30153-12.

<sup>104</sup> R.C. MacDonald, Indian Agent, to A.V. Vowell, March 10 1908, National Archives, RG10, Reel C-12121, Vol. 7854, File 30153-12.

<sup>105</sup> *Royal Commission on Indian Affairs for the Province of British Columbia*, 230.

<sup>106</sup> *Ibid.*, 230-233.

DIA controlled Aboriginal finances in a paternalistic manner. Chief Leon demanded their right to control their money, as they did when working in logging camps. Their push to control their money and resources ultimately links to their ability to control their masculine identities; they were not children- they were loggers. They argued that they deserved control over their economy- the money that was earned through their labour.

By 1918 it appears that more and more Chehalis loggers were seeking to find work in logging camps off of the reserves. At least here, they were paid cash and treated as men. In September of 1917, J.E. Thretheway applied to construct a skid road through Chehalis (See Illustration 11).<sup>107</sup> Thretheway had a timber lease directly behind this reserve, where he was “employing the Indians of Harrison and Chehalis Reserves.”<sup>108</sup> He had consulted the Chehalis, and they had agreed to let him construct the road, as long as he hired Chehalis men and agreed not to disturb their graveyard. This deal brought in annual revenue for use the road, and also ensured that Chehalis loggers continued to receive preferential employment at a local logging camp.

In the spring of 1920, the Chehalis gathered to sign a petition to surrender the timber on Chehalis Indian Reserves 5 and 5a.<sup>109</sup> They unanimously agreed to sell the timber to the highest bidding timber company, and asked the government to advertise for a public tender. The Tender was advertised in the several daily newspapers, such as *The World*, *The Province*, *The Colonist*, and *The British Columbian* in December of 1920, but only one offer was received from Brunette Sawmills Limited.<sup>110</sup> The New Westminster logging firm was given until April of 1922 to log at Chehalis, with the option to renew only if they had made good on all of their royalty and stumpage dues. The Chehalis also negotiated to have 50% of the \$17,500 bonus, paid by Brunette Sawmills on the commencement of the logging licence, distributed among them in cash.<sup>111</sup> The other 50% of this bonus was to be placed in their accounts at Ottawa. But logging

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<sup>107</sup> J.E. Thretheway to J.D. Maclean, September 2 1917, National Archives, RG10, Reel C-12121, Vol. 7854, File 30153-12.

<sup>108</sup> J.E. Thretheway to J.D. Maclean, November 19 1917, National Archives, RG10, Reel C-12121, Vol. 7854, File 30153-12.

<sup>109</sup> Chehalis Indian Band to the Department of Indian Affairs, May 11 1920, National Archives, RG10, Reel C-12121, Vol. 7854, File 30153-12.

<sup>110</sup> H.J. Bury, Indian Timber Lands Supervisor, to J.D. Maclean, January 6 1921, National Archives, RG10, Reel C-12121, Vol. 7854, File 30153-12.

<sup>111</sup> Chehalis Indian Band to the Department of Indian Affairs, May 11 1920, National Archives, RG10, Reel C-12121, Vol. 7854, File 30153-12.

did not commence until the summer of 1922 due to a fire at the Brunette Saw Mill.<sup>112</sup> Given the late start, the Chehalis agreed to extend the logging licence until 1931. This provided the Chehalis an important annual income, in the form of property rental and royalties, and also kept ample employment on their doorstep. It gave the Chehalis loggers a means to take care of their families by working on reserve, with their own resources, even if under the permit owned by a non-Aboriginal company.

### Dennis Peters and the Double-Bitted Axe of Indian Law

When Stó:lō logger Dennis Peters reported that he had been swindled by a man posing as a Timber Agent in 1921, loggers from the Stó:lō Reservation at Hope had been pushing the government to recognize their timber rights and grant permits for them to log. In 1916, they requested “permission to cut some fir timber sufficient quantity to build a few new homes, also to renew a few old ones, [b]arn building and other buildings. We can take the logs to the mills in exchange for ready made lumber.”<sup>113</sup> They were granted permission to cut enough logs to cover the costs of the repairs, allowing them to use their timber resources to provide a valuable service to their community. By 1919, loggers from Hope were seeking to profit from the trees on their reserves by selling cedar fence posts to the Canadian Pacific Railway, and they demanded that the provincial government waive all dues as they were cutting “old windfalls and...remnants of old stuff that has been logged off years ago.”<sup>114</sup> They were granted permission to sell this timber, and the dues were waived accordingly. Indian Agent Graham reported, in January of 1921, “[t]he Indians living on the Hope Indian Reserve No. 1 are anxious to try and clear their land for agricultural purposes and have asked for permission to cut up the maple and birch wood to sell the same wherever they can for firewood purposes.”<sup>115</sup> Graham stated that this would provide them with ample employment throughout the winter months, and that it would help clear more agricultural space for the Hope band. In March of 1921, they pushed the government to allow

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<sup>112</sup> L.M. Dynes, Acting Indian Agent, to the Assistant Deputy and Secretary of Indian Affairs, August 8 1922, National Archives, RG10, Reel C-12121, Vol. 7854, File 30153-12.

<sup>113</sup> Chief Joseph Stewart, to H. Graham, Indian Agent, May 22 1916, National Archives, RG10, Reel C-10185, Vol. 4083, File 491,000.

<sup>114</sup> Hope Indian Band to H. Graham, Indian Agent, March 24 1919, National Archives, RG10, Reel C-10185, Vol. 4083, File 491,000.

<sup>115</sup> H. Graham to Assistant Deputy and Secretary, Department of Indian Affairs, January 17 1921, National Archives, RG10, Reel C-10185, Vol. 4083, File 491,000.

them to cut more timber on their reserve at Katz Landing. As the Indian Agent Graham was “constantly urging them on to clear more land,” they “vigorously protested” that they should not have to pay dues on any timber cut for the purpose of clearing agricultural land on their reserves.<sup>116</sup> The government agreed. Every logger in the Hope band was given permission to “cut the wood on his own lot” without having to pay any dues or stumpage on the subsequent sale of the timber. This give the Stó:lō loggers at Hope the ability to provide earn a valuable income directly from their resources.

But not all logging deals went so smoothly at Hope. On January 13, 1921, Stó:lō logger and community leader Dennis Peters (an ancestor of Paris Peters, discussed in the next chapter) wrote a long letter to Scott to explain to him that he had been wronged in a logging deal with a man named H.H. Allen. Peters reported that Allen had approached him in September of 1920, to “buy our cedar shingle bolts for \$8.00 per cord loaded in the car.”<sup>117</sup> Peters asked to be paid up front, but Allen refused, stating that the bolts would have to be scaled at the mill first, after which he would immediately send payment to Peters for the cedar. Peters was sceptical, but Allen claimed to be a Timber Agent for the Robert MacNair Shingle Company in Vancouver. Peters and his crew loaded the car, confident that this man was who he claimed to be.

But Allen never sent the money. Peters wrote him a week after the car had been loaded requesting an update. Allen replied that a fire at the Mill had slowed the process, but again promised to send the money as soon as the logs were scaled.<sup>118</sup> That was the last that Peters heard from Allen. It appears that Allen had racked up debts with several different people and firms, and that he likely headed south to Seattle or beyond. Peters travelled down the Fraser to Vancouver on two occasions to find Allen – searching banks, mills, and real estate offices, but Allen was nowhere to be found.

Peters asked Scott to help him find Allen, and get the Stó:lō loggers the money they had rightly earned. He told Scott that the people at Hope relied on this income to supplement their families food sources, stating that Allen “steals money from the Poor Indians...he [broke] the law of the world...we are poor and hardly had money enough for our support this winter. You

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<sup>116</sup> H. Graham to J.D. Maclean, March 5 1921, National Archives, RG10, Reel C-10185, Vol. 4083, File 491,000.

<sup>117</sup> Dennis Peters to Duncan C. Scott, January 13 1921, National Archives, RG10, Reel C-10185, Vol. 4083, File 491,000.

<sup>118</sup> Ibid.

know the government deprive our original rights of catching salmon for our use, and we have to live on beef and bacon which is very expensive to buy.”<sup>119</sup> Peters, and his fellow loggers, relied on the income from logging to provide food for their family and community. They had been cut off from their main food source – salmon- and they turned to cedar to put food on their tables.

But Peters did not receive aid from Scott. Instead, his secretary, J.D. Maclean, took the opportunity to paternalistically teach Peters a moral lesson: “This experience will doubtless be of service to you in future dealings, and prompt you to take great care as to who you deal with, and not merely believe the first stranger you meet, who has a plausible story.”<sup>120</sup> Graham also took little pity on Peters. Despite claiming that he did his best to locate Allen, Graham scolded Peters for cutting timber without a licence, and stated that Peters was “one of those Indians who always knows better than anyone else and is constantly in similar trouble.”<sup>121</sup> Graham also noted that Peters did not feel the need to consult the department when using resources on the Hope Reserves.<sup>122</sup> Graham stated that behaviour like this was not out of the norm for Peters, and that Peters and his sons provided him “more work in this respect than any other family in the agency.”<sup>123</sup> But if one views the scenario from Peters’ perspective, a different story unfolds. The Stó:lō at Hope had been allowed to cut timber on their reserve since 1916. They had been allowed to market their windfalls, or small standing timber without stumpage of royalty. Peters assured the government that “the cedar we cut into bolts was not green cedar. It is windfalls and we had to cut these for to clear our land and cultivate.”<sup>124</sup> Peters, and the other Hope loggers who helped him, had turned this fallen cedar into a marketable commodity, and hoped to help their families in a time of financial need. This becomes especially clear when one considers that Peters was also having difficulty attaining salmon; he had been arrested and fined \$20 for fishing salmon on the Fraser, which he described as “wrong for arresting us for catching salmon for our food – for we are not stealing the salmon, it is our own. We never surrendered it, never sold our

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<sup>119</sup> Dennis Peters to Duncan C. Scott, January 13 1921, National Archives, RG10, Reel C-10185, Vol. 4083, File 491,000.

<sup>120</sup> J.D. Maclean to Dennis Peters, February 1 1921, National Archives, RG10, Reel C-10185, Vol. 4083, File 491,000.

<sup>121</sup> H. Graham to J.D. Maclean, February 14 1921, National Archives, RG10, Reel C-10185, Vol. 4083, File 491,000.

<sup>122</sup> Ibid.

<sup>123</sup> Ibid.

<sup>124</sup> Dennis Peters to Duncan C. Scott, January 13 1921, National Archives, RG10, Reel C-10185, Vol. 4083, File 491,000.

rights.”<sup>125</sup> Peters likely felt the same way about their timber resources. At no point in his four-page letter to Scott does he mention anything of timber dues or royalties, nor does he mention anything about the legality of his timber sale. In fact, he specifically requests that the department hold up the law by protecting his rights to cut and sell timber. Peters’ letter is an attempt to garner the government’s help in obtaining payment from a criminal, but what he received was a paternalistic lecture on Indian Laws. Peters exercised his resource rights to help provide for his family. He did not need to be told by the government when, and how, he could cut and sell trees—he, and his fellow loggers, saw their families in financial crises and used their land to contribute much needed provisions.

It must have been hard for Stó:lō loggers like Peters to try and divulge what trees were deemed legal to cut in the convoluted underbrush of Canadian law. On the one hand they were told they needed to work hard to clear land and provide for themselves, while on the other they were chastised for doing so. Graham saw a troublemaker in people like Peters and his sons; these men challenged the two-faced principles behind Indian laws, and subsequently were hard to deal with. But the gritty reality of the situation remained – Peters cut trees and sold them because they were poor and needed the money to provide for his family – as did the other loggers who helped load Allen’s rail car with cedar bolts. They did not do this in spite of the law; they did so because they believed they were acting within the law. Peters’ letters are testaments to this.

“We want our liberty to sell the timber at any time we want to.” Masculinity and Timber  
Rights at Soowahlie

In May of 1906, the Stó:lō at Soowahlie (Cultus Lake) requested permission for George S. Blakeley to bring his sawmill to Soowahlie so they could sell him the timber from their reserve. They asked for permits to cut and sell timber to be able to provide “food and other necessities as well as material with which to improve our buildings.”<sup>126</sup> The Stó:lō also agreed to allow Blakeley to place his mill on their reserve rent free, as long as any building that was erected for the purposes of logging would become property of the band after the sawmill had

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<sup>125</sup> Dennis Peters to Duncan C. Scott, January 13 1921, National Archives, RG10, Reel C-10185, Vol. 4083, File 491,000.

<sup>126</sup> Cultus Lake Indians to The Department of Indian Affairs, July 19 1906, National Archives, RG10, Reel C-12121, Vol. 7854, File 30153-7.



been removed. Blakeley wanted to purchase as much timber cut by Stó:lō loggers as possible, but the DIA would only allow three million feet of timber to be sold. Blakeley refused to relocate his mill for this much timber, but agreed to purchase all of the lumber that the Stó:lō men brought to his mill on the Chilliwack River, near Sardis.<sup>127</sup> The Stó:lō loggers agreed to the new terms, but the DIA thought explore other options.<sup>128</sup> Blakeley moved his mill to Mission City, effectively bringing this timber deal to a close as the Stó:lō now had no convenient market for their timber.

Undeterred, the Stó:lō persisted in asking for permission to cut their timber at Soowahlie. In 1908, they acquired permits to cut six hundred telephone poles to sell to J.B. Kennedy.<sup>129</sup> When Indian Land Commissioners came in 1913, Chief George Cooper of Soowahlie told them that he was “very anxious to find out whether we are the sole owners of the land and the timber and whether we have the sole right to do what we like with our lands and timber.”<sup>130</sup> The Soowahlie were tired of being harassed by the government, and wanted to know exactly what their rights were in regards to harvesting timber on their land: “In selling the timber, I am prohibited from doing that, and for that reason I want to find out if I have the right to do that or not... I don’t mean to take a certain amount of it and sell it, but we want our liberty to sell the timber at any time we want to.”<sup>131</sup> But, like at other Coast Salish communities, the commissioners refused to talk about timber rights, stating only that it would be dealt with in their final report. Soowahlie loggers wanted to be self-sufficient by using the resources present on their reserve. They wanted to engage the settler economy on their own terms, rather than as employees at logging camps that worked in Stó:lō space. Doing so provided the opportunity for them to assert a masculine identity that did not rely on settlers; they used their own trees, and their own labour to maintain buildings and provide necessitates on their reserve.

In 1922, the Soowahlie retrieved all the merchantable timber from a logjam on the Chilliwack River, which they cut into shingle bolts and sold on the open market.<sup>132</sup> By the spring

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<sup>127</sup> R.C. McDonald, Indian Agent, to A.V. Vowell, Indian Superintendent of British Columbia, August 1 1906, National Archives, RG10, Reel C-12121, Vol. 7854, File 30153-7.

<sup>128</sup> J.D. Maclean to A.V. Vowell, September 18 1906, National Archives, RG10, Reel C-12121, Vol. 7854, File 30153-7.

<sup>129</sup> Cultus Lake Indians to the Department of Indian Affairs, August 27 1908, National Archives, RG10, Reel C-12121, Vol. 7854, File 30153-7.

<sup>130</sup> *Royal Commission on Indian Affairs for the Province of British Columbia*, 210.

<sup>131</sup> *Ibid.*, 210-216.

<sup>132</sup> L.M. Dynes, Acting Indian Agent, to the Assistant Deputy and Secretary of Indian Affairs, May 20 1922, National Archives, RG10, Reel C-12121, Vol. 7854, File 30153-7.

of 1922, they again sought to sell their timber on the open market. The Westminster Mill Company had been working on the lots adjacent to the reserve boundary at Cultus Lake, likely employing several men from Soowahlie, and the Stó:lō recognized the opportunity to sell their timber.<sup>133</sup> They surrendered a portion of timber at Soowahlie, reserving one forty-acre patch between the Cultus Lake River (known today as Sweltzer Creek) and Chilliwack River for their own purposes.<sup>134</sup> In 1924, they again applied to sell cottonwood timber to a local settler named Gauthier. The government approved the request, and Stó:lō loggers set out to cut all the merchantable cottonwood on the reserve.

In 1926 the Soowahlie sought permits to continue their logging operations (See Illustration 12). They asked the DIA to advertise their cedar, fir, and hemlock timber on the open market, but insisted that they “would like to work our selves [sic] for the buyer.”<sup>135</sup> They also maintained that all of the timber near their residences would remain their property, and would not be sold under any future licence. They wanted to cut the timber in small sections, rather than sell the lot of it in a wholesale deal, something which would allow them to evaluate the market before cutting and marketing their products and ultimately control the amount of timber sold. The local Indian Agent, O’N Daunt, was impressed with the Stó:lō’s knowledge of the timber industry, expressing that “there is a good deal to be said for their attitude.”<sup>136</sup> But regardless of their intuitive plan, the government would only allow them to cut damaged timber, agreeing only to revisit the question of permits at a later date.

Later that summer, members of the Soowahlie band agreed to surrender and sell the timber on a section of land had been badly damaged in a forest fire, which they worried would rot and go to waste in left unharvested.<sup>137</sup> The Westminster Mills Company, who had operated in and around Cultus Lake for several years, won the bid for the Soowahlie timber in January of 1927. Under this licence, the Westminster Mills Co. operated in Soowahlie until 1932, bringing a

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<sup>133</sup> O’N Daunt, Indian Agent, to The Assistant Deputy and Secretary of Indian Affairs, March 5 1923, National Archives, RG10, Reel C-12121, Vol. 7854, File 30153-7. (Francis Kelly, grandfather of Ab Kelly signed petition)

<sup>134</sup> O.N. Daunt to J.D. Maclean, July 16 1923, National Archives, RG10, Reel C-12121, Vol. 7854, File 30153-7.

<sup>135</sup> Cultus Lake Indians to the Department of Indian Affairs, January 1926, National Archives, RG10, Reel C-12121, Vol. 7854, File 30153-7.

<sup>136</sup> O’N Daunt to Assistant Deputy and Secretary of Indian Affairs, January 6 1926, National Archives, RG10, Reel C-12121, Vol. 7854, File 30153-7.

<sup>137</sup> Soowahlie Indian Band to the Department of Indian Affairs, August 17 1926, National Archives, RG10, Reel C-12121, Vol. 7854, File 30153-7.

large logging firm directly onto Stó:lō land. This provided men from Soowahlie with a potential employer right at their doorstep, which provided them with the opportunity to log on their land without having to constantly push for more timber permits with the DIA. It allowed Soowahlie men to continue providing for their families by utilizing their timber, creating an opportunity to continually re-affirm notions of masculinity throughout the early twentieth century.



Pushing for control over trees, and ultimately over a Coast Salish man's ability to earn wages, exploit resources, provide for his community, and be masculine must be contextually analyzed in the broader strokes that informed a Coast Salish identity in the early Twentieth Century. In the span of a few generations, Aboriginal people in British Columbia went from having full access to their physical spaces and cultural identities to being marginalized on reserves and heavily culturally and economically managed by the colonial and then Canadian government's paternalistic and patriarchal policies. Engagements with settler society were often performed around the procurement of resources, creating intentionally segregated settler societies with Aboriginal people at the fringes. From the vantage point of a Coast Salish man, logging provided a means to ascend the systemic social and economic limitations of life on the reserve. They sought to stand eye-to-eye with white men by profiting from the timber on their land, but the government largely refused to let this happen, preferring to obtain timber surrenders from Coast Salish loggers so they could sell permits to non-Aboriginal firms, or to have Coast Salish loggers work as labourers in camps owned by white men. Allowing them to log would have challenged the carefully constructed system of patriarchy that kept Aboriginal men subordinate in the eyes of government officials. Denying Coast Salish loggers the right to log freely on their land reinforced the notion, appropriately put by Homi Bhabha, that Aboriginal people could at best become "almost the same, but not quite...almost the same, but not white."<sup>138</sup>

This must have been incredibly difficult for an Coast Salish logger, who looked around his community and saw the collapsing buildings and the hungry families, while witnessing white loggers profit and thrive in neighbouring settler towns. Chief Tom, Chief Charley, Chief Captain Bob, Chief Captain John, Dennis Peters, and Chief George Cooper saw these discrepancies, and

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<sup>138</sup> Bhabha, *The Location of Culture*, 128.

they fought to keep their men working for the wellbeing of their communities, and for their identities as men.

Coast Salish men continually asserted their rights over the forest in the period following the colonial era. But the evidence suggests that they were not just asserting their rights – they were also asserting their masculinity. They fought the Canadian State to recognize their right to use their land as they saw fit by standing up to government paternalism. They had not been given “a square deal” – the DIA failed to deal with them man-to-man, preferring instead to ethnocentrically and paternalistically manage Coast Salish forests in ways that they deemed best. Coast Salish loggers were told that they were not acting like men, that they were childish liars and unable to comprehend the complexities of the mercantile system. But Coast Salish loggers continually exemplified the opposite. They understood their resources, and they understood that by working hard they could continue to use trees to provide not just for their community, but also for their identity. Indeed, one consistent thing that gleams from these stories is continuous hard work by Coast Salish men, even in the shadow of government malingering.

By the middle of the century, more and more Coast Salish men sought employment as commercial loggers off the reserve. The timber industry was booming – and they could get choice jobs wherever they sought to work. Working as a commercial logger provided agency for an individual Aboriginal man’s masculine identity. It was a different form of masculinity – working class masculinity – and it was freely available to any man, regardless of race, creed, or class, who could earn their keep in the woods. The next generation of Coast Salish loggers grew up hearing the stories of government foot-shuffling, and as I will discuss in the next chapter, logging camps became a refuge for young boys seeking to escape the residential school system. They followed their fathers, uncles, and brothers into the woods; they entered the bush (as the forest is called in B.C.) as young boys, but when they came back from camp they were men. And much like their ancestors, they looked to the forest to create opportunity at a time when the Canadian government largely worked to limit their ability to do so.

### Chapter Three: Coast Salish Masculinity in the Rise and Fall of the Commercial Logging Industry

“It’s a man’s work and is risky...It means an Indian can feel as good as the next guy and from what we see in a lot of whites these days, maybe even better than the next guy.”

-Hank Pennier, Stó:lō Logger, 1972

Logging on the west coast of Canada was a dramatically changing industry by the 1930s. Powerful chain-driven machines were rapidly replacing axes and manual saws. Teams of oxen and steam donkeys were giving way to diesel powered machines that lifted giant trees into the sky and placed them onto the beds of multi-axelled waiting trucks. Logging crews could now log in terrains that the men before them were unable to work, creating a boom in the timber industry that sustained until the late twentieth century. This new rendition of the industry brought many men into the bush, and many Coast Salish men took up the same occupations that their fathers, grandfathers, and great-grandfathers had decades before (See Illustration 13). There were new machines, and a whole new set of responsibilities, but logging still required much brute strength, bravery, and ingenuity. It still provided, in other words, a way for Aboriginal boys to become men; and being men created certain advantages (high wages and status) in the eyes of both Indigenous and settler societies.

This chapter begins by discussing Coast Salish logger’s remembrances of learning about logging at an early age by helping their fathers, grandfathers, uncles, and brothers around their reserves or by following them into the woods to a logging camp. Then, I explore how employment in the commercial logging industry became a way for some Coast Salish boys to escape the assimilative programmes of Residential schools. These youths often fled these schools, at ages as young as twelve, to become loggers. As such, logging became an extremely defining element in defining an Coast Salish man’s masculine identity. I will then discuss how the logging camp hierarchy, defined by skill and work ethic, came to be a forum for these men to demonstrate their masculinity, thus allowing them to stand ‘toe-to-toe’ with non-Aboriginal men. In this way, Coast Salish men were both engaging with inherited ideals of masculinity from the previous generations of Coast Salish loggers, but also with the broader ideology surrounding Canadian masculinity in the post-war period. Historian Christopher Dummitt explains that in the postwar period, men in British Columbia fit in a long tradition of men who sought work and

recreation in the rugged wilderness to define their masculinity in the modern world.<sup>1</sup> It is within places like logging camps, the dangerous and “risky endeavours of modern development,”<sup>2</sup> where these men demonstrated their particular kind of masculinity. Coast Salish men also were also influenced by the larger national Canadian ideology surrounding masculinity, which historians Christopher Greig and Susan Holloway argue was linked to man’s ability to be the main economic contributor, or breadwinner, in the family unit.<sup>3</sup> I will conclude by discussing these men’s reflection on their lives as loggers, focusing on identity, but also touching on the fall of the industry and reflections on new logging techniques.

Before telling the stories of these loggers, it will first be helpful to briefly summarize the logging process in which these men worked (See Illustration 14).<sup>4</sup> In the era under study here (roughly the 1930s-1990s) the first into the woods were the fallers, the men responsible for cutting down the trees. These men often worked alone or in small teams. Buckers followed behind, limbing the trees and cutting them into uniform logs. Often, a faller would do both jobs. After the fallers and buckers finished in an area, in came the rigging crew. Either by using a sturdy ‘Spar’ tree, or a steel tower (often mounted on the back of a truck), these men rigged the equipment that would pull out the giant logs. The riggers worked as a crew: there was the rigging slinger, responsible for directing the rigging crew and maintaining safety; the high-rigger, the most senior rigger, who prepared the spar tree or rigging tower; chokermen, who attached, or set, rigging cables to the logs; the chasers, those who un-hooked the cables at the log-dump; and the hook-tender, or ‘hooker,’ the foreman of the entire crew, responsible for getting the logs from the forest to the loading area. Once the trees were off the mountain, the loaders placed the logs onto awaiting trucks. Sometimes logs were dumped directly into a body of water. Here the boom men and tug boat operators would congregate logs into ‘log booms’ and transport them to market.

Most Coast Salish loggers began their careers in the industry as chokermen. This was the ‘entry level’ position in the woods. Some stayed setting chokers for their entire careers, others ascended the logging camp hierarchy into better paying, and more prestigious positions. Many

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<sup>1</sup> Christopher Dummitt, *The Manly Modern: Masculinity in Postwar Canada* (Vancouver: UBC Press, 2007), 18-19.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, 74.

<sup>3</sup> Christopher J. Greig and Susan Holloway, “Canadian Manhood(s),” in *Canadian Men and Masculinities: Historical and Contemporary Perspectives*, Christopher J. Greig and Wayne J. Martino, eds., (Toronto: Canadian Scholar’s Press, 2012), 127.

<sup>4</sup> For a more detailed description of how this logging system worked, please see Henry Pennier’s *Call me Hank*, 90-97.

did most of the jobs at different points in their career. But a strong work ethic could enable some of these men came to be considered by their peers as ‘High-Ballers,’ an industry term used for those who worked hard, fast, and therefore were the top financial earners and viewed as the most masculine loggers.

### Learning How to Log

“My father used to tell me that him and his uncle used to go up with their crosscut by the creek, find some cedars. They’d do that for a day or two, fall a tree, he said they’d clean it up, split the tree up, cut it up, cut it into bolts... I remember when we were kids we used to come down and watch them.”

Stan McKay, Stó:lō Logger, Matsqui, 2015

Many of the Coast Salish men who I interviewed discussed witnessing, and often helping, their relatives and neighbours cut down trees as young boys (See Illustration 15). Sometimes, these trees would be processed for sale at a local mill, or simply to help clear land for agriculture or for construction. These men told me that their older relatives taught them how to use the tools of the trade, such as cross-cut saws. Often, these young boys would quickly learn how to do these tasks themselves, turning their newly learned skills into profitable ventures to help out with the familial income. Thus, from a very young age, these boys learned the value of their timber resources. It also taught them the importance of working hard and earning your keep, something that would later be essential in a logging camp. When it became time for these boys to transition into manhood, logging served to signify this transition. It was a way for them to demonstrate that they no longer needed caring for- they would now provide for themselves, and also help their families.

Henry ‘Hank’ Pennier, a Stó:lō logger and author of *Call Me Hank: A Stó:lō Man’s Reflections on Logging, Living, and Growing Old*, began his career as a logger at the young age of thirteen (in 1913). He left St. Mary’s Residential School, near Mission, B.C., to take up a job cutting shingle bolts for his eldest brother. His brother taught him how to cut bolts and sell them to the local mill on the Harrison, with the hope that they would earn enough money to send Hank Pennier back to school with a fresh set of clothing.<sup>5</sup> By the time Pennier made it to St. Mary’s,

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<sup>5</sup> Pennier, *Call Me Hank*, 12.

school had already been in session for three weeks, and he was turned away.<sup>6</sup> Pennier then made his way to Hope, and with his new found skills took on “any little job [he] could get clearing or slashing brush, blasting and burning stumps.”<sup>7</sup> Pennier claimed that using blasting powder to clear stumps required him to act responsibly and assert the sort of masculinity associated with bravery through danger, thus giving him the skills necessary to quickly move on to “bigger and better jobs.”<sup>8</sup> By 1918, Pennier was having a hard time finding work in Hope, so he decided to “keep moving and find some work.”<sup>9</sup> After spending some time clearing land for a farmer near Chehalis, he made his way into the Fraser Valley, taking a job at a logging camp in Othello, B.C.

By the time Hank Pennier had turned sixteen, he had acquired an impressive amount of skill and work ethic. And while he returned to school briefly, once his brother had taught him to provide for himself by working hard Pennier dedicated most of his time to his work. By the time he turned sixteen, he turned his focus to finding a job that would bring him “work in real earnest.”<sup>10</sup> Armed with the skills learned from his brother, logging was the perfect option. Pennier reflected on this transition, from boyhood ‘little jobs’ to a man’s job in a logging camp, by comparing his childhood years to the then contemporary 1960s youth culture:

You know when I think about it all and the way I worked to get ahead and get a little money and maybe just survive in those kid years and then I read about these dirty long haired hippies today wandering around...with all the jobs there is to do still. I wonder what’s happened to the world...I had to fend for myself.<sup>11</sup>

Pennier understood that if he wanted to ‘just survive,’ he had to start looking out for himself and stop relying on others, and small childhood jobs, to support him. He looked to the woods, a place that he learned could provide a man with the ability to do so.

Brothers Daniel (Danny) and Chris Francis remember all the Francis boys watching and learning how to log from their father, Daniel Francis Sr., around Chehalis. Daniel Francis Sr.

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<sup>6</sup> Hank Pennier was what was known in the early Twentieth century as a ‘half-breed.’ His paternal grandfather was a Hudson’s Bay Company employee who took up a homestead near the Chehalis Reserve at the junction of the Harrison and Chehalis Rivers. His mother was a Stó:lō woman from the neighbouring Chehalis Reserve. As a ‘half-breed,’ Pennier was denied any of the rights that came with being Aboriginal, such as living on a reserve or funding to attend Residential School, but at the request of his parents, the Priests at St. Mary’s “went out of their way” to allow him to attend.

<sup>7</sup> Pennier, *Call Me Hank*, 13.

<sup>8</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>9</sup> *Ibid.*, 19.

<sup>10</sup> *Ibid.*, 20.

<sup>11</sup> *Ibid.*, 23.



worked both as a handlogger around the reserve, selling logs to one of the several local mills on the Harrison River, and also as a Yarding Engineer for Canadian Forest Products at their camp near Chehalis. Chris Francis reflected on his father as “a good Yarding Engineer” who could “run anything.”<sup>12</sup> But Daniel Francis Sr.’s mechanical prowess required expensive equipment, something he did not have while working at Chehalis. While handlogging, their father used a series of innovative means to fell trees and deliver them to market. When Danny and Chris Francis were “snot-nosed brats,” they witnessed their father utilize traditional Coast Salish methods to fall giant cedar trees: “Our dad, he had no power saw in those days, and our Dad put an undercut...and he stuffed it with pitch and lit it...during the day, by four o’clock in the morning...you heard it go down and hit the ground. The next day, he was out there bucking by hand!”<sup>13</sup> Their father taught them how to use a team of horses, named ‘Prince and Maude,’ to load logs onto waiting trucks. Daniel Francis Sr. also taught his boys an innovative way to use a two-man saw when working alone: “He used to cut up a tire, a tube, and tied it to a little sapling. Tied the saw handle onto the tube, and he was on the other side pulling...he didn’t have a partner...I remember him doing that.”<sup>14</sup> As the Francis boys grew up watching their father, they did not only learn how to log, they were also taught how to apply innovative means to get the job done with the tools at hand. Excuses, they discovered, did not put food on the table.

One of the most important things that Chris and Danny Francis learned from their father was that logging provided a means to take care of your family. The Francis brothers told me that, even through one of the worst economic depressions in the Twentieth century (The Great Depression), their father not only provided for his family, but also made enough money to buy luxury goods that were largely unattainable at that time. Chris Francis proudly boasted that, “there was no hungry thirties for us. Dad was a good provider.”<sup>15</sup> Daniel Francis Sr. made so much expendable income during the early 1930s that he was able to purchase a brand new Ford car and a boat with an outboard motor. While a car and a boat may not seem like ‘luxury’ expenses from a modern perspective, cars were relatively uncommon in early twentieth century British Columbia. And a car is especially a luxury when one considers that when he bought his new car, Chehalis had no roads, and was only accessible by boat. The Francis family also had a

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<sup>12</sup> Chris and Danny Francis, interviewed by Colin Osmond, Chehalis, May 21, 2015.

<sup>13</sup> Ibid.

<sup>14</sup> Ibid.

<sup>15</sup> Ibid.

herd of cattle, which provided them with fresh milk daily, and fresh meat when none could be procured in the winter months.<sup>16</sup> Logging did not just provide a way to make ends meet, it provided a life that was better than most, Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal, were enjoying during the depression.

Chris and Danny Francis grew up reaping the benefits of their father's work. Thus, when it came time for them to transition from child dependants to masculine providers, they followed their father's footsteps into the logging industry (See Illustrations 16 and 17). Danny Francis Jr. began his logging career at the age of fourteen, in 1948. His brother Chris followed him shortly after, in 1952, at the young age of fifteen. But they did not just learn how to act like men from their father. Their mother gave them some powerful advice as they went off to work in the woods: "Just keep your hands out of your pockets and get in there and do the job and get out fast, and they'll like you."<sup>17</sup> That is what it took for a young boy to be perceived as man. And that is what the Francis boys did.

Paris 'Perry' Casmir Peters grew up in the bush.<sup>18</sup> By age nine, he was helping his grandfather, Arthur Peters, log near their home on Seabird Island. Peters remembers the amount of large old-growth cedars that he and his grandfather removed from the reserve. In those days, the mill at Harrison Lake ran around the clock to try to keep up with the amount of wood supplied by people like Perry Peters and his grandfather.<sup>19</sup>

When young Peters was not busy toppling giant cedars with his grandfather, he worked independently cutting cedar bolts that sawmills would purchase and then cut into shakes and shingles. After about a month of work, Perry had enough bolts cut to fill a truck, which he would then take to the local mill to sell. The proceeds from Perry's labour went to his mother. From a young age, Perry learned that a "being a man" came with a responsibility to work hard and support family. When Perry turned fifteen, he dropped out of school and became the next in a long line of fallers; both his grandfather and his father had been fallers as well. This was the start of a long career in the woods, one that carried Perry all over the West Coast in search of adventure, and bigger trees.

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<sup>16</sup> Ibid.

<sup>17</sup> Ibid.

<sup>18</sup> Paris 'Perry' Casmir Peters started his career in commercial logging in 1957. Amazingly, he still works falling trees at the time of the writing of this paper.

<sup>19</sup> Paris Peters, interviewed by Colin Osmond. June 2, 2015, Seabird Island, BC.

Albert ‘Ab’ Kelly,<sup>20</sup> often described by his peers as a ‘Legend in the Bush,’ began his career in a similar way. Ab Kelly’s father, Mike Kelly, was a logger who worked around the Chilliwack Lake area, and Kelly realized that if he quit school and followed his father, he could help out with the household finances. Ab Kelly was fifteen years old. He made the decision to leave school and become a logger independent of his parents. In fact, when Kelly went to find work, he went to where his father was logging. He worked for a few days before his father even realized that he was there: “He was sure surprised when he seen me!”<sup>21</sup> Ab Kelly came from a logging family. His father and many of his uncles worked in the camps around Chilliwack Lake, and throughout the Fraser Valley. His grandfather, Francis, never worked in the commercial logging industry, but he was a farmer who cleared his own land on the Soowahlie Reserve. Ab Kelly told me of how his grandfather taught him the importance of hard work and avoiding laziness to a man’s identity:

My grandfather taught me... ‘Don’t be lazy, and don’t dog around, because nobody likes anybody like that, you won’t ever get another job...always stay on top of everything.’ He was a hard worker. You know, when I was growing up, I said I want to be a man just like him. Because I watched him work, man, there was no daylight under his boots, he would just give’r...he was a farmer...just down here [in Soowahlie]...Francis, my Dad’s dad...cause he had cows and horses, and he had to get the hay in. And he was right on top of everything.<sup>22</sup>

The Kelly family found their place in Stó:lō society through hard work and taking care of each other. And Ab Kelly realized this at a young age- a significant portion of every cheque he earned as a young logger went straight to his mother.

Grand Chief Ron John,<sup>23</sup> of Chawathil, started his logging career in 1947, at the age of twelve. John was introduced to logging as a young child by working with his grandfather, using a two-man cross-cut saw. John wanted to cut firewood on the reserve to make money. Similarly to Daniel Francis Sr., he figured out an interesting way to work alone with the two-man equipment: “You usually had to have a partner at the other end of the saw, but a lot of times I didn’t. But I was kind of inventive. There would be a little...tree on the other side, I’d hook a rope on there,

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<sup>20</sup> Albert ‘Ab’ Kelly logged from 1956 until 1991.

<sup>21</sup> Albert Kelly, interviewed by Colin Osmond. June 2 2015, Soowahlie, BC.

<sup>22</sup> Ibid.

<sup>23</sup> Ron John began his logging career in 1949, and retired in 2002.

and I'd pull it, and the tree would come this way, and then it would pull the saw back! That's how I worked it!"<sup>24</sup>

John's father's generation logged locally, primarily in and around their reserve, and almost always within Stó:lō traditional territory. After John left for a brief stint working in Washington, his father passed away, requiring him to "come home and be the man of the house."<sup>25</sup> He was working around his home at Chawathil when a truck came by. The driver asked him if he wanted to be a logger, and twelve-year-old John said yes. He knew that logging could provide the income he was now expected to provide after the loss of his father. So, like his father, and his father before him, Ron John went to work in the woods.

Stan McKay,<sup>26</sup> from Matsqui, began logging after his sister and brother-in-law insisted that he start pulling his weight by looking for a summer job: "When I was about 15, my brother-in-law...he said 'I can get you on in the logging camp, want to go logging?' I said Sure!"<sup>27</sup> After that first summer, McKay followed his family members to camps in the Fraser Valley, Washington State, and even up to Alaska.

McKay also spoke proudly of his father's work in the logging industry. He described his father's generation's labour as "bull work," because of their lack of power saws and equipment. McKay remembers watching his father and other men from Matsqui use cross-cut saws and springboards (elevated planks that allowed the logger to avoid cutting through the massive butt (bottom) of the tree to topple cedars that were twenty feet wide.<sup>28</sup> He also remembers how Matsqui loggers cut the trees up into bolts, threw them into the river, and how the children then would catch them downstream and bring them to shore, readying them for shipment to the mill. As one of these children, McKay learned the value of trees and hard work at a very young age.

Chester Douglas,<sup>29</sup> a Stó:lō logger from Cheam, also began his career as a fourteen-year-old boy working during his summer and holiday vacations. His experience with clearing trees

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<sup>24</sup> Ron and Patricia John, interviewed by Keith Carlson, Michelle Brandsma, and Colin Osmond. May 21, 2015, Chawathil, BC.

<sup>25</sup> Ibid.

<sup>26</sup> Stan McKay began his career while still attending High School in Chilliwack (roughly the late 1960s), and he still works in the cedar mill near Matsqui.

<sup>27</sup> Stan McKay, interviewed by Noah Miller and Colin Osmond. May 19, 2015, Matsqui, BC.

<sup>28</sup> Ibid.

<sup>29</sup> Chester Douglas began working as a logger in 1964, and changed occupations in 1976. Although he no longer worked in the industry, Douglas still cut down trees to create agricultural space around Cheam, and he also cut cedar trees to make dug-out canoes. Sadly, Chester Douglas passed away shortly after I heard his stories. I would like to acknowledge him for graciously inviting me into his home, and taking valuable time to help me research this

began as a small child, when he helped his grandfather, Charlie Douglas, clear farm land around Cheam. Douglas remembers his father, Albert Douglas, talking about his days working with steam-powered logging equipment, before moving into more modern machinery. After graduating from school, Douglas went to Washington State to log with his brothers and other relatives before returning to the Chilliwack area. He remembers that logging was a mainstay for many Stó:lō men: “[Logging] was the main focus growing up, that you were going to go work with somebody that was already in the bush.”<sup>30</sup>

Grand Chief Clarence ‘Kat’ Pennier, Hank Pennier’s nephew, started working as a logger as a summer job while in high school, after his older brother offered him a job at a camp near Yale. Pennier’s father had worked as a Rigging Slinger all over the Fraser Valley. Pennier told me that they followed in a long line of loggers from Scowlitz: “Just about all the old-timers were loggers, as far as I know, none of them really went to universities or trade schools, they just went logging. They learned the different roles as they got older, you know.”<sup>31</sup> He remembers his first day the camp, where he borrowed cork boots that were three sizes too big from his older brother.<sup>32</sup> His uncle eventually took him “under his wing,” and brought him to a logging camp near Harrison. For Pennier, working in a logging camp was a rude awakening. Pennier described himself as “shy,” and initially found being “just being a student and being around a bunch of adults” in a logging camp difficult.<sup>33</sup> Pennier had to shed his school-boy routine for that of a logging camp, where you were “being told what to do, and when to do it, how to do it. Getting up early in the morning, trying to go to bed early. It was tough at times!”<sup>34</sup> But it was these experiences in logging camps that helped Pennier learn how to operate as an adult. In the dangerous world of logging, one mistake could have dire consequences. Pennier recounted one story about a time when he learned to always act responsibly:

You had to...understand what each person’s responsibility was and try to ensure they don’t get injured. That happened to me once. I gave a signal too fast and the guy-wires started coming down and my coworkers gave me hell. Which was right,

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paper. He also helped several other field school students with their projects (he was especially influential in the researching of Chris Marsh’s *Of Salish Sluggers and Totem Tigers*).

<sup>30</sup> Chester Douglas, interviewed by Davis Rogers and Colin Osmond. May 22, 2015, Cheam, BC.

<sup>31</sup> Clarence Pennier, interviewed by Colin Osmond. May 20 2015, Sardis, BC.

<sup>32</sup> Ibid.

<sup>33</sup> Ibid.

<sup>34</sup> Ibid.

because I threatened them...and I learned a lesson- 'don't do things until you're told!'<sup>35</sup>

Logging camps taught Pennier how to act responsibly in dangerous situations, an important lessons to learn early in life. And although Pennier decided to pursue his education after high school, he remembers his logging days as something that prepared him both physically and mentally for his adult years.<sup>36</sup>

Tla'amin logger Leslie Adams was born into a family of loggers. Adams recalled, "They taught me from a young age, fifteen when I started. In them days there were a lot of loggers, and the whole area was just full of logging."<sup>37</sup> Adams grew up in a community where "one hundred percent of [Tla'amin men] were loggers"<sup>38</sup> (See Illustration 18). He told me that he respected the Tla'amin men who logged, and that he yearned to be a logger from a very young age: "I always wanted to be a logger. When I was a young boy...I wanted to be a logger."<sup>39</sup> He also explained that logging camps, at that time, cared not how old a child was, "as long as you knew what you were doing."<sup>40</sup> Adams learned as a youth that logging could provide a young boy with the chance to prove himself as a man. And once in the industry, he did just that. After just a few years of working as a logger, Adams earned a valuable job at one of the province's biggest logging operations, the Powell River Company's operations at Stillwater Bay. Adams proudly exclaimed that roughly a decade later, "all of my relatives and uncles that taught me how to log were working under me...that felt funny...ordering your teachers around!"<sup>41</sup> Adams followed in the footsteps of his relatives and neighbours, and like it had been for them, logging provided a means to shed childhood and become a man.

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<sup>35</sup> Ibid.

<sup>36</sup> Clarence Pennier described logging as a job that required mental perseverance and physical strength, both of which he said he gained through his logging experiences. Pennier did enjoy the financial gain that logging provided: "It was a fairly decent experience, just learning something new. Money was good at the time, I could afford to buy things...before that, you know, we were just berry pickers basically." But his decision to leave the camp came after his father had been killed in a brutal logging accident. Pennier left the camp to help his mother, who was now the only primary caregiver in the family. She wanted him to get an education, and shortly after he moved to Vancouver to start his academic career.

<sup>37</sup> Leslie Adams, interviewed by Colin Osmond, Carrie Helter, and Omeasoo Butt. June 10 2013, Sliammon, BC.

<sup>38</sup> Ibid.

<sup>39</sup> Ibid.

<sup>40</sup> Ibid.

<sup>41</sup> Ibid.

Gary Mitchell, from Sliammon, decided to take up a full time career in logging after getting “too tired of being poor” as a twenty-two-year-old Marine Biology student and part-time logger. His father, Joe Mitchell, and grandfather, Bill Mitchell, were both loggers. Mitchell recalled his grandfather, who started logging at the age of eight, giving him so valuable advice: “If you’re gonna be a woodchopper, you better be the best damn wood chopper there ever was. You be the best one.”<sup>42</sup> After a few years of working seasonally in the camps while going to college, Mitchell decided to take up full time employment in the industry. To succeed in logging, he built on the skills his relatives taught him “when [he] was pretty young.”<sup>43</sup> His grandfather taught him to be responsible and work hard from a young age; his uncles taught him the ins and out of logging, and how to splice cable. He recalled that it took some time for a young man to get into what he calls “man’s shape...these guys know how to do things properly, they waste no energy.”<sup>44</sup> Taking up a career in logging gave Mitchell the opportunity to learn much about work and life, claiming, “Logging ...teaches you lots. Lots about how you work, you work smart, there’s no end to it.”<sup>45</sup> For Mitchell, logging served to signify a switch from his young adulthood to his life as a masculine logger. He described himself as “young and dumb,” and “just a kid” when he first went logging, but he quickly learned how to succeed as a logger by building off of his ancestor’s advice.

Pat Galligos got into logging because his father worked around Sliammon as a faller. While his father taught him the importance of hard work and how to log, Galligos made the decision to leave school and become a logger after witnessing his friend “show up every Friday at school with a wallet full of money...So [he] quit school and went logging.”<sup>46</sup> Galligos at first struggled as a “skinny kid,” but he quickly gained strength and learned to work hard and fast in the woods. For Galligos, logging meant making an income to stop relying on his parents, but it also allowed him to see himself less as a ‘skinny kid’ and more as a man- a logger. He refused to “wuss out” from logging, and through determination and hard work he earned his keep in the industry.

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<sup>42</sup> Gary Mitchell, interviewed by Colin Osmond. July 31 2015, Sliammon, BC.

<sup>43</sup> Ibid.

<sup>44</sup> Ibid.

<sup>45</sup> Ibid.

<sup>46</sup> Pat Galligos, interviewed by Colin Osmond. July 27 2015, Sliammon, BC.

For Tla'amin logger Peter August, beginning his career in logging was a way to help provide for his parents and younger siblings. His parents, although hard-working, were alcoholics that spent any extra income on their vice. In this situation, August saw his younger siblings going without, and he strapped on cork boots to earn money to keep them clothed and fed. He was fifteen years old. He remembers his grandmother telling him to always help out someone in need, she told him, "If they need it more than you do, give it to them."<sup>47</sup> By taking up a career as a logger, he was able to heed his grandmother's valuable advice. He became the provider for his family at a very young age, following in a long line of Tla'amin people who, August reminded me, relied on logging heavily to provide: "All we could do up on the coast here is log and fish. That was our way of living."<sup>48</sup>

For these Coast Salish men, logging provided a way to transition from childhood to manhood. Cutting down trees allowed them to transcend the limits of childhood by becoming a provider for themselves and their families. Generations of men from their reserves had taken to the woods to do the same, and for many of these men, they grew up learning the benefits of hard work to becoming a man. Learning these lessons at such a young age created a situation where logging was tied to masculinity; it was engrained in these children's worldview.

### Escaping Residential School

"I didn't like Residential School, how they taught and treated First Nations people. So I left the school when I was 12 years old."

Ron John, Chawathil, 2015

With an amendment to the Indian Act in 1931 that required First Nations children to attend school, young First Nations children were forcefully taken from their homes and their families and placed in government funded and church run institutions. These schools formed part of the federal government's policy of assimilating First Nations people and undermining First Nations culture. Curriculum taught that European culture was superior to First Nations, and highlighted the economic and social value of English or French language vis a vis Indigenous

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<sup>47</sup> Peter August, interviewed by Lindsey Moore, Jennifer Walkus, Carrie Helter, and Colin Osmond. June 14 2013, Sliammon, BC.

<sup>48</sup> Ibid.



languages. Some schools forbade children from speaking their languages. Children who did not live in villages large enough to qualify for federal funding for a resident day school were compelled to attend often-distant residential schools, making it difficult and sometimes impossible for parents to visit. Children were segregated according to sex, meaning brothers and sisters often had little contact with one another. And as has been so well documented recently, the schools often employed pedophiles and sadists who abused the children. The system of education, the strategy of separating children from family, and the living conditions within which the children found themselves together made the schools highly undesirable places to be.<sup>49</sup>

One feature of the residential schools that is most relevant to this study is their emphasis on manual labour. Children were often subjected to long hours of labour daily (many of the schools required children to do all of the farming, cleaning, and other chores, and to take in laundry so as to raise funds to run the schools). Teachers taught them that Indigenous cultures, being inferior, were destined to exist merely as museum artefacts rather than parts of living societies. The future for Indigenous people, the students were taught, was manual labour within the capitalist wage economy was their destiny. Whether they believed this or not, many of the boys found labour, and especially labour that allowed them to work outside in the forest, more appealing than school. Further, many of them realized that they could do much more to help their families by leaving residential schools and taking up a career as a logger.<sup>50</sup> Many of the loggers interviewed stated that they left residential school as young boys to go work in the woods. Making the decision to leave residential schools and take up a demanding job required them to transition into adulthood, and learning how to log marked an important part in the formation of these men's masculinity. They were no longer children who relied on their parents and family.

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<sup>49</sup> For more detailed discussions on Residential Schools, please see: Jody R. Woods, "St. Mary's Roman Catholic Boarding School: A Spatial Analysis," in *A Stó:lō Coast Salish Historical Atlas*, ed. Keith Carlson (Vancouver: Douglas & MacIntyre, 2001), 68-69; Terry Glavin, *Amongst God's Own: The Enduring Legacy of St. Mary's Mission* (Vancouver: New Star, 2002); Sarah De Leeuw, "Intimate Colonialisms: The Material and Experienced Places of British Columbia's Residential Schools," *The Canadian Geographer* vol. 51, no. 3 (2007): 339-359; J.R. Miller, *Shingwauk's Vision – A History of Native Residential Schools* (Toronto: University of Toronto, 1996).

<sup>50</sup> Not all of the loggers I interviewed went to Residential Schools. In the Fraser Valley, some children attended local public schools at places like Hope or Chilliwack. I have chosen to highlight the decision to leave residential schools because of the legacy that these schools have in Canada. The majority of the loggers I interviewed did leave schooling, residential or other, before completing their education. The stories from men who did not attend Residential school are no less compelling. But many men specifically stated that they left residential school specifically to go logging, highlighting that they made an informed decision to leave an oppressive system for what they believed was a better life and career.

Cutting down trees created an opportunity for Coast Salish men to express and affirm their masculinity alongside white loggers, which seemed to break down the ideology that was taught to young Aboriginal boys in government-run schools. If a young boy could succeed in a logging camp, it became part of their identity. They were now men with responsibilities. They were loggers.

The ideology that surrounded using logging and resources to keep children away from residential school was something that the previous generations of Tla'amin loggers had taken seriously. In 1909, sixteen Tla'amin loggers petitioned the Provincial Government for permission to log at Sliammon to ensure that their day school would remain open. R.C. MacDonald, the Indian Agent at Sliammon, reported that,

These Indians are taking a praiseworthy interest in the day school recently established on their reserve, and they fear that if they are compelled to seek employment elsewhere, the school will suffer as they will have to take their families with them; and one of their chief reasons for asking to be allowed to cut and sell timber from off the reserve is in order so that they can stay in their village and make a success of the school.<sup>51</sup>

Without the school at Sliammon, Tla'amin children would be forced to attend residential school at places like Sechelt or beyond. To protect their children from, at the very least, being taken away from their homes, and at the worst, separated from their culture and subjected to physical, emotional and sexual abuse. Using the forest resources that surrounded their village allowed them to keep their children safe at home, even if only temporarily.<sup>52</sup>

Taking up work in the woods, often alongside their brothers, uncles, or fathers, provided a way for these boys to escape the clutches of the Residential school system throughout the mid-twentieth century. Tla'amin logger Henry Bob left Residential school in 1935, at age fourteen, because young boys like him “had to leave school, [they] had to look for a job.”<sup>53</sup> Joe Mitchell, Gary Mitchell's father, stated that after attending school for a few years, he left to go to work because “it was more fun working in the logging camp...I was making money, so I didn't go

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<sup>51</sup> R.C. MacDonald, Indian Agent, to A.V. Vowell, British Columbia Superintendent of Indian Affairs, May 21 1909, National Archives, RG10, reel C-12126, Vol. 7861, File 30167-24.

<sup>52</sup> The history of the school is limited to a few random records within the Indian Agent's correspondence from the RG10 series. However, it appears that by the 1930s, children from Sliammon were being sent to Sechelt Residential School. This may be tied to the end of logging at Sliammon IR1 (discussed in the previous chapter) and also a result of the economic downturn.

<sup>53</sup> Henry Bob, Tla'amin Traditional Land Use Study MIS.2A, *Sliammon Treaty Society*, September 18 1995.

back to school.”<sup>54</sup> Agnes McGee, when interviewed as part of the Tla’amin Traditional Land Use study in 1995, reported that her husband, Smith McGee, was taken away to the residential school at Sechelt by priests when he eight years old. Smith McGee returned a year later, adamant that he would take up logging and not return to the school. Agnes McGee stated, “In those days, I guess there was no limit to [how young you could be]. Not like today.”<sup>55</sup> Peter August remembers leaving residential school at age fifteen to go logging with a large group of boys and men from Sliammon: “Them days we had big families, there was lots of boys on this reserve,” and they all went logging together.<sup>56</sup>

Ron John decided to leave residential school at age twelve because he “didn’t like residential School, how they taught and treated First Nations people.”<sup>57</sup> For John, leaving school and taking up work as a logger signified his transition to “man of the house at a young age.”<sup>58</sup> John felt that leaving school for logging was something that taught him more than any schoolroom could do, and he boasted, “I think I did a lot better than people who went through university. People who worked under me who went to university would say that I was smarter than a lot of the guys who they went to school with! So that made me feel good.”<sup>59</sup>

While Kat Pennier did not quit school to go logging (he opted instead to work seasonally), he thought that “it was probably common, because they did start [logging] young, and I guess if I looked at some of the graduation pictures, there wasn’t all that many people graduating from St. Mary’s, where I went to, so I guess they did leave early probably because of some of the abuses they had inflicted upon them...[they] got up and ran away to get to work and provide for themselves and their family.”<sup>60</sup>

Logging represented a shift in these boy’s lives. Demonstrating that they were no longer children, by working hard and earning their keep in a logging camp, created a masculine identity for these young Coast Salish men. Their identity as ‘men’ was tied to their ability to perform in the logging industry. And as most of these men identified themselves as ‘Highballers,’ this

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<sup>54</sup> Ibid.

<sup>55</sup> Agnes McGee, Tla’amin Traditional Land Use Study MIS.1, *Sliammon Treaty Society*, September 18 1995.

<sup>56</sup> Peter August, interviewed by Lindsey Moore, Jennifer Walkus, Carrie Helter, and Colin Osmond. June 14 2013, Sliammon, BC.

<sup>57</sup> Ron and Patricia John, interviewed by Keith Carlson, Michelle Brandsma, and Colin Osmond. May 21, 2015, Chawathil, BC.

<sup>58</sup> Ibid.

<sup>59</sup> Ibid.

<sup>60</sup> Clarence Pennier, interviewed by Colin Osmond. May 20 2015, Sardis, BC.

allowed them to shatter the stigma that was often tied to their cultural identity. Residential schools were part of a system that taught Aboriginal children they were subpar to settler society; to succeed, they needed to assimilate into the normative Euro-Canadian mould. By exiting these institutions to take up a career as a logger, these boys learned that logging could provide them with an opportunity to not just succeed occupationally, but they could develop a unique identity. They were not just Aboriginal; they were Aboriginal loggers. And their skills were highly sought all over the coast.

### Of Highballers and Hard Work

“Well Kid, I got a phone call from God, they wanted a real man, and here I am. Time to separate the men from the boys.”

- Albert ‘Ab’ Kelly, Soowahlie, 2015.

A logger’s reputation in the industry was extremely important. Once an Aboriginal man developed a reputation as a highballer, his skills and work ethic were sought at camps all over the coast.<sup>61</sup> Ron John described a highballer as a logger who “would work fast, running, and get out of the way in a hurry and get the log’s going in.”<sup>62</sup> Pat Galligos said that working as a highballer required running fast, working hard, and ignoring fatigue and pain or else you would be sent packing.<sup>63</sup> In an industry that championed hard work, and where mottos like “no guts, no glory,” and “Run or Bleed” abounded, loggers measured their self-worth against the productivity and work ethic of other men. Earning the moniker ‘highballer’ allowed Coast Salish men to not only become equal with non-Aboriginal loggers, but gave them the ability to overcome racial barriers and become some of the best loggers in the industry. Working hard and ‘earning big’ allowed Aboriginal men the ability to express their masculinity in ways that would have been difficult in the world outside of the camp. For in the camp, men evaluated each other against their peers; reputations were built on one’s ability to enforce their masculinity by skillfully

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<sup>61</sup> As this thesis is a study of historical consciousness, I have not fact-checked these men’s remembrances against other sources, such as any existing logging company records. What I am most interested in is how these men remember their time in the woods. Such reflections give insight into how these men shaped their identities as both loggers and Aboriginal men.

<sup>62</sup> Ron and Patricia John, interviewed by Keith Carlson, Michelle Brandsma, and Colin Osmond. May 21, 2015, Chawathil, BC.

<sup>63</sup> Pat Galligos, interviewed by Colin Osmond. July 27 2015, Sliammon, BC.

tackling trees in a dangerous environment. Hank Pennier explained that loggers were required to work hard, or they would be discarded and replaced by someone who would: “Boy oh Boy logging was a tough and rough game. You had to work or else. If you were a little slow... the hooker would holler at you – don’t run, fly. And if you didn’t down the road you would go for your timecard. Many’s the guy who was packed out of the woods and I helped the odd one pack out too.”<sup>64</sup>

All of the loggers interviewed discussed how important their reputation was to their success in the industry. Coast Salish loggers proudly told me that they remember attaining such a reputation that logging companies often sent representatives to Tla’amin and Stó:lō reservations to recruit men to work in their camps. Gary Mitchell remembered that logging companies “used to come seek us out around here.”<sup>65</sup> Mitchell stated that men from Sliammon had an excellent reputation in the industry, and that once they found out where you were from, you were hired on the spot. Les Adams remembers hearing a white logger loudly state that “those boys from Sliammon, they might be the biggest drunks on the weekend, but they are the best loggers on the Coast!”<sup>66</sup> During our interview, Ron John explained that he had developed such a reputation that the operator of a large logging firm in the Fraser Valley, Pretty’s Timber (many Stó:lō men worked for this company), personally visited to ask if John would come work at his camp: “he came right down here across the river, there was no way to get here before because there was no highway, there was only the river, and he found a way to come across the river to see me, because he wanted me to go to work. They came chasing after me.”<sup>67</sup>

Ab Kelly comfortably asserted that his reputation was so good that he was often brought in to save camps that were not performing up to par. In one situation, Kelly explained how Stó:lō logger Herman Bob recommended that the company he was hook tending for bring in Kelly to increase their production. Bob told his boss, “you’re not gonna get ‘em [the logs] with these guys. You get my slinger from Chilliwack, Ab Kelly... get ‘em up here, and we’ll show ‘em how to log. [The boss] went into the lunchroom and...he says ‘anyone of you know Ab Kelly?’ ‘Oh

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<sup>64</sup> Pennier, *Call me Hank*, 36.

<sup>65</sup> Gary Mitchell, interviewed by Colin Osmond. July 31 2015, Sliammon, BC.

<sup>66</sup> Leslie Adams, interviewed by Colin Osmond, Carrie Helter, and Omeasoo Butt. June 10 2013, Sliammon, BC.

<sup>67</sup> Ron and Patricia John, interviewed by Keith Carlson, Michelle Brandsma, and Colin Osmond. May 21, 2015, Chawathil, BC.

yeah, Chilliwack Ab? Yeah he's a logger all right!"<sup>68</sup> Within a few days, Kelly had upped the camp's production from two loads a day to thirteen loads a day.<sup>69</sup> Kelly reflected that Iver Stromquist, the boss of the camp, offered to pay him more than twice than what he was receiving at his regular job with Cattermole Timber. He told Kelly, "You're the best I ever seen," and even promised him his own bunk trailer with all of the amenities, a luxury that he said he would pay for out of his own pocket.<sup>70</sup> Kelly declined, preferring to stay with his own camp, where he had a pension plan and seniority. But Kelly built a reputation as a highballer by doing short stints at struggling camps while on his days-off from Cattermole. When Kelly showed up at one of these camps, one logger questioned why he was there. Kelly quickly shot back, "Well Kid, I got a phone call from God, they wanted a real man, and here I am. Time to separate the men from the boys."<sup>71</sup>

Logging provided a space where Coast Salish men could succeed by working hard and becoming a highballer. Doing so allowed them to stand on equal – or higher – ground than their non-Aboriginal colleagues. Stan McKay remembers that bosses and supervisors spoke highly of First Nations loggers, and that they "always got the First Nations because we had good balance. They'd rather have a First Nation guy."<sup>72</sup> Hank Pennier highlighted how his reputation and work ethic allowed him to avoid falling victim to racist coworkers. On one rare occasion, a white logger called Pennier out in front of the boss, which Pennier expected "being a half-breed had something to do with it."<sup>73</sup> The boss pulled the white logger aside, and after that Pennier explained that the logger was a changed man. Pennier wrote that "things ran pretty damn smooth after that and I guess it wasn't until after that happened that I could really feel like one of the boys for the first time."<sup>74</sup> Similarly, Herman Bob and Ab Kelly were working at a camp near Chilliwack Lake when a greenhorn<sup>75</sup> non-Aboriginal logger told Kelly that he "moved like an old lady."<sup>76</sup> Kelly says that he "tightened up his hard hat...and said 'now were gonna run. And I

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<sup>68</sup> Albert Kelly, interviewed by Colin Osmond. June 2 2015, Soowahlie, BC. This story was recited by Ab Kelly, who explained that Herman Bob often used to tell this story.

<sup>69</sup> Ibid.

<sup>70</sup> Ibid.

<sup>71</sup> Ibid.

<sup>72</sup> Stan McKay, interviewed by Noah Miller and Colin Osmond. May 19, 2015, Matsqui, BC.

<sup>73</sup> Pennier, *Call me Hank*, 50.

<sup>74</sup> Ibid.

<sup>75</sup> A Greenhorn is a person that is new to the industry, a rookie logger.

<sup>76</sup> Albert Kelly, interviewed by Colin Osmond. June 2 2015, Soowahlie, BC.

ran it for 45 minutes, and [the non-Aboriginal logger's] legs seized up.”<sup>77</sup> Bob and Kelly then told the man to get into a logging truck and look for work elsewhere.

Coast Salish men often stuck together in logging camps, sometimes taking jobs at camps as a group. Ab Kelly wanted to “get a Native crew...to show the boys what we could do.”<sup>78</sup> He told me that Aboriginal loggers “always ran,” and that they could travel anywhere and get work.<sup>79</sup> As part of an all Coast Salish crew from Cheam, Chester Douglas told me that his crew was known as highballers, “because if we [went] anywhere the whole crew could get hired on.”<sup>80</sup> Douglas also stated that Aboriginal crews would often go as a specialized team, such as a rigging crew, where they would work for several months before moving onto another camp as a unit. Many of the loggers interviewed travelled and worked with family members, creating small groups of semi-mobile Aboriginal loggers that plied their trade freely from California to Alaska. Stan McKay always found many of his logging jobs through family connections. Sometimes, distant relatives heard of McKay’s success as a logger through other men: “I’d run into my cousins, and they’d say, ‘Want to come to work? We heard you’re a good man.’”<sup>81</sup> McKay would often follow these jobs for long stints, using his reputation and skill to continually keep him working in the woods.

Having a reputation as a highballer meant that an Coast Salish logger could attain employment at any camp on the Coast. Coast Salish loggers were so respected, and jobs were so plentiful, that they could leave a job at a camp on one day, and have a job in another the next. Kat Pennier explained that Aboriginal loggers “moved from company to company and job to job,”<sup>82</sup> and that they never had any problems getting jobs in the Fraser Valley. Ab Kelly’s phone would ring as soon as word got out that a camp he was working out closed down or finished production: “When I finished [one job]...I got called up...one phone call and I was gone.”<sup>83</sup> On the Coast, Aboriginal loggers could “quit or get laid off, and they’d go to the next camp and they got a job.”<sup>84</sup> Being able to move from job to job gave Coast Salish loggers agency over their careers and livelihoods; if a boss mistreated them, or compensated them poorly, they could

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<sup>77</sup> Ibid.

<sup>78</sup> Ibid.

<sup>79</sup> Ibid.

<sup>80</sup> Chester Douglas, interviewed by Davis Rogers and Colin Osmond. May 22, 2015, Cheam, BC.

<sup>81</sup> Stan McKay, interviewed by Noah Miller and Colin Osmond. May 19, 2015, Matsqui, BC.

<sup>82</sup> Clarence Pennier, interviewed by Colin Osmond. May 20 2015, Sardis, BC.

<sup>83</sup> Albert Kelly, interviewed by Colin Osmond. June 2 2015, Soowahlie, BC.

<sup>84</sup> Gary Mitchell, interviewed by Colin Osmond. July 31 2015, Sliammon, BC.

simply move on to the next camp and negotiate a better deal. It also gave Coast Salish men a way to avoid welfare dependency and provide for their family. Ab Kelly explained that working continually to avoid taking compensation was “just part of the job...I had kids going to school then. I had to make sure they had school clothes and books...That’s the only thing I thought of. You can’t make it on unemployment...I didn’t ever go on that unemployment...I’d sooner go logging.”<sup>85</sup> Even after undergoing surgery to remove a sizable piece of timber wedged between his eye and his skull, Kelly refused to take time off and compensation: “I got a phone call from Workmen’s compensation board, the doctor says ‘you’re supposed to be on compensation for 4-5 months.’ I says ‘I don’t believe in that. I’m a logger, I was born a logger...I went out to the coast to log.”<sup>86</sup> Chris Francis said that when work ended in the Fraser Valley for the season, he and his brother would pack up and go logging in Washington State or on the Coast to avoid taking unemployment.<sup>87</sup> Pat Galligos remembers that when you finished at a camp, “you didn’t go to EI offices looking for work and job posting or whatever, you went to the bar and looked for a job! Don’t go on EI, go to the Inn! That’s where everybody hangs out, and you’ll get a job!”<sup>88</sup> Staying off of ‘pogey’ was a point of pride for Coast Salish loggers. Continually working allowed them to provide food, clothing, and shelter for their families, which correlates with mid-twentieth century ideals on masculinity that valued a man’s ability to care for his own.

The unique identity that developed around Coast Salish loggers was based on their ability to succeed in a rough and competitive industry. Becoming Highballers served to confirm their identity as men in an industry that championed hard work and skill as valuable masculine traits. Ron John reflected on his Stó:lō identity and being a logger as something that “definitely made me feel good...in the jobs I did I was good at it...I just knew I was better than most.”<sup>89</sup> Hank Pennier championed his identity as an “Indian” as the reason that he, and other First Nations people were so successful in the industry. After discussing logging and being Aboriginal with some fellow retired loggers, Pennier argued that logging was important to Aboriginal and masculine identities because “it is a man’s work and it is risky...an Indian can feel as good as the

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<sup>85</sup> Albert Kelly, interviewed by Colin Osmond. June 2 2015, Soowahlie, BC.

<sup>86</sup> Ibid.

<sup>87</sup> Chris and Danny Francis, interviewed by Colin Osmond, Chehalis, May 21, 2015.

<sup>88</sup> Pat Galligos, interviewed by Colin Osmond. July 27 2015, Sliammon, BC.

<sup>89</sup> Ron and Patricia John, interviewed by Keith Carlson, Michelle Brandsma, and Colin Osmond. May 21, 2015, Chawathil, BC.



next guy and from what I see in whites these days, maybe even better than the next guy.”<sup>90</sup> Pennier claimed that Aboriginal men made better loggers because they “put in the extra effort” when non-Aboriginal people found excuses to not work hard.<sup>91</sup> Logging, for men like Pennier, gave them “a chance” to strive and succeed in a society that culturally and racially limited their chances of doing so.<sup>92</sup> By cutting down trees, Coast Salish men found opportunities to rise above stereotypes and limitations.

Logging camps were a venue where Coast Salish and non-Aboriginal men worked, ate meals, and swapped stories as peers. Chester Douglas stated that, in these close-living quarters, “You would work with someone for ten days and they would sleep in the bunk beside you. You had to learn to get along.”<sup>93</sup> When I asked Coast Salish loggers if race or culture ever caused problems in these spaces, they resoundingly stated that race was never an issue. Most men were more interested in talking about the quality of the steak than of racial discrimination. Danny Francis said that fights in the camps were extremely rare, and he does not remember any of them ever being over race.<sup>94</sup> While logging, men were required to look out for their fellow loggers at all times, due to the dangerous nature of logging with powerful machinery. Perry Peters explained that camps were made up of men from all over the world, and that because of the dangerous nature of the job, “you had to get along with everyone or it wouldn’t have worked.”<sup>95</sup> Kat Pennier and Ab Kelly reflected in much of the same way:

Kat Pennier: “people had to get along because they had to look after each other up there...you had to make sure safety was paramount.”

Ab Kelly: “Everybody got along. They didn’t tolerate it if there was anybody like that. Because we had to get along, you know. If we worked with a guy, we had to look after him...you got to look after them, you guard them, protect them with your life.”

Loggers needed to be able to trust the man next to them, regardless of the colour of their skin. Working in the woods required men to shed racial barriers and develop a unique type of

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<sup>90</sup> Pennier, *Call me Hank*, 58.

<sup>91</sup> Ibid.

<sup>92</sup> Ibid.

<sup>93</sup> Chester Douglas, interviewed by Davis Rogers and Colin Osmond. May 22, 2015, Cheam, BC.

<sup>94</sup> Chris and Danny Francis, interviewed by Colin Osmond, Chehalis, May 21, 2015.

<sup>95</sup> Paris Peters, interviewed by Colin Osmond. June 2, 2015, Seabird Island, BC.

camaraderie that extend beyond the workday. For Coast Salish men, becoming peers with non-Aboriginal loggers provided a means for them to shed the racial dichotomies that existed between Aboriginal people and settler society. For in a logging camp, masculine identities were available to any man earned their stripes in the woods- regardless of race or class.

### Reflections on Life in the Woods

Logging, as an industry, has greatly changed over the past century. No one understood this more than Hank Pennier. Pennier tied his masculinity to the environment in which he worked. As logging evolved and equipment changed, Pennier argued, logging became less of a masculine occupation:

I think there is something dirty about a man now who is able to cut [a tree] crashing down in less than a half hour all by himself using a six foot gasoline chain saw. What chance does the poor tree have? In my time it took two men at each end of a 10 foot crosscut saw bucking away for most of a day before old Mr. Fir would give up the ghost. We always knew who was going to win but at least we gave him the chance of putting up a fight for it. And sometimes in spite he would flip his butt as he died and take a man with him...I can't see how a logger can have much respect anymore with all of these powerful modern tools to his hand...seems like a man doesn't need any more muscle strength...Where is the dignity in it anymore where a man can feel like he's standing ten feet tall?<sup>96</sup>

Pennier logged at the cusp of the industrial revolution of the coastal logging industry. Steam powered machines and trains no longer pulled the trees out of the woods- it was now done by diesel powered rigs. Pennier retired in 1959, just as many of the loggers I interviewed for this project were beginning their careers. But the stories these men told abounded with masculinity gleamed through hard work in a dangerous and unforgiving environment. Kat Pennier told me that working with big, powerful chainsaws was dangerous, and that not every man was able to use them safely: "not everyone could handle the saws, because they were bigger back then...they were powerful...and I had to carry them uphill. You had to have muscle."<sup>97</sup> Kat Pennier's father, an accomplished faller, tragically died after felling a tree with a chain saw.<sup>98</sup> Modern equipment moved trees quickly and seemingly without effort, which brought a whole new element of

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<sup>96</sup> Pennier, *Call me Hank*, 60-61.

<sup>97</sup> Chris and Danny Francis, interviewed by Colin Osmond, Chehalis, May 21, 2015.

<sup>98</sup> Clarence Pennier, interviewed by Colin Osmond. May 20 2015, Sardis, BC.

danger to a logging operation. Many of the loggers solemnly reflected on the tragedies that came with working with strong steel cables and powerful diesel powered winches. Stan McKay highlighted how modern machinery made it easier for mistakes and accidents to happen. Machines created blind spots where operators could not see the loggers, and powerful machinery often caused cables to snap when trees got snagged or hung up in the cluttered bush.<sup>99</sup> Chester Douglas recalled that using complex rigging systems to haul logs out of the forest sometimes was dangerous because logs could shift or come loose.<sup>100</sup> If the loose logs hit a snag or an elevated piece of terrain, they could completely detach from the cables, sending them sliding recklessly into the loading ground or camp. After working for several years in the bust, Les Adams said he preferred working in the booming grounds. He stated, “In the bush there was a high rate of danger. A lot of our boys were killed logging.”<sup>101</sup>

So what do we make of Hank Pennier’s conclusion, that logging has lost its masculinity? For Hank, modern logging took away the job that he claimed made a man feel ‘10 feet tall.’ But the loggers I interviewed spoke of and regarded their work in many of the same ways. Logging today is again a much transformed industry. Large logging crews were replaced by expensive machines that cut, fell, limb, and buck a tree in a fraction of the time it took with a chainsaw. Most of the large old growth trees are logged selectively by utilizing a technique called *standing stem harvesting* or Heli-logging. In this process, a faller will strategically cut a tree so that it remains standing, then cables attached to a helicopter mounted rigging system then grip the tree, sever it at the faller’s cuts, and hoist it away from the stump. These processes, while less environmentally degrading, require far fewer loggers than clear-cut or strip based commercial logging operations. The loggers I interviewed mostly look upon this type of logging the same way that Hank Pennier looked at the generation of loggers that replaced him.

Much like Hank Pennier, Perry Peters thought that new machines took too many jobs from men who needed the work. He stated that he “wouldn’t want to do that kind of logging. They focus too much on the little trees...it’s the big trees that keep you busy.”<sup>102</sup> For Peters, the size of the tree was a central tenet of the work- it was a challenge to fell a big tree, and he

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<sup>99</sup> Stan McKay, interviewed by Noah Miller and Colin Osmond. May 19, 2015, Matsqui, BC.

<sup>100</sup> Chester Douglas, interviewed by Davis Rogers and Colin Osmond. May 22, 2015, Cheam, BC.

<sup>101</sup> Leslie Adams, interviewed by Colin Osmond, Carrie Helter, and Omeasoo Butt. June 10 2013, Sliammon, BC.

<sup>102</sup> Paris Peters, interviewed by Colin Osmond. June 2, 2015, Seabird Island, BC.

developed a respect for the size and beauty of the giant trees he tackled. Chris Francis lamented the amount of men that the newer rendition of logging put out of work: “They eliminated... eighteen guys from that slackline... Nowadays one guy does all of that work... [that machine] does everything, it put a lot of guys out of work.”<sup>103</sup> Danny Francis, who had worked with both cross-cut saws and teams of horses, and chainsaws and rigging equipment, commented that the downfall of the modern industry was that the machines are “all computerized.”<sup>104</sup> For men like Francis, their ability to fix machinery on the spot and keep the job moving was something that helped them stand out in the logging camp. Newer machines, he told me, required special training and tools to fix, something that took away from a logger’s ingenuity.<sup>105</sup> Les Adams reflected that modern logging camps do not allow loggers to run like they did in his day. He expressed that logging companies “used to want you to get as many logs as you can. Today...they could fire you for running around, that’s the difference between our generations.”<sup>106</sup> Ab Kelly looks upon modern equipment as not just damaging to the industry, he openly stated that he “doesn’t think they’re too good, not like the [old equipment],” but that he also believed that modern logging is much more damaging to the final product: “when they use those machines, they crunch a tree like that...it ruins the wood. It bruises the wood up the tree. In the old days, the fallers would come in there and it was one cut.”<sup>107</sup> The way that Coast Salish men logged drastically changed, but it appears that the way they reflect on their careers, and on the future of logging, has common sinews that weave together a much more central narrative.

Even though many reflected on the modern logging industry with some disdain and reservation, they still respected the men who work in the woods today. Hank Pennier recognized that the industry had to change to keep up with demand, stating that he understood that they “always got to keep finding better ways of doing things with bigger and bigger equipment and better and better machinery.”<sup>108</sup> Perry Peters praised modern logger’s ability to adapt to fit the industry, and said that logging was still just as demanding, it is just different from when he logged.<sup>109</sup> Kat Pennier explained that even though there are fewer loggers working now, “people

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<sup>103</sup> Chris and Danny Francis, interviewed by Colin Osmond, Chehalis, May 21, 2015.

<sup>104</sup> Ibid.

<sup>105</sup> Ibid.

<sup>106</sup> Leslie Adams, interviewed by Colin Osmond, Carrie Helter, and Omeasoo Butt. June 10 2013, Sliammon, BC.

<sup>107</sup> Albert Kelly, interviewed by Colin Osmond. June 2 2015, Soowahlie, BC.

<sup>108</sup> Pennier, *Call me Hank*, 61.

<sup>109</sup> Paris Peters, interviewed by Colin Osmond. June 2, 2015, Seabird Island, BC.

still respect the job that they do.”<sup>110</sup> Each of these men did their time in the woods, and new technology challenged the way that they understood their livelihoods- and their identity as men. But they still respected the underlying identity that came with making your living from the woods, regardless of the machinery and tools that the new generation of loggers wielded.

When reflecting on their time in the woods, many expressed that they would, without hesitation, not change a thing about their career choice. For Chester Douglas, becoming a logger helped him change from a “juvenile delinquent, getting in trouble on the weekends, ending up in a drunk tank or on probation” to a respected man with a productive career.<sup>111</sup> He thanked working as a logger, and being a competitive boxer, for helping him to straighten his life out and stay out of trouble. Ab Kelly was forced into retirement after working for over thirty-five years in the bush, but he proudly claimed, “I’d do it all over, if I had a second chance...I bet ya I could still do it yet!”<sup>112</sup> Chris and Danny Francis contently stated that “we had a good life,” and then reminisced about how it had provided them with more than just careers, but a lifetime of prosperity.<sup>113</sup> Ron John, although concerned about the environmental impact of his work, said that he “really enjoyed it. I really loved it, and I made good money.”<sup>114</sup> Perry Peters, now in his 70s, never fully retired. He still works felling trees in the Fraser Valley, but he championed logging for providing him “something different every day, not like in these factories where you get bored.”<sup>115</sup>

These logger’s reflections tell us that logging meant much more than a job to them. They remember working in the woods in a positive light, even though many of them witnessed more than their share of death and injury. Becoming a logger provided a way for many Coast Salish youth to escape the oppressive teachings of the residential school system. They could then form identities that were not only cultural, but also occupational- they were not just loggers, they were Aboriginal Loggers. Coast Salish men earned their place in a dangerous and competitive industry through working hard. Becoming highball loggers provided an avenue for Coast Salish men to

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<sup>110</sup> Clarence Pennier, interviewed by Colin Osmond. May 20 2015, Sardis, BC.

<sup>111</sup> Chester Douglas, interviewed by Davis Rogers and Colin Osmond. May 22, 2015, Cheam, BC.

<sup>112</sup> Albert Kelly, interviewed by Colin Osmond. June 2 2015, Soowahlie, BC.

<sup>113</sup> Chris and Danny Francis, Interviewed by Colin Osmond, Chehalis, May 21, 2015. Chris and Danny Francis both reflected on their father’s success as a logger at several points in the interview. Near the end of our conversation, they both talked generally about the way that logging provided them with a long life of benefits.

<sup>114</sup> Ron and Patricia John, interviewed by Keith Carlson, Michelle Brandsma, and Colin Osmond. May 21, 2015, Chawathil, BC.

<sup>115</sup> Paris Peters, interviewed by Colin Osmond. June 2, 2015, Seabird Island, BC.

rise above the social and racial stigma of contemporary Canadian society. The downfall of the logging industry began in the late twentieth century, just as many of these men were reaching the end of their natural careers. It was becoming a different game, even more than it had for Hank Pennier several decades before. But while the technology changed, Coast Salish loggers still viewed logging as a way to become a man. Most importantly of all, it allowed Coast Salish men to transcend some of the negative racial stereotypes that were associated with being Indian in the mid-twentieth century.

## Conclusion: Coast Salish Logging and Masculinity

What is presented here is a history that provides insights into the ways Coast Salish men mobilized and performed particular forms of masculinity in their day-to-day informal negotiations with colonial society. To a lesser extent, it is also a study into the way different notions of masculinity were negotiated within Coast Salish society. What I have attempted to do is illustrate the way Coast Salish men used particular expressions of masculinity, in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, to develop identities at a time when the racist dimensions of settler colonialism made notions of equality between Indigenous people and members of newcomer society difficult. I have also attempted to show that for Coast Salish men in the logging industry, there was no real division between so-called colonial and Indigenous masculinities. Neither Indigenous masculinity nor non-Indigenous masculinity can be easily and neatly distinguished. Culture informs, indeed constructs, masculinity. And the lived experience of equating being a good logger with being a good man needs to be played out within the hybrid context in which Coast Salish people engaged logging, and settler society, in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries.

What I have suggested is that working with forest products has always been important to certain Coast Salish men's masculine identities. Cutting down a giant cedar and commodifying it certainly provided more than just material to pre-contact Coast Salish men – it let them flex their muscles, demonstrate special skills, face danger, experience excitement, and receive praise. It also gave them a way to provide for their families and communities, and offered an avenue to social betterment through potlatching, gifting, and spirituality. When a Coast Salish youth began developing the inclination and skills needed, whether spiritual or practical, to become a woodworker, he learned responsibility; he learned to be a man. Important aspects of what made pre-contact logging appealing continued into the colonial period of capitalist wage labour. And additionally, it provided a means of transcending racial bigotry.

I have tried to tease out this idea chronologically to see how the experience of cutting down trees has changed for Coast Salish men over time. Logging became a central occupation for Coast Salish men in the post-contact period. In the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, working alongside non-Aboriginal loggers in camps provided Aboriginal men with a means to achieve social parity and occupational success in a society where they were physically

segregated, culturally oppressed, and socially limited. It allowed Coast Salish men to be more than binaric opposites in the psyche of settler men. Developing logging industries on their own lands, through whatever means possible, allowed them to engage with settler society by asserting their right to control their land and resources. These assertions became emblematic of Coast Salish resistance to the imposition of patriarchal laws by the Canadian State. Most importantly, logging gave Coast Salish men with a means to continually assert their masculine identity – “standing ten feet tall,” in the words of Hank Pennier – and shed the aura of paternalism that eclipsed Aboriginal men’s identities in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries.

Modern works of Indigenous history should contribute to decolonizing antiquated historical narratives that omit or ignore Indigenous voices. As I neared the final drafting of my thesis, I realized that there is something intrinsically decolonializing about the way that these men spoke about their experiences as loggers. Logging was a way to shed colonial oppression – it was a way for men to succeed in a world that pinned them down culturally, racially, and socially. And while both the Newcomers and Aboriginal people’s identities changed after contact, in ways that echo Bhabha’s notions on cultural hybridity – Indigenous masculinities became somewhat colonized, but settler masculinities also became somewhat indigenized – what emerged was a range of masculinities that Coast Salish loggers sometimes embraced.<sup>1</sup> As highlighted in Chapter Three, ideals on masculinity were passed down through generations. The men who pushed to control trees in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries laid the groundwork for the next generation of Coast Salish loggers. The last few generations of Coast Salish loggers grew up hearing these stories – of their ancestors pushing for control of their land, resources, and identities – and this, in turn, informed the way that they understood masculinity and manhood.

This thesis contributes to the growing body of literature that challenges the romantic depiction of the “ecological Indian,”<sup>2</sup> but it does so without creating new stereotypes in its place and without denying that ecological concerns were important to Coast Salish loggers – even as they participated in cutting down trees. We have to remember that the modern forestry crises developed out of the mechanical ability to process trees in a largely unsustainable way. For many

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<sup>1</sup> Bhabha, *Location of Culture*, 2-9.

<sup>2</sup> For more on the mythos of the ecological Indian, see: Shepard Krech, *The Ecological Indian: Myth and History* (New York: W.W. Norton and Co., 1999).



modern Coast Salish loggers, the destruction of forests was not something that they considered during their logging careers. Chester Douglas said that taking too many trees “was never a concern. It was just a general attitude that the resource was there and it would never go away.”<sup>3</sup> Douglas believed that it was international demand, not domestic and local consumption that provided the market for overconsumption.<sup>4</sup> Chris Francis stated that he “Never thought of it” and that “there is still enough timber out there...and they are replanting every summer.”<sup>5</sup> For Perry Peters, it was not the act of logging, it was the modern method: “I don’t like clear cuts. It’s better to take a patch and leave the rest...Those big trees will always come back again...Mother Nature, she knows what she is doing.”<sup>6</sup> Similarly, Ron John believes that it was a lack of planning that resulted in overconsumption, and advocates the tactic of cutting in logging strips rather than clear-cutting.<sup>7</sup>

These loggers’ reflections suggest that Coast Salish loggers never contemplated a future without trees, or that they might be contributing to some larger ecological crisis. We need to remember that it has not been that long since loggers used axes, saws, and muscle to extract timber from the forest. And it is not hard to imagine that a logger in the mid-twentieth century, deep in an isolated forest surrounded by trees, would have a difficult time doing so. Much like it is important to realize that comparing an assumed pre-contact Indigenous traditional identity to modern Coast Salish people is problematic, we need to imagine nineteenth and twentieth century loggers’ perspectives without our current knowledge of the degradation caused by commercial logging. If not, we risk not seeing the forest for the trees.

The stories these Coast Salish loggers told me complicate the non-Aboriginal historical knowledge surrounding forest use, logging, and Aboriginal identity. Indeed, these stories are powerful. The narrative I have formed here is a summary and blending of these men’s histories. My research on Coast Salish loggers in governmental records and correspondences confirm the importance of logging to the Coast Salish in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. Yet, these stories add much nuance and provide so much more than proof of participation in an industry.

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<sup>3</sup> Interview with Chester Douglas.

<sup>4</sup> Ibid.

<sup>5</sup> Interview with Chris and Danny Francis.

<sup>6</sup> Interview with Paris Peters.

<sup>7</sup> Interview with Ron and Patricia John.

Working as a logger served an important function for these men. To them, it is much more than a job and a paycheck. It enabled them to be men.

One story, told to me by Stan McKay, has sinews that weave a common thread between what many of these men told me. Cutting down trees, for them, was a way of life, and a way to provide their families with better lives. Rather than explain what I think Stan McKay's message was, from my perspective as an outsider, I will give him the final word:

It is a sacred wood, cedar, to the First Nations people. They used it...our ancestors used the bark, the wood, they built canoes, they made bows, they made bowls. Lots of carvers made big bowls. They used cedars. Any of our carvings are in cedar, usually red or yellow... It gave us life. And I work in cedar every day, and I think that's why I feel good too. At the age I am, I hear everybody complaining down there. They don't understand that we are all connected to the world. Whatever is around us, we are connected to, wherever we are. Whether if we are breathing the same air, drinking the same water, or whether we are working with the same sacred wood. You know, I feel that the wood I work with is sacred because it has given me the life that I have been looking for, in order to raise my family. If it wasn't for the cedar, I wouldn't have a job, I wouldn't have brought up my children, watch my children bring up their children. Some of my kids worked down there, you know. Now we are into the great-grandchildren, and they are just little, but it's up to them to understand the way we talk about cedar. Understand that it was our lifeline at one time.<sup>8</sup>

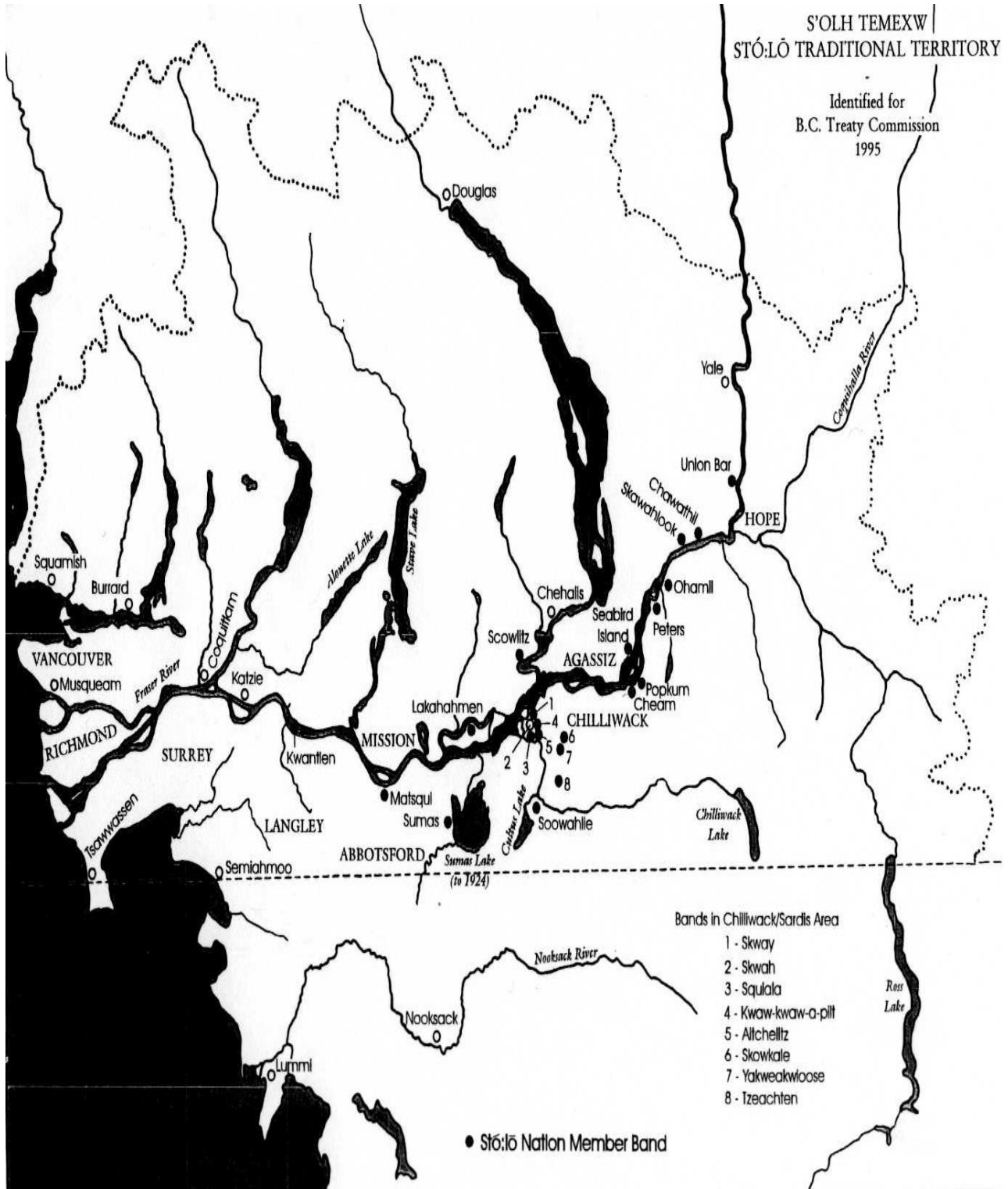
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<sup>8</sup> Stan McKay, interviewed by Noah Miller and Colin Osmond. May 19, 2015, Matsqui, BC.

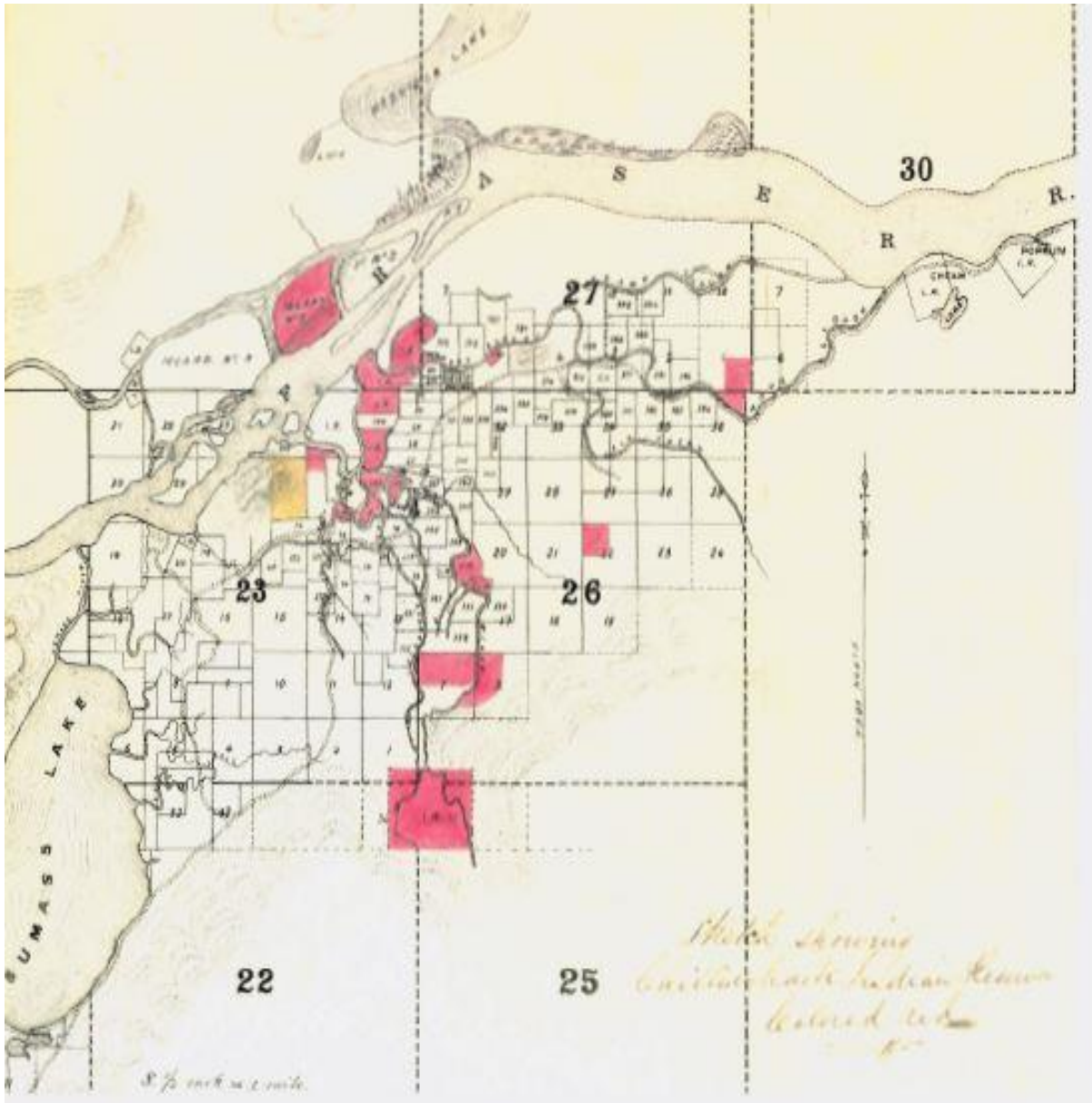
## Illustrations



*1 Tla'amin Traditional Territory and Reservations (Tla'amin Treaty Final Agreement, Indigenous and Northern Affairs Canada)*

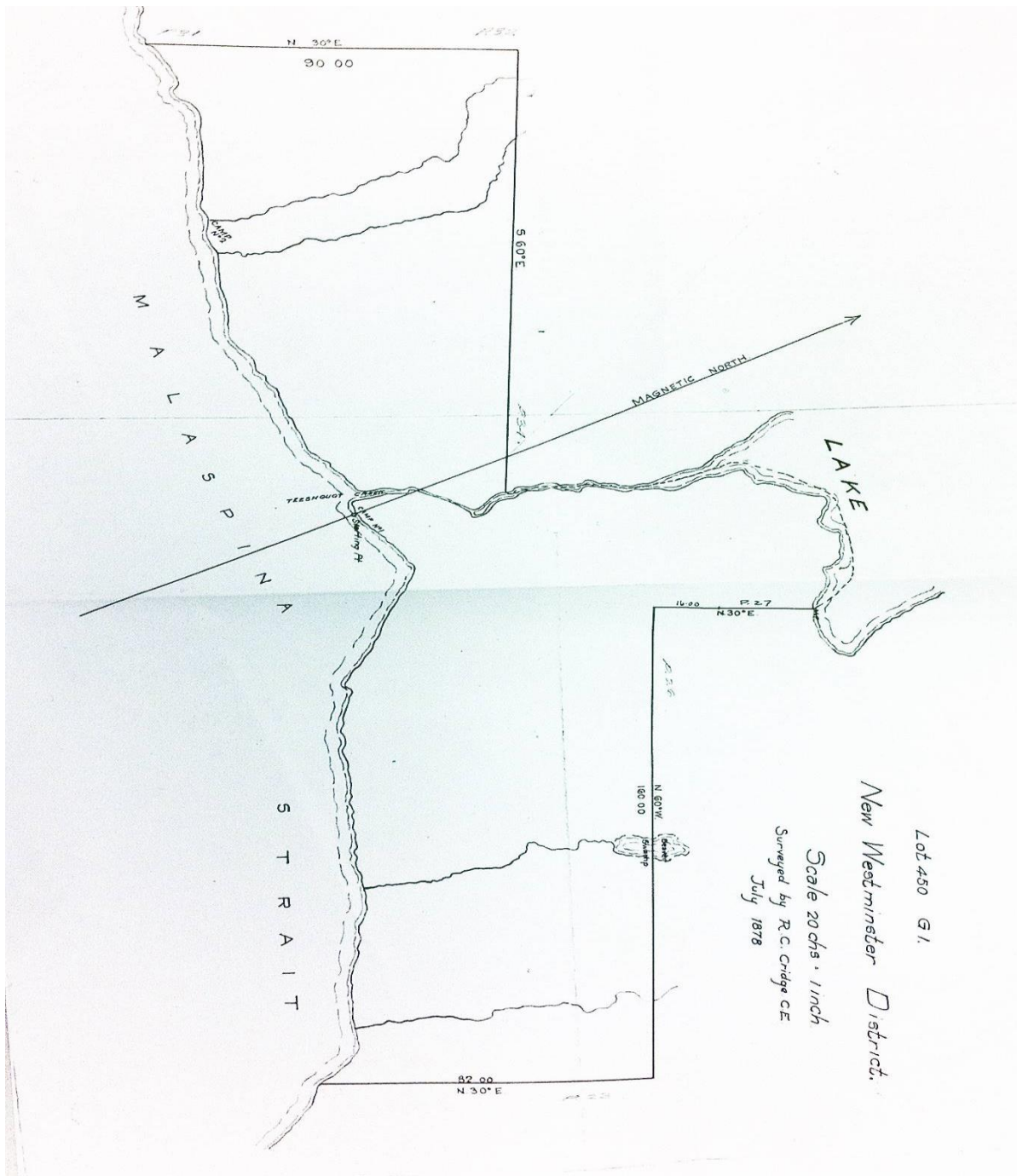


*2 S'ohl Temexw: Stó:lō Traditional Territory (Courtesy of the British Columbia Treaty Association)*



3 By the time the JIRC came to the Fraser Valley to survey reserves in the 1870s and 1880s, settlers had already taken much of the land surrounding the small reserves allocated by Douglas in the early colonial period (“Sketch Showing Chilliwack Indian Reserves,” Provincial Collection, Binder 4, File 591-80, “Materials produced by the Joint Indian Reserve Commission and Indian Reserve Commission, 1876-1910,” Union of British Columbia Indian Chiefs Archives, pp. 73)





4 Survey Map of 'Lot 450.' This survey encompassed a large tract of the Tla'amin's territory, including the village of Tees'kwat, which is labelled here at the mouth of the river (R.C. Cridge, Surveyor, "Lot 450, New Westminster district," July 1878, Darryl Muralt Collection. Powell River Historical Museum and Archives, Powell River)



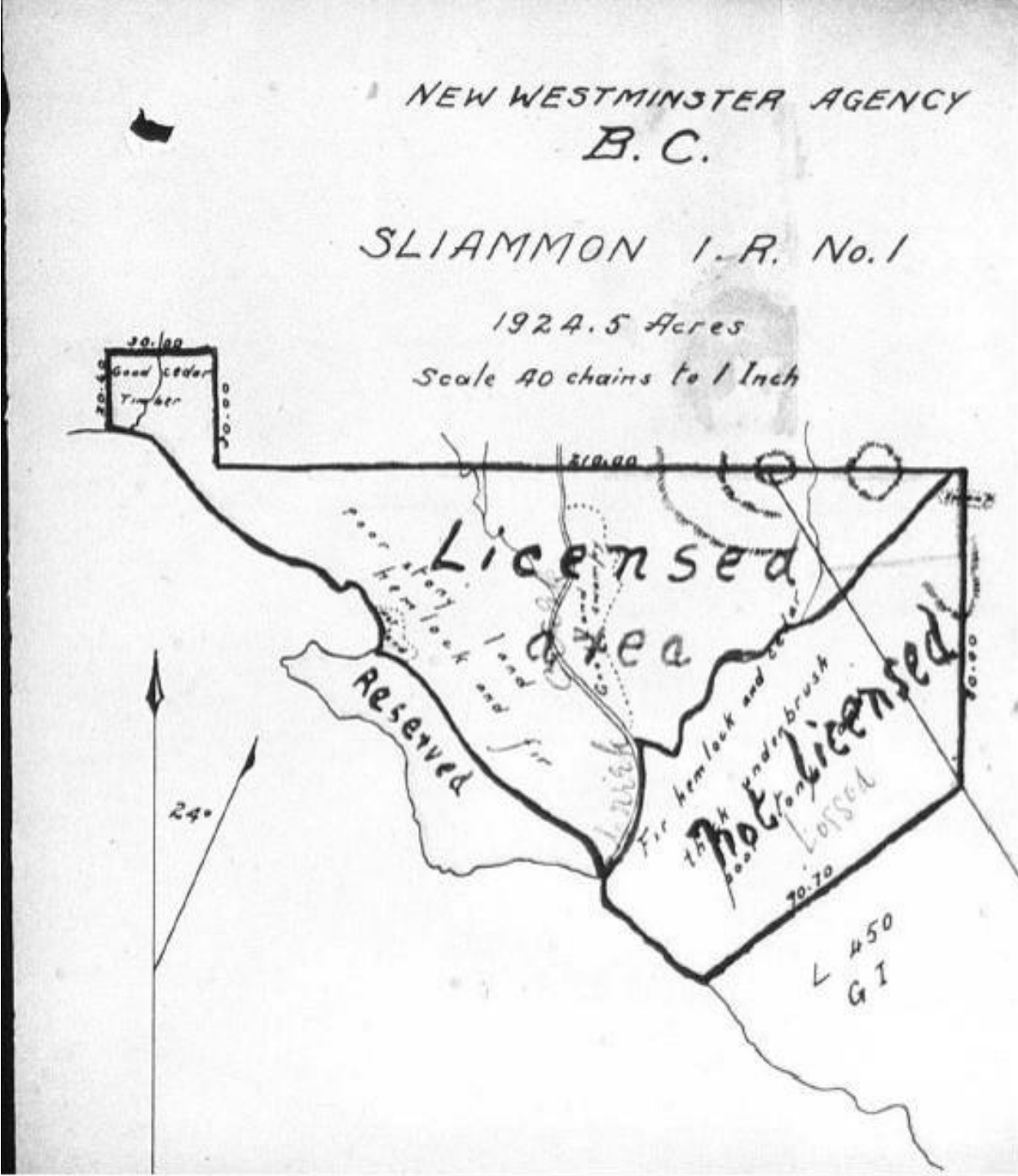
*5 Powell River Pulp and Paper Mill, circa 1912 (Rod Le May Collection, Powell River Historical Museum and Archives)*



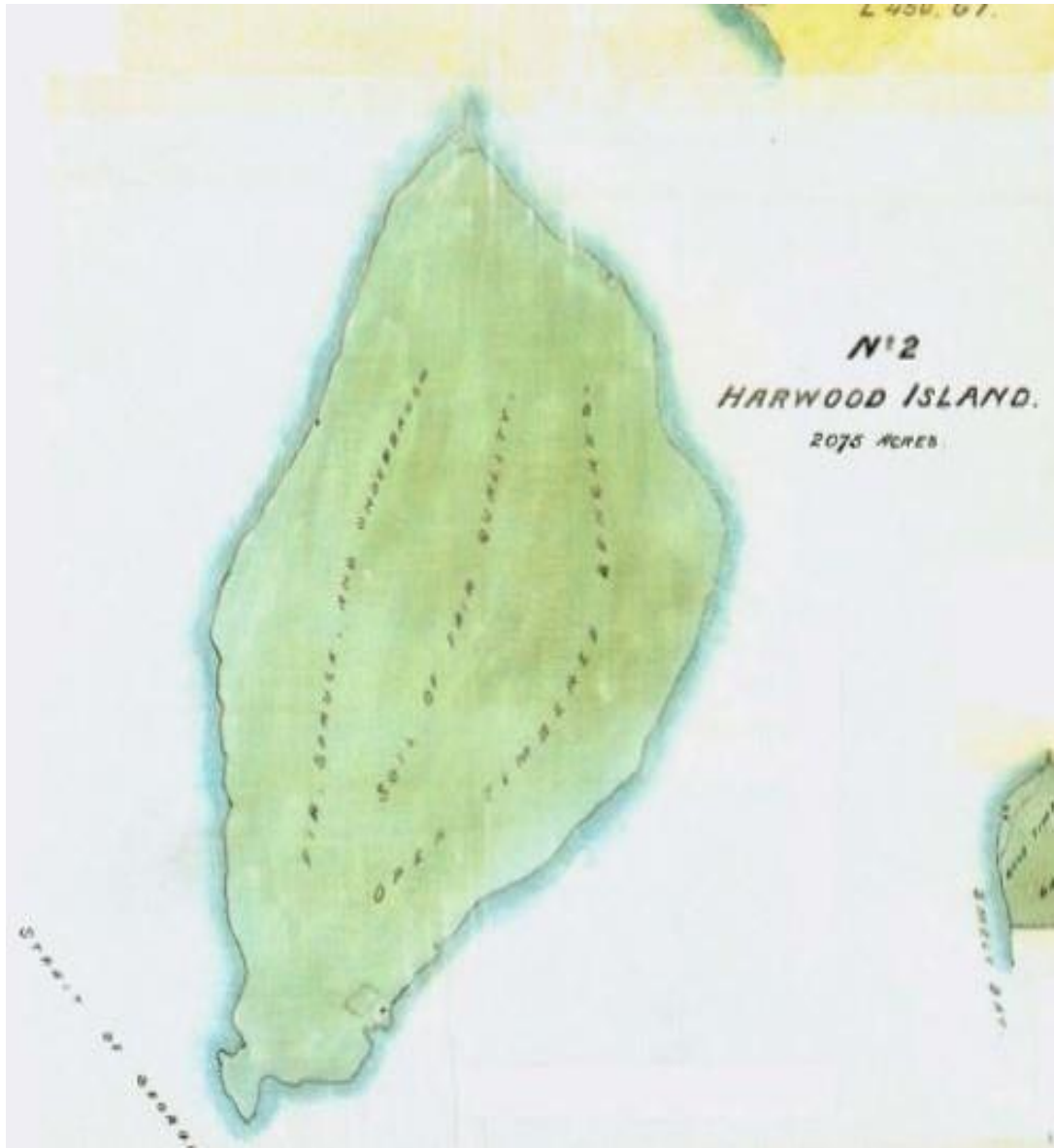
*6 Chief Tom – The Tla'amin's last hereditary Chief (Courtesy of the Tla'amin Treaty Society)*







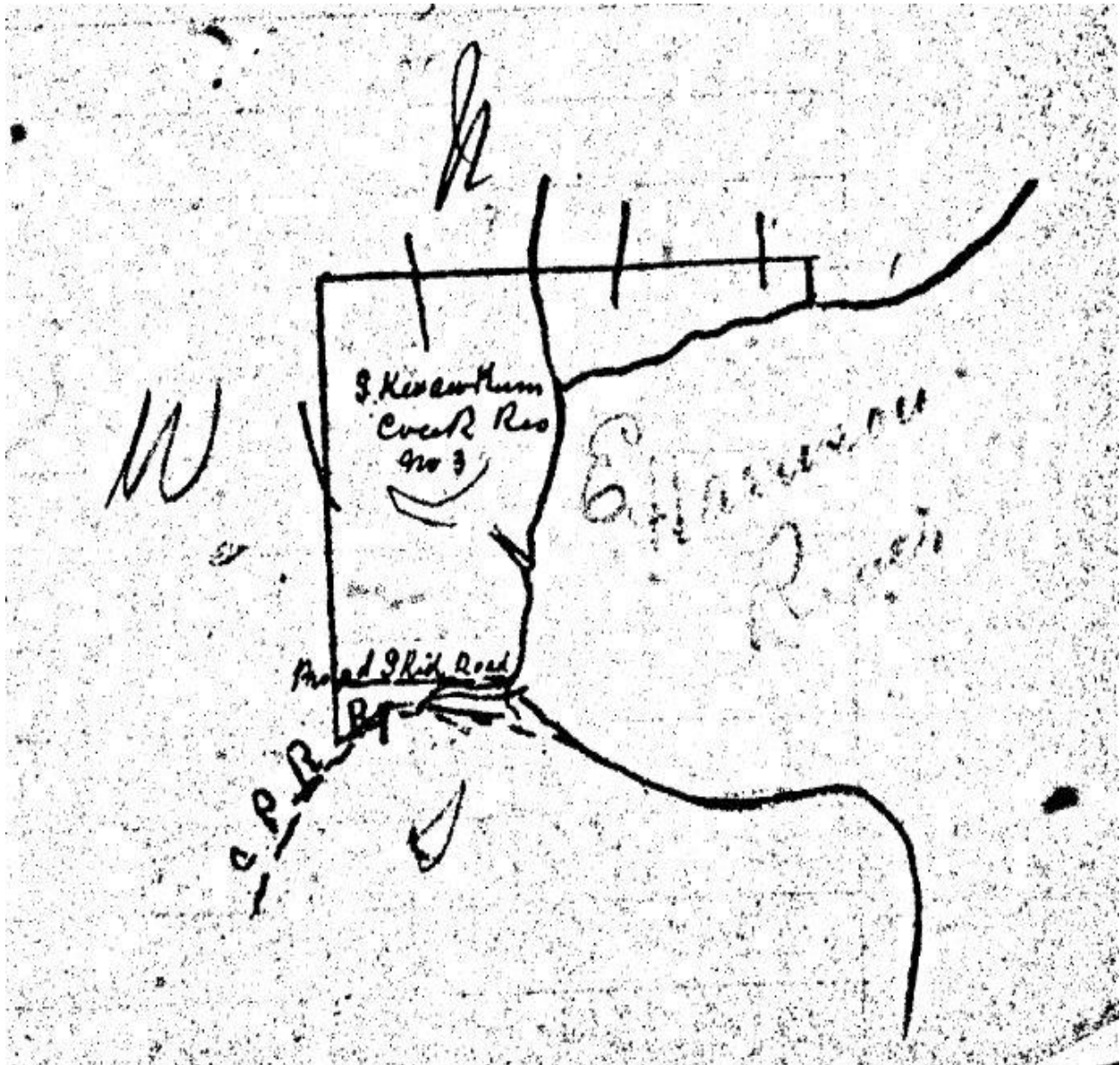
8 Timber Surrender at Sliammon IR #1, 1916 (National Archives, RG10, Reel C-12126, Vol. 7861, file 30167-24)



9 Official survey map from 1888 JIRC survey of Harwood Island (Provincial Collection, Binder 9, File 3012-88, "Materials produced by the Joint Indian Reserve Commission and Indian Reserve Commission, 1876-1910," Union of British Columbia Indian Chiefs Archives, pp. 5a)







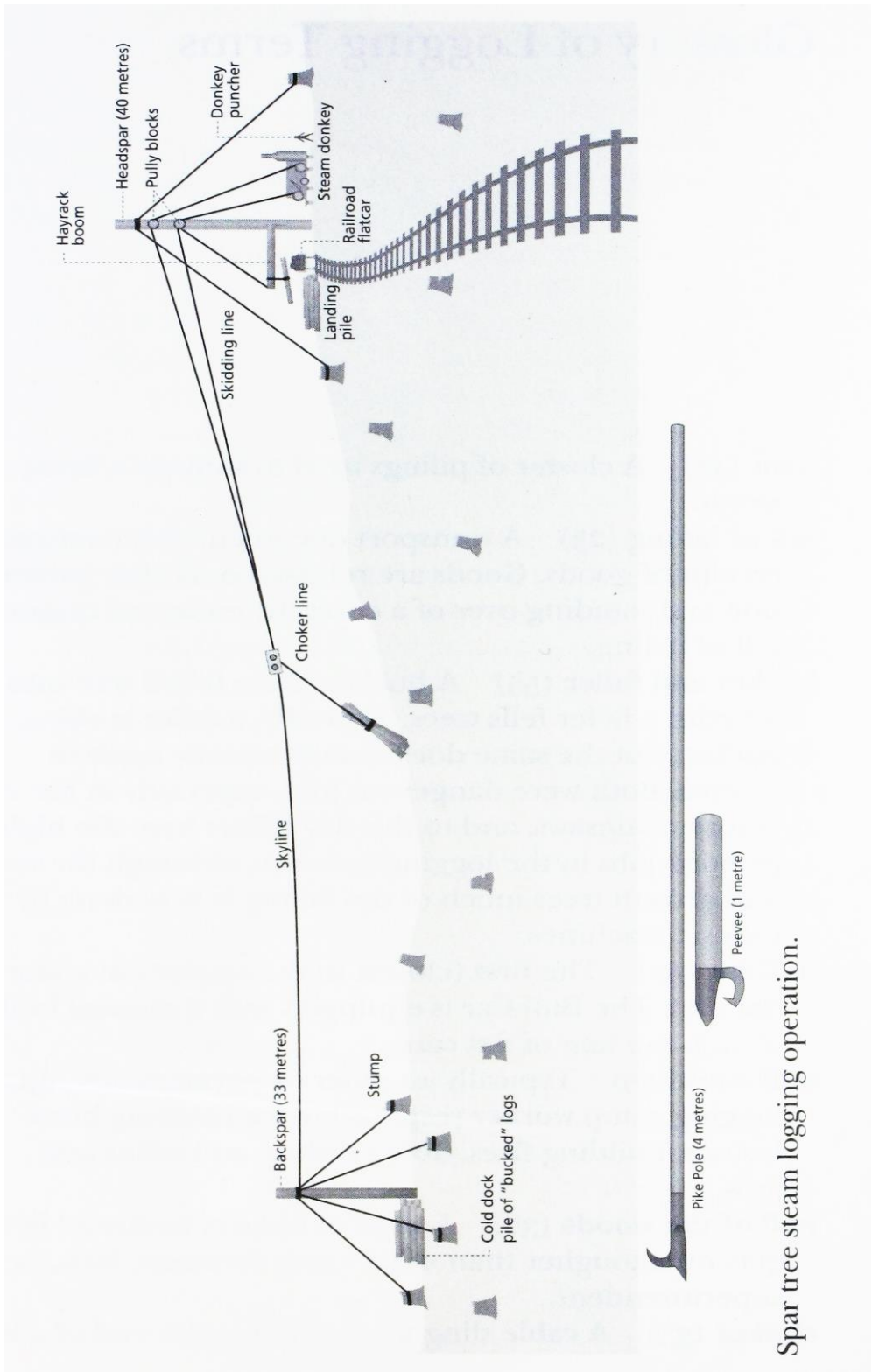
11 Sketch map showing Thretheway's logging skid road that ran across Chehalis #3. This road gave the Chehalis an annual rental fee, and also access to jobs at Thretheway's camp (National Archives, Reel 12121, Vol. 7854, File 30153-12)







*13 Tla'amin Logging Crew-note the young boys on the bottom right (Photo Courtesy of the Tla'amin Treaty Society)*



14 Spar Tree Steam Logging Operation (Courtesy of Dr. Keith Carlson)





*15 The Bob Family on Harwood Island- note the axe held by young Ralph Bob (Photo Courtesy of the Tla'amin Treaty Society)*



*16 Chris Francis logging in the Fraser Valley, date unknown (Courtesy of Danny Francis)*





*17 Danny Francis standing next to a giant cedar in the Fraser Valley, date unknown (Courtesy of Danny Francis)*



*18 Tla'amin Logging Crew on logging truck- note the spar tree in the background (Courtesy of Tla'amin Treaty Society)*



## Appendix

### Pre-Contact Coast Salish Forestry and Wood Working

There was a real good man who was always helping others. Whenever they needed, he gave; when they wanted, he gave them food and clothing. When the Great Spirit saw this, he said, “That man has done his work; when he dies and where he is buried, a cedar tree will grow and he will be useful to the people- the roots for baskets, the bark for clothing, the wood for shelter.<sup>9</sup>

-Bertha Peters, Stó:lō Elder

Few things are more important to Coast Salish people than cedar. Cedar (Western Red Cedar, *Thuja plicata*, and Yellow Cedar, *Chamaecyparis nootkatensis*) provided many of the necessities for survival in the rugged Pacific Northwest. It is a soft wood with long straight inner fibres that can be easily plied apart, allowing the Coast Salish to split cedars into long, straight, and strong planks for use in the construction of longhouses. This was done with an artist’s precision. Large trunks of cedar were used to carve ocean going canoes, as well as totem poles or welcoming figures that would grace the entrances of villages and longhouses alike. Cedar bark was also utilized; it provided materials for clothing, baskets, canoe-bailers, and various cultural items. After being soaked in water, the thin fibres behind the rough bark could be split, providing long threads that could be used in a multitude of ways: tie house planks together, bind stone or bone to wood to make weapons or tools, weaved together to make hats to protect from the sun, or clothing or armour. Bark fibre could also be weaved into strong ropes that secured fishing weirs, or helped move massive logs from the forest to the sea.<sup>10</sup>

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<sup>9</sup> Bertha Peters, qtd. In Hilary Stewart, *Cedar: Tree of Life to the Northwest Coast Indians* (Vancouver: Douglas and MacIntyre, 1984), 27.

<sup>10</sup> The many uses of the cedar tree are explored at length in Hilary Stewart’s *Cedar*. Franz Boas also documents the various methods and tools used to harvest wood throughout coastal British Columbia in his “First General Report on the Indians of British Columbia,” *Report on the 59<sup>th</sup> Meeting of the British Association for the Advancement of Science* (Newcastle-upon-Tyne, 1889). There is also a short but detailed discussion of the use of cedar in Naxaxalhts’i Albert ‘Sonny’ McHalsie’s article in *Be of Good Mind* (“We Have to Take Care of Everything That Belongs to Us,” 104). Cedar is also an important cultural and spiritual resource for the Coast Salish, and the lack of discussion of the spiritual realm is not an oversight by this thesis. I made a difficult decision to omit the spiritual and cultural aspects of cedar due to space restraints. An entire thesis could be dedicated to this aspect of cedar, and rather than try and squeeze in a few paragraphs, I decided to focus solely on cedar as a resource and commodity. Further, utilizing a cedar was a gendered activity. While the felling of the tree was reserved as a job for men, women and men both often harvested the roots and bark. Weaving cedar into baskets, clothing, and rope was also mainly practiced by women.

Retired Tla'amin logger Freddy Louie explained to me that the Old People<sup>11</sup> used every part of the cedar tree, from root to tip.<sup>12</sup> For Coast Salish, cedar trees are not just resources, they are considered family for they possess the spirit of a legendary person. In the Tla'amin's language, the word for *tree* and the word for *family* are the same: *jeh jeh*. For the Stó:lō, as Bertha Peter's narrative explains, the cedar tree contains the spirit of Xepa:y, who, upon his death, was transformed into a cedar tree so he could keep giving to the Stó:lō people.<sup>13</sup> The Coast Salish thus treat the forest and trees with respect; disrespecting the forest meant directly disrespecting your family and ancestors. As Stó:lō knowledge keeper Naxalhts'i (Albert 'Sonny' McHalsie) explained, cedar trees are not solely looked upon as an important resource, they are also "looked upon as one of our ancestors and we need to pay respect to that ancestor so we have...the prayer that is said to Xepa:y, thanking him for all of the different things we get."<sup>14</sup> Working with cedar, therefore, came with a great cultural and spiritual responsibility. It reflects the value of not only the resource, but also the skill and talent of those who sought to work with this sacred wood.

Harvesting cedar from the forest happened in many different ways. Some harvest activities could be done without actually toppling a tree to the ground. Certain amounts of bark or roots could be stripped without killing the tree. Skilled Coast Salish loggers could even remove entire planks from a standing tree without endangering the tree's life.<sup>15</sup> Strategically harvesting cedar was extremely practical, as harvesting specific parts meant that the loggers could avoid the arduous labour involved in cutting down the behemoth tree, which grew to be 250 feet tall and 15 feet in diameter. Many of these trees, known today by archaeologists and forest managers as *culturally modified trees*, can be found throughout coastal forests today. They are silent reminders that the forest has witnessed hundreds of generations of Coast Salish loggers working in the woods.<sup>16</sup>

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<sup>11</sup> When the Tla'amin refer to 'The Old People,' they are referring to their deceased ancestors. For the Coast Salish, the spirit of a person still lives after death, and they are often present to listen and witness modern events.

<sup>12</sup> Freddy Louie, interviewed by Colin Osmond, June 18 2013.

<sup>13</sup> Naxalhts'i Albert 'Sonny' MacHalsie, "We Have to Take Care of Everything That Belongs to Us," in *Be of Good Mind*, ed. Bruce Granville Miller (Vancouver: UBC Press, 2007), 104.

<sup>14</sup> *Ibid.*, 105.

<sup>15</sup> Stewart, *Cedar*, 40-46.

<sup>16</sup> For more on *culturally modified trees* see, Arnoud H. Stryd, "CMT (culturally modified tree) archaeology in British Columbia: the Meares Island studies," *BC Studies* 99 (1993): 184-234.

But for certain purposes, the tree would need to be felled to the forest floor. To do so, Coast Salish loggers developed a methodology, along with an important set of tools. Indeed, early explorers recorded that, on the west coast of Vancouver Island, Aboriginal people would trade for European tools only to modify them into ones that resembled their own stone implements.<sup>17</sup> Some trees were felled by a team of loggers working in tandem, using chisels to cut a circular ‘undercut’ at the base of a tree. Other times, loggers cut into the center of a tree’s base and placed hot coals or pitch inside the hollowed trunk; loggers would then work to ensure that the fire remained at a consistent temperature so the fire did not spread beyond the controlled burn in the base. After many long hours, the tree’s core would be weakened to a point where the trunk would break and the tree would fall to the ground. This method saved many hours of tough physical labour, but it also brought the increased risk of damaging the tree or setting the forest alight. The Coast Salish searched their territories for the perfect trees. Cedar destined for canoes needed to be long, straight, and have a long, smooth trunk free of branches. These trees were often prepared long before the loggers sunk their tools into its bark. Freddy Louie explained that decades, if not generations, before loggers cut down the tree, other people had pulled off branches and managed the landscape around the tree to ensure that it would grow within strict dimensions.<sup>18</sup> Systems of resource ownership dictated who owned the rights to have such managed trees.<sup>19</sup>

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<sup>17</sup> Alexander Walker, *An Account of a Voyage to the North West Coast of America in 1785 and 1786*, eds. Robin Fisher and J.M. Bumsted (Vancouver: Douglas and MacIntyre, 1982), 108-109. Walker, an Ensign on the ship *HMS Captain Cook*, recorded in 1786 that, “They are much dissatisfied with the shape of our tools, that they generally altered it after buying them...a chisel, five inches long, and very broad towards the end, they preferred over all our tools.” John Meares also recorded that the Nu-Chah-Nulth at Friendly Cove, “manufactured tools from the iron which they obtained from us; and it was very seldom that we could persuade them to make use of any of our utensils in preference to their own...In particular, they contrived to forge from the iron they procured of us, a kind of tool, which answered the purpose of hollowing out large trees much better than any utensil we could give them. This business they accomplished by main strength, with a flat stone by way of anvil, and a round one which served the purpose of a hammer; and with these instruments they shaped the iron from the fire into a tool bearing some resemblance to a cooper’s adze, which they fastened to an handle of wood with cords made of sinews” (John Meares, *Voyages to the North-West Coast of America* (New York: De Capo Press, 1967), 262-263.)

<sup>18</sup> Freddy Louie, interviewed by Colin Osmond, 18 June 2013.

<sup>19</sup> Freddy Louie described that certain families had rights to regulate access to particular stands of trees (interview at Sliammon, June 18 2013); Martin Jensen (a retired white logger, and an honorary member of the Tla’amin Band) told me that he remembers hearing of people tying ropes around certain trees in the woods, or around logs that escaped log booms and were salvaged on coastal beaches, which would effectively mean that someone had claimed ownership to that tree (interview at Sliammon, June 2013); Hilary Stewart describes how many CMTs contain ‘test holes,’ which ostensibly were used to check if a tree’s core had any sign of rot. Stewart suggests that due to the variety of the size and shape of these holes, they may also have been a way to show ownership over certain trees (Stewart, *Cedar*, 37-39). And as cedar trees are hollow near the bottom, and living trees do not contain rot, the latter meaning of the ‘test holes’ seems most plausible.

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