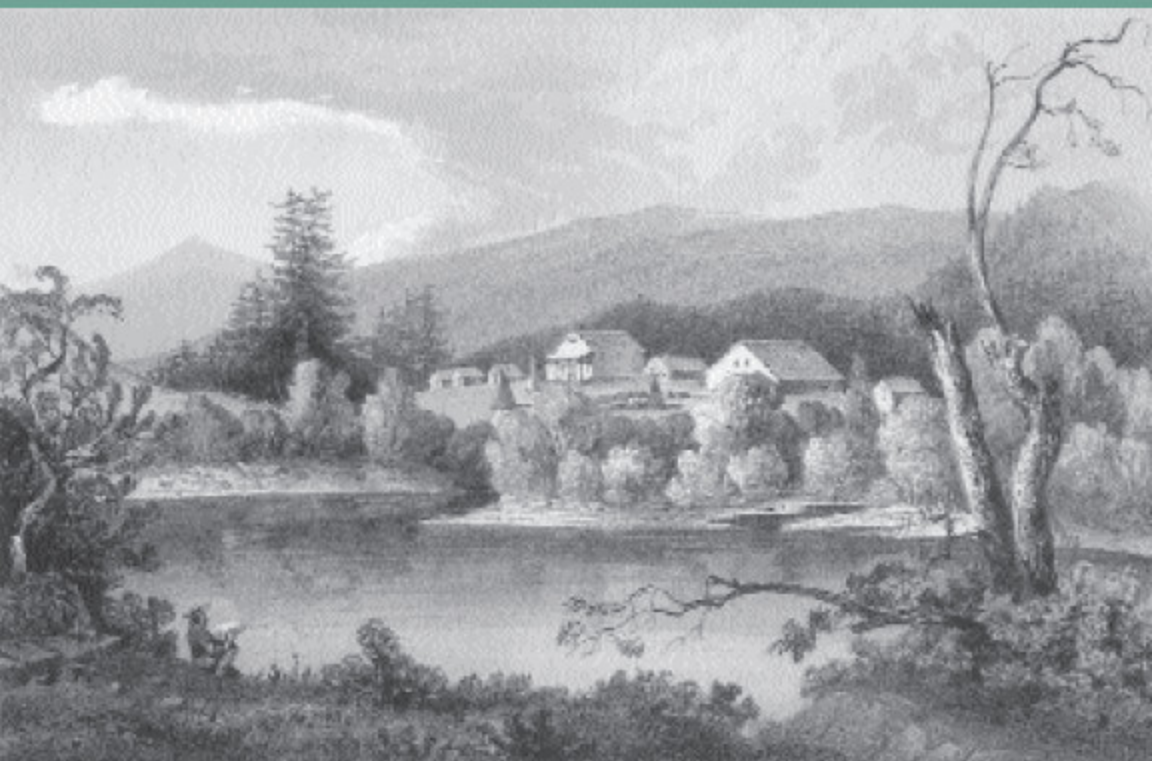


Landscape Traveled by Coyote and Crane



The World of the Schitsu'umsh
(Coeur d'Alene Indians)

RODNEY FREY

in collaboration with

THE SCHITSU'UMSH

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In memory of
Lawrence Aripa, Lucy Finley, and Henry SiJohn,
whose wise counsel and love of the lake,
rivers, and mountains
helped inform and inspire the words of this book.
May their example continue
to guide and inspire future generations.

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Foreword

There is a story in the title itself. *Landscape Traveled by Coyote and Crane* brings to life the culture, history, and traditions of the Coeur d'Alene Tribe. It brings to life the world our Creator gave us; it declares our commitment to this homeland and the lessons we have learned through the millennia.

Rodney Frey has studied it well. For some ten years, his research has included the traditional study of a scholar and it has included adopting an American Indian tradition of listening and, therefore, learning.

We share now and we have always shared our world with the animals of the forests and the birds in the air. Just as importantly, we learn from them. These classic lessons have and will always be the instruments of our education, taking us from childhood through the journey of life and all the experiences and challenges it provides us.

There is a grand treasure of American history that has existed and survived since long before the coming of non-Indians. Millions of people lived and thrived on this continent for thousands of years and part of our treasure has been the oral tradition of handing from generation to generation the lessons of life and the stories that make the world.

In that world, we were wealthy Indians. The Schitsu'umsh homeland spans the western edge of the northern Rocky Mountains, from the Clark Fork River in Montana to Spokane Falls in Washington, including the vast forests, lakes, streams, and valleys of north Idaho. Nature's gifts in this homeland are endless and since time immemorial have provided everything we needed for life and for prosperity.

Our traditions include sharing this wealth. And we continue that tradition by sharing the knowledge and wisdom of our own Lawrence Aripa, Lucy Finley, and Henry SiJohn. We cherish their memories just as they cherished the memories and teachings of their own elders and ancestors. So we offer our treasure with the hope that more Americans will take ownership in it and understand the depth and value of their own history in the landscape we share across the continent.

As Henry SiJohn often said, we are here because this is where the Creator put us. This is our landscape of natural beauty and the people in its midst. This is where we have lived and grown with Coyote and Crane. You will understand our love for our Creator, this homeland, and for the wealth with which we are blessed.

Truly, our roots are here. They extend to the very center of the earth.

MX^w Qin (Snow on the Mountain)

Ernie Stensgar, Chairman, Coeur d'Alene Tribe



Acknowledgments

A project that seeks to convey something so cherished by a people must emanate from that people. I wish to give heartfelt thanks to the many Schitsu'umsh who opened up their lives and shared their stories with me. It is their voice I hope I have conveyed accurately and with "heart." Among those to whom I am particularly grateful are John Abraham, Felix Aripa, Lawrence Aripa, Lucy Finley, Mariane Hurley, Roberta Juneau, Marceline Kevis, David Matheson, Richard Mullen, Lawrence Nicodemus, Alfred Nomee, Henry SiJohn, Cliff SiJohn, Frenchy SiJohn, Skip Skanen, Dixie Stensgar, Ernie Stensgar, Marjorie Zarate, Jeannette Whitford, and Father Thomas Connolly. There can be no better teachers than those whom you have come to know as "elder brother," "elder sister," "father," and "grandmother."

Much of the research for this project is based upon materials gathered as part of the Coeur d'Alene Tribe's Natural Resource Damage Assessment. A special thanks goes to Phil Cernera, Project Director; to Ray Givens, Tribal Attorney; and to Ted Fortier of Seattle University and David Nugent of Colby College, fellow anthropologists and team members, whose encouragement was appreciated throughout. I also want to thank Robert McCarl of Boise State University and Gary Palmer of the University of Nevada, Las Vegas, for their thorough and insightful comments and suggestions on earlier drafts of this work, and to Rick Harmon for his invaluable editing assistance.

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Anthropological Association for Susan Antelope's retitled "Camas Baking," from Gladys Reichard's "An Analysis of Coeur d'Alene Indian Myths," *Memoirs of the American Folk-Lore Society* 41, 1947. Unless otherwise noted, the photographs are by the author.

This manuscript was reviewed for its accuracy and appropriateness, and approved for public dissemination for educational purposes by the elders of the Schitsu'umsh and the Coeur d'Alene Tribal Council. The Council members were Lawrence Aripa, Norman Campbell, Norma Peone, Chuck Matheson, Henry SiJohn, Marjorie Zarate, and Ernie Stensgar, Chairman. While I am most appreciative of this review process for its ethnographic and ethical implications, and, as a result of the review, feel immensely honored by having been entrusted by the elders and Council with helping tell their story, I also take full responsibility for any errors or misconceptions that may have been inadvertently conveyed in *Landscape Traveled by Coyote and Crane*.

Royalties from the sale of this book go to the Schitsu'umsh Tribe.

Limlemtsh. Thank you.

R.F.
May 2001

Landscape
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The World of the Schitsu'umsh
(Coeur d'Alene Indians)



Swift water on the St. Joe River, c. 1910
(courtesy Museum of North Idaho, Coeur d'Alene, acc. no. SJR-2-8)



Introduction to the Schitsu'umsh Landscape

As the elders would remind us, the place to begin our understanding of the people who call themselves Schitsu'umsh ("the ones that were found here"; pronounced schëts-ü'ümsh), and whom others often call "Coeur d'Alene," is in their oral traditions, in the accounts of the First Peoples. The following story tells of Crane and Coyote, who, along with the other First Peoples, created and transformed the world of the Schitsu'umsh. Ingrained within the narrative are certain "teachings." These teachings go to the very heart of Schitsu'umsh life. They have shown great resilience in the face of tremendous Euro-American pressures, and they continue to pervade much of Schitsu'umsh society today.

Crane and Coyote¹

Here is the village. There, far from it, lives Crane and his grandmother. He is a good hunter. He always has plenty of deer meat hanging from his lodge.

Then in this village the Chief asks his daughters to go to Crane's lodge. "He may share meat with you. The people in our village are hungry," he says. His daughters are Little Squirrel and Chipmunk.

Then the girls go to Crane's lodge. When they get to the door to his lodge, they see it is dotted with cooked camas. They pick some off, eat it. The girls think it must be meat. Then Crane comes out. "This is not what you are looking for." He invites the girls into his lodge here. Then he calls on his grandmother to cook some meat for them to eat.

Then his grandmother boils some meat, places it before the girls. She takes a piece of fat, cuts it in half, then in quarters. The grandmother then puts two quarters of the fat there on each of the girl's dishes.²

Then each morning Crane goes out to hunt deer. He gets two deer each time. Then he hangs one on each side of his belt. About two days later he goes out again. He never takes more than two. There is always plenty of

meat of all kinds hanging here in his lodge—fresh meat, smoked meat, dried meat.

Then one morning Crane says to his grandmother, “Get the meat ready. The girls are going back to their village.” The grandmother makes huge bundles of meat. Then the older girl comes out. She says, “That’s certainly plenty of meat. How can we carry it all?”

“I’ll go with you. Just put the meat under my belt,” Crane says. The bundle is made very tiny. Crane sticks it in his belt.³

Then they go to the village. It’s the village of Crane’s in-laws, the father of his wives. Crane throws the bundles down, goes into the Chief’s lodge there. The two sisters who had been away so long are glad to see their mother.

“Get the bundle, for now we will eat well,” the elder sister says to her mother. The mother goes out. “Take half for yourself, half for the rest of the village,” the girl says to her. “It’s such a small bundle,” the mother says. The mother is just about to untie it. Her daughter stops her. “It must first be placed on a big mat,” she says. Then the mother unties it. The tiny bundle spreads out, becomes a huge pile. The mother puts half away for her family, half she ties in a number of bundles for all her relatives. Then all the villagers come and eat the meat.⁴

One day Crane announces that they should get fresh meat. They prepare for the hunt and moccasins are readied. Crane asks if everyone is ready. The Coyote comes along.

Then Crane and the others go off. Having gone not too far, he says, “Now, we’ll stop to make a fire and warm up.” Coyote says, “What must it be that is tame enough for you to shoot?” Here is a rotten tree. Crane kicks it. It cracks and begins to burn. Coyote says, “Oh, you know that trick too. My father’s father’s father used to do it.” This Coyote goes to that tree, but when he kicks it, it doesn’t burn, and he falls on his back over there. He says, “It wet!” So he looks for another. Then again he kicks it, and again falls. Then Crane says, “You burnt-eye of a Coyote there, come warm your hands.”

Then Crane tells the people to drive the deer toward him here. The people scattered to their positions and Crane prepares himself. The people drive the deer up. As they come near, Crane directs the men not to kill more than two each, and to get ready to shoot. The Coyote did not get ready, but keeps his arrows tied up. Coyote says, “Why should I get ready when there is nothing to shoot.”

Then Crane calls, “*hi hi*,” and immediately the deer run

up. No one shoots more than two. Then Coyote is leaning against a tree when he hears a noise in the snow. He sees it is a deer. He reaches for his quiver but cannot untie it. So he tears the quiver trying to get the arrows out. He aims at the biggest deer and shoots it. He shoots another and then there are no more deer. Then the Coyote tracks the deer he had shot. He goes only a little way and there lays a small fawn. He goes farther and there lays another, smaller than the first.

Then the people come and look. Coyote says, "This is not my game. I had shot two big ones." But the people see that it is Coyote's arrow in the small fawn. Coyote says, "Someone must have substituted his deer for mine." Then he keeps quiet.

Crane asks if each hunter got just two deer and how Coyote did. All got just two, but Coyote took two fawns. Crane tells them to skin the deer now and then go on.

Then Crane hangs one of his deer on each side of his belt. The Coyote sees Crane do this. He says, "Oh, you know that too; my father's father's father used to do it." So Coyote tries the same thing. But as he goes along, his game drags on the ground, even though he has only very small fawns. He ties it up more firmly and fastens his deer again, but it breaks. Crane says, "Coyote, you burnt-eye, take the meat to your children." It takes all of Coyote's strength to get home. He is thirsty.

Then, the end of the trail.

For the Schitsu'umsh, the oral traditions—such as in the stories of Crane and Coyote and the other First Peoples—have had an essential role in defining, bringing forth, and maintaining their entire world. As prominent figures in the oral literature, Crane and Coyote not only provide teachings—models for behaving in the world—but they also contribute to the making of that world. For example, Crane's character traits, and the corresponding model they provide for behaving, are manifested throughout Schitsu'umsh society—from the behavior of "designated hunters" to the rituals associated with the digging and distributing of camas and water potato, from the Jump Dance and Sweat House ceremonies to the Memorial Giveaway. And as the story of Crane and Coyote is told, the lessons and values embedded in the narrative are also intrinsically and unequivocally interwoven into the surrounding landscape—the mountains, rivers, and lakes. It is a landscape traveled by Crane and Coyote, and endowed with their teachings. Crane and Coyote will serve us well as guides into the territory of the Schitsu'umsh.

THE INTENT

This work provides a glimpse into the Schitsu'umsh's view of their world. Throughout my involvement with them, two questions have been preeminent: What does the surrounding landscape mean to the Schitsu'umsh? And, what effect does that understanding have on how the Schitsu'umsh relate to their landscape and to each other? I have been concerned not only with the significance of the mountains, rivers, and lakes within the landscape but also with the meaning held by the Schitsu'umsh of such specific phenomena as camas (or, in the Schitsu'umsh language, *sqha'wluqhwe'*), white-tail deer (*ts'i*), huckleberry (*st'shastq*), water potato (*sqigwts*), and lovage (*qhasqhs*).⁵ What is the significance of a field of flowering camas or a lone deer at the edge of a thicket to a Schitsu'umsh who encounters it, and what are the implications of that camas or deer for the members of the Schitsu'umsh family? The implications are indeed pervasive, their threads extending from and into the oral traditions and ceremonial expressions, the subsistence activities, the economic exchange networks, the kinship orientations, and the aesthetic nuances of the Schitsu'umsh people.

In my attempt to understand and frame this presentation of the Schitsu'umsh view of their landscape, a number of pivotal conceptual and methodological questions arose, each of which bears on the intent of this project. A review of Appendix A, "Research Considerations," will greatly assist readers through many of these concerns. But in order to set the stage, let me introduce a few key questions here. The most straightforward question was: What geographical boundaries define the Schitsu'umsh landscape? By far the most challenging questions were: Could I convey to my readers the Schitsu'umsh perspective? And, in attempting to do so, what ethnographic information would best inform and convey that perspective? And closely aligned to those questions: In attempting to identify the specific parameters that define the Schitsu'umsh view of their landscape, would the terminology and constructs used be accessible and understandable to both Schitsu'umsh as well as non-Schitsu'umsh readers? Finally, could a case be made that the Schitsu'umsh world view has remained relatively consistent through time, and, if so, how would I distinguish between Schitsu'umsh continuity and the variation brought on by a myriad of historical influences?

THE BOUNDARIES AND TERRAIN OF THE LANDSCAPE

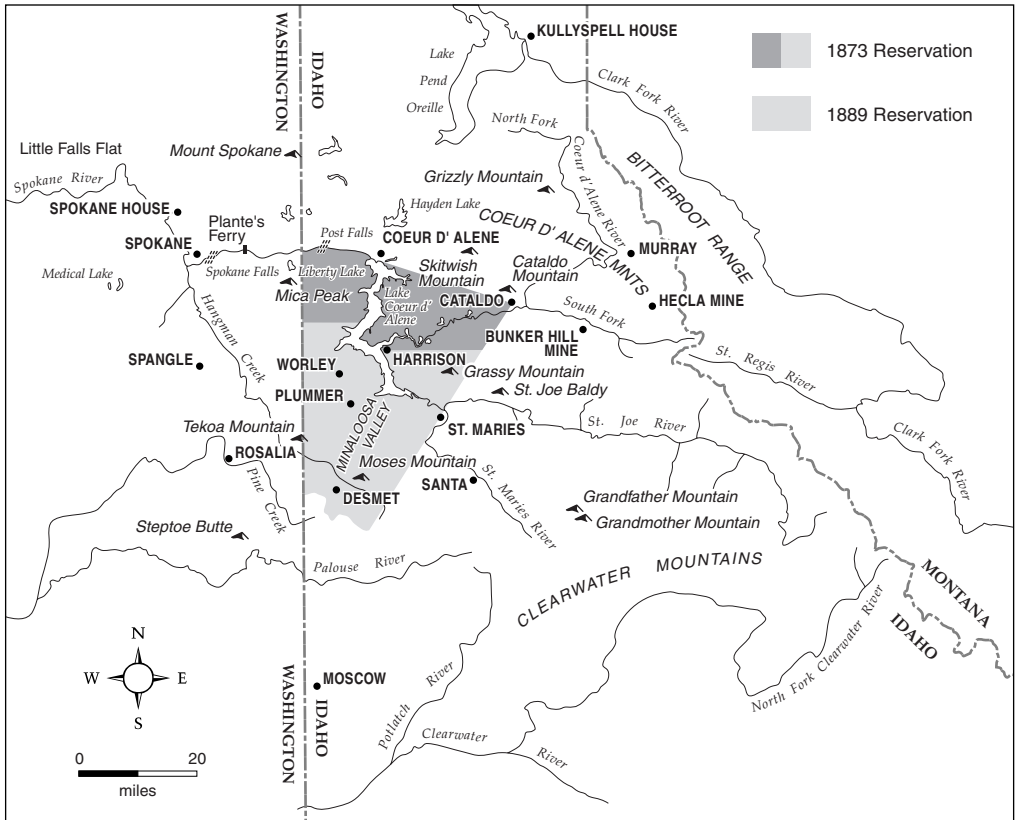
The aboriginal landscape of the Schitsu'umsh encompassed much of what would become the Panhandle region of Idaho, as well as parts of eastern

Washington and western Montana (see the map on page 8). The northern boundary was marked by the lower end of Lake Pend Oreille, with the Kalispel and Pend Oreille peoples occupying the country to the north. The easterly area of Schitsu'umsh country extended into the Bitterroot Mountain Range of Montana, with passes ranging from 4,700 to 5,200 feet in elevation, and with the tallest peaks towering from 6,000 to nearly 8,000 feet above sea level. On the other side of these mountains the Flathead people made their homes.

The southern boundary followed the prairie region south of the Palouse River to the North Fork of the Clearwater River and the Clearwater Mountains. Across these rivers and mountains was the country of the Nez Perce. The western reaches of the Schitsu'umsh landscape were set by Plante's Ferry, an early Indian crossing on the Spokane River just east of Spokane Falls, and then extended south along the Hangman (Latah) and Pine Creek drainages to Steptoe Butte.⁶ To the northwest and west was the home of the Spokane people, and to the southwest lived the Palouse Indians. In all it was a landscape consisting of more than 4 million acres of fir-, ponderosa-, and cedar-forested mountains, freshwater rivers, lakes and marshlands, white pine stands, and perennial bunchgrass and fescue wheat-grass-covered rolling hills and prairies.

While these boundaries were recognized by both traditional neighbors and the Schitsu'umsh themselves, they were fluid delineations rather than confining barriers. Before settlement on their reservation in the late nineteenth century, Schitsu'umsh families traveled seasonally well into the Big Bend country, far to the west of Hangman Creek, to dig bitterroot; met with other Salish peoples at Kettle Falls on the Columbia to the northwest to fish and trade; gathered huckleberries with the Kalispel in berry patches to the north, around Lake Pend Oreille; and, after the arrival of the horse, accompanied by Spokane and Flathead families, traveled east into what would become Montana to hunt buffalo. Even today, some families pick huckleberries in late summer in the mountains enveloping Lake Pend Oreille and assemble at Spokane Falls with other regional tribes to share in song and dance and to renew kinship.

The Schitsu'umsh consider their "home" to be located at the core of this vast landscape, "since time immemorial." This is the landscape that includes Coeur d'Alene, Hayden, and Liberty Lakes, the mouth of the Spokane River, and the entirety of the Coeur d'Alene and St. Joe River basins. And at the very heart is Lake Coeur d'Alene, some 23 miles long with more than 103 miles of lakeshore. Fed by numerous creeks and rivers, the largest of which



Landscape of the Schitsu'umsh

are the St. Joe and Coeur d'Alene Rivers, the lake drains into the Spokane and eventually into the Columbia River. The term Schitsu'umsh, which translates literally as “the ones that were found here,” reiterates and affirms an identity anchored in a specific landscape.⁷

THE PERSPECTIVE AND TEACHINGS

For the Schitsu'umsh, the world was “prepared” by the actions of the Creator, articulated linguistically as *Amotqn*, or *K'u'Intsutn*, and the First Peoples, such as Coyote, Chief Child of the Yellow Root, and Crane. In this time before the “coming of the Human Peoples,” the First Peoples traveled the landscape, investing it with spiritually endowed “gifts,” such as

camas, deer, and *qhasqhs*, and setting forth certain teachings. It was a landscape given definition and meaning, “prepared for the coming of Human Peoples.” And from that landscape the Human Peoples were brought forth. The teachings themselves were handed down from the beginning of time, conveyed through the oral literature of the Schitsu'umsh. In the act of telling the stories, the teachings continue to guide the behavior of the Human Peoples. The ritual behaviors, as expressed in the Memorial Giveaway or the Sweat House Ceremony, are thus a “bringing to life” of these teachings. A grand story has thus been told. The First Peoples have prepared the world for the “coming of the Human Peoples.” Five fundamental teachings are set forth in this grand story and the landscape that embraces it.

The first teaching conveys the understanding that the landscape is spiritually created and endowed. Crane consistently demonstrates his *suumesh* powers, making “huge bundles of meat” small, kicking a tree and causing it to burn, calling in the deer during a hunt, and then carrying the two deer under his belt, all to the frustration of Coyote, who tries unsuccessfully to do the same. The world itself was created by spiritual beings, articulated by individual Schitsu'umsh as either the First Peoples, such as Coyote and Chief Child of the Yellow Root (as referred to in the oral literature), and/or the *Amotqn* or *K'u'Intsutn*, the Creator. It is the Creator who sent the First Peoples to prepare the world for the Human Peoples. The landscape is imbued with an abundance of “gifts” upon which the Human Peoples depend, such as camas, water potato, and deer (for food), *qhasqhs* (a healing root), and “*suumesh* songs” (spiritual power), all of which are understood as spiritually endowed.

The Spider

The Pest Control specialist stopped by that morning to offer his services to the school, a new facility that had just opened a few weeks before. Thinking that they must want to keep the facility pristine, he asked the school secretary, “Do you have any spiders or other insects, any pests? I can take care of them for you.” She replied, “Yes, we have spiders here. Just the other day I had one on my typewriter stand. He crawled all around and then I watched as that spider crawled onto my typewriter. But why would I want to kill him?” And she went on to say, “I don’t know why he came to me, but that Spider might have had a message for me, something to say to me. Why would I want to kill him?” (From participant observations at the Tribal School in October 1997.)

The second teaching conveys the understanding that the landscape is inhabited by a multitude of “Peoples,” all of whom share in a common kinship. Among those in this all-inclusive kinship network is the Creator (as “father”), the Earth (as “mother”), the First Peoples (such as Crane, Coyote, and Chief Child of the Yellow Root), the Animal Peoples (such as Deer as “brothers and sisters” and Wolf as potentially a *suumesh* guardian spirit—with the Animal Peoples, in fact, ultimately understood as synonymous with the First Peoples), the Mountains (as “father” or “grandmother”), the Sweat House and Sweat Rocks (as “grandmother” and “grandpas,” respectively), the Ancestors (deceased relatives who have “crossed over”), and the Human Peoples (among them the Schitsu'umsh). Even the antagonist Coyote is “related” to Crane, as is Spider to the school secretary. The Schitsu'umsh family encompasses a vast landscape and the many Peoples within it.

Fire in the Housing Projects

I think sharing is a value that we all have. We just had a fire in the Housing Projects, and one of our lady's family lost their kitchen. So the girls just came, saying, “We were taking up a donation. We're going to find someplace for them to live until things get better.” It's a value that we all have, we practice today, this sharing; the need to take care of each other. You see that all the time. Tragedy in the families, there's a death, almost immediately we have the tribe coming to them and being there, and the protecting way of just being with them. Helping them through that time of crisis; doing the cooking and taking care of the babies and the children. Just the value that I believe is really, really important to us as a tribe and as a family. In that way it's pretty unique. (From an interview conducted on February 12, 1997.)

Third, if kinship defines the structural relationship of the Peoples, the dynamic that helps bind them as members of the Schitsu'umsh family is the ethic of sharing. Crane unselfishly feeds Little Squirrel and Chipmunk, as well as an entire village. The gifts bestowed on the landscape—the deer, camas, and *qhasqhs*, for instance—have been shared by the Creator and the First Peoples, shared by the Animal Peoples, for the welfare of the Human Peoples. In turn, the Human Peoples replicate those actions and share the gifts with those in need—the elders, children, and needy families. The act of sharing is done unselfishly. There is no expectation that what is given to another should be reciprocated.⁸ Members of the Schitsu'umsh



Camas prairie near the Palouse River
(from John Mix Stanley's lithographs in Stevens 1855, pl. LXI)

family are oriented toward not what can be personally acquired and possessed but toward the opportunity to share with and “give back” to all members of the family, including the landscape itself.

The Muskrat

We shared with the Animals, you know. Right after the Second World War, a few of us went to Rose Lake to get some water potatoes.⁹ One of the guys seen a Muskrat, you know. He got all his water potatoes and stored them in there [pointing to the ground, the Muskrat's den]. This guy didn't feel like going to the lake to dig the water potatoes, so he's going to rob that there Muskrat. But his wife, when she found out what he's going to do, she called him and give him heck. “You leave that alone . . . That's the Animal's. You leave that alone.” (From an interview conducted on March 10, 1998.)

Fourth, while the gifts are to be shared freely with those in need, the gifts are also to be respected and not abused. Crane hunts only two deer at a time, and, as a result, there is always plenty of meat hanging in his lodge. But when Coyote attempts to take more than what he needs, he manages only to lose it all. One hunts only the deer that are needed and can be used to feed the family, and never more. A “home” is open for all the relatives who need a place to stay, so long as they “leave it the way they found it.” Above all, one is to show thanks for what is received. The gifts and kinsmen of the landscape—the camas, deer, and mountains—are to be respected as one respects his own grandmother or granddaughter. Not to respect the gifts is to lose one’s right to them.

While the Schitsu’umsh family is expansive, inclusive of humans and the phenomena of the landscape (animal, mountain, lake, and spirit), it is bounded. Not all humans are considered part of the Schitsu’umsh family. At the geographic and social boundaries of the Schitsu’umsh family can be found a world of competitively defined relations—the world of Coyote. The fifth and final teaching encompasses what I have come to term the ethic of competition.

This world of Coyote is inhabited by strangers, potential adversaries, and foes—formerly by the Blackfeet and Crow and, in more recent history, by many *Suuyapi* and “non-Indians.”¹⁰ It is a world in which the Schitsu’umsh enter into competitive exchanges with others, to maximize gains and minimize losses. Instead of freely sharing the gifts of the landscape, the gifts are themselves items competed with and for. The means employed to accomplish these goals may include sharpened skills of calculation and negotiation, well-toned dexterity and physical prowess, or, occasionally, artifice and chicanery, to avoid “getting duped” by an opponent. In the character and actions of Coyote (that is, in those adventures in which he succeeds) are found the archetypal model for successfully traveling this world. Coyote’s example is often manifested and well illustrated in the actions of those Schitsu’umsh who compete in a “stick game” or football game against another tribe or rival high school, who are on “active duty” against the Blackfeet of the nineteenth century or the Viet Cong of the twentieth, or who negotiate with a federal governmental agency or a Fortune 500 company. It was the Coyote example manifested in the Schitsu’umsh (in particular, their shrewd and aggressive trading skills) that so impressed the early fur traders, who soon began to call the Indians “Coeur d’Alene,” or “heart of an awl.” Nevertheless, whether engaged in sharing or competitive exchanges, the ultimate goal of the actions remains the same: sus-

tain and enhance the welfare of the Schitsu'umsh family. Thus a demarcation of kinship and nonkinship, and a defining of the boundaries of the Schitsu'umsh family, are found in these competitively defined relations. A contentious Coyote is seldom evident in the actions among and between members of the family.¹¹

My intention in identifying the ethic of competition is simply to acknowledge that the Schitsu'umsh family does have geographic and social boundaries. Our primary focus will be on the interrelations among the members of the Schitsu'umsh family, on illustrating the first four teachings, and only secondarily on nonkinship-based relations.

THE ETHNOGRAPHIC FRAMING

The research for this work, as well as the framing of the presentation of that research, are based upon the oral, ceremonial, and social traditions of the Schitsu'umsh. It will be through these traditions that we will access and come to better understand the teachings. Six specific expressive traditions are relied upon and described in this book. The first is storytelling and the oral narrative accounts of Crane and Coyote and the other First Peoples. In the act of storytelling, a landscape is perpetuated and the teachings of the First Peoples disseminated. Appreciation of the oral tradition is a necessary prerequisite for understanding the other traditions.

The second tradition is the Powwow. As song and dance are essential to many of the other traditions, the Powwow of the Schitsu'umsh is an exemplary and culminating expression of Schitsu'umsh vitality and identity. The Powwow provides an opportunity, through song, dance, and regalia, to celebrate and renew one's kinship with the landscape.

The third tradition involves an assortment of rituals associated with gathering and hunting, and with the distribution of such foods as camas, huckleberries, and venison. The ceremonial acts accompanying a boy's first successful deer hunt, the digging of water potatoes in the fall, and the distribution of elk meat by designated hunters at a meal served at a Powwow or Memorial Giveaway exemplify such rituals. These rituals seek to give thanks for what is received from the landscape and ensure that what is received is then shared with those in need.

The Jump Dance and the Sweat House are the fourth and fifth traditions described. They provide an opportunity to communicate the various needs of the family, to heal their sufferings, and to help maintain the vitality of the landscape.

The sixth tradition is the Memorial Giveaway. It allows the sorrow resulting from the death of a family member to be shared and to “fly away,” and it prepares for the eventual reuniting of the entire family back into the landscape.

To accentuate the voice of those who tell the stories or sing in the Sweat House, I will cite specific excerpts from interviews I have conducted with various Schitsu'umsh, from archival material, or from conversations I had or from “talks” delivered. Segments of narrative text from the oral literature will also be presented. And I will provide descriptive accounts of events I witnessed in the course of my field research. These vignettes are distinguished typographically in the body of this work.¹²

It is upon an understanding of the “Crane and Coyote” narrative or of the ritual behavior of those participating in a Memorial Giveaway, for example, that this study is based. As such, for those Schitsu'umsh individuals, either past or present, who have told stories of Crane and Coyote, who have led as members of the Tribal Council, who have hunted deer and shared the venison, who have helped distribute the personal effects of a deceased loved one, or who have sung at a Jump Dance or in the Sweat House, the following account provides the model of how they view their landscape.

It is important to note that this presentation, while framing a Schitsu'umsh view of the landscape, is not a complete framing of Schitsu'umsh society. Contact with Euro-Americans has resulted in significant societal change. Certain economic, political, religious, and social-structural elements of Schitsu'umsh society, either adaptations to or assimilations from Euro-American society, have not been fully and ethnographically portrayed here. For example, discussion of “Indian Catholicism,” the current tribal government, or employment and economic activities, while alluded to for their historical significance in the chapter “Winds of Change: Contact History,” lies beyond my primary focus. My purpose has been to reveal those quintessential aspects of Schitsu'umsh culture, the teachings, that were originally brought forth by the First Peoples, maintained through time, and then carried forth and expressed in the contemporary lives of the Schitsu'umsh people and in a landscape.

CONTINUITY AND VARIATION

While the goal of this study is to enunciate expressions of culture that may be called “traditional,” as in the stories of Crane and Coyote or in the ritual behavior in a Sweat House, and to identify in those expressions their



Father and son viewing the landscape from atop Steptoe Butte, May 1996

primary teachings, the Schitsu'umsh have obviously not existed in a temporal and spatial void. First, there have been significant societal changes primarily brought on by Euro-American contact. Among the most significant intercultural influences were the introduction of the horse as early as the mid-1700s; a series of smallpox epidemics, likely beginning in the 1770s; the arrival of Lewis and Clark in 1806, David Thompson in 1809, and the fur trade; the establishment of the Jesuit mission in 1842; military victory followed by defeat in 1858; confinement to a limited land base following the "Agreements" of 1873, 1887, and 1889, and the allotment of 1909; and the polluting of much of the landscape as a result of mining. Yet despite these substantive influences, the teachings of the First Peoples have shown amazing resilience and are as applicable to the Schitsu'umsh of the mid-nineteenth century as they are to those living today. In fact, ethnographic and historical sources indicate that the general description of the Schitsu'umsh world view offered here can be extended to a baseline of 1850.

While the underlying teachings have shown astounding continuity through time and from family to family, the manner in which those teachings are expressed illustrates a certain degree of interfamily variation. This variability reflects Schitsu'umsh acceptance of individuality and the influences of intertribal trade and intermarriage, as well as Euro-American contact.

Certainly part of the variation between families today is the result of historic influences of the Jesuit mission, which gave rise to a syncretism of indigenous and Euro-American cultural practices. While our focus is on traditional Schitsu'umsh culture, we cannot neglect the important and integral role that "Indian Catholicism" has played, and continues to play, in the lives of the Schitsu'umsh people. It is certainly true that many of the "old ways" (e.g., Jump Dancing) have been inhibited or curtailed because of Church policies. But it is much more accurate to view traditional Indian and Catholic spirituality today as complementary rather than exclusive of each other. Schitsu'umsh people walk two paths—saying the Rosary in one activity, for example, and singing the "evening *suumesh* songs" in another—and can easily "jump over and jump back" between the two. The babies of Jump Dancers continue to be baptized, Jesuit Priests have "jumped" at the Jump Dances, and deceased Schitsu'umsh "cross over the creek" through an Indian Catholic wake-funeral. The term *Amotqn* can be understood as synonymous with both Christian and traditional notions of Creator. But a complete description of Coeur d'Alene Indian Catholicism is outside the scope of this work.

Variation in Schitsu'umsh culture is also a function of intertribal con-

tact and intermarriage. From the earliest times, Schitsu'umsh families have regularly traveled to Spokane Falls and Kettle Falls to fish and trade for salmon with other Salish peoples. With the coming of the horse, some Schitsu'umsh families stayed among the Flathead for up to nine months of the year. Because of their proximity, regular contact with the Spokane was maintained by the Schitsu'umsh living around Liberty Lake and the north end of Lake Coeur d'Alene. The Agreement of 1887, in fact, brought several Spokane families onto the Coeur d'Alene Reservation. The automobile and interstate highway system further facilitated intertribal contact. Today we see many Schitsu'umsh who can trace part of their family heritage not only to Spokane but also to Colville, Flathead, or Kalispel families, for example. With this degree of communication and intermarriage with other tribes came variation among and between Schitsu'umsh families.

The many paths used by the Schitsu'umsh people to “jump over and jump back” are further enriched and diversified by the value they place on inclusivity. While they were certainly motivated by a variety of concerns, the Schitsu'umsh themselves welcomed the Black Robes and an additional “way to pray.” Even before the Jesuits attempted to make farmers of the Schitsu'umsh, these hunters and gatherers had already incorporated potato cultivation into their way of life. Schitsu'umsh decisions resulted in their adoption of a Euro-American form of political governance. Rather than exclude, the Schitsu'umsh often elect to engage and even partner with the non-Schitsu'umsh community in education, environmental protection, healthcare delivery, and public safety. In these situations of shared advantage, it may be the “wise Coyote” (an astute competitor with foresight) in the Schitsu'umsh who recognizes that cooperation will serve him better than confrontation and exclusion. Or these may be partnerships in which kinship has been extended to certain individuals or even segments of the white community. In either instance, it is from this pattern of inclusivity that the Schitsu'umsh both tolerate difference and accept a certain degree of individuality. What may seem as mutually exclusive and inconsistent behavior to an outsider can be accommodated and even celebrated within and among Schitsu'umsh families.

For the Schitsu'umsh there is thus no inconsistency in being “successful farmers,” as during the early reservation years, or “enterprising entrepreneurs” today, and also continuing to dig camas, gather huckleberries, and hunt deer. All are understood as complementary practices. The lives of contemporary Schitsu'umsh families include Sunday Masses, eight-to-five jobs, college education, golf, vacation trips to Reno or Seattle, voting

on school levies and for presidents of the United States, as well as digging for camas and water potato, and attending Powwows, Jump Dances, and Memorial Giveaways. And among such families, differing cultural practices are also represented. For some families a “naming ceremony” might be incorporated into an evening’s Jump Dance ritual, but for others it would not. One family might make a tobacco offering when digging camas; for others, *qhasqhs* would be offered. The details and specifics of a particular Coyote story may vary from family to family. For some families the story of Coyote is considered “true” and is told with regularity to their children. Yet for other families it is a story no longer told with regularity, or perhaps not at all. For them, the stories of the First Peoples may be understood simply as “stories” and “fairy tales.” Cultural variance is today symbolically represented in the manner in which some Schitsu'umsh men wear their hair: “short and non-Indian in front” and “long and Indian in back.”

Critically, while we may find specific instances of inter- and intrafamily variation in the expression of Schitsu'umsh culture, the underlying principles, the teachings that generate those behaviors, tend to be shared with consistency from family to family. For example, while there are differing terms used to refer to the Creator (those distinctions tending to follow along families lines), virtually all Schitsu'umsh I have interviewed hold to the belief in a supreme being, the Creator. Regardless of whether an offering of tobacco or *qhasqhs* is made, respect is still paid to the camas; and whether a “naming ceremony” is held or not, the evening’s dancers still “jump” for the well-being of their respective families. The same moral lessons of Coyote are taught, despite the contrasting styles of storytelling of different raconteurs. The teaching that venison is to be shared with those in need continues regardless of whether deer is hunted with the sinew-backed wooden bow and arrow or by “spotlighting” from a pickup truck with a high-powered rifle. While rituals of the Catholic Church have replaced many eighteenth-century ceremonial expressions, both contemporary and ancient rituals include an ethic of sharing. It is thus important to note that while the specifics of a ritual activity or the comments of a particular interviewee included and cited in *Landscape Traveled by Coyote and Crane* may be singular and not shared by other families, those activities or comments express the same underlying teachings observed by other Schitsu'umsh families.

In helping me sort through this important distinction, one elder empha-

sized, “you have to distinguish between family traditions and tribal traditions.” Individual family traditions are potentially unique and idiosyncratic, and, in fact, “this family may do something a certain way, and it may not even be acceptable to another family.” Yet those family traditions can remain “tribal,” based upon and reflective of the same teachings held in common by other Schitsu'umsh families. Or rephrased, the First Peoples have traveled many paths, some of which have grassed over and are no longer traveled, whereas others are only now being cleared, and still other paths are yet to be discovered. But the First Peoples still travel. While the Schitsu'umsh tribal traditions—the teachings—have remained resilient, those teachings are continually reinventing and bringing forth new and varied societal expressions of themselves, often manifested in individual “family traditions.”

Recognition as a traditional Schitsu'umsh is thus most likely to come from adherence to the teachings of the First Peoples. In turn, such recognition depends less on whether someone's consanguineal great grandmother was “Coeur d'Alene” or not, and thus whether there are discrepancies in the manner in which families express the teachings. To be Schitsu'umsh is to view Lake Coeur d'Alene and Grassy Mountain, for example, in terms of their spiritual and familial significance, and to share unselfishly and not abuse the gifts that emanate from that landscape.

The continuity of Schitsu'umsh teachings and the variety of their expression are thus not unlike a “tattered flag.” The eagle-feather staff, the “Indian flag,” of the Schitsu'umsh continues to fly in the face of the many winds of change. But clearly visible on that flag are the patches of stars and stripes, a crucifix, and the emblems of other tribes. And there are also a few holes evident. Nevertheless, the threads of the flag still hold true to their particular design, and the overall outline is distinctly Schitsu'umsh. Likewise, the underlying teachings (the “design” of the flag) have remained consistent even while some of the manifest expressions of Schitsu'umsh life (the “patches”) have been altered. While the focus of this study is on the “design” of the Schitsu'umsh flag, we must also understand the various materials and fibers with which the flag is made if we are truly to comprehend its design. In viewing the variety and arrangement of the “patchwork,” we can grasp the flag's underlying teachings. And in the process, what at first glance may have been seen as a “tattered flag” is later viewed as a richly patterned montage of integral insignia, indeed, the Indian flag.



Frenchy SiJohn holding the Indian flag on the Hngwsumn Memorial Ride, May 1996

The Water Potato

Earlier that morning, before we had arrived, he had sung his *suumesh* songs. The songs had asked the Creator for a good gathering of the water potato, and gave thanks. With the shovels in the back of the pickup, we drove to the shores of the lake. Each year in October, on the fourth Friday of the month, he and another man, often joined by other adults and children, dig the water potato. For these two men, they gather the water potatoes for their own families and, by extension, all the Schitsu'umsh families. Over the next couple of weeks, other Schitsu'umsh will also go to the lake's shore and dig for the water potato.

The elder pointed to a thick stand of cattails and mud, just along the shoreline, and we were instructed to begin to dig there. The shovels moved

the mud out some eight to ten inches deep. Nothing on the surface of the mud marked that which we were looking for. Earlier that summer, the cat-tails intermingled with a "large-leafed" plant. Today there was no visible sign of the plant.

Almost right away, about six to eight inches down, the first water potato showed itself. It was a root about two inches long and three-quarters inch around, with a brown skin covering. As it was lifted and partially cleaned, all the others stopped their digging and briefly glanced at it in silence. With a second and third shovel, more water potatoes were soon revealed. Some were smaller, an inch or so, but most were larger, up to three and a half inches in length. Within a hour, all the water potatoes that were needed this year were gathered. Some years, more would be gathered. One of the men remembered how "gunny sacks full" of the water potatoes would be gathered, lasting through the winter.

The water potatoes were washed in the lake's water and placed in plastic and paper sacks. We were told that we can "prepare it just like a potato." As we were about ready to leave, the elder reiterated what he had mentioned as we dug: "Take at least one of these and give it to an elder, one who could not make it down here today, someone in need of this water potato." (From participant observations made on October 24, 1997, on the shores of Benewah Lake, at the southern end of Lake Coeur d'Alene.)

In order to better appreciate the continuity and resilience of the Schitsu'umsh teachings, we must glimpse more fully some of the forces of intercultural contact and assimilation that have inadvertently or overtly sought their demise. Before proceeding with our consideration of the various contemporary expressions of the Schitsu'umsh teachings, it would be instructive first to provide an outline of Schitsu'umsh society prior to the coming of Euro-Americans. This discussion will be found in the chapter entitled "Since Time Immemorial: Precontact Society." We will then review the history of Euro-American influences on that society, presented in the chapter entitled "Winds of Change: Contact History." These discussions are not intended to be a complete history of the Schitsu'umsh people, but rather a focus on the interrelationship of the landscape to pre-contact Schitsu'umsh society and to events brought on by contact with Euro-American society. These next two chapters are an introductory history of the Schitsu'umsh landscape.



Since Time Immemorial: Precontact Society

FRIEND AND FOE

“Since time immemorial,” the Schitsu’umsh had traveled in a particular landscape, reliant upon its material and spiritual gifts.¹ Bordering this landscape were specific neighbors, both friends and foes. The language spoken by the Schitsu’umsh is classified as part of the Interior Salish family. Other peoples throughout the Plateau region who spoke an Interior Salish language included the Colville, Okanagan, Sanpoil, and Wenatchee.² The immediate Salish-speaking neighbors of the Schitsu’umsh were the Flathead to the east, the Pend Oreille to the northeast, the Kalispel to the north, and the Spokane to the west. Farther to the north were the Kootenai, who spoke a language unique to the region. To the southwest were the Palouse, and south of the Schitsu’umsh lived the Nez Perce, both peoples speaking Sahaptin languages. While classified as distinct Salish languages, Flathead, Kalispel, Pend Oreille, Spokane, and Schitsu’umsh were close enough linguistically to make them generally intelligible to one another’s speakers. The categories “friend” and “foe”—certainly not fixed, but oscillating with changing circumstances—are fundamentally extensions and realizations of the designations “kinship” (with its ethic of sharing) and “nonkinship” (with its ethic of competition).

Among their Salish neighbors, especially the Spokane, the Schitsu’umsh entered into regular commodity exchanges and marriage partnerships. The Schitsu’umsh traveled to Spokane Falls to fish and trade with the Spokane. As deer were plentiful in Schitsu’umsh country, venison was given to the Spokane. Deer were relatively scarce in Spokane territory. In turn, the Spokane allowed the Schitsu’umsh to fish the Spokane River below the falls for salmon, or they entered into direct exchanges for dried salmon. Bitterroot was also sought from the Spokane, as it was scarce in Schitsu’umsh country but grew in abundance in the Spokane country. Given the proximity of some of the Schitsu’umsh families who lived around Liberty Lake and the mouth of the Spokane River on Coeur d’Alene Lake, these people may