Living on the Edge:
Nuu-Chah-Nulth History from an Ahousaht Chief's Perspective

By

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We accept this thesis as conforming to the required standard

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ABSTRACT

Growing up through a time of great changes in the lives of First Nations people I have seen and felt may things. Only a couple of generations before my time we were self governing states with our own institutions to govern day to day life and the resources we depended on. Through most of my lifetime we were treated like children by the new governors of this country. Now we are seeing the beginnings of a new period where we can once more have control over our affairs. There has been a great deal to think about in joining the past to the present and planning for the future of our people. This work documents some selected legends, recollections, and my own thoughts and feelings to develop a narrative that may allow onlookers to understand some of the things that may not be readily apparent, especially to non-native people, about a coastal First Nation and the relationship of the people, the land, and the sea.

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As anyone who takes on graduate work finds, there are many others who helped along the way whose names you don't remember when writing out acknowledgements; to all of those, thank you.

Chapter 1 Maquinna

An Introduction

I am Earl Maquinna George. I am a Nuu-Chah-Nulth First Nations' person, and the hereditary chief, as the *mamat'n'i* (people other than First Nations) call us, of the Ahousaht. Europeans called us Nootka.

In our native language, we are called *Hawilth. HawiiH* means something similar to, but not the same as the Crown, such as a European king. We have a hereditary system of passing down the position of Hawilth or chief to the eldest male child in the family. Mine is a family of HawiiH, which refers to my ownership of resources, beaches, fishing grounds, forest land, and salmon streams. Everything that is valuable belongs to the HawiiH. And I am not afraid to say that these belong to me, the Hawilth of the Ahousaht territory. The Ahousaht First Nation is one of the Nuu-Chah-Nulth Tribal Council. The other nations are, beginning from the south, the Pacheedaht, Dididaht, Ho-a-aht, Ho-choclis, Tsishaht, Ho-pachisaht, Toquaht, Yu-cloisaht, Tla-o-quiaht, Ahousaht, Hishquiaht, Mowachaht, Kauquaht, and the Makah of Neah Bay Washington. The people live in the area from Neah Bay, Washington and Port Renfrew on Vancouver Island to Kyuquot on the northwestern coast of the Island (Figure 1).

I believe that it is important to understand the Nuu-Chah-Nulth people of the west coast of Vancouver Island and their relationship to the land and sea. This is the object of my thesis. In particular, I will discuss the history and environment of my own territory in Clayoquot Sound.

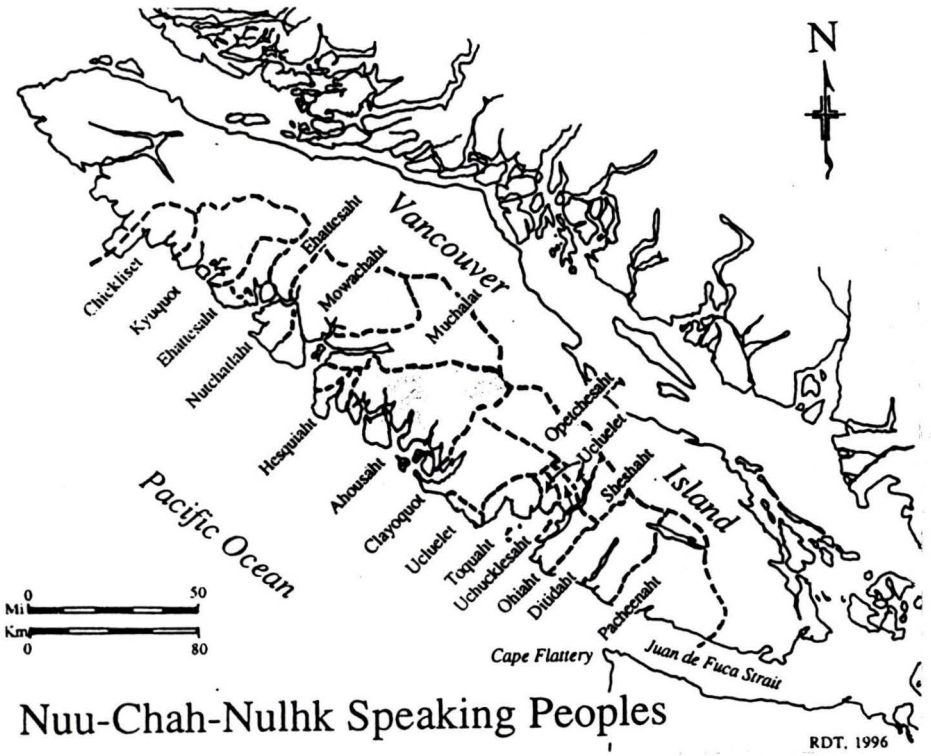

Figure 1: The Nuu-Chah-Nulth Peoples and their homelands on the west coast of Vancouver Island.

It is important for you to know about my family and what was happening, changes in the structure of the village, the residential school, and families because it has much to do with changes due to our movement to different salmon streams. Salmon are a relatively well known part of aboriginal people's lives. I will discuss salmon to some extent throughout the thesis, but I have also used some less well-known aspects of our life to bring out relationships between the Nuu-Chah-Nulth peoples and their home.

I will start by telling about who I am and how I am able to know what I have written here. My names, Earl Maquinna George, were given to me in part through baptisms by the United Church of Canada, a church of the *mamat'n'i*, the white man. Earl comes from the title "Earl" in English royalty, George from the King of England. Maquinna is a name passed down through generations of my family. We are a family of Chiefs, HawiiH, passed down from generation to generation.

Hereditary chiefs are born with a destiny, with royal blood. So when they are born, they are born with a name. When a chief became old enough, often a wife was chosen for him, sometimes right from birth, sometimes not. I know mine was chosen for me through high-ranking hereditary chiefs of the Keitlah family. I married Keitlah's daughter, not by my choice, but by the choice of my father and my relatives. I have nine children from my first marriage, six boys and three girls. My wife died from muscular-dystrophy and pneumonia while we were away in the cold weather of Vancouver.

I was born 1926 in the village of Ahousaht. My father, McPherson George, was a very strong believer in the Christian faith received through the teachings of the Ahousaht

Residential School where we both went. The name "McPherson" was also given to my father by the Church. At that time the missionaries thought that it was best to rename the persons they taught to know Christianity. My father and mother were both taught by principals, usually ministers, sent out by the missionary church from England to teach Christianity to students at the Ahousaht school.

The residential school was run by the United Church of Canada under the sponsorship of the Government of Canada. They funded the school, supplied the teachers and staff, the providers, who taught both Christianity and schooling. The reading, writing and arithmetic was the equivalent of the same standard curriculum and texts as in other classrooms throughout Canada. The first residential school was built in 1903 just half a mile from my village on Flores Island. My father was in school at that time. The residential school played a strong role in my personal history.

I was born to Mabel Davis George whom my father married when she was in her early twenties after both attended the Ahousaht Residential School, in the Ahousaht village; it is called Maaqtusiis in our language. The name Maaqtusiis means “moving from one village to another”, “going from and going to”, or “to stay for some length of time.” The reason it was called Maaqtusiis was that our people followed the cycle, moving seasonally to the rivers and streams in Clayoquot Sound to catch salmon. Salmon, smoked and preserved for the winter months, was our main food. Our people traveled anywhere from five to twenty miles away. There were about 24 fish streams that our

people relied on. They would go and stay for the season to catch the different species of salmon: chum, spring (chinook), coho, sockeye, and pink.

An Introduction to the Life of the Ahousaht People

Many families had make-shift houses at the rivers. From Ahousaht the salmon would lead us across the way from Bawden Bay or Whitepine Cove upriver towards Herbert Inlet, or up into Herbert Inlet itself all the way to the Moyeha River (Figure 2). We had access to all the species with enough to carry us through the winter months.

Our people used spears to catch the fish. Throughout the life of each fishing camp, we would filet the fish, cutting into the center of the fish, splitting off thin strips for what we call *upsl-kwi*. These smaller pieces of fish, when they dry out, are already cured and ready to eat.. For larger pieces, when a whole salmon is split down the middle, they are spread out and thinned off on cedar sticks to hang up in the smoke house for at least a week until it is completely dry. It is then ready for storage. All it needs is to remain in a place cool and dry where it is stored, usually up in the attic at the main village of Maaqtusiis where people had large houses that each served quite a few families.

Each house included as many as one hundred people or more in earlier times. That would include whole families, men, women and children, and each would have a designated spot inside the big house where they slept on a mat floor with no flooring except the earth itself that our people lay on or slept on during the winter months. The fireplace was in the middle where people cooked and ate together. They baked and shared

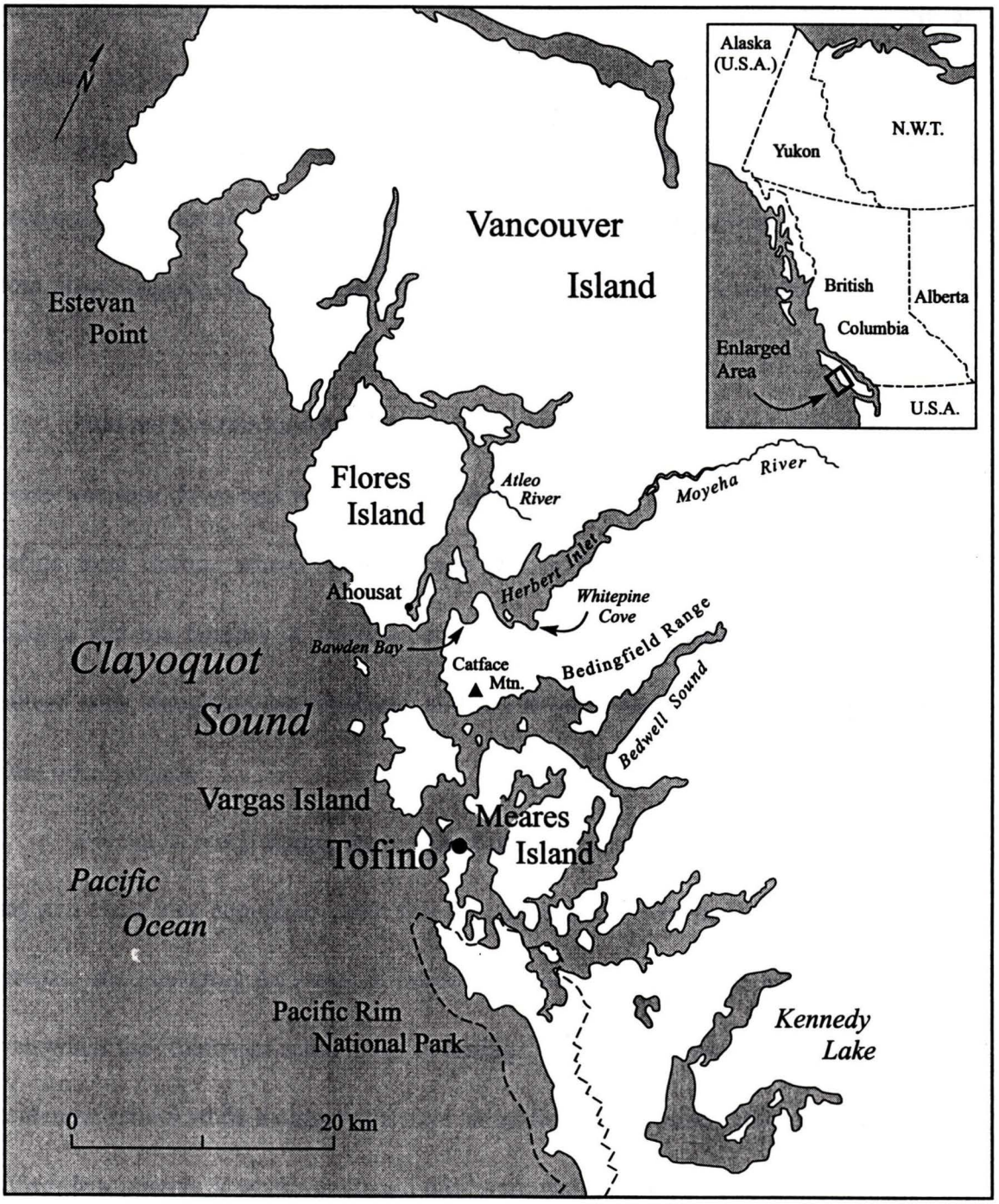

Figure 2: The Ahousaht homeland and its surroundings

salmon over the open fire with the family. There were no set meal times, people ate whenever they got hungry.

This is the life my father and my mother lived after finishing grade eight and being discharged from the residential school to go and learn how to catch fish, smoke fish and go from place to place, wherever the salmon was running in the 24 streams of Clayoquot Sound.

I did not live this kind of a life in the big house. Shortly after I was born, the big house was torn down and we began following the style of the people that migrated to Tofino from Europe where families made two or three story buildings to house the children and the families of married people. At first the grandmothers, grandfathers, fathers, sons, daughters, grandchildren all lived in one building until they could afford to build other houses.

It is not so much stating the length of time spent at an area, but more important to stay at a place long enough to catch fish for our families. My dad's parents or even my parents, after spending the years in residential school, practiced the same food gathering even when the residential school was operating. The children would be cared for in the residential school while their parents were away fishing. In June, July and August, they joined their parents at whatever stream they were gathering fish. The children went back to school in September to continue their education.

The residential school children were kept nine months a year and spent three months of summer holidays with their families. I mostly spent 12 months a year in

residence because I was not fortunate to have someone to live with. I was raised in Ahousaht and knew the area very well in my early years. During those years there was very little in the way of hospitals, nurses, medical aid, or even medication to fight off sickness that came about in our villages. One time my mother, who had been processing fish, got soaking wet and contracted a flu that killed her early in her life. I was two years old at the time, thus I never knew my mother. While I was at residential school, my father worked at canneries, fish plants and on seine boats. I and my brother Wilfred Stanley George, who was one year younger than I, were both orphaned early in our life.

Miss Chambers, a Christian missionary, nurse and midwife, helped my mother when I was being born. She had an interest in the health and well-being of aboriginal people. She did everything from sick care and application of medication to delivering babies. And so she looked after me and my brother Wilfred as a baby.

My thesis begins with the story of how my people came into possession of the lands and waters they now have. I then discuss the life cycle of early hunters of whales and seals, focusing on the story of pelagic fur seal hunting and the influence that the Pelagic Sealing Treaty of 1911 had on us. Included in that history is a story of hunting seals through expert seamanship using dugout canoes in the migration path as far away as fifty miles (80km) offshore from Vancouver Island, before the sealing schooners came to our coastline to hire hunters.

My story about the fur seal hunting continues into the early days of the pelagic sealing industry that became available to the Nuu-Chah-Nulth tribes. People from all the

tribes were hired, signed articles, and brought their canoes, their shotguns, rifles, ammunition and enough food to cover the long days when the sealing schooners moved from one location to the other in the northern hunting grounds. The time spent away from home could be as long as nine months of the year. Some people became wealthy, but some did not make much but a living.

The pelagic fur sealing ended with the signing of the treaty in 1911 forbidding our hunters to hunt except along the coast line, and then only from canoes with spears in a traditional way. I chose fur sealing as an example of how things change. We once had access to seal for food, then became part of the labour force, and then were excluded, without too much discussion, from the sealing altogether. Although there was a Royal Commission established to hear First Nations' claims for compensation, very little was accomplished.

After the historical discussion, I move to the present, 1997, to the modern treaty process, in particular, questions of land, resources and our rights. The first part of the first day of the first presentation made by Canada in the treaty talks stated that there will be no compensation for wrong-doing made by either governments, Canada or British Columbia. Furthermore, there will only be 5% of the land base available for the return of traditional lands to First Nations. Recently, the Nisga'a Tribal Council further north have finished negotiating their treaty. They have gone through the modern day treaty process of starting with a Framework Agreement, and from the Framework Agreement going to an Agreement-in-Principle which outlines settlement of land, settlement of resources, and

settlement of the question of self-government. The Indian Act itself is supposedly being thrown out or made redundant and replaced by a First Nations' self-government and justice system.

The problem of these modern day treaties is that there is strong opposition in the political arena. New voices are being heard from people, third party interests, that are not agreeable to settling the land question with First Nations in British Columbia. Two political parties, the Reform Party and the Liberal Party, are saying to the First Nations there is "one law for all" and that there should be equal access to ownership of land by purchasing land rather than having it returned to its original owners, the First Nations. I find this particularly ironic as we have lived under a different law imposed on us through the Indian Act for the better part of the century.

The fact is that people seem to have a wrong or very biased perception of what is going on in these negotiations. They do not recognize some of the things that occurred with the colonization of British Columbia. We had a system of government and laws for our people at the time of the Royal Proclamation. Europeans simply used the British North American Act 1867 in order to gain control of the land that was not settled or did not appear to be settled by European standards. It is sad and very unfair for decisions regarding ownership of land in large tracts of land all across Canada to be have been made in Britain and imposed on us.

I have already stated that we have opposition from third parties who I think, in my own conscience, have no say whatsoever in the settlement of land. They are standing

on land that they gained by force and coercion without committing any outright war. There was an attack by the British Navy on the Ahousahts. The Ahousahts sank the British vessel *Kingfisher*. In return the British army bombarded the Ahousaht and the communities in the area in order to punish them for sinking the *Kingfisher*. We considered the *Kingfisher* an alien, as other settlers had already taken land away from other Ahousaht people on Vargas Island. The settlers had taken land on their own, settling, without any payment. The Ahousahts naturally saw the same intentions of the people on the sailing vessel. The British Navy proceeded to destroy 60 canoes which were vital to our day-to-day life.

We consider this not a war. We consider this to be punishing the Ahousaht Nation. The Ahousahts retaliated and fought back and the British backed out. According to our history they killed over 100 people, but they did not have to account for how they plundered the Ahousaht people, merely calling it a punishment. They wrecked the houses and canoes and took hostage a chief, or Hawilth youngster, called Keitlah Mukum. He was the hereditary second chief of the Ahousaht Nation. The English warship, *Sutledge*, was anchored out near Opitsaht after the bombardment of the villages near Tofino. The Tla-o-qui-aht Chief, Wickanninish, made an offer to the Captain of the English war ship for one sea otter skin to release the hostage, young Keitlah Mukum. The Captain took the sea otter pelt and released Keitlah Mukum. The British fleet then returned to their base in Esquimalt.

Not only were our government and peoples plundered, but the newcomers took without permission from the traditionally owned resources of people living in Clayoquot Sound and other places in British Columbia. Those resources are the same ones that were eventually handed over to corporations like MacMillan-Bloedel, Interfor, Canadian Pacific Railway, and I could name many others that gained favors from politicians inside the government of British Columbia, giving them the right to harvest and own land that belonged rightfully to First Nations.

Now in 1997 we have won a little piece of what was ours in an Interim Measures Agreement. For three years, for the tribes from Central Region, Clayoquot Sound, our agreement has stated that we are to regain land which is rightfully ours. We are here to regain authority over the many resource holdings that are in Clayoquot Sound, meaning beaches, salmon spawning beds, resources on forest land and all the things that we have not yet negotiated through the Interim Measures Agreement. It is good until 1999.

A Note on Methods

This thesis is entirely a personal narrative. I use no outside sources other than my own recollection of events, stories and legend. While I am aware of the ethnographic accounts, the compilations, and the reconstructions done about us by outsiders, they have a flaw that makes them a different kind of work than I have done here. The work of a non-native is coloured by the inability of the outsider to experience the context of the information collected. Although scholars believe they know all about us there are many

parts of native life that have never come out of their work. When I read that material it simply has no character and is not authentic and some of it is plain wrong.

Part of the reason for the lack of understanding in the writing done about us is that for much of the time we have existed under the control of the Indian Act which we believe prevented us from discussing our culture. We believed to do so would land us in jail. Whether or not such a law exists is not the issue, the point is we believed that was the case. The entire story of our people exists as a large body of information carried in our memories, sometimes with facts conflicting between families, but always subject to the same sorts of forces that shape our culture. It is an ongoing conversation among the people.

Still material is being taken from us under a variety of disguises used against the people. Recently, detailed ethnographic work was done at the behest of a multinational forestry corporation that may end up working against our treaty settlement, and that work is no better than the rest of the incomplete material compiled by outsiders.

The difference with the information herein is that I decide the agenda and the order of the information, and in some ways that is a shortcoming. Documentation by outsiders is an artifact of the order and the orderliness of western cultures, it is not a part of our way of knowledge. It is hard to write about myself, maybe I am bitter about people writing about us, about me, rather than creating a picture as I see it. There is a real difference, and I feel it is important enough for me to write this work not so much to set the record straight, but more to provide an example of what my world is like.

I have no list of interviews and have never "collected" information. My information has been assembled over the past 70 years. From the time I was a small child I have heard stories from my family, my friends' families, and aboriginal people from many places. There is still much information in my thoughts, images of fur seal skins piled on the dock, the "one-lunger" engines starting up before sunrise, being hauled into a courtroom in Port Alberni, charged with violating fisheries regulations for exercising my aboriginal right to hunt for food. Some of that is included here, and some of it is not. Perhaps that is a flaw of the thesis; parts are not always linked and it is not bound together in a continuous story. However, that is the way the information exists and has since time began for us. We lived before Boas, Sproat, the many Indian agents and band managers, treaty negotiators, fishing companies, logging companies and government agents as surprising as that may seem to non-native people.

My thesis is not in the usual form of scholarship that university degrees are based on. I think it is a valid form for many reasons, particularly because it seeks to build understanding of First Nations. A better understanding of First Nations is important for reasons of justice in settlements, for better understanding of the many cultures in Canada, and to provide a different look at the way people and the environment co-exist.

Chapter 2 *Quesahii*

The People and The Sea

This chapter is about people and marine animals and their place in the resource base of the people of the west coast. The chapter begins with a story that relates some of the history of the Ahousaht and the way we secured the lands we now have as part of our traditional territory. We obtained the salmon streams and other waters that we now claim after a war which took place in the last century. I then discuss two cases of how we used marine animals for our survival. Hunting the large whale is an important point because whales have now become very important to non-native people as well. Our history also includes a relationship with fur seal, and is a case that shows the changes that were imposed on the Ahousaht people as part of our relationship with newcomers.

Two people helped me put together this story at different times through my life. My late grandfather, Peter Webster, a learned scholar, helped to develop the linguistic understanding of our language at University of Victoria. He was my grandfather and of the same house as my father. He told me some of what I am going to tell you about the history of Atleo River area. John Jacobsen, another Ahousaht historian, also provided me with much information that he learned from his father and the elderly people of his family. John used to call me in the middle of the night and he would say, "Did you know this?" and I would say, "Know what?". "Well this story I've been trying to tell you." And he'd tell me part of a story and the telephone would shut off. He never finished

telling me all of the stories. In these next sections when I discuss the term "owned" I am referring to a concept we call *ha hoolthe*. That is the concept of ownership vested in the hereditary chieftainship that formed the basis of our government. It is a form of absolute control by the Chief held for the people.

Long ago in the latter 1700's and into the 1800's, the entire area around Atleo River including the Bedingfield Range belonged to a tribe called Otsosat Nation (Figure 3). They owned all of Flores Island, all the rivers and streams that cross Flores Island, Bawden Bay, White Pine Cove, Herbert Inlet, all very rich in salmon. And every year the different species of salmon came at their own times to spawn. Up in the Moyeha River, in Herbert Inlet there were pink salmon we call *ch'ap'i*. Really good eating fish, lean and light in colour, different from the other species.

They also owned the Atleo River, which was one of the richest rivers during that time. Year after year the chum salmon came by the thousands into that stream. They laid their eggs in the fine gravel beds. In my own time I can remember seeing the female chum salmon using their tails to dig into the gravel to lay their eggs. Nature, knowing how to create a hatchery, brought in the male fish and it laid the sperm turning the stream almost white.

As I stated earlier, the Atleo River belonged to the Otsosat Nation, a big tribe that may have had as many as 10,000 members. Each one of those rivers belonged to certain families from the Otsosat Nation. That includes a stream that I named Shark Creek (called McGregor Creek on the maps and charts). In our language the place is named after

Mamach-aqtlnit. Mamach-aqtlnit is the great basking shark, they resemble *yacha*, the dogfish, but they can reach forty-feet long. When we were teenagers, we would see the shark come up out of the deep water down on the floor of the Millar Channel and swim with a fin on top of the water and we would go alongside in our boats.

The basking shark went into Shark Creek on the high tide, up over the gravel bar into that creek and into a pool below a set of falls. It would hide underneath the falls and bear its young. My grandfather said, the spiritual belief was the shark knew, like a human being, where to go in order to have its young and be safe, be free from other predators. So they said this animal, this great big shark, has an understanding of where to go, knowledge of that special spot called Mamach-aqtlnit.

The Otsosat owned the whole of the area designated by an imaginary line from the south side of Catface Mountain, to a point half way from Hot Springs Cove to Hesquiat. They would not allow any other tribe to come past that imaginary boundary line. If anybody did pass by that boundary line without permission, they killed them or chased them away. They were not a friendly tribe.

At one time they made the mistake of murdering someone from the Ahousaht tribe. I am not sure how the murder took place but a war erupted from this murder. It began as a small conflict. They knew who the killer was because they had understanding, or the knowledge of most of the families from that tribe. The same knowledge is still here, someone living in Ahousaht, or in Tla-o-qui-aht, or someone living on this side of the Clayoquot Sound; most everybody knows each other. Part of that knowledge is through

the intermarriage amongst people all through the west coast people. The people of the Otsosat Nation were married to Tla-o-qui-aht, Ahousaht, Mowachat, and Hesquiat people.

Somewhere around 1800, the war began to grow more fierce. There were raids, night raids that killed as many as eighty to a hundred people in one night. Guns bought from fur-dealers were given to the Ahousaht tribe from the Mowachat people because of family ties. Many Mowachat women were married to high chiefs in Ahousaht. Although, there was also inter-marriage with the Otsosat Nation, making alliances difficult for the Mowachat.

The Mowachat got their guns from the European sailing ships that anchored outside of Friendly Cove and in through that area where Mowachat, Ehatisaht and Kyuquot peoples were living. For a long time Europeans used to go by on the sailing ships but were unable to land because of the big seas and rocks. The Nuu-Chah-Nulth helped the sailing ships to find deep passages to come in and anchor and through that they gained access to Friendly Cove, and all Esperanza Inlet.

At that time the Ahousahts were living on Vargas Island and up into Cypre River, Bedwell Sound, some on Meares Island, Keltsomaht, and the outer islands, abiding by the borderline at Catface Mountain. Ahousahts had already formed a confederacy with the Keltsomaht, and the tribes that lived in Bedwell Sound, Quatsweaht. They were also ten thousand strong. But the war was not an every day war. It was guerrilla warfare where there were raids from either side.

In this conflict the Tla-o-qui-aht, neighbours to the immediate south, were neutral. Although they wanted to see the Ahousaht lose the land as they thought Tla-o-qui-aht would thus gain property on their own boundary with the Ahousaht. They were kind of enemies, but there again, inter-marriage was quite strong and families sided with family.

John Jacobsen related much information to me about the warriors, their reputation as brave killers, how they fought and how they survived. He told me the story about Maquinna, my direct ancestor; my blood and name flows from Maquinna. He was a warrior who survived because he had a true honest slave. Not a slave in the way African people were to the white people, more like a trusted servant. This man looked after Maquinna. When Maquinna was sleeping, this man was awake. He had his guns ready in case somebody attacked during the night. And they did a lot of hiding during the day time when it was dangerous to go in the open. They would find a place where nobody knew where they were.

War plans were made on top of Catface mountain from where they could see the land on both sides. The planners of this war looked mainly at the rivers: all the rivers and streams on the Otsosat side and all the waters draining into the Millar Channel. There were not many rivers on the Ahousaht side, the Cypre River being the only major stream on this side in the Ahousaht territory. We were limited in our access to salmon. There were small rivers on Vargas Island producing a few cohos each year, but no chums. We only got a few chums at Kakawis on Meares Island, in Bedwell Sound and Warn Bay. Most of the good salmon rivers were in the Otsosat territory.

So a warrior, Hayupinutl, who my son, Bill, is named after, sat on that mountain with a gathering of forty warriors all sitting around. They were all speaking, one at a time. Hayupinutl said "I'll start the war, and I'll swear that I'm going to kill all Otsosat on that side. That is going to be my will in my life." And he said "You don't have to join me because of the many reasons that you as warriors know you have blood relatives over there. You have uncles, aunts, cousins, close relatives married in the Otsosat Nation."

Maquinna decided to stay neutral. He said "I'm going to stay neutral. I have blood relatives there. I'll see how you do. I'm not afraid to fight. I'm not afraid to join the war. I am on your side but I will not fight because I want to see how the war progresses or whatever will happen. They can come and kill me and I'll protect myself but I will not go over and kill anyone on that side of that line."

But all of the forty that were at that meeting on top of Catface mountain joined forces with Hayupinutl. Looking at the ten thousand people and the God knows how many warriors there were on the Otsosat side, they were brave men. They swore that they would protect and fight for each other until the last. The fight was not every day or every night. It went in spurts. There was no special time, although the Otsosat Nation figured out that the Ahousaht attacked according to the phase of the moon.

In order to fight, a warrior had to be prepared in terms of his spirituality, his protection from being killed, and the medicine that he used was strong in his body, inside and out. They prepared for the war through *uusimich.* Through swimming in a bathing pool, something like the one in Shark Creek. There were streams and pools all in through

the inlets and on the islands. The ones that were on the islands bathed in the salt water. But the ones living near the Bedwell and Cypre Rivers bathed in the river. Bathing was a cleansing: cleansing of the soul, cleansing of the body, cleansing of the mind, cleansing of evil spirits. And it is exchanged for the strong will to live and fight.

Two years from the time the war started, Maquinna's brother was killed on the beach at Kutcous where the Otsosat Nation built a wall out of cedar poles stuck into the sand leaning outward so it could not be climbed. It was a protection for attack from the Ahousaht. The warriors had no fear because the belief was, "I am not going to die. Nothing can kill me." Maquinna's younger brother was killed by shot. It was ironic because the gun of that day was very poorly made. Instead of the shot going straight, it was carried in an arch. That's the way the barrel of the gun was made, poor guns from poor gunsmithing. The guns were made in Europe.

So, the warriors used to laugh. They'd say, "I can see that bullet. See the way it curves? Nobody can kill anybody with one of those poor guns. I'd rather kill a person with my knife, or my spear, or my club." It was not a joke because they knew what the gun was like it was called *ta-kliulth* meaning "shooting straight".

Maquinna's younger brother was walking slowly up the beach and he had a gun in his hand. A stray bullet hit him and killed him. Upon hearing his younger brother had died from a gunshot, Maquinna went to take him home to Vargas Island to where they were living on the outside in Ahous Bay, where he buried him. He had said that he would not enter the war, that he would be neutral, but his new position was, "I'm going to step

over your body, your dead body, my brother because I'm going to now enter this conflict, this war. You're gone, I'll be here. I'll fight until the last person is killed on our enemy side. And I vow vengeance for your death." This is John Jacobson's story.

That marked the beginning of Maquinna's participation in the conflict. Two years after the meeting on Catface mountain he entered the fight. Hayupinutl himself died two years after that meeting on the mountain, by an enemy spear. Once he entered the war, due to his brother's death, Maquinna and his slave traveled in enemy territory and killed many people. He was hated and the enemy vowed that one day they would find him and they would kill him for all the killings that he did among the tribes of Otsosat Nation. John Jacobsen related that Maquinna killed as many people as the best of the warriors that fought over approximately fifteen years.

The Otsosat Nation started to back away from the war, while the Ahousaht were saying that they were not going to spare any Otsosat. The Otsosat response was, "We may as well find shelter somewhere or move a long ways away so that at least we'll live. The brave Ahousaht warriors like Maquinna are not going to spare any one of our people. They're going to kill every one of us right to the end."

Before the Otsosat Nation was completely exterminated, some fled south. They showed up in places like Tacoma and Seattle in Puget Sound on the American side, and on the outer coast on the Olympic Peninsula, at Neah Bay. In later years they showed up singing songs, the same songs that came from their tribe. So, the Ahousaht knew that they survived and pursued some of them as far as Neah Bay and they told the Neah Bay

people, "You give us the Otsosat people. If you don't, we'll kill you too." So the Neah Bay people killed the Otsosat refugees and gave the heads to Ahousaht. The Neah Bay feared the Ahousahts.

It does look like Maquinna married more than once. I do not know the story about his first wife. My bloodline comes from Maquinna and his marriage to a woman from the highest chieftainship of the Tla-o-qui-aht Nation, a lady of royalty. Around this time, Maquinna settled at the Atleo River. He said "I choose this spot as my new homeland because of the richness of the fish going up that river, because of my contribution to our war, Ahousaht war, with Otsosat Nation." So Maquinna built a house and started a family at the Atleo River, right at the mouth. Right on that green spot that can be seen today. Thus the Ahousaht moved to the new land that became Ahousaht territory as spoils from the war. The rivers and streams were divided among the victors. A large part of it was given to Maquinna, as *ha hoolthe*. Maquinna took Megin Lake, Megin River, Shelter Inlet. I don't know when Atleo River became the *ha hoolthe* of Atlieu, representing the line of Chief Richard Atleo now. But somehow that is how the division of property and land were given including water rights, the foreshore rights and offshore rights.

Both John and Peter told me about Maquinna and his new territory. Maquinna was in bed resting with his new wife, the Tla-o-qui-aht woman. His slave came in to the house and said ,"[T]here's enemy canoes on the beach. You better wake up and get ready and go. I don't know how many of them there are." Maquinna donned his clothes, put on

his weapon, and he went through the back way up the river. By that time, Otsosat warriors were already on the house and they had already killed his wife. Maquinna was mistaken in his belief that the whole of the Otsosat Nation were killed. He relied on his slave to take care of his wife. But the Otsosat had killed her. Maquinna hid in the brush up the river while the Otsosat searched all over for him. They were going to gain their vengeance and for that purpose had grouped together to kill Maquinna, but they did not find him that day at Atleo River.

Maquinna fled north and ended up hiding at Shark Creek. He went up the river and he went through the higher part of the hill and came down on Shark Creek, down the waterfall. The Otsosats, fearing more Ahousaht would return, pulled away. There was quite a few Otsosat left yet, I guess, even after Maquinna had already claimed Atleo River.

The Tla-o-qui-aht Nation heard of the death of their queen. And they heard that it was Otsosat who killed her. So they put all their canoes together, all their warriors together. They went and they finished the Otsosat Nation off, hunting them down all through their hiding places. The Tla-o-qui-aht are the ones that actually finished the war in a state in vengeance for their queen and my ancestor, my grandmother.

Through this war the Manousaht people that were living in Hot Springs Cove and Hisnit between Hesquiat and Hot Spring Cove were spared although they were part of the Otsosat Nation. The Ahousahts spared them on account of the many close relatives between the tribes. In return the Manousaht gave up all their rights and the land on that

side, which was given over to Hayupinutl's family in settlement. John Jacobson's own family had a place called Utla-Kutla, a coho river across from Hot Springs on that side of Flores Island.

Much of the traditional land holdings of the Ahousaht date from this war. Many important resources, good cedar trees, salmon streams, herring spawning beds, and access to whales and seals resulted from this war.

Kista and *Oo-oo-tuh* Preparation for the Hunt

Two or three generations after the Otsosat war, Kista Atleo and many young warriors were heirs to the settlement lands of former Otsosat territory including Bartlett Island, also called Nu-a-suk seaward on the southwest side of Flores Island. Kista was the third hereditary chief of the Ahousaht Nation which ranked him down from the Keitlah Mawhim who was second by rank. He was known for his spearing skills. This story, however, relates to the ability to spear and catch a whale and the long preparation for this hunting of the whale.

Kista Atleo pledged to go and hunt and kill a whale as his ambition, to do what seemed impossible. There were other hunters from the Ahousaht tribe on Nu-a-suk. Another hunter was Xiyiks, also known as Ahousaht Amos. He was another of the ambitious young men dedicated to hunt the big whale. There was another hunter besides Kista and Xiyiks. The man was also Ahousaht; I know his daughter was Nellie Jacobson, but I do not know what their Indian names were. These were the three hunters that were

given the task of capturing and killing the whale for the Ahousaht Nation. They settled on Bartlett Island and spent two years talking to the Creator on how the task of capturing and killing a whale was their ambition.

When captured, the whale was cut up into sections that were given to the hereditary chiefs, Maquinna, Keitlah and Kista. The hereditary chiefs took his heart, the other part which was on the left side of the whale was given to Keitlah. Kista took the next part of the whale which held the very rich pieces of meat and blubber and got the head and tail, as the man who killed the whale. And all the Nuu-Chah-Nulth Nation, from one end of the island to the other, were invited to come and celebrate the capturing, killing, and towing of the whale into Nu-a-suk Island. Eventually, all the parts of the whale were given in a ceremony and people of all parts of the coastline were rejoicing and feasting. The most useful part of the whale was the blubber, which was smoked. The meat and blubber were smoked to give it flavour. There was no part of the whale that was not used.

The type of whale hunted by these young hunters, the *ma7ak*, is also called *iih tup* because it was large. They were the largest mammal in the area. *Kaka7wi'n* (killer whale) was not hunted because it was known to be a sacred type of life that had the power to go on the dry land and then be part of a wolf family. There are stories that say that they traveled on land across waters that were lakes. The ability to turn back into a killer whale was a sacred power. So the respect for that being meant that they were not

used for food purposes. There are many stories that this happened and special people were known to have seen this transformation happen to the killer whale.

There were good and bad happenings during the time of the *oo-oo-tuh*, the preparation for the killing and spearing of the *iih tup*, the big whale. There is a story about Ahousaht Amos. Ahousaht Amos was going for his daily bathing in a sacred pool that he claimed ownership to for the purpose of praying to catch the whale. There was an incident when Nellie Jacobson's father was found dead in the pool that belonged to Ahousaht Amos. But there was suspicion that her father was murdered while inside the pool that belonged to Ahousaht Amos on Bartlett Island. The rule and ownership rights were very distinct and it was not a good omen to bathe in someone else's pool. The belief was that if you did not kill the person inside your pool, you would have bad luck all the rest of your life. These happenings were only one generation earlier than mine

This was the thought that was brought out when Kista captured and killed the one whale that was towed into Nu-a-suk, Bartlett Island. Ahousaht Amos got two whales killed, captured and towed onto Nu-a-suk.

On each of these occasions the killing of the whale and the division of the food was done in the historic way. People from all the Ahousaht Nation and farther away gathered to come and enjoy the celebration and feast of the killing of the whale. There were Kwaguilth people from the other end of the Island, Nimpkish Lake people came to attend the ceremony of the killing of the whale and enjoy the feast that was put on. Also, people from Neah Bay, Washington and the places near Neah Bay, Port Angeles and out

to the outside areas, part of the Makah Nation which was also Nuu-Chah-Nulth. Of course there were famous whale hunters from all the Nuu-Chah-Nulth Nations that took part in that. People of the Ohiat First Nation attended with all their famous hunters, who were well known for hunting and killing the giant whales. So well over anywhere from 5000 to 10 000 people came to take part in that ceremony which made Kista Atleo a very famous man.

Vital in the preparation of a hunt was also the carving of a whaling canoe. This giant canoe was over forty feet long and six feet in width, carved to a sharp point in the bow with gradual slope to the stern end. The boat needed extra depth to give it balance to allow a pair of oarsman, one on each side to work. This made room for eleven hunters including one at the stern acting as a rudder to maneuver to head off the whale. There is a difference between these boats and canoes that are made for other purposes. The special formation of the bottom and the upper sides of the canoe flare up to the bow while the stern is made specially for maneuvering and following the whale on the hunt. The boats were built very smoothly with carving around the bow and the stern ends of the canoe. In the bow the carving of the Thunderbird faced upward with the wing spanning towards where the width grew and coloured with engravings of a spearman and the man, a Whale and a Thunderbird on the sides of the canoe.

The canoe was dug out of a cedar log with a special hand adz called *chuhyak.* Also an especially sharp twin-bit ax was used to dig the inner part of the canoe. The cedar log, itself, also had its own history being taken from high level on the slopes of the place like

Catface Mountain. There were several canoes that were made there and also in Ross Passage behind MacKay Island was a special place for some of the canoes. Some other canoe logs were taken from Moyeha River; along the high ridges we find the remains of where canoes were dug out until they were light enough to drag down to the ocean. When the initial forming was finished, the canoe was towed to Bartlett Island to finish carving and preparing the canoe to be the well balanced hull needed for the whale hunt.

These giant canoes were seaworthy. On the Pacific coast winds flare up in a very short time. In one or two hours the winds can start to develop stormy conditions which make the ocean hazardous. As well as being seaworthy, the boat was also quiet and maneuverable. The paddle played a very strong role in a stealthy approach to a whale. The paddle shape was sharp on the end and had a handle to fit into the palms of both hands. And when the paddle hit the water it made less sound so as not to alert the whale, but it could hear when the paddle hit the water, making movement in the water. The whale knew where the hunters were at all times.

This time when Kista killed the whale, it surfaced at the place where he had a spear precisely placed, where it would enter at the right spot. Sometimes spears only injured the whale. This time the whale took the thrust of the spear into the heart, the angle of the canoe and the whale were in perfect position, just as Kista had prayed for. There were times when whalers, in order to capture and kill the whale in shorter time, would jump onto the whale and put a rock into the blowhole. This was not known to

have happened to Kista, but other hunters have told stories of how other whales were captured.

That was not the end part of the kill. The kill was executed by knife and lance thrust onto the area that let all the blood out through the throat of the whale. And the whale, gasping for air, turned over and when it turned over it was fighting for air because the spear was in the heart and the throat was split open. It was better so as to keep the lungs inside the whale filled with air, in order for it to float rather than sink. They plugged up the hole inside the throat so that kept even more air in other parts of the whale. Kept afloat this way, the whale could be then towed to shore.

It sometimes took many days to tow the whale from where it was killed to Bartlett Island. Somehow the people in the settlements of Ahousaht and the other parts of Vargas Island and Blunden Island heard of the kill and went out towards where the whale was being towed, put a line on it and there were as many as twelve canoes that helped tow the whale in to the beach. I have said the success depended on supernatural assistance and being very well prepared. The hunt was a challenge between man and giant whale, and the whale was both strong and instinctive, aware that it was being hunted by mankind.

There are names derived from Kista's hunting skill. For instance, the name well known by all was Atlieu which is the family name passed down to his son Shamrock. Atlieu means "cedar root" and when you twist the cedar root the stringy parts of the root become flexible and like rope. So that when you make a length of it, you turn the branch,

the root, back and forth to make flexible and not break so that you could join it into many lengths, splice it, and make it into rope.

Kista Atleo, my grandfather, become very wealthy, a famous, successful hunter and title holder to Bartlett Island, his place of preparing for the hunt of the giant whale. My cousin, Gertrude, goes to this island annually to talk to the Creator and to remember the success of our grandfather, a famous hunter, well-known from the Queen Charlotte Islands to the Oregon coast. And his success also came from all his years in hunting for other mammals such as the fur seal.

The name Chaquosoikmik was bestowed on Kista by the chiefs of the Nuu-Chah-Nulth who attended the ceremony. The choice parts of the whale were called *chaquosoi.* So that the hunter of that whale is called Chaquosoimik, "the one that catches the whale." That was the name of Kista after he captured that whale. Most recently the name belonged to Mark Atleo.

The stories about hunting, whaling, and ambition, connect my generation with Kista, this all ties in with the life of Kista, of Mark Atleo, and of me. We never hunted whale, Mark Atleo and myself, but we hunted for fur seal. We tried with a spear but we never had success, so we used a shotgun. Because of the law-makers, we were not allowed to shoot fur seal with the shotgun. We were only allowed to use aboriginal tools such as canoe and spear, part of what is called "aboriginal rights and title".

Ktlunoos, Seals in Nuu-Chah-Nulth Culture

Fur seals, called *kwakwatl'* in my language, were and are an important element of our Nuu-Chah-Nulth people's lives. This coast line is only one part of the wider range of the northern fur seal, because its migration begins as far north as the Pribilof Islands in the Bering sea. In our area the seals may be found from Dixon Entrance, the whole coast line of the Haida lands of the Queen Charlottes, to Vancouver Island and as far south as the Gulf of Mexico on the southern parts of their migration.

The northern fur seal is a fascinating creature. The story of its life since humans first interjected themselves into the seal's habitat is a story of both flagrant plunder and international wildlife conservation, depending on the true meaning of what we call conservation. Our people, the Nuu-Chah-Nulth people, knew the times of the seal herds passing, along the coast line on their route to the south, stopping to feed on the fish banks off the coastal waters of Clayoquot Sound and Nootka Sound, and all along the range of the Nuu-Chah-Nulth territories, all the way to Barkley Sound, and the Juan de Fuca Strait, Cape Flattery, Neah Bay, and along the American coast to California.

The seal herds were fast moving, spending seven months traveling, swimming, and following the fish. They went onto the shallow fish banks and were able to dive and feed on the cod, herring, and salmon that they depended on to give them strength to swim their long migration.

Before the fur seal became a focus for the European fur trade industry, it was an important source of food for the coastal people. Our people mainly used the meat and

the fine fur for robes that were very warm and comfortable to wear. Like salmon, whale meat and whale blubber, the seal meat was smoked for long term storage. Strips 1/4 inch to 1/2 inch by a foot long were hung above a smoky fire in the sun and wind to make a preserved meat for the winter months.

The Europeans who first came among us at Nootka Sound changed our relationship with fur seals. There are two parts to the fur seal hunting story, one that predates the period when fur buyers commercialized the hunt, and another after it became an industry in which many Nuu-Chah-Nulth people participated. There is a cultural and survival difference of how and why we hunted fur seal. As a food source fur seal is very rich, but it is hard to hunt for the fur seal, the way our people hunted them, by spear. So our people learned and kept much knowledge about the animals in our culture to aid in our continued survival. It is quite an interesting part of life for First Nations people, relying on the seal as a source of food for the many thousands of people that lived along the coastline, especially because we lost our rights to the seals and younger generations have little contact with this important animal.

Some of the things I will take from my own recollection from boat tanners from Clayoquot Sound and my father-in-law, Keitlah, who was hired on as a hunter when he was just 16-years-old, signing articles on the schooners, *Lady Mine* and *Jessie*. These were good sized schooners able to take on 12 hunting canoes. Hunting canoes were dug out quite heavily, 16 to 18 feet long, and approximately 4 to 5 feet wide. It was roomy little canoes that were hoisted onto the schooner anchored out in front of Maaqtusiis.

There were other young hunters that joined ship, one being George Jacobson, the same age as Keitlah. The interesting thing about George Jacobson was that he changed his name while on a sailing schooner on a trip that took him up following the seal herd. The people had Nuu-Chah-Nulth names that were hard for the English speaking seamen to pronounce. So one of the sailors on board the schooner wanted to give a name that he understood so he said "you can use my name". His name was Jacobson. There were others that changed to the English names because they were easier to pronounce and write into the log book

There were other young hunters that joined the ship at Ahousaht. There was George Si, Noah Thomas, Thomas Louie, Chief Billy, Chief George, Big William, William Swan, Big Paul, Fred Gillet, Chief Joseph. There were also some ladies who joined ship as cook, including my mother-in-law, Eliza Johnny. These journeys on a sailing schooner often took nine months before coming back. The hunters followed the seal herd as it went southward beginning from the Pribilof Islands following the herd migrating to the American shoreline on route to the south across the Bering Sea. This was quite a story, because they had to understand the geography of where they were. But always being sea-going people the Nuu-Chah-Nulth understood direction and travel on the sea and quickly learned about the compass points.

The story of the fur seal has much importance, it clearly shows an example of the changes to our people's behaviour after the arrival of Europeans. Before the arrival of the fur buyer/trader, our people used the aboriginal style of spear with a barb on the end, to

go through the skin and into the body and when you pulled it back the barb locked a line into place made out of gut, wound up into a rope. It was strong enough that it would never break. The end of the spear was tied onto a line that fitted into the end of the wooden spear itself. When the spear went into the skin, the rope held but the wooden part of the spear withdrew. The seal did not die on the impact, but it fought hard to get away pulling the line taught and dragging the canoe here and there. It sometimes took hours for the hunter to get a chance to club the fur seal on the head to lessen its fighting and bring the animal into the canoe. When we started hunting on the schooners, following the herd, we used the canoes to hunt during the day with the same method until there was enough money to buy guns. The guns would kill the seal more quickly.

This is the route that our forefathers took when they started signing on as hunters, seamen, and as cooks for 9 months of the year, stopping into some of the ports that were close to the seal herd. In California, they went into San Francisco and went ashore and shopped in the big city for clothing, rum, whiskey, cutlery, teapots, kettles, cooking pots and anything that was of value, because the hunters were very well off. Some of the hunters made big money selling their seals to the captain of the ship, who was the agent for the company to pay off the hunter all through the hunting trip.

Part of the changes to our relationship with the seals came from the change in the hunt. That hunt resulted in the depletion of seals on our coast. It also depleted our traditional hunters, due to their participation in the commercial hunt. Eventually, the smaller seal populations led to conservation measures in the form of an international

treaty. The treaty was between the Americans, Russians, Japanese and British on behalf of Canada, made without any reference to the needs or roles of Nuu-Chah-Nulth people.

The next major phase in the chronology of the northern fur seal develops farther north where the Russians had observed herds of seals swimming northward each spring through the passes of the Aleutian chain, disappearing into the fog and mist of the Bering Sea. In 1783, Pribilof, a navigator in the service of Imperial Russia, joined the search for the breeding grounds outside the Commander Islands. His discovery of St. George Island in 1786 and St. Paul in 1787, within a group of islands which now bears his name, exposed the breeding grounds of the northern fur seal to exploitation by humans.

Overnight the northern fur seal became the source of seal skin for the entire world. During this period, harvesting was uncontrolled and breeding females were unprotected. In 1834, when it was obvious that they were facing extinction, measures were taken and the fur seal populations had begun to recover by 1867 when the U.S. purchased Alaska from Russia. During the first two years of U.S. jurisdiction, a number of independent seal companies were allowed to operate on the islands. In the first season 200 000 to 300 000 skins were taken, a number now considered to be excessive for the management of the herd.

In 1869 the American Congress established a special reservation to protect the breeding grounds and in addition provide for controlled harvest. The American government was authorized to award the first of two consecutive twenty-year leases for sealing on the island by private companies who took only a specified number of young

males. Under the first twenty-year lease the lessee was authorized to take 100,000 young males each year totaling just under two million seals. One other company awarded the second lease to take 342,651 seals[1] probably because the contract period coincided with the peak of pelagic sealing. This unregulated pelagic operation, taking mostly females, was responsible for reducing the herd to a remnant of its former size. Pelagic sealing, primarily by sealers from the United States, Canada and Japan, reached a peak in 1894 when 610,830 seals were taken. From 1889 to 1909 over 600,000 animals were taken. At least that many or more were lost after being wounded and not recovered. The herd had now been reduced from an estimated two million to probably 300,000 seals.

Pelagic sealing was halted in July 1911 as part of an international agreement by the U.S., Great Britain (for Canada), Japan and Russia meeting in Washington. In exchange for the right to pelagic sealing, the U.S. and Russia agreed to provide Japan and Great Britain each with 15% of their seal harvest from the island rookeries. Japan in turn agreed to give the U.S., Great Britain and Russia each 10% of its annual harvest on Ramen Island. Thus in 1911, the agreement became the instrument that finally gave much needed protection to the seal herds, providing economic gain for the countries involved. It was the first significant step towards a type of international cooperation required for the survival of the fur seal.

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[1] For details of fur seal populations and takes see annual NOAA Technical Memoranda, *Fur Seal Investigations*, National Marine Mammal Laboratory, National Marine Fisheries Service, USDC, Seattle Washington 1990, 1992 *et al.*.

The survival of aboriginal people did not seem to receive the same attention. Not only did we lose the employment opportunity, but we lost the right to hunt for food except using traditional hunting methods. I have said a little bit about the importance of the transition from spear to the gun. The double barreled 10 gauge or 12 gauge shotguns were very much in demand by the hunters to get away from having to hold onto a line that burnt your hand and the seal biting the canoe, biting the line and everything else within its reach in order to save its own life. We were told that if we wanted to continue to hunt seal for our own consumption we would have to return to using a spear.

This area is one in which people have begun to appraise the price they have paid for progress, in the form of a damaged environment and diminished resources, meaning that the seal herd was hunted to near extinction. The story of the northern fur seal is an encouraging example of what can be accomplished through intensive research and sound management. Today the Alaska fur seal herd numbers are estimated at 1.4 million animals. There is a healthy population from which surplus young males are selectively harvested on St. Paul Island. It is one of the most dramatic conservation achievements since people first began making serious efforts to undo some of the damage they have inflicted on the environment and the living natural resources it sustains.

The generations of Nuu-Chah-Nulth people younger than me have no memory of the seal meat and pelts, or the precarious journey to offshore waters in small boats. Neither do we have any say in the disposition of the animals that are part of our world that are harvested for commercial gain by other peoples. The story of the whale is

significant because whales are once again important aspects of the wildlife in our traditional territory, while the seal provides a good example of the type of changes we have experienced through the transition from European contact to modern times.

Chapter 3 *Naa'sQa?itkquisHicit*

Our Changing Landscape

In this chapter I will present some of the memories of my people and some of my own memories. Together these are the foundation and the context of my thoughts on the state of First Nations people in B.C. and where the future might take us. It is important for the reader to realize that some things that are taken for granted by white people are quite different from how a First Nations person might think. I discuss some of the spiritual beliefs we have and their links to the land and waters that surrounded us. I write here about our version of the origins of the Nuu-Chah-Nulth in Clayoquot Sound. Many older people that surrounded me during my life have given me their perspectives, mainly through stories and songs. I present some of those and explain what they mean to us.

I then focus the chapter on my village and the life I led in and around the village and the people of Ahousaht. The period of my parents and myself is one of great change. As the white society developed we joined the labour force of some industries and were excluded from economic activities. Then some of those very activities, like logging and commercial fishing, both of which I have taken part in, came to reduce much of the resource base that had supported us throughout our lives on Vancouver Island.

Naa'sQa?itkquisHicit

Naa'sQa?itkquisHicit is a Nuu-Chah-Nulth word meaning the changing ways of Mother Earth and all the surrounding elements, from every avenue of life. It refers to the cycles, the water coming from the mountain sides in spring and the stream gushing out of the rocky hillside, running down into the ocean and from the ocean evaporating back up into the skies to transform once again into rainwater

It refers to the change in summer when the sun dries out the hillsides, the river banks, and the ocean shores. Living things, including humans, rely on the summer season for food, be it fish, deer, seal, berries and all the resources of the ocean. All rely on the changing ways of Mother Nature according to the time of year.

In the fall, when the huge leaves start falling off the maple trees the summer's growth goes back into the ground. With the fall comes the changing colors of a beautiful hillside. Then comes the wintry weather where we get a bit of cold, snow, and ice.

We see smolts coming from the rivers; fish of different species have different seasons to return to the ocean. All this is also dependent on time. Within the life of human beings and animals we only see a very small part of this great change and the way it happens. What I have seen in my lifetime, seventy-two years of being one of the living creatures, leaves me very much unsure of how we relate to cycles of year and the longer time elements of animals and their environment.

Spring, summer, fall and winter all have Nuu-Chah-Nulth names. Early spring we call *clakshilth,* which means "growth." *Clupitch* means "warm summer weather" and

ahitch means "fall season." *Suitch* refers to the wash-down of all mountain sides, all rivers, cleaned out by torrents of water coming from the winter.

The four directions of wind also have names. In the summer we have westerly winds, called *huchclitch*. South-easterly stormy winds are called *tuchilth*. The cold north wind that brings Arctic air is called *yuhtacak*. South and easterly are combined on all these changes of wind direction. And when we say *tuchi*, south-easterly, it means it is connected to the south because the wind does not stay in that direction, always returning back to the south-east wind.

Tiskin

During the stormy weather it is easy to remember how we are kept in contact with the Tiskin, the almighty Thunderbird. The Thunderbird is the main element that links our lives to the seasons and the weather. It is the heart of our interconnectedness. The lightning is *kli-cliha* and Tiskin is the thunder, made by the giant Thunderbird.

It is important to know how we look into the sky towards the west and then towards the south-east to understand what the weather is going to be like. The elders would look into the sky and say, "Tiskin, how is the weather going to be today?" And Tiskin would answer "I'll give you rain. I'll give you wind. All for the sake of the living creatures, whatever it may be, animals, human beings, or fish in the ocean." We could understand the conditions and were never wrong because Tiskin showed what the day would be like, what the week will be like, or what the month will be like because of the

changing position of planet Earth according to the season of the year. The moon and the sun were very important parts of understanding Mother Nature, Tiskin and human beings and animals and life on Planet Earth. That is how we understand the elements of the universe.

Every knowledgeable person in the Nuu-Chah-Nulth Nation understands what I have written here about Tiskin and the weather and seasons. Knowing our environment on a day-to-day basis was important to have a safe journey. If, for example, you were traveling 30-50 miles (50 to 80 kms) out into the ocean hunting fur seal and whale, things I discuss in other parts of this thesis, knowing the weather conditions was important for survival. You could decide not to go due to bad weather based on the knowledge of elders who would sing during the stormy weather, sing to Tiskin, to please calm our waters in dangerous times of the year when people are traveling on the coast, be it going for invited feasts or visits to other tribes along the coast line.

Tiskin was here before life was formed. He was here before the creation of humankind. Tiskin is sacred, he holds the world in his wings. We are not fooled because he is not visible, because we know his spirit is in all areas that are moving on the face of the earth; the weather, the four seasons.

The song of the Thunderbird is what gives us success, like those we had in our battles with the Otsosat Nation that I discussed earlier in the thesis; Tiskin was there on our side. We learned from Tiskin the value of being a strong person, gaining strength from

the abundant foods that we ate. If we dug up the sand on aboriginal land, we would find a wealth of shellfish which was what Tiskin also ate.

It is known, though, that a true believer can talk to Tiskin. He becomes angry, mostly when he sees examples of selfishness. He is happy when everyone is included in the feast of the giant whale or the mammals of the sea, any kind of meat that fits the diet of the Nuu-Chah-Nulth people. Lately, during treaty talks in Nootka that I will also discuss later, the Ahousaht brought seal blubber and meat and home-baked bannock to the table. The table was loaded with food. I wonder if my nation knew that Tiskin joined the feast by spirit and was happy to watch nations at peace.

The gifts of Tiskin are like instinct. I talk to Tiskin, he talks to me, and I hear, but it is not like you hear other things. It is more of an understanding what is right and what is wrong. Simple ways of life; harmony with nature and Tiskin. I believe that Tiskin would be very pleased that I am mentioning him in my work here. My hopes and my dreams are to meet Tiskin in person; tell him what I have put on paper and why I have done so. He will be happy to know that we very much respect his strength, his presence and spirit in body and soul. I say soul more for the English version of the spirit Tiskin and my spirit.

The Beginnings of our Nations

The story I am presenting here came to me from the late Francis Charlie. He was the younger brother of Chester Charlie, the hereditary chief of the Keltsomaht and a self

taught historian with special knowledge of the history of the amalgamation of the Ahousaht First Nation. His story is about the early movement and arrival of the First Nations into Clayoquot Sound. It was when our nations were formed, on the advice of Tiskin.

There was a freeze-up of the inlets, mountains, waterways, channels and the rivers around all through the Sound, from the areas of Bear River, the inlets in and around Meares Island, Warn Bay, and through the outside areas, both sides of Fortune Channel and the Cypre River. The whole of the Bedwell Sound was frozen over and the ice and heavy snow forced people to abandon Bedwell River, Cypre River, Fortune River, Warn Bay, and the villages throughout Catface called *Chetapi* in between Maaqtusiis, and Vargas Island.

Francis Charlie's story is kept only by word of mouth, an oral history passed on from generation to generation as to our origin. His story is of all the nations joining together, not finding any enemies, but friends, becoming a Nation, understanding the need for survival during that freeze-up and ice that formed all through Clayoquot Sound. Francis Charlie said there was so much cold that people froze to death because there was no way of freeing wood to make fires. People sought the best places to go for a little bit of warmth. They all joined together and found someone who had maintained driftwood fires going on the outer west side of the islands, Flores, Bartlett, Blunden and Vargas Island with its long beach. Some arrivals were strangers, some were relatives, and some were friends.

If I were to guess as to the time, I would suspect that it would be as long ago as four thousand years or more. This comes from the archeological sites near Hesquiaht that have indicated human presence over four-thousand years ago. We believe that we did not come from the north across the Bering Strait. There's nothing in our history that I recollect that talks about migration of Nuu-Chah-Nulth Nation, rather our history tells about the movement to get away from the freeze-up of the waters in Clayoquot Sound.

Around that time, there was a plague that engulfed all the nations on the west Pacific coastline all the way to Alaska and all the way to Mexico and the American coastline. Tiskin appeared and faced the Nuu-Chah-Nulth nations and said, "form your nations and I will help in cleaning off the bad omens of disease and plague and enrich the islands, the coastline, from one end to the other on the Pacific shoreline." This may sound like a fairy tale, but the nations were formed on the advice of Tiskin, and we became a spiritually and physically enriched people.

Much of our culture was also created by Tiskin. The song of Tiskin has remained in the minds of people that know how to sing. Some songs are for occasions such as feasts or happy times when people just wanted to enjoy a song and dance for entertainment, other songs that came out were songs for inspiration. Some are ancient, and some songs are new.

Some songs were for gatherings when First Nations from the many tribes put on a sacred celebration. Tiskin would help along and use his powers when the ceremony was on, using other animals such as wolves and bears in the process. There is a sacred

gathering under Tiskin's guidance when there is a wish to clear the air of many wrong doings such as warfare or some bad times that came about from human error. Tiskin would help to give people happy times.

Many types of strong feelings exist and there are gifted people who can use magic. There are sorcerers, witches, devils, and other such figures such as exist in non-First Nations written sources. The power of evil exists. A power to kill a person exists. And the power of good feelings exist. There are happy times and sad times. Sad times when many people die within a short time of each other. When a person dies young, be it suicide or be it from accident, a cycle of life is in existence, and we record or remember the death of young people and the sadness that comes with it when a person does not live a full life.

White people that first wanted to teach First Nations modern religious beliefs (I say "modern" because it is a different way of life which does not agree with First Nations) told us something totally different from the culture of First Nations. We understand the different styles, ways, words, and beliefs of non-First Nations. We are open to other beliefs, because we knew something about differences from those within our own Nations. However, I think that the day is quickly passing when we are convinced that we can live two lives with different ways, different styles, different beliefs. We all go by inspiration of song, of dance, of praying to Tiskin. We are trying to convince the non-First Nations that we are able to control our own destiny.

Recollections of Fish and Forests

The purpose of this section is to understand the ideas of resources and how they are linked to employment. The information I use is based mainly on my personal recollections of the role fishing played in my family history, and forestry in my own personal history. This is part of a dialogue I have assembled from speaking with many Nuu-Chah-Nulth elders: Francis Charlie, my grandfather Peter Webster, John Thomas of the Dididaht, James Adams, Fred Gillete, and F. Mistak. These people, and others, formed a group whose collective knowledge was passed on to me in various forms at different times. I cannot sort some of these early memories and attribute them to specific individuals, and present them here as a combination of stories from specific people, and as a general understanding I derived from the people who surrounded me.

I have photographs of and memories of Mistak in his younger days, a happy, smiling and healthy man. A really grown person, in the giant sense, a healthy person. He was a genuine Nuu-Chah-Nulth elder who practiced sleight of hand and magic for us when we were children. He used to put a coin in his hand, turn his hand over, and the coin would disappear. And playing with cards, he would put down a bunch of cards, lay them all face down, and he would ask us all to take one each and then tell us what we had in our hand when we faced it up.

My grandfather, Peter Webster, who passed away a few years ago, remembered beautiful songs. Some of his songs he learned from his father, passed down from past generations. These were about happiness, life, survival, and the movement of nations

with other nations. The happiness songs were also about the celebration of the resources that came very mysteriously from the ocean. Without too much chasing or trying to do things the hard way, the First Nations sat at the stream waiting for the fish to come up the river. The songs are still being sung today.

Peter Webster told me about the environment, about our knowledge of the cycle of life. He maintained that the people knew how to look after resources and managed to keep the salmon coming up the same stream each year. The mystery for us was, how did these little fish, when hatched and when ready to travel down the river out into the ocean, and swim the many miles of coastline following the current, return back at various times in the same streams on a cycle? Sometimes it happened that fish did not come back abundantly. But wherever the wrong was, it happened out at sea. Some things did not happen the way Mother Nature thought it should happen and sometimes there was very few that came back.

Peter Webster told me another story about the people of Ahousaht who went way up into the mountains looking for a very important resource. He was using the story to present the importance of good cedar for dugout canoes. The key point is that there are different kinds of canoes for different tasks. They went to locate a place where people could find bigger and better cedar that was not cross-grained or trees that grew rather in a knot, circle-ish and short, a round tree. They eventually found the trees with the best grain and softness for the dugout canoes in general.

The dugout canoe has been around also for thousands of years. I would like to bring that time back again when the first dug-out was pulled out of the woods by 20 men. The method for building a canoe was to burn and dig the burned parts off the inner side of the dug-out canoe. We built huge canoes this way; some were 50 feet long and five or six feet wide at the widest part of the canoe, then tapering off on each end. This was Peter Webster's story of the cedar resource.

There was no quarrel as to who had the ownership of resources. The people of the Nuu-Chah-Nulth Nation were the stewards, the caretakers, the people that watched the resource. Part of that watching meant keeping in mind the entire watersheds, which has only recently become part of the thinking of government resource managers.

Francis Charlie knew the history of the Keltsomaht First Nations from Vargas Island, also the original home of the Ahousaht. They were always working together as if they were already joined as one Nation similar to the way we now consider the amalgamated tribes of the Nuu-Chah-Nulth Nation.

The Keltsomaht were also composed of many parts all living in various places on Keltsomaht, or Vargas Island as it is called today. The Ahousahts were living on the south-west side of the island they called Ahous and the other areas right around the island. A'ups, the long beach joining Ahous facing the open Pacific Ocean, and the island across called Blunden Island all had our dwellings.

Francis Charlie told me that where they lived, on the south side of Vargas Island, there were no big rivers. There was a little stream on the west end of the island where a

few coho salmon came in to spawn. The people depended on the other places that had abundant fish. When they heard there was a run of fish going into the bigger rivers, it was not that they were not allowed to go, because the people shared with all to meet the needs of other tribes that had no streams. So, although Francis Charlie always maintained that they owned no streams, it was not entirely true because the sharing of all the resource was very much a part of the culture of the Nuu-Chah-Nulth Nation.

During the early part of my life in the 1930's and early 1940's I recall in the early summers, the people were home in Ahousaht and June saw the beginning of the calm and beautiful early summer days. The summer holidays usually started on June 18th or 19th when the children used to go home to their parents for the summer months. Around that week the adults usually started to move towards the fish canneries located up and down the coast. The Ahousaht usually went up to the River's Inlet area called Oweekeno where there were fish canneries. One year I went up with my parents, and my aunt and uncle, to work in a fish cannery during the heavy sockeye run. I have never seen so many sockeye at one time.

The summer months became very lonely because all that was left in the village site of Maaqtusiis were the elders who were unable to work in the fish canneries. Work in the canneries was strenuous. The workday started around eight o'clock in the morning when the cannery workers, strong women, started filling the cans full of fish, sockeye, cut by machines and cleaned by men and women. There were Chinese workers, too, as many as 40 or 50 of them in each cannery. These people held key jobs, rolling the cans from the

storage areas in the upper part of the cannery. The Chinese went around the tables and when a tray was filled with canned fish they collected it and punched a number on a ticket showing each tray that the worker had filled. The people were experts at estimating the right amount of fish, not too much, so that the lid of the can would fit snugly, covering the sockeye. The Chinese workers then soldered a lid onto the can, a lengthy operation.

This environment was so full of life that if you were to take a trip over the waters of Oweekeno there were passages with miles and miles of waterways where the fish were heading to spawn. But there were also well over a thousand gill-netters with their nets strung out in the water and pulling in on the gill nets early in the morning. The majority of the boats were wooden skiffs, with one or two people running the gill-net. The fishermen were from all over the coastline from Vancouver, the interior of Vancouver Island, Sechelt, Campbell River, Powell River, Alert Bay, the areas of the Johnstone Strait, and many of the villages on the west coast of Vancouver Island, waking up each morning to work in the fish canneries.

I mentioned that Ahousaht was a lonely place from the third week of June on due to the time that people were away at the fish canneries. There were very few of us left; I was one of those because I didn't have any place to go at times. There were times that I stayed right at the residential school for the summer months.

The preparation to go north took several weeks of collecting enough food to eat on the way up and to have for while you were at various canneries. At that time we had

small boats, about 30 feet long, powered by engines that we called "one-lungers". We quickly learned how to operate the early boat motors that were introduced to our people. There were motors built by the Easthope Brothers in Steveston, British Columbia on the Fraser River, and Vivian engines manufactured in Vancouver. They were reliable motors with heavy fly-wheels and small coiled batteries to fire up the spark plugs. I grew up during these times and I was shown how to operate small engines.

That long journey would take three to four days of traveling, stopping on the first day perhaps as far as Kyuquot Sound. Usually in the late evening there would be as many as 30 to 40 boats, each 25 to 30 feet long, anchoring out and resting overnight at Kyuquot.

They put a canvas cover over from the cabin to the stern of the boat for the trips up the coast. That is where the ladies and children had protection from the cold and rain. The environment was always an uncertainty, but our people were familiar with weather, tides and wind and they knew the anchorages up and down the coast that they would use for shelter.

The journey to the Rivers Inlet fish canneries could be very dangerous for the small boats traveling up the coast. Although beautiful in the summer, the coast can be treacherous with its winds and tidal streams. When the tides are strong they rise up to 12 to 13 feet, and the current runs offshore along the outer side of places like Estevan Point at the tip of the Hesquiaht peninsula. Those conditions can be perilous for a small

gas boat taking water into the hold with the weight of the passengers, as many as 20 in the family, and often several families.

The fish canneries played an important role in our lives as they caused a major change in the pattern of life. Throughout the 1920's, 1930's, and 1940's, the environment of Nuu-Chah-Nulth people was uprooted causing many different cultural "breaks"; I call them breaks because the changes were so different, so diverse.

The environment during my early years of attending a residential school gave us a lifestyle filled with beauty. When we were very young we used to walk the beaches of Flores Island when the tide was out, searching for the seafood, the mussel, the chitin, sea urchin, cockles and odd clams that lived along these beaches. I recall that the shoreline was very rich and the Nuu-Chah-Nulth people, young and old, depended on it for their existence and livelihood. First, when the tide was out, the ladies, the young men, and families would go out to the islands that were rich with seafood. Abalone are very rich and very much in demand now, but because of over-harvesting by divers there are very few left behind in the lower inter-tidal areas. There was also the chiton and the sea urchins, rich in iodine, which were important for their medicinal value. Our people have known for a long time that sea urchins, called *t'uts'up* in the Nuu-Chah-Nulth language, keep bacteria away from the inside of the person's organs such as the stomach, the liver, kidneys and even the heart. The chitin is called *haay'ishtuup*. There are other seafoods that are in the family of the sea urchin but smaller called *usgi-hey* that growing men and women need on a daily basis.

For our fishing and sea travel, First Nations traveled in dugout canoes, 24-foot motor boats, the one-lungers, 30 foot one-lungers; more recently they moved to modern equipped fishing boats for trolling and gill-netting and seining. Our people adapted to the change as the various new industries came into our existence. I could remember my late father showing me how the one-lunger was operated and how to turn the fly-wheel over and start the motor. I learned how to take a boat out by myself while I was quite young.

That seemed to be part of the goal of each young First Nations person, to join in the daily way of life, to go out and catch the salmon and to learn how to put it away in the smokehouse and the various ways of preserving the fish To survive, the Nuu-Chah-Nulth people, especially the women, mothers, young ladies, learned at an early age how to keep food from spoiling.

Our people were very generous in the old days. They invited newcomers to come sit around the fire and eat the food that was prepared and preserved. We welcomed any visitor that came to live and co-exist with our people. The word I will use for this behaviour is reciprocity.

Commercial fishing has dominated our search for salmon. I would like to stress that this change in something so important to our lives influenced everything we do. My memories of this go back to the mid-1930' some of how this change influenced us.

In the fall season, the chum salmon, coho, and spring salmon came to the rivers and channels in Clayoquot Sound, Millar Channel, Russell Channel, and Father Charles Channel, from the open Pacific. In early times there were no buyers or no commercial

fishing. The early 1930's saw some commercial fishing ventures, for example the selling of fish by First Nations people to the local buyers, in particular, the two residential schools, in Ahousaht on Flores Island, and on Meares Island at Kakawis. Chum salmon and cohos were sold for about 4 cents a piece. It was not until the mid-1930's that BC Packers, Nelson Brothers, Francis Millard and Sons and a few other companies started the industry going in our waters. The industry then created a demand, although the price of the fish was very low.

During those early years I remember there was a Japanese company that put up what were called "salteries", because at the time there was no other way to preserve the salmon. Because of the richness in the sockeye, coho, and spring salmon it seemed to decay and spoil within one day in the open. Consequently, there was much wastage at various canneries because of overfishing at the height of runs. Fish simply could not be processed fast enough.

Fish and forests were always important to the First Nations people. We also worked in both our traditional ways and in the industries that moved into our territories. As a young man I worked in the logging industry. I use my experience to show some of the changes in logging as I experienced them through some years working in the forest. The story of my experience begins as a 16-year-old residential school graduate in Ahousaht. I was looking around for some kind of work to make a living. I decided to wander away from my village because there was no employment there and move to Port Alberni where I had friends and could seek employment in the lumber mills.

I was hired first on a part-time basis at MacMillan, Bloedel and Stewart as an ordinary laborer, and put on the night-shift piling the heavy timbers as they came out from the sawmill. I learned how to operate and maneuver them by using a pevee. As a youngster, the work was heavy, the hours were long, and the noise was terrible. Throughout the night I could hear the saws screaming in my ears, but I had to make a living. Fortunately, I found a friend and relative up the Sumas River near Port Alberni, Adam Siwish, hereditary Chief of the Tsesaht Nation (refer to Figure 2), who asked me to move in with his family. Actually it was his father, Jacob, who asked his son to find me a place to stay while I was working at the mill until I could find some place for myself.

Adam Siwish was very generous and kind young man. He brought me down to talk with the hiring people where I found work. When I say generous, I mean he was more than generous because he already had several families living in his house so I felt like I was encroaching because I had one room to myself. And every morning when I came back from the mill, he would offer me breakfast and I would sleep during the day. They would let me sleep throughout the day until I got ready to go back on shift.

For one day of work, I was paid $5. And out of this I had to pay my room and board, and buy my working clothes. It took me a while to sort myself out. After a month of work, I decided that I was imposing on the big family of Adam Siwish, although they assured me otherwise, and that I could stay as long as I wanted.

I asked at the management at the mill during my off hours if I could find work in the woods to learn how to take logs out of the bush or find some different kind of work as

a logger. They arranged a transfer for me to go from the mill to a logging camp at Great Central Lake.

After seven months at the logging camp I went over to Seattle looking for work. Moving to the American side and hiring out from Archie's hiring hall in Seattle, I was sent up into the Cascade Mountains, 45 miles outside of Seattle, and to a camp that was sitting on railroad tracks. In fact, when I went up to the camp, I rode up on what they called a crummy on the railroad track. Everything was placed on that railroad track sitting against the mountain quite high up in the Cascades. It was summer, 1942, and I moved into a bunk house.

In Great Central Lake, I had been employed as a whistle punk. My job was to stand on a stump and listen for the signals coming from where the cutting was going on and to signal the riggers to pull logs out from the bush. There was the choker man who wrapped the steel cable around the log and snapped it into the choker so the log could then be yarded out of the bush. The rigging slinger helped the choker man and gave him orders for which logs to take out to the line where rigging was coming from. There was also a head-rigger who stood by and made sure that the crew was working properly. It was the choker man who told the rigging slinger when it was ready for the yarder to get into operation and haul the logs up the slope.

There was a main line which hauled the logs in from the woods and there was a line which was called a haul-back, the haul-back bringing the rigging. The rigging could be set anywhere along a road, but usually the logs were started from the closer end to the

yarding machine which was in those days a gas engine with a winch and cables that wound in either the mainline or the haul-back line. The rigging was set out from the yarder which was tied down to stumps so that it would hold when the yarding started from the bush.

I found a very different system on the American side because the logging crew was actually two sets of crews. One was called the rigging crew and the other the operating logging crew. The difference was that one crew was setting up the rigging on the one road while the operating logging crew was yarding logs up hill on another line. And it was called a skidder show, the skidder being machinery up on top of the hill where the logs are being yarded up hill. And when it reached the top it was dropped to the ground and the rigging went back down hill to pull more logs.

I will just say that the story of the Cascade Mountain rigging caused heavy damage to the side hill because the logs had to be dragged on the ground with the tail end of the logs, ten at a time, scarring the side hill, knocking and uprooting everything that went in its way. So there is no really safe, easy way of not hurting the forest lands when you're harvesting this type and amount of logs. As the rigging moved from one site, when this road was finished, the logging crew moved onto the next row. This was in turn moved going right around the mountain in the kind of a way that the train moved as the logging progressed and the logs were harvested and loaded onto the train.

I am outlining this to explain how the rigging and cables worked to drag logs from the bush anywhere from 400 to 500 yards distant from the machine. Three to four

chokers at a time were hanging from the rigging. I remember the damage that it caused was tremendous because the logs destroyed anything that was in their way. The damage from where I saw it standing on a stump, included pulling the salal bushes, huckleberry bushes and various small plants along the route; all would be yarded out. It seemed the earth itself would crumble under the pressure of the logs.

There is no real way of compensating for, or repairing the damage that is done on one road and in one clearcut because the early machinery was not made to lift these heavy logs off the ground. This is my early experience. I ask myself, what did it do to my mind? I was 16 years old and living during a time of very different attitudes with loggers who sweated and worked and pulled these logs out of the bush.

I logged in various camps on the American side. By 1945 I returned to British Columbia, an experienced young man having served in the armed forces and also looking for a job. My next job was in the logging camp at Tahsis on Nootka Sound up the coast from my own home on Flores Island.

Once there, I worked at the loading works at Strange Island. The system was very different because the logs were being loaded onto gutted out sailing vessels, the *Tolmie* and the *Malahat*. They had cut out the deck and beams on both ships so that logs were loaded down into the bottom of the ship. The machinery for loading onto the two vessels was powered by very old steam engines fired by wood so that when the logs were lifted the engines would steam. It would take some time for the steam to build up in order to lift in some more.

Both the vessels sank in heavy weather. One of them, the *Malahat*, was coming from the Queen Charlotte Islands when it hit bad weather and broke up and was lost between the Queen Charlotte Islands and Vancouver Island. The *Tolmie* was also lost in the same area so that all the logs that were on board these two vessels drifted and were lost, proving a heavy loss for Gibson Brothers logging company.

At the time the logging operations at Tahsis were six miles up the Tahsis River. It was one of the places where I found the early evidence of environmental damage to the fish stream. Logs were dragged by a bulldozer along the river bed. For many years the operation used the river as a road. And there was a dump at the bottom end of the river where the logging truck dumped its logs. The road was the river so that anything that went downstream went down the river.

Today we call the river and its shorelines a hydro-riparian zone and seem to understand the importance of these areas. The Tahsis sockeye and chum runs were pretty well ruined by this logging. And you can imagine what's left there after over 50 years of operation. The roads are now intertwined all the way to the main highway which runs along towards Port McNeil and Port Hardy.

I have seen what the logging companies do, and how they act, and they wanted to do the same in the lands that I inherited all the way back from Maquinna. A few years ago we set up a roadblock just on the road not far from Shark Creek on Sulphur Passage, about a quarter of a mile from where road blasting was going on. There were many reasons why we blocked the work of the logging company at this site. First off, this was

traditional Ahousaht territory and I, myself as Chief Earl Maquinna, decided to protest the logging of all the areas along that side of the Channel on the Vancouver Island side, Shark Creek and Atleo River, called Seektukis, the main river of the Ahousaht.

Atleo River was a very rich salmon river, but I can say right now the stream is damaged due to the heavy damage from the logging practices of MacMillan Bloedel and Fletcher Challenge and other logging companies that have operated in that area on the north-west side of Millar Channel. I am not the owner, but I am the keeper of Shark Creek. I am the person who watches and sees that no damage is done to Shark Creek. It is called *mamachaqtlnit* because the basking shark had their young at the deeper part of the pool below the waterfall on the saltwater side of the tidal pool. And this sacred pool is shared with my family.

How I have responded to my people's recollections and my own experience has formed my view on the future. A good part of the future is linked to the treaty negotiations we are now undertaking with the Governments of British Columbia and Canada. My ancestors have captured great whales, they and I have hunted the fur seal, I have fished and logged in many areas of First Nations territories. In the short period of a little more than a century we have gone from using these things for our survival to being employees for large companies. We are now trying to regain some of what was ours so we can survive with the food from the sea, and also have work for our young people. Thus we sit at the treaty table and try to settle the issues of land and resources with the Crown. That is the focus of the next chapter.

Chapter 4 Ha hoolthe

The purpose of this part of the thesis is to give a message to my grandchildren, my children, and family of the Hawiih of Ahousaht. I refer to the question of settling ownership issues, over land and sea, rivers and streams with all the European Nations that came and settled in British Columbia and who did not respect the First Nations in Clayoquot Sound. What I have written is a very small examination of the foundations for the inequities that we are trying to resolve on the treaty table. I begin the chapter with the story of how our song of prayer to the Thunderbird, Tiskin, was given to us. I then place the song in its current setting, the treaty negotiations, our first and only such deliberations. We know we are facing very hard negotiations as to what the two governments have to offer because each of them has different ways of dealing with the matters that are their responsibility. I will use a chronological framework to discuss the progress of the negotiating process.

Our negotiations are not carried out by themselves so I discuss some of the outside issues that have influenced our thinking on the treaty and may also influence the government negotiating position as well. My source for this material is from legend passed down to me from my ancestors, and my position as one of the Nuu-Chah-Nulth treaty negotiators. I can only think that, by seeing some of the Provincial Government attitudes and "democratic" ideas, they are different from an aboriginal person's mind, such as mine. To understand the meaning of aboriginal rights of First Nations, is to allow

them to live the way they lived before the coming of the settlers and the laws that came first under the British North America Act (1867 rep.1982)

The Song of Tiskin

There is a song we sing at the beginning of every treaty meeting. This song is about the strength of Tiskin, almighty Thunderbird. It dates back to the generations before the wars between Ahousaht and Otsosat nations. It came as a spiritual awakening to two warriors who were preparing to avenge the killings of hereditary chiefs; one was called Betokamai the other, Totohasta. These two were preparing to kill Canakum. He was a dictator and a commoner using his power and strength alone, who had killed most of the Ahousaht Nation *Hawiih* (hereditary chiefs) and threatened the other chiefs enough to become the chief by the power of his wickedness. Canakum was a giant that had been born to the ordinary people of the Ahousaht Nation before the wars. His arms were twice the size of an ordinary person's. He had seven sons and a wife who was very wicked. Canakum had one more hereditary chief to kill in order to hold the total chieftainship of the Ahousaht Nation.

Canakum knew that the two warriors were preparing to avenge the killings of their chiefs. He went out to Bartlett Island and met the two warriors talking together on the water in canoes. They were far enough apart that they were not going to harm each other. Canakum said, "I'll kill you both before you try to kill me. I invite you both to try what

you are planning to do, to kill me, but you will go out of my house as a corpse. I welcome you to try. "There's no man stronger than Canakum," he said of himself.

The Thunderbird came to these two warriors with the song. It is the same song that was passed on through the generations to me, that I have now given to the Nuu-Chah-Nulth Tribal Council as a means of being successful in the fight to keep our *ha hoolthe*. This is what we are using now to pray that the Thunderbird is going to use its strength in order to give us back the resources and land in Clayoquot Sound we once owned. So that song the Thunderbird first sang to the two warriors.

The warriors succeeded in killing Canakum after their second year of praying on Bartlett Island. They went into his house on Cypre River where he lived with his seven sons. He told his sons, "you just keep a long distance from the sides because I'll kill the two warriors with my own strength myself". Canakum's nephew was standing beside him holding his club. He had another club that he was prepared to use but it was for the last part of his fight, the killing of the two warriors. So his sons obeyed him and stayed on the sides waiting to see from which side the two warriors would enter the fight.

Canakum was standing near the center of the house where the two warriors made ready to fight. His nephew was standing behind him and he said to his nephew, "give me my better club". He was facing towards the center of the room where the two warriors were ready to fight. The nephew himself grabbed his club and clubbed Canakum from behind, killing him instantly. The sons that were on the side did not move. They were awestruck to see their father die. The dictator Canakum was finished.

That is when the song of the Thunderbird was sung by these two warriors, Betokamai and Totohsata. The song has been passed down through the generations, to my grandfather, Chief Billy, and then to my father, and over to me. Now it is in the hands of the Nuu-Chah-Nulth Tribal Council. That song is sung first thing before every meeting at the treaty table. It is what we believe is going to spell victory for the Nuu-Chah-Nulth Nation.

I have been thinking about land, about fee simple land. This is what the whole treaty is about. It is about how the land changed from First Nations' territories with the coming of the settlers, those people who came and imposed their sovereignty. Essentially, these people came and took our land away.

The Province has a way of holding on to land, naming it Crown land. The settlers call their landholdings fee simple land. Around the turn of the century the lands in Clayoquot Sound were divided by a Royal Commission. The Commissioners came to the area saying to the Nuu-Chah-Nulth people to put a stake at the end of their dwellings, and all the tribes put up survey posts saying that this is the land you are going to live on, reserve land. These amounted to little fragments of property where our people were dwelling at that particular time, "given" to us, although the Federal government retained ownership to the land. At the time we may not have clearly understood the whole process. We now understand very well the meaning of naming these lands that the settlers took as private lands.

One such site we held onto is a special island where the First Nations meet called Nu-a-sak. We are not one tribe, but a confederacy of the First Nations like Keltsomaht, Ahousaht, Manousaht, Quaswiaht, Ouinmitisaht. There was a shelter where you could land on the sand beach, even on a day of very rough surf. Although white people had no knowledge of the place we were required to stake it as a reserve. The settlers did come as far as another site, Tofino, Nachics in our language, which belonged to the Nuu-Chah-Nulth who were dwelling there. Nachics is a word which means that you can see across to another village, which was Opitsat on Meares Island. We were not able to keep that site.

January, 1996: The Framework Agreement

The negotiation now before us represents the final act of our past relationship with European people. The Chief Negotiators were appointed by each of 12 Nations of the Nuu-Chah-Nulth that are participating in this process. One First Nation, Dididaht, chose to meet Canada and British Columbia, independently. For the Ahousaht, there are two of us that sit at the table and both of us have the same authority to speak. Most of the Nations have one chief negotiator. The four northern Nuu-Chah-Nulth Nations appointed one chief negotiator for all four tribes.

So there is variation in the people sitting around the treaty table. There are three co-chairs designated as chief negotiators for all the Nuu-Chah-Nulth twelve Nations:

Nelson Keitlah, Lillian Howard and Richard Watts. The governments came with negotiators appointed at the Federal and Provincial levels.

Throughout 1995 the Nuu-Chah-Nulth were negotiating the Framework Agreement to outline all of the aspects of our aboriginal lifestyles to be recognized by both federal and provincial governments as part of the negotiating process.

In January 1996 there was a letter from Wendy Porteous, Chief Federal negotiator for the Government of Canada directed to Murray Rankin, treaty negotiator for the Province of B.C. and provided to co-chairs, Nelson Keitlah and Richard Watts, and to Victor Pearson, our treaty manager who keeps track of all the business throughout the talks with both governments. Although regulations preclude me from revealing the full contents of the letter, it provides the details of the system for modern treaties. The letter says that parties to the treaty are there due to a political commitment to negotiate, but no party is legally bound to participate. The letter is careful to note that this first stage, the Framework Agreement, does not create a legally enforceable right.

The Framework Agreement is very important, because when we get into the Agreement-in-Principle, the next stage, some issues will not be easily understood by some people because they may not be within the history of experience of some First Nations people. For example, as I discussed earlier, few outsiders would be aware of the role of fur seals and the fur seal industry in our lives. Seal hunting for subsistence, for example, is still an aboriginal right protected by the Constitution of Canada, although no one has tested that right in recent years.

A draft Framework Agreement between Canada, British Columbia and the Nuu-Chah-Nulth Tribal Council has been written. So at this point we have not initialed it, and thus not agreed to the Framework Agreement, but the papers are set in place.

There was a Nuu-Chah-Nulth Tribal Council meeting on January 12th and 13th, 1996. Our discussions suggested that some tribes were ready to sign, and some others were not, but it seemed that overall we were not ready. Our lack of readiness was and is due in part to the changing fabric of the framework agreement. We wish to see issues in the agreement that the governments were not prepared to discuss at that point.

A key issue addressed the residential school situation. The Federal Government especially did not want to discuss residential schools in the Framework Agreement while there were court cases pending regarding the residential schools. Many individuals who spent their youth in a residential school have come forward and related terrible events that happened during their years there. We definitely believe this to be a problem integral to the Framework Agreement. We are particularly taken aback by this issue because of the recollections of cruelty and abuse applied to our people and those of other First Nations in remote villages up and down the coast. However, the Federal government has only recently begun to accept the legitimacy of the reports of the events.

A second broad issue relates to Crown land activities and aboriginal rights. Recent court decisions, such as the Sparrow decision, redefined the legal relationship between the government of British Columbia and aboriginal peoples.

The Sparrow decision was brought up to the Supreme Court of Canada on May 31, 1990. The Supreme Court of Canada rendered its decision and recognized that the Musqueam First Nation, and by extension other aboriginal peoples, had unextinguished aboriginal rights to fish for food, ceremonial and societal purposes. These rights were held by the collective, in keeping with our culture. The governments may justify activities that may infringe on any aboriginal right protected under Section 35 of the Constitution Act, 1867, by meeting the principles established by the Supreme Court of Canada and reaffirmed with the results of the Sparrow case. In March 1993, the Provincial Minister of Environment, Lands and Parks, in response to this decision, issued interim guidelines on aboriginal use of fish and wildlife. The Sparrow decision is important to treaty negotiations because the aboriginal rights were proven to be still in place, and protected by the Constitution.

There are seven other decisions rendered at the same time by the Provincial Court of Appeal that dealt with aboriginal people on a variety of issues including hunting and fishing rights. Implications of these decisions are significant and they are effectively changing the nature of the legal relationship between the Province and First Nations.

Aboriginal rights continue to exist in British Columbia. Aboriginal rights are those activities that are integral to the distinctive culture of an aboriginal society. They may vary from context to context in accordance with distinct patterns of historical occupancy and use of land. An activity in question must have been in existence prior to 1846, and over a sufficient length of time to become integral to the aboriginal society.

In order for the Province to engage in any activity on Crown land it should make its best efforts to first determine if aboriginal rights exist in the area and if the proposed Provincially sanctioned activities will infringe upon those rights. If it is determined that an activity does infringe upon aboriginal rights, that infringement should be avoided where possible, unless it can be justified pursuant to the principles established by the Supreme Court of Canada and the Sparrow decision. Although how this is dealt with in various jurisdictions can be quite different.

February, 1996: Other Resource Issues

While treaty negotiations are underway there are other processes that have been developed from the overall situation through court decisions. An important interlocking process for the First Nations of the central areas of Clayoquot Sound is the Central Region Board. This Board is meant to establish some joint authority over resource management and put an agreement to work that will be the foundation for resource management in the final treaty. Discussions are underway between the Central Region Board (CRB) and the Province on the extension of the Interim Measures Agreement (IMA), which was in force until the 19th of March 1996 and then extended. The IMA is "the framework within which the Province is approaching the land and resource component of treaty negotiations with First Nations."

I sit on the CRB as a representative for Ahousaht. The land and resource issue is one of our foremost concerns, especially dealing with Tree Farm License 44, currently in

corporate hands, but now bound by the Clayoquot Scientific Panel recommendations for sustainable forest practices, through another government process.

The Board believes its objectives regarding planning, management, and cultural values are sufficiently addressed through the Clayoquot Scientific Panel, but the Government's and McMillan Bloedel's acceptance of the Panel recommendations, seems to require detailed amendment. If an agreement can be reached with government on the Board's planning proposals, we will promote the inclusion of specific obligations regarding local economic benefits; such as employment for First Nations and other communities and the retention of fiber in Clayoquot Sound to promote community-based business opportunities and to generate employment in local processing. This is a very positive idea that First Nations support because it helps us and our neighbours much more than the corporate approach to resource management.

We have an Interim Measures Agreement (IMA) in place and we also have an understanding to co-manage in the agreement, a real chance for joint stewardship. The lifetime of the Interim Measures Agreement should be a longer agreement, for what we think is a good reason. Politics seem to be a roadblock in the progress of the ideals of the IMA. My mind is bothered with the politics of the people in power who seem to me to try to disregard the whole issue of aboriginal rights when discussing actually having to return some power to the original owners of the land

November, 1996: Sovereignty

Many issues are at hand in Clayoquot Sound and there was an ongoing dispute between the Province and its Ministry of Forests, and First Nations of Nuu-Chah-Nulth tribes, Central Region: Hesquiat to the north, Ahousaht to the south, and, further south, the Tla-o-qui-aht Nation, the Ucluelet and Toquot.

As of November 1, 1996 there was a vital issue that seems to be missing as talks proceed on issues regarding the Agreement-in-Principle that I will mention. The Province of British Columbia claims, "at the time of sovereignty was asserted in British Columbia, title of land in the Province became vested in the Crown." I state outright that any written documents that claim sovereignty by British Columbia were not properly permitted by the Nuu-Chah-Nulth Nations. Having said that, I should add that, historically, the fourteen tribes were at that time very sadly in a state of confusion. This issue has very recently been settled to a large degree by the Delgam Uukw decision. That ruling links aboriginal rights and title, and further gives respect to the First Nations way of holding land and resources.

A number of other court cases in recent years have held that the Crown's title is burdened by unextinguished aboriginal rights to lands and resources that formed a foundation for the larger decision. Together, the set of rights held by an aboriginal group is also sometimes referred to as 'aboriginal title'. For example, the Supreme Court of Canada in the *Guerin* case recognized 'pre-existing aboriginal title' as a legal right other

than one of ownership, in this case the Indian Agent allowed Reserve lands to be removed for the higher purpose of building a golf course.

Early in the history of white peoples' occupancy we were confined to reserve lands, and held as wards of the government with one official from Indian Affairs for each First Nation under a system mandated by the Indian Act. So when they say "aboriginal title" they are only talking about the thin surface of aboriginal rights of people who were here for thousands of years before the arrival of the people who claim sovereignty in Canada and British Columbia.

As time goes on and treaty talks proceed toward an Agreement-in-Principle we see and hear more of those people who are afraid that we will be given back the land that was essentially stolen from us. While the Province claims the underlying title to land in British Columbia has never been questioned by the courts or by government, it certainly has been. They claim aboriginal rights do not supersede either Crown title or the 'beneficial ownership' conveyed to the Province through the Constitution. The fact that aboriginal rights exist in British Columbia does not call into question the title of the Crown, but does create a legal burden on Crown ownership and management activities. On paper, the Province believes that fair and honorable treaty negotiations are necessary if these long-standing issues are to be resolved in a way that benefits all British Columbians. But I think sometimes the ideal of fairness does not have the same meaning between our two peoples.

For example, some third party political structures, organizations, municipal governments, federal and provincial bodies have shown very strong oppositions to what has been settled with the Nisga'a people. I have read the Nisga'a Agreement-in-Principle which they have been fighting for through the courts and with governments for about twenty years. I have the impression that the Nisga'a agreement is not supported by the majority of white Canadians, but it has recently been signed and now only awaits ratification.

April, 1997: Roadblocks

As the spring was upon us I had been thinking of the mandate of the government negotiators. I ask myself, is there a mandate? They have no such thing as a mandate, rather it is what I call in my language "direction". We do have a lot of paperwork, 2 1/2 to 3 years of paperwork for the Nuu-Chah-Nulth Nations, but little else. The Government will not say much on how things will be done as we proceed. Sometimes I seriously doubt that the government is capable of understanding its own way of regulating, let alone understand how we might manage ourselves. I can say I feel certain that we are beginning to be pushed over the edge again.

Our ideas about fish and streams and animals seem to be irrelevant to the treaty development, yet they are central to our way of thinking. We want to govern our own people, look after our own land, be our own stewards of what we have, what you've taken away. We want that back. We want to look after our own people and return a

sense of self respect. It appears to me based on the way negotiators talk to us that the government does not believe we can take care of ourselves and our resources. Thus, no real progress has been made toward a settlement.

We were more and more going backwards at the time. We were monitoring what is being talked about around the tables with First Nations all across British Columbia. In all the negotiations that are on-going across British Columbia no talks have reached the Agreement-in-Principle stage. I feel safe saying that governments were stalling the process before the Delgam Uukw ruling.

We have, in the last couple of meetings (ca. April 27, 1997) changed our way of treaty negotiations. This is because we were going too slow and we would not reach an Agreement-in-Principle, so vital to the treaty task. For example, an issue that has become laboured is access to land and resources by people on both sides of the agreement. Although access is a word which does not have proper meaning to me, it is being discussed at the negotiating table. Access will mean access to reserve lands, access to treaty lands, access to shared lands, and access to areas that are territorial lands. This became such a long, drawn-out issue that we decided we would hire a facilitator to give us more rapid answers to the issues of access so we could draft a position. So we hired a person called Daniel Johnson, a person who was recognized by the government of B.C. and Canada as a top-notch negotiator.

We had trouble using all the negotiators from the 12 Nuu-Chah-Nulth Nations where all the negotiators sat around what we call the main table. The trouble was that

each Nation would negotiate and this resulted in the need for much draft paperwork to properly hear out each Nation separately. Each Nation would talk about the issues that were raised on the floor and it would take one whole sitting to hear each issue.

So a motion was made by me to try a different style of negotiating, a different style of facilitating. We decided that using six negotiators to put together proposals for the Agreement-in-Principle would be more useful. The six negotiators are called the Tripartite Standing Committee (TSC). Even if one of the members was missing the negotiations would carry on. And I sit in on this Committee as a witness, and also have the same powers to negotiate or advise if I feel that I disagree with the discussion. The Main Table still has the power to decide how to deal with what has come out from the TSC.

Even in this more flexible setting I am not very satisfied with the attitude of the negotiators for Canada. In my judgment, Canada still wants to deal with First Nations in the same manner they have over the last 150 years, mainly through their bureaucracies at Indian Affairs, through the mechanism of a Band Council. They have the full control of all these Councils and any business that relates to administration and funding.

I can only say to this that Canada seems unwilling to relinquish lands and resources to the rightful owners of the land, calling these treaty lands. Treaty lands are those lands that belonged to our forefathers, and belong to us in this day and age. And we want a settlement that will put the land back to the ownership of each of the Nuu-Chah-Nulth Nations' territory, rivers and streams, timber and forestry, in to the rightful

ownership of the Nuu-Chah-Nulth. So the intent of negotiations is still very dark. It is very disheartening because we are going to have to pay back 80% of the cost of the negotiations and so far, it has cost us a fortune, and we have not gotten anywhere near to finalizing and settling our treaty negotiations with Canada and BC.

At several times in the negotiation I have seen much to make me feel negative about the process. One the other hand, I would like to say that the people who are working on drafts relating to all the issues that are being negotiated have done a great job, documenting the data and recording the important parts of the treaty discussions. Very young people who are well educated have, to my mind, been pushing out the draft documents that are so much a part of a modern treaty. These people, who make up the working groups, the six negotiators, and the main negotiating table are top-notch people who know full well what we are demanding of the governments of Canada and British Columbia. I have to give credit to every person who has put into perspective what needs to be recognized as the treaty of First Nations of the Nuu-Chah-Nulth and the Governments of Canada and British Columbia. Our people have done well. There is nothing that is missing. All issues have been talked about for the last two years. All the paper work is there. We don't want to be tied down anymore. We want to be our own government. We have in my mind, put down in paper, all the issues that we are wanting to settle.

What I was talking about, the slowness, when I said that we were not getting anywhere, I was meaning that Canada and B.C. have not offered us anything at all that was being negotiated.

What should happen, and what should happen fast, is that we should scrap the Indian Act and set up our own department, First Nations managing their own destiny in self-government in their own way of life. We are asking for the return of many of the things that were taken away from us by the governments that were formed at the time our lands were taken away. It is the right thing to do.

August, 1997: A Re-appraisal

I will now discuss my own general recollection of sitting in as a hereditary chief and having the same powers as the head negotiators on the table. I have listened to the issues that were raised on the table and have been an observer on the Tripartite Standing Committee, which we are still evaluating. We want to find out about progress of the creation of the TSC with respect to drafting the Agreement-in-Principle.

We are still evaluating some of the issues and it is, in our minds, that we are making headway on very important issues so that we are prepared now to finalize the Agreement-in-Principle. While there are many questions that we do not have the answers to, we do know that there is progress. I cannot gauge the progress until we receive answers from the other parties as to their willingness to put things down on an Agreement-in-Principle.

In the last sitting that we had, they were asking the question, "Are you ready to talk about land selection?" So, what they're asking the negotiators is, "Are you ready to give us the maps and charts of where your land selections are in Clayoquot Sound?" And our answer to that is, "Yes we're prepared". We know already where our lands, rivers, streams, ocean are, all the area that we know is ours. A land selection process has now gone ahead.

We have an unwritten history well understood by advisors, hereditary chiefs, historians, families, and Hawiih, because this Treaty is based on *ha hoolthe*. We know the areas that are owned by the Hawiih and are looked after by each family, elders, and relatives. Starting from the beach we have what we call the beach owner. We know who owns all the beach in the front of each living area, we know who owns all the beach and foreshore out to the ocean fishing grounds, hunting areas, all around the whole area of Nuu-Chah-Nulth territory.

We also have unwritten and written boundary lines which are shared by neighbours on each side of the territory. We do not have any markings, but we do have names of the areas where the boundaries exist. They are peaceful boundaries and we are not arguing exactly where each boundary is as understood by each neighbouring Nation. The question the government asks is, "where are your boundaries?" They have been told in court cases such as the Meares Island court case, also directly from us, where the boundaries are and we do not change our minds as to the place and direction. More recently I was an observer to a ceremony between Nuu-Chah-Nulth Nation and the

Kwakwaka'wakw people over a boundary dispute on Vancouver Island. We have demonstrated our ability to negotiate among ourselves, and I am confident that we will build a peaceful process to solve problems between First Nations.

We can say outright that we own the whole territory as First Nations. The government will reply, using their language, because we are a sovereign country, that the land belongs to B.C. and Canada. We do not argue about that because we were not the ones who made that statement. We simply do not recognize any other Nation in our territory, much the same as the government seems to feel. Only one of us was here first, and no war occurred to change the ownership of our land or transfer it to the newcomers.

We hold this position that we do not agree with the system that was introduced, making certain areas Crown land, fee simple lands, private lands, parks, and offshore zones without consulting First Nations. We are prepared to understand we are to be questioned as to whether we agree to the sovereignty of Canada and British Columbia.

All of this ties in with some things that are not agreeable to both governments. But we do know that to make a modern treaty, to make a settlement these issues have to be resolved. What was settled when Confederation happened in Canada should have also included the governments of First Nations as well as the governments of Canada and B.C.

Here is an example of how we look at things from our position. One of the important issues we need to resolve relates to fisheries. It is a key issue for negotiating because of its many regulations for the conservation of fish. It also has many ties with other key issues, for example conservation and sustainability.

A slightly different example comes from our view on timber. It is one of the resource issues that is in the Interim Measures Agreement and is one of the questions that will form a bridge to the Agreement-in-Principle as to part of the settlement that will go to First Nations. The timber is standing in First Nations territory. Because of this it also bridges larger issues of control and power involving how governments made some companies wealthy by allowing them to have Tree Farm Licenses and full control over the extraction of timber in British Columbia and Clayoquot Sound. This is one of the issues in which we are claiming that we should have a share or even part of what is left of the industry and again, pointing to better protection of all the resources of Clayoquot Sound.

First Nations are trying to participate in the management of forests through the Interim Measures Extension Agreement by having the forest lands given back to First Nations in each territory of Clayoquot Sound. We have much to say about forestry because it involves fish streams, salmon habitat of the watersheds in Clayoquot Sound.

A third area being discussed is wildlife: endangered, threatened and vulnerable species. That is also a long, drawn out issue that has broad implications. Earlier on, a whaling industry just about exterminated the great whales in our territorial waters in British Columbia, both by our own hunters and foreign hunters from around the world. It is one of the important issues to try to find a way to protect what was left of the life of the whale that was hunted off our coastline.

A fourth issue involves the question of water resource management in British Columbia. We were told by the Province that all water issues and the control of water rights is managed by the BC government. They produced a paper called "Water Resource Management in British Columbia" (draft discussion paper for Treaty table: May, 1997), produced with no consultation with the First Nations or any understanding of our concept of ownership of water. Although it is a draft, it has issues and meanings and definitions and involves a moratorium on all water licenses in British Columbia.

So this moratorium has to be reviewed and talked about on the Treaty Table to allow First Nations discussions and to examine drinking water and how people were given licenses to bottle water and sell to the public drinking water which is from places and territories that belong to First Nations. We would have some form of power to manage and control our own drinking water and our own rivers and streams in our territories. Each of our places where we lived, even water wells, had names. The names were usually quite understandable or known by all resident families living in our village sites. And all the streams have names, including the streams that run down the steepest mountain sides.

I touch here only briefly on some of the issues that are being raised on the treaty table and note that all of this is still in a draft and being used for discussion. At this time we have pieced together some of the important issues.

We could produce volumes and volumes on the injustices involving First Nations people in Clayoquot Sound. Right from the time when the King and Queen of England

proclaimed sovereignty over British Columbia, Clayoquot Sound and ignored the Hawiih and their *ha hoolthe* in Clayoquot Sound.

I remember when there was an American military vessel that lost a scow carrying military equipment up to Alaska. The scow drifted ashore on Bartlett Island, Nu-a-sak, the meeting place of Chiefs of the First Nations confederation of Ahousaht. Now, I want people to understand, and also my family to understand, the respect that was shown by the American military that came ashore to the people that were residing on Bartlett Island to pick up their scow. They asked for their scow and the answer was, "no, the scow has landed in Nuu-Chah-Nulth territory of Ahousaht. You have to pay a cost to have your scow returned to you to take it off my territory". The American military awarded the Hawiih of the Ahousaht the fee to regain their scow in peaceful manner, recognizing the Hawiih of the Ahousaht. That was showing full respect for the Hawiih of Ahousaht from the American military. This is much more than the Government of Canada or of British Columbia has shown us since they proclaimed a sovereign land without consultation of the Hawiih of Clayoquot Sound.

So if you can sort out the injustice of these two instances: one, the instance of the American military recognizing Hawiih of the Ahousaht Nation, and the other being the Kings and Queens of England and Sir James Douglas not consulting the Hawiih of Clayoquot Sound as the sovereign owners of the Clayoquot Sound territory.

We would like to have the Agreement-in-Principle in a stage where we can sign it. And we are piecing together a document that will not be binding, but that will be changing

in time when the young people take over the formation of government in Clayoquot Sound through the inheritance of Hawiih of all the Nations of Nuu-Chah-Nulth. There are many substantive issues on hand and many documents, and each is being examined, talked about and negotiated to bring justice to the Nations of Nuu-Chah-Nulth, and to do away with the Indian Act to re-make our own government and our lives.

Chapter 5

Conclusion

What I have written here is part of a larger story. I could have said much more and related more stories. I wanted to do something that is not the same as what a historian would write, or an anthropologist, because I am neither. Although there is no discipline in a university in living as a First Nation person, what I have is done some inquiry into my life to try and present something that will help others understand what it is like to be a native person, at this time, and what kind of things at least one of us thinks about.

We are concerned about our land, water, and the things that live there. We have a much closer relationship to those things, we lived off them for thousands of years. We can see all through places like Clayoquot Sound that things now called resources have been very poorly managed. I worry that the forests and water are being very seriously damaged. These are the things that have supported our people for all time and are part of our life.

We are, as you can see from what I have written, that a sea people. In living by the sea and studying about it in university I have many worries over the fish, seals, and whales. My ancestors had special relationships to the whales. Their protection or future hunting now seems out of our control. So too, our knowledge of these animals does not seem to be of much interest to the current resource managers. That is why I wrote a chapter especially on the sea animals.

The thesis then leads up to my essay on the negotiation process. This is not an analysis of the process or the content. It is my own observation and feelings as we went through the process of trying to iron out issues and move toward a settlement that will bring some foundation for the future of our people. Some parts may seem unfair, but I have put down my impressions as I felt them. Of course things may now change quite a bit due to the Delgam Uukw decision, but that is largely beyond what I am trying to accomplish here.

In this thesis I have written down many things that are part of my life as a First Nations person living through the last 72 years. Like many of my generation we have lived through a time of great change. The stories of Maquinna were fresh in the minds of our grandparents, and the stories of Tiskin are as real to us as the stories of Christianity. The story of my own life beginning in the residential school, seeing the end of sealing, and watching my people move in and out of various industries as the world changed around us has been a lot to take in.

Much of what I say here is based on my own reflection. In negotiations people ask me, "what is the reason for your opinion?" What I have written here is the basis for my position. I sometimes try to find out what is the basis for the white people's opinion. When they say they want to do justice, I have a real hard time understanding what they mean. It seems to me the white sense of justice is based on giving as little as possible. The treaty ideal of giving 5% of the land back to native people is supposed to

be just. I think that giving back 100% of the land is maybe more just, especially of our homeland and traditional territory, like Clayoquot Sound.

It feels odd to have won the argument, yet not won an adequate settlement. As I have written here, and as the courts have now said, we have rights, and title. Our occupancy of the land and water and our stewardship of the resources in undeniable. That white people have taken the land and resources from us is also undeniable. I have watched while white people have taken more and more from the land and water that was once ours without so much as a "Thank You".

That we are now negotiating is our choice as an alternative to court action. We think we are being much more reasonable in the way we are seeking our land back than in the way it was taken from us. I cannot help but feel that the government and politicians are putting us on. Politics and justice here create a curious result.

Today, when we sit down with the governments of Canada and British Columbia, we talk about the many issues related to ownership. Ownership is based on what we call ha hoolthe. It is not ownership in the white sense; it is a river or other place that is shared by all Nuu-Chah-Nulth people, with a caretaker being the hereditary chief of each site or village such as Ahousaht. After much discussion, *ha hoolthe* is now recognized in the negotiations and has been identified and written into the Framework Agreement as one of the key issues, as accepted by the Provincial and Federal governments and the Nuu-Chah-Nulth nations.

Somehow the word confederation is used to describe our system of joint First Nation ideas of being many nations within the nation. For example, Francis Charlie's thoughts about being a Keltsomaht were that, they were not an independent, rather they were always tied in with the Ahousaht Nation who lived on the outer side of the same island. It is a fitting description of how all nations should live, as we are all on sides of the same island.

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Living on the Edge: Nuu-Chah-Nulth History from an Ahousaht Chief's Perspective

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