

## **James Alexander Teit**

James Alexander Teit (1864-1922) was born on Scotland's Shetland Islands and immigrated to Canada as a young man. He eventually settled in Spences Bridge, British Columbia, where he married a local Nlaka'pamux woman named Lucy Artko and became immersed in Nlaka'pamux life and traditions.<sup>1</sup>

*James Alexander Teit*<sup>2</sup>

Although he was not an Aboriginal, Teit was one of the first literate activists for Aboriginal rights in British Columbia, serving as a translator, scribe and lobbyist. In 1909 Teit helped form the Interior Tribes of British Columbia and the British Columbia Indian Rights Association, then, in 1916, helped co-found the Allied Indian Tribes of British Columbia. Known primarily as one of the main informants and guides for anthropologist Franz Boas, Teit also published and produced ethnological material of his own.<sup>3</sup>

In the late nineteenth century Teit was hired by Franz Boas, to undertake collecting and research for the American Museum of Natural History's Jesup Expedition (1897-1902). The goal of the Jesup Expedition was to investigate the cultural, linguistic and biological links between the Indigenous peoples of the northern Pacific regions of America and Asia. The American Museum of Natural History (AMNH) published much of Teit's research and he amassed the bulk of their Interior Salish artifact collection.<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> James Alexander Teit. <<http://www.civilization.ca/cmc/exhibitions/tresors/ethno/etp0800e.shtml>> retrieved February 4, 2010

<sup>2</sup> Image – James Alexander Teit. <<http://www.langelymuseum.org/baskets/images/basketry003-1.jpg>> retrieved Nov 12, 2009

<sup>3</sup> James Alexander Teit, <[http://www.abcbookworld.com/view\\_author.php?id=1107](http://www.abcbookworld.com/view_author.php?id=1107)> retrieved February 4, 2010

Teit collected thousands of objects and photo's for various museums; and his work is documented in the Mercury Publication, *The Interior Salish Tribes of British Columbia: A Photographic Collection* (1987), edited by Leslie Tepper.<sup>1</sup>

### **Charles Hill-Tout**

Charles Hill-Tout was born in Somerset England in 1858, to John Tout and Elizabeth Hill. Hill-Tout came to British Columbia in 1891 and was a pioneer settler at Abbotsford in the Fraser Valley. Hill-Tout devoted many years of field work to his studies of the Salish people, and published his work in scholarly periodicals between 1895 and 1911. Charles Hill-Tout was honoured as a fellow of the Royal Anthropological *Charles Hill-Tout'* Section of the Royal Society of Canada and as a fellow of the Royal Anthropological Institute of Great Britain.<sup>5</sup>

Although the Salish territory extends as much below the International Boundary as above, Hill-Tout stayed entirely on the Canadian side, providing an extensive survey of the Interior Salish groups, including; the Thompson, the Lillooet and the Okanagan peoples. In *The Salish People*, Hill-Tout's field reports are collected for the first time.

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<sup>4</sup> Image – Charles Hill-Tout; [www.livinglandscapes.bc.ca/.../images/wong8t.gif](http://www.livinglandscapes.bc.ca/.../images/wong8t.gif)> retrieved Nov 12, 2009

<sup>5</sup> Hill-Tout, Charles. (1928). *The Salish People. The Local Contribution of Charles Hill-Tout Volume II: The Squamish and the Lillooet.* Edited with an Introduction by Ralph Maud (1978). Talonbooks. Vancouver BC. (161)

### ***Habitation***

The southwestern interior of British Columbia is home to Lillooet country, and a division of British Columbia's Salish people known as St'at'imc, or more commonly, the Lillooet. The Lillooet were named after one of the chief rivers<sup>6</sup> that flowed through the region, and like most tribes their settlements bordered the many lakes and rivers of the area. Although it can be agreed upon that Lillooet country lies in the Coastal range, anthropologists James Alexander Teit and Charles Hill-Tout differ in their claims to its size. While Teit claims the area to be approximately one hundred miles in length and nearly one hundred miles in breadth;<sup>7</sup> Hill-Tout identifies a range much longer than it is broad, with the distance between the most southern and most northern tribes being upwards of two hundred miles.<sup>8</sup>

The Indians of Lillooet live on a land that is generally more rugged than the lands of any other tribes in the interior of British Columbia. These people have no name for themselves, though they do call those who live south of the watershed between Mosquito or Pole River and Anderson River, Li'luet, and those living north and east of the watershed Sla'lemux. These two divisions are known respectively as the Lower and Upper Lillooet by the whites,<sup>1</sup> though the Shuswap and Thompson Indians called them

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<sup>6</sup> Hill-Tout, Charles. (1928). *The Salish People. The Local Contribution of Charles Hill-Tout Volume II: The Squamish and the Lillooet.* Edited with an Introduction by Ralph Maud (1978). Talonbooks. Vancouver BC. p. 99

<sup>7</sup> Teit, James Alexander. (1906 – 1975 [Rev.]). *The Jesup North Pacific Expedition. Vol. II, Part V The Lillooet Indians.* (196)

collectively SLA'LEMUX, although this name is more precisely applied to the Upper Lillooet. The Lower Lillooet are identified by the Thompson Indians as; A'yut and the Anderson, with Seaton Lake people being Pespasulkomux (people of the lakes); the Shuswap Indians called them respectively Tcutxwa'ut and Pa'selkuamux (lake people). The Lillooet of Fraser River are called simply SLA'LEMUX, though the [Okanagan] Indians call them Nxw'elami'na.

The Lower Lillooet call themselves collectively Li'luet, though recognize two divisions in their tribe:-

1. The Li'luet or Nku'tcin. Nku'tcin means "down stream," and consists of the people of Little Harrison Lake or Douglas, and the Lower Lillooet River up to Lower or Little Lillooet Lake, a distance of about thirty miles. Their hunting – territory covers the country some little distance to the east, where they come in contact with the Thompson Indians. On the west it extends some fifty miles into the Coast Mountains, to the head of the Mamquam and other streams flowing into Howe Sound; and to the south, at least as far as the heads of Pitt and Stave Lakes, and on both sides of Harrison Lake from twenty to twenty-five miles down. I [Teit] shall call them the Lillooet River band.<sup>9</sup>

2. The Liluet-o'l (Lillooet proper) – the people of Lillooet Lake, Pemberton Meadows, Pole River, Upper Lillooet River, and Green Lake Teit had called the Pemberton band. The Liluet-o'l hunting-grounds to the west extend along the upper reaches of the Squamish and other streams entering the head of Howe sound, and include all the head waters of the Upper Lillooet river and beyond to the sources and eastern branches of the streams running into Jervis Inlet. Northerly they extend toward the Upper Bridge River to beyond Blackwater Lake.<sup>8</sup>

The villages of the Lillooet River band are as follows:

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<sup>9</sup> Teit, James Alexander. (1906 – 1975 [Rev.]). The Jesup North Pacific Expedition. Vol. II, Part V The Lillooet Indians. (196, 197)

| <i>Name</i>   | <i>Location</i>   |
|---|---|
| 1. Xa'xtsa, called by the white Douglas                             | On little Harrison Lake, about 4 miles from Tipella on Great Harrison Lake. |
| 2. Lala'xxen  | On Lower Lillooet River, 10 miles above Douglas                             |
| 3. Sme'mits ("little deer")   | A short distance above Lala'xxen  |
| 4. Sxo'mEliks   | Near Lower Lillooet River, 10 miles above Douglas.                          |
| 5. Ska'tin, called by the whites Skookum Chuck                      | On Lower Lillooet River, about 17 or 18 miles above Douglas.                |
| 6. Sextci'n ("serrated shore" [?] called by the whites Warm Springs | Near Lower Lillooet River, about 23 mile from Douglas.                      |
| 7. Sama'qum   | On Lower Lillooet River, about 25 miles above Douglas.                      |
| 8. Kwe'xalatEN  | On Little Lillooet Lake.  |

Lala'xxen, Sme'mits, and Sxo'mEliks are very small villages of only a house or two at each place. Xa'xtsa, Ska'tin, Sama'qum, and Kwe'xalatEN are villages with churches, and are the most populous centres.<sup>10</sup>

The villages of the Pemberton band are as follows; -

| <i>Name</i>   | <i>Location</i>   |
|---|---|
| 1. Nk'impc  | On Upper Lillooet River, a little above the head of Lillooet Lake                     |
| 2. Xazi'lkwa ("eddy"[?])                                | At head of slough, 1 mile above Nk'impc.  |
| 3. La'qEemitc   | Less than a mile above Xazi'lkwa.   |
| 4. SLa'lEk or SLa'luk, called by the whites - Pemberton | Near the large bridge across the Upper Lillooet River, about 1 mile above La'qEemitc. |
| 5. Sulpa'ultin  | On Upper Lillooet River, about 2 miles above SLa'lEk or SLa'luk No. 4. <sup>9</sup>   |

Teit identified Xazi'lkwa and La'qEemitc as small villages having only two or three houses each, while SLa'lEk or SLa'luk was a larger village of about 25 inhabited homes, as well as a church. He also identified these villages as being situated in what

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<sup>10</sup> Teit, James Alexander. (1906 – 1975 [Rev.]). The Jesup North Pacific Expedition. Vol. II, Part V The Lillooet Indians. (197)

was termed the “Pemberton Meadows,” a large tract of meadow and swamp-land formed from the silt and mud brought down by the Upper Lillooet River.”<sup>9</sup>

The Upper Lillooet divide themselves into at least two divisions; viz., -

1. Teit called the Lixale’xamux or Tcale’lamux (people of the lake) the Lake band. This band’s hunting-grounds extend southerly along Cayuse River to Duffey Lake, and westerly to the head waters of streams flowing into Jervis Inlet, and the northwestern sources of Bridge River. Northerly the hunting-grounds extend beyond Bridge River to a place called xwaalxa’scten and to near the head of Big Creek. They do not hunt in an easterly direction.

2. The people of Fraser River, from about five miles below the mouth of Cayuse Creek to a few miles below the mouth of Pavilion Creek are known as Sla’lemux or SLalemux-ol and Teit recognized them as the Fraser River band. Easterly their territory embraces Three Lake Valley and the neighboring hills between the Fraser River and Hat Creek. To the south their hunting-grounds extend a few miles up Cayuse Creek and to the north they hunt along the lower part of Bridge River and beyond in a north-westerly direction to near the head of Big Creek.<sup>11</sup>

“Some Lillooet look upon the people occupying the west bank of the Fraser River as the real SLalemux, while those occupying the east bank are looked upon as different, and as forming a separate division under the name of Xa’xalepemux.”<sup>10</sup>

The villages of the Lake band are at the present day [1906] as follows:

| <i>Name</i>                  | <i>Location</i>                                     |
|------------------------------|---|
| 1. Nkua’tkwa                 | At the head of Anderson Lake                        |
| 2. Nka’iot (“top of height”) | At the foot of Anderson Lake                        |
| 3. Sla-u’s                   | At the head of Seaton Lake                          |
| 4. Tcalei (“lake”)           | About two-thirds up Seaton Lake, on the north side. |
| 5. XESE’ItEN                 | About one-third up Seaton Lake,                     |

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<sup>11</sup> Teit, James Alexander. (1906 – 1975 [Rev.]). The Jesup North Pacific Expedition. Vol. II, Part V The Lillooet Indians. (197, 198)

6. Skemqa'in ("top" or "source") on the north side  
At the foot of Seaton Lake, about 4 miles from Lillooet. It has its name from being near the source of the stream that flows out of Seaton Lake into Cayuse Creek.<sup>10</sup>

XESE'ITEN and Skemqa'in are small places of two or three houses each.

Nkua'tkwa, Nka'iot, and Tcalei are villages with churches.<sup>10</sup>

Teit provides great detail to his understanding of the St'at'imc territory, however, Charles Hill-Tout presents another view, stating; "In former times the settlements of the Lillooet proper did not extend so far south as at present. Prior to the advent of the gold rush, about the middle of the last century [1850], the Halkomelem territory took in the whole of Harrison Lake and some portion of the Lillooet River..."<sup>12</sup> Hill-Tout explained how, "All those on the shores of Harrison Lake, up as far as Cqomluks, were formerly Halkomelem villages,"<sup>7</sup> though with the coming of the gold rush

many of the miners . . . chose the Harrison Lake route and made Port Douglas their port of debarkation; and in consequence a populous little town soon sprang up here. This attracted the Lillooet tribes above in such numbers that in a generation the Halkomelem speech of that centre gave place to the Lillooet, which has ever since been spoken down to this point.<sup>13</sup>

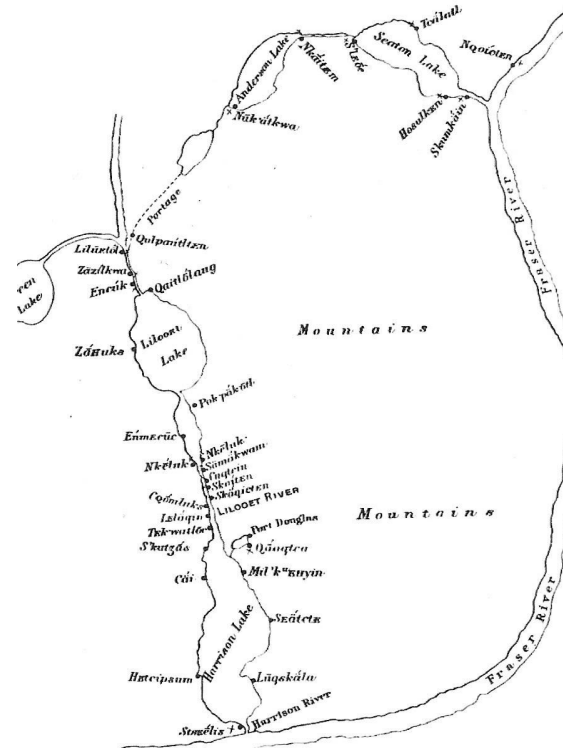
Hill-Tout's claim, of the southern shift in location among the Lillooet, helps explain the tribes of mixed descent – Halkomelem and Lillooet.

The map below was created by Charles Hill-Tout as a means of identifying location and community names of the St'at'imc territory.

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<sup>12</sup> Hill-Tout, Charles. (1928). *The Salish People. The Local Contribution of Charles Hill-Tout Volume II: The Squamish and the Lillooet.* Edited with an Introduction by Ralph Maud (1978). Talonbooks. Vancouver BC. p. 102

<sup>13</sup> Hill-Tout, Charles. (1928). *The Salish People. The Local Contribution of Charles Hill-Tout Volume II: The Squamish and the Lillooet.* Edited with an Introduction by Ralph Maud (1978). Talonbooks. Vancouver BC. p. 102



With assistance from Captain Paul of Port Douglas, Charles Hill-Tout explained the names and locations of St’at’imc villages along the waters of the territory. This map can easiest be read from south to north, beginning just north of mouth of the Harrison River.

- (1) Luqskala ‘place of many berries’ (*skal* ‘red huckleberry’ – this settlement was noted for its berries);
- (2) Hetcipsum ‘narrow neck’ (*tepsum* ‘neck’ – here the lake narrows to about a third of its usual width);
- (3) Seatcte (meaning unknown);
- (4) Milkuehyin ‘standing strong’ (*smaleku* ‘elk shirt’ and *hyin* ‘foot’ – the mountain here stood strong and impregnable like a man clad in elk-skin armour);
- (5) Cai (Doctor Point - a shaman was supposed to live here at the time when Qals wandered about the country – there is a myth in connection with it);



- (6) Skutzas ‘butting’ (if one paddled on here, one would run against the head of the lake);
- (7) Qaaqtca ‘little lake’ (a small lake that runs into Harrison Lake, on which Port Douglas is situated);
- (8) Tekwatloc (meaning unknown – now used as a fishing station and root ground);
- (9) Lelaqin ‘fising stage’ (a noted fishing ground – the shore is rocky here and the waters swirl by – the salmon take this course and the Indians erect staging over the water, upon which they stand and fish with the dip-net);
- (10) Cqomluks ‘falling on the nose’;
- (11) Skaqicten ‘shallow water’ (the river here spreads out and becomes very shallow);<sup>14</sup>
- (12) Skaiten ‘waterfall’ (this was and is a great fishing ground, the fall in the river here causing the salmon to congregate – this is one of the most populous settlements)
- (13) Cuqtcin ‘narrow strait’ (the mountain here comes down close to the band of the river and forces travelers to walk on the beach – *cuqatc* ‘beach’)
- (14) Samakwan (meaning unknown);
- (15) Nkeluk ‘head of the river (there is here now a settlement on each side of the river with a church in each place);
- (16) Enmetcuc (this term has reference to the narrowing of the lake at this point – close by here is one of the loftiest mountains of the district, which has a peculiar cleft in it – it is called Encukata ‘split like a crutch’ – at the time of the traditional flood, those who escaped

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<sup>14</sup> Hill-Tout, Charles. 1906. *The Salish People. The Local Contribution of Charles Hill-Tout Volume II: The Squamish and the Lillooet.* Ed. Ralph Maud. Talonbooks, Vancouver B.C., 1978. p.102

- managed to do so by climbing this lofty mountain . . .);
- (17) Pokpakotl ‘place of many store-houses’ (these store-houses were erected on poles and stood from four to six feet above the ground - these are always found in localities when the ground will not permit of digging the commoner *tcepon*, or stone-cellars);
- (18) Zahuks ‘long point or nose’ (this spot is now the graveyard of the district – fifty years ago it was a populous village);
- (19) Qaitlolauq (meaning unknown – tradition says that it was here that the wolf people used to live – wolves are supposed by these Indians to be dogs gone wild);
- (20) Encuk ‘split’ (there is a mountain opposite the village here with a great cleft in its summit);
- (21) Zazilkwa ‘eddying water’;<sup>15</sup>
- (22) (Liluetol ‘the real or true Liluet’ [Mount Currie] (*Liluetol is therefore not the present town of Lillooet . . . it is the name of a band, not of a place, and that liluet (wild onion) is the name for the Pemberton area as a whole.*)
- (23) Qulpautlen ‘portage’ [Birken] (*qulpautl* ‘to haul a canoe over the ground’);
- (24) Nukat kwa [D’Arcy area] (meaning unknown);
- (25) Nkai tem ‘head or source of creek’;
- (26) Sleoc ‘head of the lake’ [Seaton Portage area];
- (27) Tcalatl ‘lake’ [Shalalth];
- (28) Hosulken ‘white-haired mountain goats’;

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<sup>15</sup> Hill-Tout, Charles. 1906. *The Salish People. The Local Contribution of Charles Hill-Tout Volume II: The Squamish and the Lillooet.* Ed. Ralph Maud. Talonbooks, Vancouver B.C., 1978. p.102

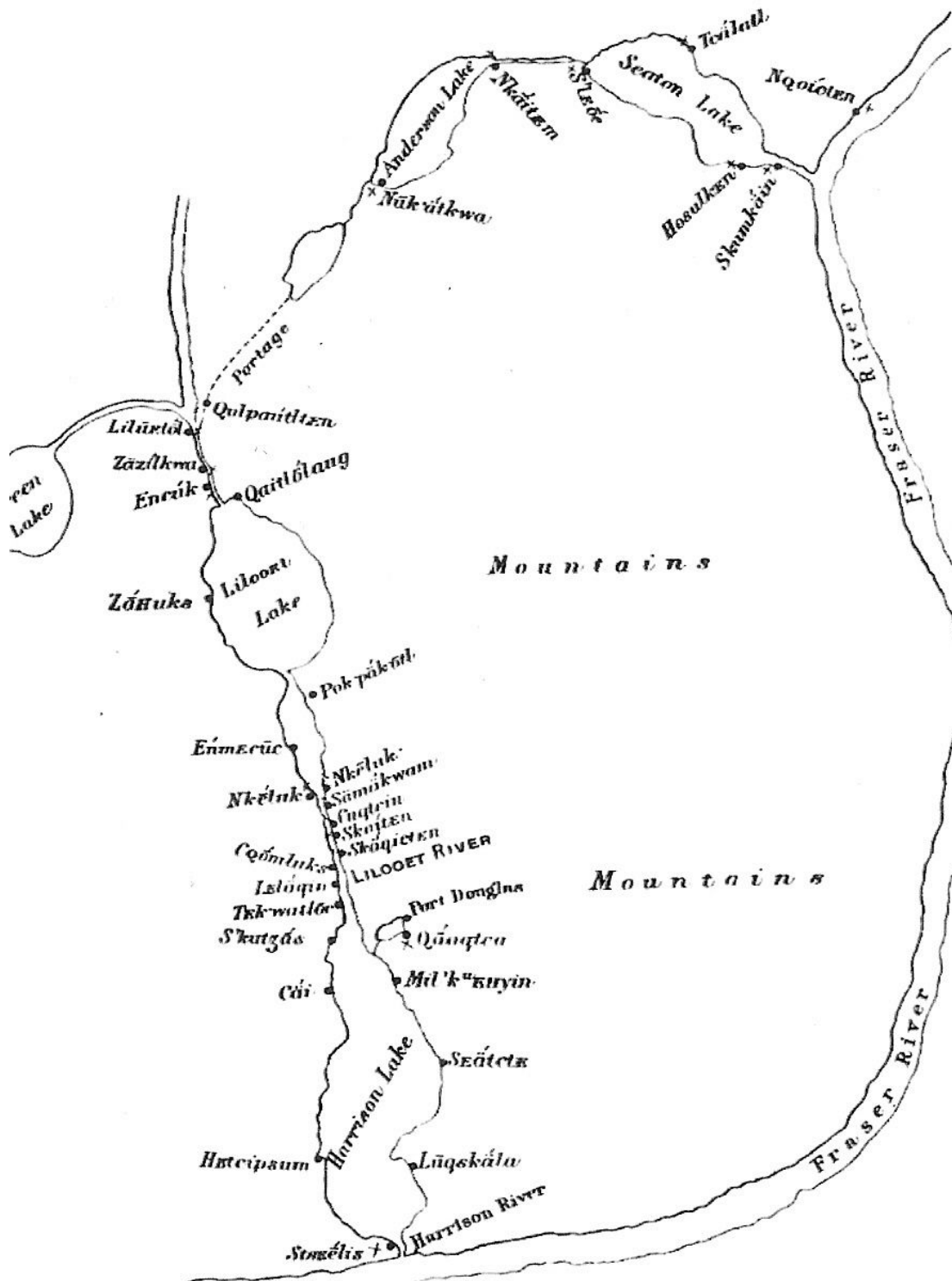
(29) Skum-kain ‘head of the river’ [4 mls from Lillooet] (this was a populous settlement in former times – it is now the site of the Government salmon hatchery);

(30) Nqoicten ‘smiling (the salmon were taken here in large numbers and the people were therefore happy and glad).<sup>16</sup>

The distance between the Upper and Lower Lillooet did not allow them to interact often, Hill-Tout claiming this to be a contributing factor to the difference in dialect.<sup>15</sup>

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<sup>16</sup> Hill-Tout, Charles. 1906. *The Salish People. The Local Contribution of Charles Hill-Tout Volume II: The Squamish and the Lillooet.* Ed. Ralph Maud. Talonbooks, Vancouver B.C., 1978. p.103



## ***Population***

The Lillooet have lived on the land since time immemorial and their numbers soared in the thousands. Before the arrival of European settlers, the number one cause of mass deterioration to the population was starvation. Over the year the Lillooet were plagued by shortages of food when the salmon did not return to the river in numbers which allowed sustainability.

When settlers arrived on St'at'imc territory in the mid 1800's, the population of the Lillooet neared 4000. It did not take long however for that number to drastically decline as the people had no immunity to foreign diseases that arrived with the newcomers. Small-pox wiped out whole communities and within 50 years the population of the Lillooet diminished by 2400 to a low of approximately 1600 for the entire nation. Some areas of the territory were harder hit with disease than others, and through his field study, James Alexander Teit discovered, "at a time when numbers were diminishing [due to small-pox] the Pemberton band was slightly on the increase."<sup>17</sup> The years that followed saw the population of the Lillooet gradually begin to rise once again.

A century and a half has passed since the small-pox epidemic decimated much of the St'at'imc tribe, and today, in 2010, they number approximately 6000,<sup>18</sup> and that number continues to climb.

The St'at'imc people, as a collective nation, are determined and committed to the growth and maintenance of their culture, traditions and people. The Constitution of the P'egp'ig'lha, reiterates *Our Dream*, for the unity, stating;

This is the dream of the P'egp'ig'lha clan.

Our words come from our hearts.

We will look after ourselves and each other.

We will make our own laws.

We will follow our own way of life as did our ancestors

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<sup>17</sup> Teit, James Alexander. (1906 – 1975 [Rev.]). *The Jesup North Pacific Expedition*. Vol. II, Part V – The Lillooet Indians. (198, 199,200)

<sup>18</sup> St'at'imc. (2009, December 18). In *Wikipedia, The Free Encyclopedia*. Retrieved 06:19, February 20, 2010 from <<http://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=St%27at%27imc&oldid=332559870>>

and as will our future generations.<sup>19</sup>

### *Housing/Homes*

Housing and homes of the St'at'imc varied in size, number and location throughout the territory. Similar to surrounding tribes, most Upper Lillooet lived in semi-subterranean homes during the winter months, and temporary dwellings during the summer, while many of the Lower Lillooet lived in communal houses; subterranean or longhouse style.

The underground homes, or ecitken,<sup>20</sup> of the Upper Lillooet were most often round in shape, usually five to fifteen metres in diameter and one to two metres deep. These homes were supported by four main posts that lead to a whole in the top, which allowed smoke to escape, and was also used as a point of entry and exit. The Lower Lillooet lived in larger underground homes that most lodged more than one family, “some of the largest underground houses had the hole on the top made large enough to admit of being divided in halves by a cross-log, making two entrances, in each of which rested a ladder . . . This was for convenience, owing to the large number of inmates.”<sup>22</sup>



often

thus

Inside Pit-House<sup>21</sup>

James Alexander Teit reports the St'at'imc as claiming that, in perhaps 1860, There were nine large underground lodges at the Fountain, and two others near by, on the same side of the river. There were nine large underground

<sup>19</sup> St'at'imc. P'egp'ig'lha Constitution. (2007). (3)

<sup>20</sup> Hill-Tout, Charles. (1928). *The Salish People. The Local Contribution of Charles Hill-Tout Volume II: The Squamish and the Lillooet.* Edited with an Introduction by Ralph Maud (1978). Talonbooks. Vancouver BC. p. 108

<sup>21</sup> Image: Inside Pit-House: (1907) *British Columbia Archives.* Visual Records Catalogue. (G00754). <<http://search.bcarchives.gov.bc.ca>>

<sup>22</sup> Teit, James Alexander. (1906 – 1975 [Rev.]). *The Jesup North Pacific Expedition. Vol. II, Part V – The Lillooet Indians.* (199, 200, 213)

lodges at Lillooet, and eight at the mouth of Bridge River. There were a lesser number on Cayuse Creek, and a few scattered ones between the villages and farther up Fraser River. Besides these, there were a number of families living in mat lodges.<sup>21</sup>

There is much evidence to support the findings of Teit and Hill-Tout regarding the subterranean home of the Lillooet. Keatly Creek is “world heritage quality site with unusually large housepits, good preservation, clear architectural features and evidence of complex socioeconomic organization.”<sup>23</sup>



*Keatly Creek*<sup>24</sup>

Evidence of traditional, historical underground homes  
and settlement of the St’at’imc people



<sup>23</sup> Hayden, Brian. (2005). *Sin*  
< <http://www.sfu.ca>

2010.

<sup>24</sup> Image: Keatly Creek. *Flickr*. Retrieved on February 25, 2010.  
<[http://farm1.static.flickr.com/152/358021837\\_8bfeeca083.jpg](http://farm1.static.flickr.com/152/358021837_8bfeeca083.jpg)>

## 1898 Pit-House <sup>25</sup>

### *Sustainability*

The St'at'imc were a semi-nomadic people, traveling to regions of the territory where sustainability was most likely at the time. Hunting and gathering was a way of life for the St'at'imc, so weather and climate played a large role in their physical and spiritual well-being. The food of the Lillooet consisted in a big way of fresh and dried salmon, birds and animals, plus wild berries and roots of the region. <sup>26</sup>

### *Gathering*

Hunting and root-digging grounds were shared property of the tribe. The country around Upper Bridge River was good hunting ground and though it was used most by the Lake Lillooet, as they were nearest, members of the Fountain, Fraser River, Lake, and Pemberton bands sometimes hunted together, or one after another, on the lucrative land. James Alexander Teit recognized this area as being abundant in roots as well as game; and identified a place called “Many-Roots,” or “Wealthy-in-Roots,” as being the recognized spot where the hunting-grounds of the Lillooet, Chilcotin, and Shuswap joined.<sup>27</sup>

Roots gathered among the Lillooet were similar to those of neighbouring tribes though tselaha'kst was native to St'at'imc territory alone. “Tsu'qua and tlasip; also ca'ak (Pteris aquiline, var. lanuginosa), ski'muet (Lilium columbianum), sqam'etc (Erythronium grandiflorum, var. minor)”<sup>26</sup> were the roots most commonly gathered by

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<sup>25</sup> Image: Inside Pit-House: (1898). *British Columbia Archives*. Visual Records Catalogue. (E08451). <<http://search.bccarchives.gov.bc.ca>>

<sup>26</sup> Hill-Tout, Charles. (1928). *The Salish People. The Local Contribution of Charles Hill-Tout Volume II: The Squamish and the Lillooet*. Edited with an Introduction by Ralph Maud (1978). Talonbooks . Vancouver BC. (109)

<sup>27</sup> Teit, James Alexander. (1906 – 1975 [Rev.]). *The Jesup North Pacific Expedition. Vol. II, Part V – The Lillooet Indians*. (256, 222, 223 )



the Lillooet. Teit also mentioned black moss (*Alectoria jubata*) being used in great quantities by both the Upper and Lower Lillooet.

Roots were gathered with digging tools made of *Cratagus rivularis* Nutt and *Amelanchier alnifolia* Nutt, having handles of mountain-goat or mountain-sheep horn, or a hard *digging tools* wood such as birch.<sup>26</sup>

Once gathered, roots were either hung to dry (and prepared for storage), or eaten fresh. The Lillooet eat raw the young stalks of ha'kwa (*Heracleum lanatum*), sxaqt (*Epilobium angustifolium*), the stalks and roots of the wild celery. They also eat the sap of the wild cherry. . . the cambium-layer of the black pine (*Pinus contorta*) and that of the poplar, choke-cherry, and alder occasionally. Cacti were eaten only by the Fraser River band. Hazel-nuts are gathered by the Lower Lillooet, in whose country they grow, and considerable quantities of nutlets of *Pinus albicaulis* are gathered by the Upper people.<sup>3</sup>

Berries were gathered in great quantities among the Lillooet. All the large berry-patches in the villages and on the lower parts of the mountains were under the supervision of the clan chiefs, who saw to it that no berries were picked before the proper time, and that the equal rights of all were guarded.

The clan chiefs watched the berries ripening; and when half the crop was ripe, they called all the people, and told them the time had arrived to pick. Then all the men, women, and children painted their faces and other exposed parts of their bodies' red. When they were all seated, the chief took a birch bark tray containing some of the various kinds of ripe berries. Walking forward, he held the tray up towards the highest mountain in sigh, saying, "Qai'lus, we tell you we are going to eat fruit. Mountains, we tell you we are going to eat fruit." After addressing each of the mountain-tops in this manner, he went around the people, following the sun's course, and gave each of them a berry to eat. After this, the people dispersed, and the women proceeded to pick berries.<sup>28</sup>

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<sup>28</sup> Teit, James Alexander. (1906 – 1975 [Rev.]). *The Jesup North Pacific Expedition. Vol. II, Part V – The Lillooet Indians.* (222, 282 )

Huckleberries (*vaccinium* sp.) and raspberries (*rubus* sp.) were the most commonly gathered berries of the Lower Lillooet, while service-berries (*Amelanchier alnifolia*) and soap-berries (*Shepherdia Canadensis*) were more common among the Upper Lillooet.<sup>29</sup> Teit mentions that berry-patches were common property; and people of all clans had the right to pick in any patch, so long as they did so at the proper season. When about ready to pick the first berries, each chief gave notice to his own people, to the neighboring clans, and even to other tribal divisions, telling them when he would start picking, and inviting them to come.<sup>27</sup>

Once berries were picked they were either eaten fresh or spread thinly upon mats exposed to the hot rays of the sun. Sometimes they were baked in cakes without drying, and were then put into a cedar-root or birch-bark basket, and boiled by means of hot stones. When somewhat cooled off, the stones were taken out, and the berries were mashed with a stick or kneaded with the hand, and finally spread rather thickly on a layer of fresh pine-needles, leaves, or dry grass, which was supported on a framework of poles, where the sun and wind dried them. The juice left in the basket was poured over the berries as they dried, and formed into cakes.<sup>30</sup>



With all the work that went in to hunting and gathering, storage was handled with care. Knowing it would be a long winter the people knew what was necessary if the food was to last, unspoiled, until spring.

The Upper Lillooet stored food in two kinds of cellars. One kind (called *powa'wan*) was made very carefully and lined with bark. The roots, berries, and other food stored therein were done up in bundles and wrapped in birch-bark. All the surplus food not required during the winter was placed in it, and not disturbed until spring. The other cellars (names *squo'zeks*) were

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<sup>29</sup> Image: Lillooet Indians Drying Berries: I29071 *BC Archives*. Retrieved February 15, 2010

<sup>30</sup> Teit, James Alexander. (1906 – 1975 [Rev.]). *The Jesup North Pacific Expedition*. Vol. 1, Part IV – *The Thompson Indians*. (235)

situated near the house, and made with less care. From them provisions were taken as required during the winter. Food stored in the permanent cellars and kept over until spring was called ka'za.<sup>31</sup>

### *Fishing*

Salmon-fishing was probably the most important industry to the St'at'imc, and a prominent part of their diet. Understanding the important role the salmon played in their life, some St'at'imc recognized and followed routines and rituals each year at the beginning of the fishing season.

Teit explained, how, although the Upper Lillooet had no ceremonies when the first salmon of the year was caught, the Lower Lillooet believed that if the first salmon caught was not treated properly, there would be a poor run. When the first salmon were expected, and one was spotted, a prayer would be said at each fishing station along the river. When they were ready to fish, they decorated the fish weirs with “feathers of the owl, hawk, red-winged flicker, and eagle.”<sup>32</sup>

Then the chief gave orders to catch the first salmon, and some men went in a canoe (if this were possible) and caught it. Before taking the salmon from the water, the people rolled it up in a bag or mat; for, if it should see the ground, no more salmon would come. Taking it ashore, they waited until it was dead, and then rolled it in the leaves or branches of a bush which had red berries . . . the salmon was then carried to the boiling-place, where it was put into a large new basket-kettle. The kettle and the stones used in boiling had never been in use before. The stones were dipped into water to clean them before they were put into the kettle. The water used for cleaning them was kept in a small new basket. The salmon was boiled whole, and when cooked was lifted out with sticks and laid on a new mat. The fins were then pulled off and the back-bone

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<sup>31</sup> Teit, James Alexander. (1906 – 1975 [Rev.]). *The Jesup North Pacific Expedition*. Vol. II, Part V – *The Lillooet Indians*. (223)

<sup>32</sup> Teit, James Alexander. (1906 – 1975[Rev.]). *The Jesup North Pacific Expedition*. Vol. II, Part V – *The Lillooet Indians*. (280, 281, 227,228)

taken out. Then the fish was boiled once more until it formed a mush. Now the stones were taken out of the kettle, and the water poured into a new dish. The fish was then divided up with a new spoon, and put into two other new dishes. The people were all assembled for this occasion. No unmarried adult woman, menstruating woman, orphan, widow, or widower was allowed to eat of the first salmon. If they did, there would be a poor run. All the other people must eat of the salmon-mush, - the males out of one dish, the females out of another. The brew was drunk.<sup>31</sup>

Fishing methods of the Lillooet were much like those of the Thompson River tribe where “large nets were set in the lakes; and bag-nets were used in the rivers, especially in those where the water was muddy or swift and deep. Spears, single and double pronged were used when fishing in clear water from the shore, and three-pronged spears were used from rafts or canoes. To pull fish from weirs or dams barbed hooks, made of antler, were used.<sup>33</sup>

Fish-traps were set at gates or openings of weirs, in creeks near outlets of lakes, or near mouths of creeks flowing into lakes. They were also set along the banks of rivers where the current was swift and steady, and were kept in position with poles. Owing to the strength of the current, fish ascending hug the edge of the stream, and, entering the trap, pass out through the upper end into a small corral made of sticks and brush, from which they are removed by spearing.<sup>34</sup>



Fish were also taken by torch-light, spearing the fish, at night, with the aid of a glowing torch, or by building a fire on a raft. The methods and technique of fishing among the Lillooet was similar in many ways to neighbouring tribes.

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<sup>33</sup> Teit, James Alexander. (1906 – 1975[Rev.]). *The Jesup North Pacific Expedition. Vol. II, Part V – The Lillooet Indians.* (228)

<sup>34</sup> Teit, James Alexander. (1906 – 1975 [Rev.]). *The Jesup North Pacific Expedition. Vol. 1, Part IV – The Thompson Indians.* (234, 235)

Image: Fishing Spear Retrieved on March 1, 2010 from  
<<http://www.yukoninfo.com/images/fishinhtools.gif>>

Preserving salmon was an ongoing process throughout the fishing season. Teit gave the following description of salmon preservation;

The fish was cut up along the belly, and all entrails and blood removed. The backbone was separated from the back, and the knife drawn deeply across the fleshy part of the fish several times, leaving an inch or so between each cut . . . the fish was then stretched, and kept open by thin sticks, the ends of which were inserted into little holes cut near the outside edges of the fish on each side. Finally the whole was hung over a long pole to dry. The part containing the backbone hung on one side, and the rest on the other. In this manner about a hundred fish were generally suspended a few inches apart on one pole, and hung there until quite dry and hard. They were then taken down, piled in heaps, and carried to the winter cellars or fish caches, where they were stored. Birch-bark was then put under, around, and on top of the fish, or the cache itself was lined with birch-bark to prevent any moisture which might soak through from damaging the fish.<sup>33</sup>

When fish were plentiful fish oil was made in a hole in the ground, lined “at the bottom and sides with large slabs of stone, and all holes and seams were plastered up with mud.”<sup>35</sup> Once the hole was ready, the fattest salmon were thrown in and covered with enough water that when hot rocks were added the water would reach a boil. To extract the most oil possible from the fish, they were broken up and then left to cool. When the water cooled, the oil floated to the top and could be skimmed off and stored in containers, sometimes made of salmon-skins or large intestine.<sup>34</sup>

### *Hunting*

Hunting was an integral part of life for the Lillooet and required understanding and respect for the land and its resources. The people were respectful of their environment and its resources, and used all parts of the animal that gave its life so others might live.

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<sup>35</sup> Teit, James Alexander. (1906 – 1975 [Rev.]). *The Jesup North Pacific Expedition*. Vol. 1, Part IV – *The Thompson Indians*. (235)

Tools and weapons made a difference to the successful quest of the Lillooet, therefore, making these implements demanded the peoples knowledge of resources; what could be used, and where to find it. The bow and arrow was the principle weapon used by the Lillooet for hunting. Sinew-backed flat-bows, covered with snake-skin, and bow-strings of twisted sinew, were the best bows among the Upper Lillooet.<sup>36</sup> Arrows were made of service-berry wood (Upper Lillooet) and dogwood, hazel-wood and cedar (Lower Lillooet), some with detachable fore shafts, and those made for hunting small game, with detachable heads. While Arrow-points were made of stone (glass basalt), teeth (beaver), and bone, arrows themselves were often winged with owl or grouse feathers. Quivers were most often made of dog, wolverine or fisher skin with the hair left on and the tails left at the bottom for ornament.<sup>35</sup>

Consideration was given when a hunter took the life of an animal. Deer, mountain goat, big-horn sheep and caribou were hunted on St'at'imc territory, and, "chief among other animals hunted for their flesh and skins were the hoary marmot and black bear, both of which were plentiful throughout all the mountains of the country."<sup>37</sup>

The preservation of meat was crucial to avoid spoilage;

Meat was preserved in the following manner: The fat of large game was cut off, and stored in deerskin sacks. The flesh was then cut into thin slices, and, to further assist in the drying process, each slice was pierced with numerous holes or slits some five or six inches in length. These slices were then dried by the sun and wind on a framework of poles placed a few inches apart and about five feet above the ground. Frequently artificial heat was resorted to. Meat was also spread on poles above the fire inside the lodge, or hung up near the roof and dried in the smoke.<sup>38</sup>

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<sup>36</sup> Teit, James Alexander. (1906 – 1975[Rev.]). *The Jesup North Pacific Expedition. Vol. II, Part V – The Lillooet Indians.* (224, 225, 256)

<sup>37</sup> Teit, James Alexander. (1906 – 1975[Rev.]). *The Jesup North Pacific Expedition. Vol. II, Part V – The Lillooet Indians.* (256)

<sup>38</sup> Teit, James Alexander. (1906 – 1975 [Rev.]). *The Jesup North Pacific Expedition. Vol. 1, Part IV – The Thompson Indians.* (234)



Lillooet Indians Drying Salmon<sup>39</sup>

The wisdom of the people regarding hunting, fishing, and gathering was fundamental to the continued survival of not only the people, but plants and animals as well. Although customs, traditions and beliefs varied regarding the treatment of the four legged, swimmers and flyers who offered their life for the sustainability of the people, there was an understanding and respect for all.

#### Sustainability Notes

[Note: The survival of all people was understood among the St'at'imc, and therefore honoured by the hunters. The chief of a hunting-party took responsibility for dividing equally among its members all meat, fat, and skins. The persons who shot the game did not received preferential treatment over the others, receiving the same amount of the kill as others. However, when animals were trapped they remained the property of the man in whose trap or snare they were caught.]<sup>40</sup>

[Note: The most noted salmon-fishing place of the Lillooet River band was at Skookum Chuck Rapids on the Lower Lillooet River. Here large numbers of people gathered to catch and cure salmon. Another favorite fishing-place was about four or five miles above the mouth of the river, and others of lesser note were near Warm Springs.]<sup>39</sup>

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<sup>39</sup> Image: Lillooet Indians Drying Salmon: I29073 *BC Archives*. Retrieved February 15, 2010

<sup>40</sup> Teit, James Alexander. (1906 – 1975[Rev.]). *The Jesup North Pacific Expedition. Vol. II, Part V – The Lillooet Indians.* (256, 227)

### *Marriage*

Marriages among the Lillooet were much the same as those of the Thompson people, with the “placing-down” ceremony having been both common and honourable. It was customary among the Lillooet to follow protocol and etiquette when the time came for a young man to pursue a bride, and not considered proper etiquette for the youth, or his parents, to make the first move. Teit described the “placing-down” (of gifts) marriage much the same as Hill-Tout described marriage among the Lillooet;

A young man who desired a girl for his wife sent a relative or some person, generally middle-aged, to the girl’s parents to lay his intentions before them. The messenger took with him the presents which the young man proposed to



give to the parents. After stating the object of his visit, he placed the gifts before them.<sup>41</sup>

If the family agreed the marriage was acceptable to all, the messenger returned to the family of the boy and informed them he, the boy/suitor, was invited to the home of the intended bride. The invitation to visit the home of his future bride indicated the family's willingness to accept the boy as a son-in-law.

Offers of marriage were often expressed at gatherings, where, Teit said, "The young man, or, if he was bashful, some man appointed by his parents, proclaimed before all the people that the suitor made an offer of marriage to a certain girl, the 'daughter of So-and-So,' and that these were the presents . . ."<sup>40</sup>

In the case of both noted marriage proposals, an offering of gifts was given to the parents of the intended bride. If the offer of marriage was refused, the gifts were returned to the young man pursuing the daughter in question.

Another form of marriage described by Charles Hill-Tout was somewhat different from that described by James Alexander Teit. Hill-Tout claimed that if the family of the girl requested in marriage agreed to the proposal, the parents of the boy would make a visit to the home of the intended bride, leaving their son behind. It was the evening following his parents visit, that the boy would visit the home of his future bride. "When he enters he is made welcome and invited to sit down with the family alongside the bride. It is this formal inclusion in the family circle of the bride that constitutes the marriage. The boy stays with his father-in-law for at least four days. After that period he is free to go and stay as he chooses."<sup>42</sup>

The marriage of two people, according to both Teit and Hill-Tout, included feasting and the giving of gifts. Hill-Tout claims the festivity "consisted chiefly in cooking large quantities of the choicest food . . . [and] the parents of the youth opened their treasure chests and set aside such of their contents as was needful for the carrying out of the ceremony."<sup>41</sup>

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<sup>41</sup> Teit, James Alexander. (1906 – 1975 [Rev.]). *The Jesup North Pacific Expedition*. Vol. 1, Part IV – The Thompson Indians. (322)

<sup>42</sup> Hill-Tout, Charles. (1928). *The Salish People. The Local Contribution of Charles Hill-Tout Volume II: The Squamish and the Lillooet*. Edited by Ralph Maud (1978). Vancouver BC. (107)

Mr. Teit described yet another form of marriage for the Lillooet that saw the parents of a girl approach the boy, or his family, they believed would be a good husband for their daughter. If the boy and his family agreed to the marriage the boy would go to the home of the girl (on an agreed date) to collect his wife. “They were then looked upon as man and wife, both parties being thus bound inviolably.”<sup>42</sup> After staying a few days at the home of the bride, the couple went to the home of the bridegroom where the father called together friends and neighbours informing them of his intent for a *conducting ceremony*. The friends and neighbours brought gifts and food for a celebration that would take place at the home of the bride. Before returning to the bride’s home though, the newlyweds were presented with gifts of clothing, from the parents of the groom, which were worn over top of their current clothes. These new outfits were worn, as such, when the couple returned to the home of the bride’s parents. When everyone arrived, food and gifts were presented to the family of the bride, and a large feast was enjoyed. Following the feast, the newly-weds

divested themselves of their new clothes, and gave them to the bride’s parents, who in their turn gave them to some of the bride’s kin. The presents were given by the guests nominally to the parents of the bride, but in reality to the friends of the parents, among whom they were divided. Another feast was given in the morning, and then the party returned home, leaving the bride and bridegroom with the relatives of the former.<sup>43</sup>

After a pre-determined time, another conducting ceremony took place, this time at the home of the bridegroom. Gifts were shared this time among the friends and neighbours of the bridegroom’s family, whom had provided gifts for the conducting ceremony at the home of the bride. The newly married couple remained at the home of the bridegroom, and “here the marriage ceremony ended, the couple living with or visiting their respective parents afterward, just as they felt inclined.”<sup>44</sup>

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<sup>43</sup> Teit, James Alexander. (1906 – 1975 [Rev.]). The Jesup North Pacific Expedition. Vol. 1, Part IV – The Thompson Indians. (323)

<sup>44</sup> Teit, James Alexander. (1906 – 1975 [Rev.]). The Jesup North Pacific Expedition. Vol. 1, Part IV – The Thompson Indians. (323)

It would appear that, at this time in history, - early 1900's - marriage arrangements among the Lillooet depicted a contingent of life situations. Hill-Tout explained how;

A man among the Lillooet, as among other of the Salish tribes, might possess any number of wives, and a person of means and position in the tribe usually had several . . . It was also customary for a man to marry all his wife's sisters, who are always younger than herself, the eldest daughter being always the first to [marry] . . . He might do this in her lifetime or after her death if she died early. If he had not taken them to wife while she lived, he could not marry them or any other woman for at least a year after her death. A man might also wed a widow other than his brother's wife, and if she had daughters these also became his wives provided they were not akin by blood to him. A widow had the privilege of bestowing her own hand in a second marriage if she had no brother-in-law to claim her. Widows and widowers might intermarry if they desired after the customary lapse of time.<sup>45</sup>

The custom of the Lillooet people having more than one wife changed over time, and in this 21<sup>st</sup> century, it is illegal for any man to have more than one wife.

#### Marriage Notes:

[Note: From what Hill-Tout reports, the offering of firewood appeared to be customary among the Lillooet when it came to marriage ceremonies in the community. The act of giving firewood presented the bridegroom as subjective to the authority of his new father-in-law. Hill-Tout (106)]<sup>46</sup>

[Note: Evidence indicates that when a bridegroom was invited to sit among the family of the bride, this was a demonstration of their accepting and including him as a member of their family. "This inclusion of the

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<sup>45</sup> Hill-Tout, Charles. (1928). *The Salish People. The Local Contribution of Charles Hill-Tout Volume II: The Squamish and the Lillooet.* Edited by Ralph Maud (1978).. (107, 108)

<sup>46</sup> Hill-Tout, Charles. (1928). *The Salish People. The Local Contribution of Charles Hill-Tout Volume II: The Squamish and the Lillooet.* Edited by Ralph Maud (1978). Vancouver. (106, 107)

son-in-law within the family circle gives him all the rights of son-ship and his offspring are regarded as belonging to his wife's family just as much as to his own." Hill-Tout (107)]<sup>45</sup>

### **Birth/Pregnancy**

As is the case with much of life's phenomenon among the Lillooet, pregnancy and birth presented an opportunity for change, ritual and celebration. Throughout a pregnancy, an expecting mother was given leniency when it came to some aspects of life. An example of change in routine Teit referred to was; "During pregnancy the woman and

her husband were allowed to eat the flesh of any animal, even that of the hare and porcupine. Only the mysterious parts of animals were forbidden. Otherwise they could eat anything that other people ate.”<sup>47</sup> Women permitted to eat the flesh of “any animal” was not common practice among the Lillooet as there were restrictions to what, and when women could eat certain foods.

Teit reports the childbirth process as being a time of “utmost quiet” with only those required to be there present. It was believed that if there were too many people, and too much excitement, the woman’s labor would be hard. Women giving birth were assisted by a mid-wife who was paid for her work. Rituals followed the birth of a child, one being the hanging of the afterbirth in the branch of a tree, or burying it underground.<sup>46</sup>

Once the child was delivered,

The navel-string was cut with an arrow-head, or stone knife (at present day an ordinary steel knife is used). After it was severed, the mother spat on it, and she or the midwife tied it with deer-sinew, and smeared the end of it with fir or pine gum mixed with charcoal of the bulrush or of the tule. The child was then washed with lukewarm water in which salmon-heads had been boiled, and afterwards rubbed with chalky clay powdered up fine, or dry white paint.<sup>46</sup>

In his book, The Lillooet Indians, James Alexander Teit noted Charles Hill-Tout’s description of birth customs;

when a woman was about to give birth to a child, she or her husband, or both together, build a small lodge near the general dwelling-house. When her labor overtook her she retired to this lodge, in company with four elderly women, who acted as her midwives. After the child was born, it was customary for the friends of the man and his wife to visit the lying-in-lodge and see the baby, and the husband was always expected to make the visitors presents on this

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<sup>47</sup> Teit, James Alexander. (1906) *The Jesup North Pacific Expedition Vol. 11, Part V. The Lillooet Indians* / by; edited by Franz Boas. [Reprinted from the edition of 1906, Leiden and New York] AMS Press Inc. New York 1975. (260)

occasion to mark the event. The mother and child remained in the lodge for at least for days; and if the weather permitted, this period would be extended to eight or twelve, or twenty days, or to some other multiple of four, the Salish mystic number.<sup>48</sup> (Note 4 – p.295)

Other customs around the birth of a child included; the father of a newly-born infant giving gifts to those who first came to see the child; as well, all family members in the home of a newborn child painted their faces red every morning for a time. Teit claims that,

For many nights after the child was born the father slept along in the mountains. He had to hunt game often, but did not carry home what he killed, because it would cause injury to the new-born infant. It seems that he was considered in a manner unclean; and therefore, if he touched game, the animals would be displeased and throw sickness on the child; or it would give him and his wife bad luck, in which case the child might die. If he killed any animals at this time, however, he would be lucky in hunting for a long time afterwards. He engaged other people to carry home and cut up the game he killed. For one month or more the husband must not eat or touch the flesh of any animal until at least a day after it had been killed; and for a period lasting from six months to one year after the birth of the child, his wife must not eat any fresh meat.<sup>2</sup>

### *Twins*

Teit tells of traditional beliefs regarding twins, and states “some of these customs are still maintained, but in modified form [1906].”<sup>47</sup>

The beliefs of the Lillooet regarding twins differed somewhat from those of the Thompson people. Twins were considered the real offspring of the grisly bear. Many say the grisly bear pitied the woman, and made these children

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<sup>48</sup> Teit, James Alexander. (1906) *The Jesup North Pacific Expedition* Vol. 11, Part V. *The Lillooet Indians* / by; edited by Franz Boas. [Reprinted from the edition of 1906, Leiden and New York] AMS Press Inc. New York 1975. (295, 260, 261, 263)

grow in her womb. The husband of the woman was not the real father of twins, although some believed that the grisly bear acted through him. When twins were born, the husband went outside and walked around in a circle, following the sun's course. He struck the ground with a fir-branch as he went around, and sang the grisly-bear song. The parents of twins built a lodge apart from the people, in which they lived until the children were about four years old. The longer they kept the children away from people, the better was their chance of life. Parents of twins could eat every kind of food excepting "mysterious" parts of animals. . . . If possible, a young man was hired to attend to the children during the whole period of isolation. It was his duty to wash them regularly; and when they cried, he went around the lodge, singing the grisly-bear song, and striking the ground with four fir-branches. . . . when the family returned again to live with the people, they discarded all the clothing they had worn. The lodge in which they had lived was left standing until it fell down. It was never burned, for that would cause the children to die. When one of twins dies, whether infant or adult, the body was never buried. It was tied up and deposited rather high up in a busy fir-tree, and the grisly bear was supposed to take it away. Many Indians say that twins were grisly bears in human form, and that when a twin dies, his soul went back to the grisly bears and became one of them. Bodies of twins were always deposited in a tree distant from burial-grounds and human habitations. If the body of a twin child was placed near a grave, the mother would have no more children.<sup>49</sup>

It is hard to imagine a family enduring such an ordeal, and makes one (on a personal level) thankful for evolution.

### *Children and Whippings*

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<sup>49</sup> Teit, James Alexander. (1906) *The Jesup North Pacific Expedition* Vol. 11, Part V. *The Lillooet Indians* / by; edited by Franz Boas. [Reprinted from the edition of 1906, Leiden and New York] AMS Press Inc. New York 1975. (263)

Whippings were practices among the St'at'imc (principally by the Fraser River band) in the mid 1800's, the explanation being, "it made the body hard, drove out sickness, made the children able to endure pain, and lucky at gambling."<sup>50</sup> Teit claims, "All unmarried persons had to undergo the ordeal. Two switches of the service-berry bush were used, - one for striking males, and one for striking females."<sup>4</sup> When lazy children were pointed out, they were struck four times – males across the back or chest, and females across the bare legs below the knee.

If a girl volunteered to make 'froth' of soap-berries for all present, she was exempt, and the people ate of the 'froth' she made. If a young man volunteered to take a 'long whipping,' all the other young people in the house were exempt. . . . As a rule, he was struck eight times. When he let go of the bar, it was a sign that he had had enough, and the man stopped. Sometimes, however, when desirous of showing his endurance, he held on to the bar. Then the flogger would continue to lash him until all his switches were broken, and the young man was all covered with blood. The flogger had to recompense the courageous youth by presenting him with half a fathom of dentalia.<sup>49</sup>

Treatment such as this would have communities up in arms in this 21<sup>st</sup> century. Although it has not been kind on all levels, I believe youth of today would agree that evolution, on the "whipping" level, has been a good thing.

### *Puberty customs*

Customs and practices regarding puberty varied among the St'at'imc. Charles Hill-Touch explained how, when a girl has her first catamenial flux – her mother takes her out and builds her a temporary shelter in which she digs a hole several feet deep (to about the level of the girls breast when squatting) where her daughter will squat while her flux passes. The girls stays at this structure for a minimum of four days, after which the length of time varies.

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<sup>50</sup> Teit, James Alexander. (1906) *The Jesup North Pacific Expedition Vol. 11, Part V. The Lillooet Indians* / by; edited by Franz Boas. [Reprinted from the edition of 1906, Leiden and New York] AMS Press Inc. New York 1975. (262)



For the first four days the girl practically fasts, and throughout the whole period of her seclusion abstains from fresh meat of any kind. There was a two-fold object in this abstention. First, the girl, it was thought, would be harmed by the fresh meat in her peculiar condition; and second, the game animals would take offense if she partook of their meat in these circumstances. Should a pubescent girl eat meat, it was believed her father's luck as a hunter would be spoiled thereafter. The animals would not permit him to kill them; for it was held that no animal could be killed against its own wish or will. Indeed the Indian looked upon all his food, animal and vegetable, as gifts voluntarily bestowed upon him by the spirit of the animal or vegetable, and regarded himself as absolutely dependent upon their goodwill for his daily sustenance.<sup>51</sup>

After her time in seclusion she was formally purified by a shaman, her bad medicine taken from her. Once the shaman had performed this ritual, he marked the girl's face or blanket with red paint, in the symbol of his *snam* (familiar spirit).<sup>50</sup>

Boys underwent a different kind of seclusion upon reaching puberty. Among the upper tribe, a youth retired to the woods or mountains and sought his *snam* or *sulia*, every man possessing such among these tribes as among the Thompson. Among the lower Lillooet, only those youths who had a desire to excel in any particular thing underwent the regular *kwazantcut*, the ordinary youth possessing no personal totem.<sup>50</sup>

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<sup>51</sup> Hill-Tout, Charles. (1928). *The Salish People. The Local Contribution of Charles Hill-Tout Volume II: The Squamish and the Lillooet*. Edited with an Introduction by Ralph Maud (1978). Talonbooks. Vancouver BC. (112, 113)

[Note: It seems that the piece of the child's navel-string outside the ligature was not kept, as among the Thompson tribe.]<sup>52</sup>

[Note: A woman pregnant for the first time, and her husband, had to dress themselves and put up their hair in the same manner as during the puberty ceremonials. (She had to tie up her hair in a knot at each ear, and wore a head-band of dentalia strung on three bark strings, which were tied together or plaited. He wore no head-band, but tied his hair in a knot behind his head. They used scratchers and drinking-tubes, and bathed regularly, washing themselves with fir-branches, and supplicating the Day Dawn. The husband was allowed to live in his lodge; but the woman had to stay by herself in a shelter made of brush or bark, and was treated in the same manner as an adolescent girl or a menstruating woman. Some couples did not separate until after the birth of the child. The woman had to throw away part of the first four meals she ate after giving birth. There were not further restrictions than those enjoined on other pregnant women. From one to three months after the birth of the child the woman returned to her husband's house. The he invited all the neighbors to a feast, and gave to each one who took the child in his arms, who praised it, or who blessed it, a small present.])<sup>51</sup>

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<sup>52</sup> Teit, James Alexander. (1906) *The Jesup North Pacific Expedition* Vol. 11, Part V. *The Lillooet Indians* / by; edited by Franz Boas. [Reprinted from the edition of 1906, Leiden and New York] AMS Press Inc. New York 1975. (260, 261)

## *Governance*

According to Charles Hill-Tout, the social organization of the Lillooet differed somewhat according to locality; the upper tribes approximating to a simpler, looser social system, while the lower tribes prevailed to the more complex, formal system of the Halkomelem tribes, where a threefold division of chiefs, nobles, and base folk existed. James Alexander Teit and Charles Hill-Tout both identified clans of the St'at'imc as having hereditary chiefs who were honourable members of a local family in the community. "The hereditary chief was the chief of the families composing a village. When a clan spread over several villages, the branches still had one chief in common. He resided at the original home of the clan. In a village that contained several clans, the chief of the original clan was the head chief."<sup>53</sup> The head chief, as with all chiefs had the best interest of the people in the community at heart.



Figure 1 "Indian Chief of Fourtain Band" Photo: BC Archives  
ish People. The Local Contribution of Charles Hill-Tout Volume II: The Squamish and the Lillooet. Edited with an Introduction by Ralph Maud (1978). Talonbooks. Vancouver BC. (104)  
Figure 1: <<http://www.firstnations.eu/img/06-4-0-chief.jpg>>

Among  
the people of the lower St'at'imc the  
influence of the chief or  
headman, who was  
theoretically elected though  
practically  
hereditary, depended a great deal upon his  
personal qualities and character, though, the  
more able and

intelligent he was the greater influence. Hill-Tout how, as a general rule “the office of headman in a Salish tribe was held by the ablest, most intelligent and therefore the wealthiest man in the tribe, [and that] even the most influential and wealthy was hedged with many limitations, autocracy in any form being contrary to the spirit of Salish institutions.”<sup>52</sup> Teit claims that even the children and grandchildren of the chief “formed an aristocracy of descent, but had no privileges of any kind.”<sup>54</sup> In many ways, the chief was like the “tribal father and stood to the tribe as a whole on much the same footing as did the several eldersmen to their individual families; and it would appear that he rarely, if ever, entered upon any serious undertaking without first learning the opinions of the tribal elders and consulting with them.”<sup>55</sup> Teit supports Hill-Tout’s findings, and reports, “The advice of the elders of each clan – namely, of the clan chief and of other chiefs assembled in council – was followed by all the people. The advice and orders of the hereditary chief had great weight with the people of his clan.”<sup>53</sup>

A high regard for his people was evident by the fact that a community chief did not undertake dominion for all matters in the community;

For example, if he were not the most noted warrior of the tribe he would not direct warlike operations, or lead in attack or defence. This office and authority was always vested in a man noted for his personal prowess and skill in warfare. It was the same in hunting. When a hunting expedition was set on foot, it was not the chief who usually directed the movement, but the best and most successful hunter in the tribe. And thus it was with all public

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<sup>54</sup> Teit, James Alexander. (1906) *The Jesup North Pacific Expedition* Vol. 11, Part V. *The Lillooet Indians* / by; edited by Franz Boas. [Reprinted from the edition of 1906, Leiden and New York] AMS Press Inc. New York 1975. (254, 257)

<sup>55</sup> Hill-Tout, Charles. (1928). *The Salish People. The Local Contribution of Charles Hill-Tout* Volume II: *The Squamish and the Lillooet*. Edited with an Introduction by Ralph Maud (1978). Talonbooks. Vancouver BC. (104)

offices: the man most fitted for any particular post was invariably chosen by his fellows to fill it. But while all other offices seem to have remained elective, circumstances have tended to make that of the tribal chief hereditary.<sup>54</sup>

Charles Hill-Tout reported that among the lower Lillooet, “As soon as the office of *siam* became hereditary, the king or chief held a place apart from the rest of the tribe; and thus a princely caste is formed.”<sup>54</sup> This, however, was not the case with the upper Lillooet.

Throughout the St’at’imc territory there existed two “main chiefs,” one for the upper bands and one for the lower. The position of these chiefs was “generally held by a local chief whose wealth and influence excelled those of all others, or whose village was most populous and flourishing. . . . These chiefs or divisional heads had nothing to do with the local affairs of the other villages. Their function seemed to be to represent the group or division as a whole and look after its interests.”<sup>56</sup>

Individual communities had their own chief who looked after local affairs, a position, Hill-Tout claims, to have once been “shared by all the eldermen of the village or commune in common; or perhaps it would be more correct to say that the eldermen of each family directed the affairs of his own household independently of all others; for the original social unit of Salish society was the family not the village commune.”<sup>55</sup> To some extent, James Alexander Teit confirms Hill-Tout’s findings, stating;

The Lillooet had councils or local gatherings of men to talk over matters of importance. The father and eldest son were the heads of the family; and the eldest men of a group of closely related families were considered the head men, and their advice was taken. The advice of the elders of each clan – namely, of the clan chief and of other chiefs assembled in council – was followed by all

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<sup>56</sup> Hill-Tout, Charles. (1928). *The Salish People. The Local Contribution of Charles Hill-Tout Volume II: The Squamish and the Lillooet.* Edited with an Introduction by Ralph Maud (1978). Talonbooks. Vancouver BC. (105)

the people. The advice and orders of the hereditary chief [held] great weight with the people of his clan.<sup>57</sup>

As is the case with current practices among various tribes, the Lillooet had protocols that were followed among their leaders. Teit explained how, “If the hereditary chief of a community died, he was succeeded by his eldest son; and if he had no sons, by his eldest daughter. If a chief dies without offspring, his nearest male relative was considered chief. If a chief [left] a son of tender age, the community had no acting chief until the boy grew up.”<sup>56</sup> When the young son of the deceased hereditary chief reached the age of twelve or fourteen, the “elders of the community invited him to a feast specially prepared for him. They reminded him of his position and ancestry, and gave him a present of two robes. When the lad had finished his training and had become a man, he gave a feast and many presents to the people.”<sup>56</sup> It is evident that the chief looked after the families in his community, though, in turn, the community looked after the family of the chief.

### *Other Chiefs*

The term “chief” was not reserved strictly for hereditary chiefs. Other community members could gain the title of chief as they influenced others through;

wealth, wisdom, oratory, liberality – shown; for instance, by giving feasts and presents without receiving an equivalent in return. Other chiefs were men who had become conspicuous through their proficiency in certain occupations, and had become leaders of men. Such were war chiefs, hunting chiefs, chiefs of the religious dances. A woman who was noted for wealth, or who gave more than one potlatch, was called a chief; and any man who gave a large potlatch, or was able to repeat his potlatches from time to time, was called a chief. Another class called chiefs were men who gave a great

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<sup>57</sup> Teit, James Alexander. (1906) *The Jesup North Pacific Expedition Vol. 11, Part V. The Lillooet Indians* / by; edited by Franz Boas. [Reprinted from the edition of 1906, Leiden and New York] AMS Press Inc. New York 1975. (255, 259)

public feast when taking their ancestral names . . . their rank was not hereditary.<sup>58</sup>

Chiefs of this nobility were declared “chief” strictly on their merit in the community while the hereditary chief was the one who held authority, influence and power amongst his people.

#### Governance Notes:

[NOTE: It is easy to understand that the son of a wealthy and influential chief stood a better chance to be his father’s successor, other things being equal, than any other man of the tribe, more particularly when both father and son paved the way for this succession by a generous and discreet distribution of presents; and thus it is not difficult to perceive how an office originally elective became, as we now find it among the coast and delta tribes, practically hereditary. It was this hereditary character of the chieftaincy which gave rise to that threefold social division of chiefs, nobles, and base folk, which prevailed among the lower Salish tribes.]<sup>59</sup>

[Note: It must be mentioned that, long before the arrival of European settlers, the people of the St’at’imc territory had a sophisticated government with protocols that worked in a way that served them well.] 58

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<sup>58</sup> Teit, James Alexander. (1906) *The Jesup North Pacific Expedition Vol. 11, Part V. The Lillooet Indians* / by; edited by Franz Boas. [Reprinted from the edition of 1906, Leiden and New York] AMS Press Inc. New York 1975. (255)

<sup>59</sup> Hooper, Debra

## *Warfare*

The Lillooet were not known to be aggressors when it came to warfare and acknowledged that they were not as warlike and rapacious as the other tribes of the interior. Unless there was personal or territorial threat, the Lillooet very seldom went on war expeditions. However, if there was a threat to the Lillooet people, or to their local territory; hunting, fishing and community, they fought determinedly to protect their own.

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<sup>60</sup> Teit, James Alexander. (1906 – 1975[Rev.]). The Jesup North Pacific Expedition. Vol. II, Part V –



Among the St'at'imc there was an understanding regarding the need to be prepared for battle, as the Lillooet did not let slip from their minds the need for knowledgeable warriors. They made weapons of; bows and arrows, (the Upper Lillooet poisoned war-arrows with rattlesnake-poison)<sup>1</sup> knives (made of hard black and green stone), spears and war-clubs. The Lillooet also made vests of armor from boards (vine-maple wood) or rods, and sleeveless tunics that reached the knees, made of double elk-skin sometimes painted with animal designs in red and white. The Lillooet did not have shields for protection though some wrapped a thick marmot-skin robe around their free arm to protect them from arrows and other blows that came their way.<sup>59</sup>

The Lillooet did not perform war dances before going into battle, though practiced them from time to time so as not to forget them, and to teach young warriors.

In times of peace a chief would sometimes call the young men together, and ask them to sing the war-song. Then they took their spears and ran around singing, whooping, and pushing their spears to the sides and up and down. When they had finished, the chief feasted them. This was done partly as an entertainment, but chiefly that the war song and dance might not be forgotten.<sup>59</sup>

When the Lillooet did go to war, there were customs the warriors followed. The men tied their hair in a knot at the top of their head, placing in the knot an eagle feather and some men chose to wear a feather cap.

All warriors painted their faces and the uncovered parts of their bodies. The common war-paint was red, but sometimes parties painted themselves with alternate stripes of red and white. When a man had killed an enemy, he painted his whole face black. It was believed that if he did not do this, he would become blind.<sup>61</sup>

Fortresses of stockades surrounding a large buildings, or group of buildings, of various shapes; square, circular, oblong, were often used in battle.

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The Lillooet Indians. (234, 235, 236)

<sup>61</sup> Teit, James Alexander. (1906 – 1975[Rev.]). The Jesup North Pacific Expedition. Vol. II, Part V – The Lillooet Indians. (235)

These fortresses were sometimes very large, though built some distance from the regular houses and communities.<sup>60</sup>

Although the Lillooet were not well known for fighting, blood feuds were not uncommon. Teit reports “traditions say that some families became extinct through them. These feuds at one time nearly occasioned a war between the Upper and Lower Lillooet. Quarrels and blood feuds were often settled by intermarriage and the giving of presents.”<sup>60</sup>

Fire was symbolic to the warriors.

“To light a fire between enemies was a token of conciliation. Symbolically it meant that ‘they had one and the same fire,’ or that ‘they lived together,’ and therefore must be friends. Past enemies would smoke together out of the same pipe as a token of good-will, friendship, and peace. Symbolically it meant ‘they ate out of the same dish’ and ‘gave each other food to eat.’ therefore they must be friends.<sup>60</sup>

The non-aggressive behaviour of the Lillooet helped maintain the peoples existence and served them well as a people determined to maintain what was believed to have been a large part of their nature.



### **ORIGIN OF THE LILLOOET AND BRIDGE RIVER PEOPLE**

*(Called respectively, Se'tLamux and Nxo'istEnamux (from SetL, the name of Lillooet; and Mxo'isten, the name of Bridge River) They are SLa'tLemux or StatLemux-oL)*



When speaking of the Frog Clan, James Alexander Teit reported; It is said that long ago no Lillooet lived on the Fraser River except one band at SEL, the

present Indian reservation near the town of Lillooet. They are believed to be descendants of a mythical personage who transformed the Frog people. Some of them claim descent from the Frog people themselves. The Bridge River people are off the same clan, - a branch of the SEL, who migrated east to the mouth of Bridge River and beyond. Some say that a small clan originated among them, claiming descent from a man who lived with bears.

The Fountain people are said to be descended from the Coyote, who was a Shuswap, and the original inhabitant of that region. Through intermarriage the Frog clan was introduced among them.<sup>62</sup>

*The Journal of American Folklore: Vol. XXV – October – December, 1912 – No. XCVIII. Traditions of the Lillooet Indians of British Columbia* shares with its audience, James Alexander Teits retelling of the Origin of the Lillooet and Bridge River People. Teit states;

Formerly, there were no people who lived at Bridge River and the Fountain; but a number of people lived near a spring close to where the present Indian village of Lillooet [SetL] is situated. They were Lillooet, and lived principally on deer-meat. Lower down, between them and the Fraser River, at another spring where white people are living now, dwelt other people who were called Frog-Mouths (**Pape'tatcin**) because they ate frogs. They lived all together in an underground house and never held intercourse [interaction] with the people who lived above them. They subsisted principally on frog-flesh; but they also ate snakes, lizards, and all kinds of reptiles.

In those days the frogs and toads were as large as buffaloes; and the Frog people called the, “the animal,” in the same way as the Indians of the present day designate the grizzly bear. These people made all their clothes and blankets of frog and toad skins. Their dress consisted of shoes,

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<sup>62</sup> Teit, James Alexander. (1906 – 1975 [Rev.]). *The Jesup North Pacific Expedition. Vol. II, Part V – The Lillooet Indians.* (253)

breech-clout, and robe. They hunted the frogs with spears similar to beaver-spears, and carried home the meat at night. *(Some say they also hunted at night)*

Among these people were two marriageable girls whom the young men of Setl were very anxious to marry. The young men repaired to the underground house to obtain the girls; but each one, in turn, was overcome by the smell of frog-fat when the people cooked, and died inside the house. Their bodies were carried out, and left on a bench near by. Thus all the young men of Setl met their death; and their bones whitened the bench near the house of the Frog-Eaters.

Only one young man was left, and he repaired to the mountains to train himself. He took the back-fat of four deer with him, and lived on that during the four years he was away training. At the end of that time he had learned all the “mystery” of water, lake, swamp, mud, spring, and river. He had also learned all the “mystery” of the animals that inhabited or lived near them, such as frogs, snakes, and lizards. He could eat all these animals, and their flesh did not harm him. Being complete in all the magic required for his purpose, he returned home, and told the people he intended to go and obtain the daughters of the Frog-Eaters. The people said, “Don’t go! You are sure to be killed, and you are the only young man we have left.” After swallowing arrows, snowshoes, and a dog, he went to the Frog-Eaters’ house, clad only in breech-clout and leggings. A Frog-Man was sitting at the ladder striking one foot against the other, and seeing him coming, he said, “All your friends have died by coming here. Don’t you see their bones on the bench? Why do you court death? Have you had no lesson?” The lad answered, “I wish to obtain your two daughters, and am prepared to die.” The man struck him on the legs as he went down the ladder, but he paid no attention. Reaching the bottom, he went aside, and sat down with his back to the wall. The people were all lying

down; but when he entered they said, "Cook some meat: we have not eaten since morning." Then they began to boil and roast frog-meat, and the smoke from the fat filled the house. The people ate, and, when the smoke cleared away, they saw him sitting in the same place. They said to one another, "He does not die as quickly as the others did." After a while, the people said, "We will cook again;" and this time they roasted the intestines and inside parts of the frog. The house became so filled with smoke from the burning fat, that the people could not see one another. When it cleared away, the lad still sat alive, and the people wondered. When they went to sleep, their chief said, "The lad has vanquished us, and seems to be able to live with us. He may have our daughters." He [staid] with his wives that night, and they covered him with a frog-skin blanket, which smelled horribly.

On the next day the people said, "Let us hunt! We are nearly out of food." They all went and hunted over the mountains back of Lillooet, returning by the mouth of Bridge River, without seeing any game, for the lad made all the frogs leave their usual haunts. The people all returned home, the lad being the last one, and some distance behind. He felt thirsty, went to a spring called Kelamu'lax, and, although knee-deep in mud, he drank, pushing aside the dead leaves which covered the surface of the water. To his surprise, he beheld a huge frog looking at him. It was nearly concealed by the dead leaves, water, and mud. It was early winter, and the frog had probably gone into his winter quarters. The lad said, "I am not afraid of you," and drank his fill of the water. Then he hurried home to the house, as it was getting late.

He was wearing frog-skin shoes, and his legs were all covered with mud. When he entered, the people noticed the mud, and said, "Our son-in-law must have found a frog! He is a great hunter." His wives pulled off his shoes and leggings, and hung them up to dry. He told them where he had seen the frog, and they said, "We will go to-night and kill it." They all went to the place,

and, after spearing the frog and killing it, they began to roast the meat. The place where they had their fire and roasted their meat may still be seen near the mouth of Bridge River. Then they carried the meat home, and ate again when they reached there.

The lad did not eat any frog-meat. He told his wives he was going to hunt, and bring in a different kind of meat to eat. Early next morning he went out, and vomited the dog he had swallowed, sending him to round up deer. Then he vomited his snowshoes and bow and arrows, and put the snowshoes on, chased the deer into a gulch, and shot them all. He cut up one, took some of the meat home, and, when he found his wives out washing themselves, he persuaded them to eat some. They thought they would die; but after waiting a long time, and finding no bad effects from the meat, they were glad.

The lad said, "I will change the food of your people to-morrow." He brought some deer meat to the house the next day, but the people were afraid to eat it. On the fourth morning he went to the gulch, roasted the whole carcass of a deer, and brought it to the house and dropped it down the hole. The people were afraid of such a mysterious object. He told them, "You must eat this meat, and I will eat with you. It is good, and will not harm you. I shall transform any one who does not eat of it." The people at last ate of the meat, and, finding that they did not die, they declared it to be good food. Three of them would not eat of the meat.

Then he sent his wives and all the people to bring in the deer from the gulch. When they had left, he took all their clothes, blankets, skins, and meat of frogs outside the house, and burned them. When the people returned, he said, "You are already in my power, and I can do with you as I like. Having eaten of venison, you are now like my own people." He told them to strip naked, and burned all their frog clothes. Then he showed them how to tan the skins of the deer they had brought home, and make themselves deer-skin clothes.

When they were all clothed, he told them to sit down on the edge of the bench where the skeletons were, and watch what he would do with them. He said, "You killed these people: now I will make them alive." He jumped over the skeletons, one after another, and immediately each one became alive. They stood up, and he ordered them to walk around and mix with the Frog people. Then he transformed into "water-mysteries" the three Frog-Eaters who would not eat venison, and threw them into a creek near by, saying, "You shall remain there as "water-mysteries," and shall howl like dogs. If a person happens to see you, you may do them harm, if their time has come to die" (*The sight may cause them to die.*) then he conducted all the Frog-Eaters up to Setl, where they lived thenceforth, and the two people s intermarried.

After they had amalgamated, some of the people moved, and settled at the mouth of Bridge River: therefore the Bridge River and Setl or Lillooet people are the same. Many of them claim descent from the Frog-Eaters and their ancestor who changed the Frog-Eaters. The other Lillooet nicknames them "Frog people," or "Frog-Mouths," because of their origin and ancestry. They used to impersonate their ancestors at feasts and potlatches, and wore masks resembling frogs.<sup>63</sup>

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<sup>63</sup> Teit, James A. (1912). Traditions of the Lillooet Indians of British Columbia. *The Journal of American Folklore*, Vol. 25, No. 98 (Oct. – Dec., 1912), (361- 364)