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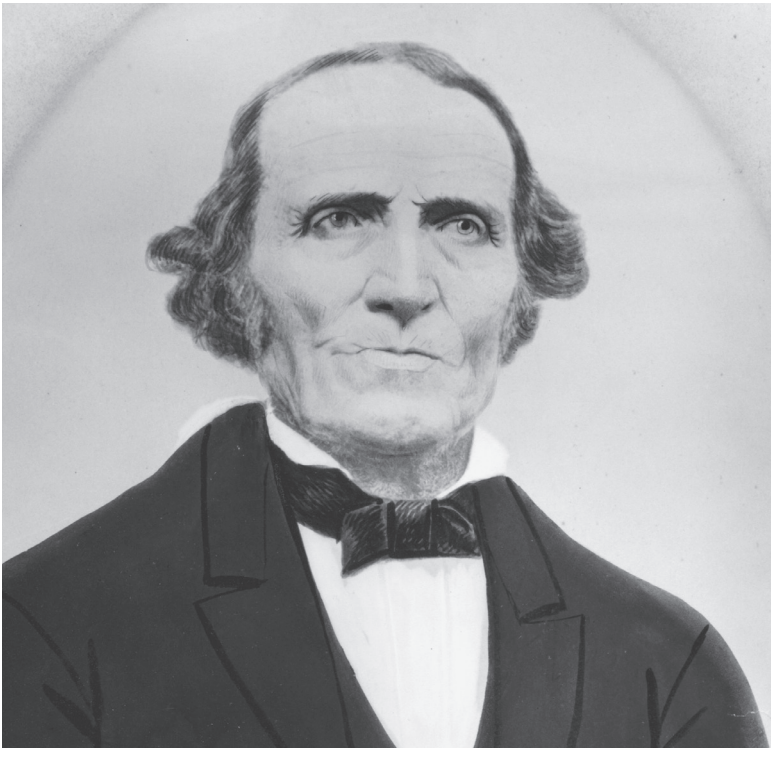
Ethnic and Linguistic Complexities Persist Following Partition of the PNW -

the Cowlitz Tribe and the Plamondon Family



Inside the Quarterly

September 2019 Volume 61, Number 3

Authors Robert Foxcurran and Michael Hubbs examine the changes wrought on the populations of southwest Washington in the 1800s by the coming of Europeans, specifically through the lens of Hudson's Bay Company employee Simon Plamondon and his in-laws in the Cowlitz Tribe.

Cover Photo: Portrait of Simon Plamondon in 1877. Simon, a Hudson's Bay Company employee, was the first white settler on Cowlitz Prairie. *Cowlitz County Historical Museum photo 1959.0007.0001*

Cowlitz Historical Quarterly

The Cowlitz Historical Quarterly is published four times a year by the Cowlitz County Historical Society, State of Washington. Single-copy price is $7.50. The Quarterly Editor welcomes articles dealing with the history of Cowlitz County, Southwestern Washington and Washington State.

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Editor's Letter

JIM LEMONDS

This issue contains a single article: "Ethnic and Linguistic Complexities Persist Following Partition of the PNW - the Cowlitz Tribe and the Plamondon Family" by Michael Hubbs and Robert Foxcurran. The authors' coverage of the plight of Native Americans in the Northwest is thorough, accessible, and enlightening. It is also incredibly ironic in light of current political affairs.

Hubbs and Foxcurran tell the story of the cultural, demographic, and linguistic clashes that left Native people with virtually nothing after settlers arrived.

The newcomers found that tribes were difficult to compartmentalize when it came to language, locations, and ethnicity. But one thing was clear - the inhabitants of prime land needed to be moved to reservations so that the most desirable property would be available to settlers.

There was heated debate in Washington's territorial legislature over whether Native residents qualified as citizens entitled to rights. To its credit, the legislature ultimately decided that Indians were people. However, by the time this had been decided and Donation Land Claims could be filed, the best land had already been claimed by newcomers.

The Cowlitz Tribe did not participate in the War of 1855-'56. However, it also refused to move to a government-designated reservation for fear that all claims to its ancestral land would be lost in the bargain. Its reward was denial of recognition of its existence by the federal government until 2000. The Chinook - one of the region's most prominent tribes - still has not been recognized.

The article's painful irony is that this part of our history was about immigrants coming in to seize control of every aspect of political, economic, and cultural power from the native population. Two hundred years later, many of the descendants of those same immigrants are intent on preventing new arrivals from gaining jobs, citizenship, and political power.

The lessons of history are always instructive.

Correction -
Thanks to Jim Tweedie for providing clarification about several points in the article "Big Timbers for Japan," which was published in the June *Quarterly*. The article mentioned that by 1930 Japanese squares were a thing of the past. Jim noted that when he worked in the Lumber Sales office at Weyerhaeuser, Longview, in the mid- and late-'50s, sales of big squares were still going strong and lasted into the 1960s. The large squares were usually sold to very small Japanese sawmills, one or two at a time. Reportedly, there were hundreds of these mills, all family-owned.

Ethnic and Linguistic Complexities persist following Partition of the PNW -

the Cowlitz Tribe and the Plamondon Family

by Michael Hubbs and Robert Foxcurran

In a state hosting some 30 Indian reservations, a closer look at a modern map of southwestern Washington reveals almost no obvious Native American presence. Behind this dearth of reservations and accompanying acreage lies a complex history of accommodation, inter-marriage, and migration in the face of arbitrary decision-making by the newcomers. The first permanent Euro-American colonial establishments in the region were located along the banks of the Lower Columbia River, allowing for access far upriver into the interior of the continent. The strategic importance of this location, however, would not bode well for prior inhabitants.

During the early 19th century, tribal bands of the two principal linguistic groups along the Lower Columbia's north shore - speakers of lower Chinookan and the Salishan-speaking Cowlitz - had grown accustomed to negotiating with Canadian newcomers in their homelands from a position of strength. Then, following a devastating pandemic during the early 1830s, a second wave of newcomers arrived in the 1840s south of the Columbia. This wave came from the U.S. By the 1850s this second wave began to settle in serious numbers north of the river as well. It was not long before these new authorities ordered the Native survivors in the lower Columbia to clear out. Located along key transportation corridors between core settlement areas, their lands were now deemed to be high-value real estate with no place for its original occupants.

South of the Columbia, where the demographic imbalance was more extreme, most of the survivors had little choice but to relocate to the Grand Ronde Reservation in the coastal

mountains. North of the Columbia, Chinookan and Cowlitz refused to vacate their homelands. They continued to cohabitate with an admixture of descendants of French-speaking *Canadiens* from the earlier colonial period. Refusal to be "relocated" meant that the two largest tribal groupings of southwestern Washington would face a prolonged struggle to gain federal recognition, living off-reservation among increasingly white communities.

Lines and more lies

History tells us that lines associated with treaty settlements on national boundaries negotiated from afar, belie a much more complex reality. The extension of the 49th parallel from the Rocky Mountains to the Pacific in 1846 would have further ramifications.

Following the treaty of partition in 1846 between the U.S. and Great Britain, the new U.S. authorities attempted to disentangle the multi-ethnic communities it inherited from the earlier colonial presence. Attempts to impose arbitrary delineations would prove to be problematic. Though ownership of land was recognized by treaty for the inherited hybrid population, their voting rights in Washington Territory would be challenged on grounds of ethnicity and language, while trying to separate and remove their tribal relations to out-of-area reservations.

With implementation of policies aimed at re-engineering the land and its people, the component bands of the modern Cowlitz Tribe and the Chinook Nation were left stranded. The two tribes maintained their identities and continued to struggle to obtain justice. Of the two, this article focuses primarily on the Cowlitz,[1] and one of its multi-ethnic and multilingual member families, the Plamondon branch, descendants of Chief Scanewa. Co-author Michael Hubbs is a 5th great-grandson of Chief Scanewa of the Cowlitz Tribe. These tribes were caught in the final stages of the partition of North America during the mid-19th century. After further partition into two U.S. territories seven years later, Isaac Stevens - the first federally appointed governor of Washington Territory - arrived in fall 1853. Admittedly, he had a lot to sort out. He intended to do so, and quickly.

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[1] Roy Wilson, *History of the Cowlitz Indian Tribe*, 1988

Governor Stevens wore another hat which proved to be equally, if not more important: he was also our first Superintendent of Indian Affairs. It is estimated that at the time of his arrival Indians outnumbered white-and mixed-ancestry settlers by about four-to-one in Washington. Despite several unsuccessful rounds of negotiations involving U.S. Indian agents and superintendents, the Cowlitz and the Lower Chinookan speakers who had survived the malaria pandemic of the early 1830s would continue to hold out in their respective homelands without a land base, struggling to preserve community and tribal identity in the face of non-recognition.[2] For both the Cowlitz and Chinook, dispersal within their homelands and the broader region, resulted in accelerated economic integration.[3]

In this article we will take a look at the multiple sorts of ethnic and linguistic mixing that occurred over the early decades of the century preceding the arrival of our first Superintendent of Indian Affairs in the fall of 1853, and the complexities of the transition experienced by these hybrid peoples over the balance of the 19th century. Within this community, ethnic mixing occurred at several levels with multiple Pacific Northwest tribes, white French Canadians from Quebec, along with descendants of numerous tribes from the far side of the Rocky Mountains, be it Canadian Indians from the east, or Metis descendants from the Canadian Prairies. One of the terms in use at the time by these peoples in referring to themselves individually or collectively was *Canadien*, regardless of ethnicity. Nowadays, the descendants of these multilingual bicultural communities of various Native American origins, with French-Canadian ancestry thrown in, tend to be identified as Metis. In the

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[2] A similar scenario played out upriver for the Chinookan speaking tribes of the Gorge. See Andrew Fisher's *Shadow Tribe: The Making of Columbia River Indian Identity*.

[3] The Cowlitz, along with several of the neighboring tribes provide yet further examples of ethnic communities - both Native and non-Native - successfully retaining their ethnicity while assimilating economically into the mainstream of modern America. Among non-Native communities we see that the landless Cowlitz were in a similar situation to Japanese-Americans in several respects. Per the thesis developed by S. S. Fujita and D. J. O'Brien in their *Japanese American Ethnicity: The Persistence of Community*, Japanese Americans were, "… able to adapt to changing exigencies without losing group cohesiveness."

Pacific Northwest this is often preceded by the name of the tribe with which they are most closely affiliated, for example Cowlitz Metis, or Walla Walla Metis.[4] The Constitution of the Cowlitz Tribe today specifically includes in tribal membership the lineal descendants of "… Metis resident in the Cowlitz aboriginal area and associated with Cowlitz people before … 1856."[5] As for languages spoken well into the 20th century, these people continued to speak local versions of the Salishan or Sahaptian languages, supplemented by French, plus a Chinookan-based trade jargon, one that included a considerable French admixture.

Partition at multiple levels

Lines gradually coalesced following the 1846 treaty, along with the associated dates and demographics. But the Hudson's Bay Company (HBC) and British military would not complete withdrawal from Washington Territory until 1872, withdrawing back into what had become British Columbia. Moreover, most of their former employees chose to stay behind in the U.S.

For the entire region below the new border, both property rights, and then voting rights, had been established for the earlier multi-ethnic re-settler community from Canada. However, for their

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[4] These peoples tended to self-identify at the time as *Canadien*, Native, or both, whatever their actual ethnic mix, and depending upon circumstances. For more on these identity issues and terminology over time see *Songs upon the Rivers: The Buried History of the French-Speaking Canadiens and Metis from the Great Lakes and the Mississippi across to the Pacific*, by Robert Foxcurran, Michel Bouchard and Sebastien Malette, published by Baraka Books, Montreal, 2016. The book lays out the shifting usage and definition of the term *Canadien* from the 17th century on.

In the course of the latter half of the 19th century the term and identity of *Canadian* gradually came to include all white English-speaking residents of British North America, while the mixed ancestry descendants of the *Canadiens* often took on more of an ethnically distinct identity, increasingly narrowed to *Quebecois*. Consequently, over the years, distinctions on the use of terms such as *Canadien*, Canadian, and metis (capitalized or not), or the English term 'Half-Breed' were fluid, variable, and overlapping, while still being a subject of considerable debate today, as more and more people identify themselves as multi-ethnic or bicultural.

[5] The Constitution of the Cowlitz Indian Tribe, February 14, 2000, p. 1.

Native American in-laws, cousins, neighbors, and friends of local origins, property and voting rights would initially be denied. The property and voting rights for members of these *Canadien* communities, composed of speakers of French and various Indian languages, had been protected under the bi-national Oregon Provisional Government in the early 1840s. For the large majority of *Canadiens* who chose to remain, all they had to do was declare their intention to become a U.S. citizen and follow the same procedures as American newcomers in establishing their title to their land claim. This arrangement was explicitly endorsed by the treaty of partition in 1846 and reconfirmed by the U.S. Congress with the Donation Land Act of 1850 which by now was using the inclusive terminology of "American half breeds."

When Washington Territory broke away from Oregon Territory in 1853, voting rights had to be reconfirmed for the old settler group of *Canadiens*, including individuals and families who were increasingly a mix of both Indian and white. For most members of these scattered *Canadien* and mixed-ancestry communities, individual ownership of land was not seriously challenged, but the right to vote was. It was the primary subject of debate in the first Washington Territorial Assembly held in Olympia in 1854.

Within the Northwest, the largest of these mixed communities lay south of the Columbia River in Oregon's Willamette Valley and came to be called French Prairie. In Washington Territory, these multi-ethnic peoples were widely scattered. In the southwestern corner of the Territory, they could be found during the 1850s and thereafter: (1) in Chinook country along the north shore of the Lower Columbia and around Willapa Bay; (2) just northwest of Fort Vancouver, along the shore of Lake Vancouver; and (3) on the Cowlitz and Newaukum[6] prairies located some 20 miles north of Longview. In Puget Sound they were concentrated on the prairie straddling a tributary of the Nisqually River, Muck Creek. On the far side of *les Cascades* these communities were found in the valleys of the Walla Walla, Colville, and Clark Fork rivers. [7]

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[6] In modern Cowlitz Salishan Newaukum is spelled na'waq^{w}m, for "Big Prairie."

[7] Robert Foxcurran, "Les Canadiens: Resettlement of the Metis into the Backcountry of the Pacific Northwest," Fall 2012 issue of *Columbia*, quarterly publication of the Washington State Historical Society.

Beginning in the 1850s, the federal authorities told the Cowlitz and Chinooks to abandon their homelands by relocating to out-of-area reservations. With the drastic terms imposed on these earliest areas of contact, now deemed to be prime real estate, noncompliant tribes would not have protection from settlers. The absence of reservations in Southwestern Washington is a feature of our modern political geography.

The origins of the Plamondon family, like so many early settler families in the American West, straddled both the continent and more than one of the ethnic groups inhabiting it. Locally, the descendants of the Pacific Northwest branch of the Plamondons trace their lineage to Cowlitz Chief Scanewa through his daughter Thas-e-muth. She had four children by her marriage to Simon Plamondon, an independent, or "freeman," trapper who had arrived around 1820. He was originally from Quebec. His second wife, Emilie Finlay, and their children also included ancestry from Indian tribes originating east of the Rocky Mountains.

This transcontinental ethnic mixing was reflected in a number of other families of the Cowlitz Tribe, as well as those of the Chinook Nation to their west, their Nisqually and Puyallup neighbors to the north, and the Okanogan, Pend Oreille (Kalispell), Flatheads, Walla Walla, and others east of the Cascades.[8] Much of the inter-marriage had occurred during

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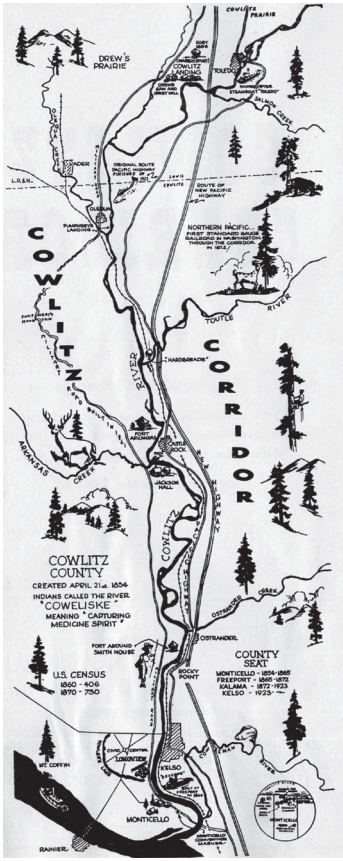
[8] For a superb introduction to the genesis of such a transcontinental people see *The New Peoples: Being and Becoming Metis in North America* edited by Jacqueline Peterson and Jennifer S.H. Brown published by the Minnesota Historical Society Press in 1985. A perceptive extract from the beginning of the chapter titled "Many Roads to Red River: Metis Genesis in the Great Lakes region, 1680-1815," by Jacqueline Peterson, states, "The people who are born and grow up at the interstices of two civilizations or nations are almost always in motion, eluding facile identification … peaceable, intermarriages will occur and a relatively stable composite group will develop along their shared geographical or cultural border. Over time, this group may begin to serve as a conduit for goods, services, and information and to see its function as a broker. It will not usually recognize, in the process of acquiring a group history and identity, that it is, … a dependency of the nations or societies it links or separates, to be snuffed out when there is no longer a need for its services." "Just such a people – calling themselves metis – burst upon the historical stage in 1815, its leaders stridently declaring themselves (rather than the Hudson's Bay Company) the rightful owners of the heartland of North America." (Peterson and Brown, p. 37)

the four decades between the four-month visit of the Lewis and Clark Expedition in 1806, and the arrival of American settlers. The result was the existence of a dozen bicultural communities in place at mid-century that, though facilitating the process of integration into the U.S., proved to be "a pebble in the sandal" for new authorities.

A hybrid village develops on the Cowlitz River

Two centuries ago the village located along the Cowlitz River at its uppermost point of navigation was named Tawamiluhawihl. As the tributary of the Columbia that extended northward to within 50 miles of the southern fingers of the Salish Sea (the inland sea that encompasses Puget Sound, the San Juan Islands and the waters off of what is now Vancouver, B.C.), it would not be long before newcomers to the Lower Columbia would be drawn to this key portage point within the Cowlitz corridor.



Map showing the Cowlitz River transportation corridor from its mouth to Cowlitz Prairie, from John M. McClelland, Jr.'s 1953 book *Cowlitz Corridor: Historical River Highway of the Pacific Northwest.*

In the second quarter of the 19th century Tawamiluhawihl began to take in new residents from the far side of the Rocky Mountains, developing into a rather cosmopolitan frontier village. Several decades of cohabitation with the *Canadiens* and First Peoples from central and eastern Canada ensued. These families included those of Cree, Ojibwe, Abenaki, and Iroquois ancestry, along with families having local origins among the Salishan, Sahaptin, and Chinookan-speaking tribes. It

must be remembered that among the "newcomers," or *cheechako* in Chinook Jargon, Protestant English-speaking Americans did not attain a majority in the Willamette Valley over French-speaking Canadian Catholics of multiple ethnic origins until the end of 1843.[9] This shift in the Euro-American majority did not occur north of the Columbia until around 1850.[10]

The Cowlitz River joins the Columbia, entering from the north, where the latter again turns westward for its final run to the Pacific. The Cowlitz has long served as a natural funnel for the movement of people and commerce between the Chinookan-speaking people along the Lower Columbia River to the south, and the Salishan speakers to the north living along the south Puget Sound arm of the Salish Sea.

Located at the north end of the Cowlitz corridor, the Nisqually participated with the Cowlitz in this traffic. Both peoples were highly skilled boatmen and traders and had mastered the horse in the prior century.[11] Consequently, the Cowlitz and Nisqually came to host major Canadian agricultural establishments during the 1830s.[12]

Numerous Cowlitz and Nisqually tribal members continued to serve as guides for safe transit of the challenging overland stretch of the Cowlitz corridor at mid-century when settlers showed up. This would include Scanewa's oldest son, Ilacacca. Between the bend in the Cowlitz River and the northward flowing rivers emptying into Puget Sound were a tangled sequence of westward flowing tributaries of the Chehalis River that needed to be traversed. Historian Steve Anderson provides

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[9] Foxcurran, "Les Canadiens", op.cit., p. 23. When Oregon bought into the plan to spin off Washington Territory in 1853, it was to serve initially as a Pacific Northwest Indian territory to facilitate Oregon's rush to statehood, achieved in 1859 – 30 years before Washington.

[10] Robert Ficken, *Washington Territory*, WSU Press 2002, p. 8.

[11] Cecilia Svinth Carpenter, *Fort Nisqually: A Documented History of Indian and British Interaction*, Published by Tahoma Research Service 1986, p. 30.

[12] James R. Gibson, *Farming the Frontier: The Agricultural Opening of the Oregon Country 1786 -1846*, University of Washington Press, 1985.

us with an idea of the skill required in an article in the *Cowlitz Historical Quarterly.*

… more than just knowing the way, it involved arranging Indian ferries, managing the party's horses, scouting out campsites and alternate routes …and investigating river fords… A non-stop gauntlet of dangerously swollen rivers, …muddied mountain trails, incessant rain, and vast flooded marshlands lay in their path.[13]

In the early 1800s, access to the Cowlitz corridor had been shut down for several years to the traders of the Montreal-based North West Company (NWCo) following a sequence of violent incidents instigated by a contingent of its Iroquois hunters from eastern Canada. Cowlitz Chief Scanewa, agreed to re-open the passage as part of a negotiated agreement of peace and commerce with the Canadian firm in the early 1820s. Serving as the intermediary during this process was an NWCo employee, the *Canadien* son-in-law of Chief Scanewa, who married his oldest daughter, Thas-e-muth. This was Simon Plamondon, and, like so many *Canadiens*, he had grown up with one of the Algonquian-speaking tribes, the Abenaki Indians in his case, in what is now Quebec. He had cousins (the Gill and Annance families) who were descended from mixed marriages with these same indigenous peoples.[14]

Like many dozens of settlements further east, Cowlitz Prairie had started as an Indian community at a strategically located portage, one to which a growing *Canadien* and Metis community had been grafted. When American settlers arrived, further economic development occurred. Cowlitz Indian families still lived and worked amongst these cheechako but were initially excluded from land claims, until the Homestead Act of 1862 allowed the Cowlitz and other Indians to take land not yet claimed by newer arrivals.

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[13] Steve A. Anderson, "By Any Other Name: E'La-cac-ca, Prince of the Cowlitz," *Cowlitz Historical Quarterly*, December 2009, Vol. 51,Number 4, pp. 10-11.

[14] Bruce M. Watson, *Lives Lived West of the Divide; A Biographical Dictionary of Fur Traders Working West of the Rockies, 1793-1858*, Centre for Social, Spatial, and Economic Justice, University of British Columbia, Kelowna, B.C. 2010.

Transformation of the Cowlitz village of Tawamiluhawihl came quickly after the malaria pandemic of the early 1830s. The Chief Factor of the Hudson's Bay Company (HBC) in the northwest, Jean Baptiste (John) McLoughlin began planning for a farming operation on Cowlitz Prairie[15] as a major facility of the Puget Sound Agricultural Company (PSAC).[16]

In 1838 Father Blanchet arrived by canoe from Montreal. On December 16, four days after leaving Fort Vancouver, Blanchet celebrated mass in the Plamondon home. Transport of Fathers Francois Norbert Blanchet and Modeste Demers to the region was provided by the Hudson's Bay Company on the condition that Blanchet would maintain his official residence north of the Columbia, at Cowlitz Prairie. The mission was to serve as a magnet for further settlement by *les Canadiens*, one more inducement that could reinforce territorial claims for the southwestern corner of British North America (BNA)[17]

Several months later, John Jackson tells us, "Father Blanchet returned to the Cowlitz in March 1839 to baptize the 43-year-old widow Bercier and several other wives of the country." The following month the four Plamondon children officially acquired a step-mother, their birth mother having passed away five years earlier. Their father's second wife was the afore-mentioned widow of Pierre Bercier, the former Emilie Finlay. Emilie, whose mother was Swampy Cree and father a Metis member of Finlay clan, had seven children with Pierre. The Finlay and Bercier families, living among the Spokane and Pend d'Oreille tribes, represented two of the oldest Metis

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[15] John C. Jackson, "*Mixed-Bloods on the Cowlitz: A British Scheme for Colonial Settlement North of the Columbia*," Columbia, Spring 1998, p. 13.

[16] After establishing the PSAC operation in Cowlitz Prairie in 1838, Charles Ross and his family subsequently moved to Fort Nisqually and then to Vancouver Island where Charles was placed in charge of building Fort Victoria in 1843.

[17] Schoenberg, Wlifred P., S.J. [University of Gonzaga historian], *A History of the Catholic Church in the Pacific Northwest: 1743-1983*, The Pastoral Press, Washington, D.C., 1987.

families in the Pacific Northwest. Both forbearers had arrived with David Thompson immediately following the return of Lewis and Clark in 1806.[18] In addition to Simon's four children with Thas-e-muth and Emilie's seven with Pierre Bercier, the couple had five more children together.

Simon and Emilies's marriage was one of many at Cowlitz Prairie that year. Father Blanchet also baptized 12 Cowlitz Indian children and eight Klickitats.[19]

The sampling of Catholic Church records for these marriages shows that Native American tribes from throughout the region, as well as from points east of the Rockies, were well represented in this combined Cowlitz-Metis community.[20] In Jackson's USGS enhanced map we see the location of most of the local Donation Land Claims (DLC) of the Canadiens and Metis, but not all. The outliers included the DLC of the Abenaki Indian Pierre Charles, which was located some 20 odd miles to the northwest of Cowlitz Prairie on the upper Chehalis River (along today's Route 6), below Mount *Bois Fort*, which was Americanized by adding a 't' in the middle, producing the name Mount Boistfort. Dominique Farron's DLC was located some two dozen miles up the Cowlitz River to the northeast, on what is now the north shore of Mayfield Lake near Route 12.

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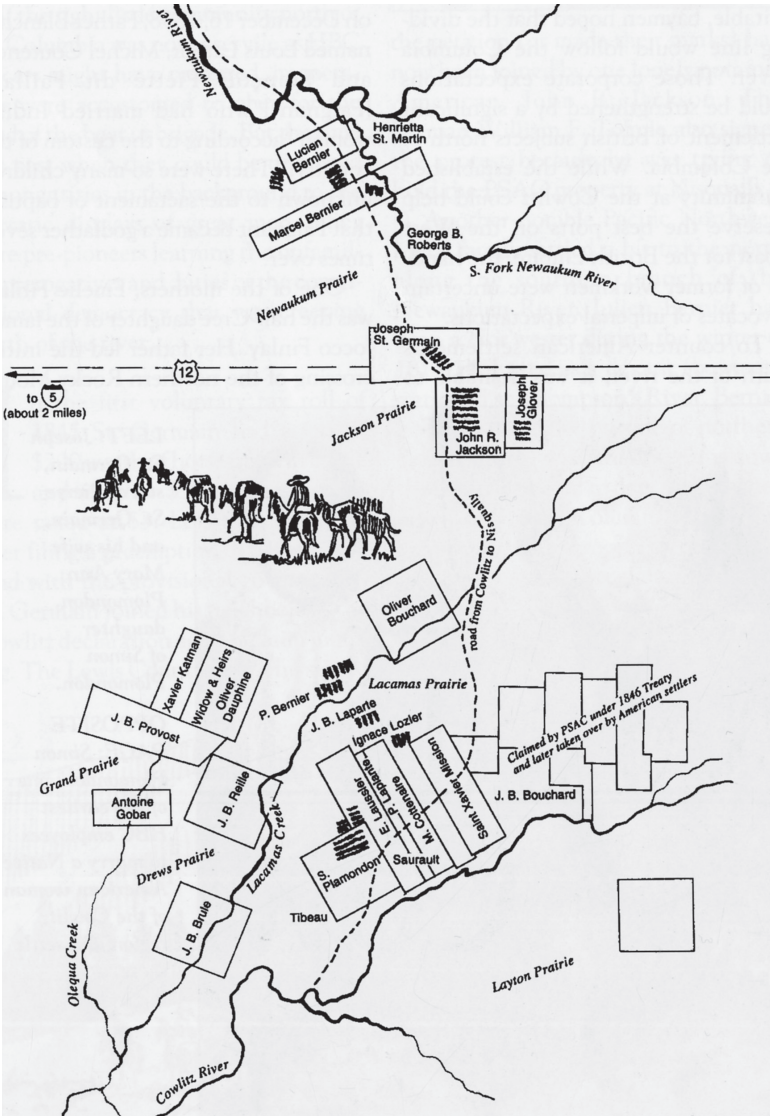
[18] David "Chalk" Courchane, Finlay (and Ojibwe) descendant, genealogist, Salish tribal member.

[19] Jackson, "Mixed-Bloods on the Cowlitz" op. cit.

[20] Gibson, op. cit.



Donation Land Claims in and around Cowlitz Prairie, from John C. Jackson's article Mixed Bloods on the Cowlitz in *Columbia* magazine, Spring 1998. [21]

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[21] John C. Jackson, *Children of the Fur Trade: Forgotten Metis of the Pacific Northwest*, Mountain Press Publishing Company, Missoula, Montana 1996, p. 140.

John Jackson also reminds us that on Cowlitz Prairie the "… French-speaking Catholics became a magnet for later arrivals, … Quebec-born Elie Sareault came in 1849 and married Plomondon's …daughter Therese." As elsewhere, this included French-speaking Catholics originating from points south of the 49th parallel. American over-landers of French extraction, the Joseph Herriot family bought part of the Plomondon DLC. Former gold miner L.L. Dubeau married Isabelle Cottenoir and became a local merchant. Jean Baptiste and Theodiste Saindon, *Canadiens* via Illinois, arrived in 1877. Madame Saindon was fondly remembered for her recipes for *pot au feu and ragu au pied de cochon*.[22]

As with other hybrid Native American-settler communities, reinforcements of *Canadiens* would contribute to sustain the pockets of multicultural French and Chinook Jargon-speaking people throughout the region well into the 20th century.

Voting rights and ethnicity

In matters of voting, each new territorial assembly in the American West had to establish its own ground rules.[23] Extensive debate in Washington's first Territorial Assembly in 1854 concerned voting rights for this population of assorted *Canadien* antecedents. According to Kent D. Richards' biography of the first territorial governor of Washington Territory, Isaac I. Stevens, *Young Man in a Hurry*: A major issue of the session was the status of these "French-Canadians" formerly employed by the Hudson's Bay Company who continued to reside in the territory. Some of

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[22] John C. Jackson, "Mixed Bloods on the Cowlitz," op cit. p. 16.

[23] The *Canadiens*, whether ethnically identified as Indian, white, or some mix of both, along with their older Metis sons were able to obtain land grants as part of the arrangements reached under the bi-national Oregon Provisional Government in the mid-1840s; wives of any ethnic origin or mix doubled the acreage of their family's claim. Once again, these terms were then incorporated into the Treaty of 1846 and ultimately the Donation Land Claim Act of 1850. Indians, however, originally could not make land claims, until the Homestead Act of 1862, and then more specifically under the 1884 Homestead Act targeting Indians. By these dates, the prime sites located around where most of them had previously lived, had been claimed by newcomers.

the legislators argued that most … Canadians were pioneers who helped open up the country and who paid taxes. Some citizens petitioned for the denial of voting privileges to anyone who could not read or write English, and, after hot debate, the legislature granted the vote to half-breeds whom the election judges determined had adopted the habits of civilization, a compromise that allowed Canadian farmers to vote but excluded those living among the Indians.[24] The first weeks of debates in the new territorial assembly were recorded in two March 1854 issues of the Olympia newspaper, *Pioneer and Democrat*. The second issue provided a summary of the final round of discussions during the legislative session of March 17 over ethnic definitions and voting rights. They focused on a group granted the opportunity to be reclassified as "American half-breed Indians." A few excerpts follow regarding whether voting rights should be granted to these earlier settlers. Mr. Crosbie was in favor of the amendment … "some of whom were really deserving of the right of suffrage. … Mr. Biles opposed the amendment on this ground. He said three-fourth of the half-bloods … could not read or speak English …, or understand it when spoken. Many of them understood no language but the Jargon… our jurors would consist of men unable to comprehend testimony …" [25]

But there was more than language involved. Mr. Moseley advocated for the amendment: "…our country was a land of freedom – where every man could stand on a level with his fellow-man. …debarring a man who happens to be guilty of a skin not colored like ours, from exercising the right of suffrage, savored very little of freedom."[26]

"… The American half-breed is allowed to hold land – a tax is annually levied upon his property, and thus contributes to the support of our institutions, but unless this amendment is adopted, he will be unable to go up to the ballot box, that

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[24] Kent D. Richards, *Young Man in a Hurry*, Washington State University Press 1993, p. 188.

[25] *Pioneer and Democrat* (newspaper), March 25, 1854, Olympia, p. 1.

[26] Ibid.

safeguard of the nation. … In Wisconsin, all persons of Indian descent, or who became citizens are allowed to vote. … Where Republican institutions exist, there the people should scrupulously guard against legislating for a 'privileged few.'" [27]

A vote was called for. The amendment was adopted with eight ayes, and six nays. On the final passage of the bill, there were nine ayes, and four nays.[28]

Alexandra Harmon's book, *Indians in the Making: Ethnic Relations and Indian Identities around Puget Sound*, provides the broader context involved in the coverage of the above debate by the *Pioneer and Democrat*: "Territorial officials' preoccupation with Indian relations and the high proportion of early court cases involving Indians reveal how interconnected settler and native societies were. … many whites were eager to sort out the entwined peoples … The first territorial legislature therefore began establishing lines of demarcation." [29]

Frontier settlements across the northern borderlands of the U.S. presented a challenge to the prevailing binary approach to ethnicity and associated rights. "People with the two kinds of 'blood,'" personified the porous boundaries between whites and Indian and became the focus of an extended controversy as lawmakers determined whom to include in the territorial electorate. Eventually the legislature reconsidered then reaffirmed by close vote a law opening the polls to "civilized half-breeds, whether literate or not."[30]

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[27] Ibid.

[28] Ibid.

[29] Alexander Harmon, *Indians in the Making: Ethnic Relations and Indian Identities around Puget Sound*, Univ. of California Press 1998, p. 160.

[30] Ibid.

Although they mistrusted many half-breeds as much for their presumed political orientation and French-Canadian ancestry as for their "Indian blood," legislators most often argued for or against the vote on the basis of the messages they expected to convey by assimilating people so close to "savagery."[31]

Given the prevailing priorities for economic development in the region, there were concerns about the signals they would be sending back East. The need to attract more immigrants to the thinly settled territory north of the Columbia is explained by Harmon:

According to Chenoweth, Arthur Denny opposed the half-breed vote for fear that people in the States would regard Washington Territory society as degraded, while Chenoweth believed that extending the franchise would prove the settlers' adherence to liberal ideals. Delegate Moseley sided with Chenoweth, saying that he wanted to live in a land where all men stood on the same level.[32]

Along the same lines, earlier in the century in Michigan, Illinois, Wisconsin, and Minnesota, the *Canadiens* and Metis had to be dealt with first. As the original re-settler group they were necessary intermediaries.[33] They knew the people, languages, and terrain. Their numbers, their strategic locations, and their skill sets meant that these half-breeds, or Metis, couldn't be ignored by the new decision makers.

Indians not only constituted a majority of the Washington Territory's population through the end of the 1850s, but they would remain thereafter a major component of the region's seasonal workforce. They were also the key to many local

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[31] Ibid.

[32] Ibid.

[33] *Songs upon the Rivers*, op.cit. pp. 85-175.

sources of nourishment provided by nature. And at a time when there were still no bridges.[34]

The Metis would still find themselves, however, in uncomfortable situations. Harmon notes, "Indians occasionally appeared to begrudge their mixed ancestry cousins any claim to Indian status." [35] This binary "either-or" ethnic choice tended to prevail for the next century and a half. In the interim, this could result in "neither of the above."

The Plamondon family

In *Washington: A Centennial History*, R. Ficken and C. LeWarne introduce Simon Sr. as "Simon Plomondon, the French Canadian who had established the Hudson's Bay Company farm on the Cowlitz Prairie, … becoming apparently the first permanent white settler above the Columbia."[36]

In the early decades of the 19th century several thousand Cowlitz Indians lived in villages in what is now Southwestern Washington. Esther Millet, one of the granddaughters of chief Scanewa through the first marriage of his son Wa-ha-Wa to a Chinook woman, was able to identify by name 29 Lower Cowlitz villages scattered along

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[34] Many of the descendants of these earlier inhabitants could sometimes have it both ways, assuming the rights of citizenship while maintaining tribal membership. Likewise, the authorities could be tempted to arbitrarily play it either way, depending upon circumstances. There is the case of the 1870 Lewis County census enumerators having superimposed a "W" for White over the original "I" for Indian for Cecile Bercier and 47 other individuals of mixed ancestry in the county rolls, mostly from the area around Toledo.

Roy Wilson cites this example in both his *History of the Cowlitz Indian Tribe*, as well as *Cheholtz and Mary Kiona of the Cowlitz*. In the latter source, Roy also tells us the census taker was "beefing up" the territory's White citizenship count in order to meet the population requirements for statehood. Wilson, *Cheholtz and Mary Kiona of the Cowlitz* op.cit p.96, as well as *History of the Cowlitz Indian Tribe*, 1988, op. cit., p.51,

[35] Harmon, op. cit.

[36] Robert Ficken, and Charles LeWarne Washington: *A Centennial History*, University of Washington Press, 1988, pp. 20-21.

the Cowlitz and Lewis tributaries of the Columbia.[37] The death of an estimated 90 percent of the Cowlitz, Lower Chinook, and others living along the Lower Columbia tributaries during a pandemic between 1830 and 1834 changed all of this.[38] The exceptionally high survival rate among the descendants of Scanewa strongly suggests that Thas-e-muth's husband, Simon, had access to the limited supply of quinine available within the region. The Hudson's Bay Company was known to have distributed quinine during this period to its employees, their families, and those of prominent Indian allies living nearby.

Several years earlier, in 1827, Chief Scanewa had agreed to serve as an ambassador for the new Anglo-Canadian combine operating under the Hudson's Bay Company heading. He accompanied an expedition to establish Fort Langley on the Lower Fraser River. Simon Plamondon, his son-in-law, came along as part of the company's workforce building the new facility. With them came Simon's Metis friend, the part-Abenaki Francois Noel Annance, serving as clerk. Their Abenaki Indian colleague, Pierre Charles, came as well, serving as the principal hunter.[39] All three were originally from the Abenaki Reserve of Odanak in Quebec.[40]

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[37] Roy I. Wilson, *Cheholtz and Mary Kiona of the Cowlitz*, op. cit. p38 The Iyall Wa-ha-Wa family is another branch of the family. The Iyalls are descended from the second marriage of Scanewa's son Wa-ha-Wa to a Cowlitz woman. The Iyall line would play a major role in Cowlitz and Nisqually tribal leadership into the 21st century.

[38] Most of the local inhabitants having European antecedents called this terrible affliction 'le fievre tremblant.' The handful of English-speakers among them, who were also the recordkeepers, tended to use their terms, 'the intermittent fever,' or 'the ague.' In the Chinook Jargon it was termed 'col sick, waum sick.'

[39] Bruce A. McKelvie, *Fort Langley: Birth Place of British Columbia*, Porcepic Books Limited, Victoria B.C. 1991, pp. 24-52.

[40] The two Abenaki tribal members from the Odanak Reserve, in Quebec have left their names on the map, one in Western B.C. and the other in Western Washington. Annacis Island just south of Vancouver, B.C. on the Fraser River was named after Noel Annance, and Pe Ell Washington was named for Pierre Charles, based on the transcription of the local Cowlitz Salishan pronunciation of his name. See Jean Barman, *Abenaki Daring, The Life and Writings of Noel Annance*, 1792-1869, McGill-Queen's University Press, Montreal 2016.

Tragically, attempting to return from Fort Langley in 1828, Chief Scanewa was murdered.[41] This serious setback for the Cowlitz people was then followed by the horrors of the pandemic.

In the meantime, the marriage of Thas-e-muth and Simon Sr. had taken place following Cowlitz Indian ceremonial traditions in her native village of Tawamiluhawihl. Thas-e-muth has since been known to her numerous descendants as Veronica. As the rate of cultural change accelerated, one of Thas-e-muth's younger sisters, Iusemusch (Harriet) would be married to Jean Baptiste Chalifoux at the nearby Catholic mission of St. Francois Xavier, the first church built in the state of Washington. Two Chalifoux daughters settled with their husbands on the prairie along the Muck Creek tributary of the Nisqually River. Each Chalifoux daughter had a large family, while other Chalifoux descendants joined the nearby Puyallup Tribe.[42]

When Simon Jr. and his three sisters lost their mother in 1834, Simon Sr. was employed building another outpost: Fort Nisqually. The Plamondon children were raised for a while by members of their extended family of the Nisqually Tribe. It is believed that Thas-e-muth's mother was Nisqually. After helping to build the initial establishments at Fort Langley and Fort Nisqually, a Canadian farming subsidiary was established closer to home on the Cowlitz Prairie behind his original cabin at "Plamondon's Landing." Simon, being one of *les gens libres*, or 'freeman,' continued to hire out his services.

In 1841, yet another prominent Euro-American came to the Cowlitz Prairie and documented his impressions. Following several years exploring the South Pacific and Antarctica, U.S. Navy's

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[41] Roy I. Wilson, *Cheholtz and Mary Kiona of the Cowlitz*, copyright 2012 by Roy I. Wilson, Napavine Washington, p. 45.

[42] Scanewa's oldest son, Ilacacca, or Richard as he had been baptized, had also been living in the area for years with his Nisqually relatives, working with the local Hudson's Bay Company post as a carpenter, farmer, foreman, and trail guide, per prior mention. After fighting in the war of 1855-'56 against the American militia as one of Leschi's lieutenants, Ilacacca later worked for the Indian agent on the Nisqually Reservation, ultimately relocating to the nearby Puyallup Reservation, where he joined his Chalifoux nephew.

Commodore Charles Wilkes arrived with his team to map the area in order to strengthen the U.S. diplomatic position, especially in the disputed area north of the Columbia. Wilkes hired Plamondon as a guide, along with his lifelong Abenaki friend and neighbor, Pierre Charles. Wilkes' appraisal of Plamondon in his narrative of the U. S. Exploring Expedition follows:

… a more useful person I have seldom met with, or one that could be so well depended upon… having left the Company's service, married an Indian wife and was now living on a farm of about 50 acres, at Cowlitz, independent and contented. I have seldom seen so pretty a woman as his wife … before her marriage she was the belle of the country, and celebrated for her feats of horsemanship.[43]

Plamondon engaged nine young Cowlitz Indians to paddle the two canoes transporting the small Wilkes party. The price for each Indian was one checked shirt. Wilkes continued, "We were soon seated and gliding down the stream, while each boatman exerted his fullest strength to send us onwards." And commenting later on the Cowlitz crew that had transported him to Astoria, Wilkes wrote, "…they were the merriest set of fellows I ever saw, full of fun, and laughing all day long: I became at last wearied with their incessant gaiety." [44]

In 1841 the families living on Cowlitz Prairie received yet another important visitor, HBC Governor George Simpson, who noted six families re-settled there. This was in addition to the company operations that employed, at that time, 23 servants - a mix of Hawaiians, Canadians, and Cowlitz Indians. The locals received favorable mention from Simpson, rare as it was. "... Cowlitz, Checaylis, and 'Squally [were] … industrious people; and as proof... they do very well as agricultural servants." [45] By 1843, 11 of the 32 men on the payroll as laborers at the Cowlitz Farm were actually local Cowlitz natives.

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[43]Lt. Charles Wilkes' Narrative of the United States Exploring Expedition: During the years 1838, 1839, 1840, 1841,1842, Volume 4, Lea and Blanchard, Philadelphia, 1845, p. 317.

[44] Ibid., p319

[45] George Simpson, *Narrative of a Journey Round the World, During the Years 1841 and 1842*, Henry Colburn Publ., London, 1947. Vol. 1, pp. 108-9.

Simon Plamondon Sr. had meanwhile been an active participant in the further developments around the region during the transitional years of 1846-'47, Simon was elected in 1846 to be one of a handful of representatives from north of the Columbia to the first legislative assembly of the bi-national Oregon Provisional Government, established immediately preceding the treaty of partition. In 1847 the Lewis County Court convened in his home. Simon operated the first sawmill in the area and enjoyed a bumper wheat crop. The first brick kiln north of the Columbia was built on his property by the partnership of Hancock and Rabbeson. Then in July 1847, following the death of Emelie Finlay, Simon took another wife, Louise Henriette Pelletier, a niece of Archbishop F.N. Blanchet and his younger brother Bishop A.M.A. Blanchet.[46]

Through the 1850s some twenty families of *Canadien* and *Metis* origins – including those identified as Canadian Indians – settled in the Cowlitz and Newaukum prairies. New additions to this settlement, included the Cottenoir, Bouchard, Loziere (Laussier), Provost, Farron, Lamoreaux, St. Martin, Ladue, Gobin, Dauphin, Brulais, Lapoeterie, Sarreault, Rochbrune, Thibeau, Delaunais, LaPlante, Chalifoux, and Gravelle families.[47]

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[46] Judith Irwin, *The Life of Simon Plamondon*, op. cit. p. 8. A not unusual characteristic of frontier marriages straddling sequential generations, the first wife of Simon had been Native American, his second was a Metisse [Metis] of mixed ancestry, and his third, a white woman.

[47] Most of the progenitors of these families are included as former North West Company employees in the appendices to Lloyd Keith and John C. Jackson's *The Fur Trade Gamble: North West Company on the Pacific Slope, 1800-1820* published by the WSU Press in 2015. This business history of the North West Company, concludes that the partnership's legacy in the Pacific Northwest lay in matters of demographics. In the last sentence of his introduction, Jackson tells us, "This French-speaking, Catholic community became the original multicultural population base and human heritage of the North West Company Columbia Adventure." (Keith & Jackson, xii)

Furthermore, in the final chapter of this book, titled "The Human Legacy," the co-authors summarize the particular ingredients in this unique regional ethnic stew. "Some were Iroquoian and Algonkian speakers, some transplanted Sandwich Islanders, but most were *Canadiens* whose passage is still marked by Francophone names they laid on many of the native tribes, and on landmarks of the geography." (Keith & Jackson, p. 279)

The original political convention calling for the separation of the region north of the Columbia from Oregon Territory was held at Cowlitz Landing (near Toledo) in 1851 with multiple *Canadiens* participating. The second meeting calling for separation was held in November 1852 in the hamlet of Monticello,[48] as commemorated by a monument near the Longview Public Library. Simon Plamondon Sr. participated in both, but was the only *Canadien* among the signatories at the second convention.[49]

Re-engineering Washington Territory

Isaac Stevens, the first Superintendent of Indian Affairs to arrive in the newly-minted federal territory of Washington showed up in late 1853. He also had the title of Governor, but folks were getting a bit ahead of themselves. At this time Washington was still an Indian Territory. Stevens, a politically active Army engineer, had been appointed to re-engineer the territory's land distribution and demographics.

Scheduling called for negotiations in rapid sequence starting in December 1854 with Indian tribes in Western Washington and

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[48] The HBC had previously established a granary and trans-shipment facility in the mid-1840s at the site at the confluence of the Cowlitz and Columbia rivers, which was about to acquire the interim name of Monticello. The HBC called it the Caweeman post. Its original purpose was to support contracts with the Russian American Company to supply wheat for its outposts in Alaska. The wheat was shuttled down river in small boats from its farming affiliate on Cowlitz Prairie.

The original resident *Canadiens* employees located on the lower Cowlitz with their Indian wives and families were Joachim Thibeau and Antoine Petit dit Gobin. It is no surprise that early settler Peter Crawford would note that both men were more fluent in the Chinook Jargon than English. By the time of the Monticello gathering in late 1852, Thibeau and Gobin had relocated to Cowlitz Prairie where each of them registered a Donation Land Claim. Consequently, the early founders of Cowlitz County and Washington Territory were Americans who had arrived by the early 1850s, with names like Huntington and Catlin.

[49] Catherine Ellen Lee Farver (descendant of Simon Plamondon through his marriage to Henriette Pelletier, the niece of Father Blanchet), "Young Simon Plamondon won himself hand of chief's daughter," *Cowlitz Historical Quarterly*, March 2003, Vol. 45, Number 1, pp. 24-5.

Puget Sound. This was to be followed by another campaign in the spring and summer months of 1855 with the interior tribes east of the Cascades. Signatories of the first one, in December, identified as the Medicine Creek Treaty for its location on a creek in the Nisqually River delta, included Nisqually headman Leschi, his brother Quiemuth, along with Scanewa's oldest son, Ilacacca, and sixty-odd other signatures of Nisqually, Swaxin, and Puyallup people.[50] As it turned out, other than the first treaty signed at Medicine Creek on the Nisqually River delta, all of Stevens' subsequent treaties in Washington Territory would have to wait until 1859 for ratification by Congress. This was in good part due to the violence that ensued in the wake of his imposed treaties.

In the interim, the overbearing Stevens proceeded with the plan, intending to rapidly bring all the tribes of Western Washington under treaty before heading to the other side of the Cascades.

The tribes in the southwestern corner of the newly designated territory began gathering during the third week of February 1855 at a point on the Lower Chehalis River. One of Stevens' supporters, James Swan, provided modern historians with an eyewitness account of the Chehalis Council in his *Three Years on the Northwest Coast*. On the issue of relocation, he paraphrases the speech in Chinook Jargon of one of the participating chiefs from the Chinook tribe, Narkarty:

We are willing to sell our land, but … [do] not want to go away from our homes. Our fathers, and mothers, and ancestors are buried there. … We wish, therefore each to have a place on our land where we can live, and you may have the rest; but we can't go … among the other tribes. We are not friends … soon we would all be killed.[51]

Swan noted, "This same idea was expressed by all, and repeated every day."[52] He added, "I think the governor would have …

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[50] Maria Pascualy and Cecilia Carpenter, "Remembering Medicine Creek," *The Story of the First Treaty signed in Washington*, Firewood Press, 2005.

[51] James G. Swan, *The Northwest Coast, or Three Years in Washington Territory*, University of Washington Press (originally published in 1857), pp. 345-46.

[52] Ibid., p. 346.

succeeded in inducing them all to sign had it not been for … several white persons who had been industrious in circulating … reports to thwart his plans, and most all of them had been in the employ of the Hudson's Bay Company."[53]

Isaac Stevens' biographer, Kent Richards, gave us his assessment of the proceedings:

The most objectionable point was the combination of several tribes on one reservation. … The council dragged on. … For the first time the governor went home with his mission unaccomplished. … Stevens regarded the Indians of Southwest Washington as relatively unimportant people, that could be brought under treaty at a later time.[54]

Michael Simmons did return to conclude treaties with the Quinault and Quillayute tribes, in January 1856, but the Chehalis, Cowlitz, and Chinook Indians never signed a formal treaty.

Other aides of Stevens provided us with what passed for astute analysis at the time: "Simmons and Gibbs concluded that "cultus [Chinook Jargon for 'worthless'] whites were exerting bad influence. ... Explaining further, Kent Richards tells us that the influence of half-breeds and disaffected whites upon Indian relations was nothing new in American history, but in the Northwest the long period of the fur trade and many years of miscegenation made this group one of unusual size and potential power. When the governor and his agents spoke of "cultus whites" they clearly had two groups in mind. One group consisted of French-Canadians (who might have Indian blood or Indian wives) most of whom had been employed by the Hudson's Bay Company.[55] [Making matters worse] "To many Americans these men were doubly suspect because of their relationship with the British. …The second group consisted of liquor dealers who might … also belong to the first group."[56]

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[53] Ibid.

[54] Richards, Isaac Stevens: *Young Man in a Hurry*, op. cit., pp. 208-9.

[55] Ibid., pp. 202-3.

[56] Ibid., p. 203.

The War of 1855-'56

Stevens next headed up the Columbia to the Walla Walla Valley to meet with the Sahaptin-speaking tribes in late spring: Yakama, Walla Walla, Cayuse, Umatilla, and Nez Perce. A treaty could be imposed, but not necessarily peace. Hostilities would break out on both sides of the Cascades several months later in October 1855.

Though having refused to sign the proposed treaty earlier in the year, the Cowlitz Tribe chose not to participate in the Indian War of 1855-'56. Several individuals chose otherwise, however, such as Scanewa's son Ilacacca who elected to join his Nisqually relatives. Deemed to be "friendly Indians," the Cowlitz had been ordered to gather at the farm of Simon Plamondon, who was appointed Indian sub-agent responsible for the Cowlitz. For the winter and spring of 1856 most of the Indians living along the middle and upper Cowlitz River came under the direct supervision of Plamondon on his 640-acre Donation Land Claim. His land had become a temporary reservation.[57] It is located on the plateau just off today's Interstate 5, northwest of the town of Toledo.[58] During this time the Washington Territorial militia formed several companies to protect this strategic corridor. In addition to units of Euro-American settlers, one known as the Cowlitz Rangers was composed mostly of Canadian Metis and Canadian Indians. The Rangers' tasks included patrolling and enforcing internment, while also constructing block houses and a new military road between Cowlitz Landing and Monticello.[59]

In his *History of the Cowlitz Indian* Tribe Roy Wilson makes a reference to the duties performed by the Cowlitz Rangers during the general state of insecurity that prevailed during the war. One 10-man unit was under the command of Pierre Charles, the

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[57] Judith Weatherford Irwin, edited by Roy I. Wilson & Marsha J. Williams, *The Dispossessed: The Cowlitz Tribe of Southwest Washington in the Nineteenth Century*, copyright Roy I. Wilson 2014, pp. 254-6

[58] Today Plamondon Road runs through his former DLC, near the Catholic Mission site. More recently there is a large image of Simon painted on the nearby water tower, located just before the town of Toledo.

[59] Wilson, *Cheholtz and Mary Kiona of the Cowlitz*, op. cit, p.79.

Abenaki Indian from Eastern Canada, a former employee of the HBC. A letter dated May 26, 1856, to Governor Isaac Stevens transcribed on behalf of Pierre Charles stated:

Found seven Indians which I brought back without any incident. At our first sight they got frightened, and tried to make good their escape, but I immediately had them surrounded and as soon as they knew us, they were willing to come. I have placed these Indians with the rest on the reservation. … I am about starting for the Cowlitz Falls where I understand that there are four more Indians… I will mark a road for the volunteers who are going to build a fort at the C[K]likitac Prairie.[60]

A sampling of individuals listed on the Washington Territorial Militia's Muster Rolls for the Cowlitz Rangers (mounted) identified members of the following families: Farron, St. Martin, Plamondon, St. Germain, Bercier, Thibault, Kattman, and Lozier. Also included were one each from the Gobin, Prevost, Laramie, Cottenoir, Blanchet, Ledoux, Jovial, Chappellier, Dauphine, Bouchard, Sarrault, and Laplante families.[61] Tribal historian Judith Irwin summarized the war experience of the Cowlitz tribe under the leadership of Simon Plamondon Jr.'s uncle Atwin (Antoine), as follows:

When war erupted in 1855 between the Indians and the whites, Chief Atwin Stockam, son of Chief Schanewa, was given to understand that the Cowlitz Tribe would be given a reservation if the restive Cowlitz warriors remained peaceful. So, instead of joining the militant Yakimas and Klickitats, 300 Cowlitz people were held … on the Cowlitz Prairie under Indian agent Simon Plamondon's care. … If these Cowlitz – excellent horsemen and riflemen, "intimately acquainted with all the roads, trails, and fastness of the country" – had become militant, they could have closed the Cowlitz corridor … the only viable supply and communication route connecting the military headquarters at Olympia and Fort Steilacoom with troops up the Columbia in Eastern Washington.

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[60] Ibid., p. 80.

[61] Legislative Archives of Washington, Olympia, Militia Muster Rolls for 1855-56.

After the war ended in 1856, "… The promise made to Chief Atwin Stockam of a Cowlitz reservation in return for cooperation was apparently forgotten."[62]

Following the war, Cowlitz Indians returned to their winter villages along the Cowlitz River. Former Tribal Chairman Roy Wilson tells us in his Tribal History that they were soon off to their seasonal sources of roots and game located in the interior mountain valleys. The rate of acculturation accelerated as another cycle of white immigration began. There was initially enough land "… available to maintain hunting grounds and fishing stations along the river. Interior gathering localities remained relatively immune to the developing settlement patterns that were proliferating near the water's edge and on prairie lands."[63]

In 1857, in his annual report to the Secretary of the Interior, the Indian agent for the region, Sidney S. Ford, formerly commander of the Cowlitz Rangers, stated: "… I cannot too strongly represent to you the necessity of making treaties with all the Indians of my district. Living, as most of them do among the settlements, with no one locality which they can call their own, no place ... where they can have any security that they will not be compelled to abandon ..., and no grazing spot from which their horses may not be excluded the next week by the fence of the settler." [64]

Having failed to obtain compliance with the initial Quinault scheme, the government decided that a small reservation on the Chehalis River could be a default option. But, again, there was non-compliance by the Cowlitz. In 1868 Superintendent T. J. McKenney wrote: "I summoned all these Indians … the Cowlitz Indians obeyed the invitation to be present at the distribution but refused to accept either goods or provisions, believing as they declared, that the acceptance of presents would be construed as a surrender of their title to lands on the Cowlitz, where they have always lived.[65]

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[62] Judith W. Irwin, "The Dispossessed: The Cowlitz Tribe Continues its 140 year Struggle for Recognition and Restitution," *Columbia* magazine, Summer 1994, p. 6.

[63] Wilson, *History of the Cowlitz Indian Tribe*, 1988, op. cit., p. 83.

[64] Ibid., p. 84.

[65] Ibid., p. 86.

Land changes hands, people come and go

As the forces of economic integration gradually engulfed the Cowlitz Tribe, members were able to retain their identity. Wilson explains:

"Initially, most Cowlitz rejected reservation life; primarily because this might be construed as indemnity for their lands. Many Cowlitz took jobs as boat hands, fishermen, and lumberjacks. As agriculture progressed, positions became available on a seasonal basis for field hands, which Cowlitz women, skilled in gathering tasks, adapted to easily. … Refusing to leave their ancestral homelands, some Cowlitz tribal members acquired land through applicable homestead acts or from private purchase. Others, unable or unwilling to take up a homestead or purchase land privately, migrated to the reservations of other tribes.

The Puyallup reservation … offered educational advancement to Cowlitz children while their parents worked in the hop fields of the Puyallup Valley. Other Cowlitz merely stayed away from populated areas and maintained traditional lifestyles.[66]

Judith Irwin provides her own snapshot of how tribal members were able to hang on:

When the Indian Homestead Act passed in 1884 … Upper and Lower Cowlitz took out papers for homesteads – Willie Youckton, John Kimpus, Katie Tillikish, Chief Cheholtz, and John Ike Kinswa, ... Many found jobs: the women doing housecleaning and laundry, the men working on farms and log drives, and in the woods and sawmills. … Those who remained in Cowlitz country maintained tribal ties under aging Chief Atwin Stockam. [67]

A critical issue was the concern over defending the new farms from possible claim jumpers among the later arrivals. In 1847, a dozen locals, almost all former PSAC employees, including

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[66] Wilson, *History of the Cowlitz Indian Tribe*, op.cit. pp. 86-87.

[67] Judith W. Irwin, *Dispossessed*, : op. cit., p. 7. Having previously served as chief, Scanewa's son Atwin (Antoine) re-emerged as tribal Chairman in 1878 when the Office of Indian Affairs demanded the amalgamation of the three bands living in the central corridor – the Upper and Lower Cowlitz, plus the Lewis River Cowlitz.

Simon Sr., signed a petition for protection against claim jumping.[68] Though Simon Sr. had signed this earlier petition, he let his guard down 14 years later. It was Simon Jr., who would pay the price, losing his land when one such enterprising American named Warbass, jumped his claim. This is the same gentleman who, during the War of 1855-'56, illegally confiscated and destroyed the guns that tribal members had relied upon for hunting.

Warbass was having a few drinks with Simon Sr. in 1861, when, apparently misrepresenting the words on a piece of paper, passed it to Simon for his signature. This strained relations between father and son thereafter. In 1908, 47 years later, Simon Bonaparte Plamondon resorted to a bilingual attorney in order to seek help in regaining his former claim. Simon Jr. provided the following oral summary as to how his family had lost the property, located two miles downstream from the modern town of Toledo. The following is a transcription of the letter dated June 16, 1908, which the notary translated from French into English:

"…. Simon Boneparte Plamondon Jr. … duly sworn … born a member of the Cowlitz tribe … That his father … Simon Plomondon, and his mother's maiden name was Scan Inewa, a daughter of Chief Scan Inewa, head chief of the Cowlitz tribe of Indians. That he was born in Vancouver … Washington, on March 20th 1830. That his father being a white man, he became acquainted with the white-men and was always shown as a peaceful and friendly Indian, and often rendered valuable services to the government of the United States by acting as interpreter … by interpreting the Indian language with the French language.[69]

Simon Jr. stated that in 1848 he entered a Donation Land Claim on the west side of the Cowlitz River containing 640 acres, which he filed in Oregon City, at the Oregon Provisional

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[68] John C. Jackson, *Children of the Fur Trade*, op. cit. Among the nine individuals signing affidavits supporting the original claim, the first one cited in the abstract published by the Seattle Genealogical Society of "Washington Territory Land Claims" by settlers prior to 1856 had been Simon Jr.'s brother-in-law, Joseph St. Germain.

[69] Notarized 1908 Letter to the Bureau of Indian Affairs dictated by Simon Plamondon, Jr. in French and translated into English.

Government's land office. Thereafter, "… the affiant herein built a log house on said claims and held peaceful possession of said land for eleven years."[70]

When Simon Jr. returned from Fort Victoria where he had recently been employed, he went to his cabin, " … and was met by E.D. Wabuss who threatened to kill him if he entered his cabin or remained on the place. Thus … the affiant preferring life to death was forced to give up the … land. … "[71] The letter stated: "That at the present time the affiant is 78 years of age, … [requests] the government shall use his power to see that one of its wards, who has always served his country, both in time of war and peace shall have his interests fully protected."[72] Simon signed under his name with an X. Witnessing his mark were C. F. Nessly and O. D. Bouchard (Simon's son in-law).

Warbass had turned his newly acquired property into a river landing that he renamed "Warbassport." A friend of Governor Stevens, W.W. Miller, subsequently acquired the claim of Simon Jr., also gaining an interest in 16 other Donation Land Claims. Miller acquired these properties after they had been offered as security on loans that he had advanced to individuals. The Plamondon, Dauphin, and Gobin properties had complex histories, which engaged Miller in long and drawn out legal processes.[73]

The norm for loss of property by early settlers of whatever origins was through sale, abandonment during the multiyear process for establishing the claim, non-payment of taxes, or foreclosure on assorted loans and liens. This would be more representative of how many *Canadien* and Metis families eventually lost their DLC land holdings. Claim jumpers would have been the exception, not the general practice. Liens on extensive property holdings to

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[70] Ibid.

[71] Ibid.

[72] Ibid,

[73] William L. Lang, *Confederacy of Ambition: William Winlock Miller and the Making of Washington Territory*, University of Washington Press, Seattle and London 1996.

secure the advance of scarce capital, and the subsequent payment of debt, were standard practice in a cash-poor frontier economy. Land was plentiful, but there was a premium on cash. A generation or two later, descendants of many of the Metis and Indian families would lose their allotments on particular reservations in much the same way. Whether off-reservation, or as occurred on the Puyallup, Umatilla, Flathead, Colville, Grand Ronde, and other reservations, family finances required that certain assets be mortgaged or ultimately liquidated, too often on unfavorable terms.

The Simon Jr. DLC later passed through the hands of various creditors as Toledo grew just upriver. Citing Plamondon's sworn statement contesting the legitimacy of that sale:

… E. D. Wabuss sold the land …to one Fred Clark [who] borrowed the money to pay said Wabuss for the land from one W. Winlock Miller. Fred Clark failed to pay the debt and … Miller foreclosed said mortgage, but thereby secured no title … for the reason no title was vested in either E. D. Wabuss or Fred Clark.[74]

The background provided by William Lang in his *Confederacy of Ambition* details Miller's modus operandi:

Miller had made his fortune by limiting his risks … from the time he turned north on the Oregon Trail, away from the California goldfields. The basis of a good part of his wealth was vested in the most conservative of valuations – land.
Much of his acquisition of land, however, devolved directly from money lending. Throughout the 1860s and 1870s, Miller acquired increasing amounts of land through foreclosures … In many cases, his debtors had to offer landholdings as security that were worth much more than the loan value …He acquired … significant tracts that … were part of original Donation Act grants, [and] Homestead Act claims after

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[74] Notarized Letter of Simon Plamondon, Jr. to Bureau of Indian Affairs. Not long after the return of Simon Jr. from Victoria, in 1858, Warbass, being short of cash, had assigned the property as payment for accumulated debts to three individuals named Fitzhugh, Forsyth, and Balch. In 1861 W.W. Miller of Olympia enters the picture as the assignee for the property. Meanwhile, the patent record in the Lewis County register shows the land claim for the 321.68 acres affronting the river was not actually granted to E. D. Warbass until March 11, 1867.

1862,... By the mid-1870s, Miller had acquired undivided interests in eight major Donation Act claims and partial interest in nine others.[75]

As for the acquisitions cited by Lang, W.W. Miller gained an interest in part of the DLC of *Canadien* Olivier Dauphin in 1866. Efforts to obtain the balance of the property from heirs in order to make it into a marketable lot, took another half dozen years.[76]

Disposition of the property associated with the DLC of *Canadien* Antoine Gobin who had previously worked at the HBC trans-shipment facility at the confluence of the Cowlitz and Columbia rivers, took until 1872 to clear the patent. Miller had to get Gobin to file a revised claim and then locate his naturalization papers.[77]

As for Simon Jr., he had, in the interim, acquired another piece of property further downstream through the homesteading process, located on Olequa Creek, near the Metis village of Olequa. His uncle, Chief Atwin weighed in to help Simon Jr. in his appeal to the BIA to get his land back, thereby initiating an expanded approach to acquiring compensation for the tribe's lost territory collectively. It was finally achieved in 1970 (Cowlitz Tribe of Indians v. the United States of America, Docket No, 218)[78].

A railroad connection between the Columbia and Puget Sound was completed in late 1873, but agricultural produce from Cowlitz Prairie farms still relied upon the river for efficient bulk shipment downstream. Consequently, river traffic and the associated jobs thrived for several more decades. In 1878 Joseph Kellogg, one of the pioneer Columbia steamboat men, built the 109-foot steamer *Toledo* in Portland, Oregon; it was specifically designed for service on the Cowlitz River. After determining that the *Toledo* could navigate about two miles above Cowlitz Landing, Kellogg decided to locate a warehouse and dock at this

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[75] Lang, op.cit. pp. 218-219.

[76] Ibid.

[77] Ibid. pp. 219-220.

[78] Wilson, *History of the Cowlitz Indian Tribe*, op.cit. pp. 91 & 155.

new location,[79] purchasing an acre on the riverfront from the *Canadien* settler Augustin Rochon. This was the same man who had built the first dedicated Catholic Church in the state back in 1839 after crossing the continent from Montreal with Father F. N. Blanchet.

To celebrate the transaction Rochon's wife gave a dinner at which the steamboat captain was the honored guest. It was generally agreed that moving the landing to this new location would result in a new town springing up, and the captain gallantly suggested that his hostess select the name. Mrs. Rochon looked out the window and noticed the name of the Captain's boat tied up at the River bank. Thereupon she proposed that the new town be named Toledo.[80]

Eight years later Kellogg and several partners purchased the rest of the Rochon property and developed the town site of Toledo.[81] As the 20th century progressed, many of the tribal members whose grandparents had crossed the Cascades to the Yakama Reservation during an earlier period began to return to the Tawamiluhawihl area where Toledo, Vader, and Winlock are now located.

Spoken languages and identity

The perseverance of the tribe over the last two centuries in asserting its territorial rights can be matched by the persistence in use of the tribal dialects of both Salishan and Sahaptian languages, later supplemented by Chinook Jargon and French. As the 19th century dawned, most villagers living along the Cowlitz River and Puget Sound spoke their coastal Salishan language. Those located near the confluence of the Cowlitz and Columbia rivers were often bilingual due to cohabitation with the Chinookan tribes. However, Cowlitz Indians living on the Lewis River and those living along the upper Cowlitz, had increasingly adopted the Sahaptin languages of their Klickitat and Yakama neighbors.

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[79] McClelland, op. cit.

[80] Ibid.

[81] McClelland, op. cit., pp. 39-42.

During the second half of the 19th century, Cowlitz tribal members remained scattered up and down the Cowlitz corridor, now embedded in and around the new settler communities. The river continued to offer employment opportunities. In addition to work in their own independent economic activities and seasonal opportunities for employment with white farmers and business operations, there were jobs as deck hands and on the waterfront. Furthermore, during the late summer when the river level got too low for the steam-powered river boats, individual tribal members could still offer their canoes for transport. Among the Cowlitz tribal members continuing to apply their knowledge of their river to the newer forms of transportation was George K'tel, a well-known river pilot - Indian George as he was known about the Toledo waterfront.

Socio-economic pressures continued as tribal members faced the stark choice of assimilation in their homeland, i.e., off-reservation, or re-assimilation by leaving Cowlitz country for one of the designated reservations. In either case, children were required to attend a mix of local public schools and/or Indian boarding schools where instruction and participation was in English. The usual generational split followed, as the local language(s) of parents and grandparents receded into the background. Late in the century the K'tel family would be among those who opted to move to the confederation of Sahaptian-speaking tribes consolidating on the Yakama Reservation just south of the city of Yakima.

Fortunately, recorded interviews by Canadian scholar Dale Kincaid captured the Cowlitz language spoken along the middle and lower river. Two of George K'tel's grandchildren, Emma and Lucy Northover, were among the last fluent speakers of this branch of the Coastal Salishan family of languages. Co-author Michael Hubbs, former tribal council member, is working to pass on the language to the younger generation, as are numerous colleagues in the other Coastal and Interior Salishan tribes.

Anticipating the imminent establishment of a separate territorial government, i.e. independence from Oregon, the newly arrived Americans organized a July 4, 1853, celebration of Independence Day at Cowlitz Landing. In his book, *Cowlitz*

Corridor: Historical River Highway of the Pacific Northwest, John M. McClelland, Jr. cited an eyewitness account that reminds us that this was still a borderland in transition.

Dr. Pasquier addressed his "… audience, in French, reminding us of the honor and thanks due to Lafayette … in our struggle for independence. Many of our French citizens were present and joined heartily in the celebration. The presence of the ladies from the country round added much to the pleasure and good order of the day. [82]

Of course, the use of the term "French" here is appropriate when it refers to the language. Its use, however, misrepresents the actual demographics of the community. The older settler group present that day was composed of a mix of *Canadien* families with Cowlitz or other indigenous antecedents stretching back to eastern Canada.

Later, references to use of French includes notations in Simon Jr.'s translated 1908 letter appealing the loss of his property to a claim jumper. Six weeks after dictating the 1908 letter, a supporting sworn statement was provided by Edward Cottenoire.[83] The lawyer, H. Nallets, also cited his interpretation service for the particular sort of Indian represented by Mr. Cottenoire: "H. Nalletts … duly sworn deposes … that he understands both the English and French languages… Edward Cottonaire [sic] the above affiant understands the French language. That he has carefully interpreted the above affadavit (sic) to said Cottonaire [sic], and is satisfied that the affiant understands … ".[84]

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[82] *Cowlitz Corridor: Historical River Highway of the Pacific Northwest*, John M. McClelland, Jr., Longview Publishing Co., Wa., 1953.

[83] Edward Cottenoire sworn statement on August 3, 1908, notarized by Johnson (as a supporting document for Simon, Jr. letter above) who " … has lived with the Cowlitz tribe of Indians for seventy years. … That he knew said Simon Plomondon Jr. [who] lived on this claim for ten years. … this land was taken possession of by one E. D. Warbuss … [who held] this land by force and that said Simon Plomondon did not dare go upon this land through fear of personal injury.

[84] Ibid.

Mary Anne Plamondon St. Germain (right, daughter of Simon Plamondon and his first wife, Thas-e-muth) and her husband Joseph St. Germain. *Photo courtesy Michael Hubbs*

Over the years, there had been confusion over the number of Simon Sr.'s wives and children. One document put the count of family members at 19 wives and 73 children. Tribal member Evelyn St. Germain Byrne quoted her grandmother, sister of Simon Jr., Marie Anne Plamondon St. Germain, "Soixante dix enfants! she exclaimed. "Et mon pere!"[85] [seventy children and my father]

Along with other Western Washington Indians, the Cowlitz would constitute a significant element in the seasonal work force, whether on-or off-reservation. This role in the local economy, combined with their widely scattered presence in and around the small towns of the Cowlitz corridor, would also contribute to the vitality and widespread use of the Chinook Jargon, or *Chinuk Wawa,* into modern times, especially among newcomers to the region.[86] Composed of a very flexible vocabulary, originally enumerated at several hundred words, this

[85] Wilson, *Cheholtz and Mary Kiona of the Cowlitz*, op. cit., p. 50.

[86] Robert Foxcurran, "Chinuk Wawa: The Evolution of a Pacific Northwest Trade Pidgin into a Community Heritage Language," Winter 2017-18 issue of *Columbia*, quarterly publication of the Washington State Historical Society, pp. 9-11.

unique regional pidgin provided for communication among neighbors of differing ethnic origins and between employer and employee.[87] Roy Wilson has edited and published a primer titled *Chinuk Wawa* for his language students and others who wish to improve their Chinook Jargon.[88] The core vocabulary consisted of words derived from coastal Native Americans straddling both sides of the 49th parallel. Words of European origin provide the balance of the vocabulary, split between French and English.[89] French terms tended to prevail earlier, identifying such items as tools and furniture, along with newly introduced domestic animals, plants and religion.[90]

Below is an excerpt from "Our Pioneer Families" of Lewis County written by Stella Shorey. She describes co-habitation of settlers and Natives, typical of rural communities of Washington, Oregon, and B.C. into the 20th century. She then mentions the use of *Chinuk Wawa*, often referred to as "the Indian jargon."

There were many Indians in the vicinity and in the summer they would gather wild blackberries … in their handmade baskets and peddle them around the country, coming to the store to trade them for sugar, bright calico, or other merchandise… My mother … could talk the Indian jargon as well as they… . [91]

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[87] George Lang, *Making Wawa: The genesis of Chinook Jargon*, UBC Press, Vancouver and Toronto, 2008, pp. 127-41. See also Robert T. Boyd, Kenneth M. Ames, and Tony A. Johnson editors, *Chinookan Peoples of the Lower Columbia*, University of Washington Press, Seattle 2013 and *Chinuk Wawa: as our elders teach us to speak it*, by the Confederated Tribes of the Grand Ronde Community of Oregon, 2012, distributed by University of Washington Press.

[88] Roy Wilson, *Chinook Wawa*, Second Edition, Wilson, Napavine 2011.

[89] George Lang, op. cit., pp. 93-98.

[90] Foxcurran, *Chinuk Wawa*, op. cit., pp. 8-9.91Ibid., (under the Shorey family story)

[91] Ibid., (under the Shorey family story)

An article provided by Wilson from the *Tacoma Tribune* of March 2, 1915, also references the use of Jargon. Meeting to elect a delegate to represent them in Washington D.C. to present their claims to the government, the "Cowlitz Indian Tribe" held a meeting at the A.O.U.W. hall in Chehalis to choose one of two candidates, Peter Kalama or Frank Iyall:

The discussion grew hot and heavy during the afternoon, one of the remarkable features being the part taken by some of the female members of the tribe who displayed marked suffragette tendencies. Several of the women made forcible speeches in Chinook as the jargon was understood by all present, while only about 25 or 30 spoke English. … .[92]

Michael Hubbs remembers a family reunion in 1993. His great uncle Leo Cottenoir, who had long been living in Wyoming, was talking with an elderly St. Germain cousin, Evelyn St. Germain Byrnes, alternately in French and Chinook Jargon. Michael had no idea that his great uncle knew these tongues. Michael also recalls that his Uncle Leo spoke positively about his experience at an Indian boarding school. "They taught me a trade," he said.

A manuscript composed from an exchange of letters between Michael's Uncle Lee and his Great Uncle Leo was recently turned over to Michaels' mother, Nadine. Leo remembered the early days at the Cowlitz tribal meetings, describing how Grandpa Dan Plamondon, during his brief tenure as tribal chairman, followed the practice of running meetings in multiple languages, e.g., Lower Cowlitz, Chinook Jargon, French and English.[93] The idea was to include everyone. Only the younger generation had mastered English.

Simon Sr. and Thas-e-muth had three daughters and a son, Simon Jr., all of whom had multiple children. Simon Jr. married a Metis named Marianne Farron. One of their sons, Daniel, had a daughter named Marie Josephine Plamondon, who likewise married a

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[92] Wilson, History, op. cit. p. 95, excerpt from an article published in *The Tacoma Tribune* of March 2, 1915, by a "staff correspondent," titled "Cowlitz Indians Send Delegate to Capitol."

[93] Manuscript compiled by Michael's uncle, Lee Rhodes, including interviews and correspondence with his uncle, Leo Cottenoir.

Simon Plamondon Jr. of Olequa and his family. Children seated (left to right): Alfred Catlin (son of Anna Catlin), Sadie Cottonoir, Vera Bertrand. Middle row (left to right): Dorothy Bertrand, Anna Catlin (holding Chester Catlin), Simon Plamondon, Jr., Mary Plamondon (Simon Jr.'s wife), Mary Bouchard (holding Alvie Bouchard), Oliver D. Bouchard; Mamie Cottonoir (holding Mable Rose Cottonoir), and Norbert Bouchard. Back Row (left to right): Alice Bertrand, Leon Plamondon, Daniel Plamondon, Mary Plamondon (Daniel's wife), Simon Plamondon III, and Eugene Cottonoir.

Metis, Eugene David Cottenoir. Marie Josephine's daughter Sadie Josephine Cottenoir was born in 1906. Sadie was about two years old in the 1908 family photo with her great grandparents, Simon Jr. and Marianne. Sadie, co-author Michael Hubbs' grandmother, later shared with him that during her stay at an Indian boarding school, where she learned to speak English, she had been told in her etiquette class that it would be in her best interest to marry a white man. Not long thereafter, Sadie did just that.[94]

Over the years, Michael asked his mother, Nadine Rhodes Hubbs, "Why didn't you enroll on the Yakama or Quinault reservations? You would have been eligible for benefits." Nadine's reply echoed the thoughts of many other tribal members who remained off-reservation in the Cowlitz corridor. It was always along the

[94] Sadie married Herman F. Rhodes and had a daughter named Nadine Esther Rhodes who married Michael's dad, Van Calvin Hubbs.

lines of "We're not Yakama or Quinault. We're Cowlitz." In 1985 when his grandma Sadie passed, the tribe had still not received federal recognition. However, Michael's mother, Nadine Esther Rhodes Hubbs, was present at the federal recognition ceremony in Washington D.C. in 2000. Sadie had long wanted to stand up some day as an equal to members of other tribes who often dismissed the Cowlitz as just a "land claim tribe," i.e., not real Indians.

The multiple languages spoken along the cosmopolitan Cowlitz corridor in the 19th century remain visible on our modern maps in the names of rivers so easily crossed driving north on Interstate 5. The rivers crossed are the Newaukum (Salishan), Skookumchuck River (Chinook Jargon for strong flowing water), Chehalis River (Salishan), and finally flowing into the Salish Sea, the Deschutes River (Canadien).

The turn of the century, then yet another

University of Washington historian Alexandra Harmon provides a helpful synopsis of the dilemma faced by Western Washington Indians and the Office of Indian Affairs at the beginning of the 20th century: "In western (sic) Washington … many people of native ancestry remained away from Indian reservations, and almost none depended on government for their sustenance. But whether classified as emancipated citizens or federal wards, most occupied an ambiguous status that entailed unwanted liabilities."[95]

The government's original policy was to segregate Indians in communities of their own, each attached to an agency. But as the years passed officials discovered Indians away from the reservations, often on homesteads or purchased lands.[96]

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[95] Harmon, op. cit. pp. 76-78.

[96] Ibid., pp. 166-7. Furthermore, there was the challenge of a bureaucratic process that was intent upon assigning a single tribal identity to an individual or family. Harmon cites the example of a South Puget Sound Indian. Catherine McKinney, wife of a Swinomish "half breed," could have called herself a Mud Bay Indian because her father was born of Mud Bay parents. She could have enrolled as Squaxin, because Squaxin Island was the reservation intended for Mud Bay Indians, or she could have enrolled with her husband [as Swinomish]. Instead, McKinney sought membership in the Puyallup Tribe, saying that her mother was born among the Puyallups.

Moreover, as noted by Harmon, by the early 20th century, whether living on or off reservations, diversity within the Indian population increased dramatically. Fifty years of radical change had produced different occupational, educational, social, and legal profiles for successive generations of Indians.[97] Consequently, much unfinished business remained for the Bureau of Indian Affairs, regardless of the treaties and reservations.

For the Cowlitz Tribe, Roy Wilson, born on the Yakama Reservation in 1927 of a Cowlitz father, provides us with a summary of the distribution of the tribal population around 1900. The Cowlitz Tribe could be found: "along the lower river, where … the best land [was] quickly claimed by the incoming settlers. [Here] the Cowlitz concentrated in settlements near commercial centers. … Along the upper river to the east … members had time to take advantage of the numerous homestead laws, and did so." [98]

Some tribal members took advantage of the government's offer to move to the Chehalis or Puyallup reservations. Others migrated "… to the Yakama reservation, and became members of the Yakama Tribe under provisions of the Wheeler-Howard Act. A few remained at large on the land, living in their accustomed manner."[99]

And among the many tribal members who stayed put, we have the family of Simon Plamondon Jr. Besides farming and ranching on his Olequa homestead, like many of his neighbors he would earn extra money working periodically as a logger. The long gone Metis village of Olequa was on the western edge of Cowlitz Prairie on Olequa Creek below the cabin of Simon Jr.[100]

Like their father, Dan Plamondon and his two brothers found work in logging and at local lumber mills. Daniel also ran a ferry

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[97] Ibid., p. 176.

[98] Op. cit.,Wilson, *History of the Cowlitz Indian Tribe*, p. 91.

[99] Ibid.

[100] Olequa is another one of Washington's numerous ghost towns.

The front entrance and south corner of what remains of Simon Plamondon Jr.'s 1867 cabin on Cowlitz Prairie, September 2019. *Photo courtesy Michael Hubbs*

operation on the river crossing at Olequa and later, briefly, served as tribal chairman. Dan had three daughters, while Simon III married but had no children. Leonard Plamondon never did marry. Marie Louise was married several times. She inherited the Olequa farm, subsequently selling it.[101] The family of Simon Jr. is buried in the Vader Catholic Cemetery.[102]

[101] Marie Louise Plamondon's son by her second marriage was Clifford Wilson. Clifford was a tribal president. During his time in office the Tribe became one of the eight charter members of the Small Tribes Organization of Western Washington (STOWW). Clifford is not related to Roy Wilson.

[102] Numerous members of the St. Germain and Scarborough families are also buried in Vader. In addition to this enormous extended family composed of the direct descendants of Simon Plamondon by his sequential wives, these four oldest children had dozens more first cousins from their mother's Cowlitz brothers and sisters. Taken together, these descendants of Chief Scanewa by his multiple wives (variously enumerated as between four and seven wives in number) account for a large portion of the modern Cowlitz tribe.

Tribal reconfiguration continues around the Northwest

In the Colville Valley, in the far northeast corner of Washington, there is the case of those Metis families who were descendants of former employees of the Hudson's Bay Company who chose to stay instead of relocating with other family members to the Flathead and Colville reservations. This story is laid out by Jean Barman and Bruce Watson in the summer 1999 issue of *Pacific Northwest Quarterly*: "Fort Colville's Fur Trade Families and the Dynamics of Race in the Pacific Northwest." Some Metis families chose to stay in the Colville Valley after the original Colville reservation was transferred to marginal land on the opposite shore of the Columbia. In contrast to the Metis component of the Cowlitz, these generally opted out of tribal membership or attempted too late in the process.[103]

Just prior to World War I, the federal government began to implement a plan to expand the Quinault Reservation and turn it into one that would provide the land base for a confederation consolidating multiple tribes from Southwestern Washington as they had done east of *les Cascades* on the Colville, Yakima, Umatilla, and Flathead reservations. The Office of Indian Affairs belatedly realized, however, that the supply of land on the Quinault could never meet the demand of the thousands of off-reservation Indians of south western Washington. Thus, a tribal confederation based on a belatedly expanded Quinault Reservation was stillborn. Though another setback, a certain number of allotments were provided on the Quinault to members of the Chinook, Cowlitz, and several smaller tribes.[104]

A federal agent with a special charter was assigned in 1916 to try to sort out the situation. Though challenges of identifying

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[103] Barman and Watson, Ibid. Also, see the last chapter of Jack Nisbet's *Visible Bones* where Chewelah resident Marie Finlay belatedly applied for adoption with the Colville Tribe, but found herself identified as "Cree," and hence ineligible.

[104] Allotment of land didn't necessarily mean living on the reservation. As on the Umatilla and Colville reservations, towns outside of the reservation included many Native Americans, Metis, and other mixed-bloods.

and counting the Cowlitz in the new century remained, tribal members were thoroughly enumerated between 1916 and 1919.[105]

A census of some 4,000 off-reservation Indians in Western Washington, with affiliations to some 40 tribes, was completed in January 1919 by Special Indian Agent Charles Roblin. From a total of over 4,000 individuals listed in "Roblin's Rolls," as they came to be called, some 860 were identified as descendants of Cowlitz tribal members located in Western Washington in 1919. Of 40-odd tribes represented, the Cowlitz were the largest single un-enrolled off-reservation tribe, roughly one fifth of the total.[106]

The Cowlitz establish a reservation

Justice does happen, but often takes time. Restitution and recognition came slowly to the Cowlitz. Having confiscated their territory without the formality of some sort of agreement, the U.S. government took more than a century to compensate the tribe.

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[105] Roblin's Rolls still serve today as a baseline for establishing membership in the Cowlitz Tribe.

[106] Those enumerated were grouped by family clans. These clans of *Canadien* and Metis origins added up to a little less than 500 individuals as of 1919, or somewhat over half of all those identified as Cowlitz descendants. Of these individuals identifying as Cowlitz, 83, or around 10 percent, were identified as full bloods. Within the Metis element of the Cowlitz, the Plamondon clan (260) also included the Cottenoir, Dubeau, Sarreault, St. Germain, Gill, and Laramie families, accounting for about ½ of the Metis. Roblin identified geographic location of the descendants in such towns as Ridgefield, Castle Rock, Toledo, Winlock, Vader, Chehalis, Tacoma, and Monroe.

Other Metis clans among Cowlitz tribal members at that time included Dupree-Lafontaine (& Pichette) clan with 55 members; the Farron (34); and the LaPlante-Frechette clan (21). The Chalifoux came in next with 20 members, which included the Smith and Corcoran families, still located mostly in the old Metis community of Roy on Muck Creek along the upper Nisqually, plus nearby Spanaway and Tacoma. Then he identifies the Gobin; Ladue; Archambault; Bernier-Garrand: St. Martin. The ten St. Martin were located on the Columbia at Carson. Finally, we have family members of larger regional Metis clans such as Rabbie; Doucette; Forrest; and Arquette.

Ninety some years after Roblin submitted his rolls to the Bureau of Indian Affairs in 1919, land purchased by the tribe was recognized in 2015 by federal authorities as the Cowlitz Indian Reservation in La Center, near the mouth of the Lewis River.

Another positive development concerns an upgrade in the exhibit at the Cowlitz County Historical Museum in Kelso. An article in the *Cowlitz Tribal News* in October 2016, quoted the recently retired Museum Director David Freece: "So many times, artifacts from pre-contact Indian history are the first display encountered at a museum, but then the people are never seen again." The museum has ensured that the new exhibits "… show the Cowlitz people throughout the entire timeline, and continuing today."[107]

Today the Cowlitz are being shown to be full participants in the development of Cowlitz County. In the same issue of the *Cowlitz Tribal News*, General Council Chairman Bill Iyall stated, "The Cowlitz Tribe recognizes that this is a rapidly changing world, one that requires the ability to adapt readily to new issues and new opportunities."[108]

The October 2016 issue of the *Cowlitz Tribal News* also included "A Message from the Vice Chairman," Philip Harju, whose antecedents through the St. Martin line include Chinook and Iroquois ancestry, in addition to French-Canadian. In it, Philip highlighted a recent milestone when the D.C. Circuit Court of Appeals affirmed the tribe's case on asserting its right to locate a casino on the newly acquired land for their reservation. The casino is located north of Vancouver, Washington, off Interstate 5 at Exit 16, and is named "Ilani," which is Salishan Cowlitz for "sing." The Ilani Casino opened in 2017.

Reflecting its distribution of tribal membership over the years, tribal facilities have long been spread throughout the Cowlitz corridor in southwestern Washington. However, with the new

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[107] David Freece, "Cowlitz Encounters at the County Historical Museum," *Cowlitz Tribal News*, October 2016 p. 10,

[108] Bill Iyall, Chairman's Corner, "General Council Chairman, *Cowlitz Tribal News*," p. 1.

reservation located between Longview and Vancouver, a certain amount of consolidation is now in order. Having maintained a Cowlitz Tribe office and health clinic in Longview for decades, planning is underway to relocate the facilities currently in Longview to the reservation.[109]

It took until 1973 for the Indian Claims Commission to find that the government had deprived the tribe ". . . of its aboriginal Indian title … without payment of any compensation." Determining that 1.79 million acres had been taken unjustly, the commission offered to finally settle for 90 cents per acre to the tribe and its members. Tribal membership amounted to around 1,200 individuals at the time of the 1973 decision, while today the Cowlitz Indian Tribe totals roughly 4,000 members. The editor of the *Cowlitz Historical Quarterly,* Jim LeMonds, provides us with his summary of the final round in the tribe's struggles: "The … remaining members of the Cowlitz Tribe were unable to claim that money because the U.S. Government still did not formally 'recognize' the tribe's existence… it wasn't until February … 2000, that the government got around to acknowledging that the Cowlitz Tribe actually existed."[110]

The 27-year delay was, in good part, the result of the Quinault Tribe having appealed the 1973 decision on compensation, due to an alleged conflict of interest caused by allotments owned by Cowlitz tribal members on the Quinault Reservation.

Meanwhile, in 2014, University of Washington Press published an important work authored by Cowlitz tribal member Christine Dupres, *Being Cowlitz: How One Tribe Renewed and Sustained Its Identity*. Dupres explores the ways in which the Cowlitz Tribe persevered in maintaining their group identity despite the lack of a land base and more than a century of Federal government efforts to erase their presence. A trained folklorist, she explored how folklore and identity interact through the rhetoric and public performances of two tribal leaders, John Barnett and the previously cited Roy Wilson. Not unusual among the Cowlitz

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[109] *Cowlitz Tribal News*, Philip Harju "A Message from the Vice Chairman, p. 3.

[110] Jim LeMonds, *Cowlitz Historical Quarterly*, "Editor's Letter," December 2009, Vol. 51, No. 4, p.3

and other Pacific Northwest tribal members, in addition to her Cowlitz and French-*Canadien* ancestry, Christine's antecedents include Cree and Barnett's include Chippewa – both from east of the Rocky Mountains.[111]

Unfinished business

The Chinook Nation represents the other major unrecognized tribe living mostly off-reservation in southwestern Washington. They would be identified in a census of the Chinook Indians by two special agents of the Bureau of Indian Affairs, McChesney[112] in 1906, and Charles Roblin in 1919. Families identified with Metis antecedents included: Petit, Tellier, Gervais, Laderoute, LaBonte, Heroux, Lucier, Lacourse, and Ducheney.

It is important to note that their research did not include the large number of surviving Chinook descendants who had inter-married with *Canadiens* and resettled upriver into various Metis communities of the Walla Walla, Umatilla, and Colville valleys. By a significant margin, the Chinook represented the largest, single tribal component within these communities.[113] In the survey of Native wives of Canadiens collected by Jean Barman, Chinooks provided just over one-third of the 240 wives, from the 20-odd coastal tribes identified. Adding in the 170 identified wives from interior tribes, the Chinook represent by far the largest tribal component of the Pacific Northwest Metis. The descendants of most of these Metis with Chinook ancestry, however, later migrated farther inland, with the balance of the Metis community.[114]

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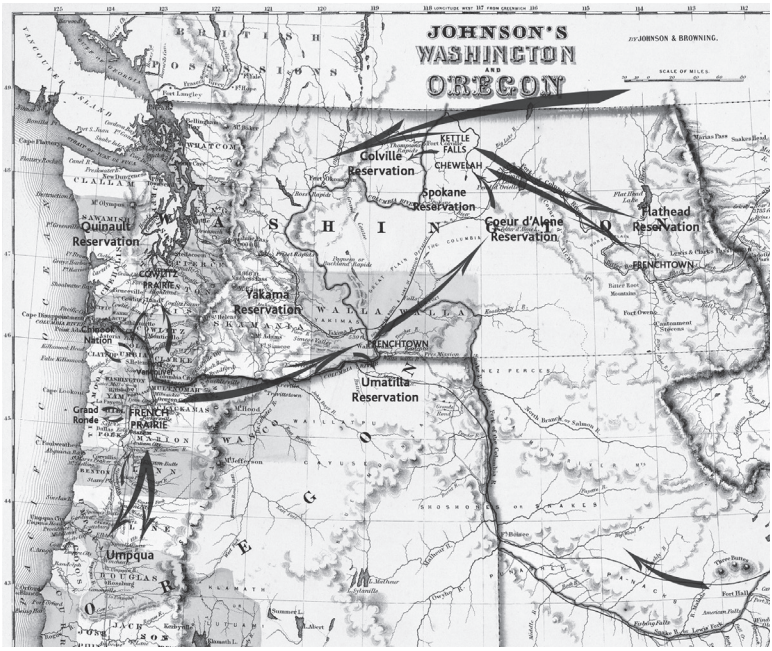
[111] Christine Durpes, *Being Cowlitz: How One Tribe Renewed and Sustained Its Identity*, University of Washington Press, Seattle 2014.

[112] Charles E. McChesney et al, *Rolls of Certain Indian Tribes in Oregon and Washington (1905)*, Ye Galleon Press, Fairfield, Washington, 2002.

[113] Harriet D. Munnick, and Mikell De Lores Wormell Warner, translation and editing, *Catholic Church records of The Pacific Northwest: Vancouver*, French Prairie Press Oregon 1972

[114] Jean Barman, *French Canadians, Furs, and Indigenous Women in the Making of the Pacific Northwest*, op.cit., pp. 115-6.



Migration dispersal of Chinook and Chinook Metis in the mid-to late-1800s, overlain on an 1863 map of the Pacific Northwest. *Courtesy Washington State Historical Society and Robert Foxcurran*

Consequently, whereas the Cowlitz Tribe was able to embrace the reinforcements provided by this net in-migration of the regional Metis admixture, the Chinook Nation experienced a net out-migration of many of their Metis families into the broader regional Metis diaspora.[115] Thereby, the numbers of one tribe were strengthened, while the numbers of the other were weakened. Hence there is the irony that the regional pidgin known as Chinook Jargon, or Chinuk Wawa – with a vocabulary based heavily on their language – expanded throughout Washington and into the interior of the broader region, serving as the median of inter-ethnic and inter-tribal communication, while the usage of the language proper died out within the

[115] For an overview of this net out-migration of Metis from the Lower Columbia see a "Les Canadiens: Resettlement of the Metis into the Backcountry of the Pacific Northwest," by Robert Foxcurran, in the Fall 2012 issue of *Columbia* magazine.

depleted ranks of the Chinook Nation who remained in their homeland. A legacy of their former prominence persisted in our regional pidgin, as did the Chinook descendants, who continued to seek justice.

Transcontinental antecedents within Pacific Northwest tribes

The Cowlitz Constitution offers us insight into the role of the Metis. The wording of Article II, "Membership" of the Constitution of the Cowlitz Indian Tribe is significant:

Section 1. Members of the Cowlitz Indian Tribe are those who were enrolled on February 14, 2000, and their direct, lineal descendants, provided that those on the roll of February 14, 2000, are the lineal descendants of a Cowlitz Indian or Metis resident in the Cowlitz aboriginal area and associated with Cowlitz people before January 1, 1856, such documentation passing the review of the Enrollment Committee and the Tribal Council …(Metis is defined by the Tribal Council to mean: an individual of French and/or English ancestry mixed with Indian blood and considered by residency and affiliation to have been part of the Cowlitz Indian tribe prior to January 1, 1856.*[116]

The Cowlitz constitution demonstrates clearly that the Cowlitz Tribe has a broad and practical interpretation of what historically constitutes membership in a modern Pacific Northwest tribe. Other tribes, or confederations thereof, in our region that have married into and/or adopted their Metis and Canadian Indian neighbors include the Confederated tribes of the Umatilla; Colville; Grand Ronde; and Flathead Indian reservations, along with the Cow Creek Band of the Umpqua, and the Chinook Nation. This tale of Cowlitz family reminds us that there is more to the history of Indians in our region than national boundaries, place names, or the location and the size of Indian reservations would suggest. Furthermore, French is clearly not a foreign language in the Pacific Northwest.

The origins and life of Simon Plamondon Jr. capture much of the complexity and nuance of 19th century Washington Territory. The terms of partition of the region between the two colonial

[116] Constitution of the Cowlitz Indian Tribe, February 14, 2000, p. 1.

powers - from those of the Oregon Bi-national Provisional Government of 1843 to the Treaty of 1846 and the subsequent Donation Land Act of 1850 - also partitioned Indian families. Unlike their pure-blood Cowlitz cousins, these arrangements allowed his father, as well as Simon Jr., his siblings, and other mixed ancestry neighbors, to establish claims to land. Through Simon Jr.'s marriage to the Metis Marianne Farron, his numerous descendants also have Native American ancestry involving other regional tribes. This child of an earlier frontier - or *sitkum siwash* as these mixed-ancestry people were referred to in Chinuk Wawa - still self-identified as Cowlitz Indian.

Simon Jr. dictated his petition for restitution of his expropriated property in French in order to have it transcribed into English and notarized for submittal to the new authorities. It would be the extension of this petition for restitution of his individual claim to that of the full tribe that would later serve as the basis for the tribe's ultimate settlement with the federal government. Furthermore, as the map of southwestern Washington indicates, by omission if nothing else, the scars of early colonial acts of dispossession of Native peoples are still with us. For historic perspective, it is useful to remember that living in a state with dozens of Indian reservations, southwestern Washington is almost devoid of them. This corner of our state happens to be the first part of the region to have been colonized by people of European extraction. Initial opportunities for local tribes located at the original point of entry by Euro-Americans would be followed by devastating epidemics and demands for removal.

The migration within the Pacific Northwest of the transcontinental Metis community during the second half of the 19th century – with its own unique regional mixture - would account for differing impacts on each of the two Southwestern Washington tribes in terms of the number of tribal members today. The regional redistribution of this intermediary group, would reinforce the ranks of the Cowlitz Tribe while leading to a net reduction in the Chinook Nation, as many Chinook descendants of mixed ancestry relocated into more interior regions with other members of this hybrid community.

There is still unfinished business in southwestern Washington. The Federal Government has yet to recognize the Chinook

Nation. The painfully slow bureaucratic process that eventually reached a satisfactory solution for roughly 4,000 members of the Cowlitz has yet to produce an acceptable outcome for the Chinook. Justice is long past due.

And finally, a citation from a book published in 2017 on Canada's constitutional history provides the appropriate context. Author Peter Russell explains the long process of seeking accommodation among Canada's three founding peoples: Aboriginal, French, and English. Referring to the early 1970s, he wrote: "… within Canada's *political* and societal elites, there was a growing recognition that Indians are more than a disadvantaged ethnic minority – that they are members of long-standing political societies that are here to stay."[117] This clearly applies on our side of the 49th parallel, as well.

The Cowlitz Tribe and the Scanewa/Plamondon family have lived through a complex, though truly representative, North American saga, not simply a national, regional, or local tale. In the final analysis, the authors would reiterate that the historiography of past attempts to oversimplify complex demographics and the related issues of rights in matters of land, language, voting, and identity for the descendants of our older pre-colonial communities, can be relevant to explaining irregularities still visible today on maps of southwestern Washington. If the presence of the mixed ancestry *Canadiens* loomed large as an important issue requiring immediate resolution in the mid-19th century, maybe they deserve a second look in the 21st century history books. Representative sampling, then and now, should matter.

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[117] Peter Russell, *Canada's Odyssey: A Country Based on Incomplete Conquests*, U.T. Press, 2017.