

# Rooted to this Ground<sup>1</sup>

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“So I’m rooted to this ground. That’s why I’m supposed to outlive everybody.”

Henry Cultee, Chehalis

“I don’t believe in magic. I believe in the sun and the stars, the water, the tides, the floods, the owls, the hawks flying, the river running, the wind talking. They’re measurements. They tell us how healthy things are. How healthy we are. Because we and they are the same thing.”

Billy Frank, Nisqually<sup>2</sup>

“Before anything else, we are our land/place... Our flesh, blood, and bones are Earth-body.”

Jeanette Armstrong, Okanagan<sup>3</sup>

“Someday the land will be our eyes and skin again”.

Lizzie Pitt, Warm Springs<sup>4</sup>

One day in 1975, Henry Cultee told me he wanted to show me something. He beckoned me aboard the boat he kept moored by his fishing shack at *Samamanauwish* on the Humptulips River. *Samamanauwish* was also Henry Cultee’s traditional name, inherited along with his luck in fishing from his grandfather’s brother. It meant “between two channels,” and in explaining the name he shared with the land, Cultee said, “I’m living right here”, as he pointed out the river channels on either side of his cabin.

Eighty-five year old Cultee stood erect as he poled the river to guide us over the riffles for which the original people here named this river *Hum-m-m-m-p-tulips*, the name humming along with water running so fast it cleaned itself out in three days after a rain. We slid past ropes of shore grass coiled round and round by loops of water as Grays Harbor opened before us. Modern frame houses and mill stacks dissolved from view as the vast, cloud-rolled sky took up the horizon and the wind danced paths of light on the water. That was the wind that lives here, the one that Henry Cultee's mother told him to run against with his arms outstretched, measuring its gaping mouth, so it would be ashamed of itself and calm down.

We entered a world composed of wind and water and sky—full of ancestral spirits and first languages. In that world, the lone sentinel of a rock behind us forgot about being James Rock (named for the pioneer) and remembered its history as Sme'um—where Wildcat stole fire, singeing his tail with the mark he still wears as a result. The urbanized confluence of the Aberdeen and Hoquiam Rivers evaporated on the milky mist behind us, giving way to their more anciently named selves: the Wishkah ("stink water,") and the Hokiam ("lots of [drift] wood. The point across the harbor from us was no longer Cosmopolis for the pioneer-hopeful "river of the world" but *Khaisálámish*: "big rocks, little rocks", named for the sandbar on the Chehalis River channel there. This was where Transformer Xwane Xwane beached himself to keep from being swept out to sea forever in stories that depicted the creation of the Chehalis way of life. It was also here that Henry Cultee's mother's father obtained his Indian doctor power that was as famous as it was dangerous. After he found his power, Cultee's grandfather took the name of the place where it lived: *Khaisálámish*. H had a white name too, but he never dropped his Indian one. Thus he was known as *Khaisálámish* Pete— or as pioneers anglicized it, Cosmopolis Pete.<sup>5</sup>

We slid smoothly down the harbor until we came to the place where a dense array of shell mounds marked the shore beside us. Cultee laughed with satisfaction as he pointed out these signs of the generations of sweet feasting of his people where the earth was streaked white with the

Indian alphabet of survival. This was what he had wanted to show me: how the land remembered the lives of his people.

Riding with Cultee that day on the waters he knew so well he called them by name, I entered a world in which the land did not belong to people by way of deed and title—but instead a people belonged to their land. What made a man, Cultee once asked me, think he could come along and put his name on the land? To him, it was a rhetorical question. No man by rights *could* do such a thing. Cultee’s people did not name the land for themselves. As in the case of himself, his uncle, and his grandfather, they named themselves for the land.

For the diversity of cultural life, language, and landscape in the Northwest, the land’s original peoples, they shared this with Cultee’s family: they named themselves for their land. The Coast Salish peoples of Western Washington, which include Cultee’s Humptulipsh ancestors, along with the Duwamish, Puyallupahmish (the older name for the Puyallup)<sup>6</sup>, Samish, Sammamish, Satsopish, Skykomish, Skokomish, Snohomish, Skopemish and Stekamish (Muckleshoot), Staktamish (The Puget Salish name for the Upper Chehalis) Squalliamish (the older name for Nisqually)<sup>7</sup>, Stillaguamish, Suquamish, Suwalomish (Lower Chehalis), and Swinomish all end in the anglicized version of the Coast Salish linguistic tag, “dsh”, “bsh”, “msh”, or “psh”, meaning, “belonging to this place”.<sup>8</sup>

Interior Salish-speaking Plateau peoples linked their identity to their place on their land with a similar sounding suffix, x<sup>w</sup> or xx, as in the traditional name for Wenatchee (snpəsq<sup>w</sup> áwsəx<sup>w</sup>: Wenatchee River people), Chelan (scəlámx or scəlámxəx<sup>w</sup>: Lake Chelan people), the Methow (spa múləx<sup>w</sup>əx<sup>w</sup>: Methow Valley people), Sanpoil (snp<sup>w</sup>ilxx: Sanpoil River people), and Okanagan (uknaqínx: those who belonged to the land near Okanogan Falls).<sup>9</sup> As contemporary Okanagan traditionalist Jeanette Armstrong put it: “The way we survived is to speak the language that the land offered us”.<sup>10</sup>

The sound rendered as “ch” or “k” that began the names of peoples of the Willamette Valley was a Kalapuya prefix meaning “belonging to this place”. The names of the twenty-three sub-groups of the Atfalati or Tualatin Kalapuya, for instance, all began with this “ch”, including Chachemewa (the original location of the Chemawa Indian School, near Forest Grove), and Chemeketa (the location of modern Salem).<sup>11</sup>

The Sahaptin-speaking Plateau peoples, living on the reaches of the middle and upper Columbia River, also signed their identification with their land by naming themselves after it. The suffix “pum” or “pam” designated a people living in their place among the Wanapam, Palousepum, Mamachatpam (Yakima); Qh<sup>w</sup>ahlqh<sup>w</sup>aypam (Klickitat), and Taitnapam “Lama” or “lam” has the same meaning among other Sahaptin groups, as in the Umatilla (Ematelam or Imatilám), Rock Creek (Qmiláma) John Day (Takšpašláma), Celilo (Wayamláma), Tenino (Tinaynuláma), and Tygh (Tayxláma).<sup>12</sup>

The Yakonan-speaking people who lived on the Oregon Coast at Alsea and Yachats told pioneer William Keady that their names for themselves came from the character of the waters where they had their villages: “Yah” was the term for “water”: “Yah-Hooch” (Yachats) meant “noisy water”. Alsea-Yah meant “quiet water”, referring to the large bay at Waldport.”<sup>13</sup>

For the land’s first peoples everywhere in the Pacific Northwest, *who* you were and *where* you were were intimately connected. Thus when Euroamerican emigrants asked for the names of the people they encountered, they were characteristically given the name of the place where they stood. “Ts he lis”, meaning “sand”, was the original term for the character of the land at the Grays Harbor village at the present day site of Westport. This was the name given by the residents there when explorers asked who they were. The explorers subsequently applied that name to the related groups that comprised the residents of the Chehalis River drainage.<sup>14</sup>

According to T. T. Waterman's collection of aboriginal geographical names on Puget Sound, "Buklshuhl" was the name of the prairie where there grew a certain medicinal plant at a location near present day Auburn. When explorers asked the name of the people they met here, they got the name of the prairie and its medicine. They anglicized this to "Muckleshoot" and applied this name to the people dwelling on the current Muckleshoot Reservation (people who traditionally lived along the White and Green Rivers and some of their tributaries).<sup>15</sup> Nearby "squally" meant "grass waving in the wind", an affectionate designation for the area near Muck Prairie. This was the home of the Squally-absch, or "people of the grass country", which emigrants anglicized to Nisqually.<sup>16</sup>

In the Willamette Valley, when emigrants asked a group they met near the Santiam River who they were, the land's first people told them where they belonged. That was *Kalapuya*: "the valley of the long grass".<sup>17</sup> Emigrants subsequently applied that name to all the people who lived in the Willamette Valley and spoke related languages.

In ancient Chehalis stories, the travels of Transformer followed the Chehalis River from its headwaters at Rainbow Falls to its outlet at Grays Harbor. One who could tell these stories could name the geographical sites and the histories that belonged to them along this entire route.<sup>18</sup> Indigenous peoples mapped their land with such stories along the Oregon Coast from Tillamook to Yachats, from Siuslaw to Umpqua, and from Coos Bay to Northern California, where John P. Harrington found a "foot-by-foot" understanding of tribal belonging linked to the ancestral names of their places on the land. This was so consistently rooted in generations of tradition that Harrington opined that an Indian "map of the coast" specifying tribal residence in 500 A. D. would replicate one made at the time of Lewis and Clark.<sup>19</sup>

The diverse peoples who lived along the vast Columbia River in habitats ranging from rainforest to desert told stories that outlined "the moral, political, economic, social and spiritual

laws” of their people—and as they did so, they stressed the importance of the ancient names of the land and the land’s creatures.<sup>20</sup> In a Colville story told in the mid-nineteenth century, Spirit Chief oversaw the ceremony in which the animal people chose the names that would determine their character and behavior in the future. He instructed the listeners to this story that these names should “be kept by you and your descendants forever”<sup>21</sup>. Some still hold themselves to that charge, as a contemporary version of the story above indicates.<sup>22</sup>

On the opposite end of the Columbia, near its mouth, Clackamas Chinook stories record how “Coyote made everything good” by giving names to plants and animals that expressed their character, their place in the natural landscape, the gifts they would become to human beings—and how humans should relate to them.<sup>23</sup> In her version of the Clackamas creation story recorded over seventy years ago, Victoria Howard noted that her mother’s mother pointed out how Coyote “named creatures like that...He did like that to everything we eat here”.<sup>24</sup>

Altogether, the peoples of the Northwest held the names of the land’s places and beings as an essential spiritual inheritance. At the Walla Walla treaty proceedings in 1855, Cayuse spokesperson Young Chief asserted that the land had its own names that men and women could not change. Indeed, asking Indigenous peoples to turn their land over to those who would rename it as individual property was asking them to perform an act that was “literally against their religion”.<sup>25</sup> Young Chief said:

The earth and water and grass says God has given our names and we are told those names. Neither the Indians nor the whites have a right to change those names... The same way the Earth says it was from her man was made.<sup>26</sup>

According to Plateau traditions such as those of Young Chief’s Cayuse people, Coyote had given the land its names and his people’s caretaking purpose together. At Walla Walla, Young Chief also said:

I wonder if this ground has anything to say. I wonder if this ground is listening... The Earth says, God has placed me here. The earth says that God tells me to take care of the Indians on this earth. God says to the fish on the Earth: feed them right. God named the roots that he should feed the Indians on. The water speaks the same way...the grass says the same thing.<sup>27</sup>

Also at Walla Walla, Yakama elder Owhi's words stressed his people's spiritual connection to their land through their recognition of the Creator's names for it: "God looked one way and then the other and named our land for us to take care of". "God named this land to us".<sup>28</sup> In this cultural context, to replace the land's names for itself with names of individual human owners was not just a conceit, but a sacrilege.

A satirical story recorded in a Plateau hunting camp sixty-five years after Walla Walla had a telling point to make about the corruption of the land's names with the coming of the emigrants. In this story, Cusho (Chinook Jargon for "pig") cheated Coyote out of his "book of names". Cusho was originally "poor" and had "not much to eat", but after he stole the land's names from Coyote, Cusho took everything in sight—and was still "rooting for more". "I guess Cusho was the white man", the storyteller observed, "Everything white man takes from the Indian".<sup>29</sup>

Henry Cultee experienced the theft of the land's names in his own family, with respect to Khaisáləmish, the name of the power place his grandfather took for himself.<sup>30</sup> Pioneers decided the name of this place should be Cosmopolis, "City of the World", reflecting their hopes it would become a shipping port of world proportions. Though the Chehalis word, Khaisáləmish, and the Greek word, Cosmopolis, have similar sounds, Cultee was decidedly displeased that the pioneers gave neither the traditional Chehalis name nor the character of the land itself credit in their re-naming. Instead whites insisted *they* had named the land—as expressed in the "Autobiography of John Roger James" circa 1850:

I remember a little Frenchman named Brunn [sic] ... was on his way to Grays Harbor. Brun asked father, “What is the name that means a city of the whole world?” “That is Cosmo, the world and Polis, city”, Father said. “Ah, yes, that is it”, Mr. Brun cried, “Cosmopolis, the City of the whole world. That is to be the name of my town in Grays Harbor.”<sup>31</sup>

Honoring their traditional names for the lands is key to honoring Indigenous links to the land in the present day. Esther Stutzman recently sang a Kalapuya song that had not been sung in public for one hundred and fifty years at the dedication of the Whilamut Natural Area in Eugene, Oregon. The name *Whilamut* evokes a family memory for her. It was the word spoken by Stutzman’s elders to designate areas of the river “where the water turns and runs fast”. The Whilamut Natural Area is marked by a number of stones etched with Kalapuya words. Stutzman sees the reclaiming of such words as essential to the recognition of Indigenous connections to the land. Unfortunately local whites with racist intent understood this as well. Within twenty-four hours after the inscribed rocks were set in place, three of them were vandalized. One had the Kalapuya word chiseled out and a Christian fish-symbol chiseled over it; another was spray-painted and the third had mud rubbed over it. The desecration of these rocks was seen as an insult not only by local Indians, but also by Eugene’s Christian churches and Jewish synagogue, who are now working in partnership with Stutzman on the issue of stopping local racism.

In response to a question in a visit to my Linfield College class, Stutzman remarked that as she speaks in Oregon grade schools, children sometimes ask her whether she is angry about the historical injustice to her people—injustice which is perpetrated in such acts as the defacing of the Whilamut stones. She is sometimes angry, she confided, but she is not bitter. She tells her grandchildren, “Don’t let it eat you up”. Instead, she emphasizes that we must all work to “make sure it never happens to anyone again”.

## Caring for the Commons

The honoring of the land's names for itself signifies respect for what modern ecologists term the natural "commons". Indigenous peoples recognized this as the source of life that transcended human will. Henry Cultee spoke of it as the "eyes of the earth" that meted out the length of human life. Included in this natural commons were game, fish, and plants. An Upper Chehalis grandmother joked to me about the modern hunter who went off by himself and thus might wind up killing another hunter instead of game. In decided contrast, she asserted that traditional Chehalis hunting was a carefully planned cooperative activity. Chehalis elders told Thelma Adamson in 1926 that a hunting party was led by one who had spirit power for locating the game. Others went along to help carry back the meat. Once the hunting party returned, a hunter would sing his spirit song over the meat as it cooked. Then he would give the signal for everyone to share it.<sup>32</sup>

Among the Mid-Columbia River peoples Coyote tales specifically proscribed waste because this would violate the "sacred contract between human beings and kindred animals."<sup>33</sup> "Wasting game was an offense against the animals themselves, against the moral order of nature".<sup>34</sup> A traditional Wasco narrative makes this point in no uncertain terms. In it, a young hunter wastefully hunted elk, and as a result the elk "cast him out" and his guardian spirit (who had given him luck for hunting) abandoned him. Without his spirit power, he died.<sup>35</sup>

Peter Knudtson's ethnography of the Wintu of Northern California emphasized the belief that the hunter took his deer not because of personal prowess, but because he honored the sacred contract between himself and the deer. That is, the hunter was successful only because the deer decided to die for him. Such a gift should be accepted with "humility, gratitude, and courtesy". Conversely, if the Wintu hunter had no luck, it was because the deer had decided *not* to die for him that day. In this cultural view, waste was "abhorrent... not because...[the hunter] believes in the intrinsic value of thrift", "but because it would be a sacrilege to waste a gift so dear".<sup>36</sup>

Anthropologist Robert Heizer found this attitude in aboriginal belief systems throughout California: “One took what he needed and expressed appreciation, rather than acting as though what was available in the way of food and materials was simply there for the taking”. Had they not held such beliefs, Heizer opined that Indigenous peoples would have “laid waste to California long before the Europeans appeared”.<sup>37</sup> Kat Anderson documented how proscriptions against waste and sharing of game were essential ways in which the diverse peoples of California reconciled taking the lives of animals they considered their intimate kin. In her detailed research on the traditional resource use of the first Californians, Kat Anderson found a universal value of treating other life with such careful respect, taught to the children growing up in these traditions from birth.<sup>38</sup> In this context, emigrant practices that showed no respect for such kin considerably distressed many indigenous Californians. Eighty years after emigrants settled in her ancestral territory, Wintu shaman Kate Luckie expressed shock and grief at the mistreatment of the natural partners that sustained human life:

When we Indians kill meat, we eat it all up. When we dig roots, we make little holes. When we build houses, we make little holes. When we burn grass for grasshoppers, we don't ruin things. We shake down acorns and pine nuts. We don't chop down the trees. We only use dead wood.<sup>39</sup>

Luckie's words echo the standard of care toward the natural world recorded by Thomas Mayfield, who was raised by Choinumne Indians in the San Joaquin Valley in the 1850's. The Choinumne provisioned the Mayfield family with game daily when they first settled in the area. Later Mayfield learned this was a deliberate strategy to keep the emigrants from hunting with rifles and disturbing animals with the noise.<sup>40</sup>

Among Esther Stutzman's Western Oregon ancestors, hunting was an activity with considerable spiritual import. A hunter would participate in a special ceremony for five days before going on a hunt. During the hunt, he would sing a song to the deer honoring it and

declaring his intentions. He sang, “Run! A man is coming to get you, but if you let us get you, we will treat you right.” Another five days of ceremony followed a successful hunt. In using deer’s gift, the people must never “waste a thing.” If they were so careless as to throw something away, elk and deer would never come again to Kalapuya territory. There was for Esther Stutzman’s Oregon peoples special joy in seeing the tail of a deer as it leapt away, since that deer would carry away all one’s negative feelings with it.<sup>41</sup> In the context of their affection for the deer, Kalapuya hunters not only utilized their kill carefully—they also chose their kill in such a way as to guarantee the robust quality of future herds. Early emigrants on the Santiam witnessed a traditional hunt in which the Kalapuya encircled a herd of deer and picked out the finest animals to release before they took their own kill.<sup>42</sup>

As this Kalapuya example illustrates, care for the natural commons is care for the future. The abundance of the salmon runs found by explorers and early emigrants in this area attests to the success of caretaking strategies. As one of the first emigrants on Puget Sound, Ezra Meeker’s report of his encounter with a salmon run while sailing on Puget Sound near Seattle is worth quoting at length:

As we rested our oars, we could see that there was a disturbance in the water and that it was moving toward us. It extended as far as we could see, in the direction we were going. The sound increased and became like a roar of a heavy fall of rain or hail on the water, and we became aware that it was a vast school of fish moving south, while millions were seemingly dancing on the surface of the water or leaping in the air. We could feel the fish striking against the boat in such vast number that they fairly moved it. The leap in the air was so high that we tried tipping the boat to catch some as they fell back, and sure enough, here and there one would drop into the boat. We soon discovered some Indians following the school. They quickly loaded their canoes by using the barbed pole and throwing the impaled fish into their canoes. With an improvised net we too soon obtained all we wanted.

When we began to go on we were embarrassed by the mass of fish moving in the water.

As far as we could see there was no end to the school ahead of us; but we finally got clear of the moving mass and reached the island shore in safety...<sup>43</sup>

Phoebe Judson, an early emigrant on Bellingham Bay, described her experience with “salmon time” there in these words:

[We] were gliding over the blue waters of Bellingham bay, heading for the mouth of the Nooksack... It was salmon time; the bay was all aglitter and a gleam with the shining beauties that were constantly springing from the waters in every direction, their silvery sides sparkling in the sunlight. Scarcely a breath of wind ruffled the peaceful waters; only the leaping of the salmon broke the mirror like surface.<sup>44</sup>

Though the runs in this area run in high, moderate, and low numbers in alternate years, salmon amply fed the aboriginal people here. Daniel Boxberger estimated that the Lummi, another Coast Salish group from this area, annually consumed 600 pounds of salmon each in pre-contact times. To accommodate their use of salmon, the Lummi reef nets were capable of taking over a thousand fish a day.<sup>45</sup> Boxberger noted that Lummi salmon consumption may have been one of the highest in the Pacific Northwest. But others were not far behind. In one Columbia River camp in 1805, Lewis and Clark counted 107 bundles of salmon that Clark estimated to weigh ten thousand pounds. Together, the fifty thousand Indians who lived along the Columbia took an estimated forty-two million pounds of salmon a year from the great river of the West. This Indigenous take was at least seven times the contemporary harvest.<sup>46</sup> Far upriver, in territory soon to be flooded by the Grand Coulee Dam, Verne Ray estimated that the aboriginal population consumed an average of a pound and a half of salmon a day.<sup>47</sup>

Notably, studies by modern historians and ecologists indicate that the stunning pre-contact take of salmon harmed neither the abundance nor sustainability of the salmon runs on the Columbia River and Puget Sound.<sup>48</sup> Historian Jim Lichatowich attributes this to the fact

Indigenous harvesting practices were grounded in the “belief that the salmon were kindred spirits capable of engaging in interpersonal relationships”.<sup>49</sup>

Among the Lummi, Boxberger writers:

The first salmon was treated as a special guest in the village. After it had been honored and every member of the village had partaken of a small portion of its flesh, its bones would be returned to the water, where it would resume its previous form and go tell the other salmon how well it had been treated. The salmon would then allow the Lummis to capture them.<sup>50</sup>

An early observation of the dance of a Katzie man (from a Coast Salish group living near present day Vancouver, B.C.) indicates the affection with which peoples treated their salmon guests. As this man danced to honor his personal spirit power, the sockeye salmon, “He pretended to hold a baby in his two arms; because that was the way the Indians carried from the beach the first sockeye they caught each summer.”<sup>51</sup> Throughout the Northwest, spiritual leaders made sure that their people honored the first fish of a run as well as the spirit that presided over the salmon. Recently, Vi Hilbert researched records that described how her grandfather served as the “salmon priest” among the Upper Skagit, making sure the salmon were treated with proper respect. A ceremony honoring the first Chinook salmon taken in the spring was held in the longhouse of this religious leader. “Like communion”, everyone would partake of the holy fish.<sup>52</sup>

Such spiritual leaders also oversaw the sharing of the salmon. Lawney Reyes, a member of the Lakes people who traditionally lived near Kettle Falls, recalls that the modern day Salmon Chief followed the model of the one first appointed by Coyote in myth time. Coyote directed him; “You must share the salmon with everyone who comes. There will always be enough for everyone.”<sup>53</sup> This, however, was not the practice of the newcomers.

Shortly after she observed the abundance of the salmon run in Bellingham Bay, Judson heard complaints from the leader of the Nooksak group who fished Fish Trap Creek, named for a

traditional Indian salmon trap there. “His people are starving for salmon, because the Bostons [U.S. pioneers] stretch their nets across the mouth of the river and keep the fish from running up.” This was a breach of traditional etiquette, according to which upriver villages relied on those down river to share the resource upon which they both relied. The Nooksak trap at Fish Trap Creek had traditionally been “community property, each Indian helping himself to fish, as he desired”. Judson reported that emigrants were allowed to share the trap as well: “The Indians freely gave them the privilege of choosing what suited them best, and all they wanted”. But “the prosperity of the whites means calamity to the Indians”.<sup>54</sup>

This kind of “calamity” had been averted by traditional salmon distribution. At particular traps, members of kin groups obtained their fish first. After that others, including those of different tribes, would be given permission to use those traps: “Each Indian helping himself to fish, as he desired, and when the white settlers began to come in, the Indians freely gave them the privilege.”<sup>55</sup> Summarizing data on early Lummi salmon fishing, Daniel Boxberger noted that “a man was guaranteed access to fishing locations as far as his (and his wife’s) kinship networks extended. For practically everyone, this included virtually all the territory occupied by the Straits Salish speakers.”<sup>56</sup>

Adamson’s consultants told of the sharing at Chehalis fish traps, adding that such shared traps had been in place for generations.<sup>57</sup> Though families with first rights to the traps readily allowed others to use them, it was important that permission be asked. Thus the failure of British explorers to ask permission to use the fishing station at Minter Creek in neighboring Nisqually territory caused considerable ire on the part of the local population. When the explorers realized they had violated local tradition, they withdrew their nets to avoid a confrontation.<sup>58</sup>

Other peoples expected Euroamerican traders to abide by traditional rules for taking salmon. In his journal of 1810-1813, Alexander Ross of the Astoria Trading Company on the Columbia River detailed the strictures imposed on his men by Indigenous people, which involved

careful treatment of the heart of the salmon and proscription against waste.<sup>59</sup> Ross complained that such “superstitious customs perplexed us at first not a little, because they absolutely refused to sell any unless we complied with their notions”.<sup>60</sup> Other traders in this area likewise regularly encountered Indigenous insistence that all parties abide by the sacred laws for respecting the salmon that traditions outlined. When the Clatsop and Chinook offered salmon to the traders on the ship *Ruby*, they refused “to exchange salmon before the salmonberries were ripe, when strangers might cut the fish the wrong way”—and thus violate the honor due the first salmon to present themselves to the Chinook. The men of the *Ruby* “found it impossible to dislodge their clientele from their sacred prohibition”.<sup>61</sup> Charles Wilkes reported an incident in which local Indians asked such an exorbitant price for a salmon—thirteen times the going rate—that he refused to buy it. A representative of the Hudson’s Bay Company explained that the Indians “had no desire to sell the fish, as they had a superstitious objection to dispose of the first fish to strangers.” Even if they could be “induced to sell it”, they would take out the heart and roast it for themselves in order to ensure it was treated with proper respect.<sup>62</sup>

By the mid-nineteenth century, the Tillamook, who were the neighbors and relatives of the Clatsop, continued to insist on such traditional strictures for honoring the salmon. In 1852, the diary of emigrant Warren Vaughn noted that when the first salmon ran, the Tillamook “would not let a white man get one for two or three weeks for love nor money”—lest disrespect of the first salmon on the part of the whites cause the salmon not to return. Therefore “the Indians would catch the first fish and if a white man wanted any they would roast a quantity and let them eat all that wanted, but not take any away with them”.<sup>63</sup>

A few years earlier, Anson Dart, negotiating a treaty with the Clatsop at the mouth of the Columbia, had encountered the Clatsop insistence that they would not sign a treaty with the U.S. unless it removed the two sawmills currently in Clatsop territory, which were frightening the salmon. It is clear from Dart’s communication to the Senate that he thought the Clatsop request a

spurious one, but during this period sawmills were in fact silting up salmon spawning grounds all along the Oregon coast, creating severe disorientation for salmon trying to make their way to their spawning grounds.<sup>64</sup>

Seventy years after Dart penned his notes to the Senate, Chehalis consultant told Thelma Adamson that salmon must be treated with careful respect lest they “feel hurt” and “not come next year”.<sup>65</sup> As the stories of the origin of the Upper Chehalis way of life were told in traditional winter houses, the audience gave a collective response: “K’walalé...i”, which indicated that the salmon were gone now, but they would come again and then there would be more dried salmon for the people to share.<sup>66</sup> These people who synchronized the telling of their origin stories to the coming and going of the salmon also used their knowledge of the salmon’s social structure in their fishing practices. At Scatter Creek the silverside salmon would run all over the prairie with the overflow from the mouth of the creek at flood time. But the people would not take the salmon at first. Instead, they would carefully watch the “leader” of the salmon arrive upstream, “look around slowly and then turn back”. Later this leader would come back again with other fish. Only after the leader came, left, and came back again, would the waiting Chehalis help themselves to the fish. If they had been impatient and taken the first spawning silverside, the others might not have followed it up Scatter Creek.<sup>67</sup>

Henry Cultee used such traditional information on the salmon’s habits in fishing Grays Harbor. Salmon, along with other fish and crabs, ran in what Cultee termed “fish trails”, the knowledge of which he inherited. On these trails, the fish moved not only in certain places but also at certain times, and the knowledge of the “fish trails” told Cultee when and where to fish. He joked that non-Indian fisherman who industriously rose early each morning to fish might think him lazy because he did not follow their clock. But he followed another clock: that of the fish themselves. He caught more fish, since he went out to fish when the fish were there. One hundred and twenty years earlier, James Costello had observed a parallel dynamic among Coast

Salish fisherman on nearby Puget Sound. According to Costello, “They know just the hour, just the spot and place when and where to fish and seldom are seen trolling any other time”.<sup>68</sup>

Such knowledge, often passed down in traditional stories, also outlined strictures on human behavior to protect the future of the salmon runs. A traditional Skokomish tale, for instance, related that when the first silver salmon came into the people’s traps, the Transformer told the fishermen, “Do not kill it, but wait until it has deposited its eggs, so that there may be a large number of these”. The people in this tale followed these instructions, modeling the proper behavior for people in the future. “Then a salmon trout came and a similar conversation [between the Transformer and the people] took place.”<sup>69</sup>

Another traditional practice for ensuring the future of salmon runs entailed letting a substantial portion of a run pass through aboriginal traps to run upstream. As noted, this was also a courtesy to peoples who lived upriver. In this context, Henry Cultee had no good words for a cannery operation on the Humptulips River that blockaded a salmon run with a dam made of railroad ties. This trap also violated the traditional proscription against waste. Tons of salmon caught in it had to be towed out to sea and dumped, since they rotted before they could be canned. Here is Cultee’s memory of this “mass production”:

When I was a young fella... you could walk across [the salmon], they was so damn thick, you know... [Then] they had that trap running right here on the Humptulips River... They’d put the fish in that big scow; tow it to Hoquiam to the cannery... They fished on mass production, so some of that fish would start spoiling in that scow... They brings out that big tugboat, you know, and this is actual truth because I seen it done, right here in Humptulips. And they’d load up fish, tons and tons of fish, in that scow. It wasn’t no little bunch of fish. It was tons of fish, spoiling. They’d tow it way out to the end of the channel down there on the main Chehalis River... [T]hey’d dump it overboard. It was spoiled. They couldn’t can it...it was waste now....

If they'd have let it go up the river instead of wasting and dump[ing] it...it'd done a lot of good. The river used to be full of fish. Yea, the Indians never fished it that way.

Indeed, aboriginal peoples in the Northwest had not fished that way. In 1916 elder Lucy Thompson of Yurok/Klamath ancestry outlined the “very strict laws” that governed the taking of salmon among her people. The members of extended families who owned a trap, wrote Thompson, “come in the morning, and each takes from the trap...as many salmon as they need.” In the process, “they must not let a single one go to waste.” After these took their share, “Indians from up the river as far as they are able to come, can get salmon, and down the river the same.” All this time, “great numbers are passing through the open gap [in the trap] left on the south side of the river”. Moreover, the people fished only “in the early part of the day”. Afterwards a leader opened the gates of the fish trap to let the “salmon pass on up the river... so that the Hoopas on up the Trinity River have a chance at the salmon catching. But they keep a close watch to see that there are enough left to effect the spawning, by which the supply is kept up for the following year.”<sup>70</sup> An ethnographic study of a Yurok fish trap during this period confirmed Thompson’s description. It indicated that a trap like the one above had a further restriction on the number of days it might be used before it was taken down for the season.<sup>71</sup>

Since such “laws of the fish dam” were followed by whole communities, they protected salmon runs for generations. Thompson contrasts this with the way in which she witnessed fish taken for a cannery at the mouth of the Klamath River. Though a U. S. fisheries law specified nets could only reach three-quarters of the way across the river, this law affected individual nets. Thus one net was set up two-thirds of the way across the river on one side, and then another net on the other side, “just a few steps up”. In sixty yards, Thompson complained, “There would be from eight to ten nets, making so complete a network that hardly a salmon can pass.” She thus deemed it doubtful whether non-Indians would “preserve the salmon through all the ages, as the Klamath [River] Indians have done...unless they enforce the laws more strictly”.<sup>72</sup>

The fifty thousand Indigenous people who utilized Columbia River salmon also shared their resources through downriver release. Eighty miles up the Columbia River from the present site of Spokane, at Kettle Falls, aboriginal populations utilized an abundant fishery, where they employed a large communal basket trap for taking salmon.<sup>73</sup> In 1913, William Tregemba moved to Kettle Falls, which had for generations been the site for the gathering of huge numbers of Indians to take salmon and to trade<sup>74</sup>. In his journal Tregemba described the traditional fishing station at Kettle Falls during the August run, when

They hung the salmon to dry at least twenty feet high in the trees to cure. They said the flies didn't fly that high...

To spear the fish, the Indians built platforms out over the water at the foot of the falls. Two poles were stuck in the crevices of the rocks along the shore and the poles leaned over the water ten or twelve feet. Then cross poles were lashed across underneath these long poles about two feet apart. They used strips of rawhide for lashing. Then boards were laid lengthwise on top of the cross pieces. They would stand on this platform with their long handled spears to spear the fish that were looking the water over before they tried to jump the falls...<sup>75</sup>

Contemporary historians have documented the fact that the Chinook salmon or “June Hogs”, as local whites called them, taken near Kettle Falls, might weigh sixty to eighty pounds.<sup>76</sup> The Chinook were not the only salmon at this fishery. Tregemba measured a dog salmon fifty-two inches long. Further, he recorded the abundant rainbow and brook trout in the San Poil River, silver trout in Curlew Lake, the prolific eel spawning beds in the Colville River, and an incident in which a man found a sturgeon stranded in shallow water near the Falls. He enlisted the help of several neighbors who managed to pin the fish down with pitchforks in order to weigh it at three hundred and twenty-five pounds.<sup>77</sup>

Nancy Winecoop, daughter of a pioneer man and a Colville woman, went as a child with her mother to Kettle Falls where they filled two barrels with salted salmon to supply them through the winter. While there, Winecoop noticed that the Indian fisherman standing on the ledges over the falls would only spear a fish after it fell back in the water. When she queried her grandmother she was told this was a traditional practice. The salmon the men speared “are the weak ones—they have no strength left to fight. If they speared the strong ones, they might be pulled form the rocks into the foaming water below”.<sup>78</sup> Spearing only those salmon that fell back aided both the fishermen and the fish runs, echoing the practice of letting the strongest deer loose to breed in the Willamette Valley. Lawney Reyes, writing in the contemporary era, notes the way that this practice intentionally protected the strength and size of future salmon.<sup>79</sup>

The ethnographic work of Leslie Spier and Edward Sapir conducted in the early part of the twentieth century, sets the practice of letting the strongest salmon go in the context of respect for the salmon among the Wishram. According to Wishram tradition, catching giant salmon on platforms that overhung river rapids was a risky business and salmon were due respect as humans brought them out of their habitat. Boys learning to fish were told that they should never boast about killing and catching the salmon, since each salmon “was a person. If you say that, you might be drowned”.<sup>80</sup>

The river and its fish were not only a natural resource, but also a trust and a spiritual gift. Lawney Reyes, contemporary member of the Sin-Aikst or Lakes people who traditionally fished Kettle Falls, recalled:

The falls and the [Columbia] river were providers of food and also the source of a way of life. Before the white man polluted it, the waters of the river quenched the thirst of the People. The river was a thing of beauty to soothe the tired eyes of all who were close to it. The cold, moving water massaged tired bodies... the sounds it shared as it flowed

south were like a symphony for everyone to enjoy. All that revered life would disappear with the loss of the falls and the river.<sup>81</sup>

The loss to which Reyes is referring is the building of the Grand Coulee Dam, which closed off the Kettle Falls salmon run to conclude a process begun decades earlier. According to the detailed assessment of Colville salmon resources by anthropologist Verne Ray, the fishery at Kettle Falls that appeared so prolific to Tregemba was actually a declining one. It had been in a downhill slide since 1870, when over-fishing and habitat destruction downriver had already taken its toll. As early as 1877, the state government closed fishing seasons due to these problems.<sup>82</sup> By 1880, Moses Half-Sun's people, who lived along the Upper Columbia near the present Canadian border, were suffering from poor salmon runs in their traditional fishing areas—resulting from the practices of canneries at the mouth of the Columbia.<sup>83</sup> Like Blaine Harden's *A River Lost* and Jim Lichatowich's *Salmon without Rivers*, Tregemba's journal records the changes that came to local fishing resources soon after he arrived at Kettle Falls. The Grand Coulee Dam “spoiled” the trout, salmon and sturgeon fishing. It also spoiled the lives of the Colville Indians. When the dam turned the site of Kettle Falls into an 150-mile-long lake, those who had formerly eaten an average of a pound and a half of salmon a day lost not only their former means of subsistence, but the occasion for important religious ceremonies and the community fisheries that bonded them as a people. After the dam went up, rates of suicide, fatal car accidents, drug addiction, divorce, and death by house fire on the Colville reservation “soared to levels that stunned” according to Ray, who lived among the Colville in the 1920's. As Ray put it, when the dam flooded their traditional area, it “drowned the culture” the river had once nourished.<sup>84</sup> As stated in an environmental impact statement prepared by the Bureau of Reclamation forty-two years after the building of the dam, “Tribal members paid with their homes, their lifestyle, their foodstuffs, so that others could have jobs, incomes, and wealth”.<sup>85</sup>

Throughout the Northwest, any dam that blocked the salmon runs, whether it be the small one on the Humptulips or the giant one at Grand Coulee, violated the “laws of creation” that Indigenous people had followed to protect the abundance of salmon runs for generations. The dam that stopped the free flow of the Palouse River was such a violation of traditional law “alive with spirit and understanding of the natural balance needed... to keep the things of nature in motion”. Among the Columbia River Sahaptin, this law was the *tamánwit* ordained by the Creator, which revealed “natural and necessary” human conduct. Breaking this law harmed the spirit of the land itself. Traditional stories of the Wishram and Wasco related how Coyote prepared the land for human habitation by removing the natural dam at Celilo Falls on the Columbia. The new dam at Celilo thus reversed Coyote’s own spiritual activity, undoing the very actions that had made the land good for human life. <sup>86</sup>

### **Wild “Parks”**

The prairies on which women dug their roots was an essential element of the traditional commons among the Upper Chehalis—a fact still recognized by certain elders in the modern day. One day in 1975, an Upper Chehalis grandmother pointed out mounds of shoveled earth left by non-Indians harvesting camas. She declared, “They really messed up the prairie”. In the old days, she continued, women knew how to use their slender digging sticks to pry up roots without disturbing the land. After the roots were loosened and lifted, the earth was carefully smoothed back over. No one should be able to tell that a camas-harvested prairie had been dug. She thus expressed the caretaking tradition that yielded the profusion of camas European explorers found on prairies everywhere in the Northwest. Charles Wilkes, traveling through Chehalis and Nisqually territory in 1841, wrote:

The direction of our route was nearly south over the plain, passing occasionally a pretty lawn, and groves of oak and ash trees... our route then continued through most beautiful

park scenery, with the prairie now and then opening to view, in which many magnificent pines grew detached. The prairie was covered with a profusion of flowers... In the morning, when we resumed our journey, the park scenery increased in beauty; and it was almost impossible to realize that we were in a wild and savage country, and that nature, not art, had perfected the landscape. Beautiful lakes, with greensward growing to the water edge, with deer feeding fearlessly on their margin, and every tint of flower, many of which were not new to our gardens at home, strewn in profusion around; we could hardly, in galloping along, but expect to see some beautiful mansion, as a fit accompaniment to such scenery. <sup>87</sup>

Wilkes need not have puzzled over why these lands seemed so like parks tended by human hands. In fact, they were. Indigenous women could have informed him how their methods of harvest protected indigenous prairie at the same time that it spread and multiplied favored root crops, resulting in the profuse blooms Wilkes found.

After centuries of such practices by Indigenous women, key food sources such as camas flourished in the Willamette Valley as well, where pioneers termed prairies of blooming camas, “blue lakes”, as flowers covered the landscape so thoroughly it looked like water shimmering in the sun. <sup>88</sup>

Malcolm Margolin and Henry T. Lewis recorded that the labor of generations of Indigenous women resulted in the profusion of edible lilies whose blooms stunned Thomas Mayfield in the San Joaquin Valley in 1850. Mayfield wrote:

As we passed below the hills, the whole plain was covered with great patches of rose, yellow, scarlet, orange and blue... some of the patches of one color were a mile or more across... Several times we stopped to pick the different kinds of flowers and soon we had our horses and packs decorated with masses of all colors. <sup>89</sup>

Even as the Chehalis lived according to the standards of the “eyes of the earth”, Margolin observed that the first peoples of California saw the natural world as their teacher and judge—and

believed firmly in the kinship of all living things. Mayfield's words above indicate the results of these values—as do the words Margolin quotes from George Yount's 1833 description of the Napa Valley:

It was more than anything a wide and extended lawn, exuberant in wild oats and the place for wild beasts to lie down in. The deer, antelope, and the noble elk held quiet and undisturbed possession of all that wide domain. The above-named animals were numerous beyond all parallel, and herds of many hundred, they might be met so tame that they would hardly move to open the way for the traveler to pass. They were seen lying or grazing in immense herds on the sunny side of every hill, and their young like lambs frolicking in all directions. The wild geese and every species of water fowl darkened the surface of every bay and firth, and upon the land in flocks of millions they wandered in quest of insects and cropping the wild oats which grew there in the richest abundance.

When disturbed, they arose to fly. The sound of their wings was like that of distant thunder. The rivers were literally crowded with salmon. It was a land of plenty.<sup>90</sup>

This abundance was carefully husbanded by practice, as Kat Anderson documents. Throughout aboriginal California, indigenous harvesters modified both the frequency of their harvest and the percentages of species they took in order to protect the resources upon which their people depended.<sup>91</sup> Anderson herself visits numerous accounts of explorers who came upon the results of such practices. Altogether, these depicted California as a “massive flower garden”, whose skies were darkened by flocks of birds; whose rivers teemed with fish and other food resources, and with wildlife in the woods and meadows. In indigenous California, as in the Willamette Valley and Western Washington, the abundance and beauty of the natural landscapes caused early explorers to term them “wild parks”.<sup>92</sup>

In addition to the horticultural practices of women, the use of fire fostered the habitats explorers saw as such “parks”. Adamson's field notes state that the Upper Chehalis, in the territory Wilkes described, burned their prairies “in early spring... so that a new growth would

come on.”<sup>93</sup> In 1926 Franz Boas collected a story that described the traditional burning done by the Chehalis:

After they finished picking berries they planned to burn dry grass everywhere on the prairies. Everywhere at that time the grass used to be long and there were many flowers. They always burned the whole prairie and also the mountains. They burned... to make berry patches just like making gardens for blackberries. The[y] always burned the prairies to plant camas and strawberries.

According to this account, when their work was done, the people assembled again and shared a feast before the visitors who had helped with the burning went home.<sup>94</sup> Adamson’s notes specify burning was done under the direction of a leader, in order “to make the grass grow well, the strawberries plentiful, and black berries.” Likely this would be a religious leader,<sup>95</sup> as was the case in the Willamette Valley. Such burning not only encouraged certain crops and game, but also cleared out underbrush and so inhibited dangerous forest fires throughout aboriginal Western Washington.<sup>96</sup>

Esther Stutzman stated pioneer records were right when they recounted that the Indians “set the Willamette Valley ablaze”, but they missed the fact that burning was carefully controlled in Kalapuya practice. Each piece of land was under the care of a particular family group, who was responsible for both setting and controlling fire on their several-acre plot. The religious leader—usually a woman—who oversaw the burning signaled the time it should take place. Stutzman joked that the women were pretty smart in those days, since they started the fires and left the work of looking after them to the men.

Peter Boag has documented how Indigenous burning practices expanded the rich habitat ecologists call “edges” in the central Willamette Valley, where controlled burning resulted in innumerable ponds, marshes and wetlands that provided habits for migrating bird flocks. The schedule of burning, which took place just as the autumn rains were setting in, encouraged the

abundance of tar weed seeds, acorn, and the flourishing of roots crops such as camas. Wapato, an important Indigenous root crop, also grew in these marshes. Forest islands protected from burning provided habitat for seasonal elk visitation as well as for resident deer. Boag noted the cooperation and care necessary to keep such never-burned areas clear of fire for hundreds of years. All in all, Boag concluded, “The first whites in the Willamette Valley did not tame a wilderness; they inherited a park.”<sup>97</sup> The ecological strategies of the Kalapuya were in substantial part responsible for the diversity and abundance of natural resources that caused early fur traders to nickname the Willamette Valley, “the gourmand’s paradise.”<sup>98</sup>

Esther Stutzman understood that emigrants were afraid the Kalapuya might set their cabins and barns on fire, but she noted the pioneers could have asked the Kalapuya to avoid the pioneer claims. She also noted that shortly after emigrants suppressed Kalapuya burning, a series of grasshopper plagues devastated their crops. Traditionally, burning had roasted valley grasshoppers, which were then consumed by the Kalapuya. Besides maintaining the oak savannah, keeping down the underbrush (including poison oak), and inviting elk and deer to live in valleys near Kalapuya villages, so hunters “didn’t have to go off and look for them”, burning helped the camas fields, roasted the Indigenous sunflower seeds, and seasoned the hazel twigs used for basketry, which were at their prime the second season after they were burned.

Conversely, the prohibition on Indigenous burning resulted in the decrease of prairie and wetland—and thus food resources and animal habitat.<sup>99</sup> Today the oak savannah that once covered most of the Willamette Valley is an “endangered habitat”.<sup>100</sup> In addition, as noted, Indian burning practices protected mature forests from serious fires by clearing out underbrush, a fact stressed by Puget Sound elders. From 1845 to 1855, after the emigrants had prohibited the Indians from controlled burning, there were a series of catastrophic forest fires in the Coast Range.<sup>101</sup> In 1868, a fire in Coos County burned down to the beach and destroyed ninety thousand acres of old growth Douglas fir forest.<sup>102</sup> Today, Forest Service personnel, in

partnership with elders on the Siletz Reservation, have reinstated controlled burning to protect forests in the Coast Range from more devastating fires.<sup>103</sup>

In pre-contact times, Northwestern lands were lands of plenty that peoples maintained in partnership with the “laws of creation”. In being “rooted to this ground”, these peoples held care for their land as a primary ethical tenet. Thus it was with great care that the Northwest’s first peoples practiced their partnership with the salmon and with commensurate care that they cooperatively burned the prairies at the right season in specific areas. It was with such care that generations of Indigenous women loosened and lifted root crops so as not to “disturb the prairie”, and hunters shared their game, wasted nothing, cleaned up after themselves, and released the best game for the future. Care of this kind is the ethic of peoples with staying power. In Henry Cultee’s view, it was such care that urged the “eyes of the earth” to positively judge human actions—and to ordain longevity for human individuals and their communities.

Care for the land and intimacy with it were inextricably linked, as expressed in the words of a contemporary poem by Quinault Clarence Pickernell: “Wha-neh Wha-neh, the great giver of life/Made me out of the earth of this land/He said, “You are the land, and the land is you.”/I take good care of this land, /For I am part of it”.<sup>104</sup>

Henry Cultee emphasized how traditional harvesting of natural resources was done with care in comparison to the actions of non-Indians—and some Indians—in the modern day:

The old people were careful. They kept the beaches perfectly clean. They used to bury their garbage. When they killed a deer, they would bury what was left, what they didn’t pack out. Nowadays this isn’t true. A lot of Indians live like whites.<sup>105</sup>

An early pioneer in the Willamette Valley indicated what “living like whites” might entail. He observed that his people could justifiably be held responsible for “slaughtering the game”, but pioneers could hardly be blamed for this, since “the supply of game seemed so

unlimited”—and the money to be made shooting deer was so readily forthcoming. After all, a man shooting one or two deer a day to trade their skins would earn more than “he could get by working at a job”.<sup>106</sup> Since it was only their skins that were valued in this account, we may surmise that these hunters did not use the flesh of the deer entirely, if at all.

Indeed, from the pioneer perspective, the abundance of resources in the Pacific Northwest gave them license not only to exploit but also to waste natural resources of all kinds. In early logging, stumps twenty and thirty feet high were left behind, since when the diameter of the local trees reached five feet, mills could no larger handle them. One pioneer family member estimated that thousands of board feet of lumber were wasted in the clearing of land in Upper Chehalis territory by dynamiting or char-pitting the old growth stumps left after logging.. Char-pitting, done by those who could not afford dynamite, was the practice of setting fires under the roots of stumps until they weakened enough to be pushed over and dragged down to the rivers to be washed away. Sometimes trees taken down to clear land were not even partially used for lumber.

An early settler on Kings Creek in Upper Coquille Valley, Lydia King McLeod, wrote, “I have seen many straight, beautiful cedars, 60 feet up to the first limb, cut down and most them burned”.<sup>107</sup> At the junction of the Cowlitz and Columbia Rivers, a pioneer recorded that the remains of a forest of old growth trees three to four hundred feet long and four to ten feet in diameter lay rotting on the ground, felled by drilling holes in their trunks and starting fires there that burned them through.<sup>108</sup>

Their short-term residence on this land did not motivate the majority of pioneers to think twice about how they treated the land’s abundance. But at the end of their lives, two men I interviewed who were involved in logging in the late 1900’s, were aghast at the thoughtless waste of their own early enterprises here. Like the farmer above, who watched all those board feet of prime lumber washed downriver in front of his house, they were in their nineties when I interviewed them. They looked back on their personal involvement in early logging with

considerable poignancy. They saw the wild land and the possibility of the outdoor life they loved as eroding because of activities in which they themselves had participated in their youth. One of these men had for some twenty years been keeping a daily log of changes in the weather he attributed to the removal of trees from the area when I interviewed him.<sup>109</sup>

These sons of early emigrants concurred with the traditional Indigenous perspective that natural abundance is built upon care—and without such care, that abundance may soon be depleted. In the 1880's, Henry Cheholtz, a Cowlitz elder born before the first U. S. settlers arrived in Cowlitz territory, gave a Fourth of July talk to an assembled white audience. He began by outlining the local abundance of natural resources and Indigenous practices that avoided waste:

Before the palefaces came we had plenty of game and fish, and no one was ever hungry. The palefaces would kill a deer and let it go off to die in the forests. If we wounded an animal we tracked it down and killed it. We never let the animal suffer.<sup>110</sup>

Cheholtz went on to assert that there was a spirit greater than individual human beings who put the animals here and that spirit “was grieved at this waste of food” on the part of whites. He further predicted that pioneer approaches to fishing would inevitably result in the decline of the fish runs. He concluded, “When white men break the laws of nature laid down by the Great Spirit, all future peoples will suffer”.<sup>111</sup>

Addressing the assembled whites, Cheholtz referred to natural law as deriving from the “Great Spirit”.<sup>112</sup> But the idea of a spirit of nature that watched over and judged human behavior (the Chehalis “eyes of the earth”) has ancient roots among Coast Salish peoples. In the mid-nineteenth century, missionary Myron Eels reported that an “Old Clallam”—one with pre-Christian beliefs—told him that it was a “common belief of the old ones to say to their children, ‘You must not do wrong or the sky will see you.’”<sup>113</sup>

Here is a parallel view of the “government” of nature signified by the watching eyes of the natural world, as expressed by a contemporary Interior Salish elder:

What white people call Mother Nature, that our government. This time of year, North Wind, *iyoh'músh*, he turns things over to *sta'wáalt*, South Wind, like a change of government. All these powers, these winds, the timber, the waters, the sun and moon, the animals and birds, they like a spiritual government. They watch over this world, they run things, just like always. We gotta live by their law. <sup>114</sup>

Whether the diverse cultures of the aboriginal Northwest saw natural law as the “spiritual government” of nature, the “eyes of the earth”, or “the laws of creation”, that law demanded humans practice care in their relationship with natural life. The Northwest’s first peoples had generations of collective experience to learn to balance the land’s needs with their own. But it took care to listen to the land—and to put into practice the lessons they learned. It was such care that made the difference between success and disaster in the eco-spiritual practices of Indigenous Northwesterners: care that made the “eyes of the earth” positively judge human actions so as to ordain the longevity of human individuals and societies here. After all, Coast Salish elders reminded Thelma Adamson in 1926, power strong enough to heal is also power strong enough to kill. It follows that one should exercise one’s power with care.

Take, for instance, the use of fire that Indigenous peoples traditionally used to maintain local landscapes. In a tale told throughout Western Washington, Bluejay visited the land of the dead by negotiating the five burning prairies between here and there with limited buckets of water. When he ran out of water because of his carelessness, he burned up, consigning himself to the land of the dead forever. Emigrants might well have used a few such warning stories in their own use of fire. Oral history in the Chehalis area is rife with incidents of fires that burned whole towns more than once. 1889, the year of Washington statehood, also marked a series of

staggering fires. In 1889 a Seattle fire consumed two dozen business blocks and all the mills and wharfs on the bay, in spite of the help of volunteer firemen from Victoria to Portland. A similarly devastating fire hit Spokane in late summer of that year, as did fires that took much of downtown Vancouver and destroyed parts of Ellensburg, Goldendale and Roslyn.<sup>115</sup> As a Snohomish County emigrant put it, it seemed “inevitable in all pioneer towns” that fire “virtually destroyed the entire town”.<sup>116</sup>

The Lower Chehalis who were resident at Shoalwater Bay could hardly have failed to notice that little more than a year before Governor Stevens and his party came to negotiate a treaty at Cosmopolis, local emigrants set a roaring bonfire for their first Fourth of July celebration and started a forest fire that raged out of control for several months.<sup>117</sup> Indigenous commentary on the emigrant laxity with fire contained characteristic wit. When the first Scotsman appeared on the Olympic Peninsula, with his red hair flying out in all directions, Lower Chehalis elder Nina Baumgartner told me her people thought his head was on fire. She went on to relate the tale in which Bluejay visits the land of the dead, which she emphatically slanted toward the necessity of being careful with fire. There is a tragic historical context for her words. European explorers used cannon fire to drive Indigenous peoples from their villages on the Olympic Coast and emigrants set fire to Indian homes throughout the Northwest to obtain the land on which they sat.

Indeed, if the autumn rains finally put out the fire started by the Fourth of July celebrants in 1853, no natural process dampened the fire in the heads of certain emigrants, in which there burned a consumptive fever that threatened to eat up the entire land. In Henry Cultee’s 1974 retelling of the tale in which Bluejay goes to the land of the dead, Bluejay finds a white man there. Seated prominently amidst the bones of whole kingdoms of animals and nations of Indians, he growls, “Eat it all up!”

Cultee’s people had more than enough reason to remark on the consumptive fever that burned in the minds of certain white men. So did other aboriginal peoples of the Northwest, who

experienced it firsthand as emigrants systematically destroyed Indigenous homes in order to replace them with their own.

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### Notes:

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<sup>1</sup> Material on the first two pages of this essay appeared in the *Australian Humanities Journal* as the beginning of my essay, [“Re-Storying the World”](#). “Rooted to this Ground” contains the words of a number of elders; please respect this material and its copyright.

<sup>2</sup> Charles Wilkinson, *Lessons from Frank's Landing* (Seattle and London: University of Washington Press, 2000), p. 101.

<sup>3</sup> Armstrong, p. 34.

<sup>4</sup> Cynthia Stowell, *Faces of a Reservation*, (Portland: Oregon Historical Society Press, 1987), p. 104.

<sup>5</sup> Mrs. Charles Fry mentions pioneer stories of Cosmopolis Pete in "Mrs. Fry's Memoirs-- a Pioneer Looks Back", *Aberdeen World*, Feb. 27, 1936.

<sup>6</sup> Eells, Myron. *The Indians of Puget Sound, the Notebooks of Myron Eells*, ed. George Pierre Castile, (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1985); p. xvii.

<sup>7</sup> Eells, *The Indian of Puget Sound*, p. 20.

<sup>8</sup> M. Dale Kinkade, “Pronunciations of Pacific Northwest Tribal Names”, in Robert H. Ruby and John A. Brown, *A Guide to the Indian Tribes of the Pacific Northwest* (Norman and London: University of Oklahoma Press, 1992), p. xvii. Kinkade has compiled a comprehensive linguistics of Northwestern tribal names here that is invaluable in its overview; Wayne Suttles and Barbara Lane, “Southern Coast Salish Tribes”, *Handbook of North American Indians* 7, pp. 485-488; Eells, Myron. *The Indians of Puget Sound, the Notebooks of Myron Eells*, ed. George Pierre Castile, (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1985), pp. xvii, 20; Wilkinson, p. 12.

<sup>9</sup> Jay Miller, “The Middle Columbia Salish”, *Handbook of North American Indians* 12, pp. 269-270.

<sup>10</sup> Armstrong, p. 35.

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<sup>11</sup> Rick Minor, Stephen Dow Beckham, Phyllis Lancefield-Steeves and Kathryn Anne Toepel, *Cultural Resource Overview of the BLM Salem District, Northwestern Oregon: Archeology, Ethnology, History*, University of Oregon Anthropological Papers No. 20 (1980), pp. 52-53.

<sup>12</sup> Trafzer, *Grandmother*...p. 4; Robert Boyd, *People of the Dalles* (Lincoln and London: University of Nebraska Press, 1996), p. 35; Kinkade in Ruby and Brown, op. cit., pp. xv-xx; Miller, "Middle Columbia Salish", p. 269; Hunn and French, "Western Columbia River Sahaptins", pp. 392-393; A. J. Splawn, *Ka-mi-akin, The Last Hero of the Yakimas* (Portland: Binford & Morts for the Oregon Historical Society, 1944), pp. 393-395; Jim Atwell, *Tahmahnaw: The Bridge of the Gods* (Skamania, Washington: Tahlkie Books, 1973), p. 63.

<sup>13</sup> "Judge" William R. Keady, taped interview in Oregon Coast History Center, Lincoln County Historical Society, Newport, Oregon.

<sup>14</sup> George Gibbs, "Tribes of Western Washington and Northwestern Oregon", pp. 171-172. In Henry Cultee's words: "These people at Oakville [Upper Chehalis reservation], they're nearly all related to me. And they were all kind of related to one another, the Oakville, Satsop, Wynoochee; they were all kind of related to one another. They all talked the same language. Only, from Wynoochee, they talked with Suwalemish, you know, that's Lower Chehalis language. From there, they talked Oakville language. Satsop, they talked a little bit different language, the Satsop Indians." Satsop territory marked the "in between" territory, the half-way point and overnight resting place in travel between Upper Chehalis territory and Lower Chehalis territory on Grays Harbor. Broadly, the Chehalis might thus be divided into three groups, Upper and Lower Chehalis, with Satsop groups in between. The groups who were designated as Satsop at the treaty proceedings at Cosmopolis in 1855 proposed to Stevens that they be allowed to take a reservation together with the Upper Chehalis near Oakville. Following both the designations in the treaty proceedings as transcribed by George Gibbs and the usage of Chehalis elders, the Wynoochee people represented by Tleyuk at Cosmopolis were traditionally affiliated with the Grays Harbor (Lower Chehalis) people, though they might also be thought of as the most easterly division of the Satsop people. In Agent Michael Simmons' report to Governor Simmons in 1858, he noted that "Te-la-ek" (Telyuk), was the head of the Lower or Salt-water band of the Chehalis.

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<sup>15</sup> T. T. Waterman, "Puget Sound Geographic Names", ms in Allen Library, University of Washington; Waterman notes this spelling is from Curtis, the equivalent of his own BE'qwcuL. Waterman notes this prairie location between the White and Green Rivers was the site of a campsite rather than a permanent village. This name and its modern application is also cited in Vi Hilbert, Jay Miller and Zalmi Zahir, *Puget Sound Geography: Original Manuscript from T. T. Waterman* (Federal Way, Washington: Lushootseed Press, 2001), pp. 171-172, as BE'kElcuL. The term for the plant is "bEq<sup>w</sup>", though Waterman never succeeded in identifying it.

<sup>16</sup> Wilkinson, p. 12.

<sup>17</sup> Peter Boag, *Environment and Experience: Settlement Culture in Nineteenth Century Oregon* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1992), p. 3.

<sup>18</sup> Franz Boas, "Chehalis Folklore," ms, Collection of American Indian Linguistics, I, American Philosophical Library records the most detailed telling of such a Chehalis transformer tale in written form; Thelma Adamson, *Folktales*, pp. 158-177, 329-342, gives a number of more abbreviated versions. In Adamson's work, incidents in the longer single epic collected by Boas are told as stories of their own. There were similar stories of creation that mapped the story of their lands among most Northwestern peoples. For a parallel story among the Upper Chehalis' Cowlitz neighbors, see Wilson, pp. 69-77.

<sup>19</sup> Thornton, pp. 5-7; Lionel Youst and William Seaburg, *Coquelle Thompson, Athabaskan Witness, a Cultural Biography* (Norman, Oklahoma: University of Oklahoma Press, 2002), p. 5.

<sup>20</sup> Clifford Trafzer, *Grandmother, Grandfather and Old Wolf* (East Lansing, Michigan: Michigan State University Press, 1998), p. 3; Melville Jacobs, *Clackamas Chinook Texts*, parts I and II (Bloomington, Indiana: Indiana University Research Center in Anthropology, Folklore, and Linguistics, 1958 and 1959); Franz Boas, *Kathlamet Texts*, Bureau of American Ethnology Bulletin no. 26 (1901), pp. 45-53; Franz Boas, *Chinook Texts*, Bureau of American Ethnology no. 20 (1894), pp. 92-106; Spier, Leslie and Edward Sapir, *Wishram Ethnography* (Seattle: University of Washington Publications in Anthropology 3:3, 1930), p. 249; Mourning Dove, *Coyote Stories* (Lincoln and London: University of Nebraska Press, 1990).

<sup>21</sup> Mourning Dove, *Coyote Stories*, pp. 17-26.

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<sup>22</sup> The nineteenth century version of the Plateau story in which coyote names the animals is given in “The Spirit Chief Names the Animal People”, in Mourning Dove, *Coyote Stories* (Lincoln and London: University of Nebraska Press, 1990), pp. 17-26; a modern version of this Plateau story is given in Harmer, *Going Native* (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 2001), pp. 38-42.

<sup>23</sup> Jacobs, *Clackamas Chinook Texts*, part I, p. 75-80.

<sup>24</sup> Jacobs, *Clackamas Chinook Texts*, part I, p. 79.

<sup>25</sup> Clifford E. Trafzer and Richard D. Scheuerman, *The Renegade Tribe, The Palouse Indians and the Invasion of the Inland Northwest* (Pullman, Washington: Washington State University Press, 1986), p. xiv.

<sup>26</sup> Darrell Scott, ed. Isaac Ingalls Stevens, *A True Copy of the Official Proceedings at the Council in the Walla Walla Valley 1855* (Fairfield, Washington: Ye Galleon Press reprint, 1985), p. 77.

<sup>27</sup> Ibid.

<sup>28</sup> Scott, pp. 80-82. Owhi’s name is spelled in several different ways in the official transcript of the treaty proceedings. I have used this spelling for consistency’s sake.

<sup>29</sup> Trafzer, *Grandmother*...pp. 132-133. Cusho or cosho is the Chinook Jargon term for pig.

<sup>30</sup> That place and its traditional name were evidently well known to the land’s original peoples here. In 1940, Twana elder Frank Twana told of an incident that happened “a long, long time ago”, in which a Chehalis boy got a strong spirit power by diving off a big bluff near Aberdeen at “qaysa’lǝbǝš”. Allen noted that the spirit power here was a well-known one (William Elmendorf, *Twana Narratives* [Seattle and London: University of Washington Press, 1993], p. 167.) George Gibbs concurs with Henry Cultee’s memory, recording the traditional Indian name of this place as *Kai sah lumpsh*. (George Gibbs, *Report on the Indian Tribes of the Territory of Washington*. United State House of Representatives, 2nd session, 33rd Congress. Reports of the Explorations and Surveys of the Rocky Mountain Region, Part II: 1877). Edward Campbell, Hoquiam’s first postmaster, recorded the original Indian name for Cosmopolis as “His-o-lumpish”. (Cited in Edwin VanSycle, *The River Pioneers, Early Days on Grays Harbor* [Seattle: Pacific Search Press, 1982], p. 370).

<sup>31</sup> John Roger James, "Autobiography of John Roger James" in *Told by the Pioneers*, Washington Pioneer Project 2 (1938), p. 85.

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<sup>32</sup>Adamson, field notes, pp. 160, 165.

<sup>33</sup>Eugene S. Hunn with James Selam and Family, *Nch'i- "Wána, "The Big River", Mid-Columbia River Indians and Their Land* (Seattle and London: University of Washington Press, 1990), pp. 153.

<sup>34</sup>Hunn, p. 141.

<sup>35</sup>Edward Sapir *Wishram Texts*, pp. 257-259; Jarold Ramsey, "the Hunter Who Had an Elk for a Guardian Spirit", in Brian Swan, ed. *Smoothing the Ground*, pp. 309-322. Summarized in Rodney Frey and Dell Hymes, "Mythology", in *Handbook of North American Indians 12*, pp. 585-586.

<sup>36</sup>Peter M. Knudtson, *The Wintun Indians of California and their Neighbors*, (Happy Camp, California: Naturegraph Publishers, Inc, 1977), p. 35; David Suzuki and Peter Knudtson, *Wisdom of the Elders* (New York: Bantam Books, 1992), pp. 122-123; see also Frank LaPena, "Wintu", *Handbook of North American Indians 8* (Washington, D. C.: Smithsonian, 1978), pp. 324-340. The classic Wintu ethnography in which these attitudes are noted is Clara DuBois, *Wintu Ethnography* (Berkeley: University of California Publications in American Archeology and Ethnology 36: 1935).

<sup>37</sup>Robert F. Heizer, "Natural Forces and Native World View", *Handbook of North American Indians 8* Washington, D. C.: Smithsonian, 1978), p. 650.

<sup>38</sup>M. Kat Anderson, *Tending the Wild* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2005), pp. 58-59.

<sup>39</sup>Cora Du Bois, *Wintu Ethnography*, University of California Publications in American Archeology and Ethnology no. 35 (1935), pp. 75-76.

<sup>40</sup>Thomas Jefferson Mayfield, *Indian Summer* (Berkeley: California Historical Society, 1993), p. 68. Mayfield noted other environmentally sensitive practices of his Native hosts, including care in not polluting a stream by washing in it. "When drinking from a stream, they would arise with their mouths full of water. They would allow this water to run over their hands and would in that way wash their hands and faces away from the stream." (p. 43).

<sup>41</sup>Sometimes the power of the land to take away negative thoughts and feelings in this way was ritualized in local traditions. Puget Salish storyteller Johnny Moses sings a "snowflake song" in which negative thoughts were cast away onto the first whirling snowfall of the year.

<sup>42</sup>Boag, *Environment...*pp. 3-27.

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<sup>43</sup> Ezra Meeker, *Ox Team Days on the Oregon Trail* (Yonkers-on-Hudson, New York and Chicago: World Book Company, 1922), pp. 95-96.

<sup>44</sup> Judson, pp. 217-218.

<sup>45</sup> Daniel Boxberger, *To Fish in Common* (University of Nebraska Press; Lincoln and London, 1989), pp. 13-14.

<sup>46</sup> Blaine Harden, *A River Lost, The Life and Death of the Columbia* (New York and London: W. W. Norton & Company: 1996), pp. 62-64.

<sup>47</sup> Verne Ray, "Fisheries of the Confederated Tribes of the Colville Reservation", report, (Washington, D. C.: 1972), pp. 46-55.

<sup>48</sup> Jim, *Salmon without Rivers, A History of the Pacific Salmon Crisis*, (Washington, D. C., and Covelo, California: Island Press, 1999); see also Harden, pp. 62-64.

<sup>49</sup> Lichatowich, Jim. *Salmon without Rivers, A History of the Pacific Salmon Crisis*, (Washington, D. C. and Covelo, California: Island Press, 1999); Hillary Stewart details this belief system throughout the cultures of the Northwest. Hillary Stewart. *Indian Fishing*. (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1977), pp. 161-177; an early summary of this belief system can be found in Erna Gunter, "A Further Analysis of the First Salmon Ceremony", *University of Washington Publications in Anthropology* (1928).

<sup>50</sup> Boxberger, p. 17.

<sup>51</sup> Diamond Jenness, "The Faith of a Coast Salish Indian" (Victoria, B. C.: The Columbia Provincial Museum, 1986). *Anthropology in British Columbia, Memoir 3* (1955), p. 52.

<sup>52</sup> Miller, "Salmon...".

<sup>53</sup> Reyes, p. 47.

<sup>54</sup> Judson, pp. 224-225.

<sup>55</sup> Judson, p. 225.

<sup>56</sup> Boxberger, pp. 13, 17.

<sup>57</sup> Adamson, notes, p. 148.

<sup>58</sup> Cecelia Svinth Carpenter, *Fort Nisqually, A Documented History of Indian and British Interaction* (Tacoma, Washington: Tahoma Research Service, 1986), pp. 23-24.

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<sup>59</sup> Ross, p. 111; for an ethnographic sketch of the first salmon ceremony of the Lower Chinook, see Verne Ray, *Lower Chinook Ethnographic Note*, (Seattle: University of Washington Publications in Anthropology 7, 1938), pp. 110-111.

<sup>60</sup> Ross, p. 111.

<sup>61</sup> Robert H. Roby and John A. Brown. *The Chinook Indians* (Norman and London: University of Oklahoma Press, 1976), p. 68.

<sup>62</sup> Moore, ed., Wilkes' 1841 Narrative, pp. 60-61.

<sup>63</sup> Cited in John Sauter and Bruce Johnson, *Tillamook Indians of the Oregon Coast* (Portland, Oregon: Binfords & Mort, 1974), p. 118.

<sup>64</sup> Coan, p. 66.

<sup>65</sup> Adamson, field notes, p. 185.

<sup>66</sup> Adamson, *Folktales*, p. xiii; Adamson, field notes, p. 165.

<sup>67</sup> Adamson, field notes, p. 147.

<sup>68</sup> Costello, p. 65.

<sup>69</sup> Reverend Myron Eells, "The Religion of the Indians of Puget Sound", *American Antiquarian and Oriental Journal* 12 (1890), p. 73.

<sup>70</sup> Lucy Thompson, *To the American Indian, Reminiscences of a Yurok Woman* (Self-published: Eureka, California, 1916), reprinted by Heyday Books (Berkeley California, 1991), pp. 177-180.

<sup>71</sup> T. T. Waterman and A. L. Kroeber, "The Kepel Fish Dam", *University of California Publications in American Archeology and Ethnology* 34 (1943), pp. 35; 49-79.

<sup>72</sup> Thompson, op. cit.

<sup>73</sup> Eugene S. Hunn, Nancy J. Turner, and David H. French, "Ethnobiology and Subsistence", *Handbook of North American Indians* 12, p. 539.

<sup>74</sup> Deward E. Walker, Jr. and Roderick Sprague, "History Until 1846", *Handbook of North American Indians*, p. 139; Theodore Stern, "Columbia River Trade Networks, *Handbook of North American Indians* 12, p. 645; Jay Miller, "Middle Columbia River Salishans", *Handbook of North American Indians* 12, p. 255.

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<sup>75</sup> William Tregemba with Avis Blakeman, "Willie's Story" (from his journal), n.d., family publication pp. 43-45.

<sup>76</sup> Harden, p. 106.

<sup>77</sup> Tregemba and Blakeman, *ibid.*

<sup>78</sup> Nancy Winecoop, in *Told by the Pioneers*, 1, p. 118; Native scholar David Wynecoop is the author of a contemporary history of the Spokane: *Children of the Sun: A History of the Spokane Indians* (Wellpoint, Washington: the author: 1969).

<sup>79</sup> Lawney L. Reyes, *White Grizzly Bear's Legacy* (Seattle and London: University of Washington Press: 2002), p. 47.

<sup>80</sup> Spier and Sapir (p. 249

<sup>81</sup> Lawney L. Reyes, *op. cit.*, p. 71.

<sup>82</sup> Gordon W. Hewes, "Fishing", *Handbook of North American Indians*, 12, p.637.

<sup>83</sup> Ray, "Fisheries..." pp. 46-55; Ruby and Brown, *Half-Sun*, p. 188.

<sup>84</sup> Harden, pp. 106-115.

<sup>85</sup> Ray, "Fisheries...", Harden, p. 107.

<sup>86</sup> Verne Ray, *The Sanpoil and Nespelem Salishan Peoples of Northeastern Washington* (Seattle: University of Washington Publications in Anthropology 5: 1933), p. 71; Miller, "Middle Columbia Salish", pp. 254, 265-266; Eugene S. Hunn and David H. French, "Western Columbia River Sahaptins", *Handbook of North American Indians* 12, p. 389. Rodney Frey and Dell Hymes, "Mythology", *Handbook of North American Indians* 12, p. 585); Trafzer, *Grandmother...*, pp.xi.)6-7; 89-96; Hunn and French, p. 389.

<sup>87</sup> Charles Wilkes, *Life in Oregon Country before the Emigration*, Richard Moore, ed. v. 4 (1841) from Wilkes' *Narrative of the United States Exploring Expedition during the Years 1838, 1839, 1840, 1841, and 1842*. (Reprint published in Ashland, Oregon by the Oregon Book Society, 1974), pp. 43-44.

<sup>88</sup> Shannon Applegate, personal communication; the pioneer image of blooming camas looking like a pool of water is also mentioned in Shannon Applegate, *Skookum, An Oregon Pioneer Family's History and Lore* (New York: William Morrow: 1988), p. 293.

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<sup>89</sup> Henry T. Lewis, “Patterns of Indian Burning in California: Ecology and Ethnohistory” (Ramona, California: Ballena Press Anthropology Papers I, 1973); Malcolm Margolin, in “A Blessing on the Land: the Cultivated Landscape of Native America” (Santa Rosa, California: Bioneers Conference, 1998); Martin A. Baumhoff, “Environmental Background”, *Handbook of North American Indians 8* (Washington, D. C.: Smithsonian, 1978), pp. 22-24; Mayfield, pp. 40-41.

<sup>90</sup> Ibid.

<sup>91</sup> Kat Anderson, pp. 130-132.

<sup>92</sup> Anderson, pp. 13-61.

<sup>93</sup> Adamson, field notes, p. 295.

<sup>94</sup> Franz Boas, “Chehalis Folklore,” pp. 868-870.

<sup>95</sup> Adamson, field notes, p. 346.

<sup>96</sup> In the Duwamish et. al. claims case, numerous elders testified to their peoples’ use of burning. Duwamish Alex Kittle heard from his elders that the burns maintained “good hunting ground”. Puyallup Mary Anne Dean also said: “That [burning] is what they did to make the hunting ground.” Augusta Kautz, Puyallup,, said, “They burned...when the old ferns were dead, just before they start...and it causes the young sprouts to come up.” Burning was also done with the intent of clearing out underbrush to inhibit forest fires. When the brush grew “too big... [fire]... burns the forest entirely; it burns the big trees”. Joe Bill, Muckleshoot, stated that his people followed a traditional “ruling” that specified clearing out the underbrush every three years to “keep the big timber from burning.” (pp. 691, 677, 680, 160).

<sup>97</sup> Peter, *op. cit.* pp. 3-27; “The Valley of the Long Grasses”, *Old Oregon 72* (winter 1992), p. 18. For an ethnohistorical overview of the effects of Native burning practices on the local landscape, see Robert Boyd, ed. *Indians, Fire, and the Land in the Pacific Northwest* (Corvallis, Oregon: Oregon State University Press, 1999); Henry Zenk, “The Kalapuyans”, in *Handbook of North American Indians 7*, p. 547: “The open character of the Willamette Valley was a direct result of aboriginal occupancy. At the close of each summer, the Kalapuyans burned over much of the valley.”

<sup>98</sup> Horace Lyman. *History of Oregon* (New York: North Pacific Publishers, 1903), v. 4, p. 365.

<sup>99</sup> Wayne Suttles, “Environment”, in *handbook of North American Indians 7*, p. 29.

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<sup>100</sup> Mount Pisgah Arboretum information board, Lane County, Oregon.

<sup>101</sup> Lionel Youst and William R. Seaburg, *Coquille Thompson, Athabaskan Witness, A Cultural Biography*. (Norman, Oklahoma: University of Oklahoma Press, 2002), pp. 16-17.

<sup>102</sup> Lionel Youst, *She's Tricky Like Coyote* (Norman and London: University of Oklahoma Press, 1997), p. 53.

<sup>103</sup> Esther Stutzman, personal communication.

<sup>104</sup> *Uncommon Controversy*, frontispiece.

<sup>105</sup> These are my notes recording his words, collected in 1974.

<sup>106</sup> Elijah Henderson, in *Oregon Pioneer Remembrances* 1, p. 101.

<sup>107</sup> Alice Wooldrige, *Pioneers and Incidents of the Upper Coquille Valley 1890-1940* (Myrtle Creek, Oregon: 1971), p. 200.

<sup>108</sup> Abbot, Helen Betsy, ed. "Life on the Lower Columbia, 1853-1866" (letters of Silas and Lydia Wright Plimpton), *Oregon Historical Quarterly* 83 (Fall, 1982), p. 254.

<sup>109</sup> One of these men asked for confidentiality in passing on his stories, such as the stories of the three trees that signified the generations of his family's life on the land related in the conclusion to this work. More details of some stories of another of these, Floyd Parrish, are also told in the conclusion.

<sup>110</sup> Judith Irwin, "The Cowlitz Way, A Round of Life", *Cowlitz Historical Quarterly* 20 (1979), pp. 5-6.

<sup>111</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>112</sup> Brett Rushforth, "'The Great Spirit Was Grieved: Religion and Environment among the Cowlitz Indians", *Pacific Northwest Quarterly* 93 (2002), pp. 188-198. Rushforth discusses the linkage of religious and environmental ideas among the Cowlitz, as well as the contact-related religious idea of the Great Spirit used in Cheholtz's speech. But he neglects the traditional idea of the commons. He rightly attacks the romanticism that would have the Cowlitz living in a world in which all creatures do human bidding, but when he attributes Cheholtz's words to post-contact ideas, he overlooks the central traditional idea that the very fact that other spirits have a will of their own is a central tenet underlying Cowlitz religious beliefs and environmental choices. For a detailed discussion of this vital aspect of Coast Salish belief in Southwestern Washington that underlies its sense of inter-related world, see chapter twelve of this work.

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<sup>113</sup> Reverend Myron Eells, “Myths of the Puget Sound Indians”, *American Antiquarian and Oriental Journal*, 20 (1890), pp. 160-165.

<sup>114</sup> Tom Harmer, *Going Native* (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 2001), p. 25.

<sup>115</sup> Robert E. Ficken and Charles P. LeWarne, *Washington, A Centennial History* (Seattle and London: University of Washington Press: 1989), pp. xix-xx.

<sup>116</sup> “Mrs. Persis Ulrich”, in *Told by the Pioneers*, 3, p. 91.

<sup>117</sup> James G. Swan, *The Northwest Coast, or Three Years’ Residence in Washington Territory*, (Seattle and London: University of Washington Press, 1972), p. 134.