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SALISHAN TRIBES OF THE COAST

WITH a few exceptions[1] the entire territory west of the Cascade mountains from the Columbia river northward almost to the fiftieth parallel was inhabited by a multitude of tribes more or less closely related, but all speaking dialects of a common language - the Salishan. In the interior this stock extends even beyond the fifty-second parallel in British Columbia, and occupies a large portion of eastern Washington, northern Idaho, and western Montana. It is therefore one of the most widespread and most numerous families of North American Indians.

The country inhabited by the coast Salish is a land of varied aspect. Extending over nearly four degrees of latitude, or some two hundred and fifty miles from north to south, and a hundred miles from east to west, it is diversified by such regions as the low-lying shores of Shoalwater bay (Willapa harbor) and Grays harbor; the loftier prairies between Cowlitz river and the head of Puget sound; the deep, ramifying waters of that inland sea and of adjacent bodies; the maze of islands between the Strait of Juan de Fuca and the Strait of Georgia; the lowlands of the deltas of such rivers as the Skagit, the Nooksack, and the Fraser; the serrated coasts of British Columbia beyond the Fraser and of the lower eastern portion of Vancouver island. Everywhere the land is clothed in a dark green garment of huge fir, spruce, and cedar, and a dense, matted undergrowth of vines and bushes slowly, relentlessly choking and annihilating the fallen lords of the forest– on every hand save where a limited stretch of prairie lies surrounded by the green, living wall whose outposts, ever encroaching, dot the grassy margin with their slender shoots; or where a sandy beach slopes back to the forest from the desolate tideflats with their wheeling squadrons of screaming gulls; or where the bold, rugged mountains lift their snow-covered

1 These exceptions are: the Chinookan tribes on the Columbia; the Willapa at the head of Chehalis river and on the upper course of Willapa river; the Quilliute on the ocean coast at the mouth of Quillayute river and the linguistically related Chimakum on the Strait of Juan de Fuca in the neighborhood of Port Angeles, Washington; the Makah at Cape Flattery, and the cognate Nootkan tribes on the west coast of Vancouver island. The Bellacoola, a Salish group inhabiting Dean inlet, British Columbia, will be considered in a future volume.

peaks far above the timber-line.

In a land of such extent and such variety a certain diversity of habit in its people is to be expected. Thus the bands living about Shoalwater bay and the Cowlitz on Cowlitz river intermarried with the Chinook, their neighbors on the south, and were considerably influenced by the culture of that tribe. The Quinault, on the contrary, though closely related to the Shoalwater Bay people, differed considerably from all their congeners in that they were the only whaling tribe of the Salishan stock. This industry (which, it must be noted, was not extensively practised by them) they acquired from the next tribe on the north, the Quilliute, who in turn had it from the Makah of Cape Flattery; the compelling factor in the adoption of this hazardous employment lying in the location of the Quinault at the mouth of a short river flowing into the open ocean. The myriad tribes on the shores and the tributary streams of Puget sound, Hoods canal, and the waters immediately northward, were quite homogeneous in their habits, yet the Nisqualli, on the river of that name, found in their grassy prairies an incentive to the acquisition of horses, and, alone among the coast Salish, they developed a culture in part equestrian, without abandoning their aboriginal aquatic pursuits. Finally the Cowichan group on Vancouver island bears many resemblances to the Kwakiutl tribes, who possess a culture quite markedly different from the normal Salishan culture. Between the two extremes, the Cowichan in the north and the Cowlitz in the south, there is a wide range of difference, the change making itself evident in a gradual progression from the south to the north and to be explained on the ground of environment, which develops special habits, and of association, which results in borrowed customs.

Nevertheless, in spite of these variations, the region now under consideration constitutes a well-defined culture-area. It is not proposed to attempt here a description in detail of each group of associated villages– a treatment which would prove tedious, unprofitable, and full of repetition; but rather to define the geographical position and the environment of each group, noting at the same time such habits as are peculiarly its own, and speaking briefly of its history. A comprehensive view of the area having thus been gained, a general discussion of the culture common to the coast Salish will follow.

COWLITZ

THE Cowlitz comprised about thirty settlements distributed along Cowlitz river from its junction with the Columbia to a point a few miles east of the Willamette meridian, a distance of forty to fifty miles. Allied by speech and by proximity, the people of these villages were not politically united by a tribal organization. Nevertheless their language contained a collective name for them - Stlpúlimuhkl.

No early writer gives us an adequate estimate of the Cowlitz population before strange diseases began their ravages. Native information must therefore be relied on. From one of the few survivors was obtained, along with a full list of the villages and their location, a careful estimate of the number of houses in each settlement. The result is surprising, indicating a total of four hundred and forty-five houses, or a minimum population of more than six thousand. It is safe to say that prior to about 1830 there were four thousand people on Cowlitz river, though it must be said that a few of the villages near its mouth were partly inhabited by Chinookan people married to Cowlitz. The ethnologist Gibbs, who made his observations in 1853 and later, supposed that the maximum number of Cowlitz and Upper Chehalis was four thousand, but at the time he wrote the Cowlitz were rapidly approaching extinction.

The swift depletion of this tribe was due almost wholly to epidemic disease. It is known that between 1820 and 1830 congestive fever worked havoc among the tribes of the lower Columbia. About 1830 measles attacked the Cowlitz with terrible effect, and about 1845 a visitation of cholera resulted in some two hundred deaths. Then quickly followed fever and chills, and the fever-racked natives, throwing themselves into the streams for relief, hastened the end. More than half the people died at this time, declares a woman who survived the attack. Many a house was left empty, or with a single occupant. Then in rapid succession came measles, cholera, fever, and again the measles, and finally a few years later an outbreak of smallpox completed the work and left the Cowlitz little more than a name. Whiskey played but an insignificant rôle in the extinction of this tribe.

The Cowlitz never entered into a treaty with the United States, but the remnant was settled on Puyallup reservation.

An outline of the seasonal occupations of the people affords a good

conception of the manner in which they subsisted. About the first of May they abandoned their permanent winter villages and erected in the prairies at the root-digging grounds mat lodges of the same type as their cedar-board houses. Two months later, having harvested and cooked or dried their roots, they moved up into the hills where berries grew abundantly. Late in August close watch on the height of the water in the river was kept by young men despatched from time to time on this errand, and when, usually about the first of September, it was sufficiently low to permit the construction of weirs, the chiefs issued commands to their people, who set out for their respective villages. Here the women cleaned and renovated the houses, the families moved in, and soon all were busily engaged in building the fish-weirs, of which some of the larger villages controlled two while the majority were served by one each. Weir fishing continued until the freshets caused by early winter rains forced the removal of the timbers and poles, which were carefully laid away for the next season's use. Throughout the winter and the early spring the salmon were taken by spearing in the smaller streams. The fish were preserved by hanging them on poles in the house and building a number of small fires beneath them. Like all tribes living on streams near the mountains, the Cowlitz were good hunters and followed the deer at all seasons.

UPPER CHEHALIS

Closely related to the Cowlitz in speech and in customs were the people living on Chehalis river and its affluents from Satsop river to the vicinity of the present town of Chehalis, Washington. These were known as the Kwaiyaíilhlk. In 1853 they numbered, according to Gibbs, only about two hundred, and were becoming fused with the Cowlitz.

SHOALWATER BAY

The bands inhabiting the shores and the tributary streams of the northern half of Shoalwater bay (Willapa harbor) have usually been included in the term Lower Chehalis; but in fact, though their dialect differed little from that of the Lower Chehalis, they constituted a distinct aggregation, closely associated with one another. In their

own language they are known as Cht'átsmihlch, that is, People of the Enclosed Bay. Their villages were situated on the shores of the bay from the present town of Northcove down to the mouth of Palux river, and on Willapa river up to the present town of Raymond.

Of these villages a native informant names ten that were still occupied in his boyhood, about the year 1840, and estimates the number of houses as fifty and the population as about one thousand. Two settlements were at that time already extinct. Many of these Salish people were married to Chinookan inhabitants about the southern end of Shoalwater bay, and on the other hand in three or four of the villages on Willapa river there was a considerable admixture of the Athapascan Willapa, who occupied the upper course of that stream. A few of the Shoalwater Bay Indians now reside on a reservation of less than half a square mile at Georgetown, Washington, while others are to be found on Chehalis reservation. Here and there is a family still occupying one of the old village sites. The total number of this group cannot be determined with accuracy, but it is almost negligible.

Unlike the Cowlitz and other river-dwelling tribes, these were essentially "salt-water Indians," dwelling for the greater part in places adjacent to the extensive mud flats of the bay, with their inexhaustible beds of clams and oysters. Salmon were obtained near the mouth of the streams, and berries in abundance were found near the settlements, so that inland journeys were unnecessary. Few of the men hunted. Most of them, in fact, would easily have lost their way in the woods.

Nor were they addicted to warfare. The following tradition, related by a man born about 1832, is the only obtainable account of a war in which the Shoalwater Bay Indians participated.

"In the time of my father's grandfather, Hlohlókum, the people of the village Qaulhlák, on Kpelks [Palux river], were one autumn catching and drying their winter's supply of salmon as usual. In the night a girl went to the stream for water, and on the opposite bank, in the still water of the beaver pond, she saw by the light of her cedar-bark torch the reflection of many men dressed for war. Badly frightened, she still retained her self-possession and continued to sing as she filled her vessel. Then she raised a cup and threw back her head, pretending to drink, while she looked across to estimate the number of warriors. With the water-pail she withdrew into the woods, but once out of sight she dropped it and sped to the village, aroused the people, and

told what she had seen. But they refused to credit her story, attributing it to an imagination excited by the unaccustomed trip through the dark woods. Nevertheless the girl's grandmother pushed off her canoe, and together the two poled up the creek to hide.

"That night the village was attacked by the Sátsapsh, who in twenty canoes had come down from their home on Satsop river, left their canoes at Tshels [the sandy point where Westport, Washington, is situated], and marched across country to Palux river. Hlohlókum was the only fighting man to escape, and all the old men, the women, and the children, were taken captive. At Tshels the Sátsapsh killed the old men and the old women, set the infants adrift in their cradle-boards, and with the older children and young women they embarked and paddled homeward. The inhabitants of Tshels happened to be absent, gathering berries.

"When the news of the massacre was spread about Átsmihlch [Shoalwater bay], people from all the villages assembled to bury the dead and to mourn. A year later Hlohlókum and Wiekhláh, the chief at Nemah river, organized a war-party of nearly two hundred men and proceeded on foot to Tshels, where they borrowed canoes from their friends. They went up Chehalis river to the Satsop country, found where the women were picking berries, and lay in wait until one of their own women, now captive, came near enough to be addressed in a whisper. She was told that at daylight an attack would be made, and she was to warn all her companions in captivity to cut the bowstrings of their masters and flee before daylight to a certain place. This the women did, and the daylight attack found the Sátsapsh defenceless. A great slaughter followed. In retaliation for the treatment accorded their babies, some thrust stakes into the vitals of captive infants and set them on the fires; but this, as well as the killing of old women, was stopped by the chiefs. Many captive young women were brought back to Atsmihlch."

In the boyhood of this informant, that is, about 1840, the village site on Palux river was uninhabited.

LOWER CHEHALIS

The name Tshels, whence the Anglicized Chehalis, was applied by the natives to Point Hanson, the projection of land at the southern

side of the entrance to Grays harbor, at which place, near the site of Westport, Washington, was a principal settlement of the Lower Chehalis. From here the country along the south shore of Grays harbor, up Chehalis river to Wynoochee river, and on Whishkal river at the head of the bay, was occupied by villages whose inhabitants used a common dialect, very similar to that of the Shoalwater Bay people and to that of the Quinault. There formerly was no collective designation for these bands, but, influenced by the white men's usage of the word Chehalis, the natives have adopted the term Cht'tshels, that is, People of the Sandy Place. Although Gibbs in 1855 assigned them a population of little more than two hundred, he says that there were formerly twenty principal villages, and that "even within the recollection of American settlers the population was very considerable." They probably were somewhat more numerous than the bands of Shoalwater bay. Their activities were almost altogether concerned with obtaining a livelihood from the sea.

QUINAULT

The territory occupied by the Quinault tribes extends along the coast from Hoquiam river to Queets river. The principal tribe is the Quinault proper (Cht'qínaihl), living at the mouth of the river of that name, and the application of the term has been so extended by the whites as to include all the people using the same dialect[2]. The natives however never had a collective name for these bands. In fact, the inhabitants of the village Qínaihl excluded from the scope of that term even the smaller settlements of one or more houses that were scattered along the lower course of their river. On the other hand, other tribes employed the word to include these communities.

In the main each band of the Quinault group was found in a single large village near the mouth of a river. There appears to be no early estimate of their population that is worthy of quotation. At the

2 In the three settlements on the north shore of Grays harbor, – Hóqiamk, Humtúlips, and Qiyáanuhl (Damons point), – as well as in Kpels (Copalis) on the coast, the language possessed a difference noticeable to the Quinault proper. The variation however is negligible.

present time they are resident on Quinault reservation, numbering seven hundred and fifty-nine in 1912.

The Quinault were less migratory than many of the tribes of the north Pacific coast, who in search of food annually abandoned their permanent villages in the summer. There were, in the present instance, no extended movements of the whole tribe. Women and slaves gathered berries and roots in near places, and never remained more than a day or two away from home. In the month of August a few men hunted sea-otter and others pursued the whale, but the most fished for rock-cod. Whaling was practised only among the Quinault proper, and but two men there, in the generation preceding the birth of the oldest informants, were possessed of the requisite "medicine" for captaining a whaling canoe. Each canoe was manned by a crew of seven besides the leader, who hurled the harpoon. In September and October the black salmon appear in the river, which at that season is so low that one can wade across it at its mouth, and the men speared them as they entered the stream. Toward the end of October and throughout the following month silverside salmon were taken in dip-nets. The river being now swollen from the autumnal rains the fishermen walked along the banks, permitting the net at the end of a long pole to drift down with the current, and hauling in whenever a salmon swam into it. December and January are the months for steel-head trout, which were taken by means of a drift-net stretched between two canoes floating down stream, each craft being occupied by two men, one to paddle and steer and the other to handle the net. Finally, about the end of January and continuing until the middle of June, but attaining its maximum in May, comes the run of blueback salmon. Far and wide among the Indians of western Washington Quinault river is famous for the superior quality of the bluebacks it yields. They were caught in dipnets until about the first of May, when the water had so far subsided as to permit the building of weirs. The right to obstruct the river with a fish-weir was hereditary, and the locations, during the season of weir fishing, were practically the private property of the fortunate possessors. Naturally the location nearest the sea was far the most favorable, inasmuch as few fish could ascend above it when the traps at that point were closed. When the owner of a weir and the families of his dependents had taken all the salmon their temporary needs demanded, the gates were opened and the fish were free to ascend to the next barrier.

At the present time, the obstruction of streams by weirs being illegal, gill-nets are stretched at the same places formerly occupied by the weirs, an open channel being left to insure the propagation of the species. Fishing rights are still held in the families of the original possessors; but governmental authorities have laid down a wise ruling that any man who refuses or neglects to make reasonable use of his inherited privilege shall be dispossessed, and the location shall be transferred to a more energetic fisherman. The fish are sold at the river-bank, hauled over an exceedingly difficult road to Moclips, and shipped by rail to a cannery at Hoquiam. The annual income of the Quinault from this industry amounts to many thousand dollars.

About the end of June huge quantities of smelt, to be dried and smoked, were scooped up from the surf in broad, shallow dip-nets. Sea-lions, asleep on rocks ordinarily submerged, were speared in midwinter when the weather was fine and the sea so smooth that the hunter could safely land on the rocks and approach his quarry from behind. Sealing was little practised. The small up-stream bands were good elk hunters, but the Quinault proper seldom ventured into the mountains or the forest.

Trade was carried on by the Quinault principally with the Makah and the Chinook. The former came down from the north in their great ocean-going canoes to exchange slaves, dried halibut steaks, whale meat and blubber, strings of dentalium shells, and large canoes, for dried blueback salmon, paint, camas, elk-tallow to be used as an unguent, and beads, blankets, and guns obtained by the Quinault from the Chinook at the mouth of the Columbia. In summer the Quinault made ocean voyages to the Chinook country, stopping the first night out at Tshels (Point Hanson), and the second at Cape Shoalwater, and on the following evening rounding into the estuary of the Columbia. The Clatsop village Nu'smá'spu, on Youngs bay south of Astoria, was a favorite rendezvous for visitors from the north on account of its nearness to the trading-post. Here the Quinault gave Makah canoes, slaves, dentalium shells, sea-otter skins, beaver-skins, otter-skins, baskets, and a variety of coarse grass (probably bear-grass), in exchange for the goods of the white traders.

The Quinault were not warlike. So peaceable were they that traditionists of the present day know of but one fray in which the tribe was concerned, a minor encounter with their kinsmen the Queets,

who, in the generation preceding the birth of the oldest people now living, invaded the country of the Quinault proper. The latter drove them off, pursued them to their village, burned some of their houses, and returned with some slaves and a few heads, which they carried on the ends of poles. In spite of the dearth of tradition respecting native warfare, it must be assumed that the Quinault occasionally indulged in the primitive pastime, inasmuch as they possessed a war-dance.

TWANA

The entire length of Hoods canal, a body of water about sixty miles long and two miles wide, and the valleys of its tributary streams, were controlled by the Twana. The tribe was divided into several distinct branches, yet all spoke a common dialect, which was considerably different from the dialects of their neighbors. Moreover, they possessed a collective name for themselves - Tuwáduh - and in these two respects they are much more properly classed as a tribe than are those other numerous groups of independent bands to which the usage of the whites has applied tribal names.

The principal bands were the Tulalip (Chlélapsh), Skokomish (Skokóbsh), Soátlkobsh, Quilcene (Squlsédbish), and Slchôksbish. Traditionary information indicates a population in the early part of the nineteenth century, say about 1830, of about nine hundred. At the treaty of Point No Point in 1855 they were assigned the Skokomish reservation at the head of Hoods canal, numbering then fewer than three hundred.

The Twana rarely, if ever, invaded the country of other tribes, but they were able to give a good account of themselves when, as not infrequently happened, warriors of the Snohomish or of the Chimakum put up the canal in their canoes, or when a party of Cowlitz came on foot against them. The character of their disorganized, savage warfare may be seen in the traditional account of two of their earliest known combats.

The Skokomish band were up the river at the beginning of the salmon season, and the women and children were alone in the camp, the men being in the woods cutting poles for the fish-weir. Suddenly a body of Snohomish warriors rushed into the camp, drove the women and children down to the river, and made away with all the plunder

they could lay hands on, especially the weapons. A single boy escaped and ran back through the woods to apprise the men of the raid. Now the Twana were in a quandary: without weapons they were helpless to rescue the captives. Nevertheless they hastened along the river through the woods, hoping that some chance might turn the tide in their favor. Arriving at the mouth, they perceived that a strong north wind had so roughened the waters of the canal as to make it certain that the enemy could not have gone far and must now be lying by.

Cautiously the Twana made their way on foot down the canal, and on the beach below the site of Hood sport they beheld their enemies asleep, while the captive women and children sat bound in the canoes. Behind the sleeping warriors rose a steep bluff, and on the brink of this the Twana quietly massed a pile of bowlders. Then they armed themselves with clubs, and after a few men had made a detour and stationed themselves both above and below the invaders, the remainder suddenly hurled the mass of stones over the brink and then rushed down, shouting and brandishing their clubs. Many of the Snohomish were killed by the falling stones, and the others were so panic-stricken by the avalanche and the unexpected assault that they leaped away from the spot unarmed. The Twana fell upon them with their clubs and annihilated the party.

On another occasion the same band of Twana, the Skokomish, were attacked under similar circumstances by a hundred Chimakum warriors and left in the same predicament. The Chimakum loaded their captives and spoils into the Twana canoes and proceeded down stream to the great jam of drift logs below which they had been forced to leave their own craft. Enraged by the news of the raid, the Twana men made rude spears of ironwood, and gave chase, knowing that the enemy would be delayed in portaging their booty around the jam. At the portage they crept stealthily through the woods until they were quite close to the Chimakum, some of whom were roasting salmon while others were just returning for the last load. The spears were thrust upright into the ground. With a chorus of war-cries the Twana rushed forth, and the startled Chimakum leaped into the water to hide among the logs and stumps of the jam. The Twana seized their enemies' spears and ran out on the jam, where they stood and made a mark of every Chimakum head that showed. Every man was killed, save the two in charge of the canoes below the jam. The last survivor was an

old man, who climbed out of the water upon the logs, and, perceiving his escape cut off, charged desperately upon his enemies. His weapon was an elk-horn dagger. The Twana easily evaded his rushes, and stood about jeering, and taunting him with the pitifulness of his weapon. Then one of them cried: "Do not kill him! Make a slave of him!" But at that instant the old man fell with four spears transfixing his body.

The Twana had commercial relations with the Clallam of the Strait of Juan de Fuca, with the Makah of Cape Flattery, and with the Upper Chehalis, particularly with the band known as Sátsapsh, a frequently travelled trail connecting Satsop river and Skokomish river.[3] The Twana rarely undertook trading expeditions, preferring to remain at home and receive the visits of more venturesome travellers. Two commodities much desired were hemp fibre and the hair of the mountain-goat, which were obtained from tribes east of the Cascades through the medium of the Sátsapsh.

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3 This fact recalls the proposed translation of the word Tuwáduh as "a portage," referring to the trail between Hoods canal and the head of Puget sound. The derivation is at best uncertain.