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Iwówes: A Community Profile and History

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The Ethnohistory Field School is a collaboration of the Stó:lō Research and Resource Management Centre, Stó:lō Nation & Stó:lō Tribal Council, and the History Departments of the University of Victoria and University of Saskatchewan.



Iwowis: A Community Profile and History

Introduction:

The Sto:lo people of the Lower Fraser River have an intimate relationship with the Fraser River and the surrounding landscape that is an intricate part of their traditions and heritage. The parcel of land, known as Union Bar Reserve #15 located approximately 2 miles east of Hope on the southern shore (See Map 1), is one place that holds particular meaning to the Sto:lo people not only spiritually but also as a well established community dating from ~~Pre-Contact~~ to the 20th Century when it was almost completely abandoned.

Union Bar Reserve #15, the official Department of Indian Affairs designation, is also known as Iwowis, although there have been several variations in the spelling and pronunciation of the Sto:lo place name. Gilbert Malcolm Sproat, the Canadian Government representative on the Indian Land Commission, 1876-1880, recorded the settlement situated on this parcel of land as Ay.waw.wis¹, while archaeological surveys conducted by Donald Mitchell, Quentin Mackie (1986)², and Gordon Mohs (1989)³ used the variation Aywawwis. A third variation, Ewowis, has also been used in other documentation. Up to this time, there was no comprehensive linguistic studies conducted in Halq' emeylem, the Sto:lo language. Int sum the means

Brent Galloway, ^{the} a UBC graduate student, compiled a linguistic dictionary and phonetic study for the Halq' emeylem language which was published in 1993. From this

¹ Gilbert Malcolm Sproat, The Joint Indian Land Commission of British Columbia Papers, Sto:lo Nation Archives, 205.

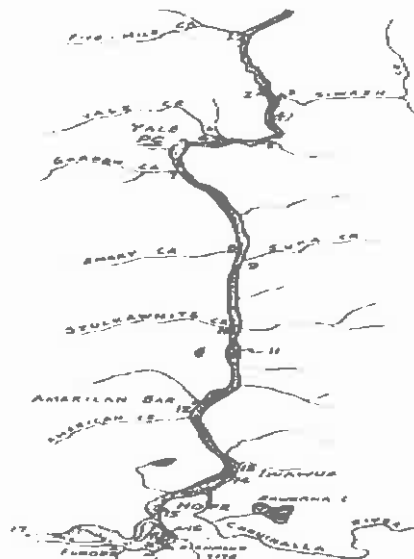
² Donald Mitchell and Quentin Mackie, British Columbia Archaeological Site Inventory Form; Site No. DiRi 83, Sto:lo Nation Archives: 1986.

³ Gordon Mohs, British Columbia Archaeological Site Inventory Form; Site No. DiRi 82, Sto:lo Nation Archives: 1989.

study and documentation, the Sto:lo spelling of Iwowis has been agreed upon and recent documentation and histories use this form. Many Sto:lo place names have literal translations and meanings associated to them. Iwowis has been translated as “does not want to be seen” or “that what is hidden.” This translation has direct association to Sto:lo transformer stories, oral histories and events that took place in this location.

The recent spelling variation of Iwowis will be used throughout the following community profile and history with variations noted when direct citations or quotations are presented. The Community Profile and History will consist of two parts. The first section or part will outline the history of Iwowis from Pre-Contact to the middle of the 20th Century. This section will outline the development of the community and the social history during this time frame. The second section or part will interpret events and conditions in an attempt to understand or determine why the community was abandoned and where the occupants went after leaving Iwowis.

Map 1.⁴



⁴ Taken from Wilson Duff, The Upper Stalo Indians of the Fraser Valley of B.C., (Victoria: B.C. Provincial Museum) 1952: 31.

Part I: Community History

The community of Iwowis has a long history spanning from the Pre-Contact era well into the 20th Century. Iwowis has gone through considerable change and witnessed events that not only had direct influence on the community but also the neighbouring landscape and the Sto:lo Nation as a whole. This history can be divided into two distinct time frames, Pre-Contact and European contact, which requires researching both the archaeological record as well as the written historical documentation. Oral histories and oral tradition of this region and community also contributes an important part ~~in the~~ development of Iwowis ~~and its~~ history. From these sources, patterns and trends will be demonstrated and explored to yield an ~~enlightened~~ understanding of not only the community history but also the history of the Sto:lo people.

The Archaeological Record:

During the 1970's and 80's, British Columbia experienced a renewed interest in recording and documenting archaeological sites throughout the province due to the initiation of Federal and Provincial funded mega projects. These projects were not limited to infrastructure as many of the projects were resource development based such as major hydro-electric projects, and resource extraction projects that included development of coal mining and intensification of logging operations. Many of these projects also required the expansion of transportation infrastructure which in some cases included twin tracking projects ^{parts of transcontinental railway} to facilitate the flow of these new resources. Iwowis was directly impacted by the provincial initiatives as the Canadian National Railway proposed

expansion (twin tracking) would cross reserve lands. In response to CN's proposal, a number of archaeological surveys were conducted along the proposed right of way through Iwowis. These surveys, conducted between 1983 and 1986, yielded the location of 10 prehistoric and historical sites on or near the Iwowis Reserve. These sites ranged from lithic scatters, pithouse depressions, historical house sites, to burial grounds.

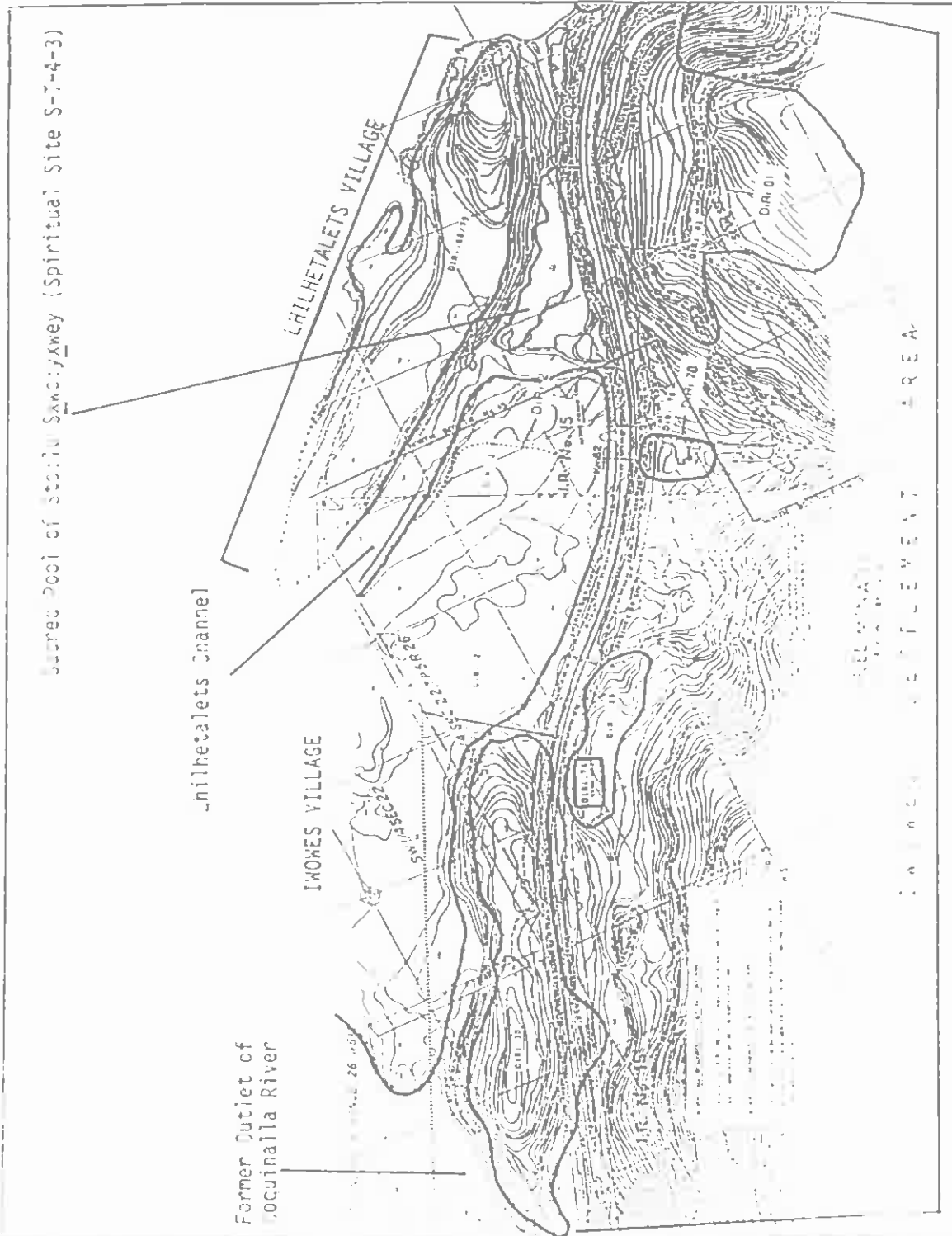
Of the ten sites identified, four were considered as prehistoric in nature consisting of two pithouse sites and two lithic scatters (Sites DiRi30, DiRi68/79, DiRi81, and DiRi83: See Map:2). There has been no excavations undertaken during or since the surveys were conducted. The only estimated dates of occupancy were proposed by Gordon Mohs and were derived from surface collections at DiRi81. Mohs estimated that the site occupation "dated between 5,000 and 8,000 years BP."⁵ From the material culture collected, Mohs proposed that this site was utilized as a wood working site. This conclusion can be questioned as some of the artifacts may have been misclassified. A number of the artifacts were categorized as lithic wedges, but resemble lithic cores and reduction flakes suggesting that tool manufacturing may have taken place. This site was disturbed by logging operations which left no evidence of seasonal or permanent occupation which also suggests that Moh's interpretation may be conjecture rather than based on evidence. It would be extremely difficult to re-evaluate this site due to the disturbance but some work is required to either verify Moh's findings or propose a better interpretation.

From the surveys conducted, the primary occupation of Iwowis was concentrated at the upstream entrance to the channel separating Lhilheltalets and Iwowis. Pithouse depressions are present on the shoreline near the mouth of the creek draining into the

⁵ Mohs, Site Inventory Form DiRi83,

Map 2.

HERITAGE SITES: IWOWES & LHILHETALETS VILLAGE LOCALITIES



Fraser River and on the island of Lhilheltalets. Wilson Duff, in his ethnographic monograph of the Sto:lo, notes that the Iwowis location “has always been a large and important village,” and that Lhilheltalets was “ a year-round village ... at a small island which is an island only at high water.”⁶

As there are no confirmed dates associated with Iwowis pithouse depressions, a general overview of comparable sites will be discussed which will lend some insight into the Iwowis settlement and history prior to contact. The consensus view has the Fraser Valley deglaciated approximately 11,000 years BP but sea levels being much higher than those existing at present.⁷ Present day levels were realized approximately 6000 years BP explaining the location of the material culture found at DiRi 81 that was situated on a higher elevation than the pithouse depressions found at Iwowis proper. This consensus view allows the presumption that the settlement at Iwowis was established post 6000 years BP at the earliest. This proposition can be rationalized by other sites located along the Fraser River as the earlier sites have always been located on higher benches along the river and more recent settlements occurring near the existing Fraser River or on old stream beds and shorelines. The location of the pithouses at the mouth of the creek is typical for this region; that is, near a source of fresh water, firewood, and near prime fishing locations. Recent interviews conducted with various Sto:lo elders confirm that Iwowis was a preferred fishing and drying location.⁸

The development of an occupation sequence of pithouse sites is difficult even under ideal conditions due to the nature of the site deposition process of these sites. In

⁶ Wilson Duff, The Upper Stalo Indians of the Fraser River of B.C., Anthropology In British Columbia Memoir No. 1, (Victoria: British Columbia Provincial Museum) 1952: 33.

⁷ David Schaepe, “The Land and the people: Glaciation to Contact,” In A Sto:lo- Coast Salish Historical Atlas, ed Keith Thor Carlson, (Chilliwack: Sto:lo Heritage Press) 2001:12-19.

⁸ Duff, The Upper Stalo Indians, 33.

many cases only one reliable date can be extracted and this date usually indicates the last occupation date. The ethnographic record states that it was customary for pithouse dwellers along the Fraser River to burn and collapse these dwellings at regular intervals to exterminate pests and if the site was to be abandoned for a long period. In the process of reconstructing the pithouse, the previous occupation material culture is redistributed and relocated to upper levels usually the mounds and roof. This does not allow for stratigraphy chronology or supposition that is the deeper deposits being deemed older. The only in situ material would be the last occupation layer usually the floor. This site process contributes to the fact that long chronologies of occupation are difficult to propose and substantiate.⁹

The pithouse depressions located on Lhilheltalets may have been the result of known events along the southern coast of British Columbia. Approximately 2000 to 1500 years BP a shift in traditional territories along the Northwest Coast has been documented through the archaeological record. There is evidence that both the Nuu-chah-nulth and the Kwakwaka'wakw of Vancouver Island intensified the frequency of raiding along the coasts of Vancouver Island and along the mainland well south of the Fraser River estuary. In response to this raiding, the Coast Salish began to relocate to more defensible sites and began to erect fortifications.¹⁰ There are remnants of these fortifications, usually located on elevated points of land, can be seen at various locations on the southern tip of Vancouver Island. The stone fortification at Lahits may have been erected during this period and it can also be proposed that the pithouse depressions on Lhilheltalets dates to

⁹ J.V. Wright, A History of the Native People of Canada, Mercury Series Archaeological Survey of Canada Paper 152, (Ottawa: Canadian Museum of Civilization), 1995: 350.

¹⁰ Kenneth M. Ames and Herbert D.G. Maschner, Peoples of the Northwest Coast: Their Archaeology and Prehistory, (London: Thames and Hudson Ltd.), 1999: 195-218.

the period of intensified raiding by other groups. This proposition can be supported by the location of the depressions and their proximity to the elevated head land found at the eastern end of the island, which would have been an ideal defensive position. These depressions may also have been constructed during the post contact period but unlikely as plank house depressions are also present on the island. The shift from pithouses to plank houses as primary dwelling structures occurred throughout the Southern British Columbia Coast sometime around 1500 years BP.

Iwowis also has spiritual importance for the Sto:lo Nation as the pool created at the mouth of the creek at low water is the location for the first appearance of the Sxwo':yxwey regalia.¹¹ There has been several versions of the oral tradition as to how the Sxwo':yxwey was obtained and its origin and arrivals throughout the Sto:lo Nation and Vancouver Island. There is some debate as to the actual date of the appearance of the regalia but the consensus view is that the appearance dates to "at least a decade before the first European arrived at the mouth of the Fraser River," but "the associated healing significance and connections to status are ancient as the Old People say 'thousands of years old.'"¹²

The Sxwo':yxwey regalia is only one symbol of status that dominates Sto:lo culture which is based upon respect. This respect determined and measured social ranking with those attaining the higher degrees receiving the term "sie'm." Although heredity was important, leadership and respect were attained through action, ability, wisdom, generosity, and pacifism.¹³

¹¹ Albert (Sonny) McHalsie, "Sxwo':yxwey Origins and Movements." In A Sto:lo-Coast Salish Historical Atlas, ed. Keith Thor Carlson (Chilliwack: Sto:lo Heritage Press) 2001: 10.

¹² McHalsie, "Sxwo':yxwey Origins," 10

¹³ Duff, The Upper Stalo Indians, 80.

Sto:lo subsistence prior to contact and well into the historical period was based upon salmon as the prime source of sustenance throughout the year. Dip-netting was the preferred method of fishing but where possible weirs, fish traps, and harpoons were employed. Hunting was also an important activity with a wide variety of mammals being utilized. ~~Berries, roots, and other plant foods were harvested~~ to supplement salmon and

other meat. A wide variety of berries, roots, shoots, ferns and moss were harvested throughout the year. All food types were preserved and stored for later use especially during the winter months. Ideal drying locations along the Fraser River were considered valuable and were inherited and passed on to other family members.¹⁴ Not all areas along the Fraser River had the necessary properties for drying with the more suitable sites located east of present day Hope within the canyon.

The settlement of Iwowis and the surrounding resource areas can be considered as being proto-typical for the Sto:lo nation and tradition even though no firm chronological date has been obtained

The Historical Record: 1808 to 1915

The first prolonged contact with Europeans along the Fraser River occurred when the Hudson's Bay Company constructed Fort Langley in 1827. Prior to the establishment of Fort Langley, the Sto:lo people had intermittent contact with "the Sky-people"¹⁵ as there were several expeditions into the Fraser River by various Europeans. The first evidence that has been presented as to when actual contact took place was the presence of signs amongst the Natives that smallpox had affected the area. It has been estimated that

¹⁴ Duff, *The Upper Stalo Indians*, 77.

¹⁵ B.A. McKelvie, *Fort Langley: Outpost of Empire*, 12

the first appearance of smallpox and ravished the Fraser Valley in the 1780s.¹⁶ The origin of the epidemic is unknown but considering ^{what we know} the later epidemics, the spread of the disease was rapid with high fatality rates. The rate of infection was ^{probably} enhanced by feasting and witnessing traditions of the Sto:lo. There are no historical records as to the effects smallpox on Iwowis, but the origin story of the Sxwo':yxwey regalia leads historians to believe the epidemic affected the entire Fraser Valley at least as far east as Yale ⁺ perhaps beyond.

With Simon Fraser's expedition down the Fraser River and the construction of Fort Langley, the Sto:lo became enmeshed in not only the fur trade but also the beginnings of trade in salmon. Initially, the fur trade was very promising for the Hudson's Bay Company with "1400 skins" traded from the surrounding area in 1830.¹⁷ The Natives of the entire Fraser Valley as far east as "the falls,"¹⁸ which was most likely present day Hell's Gate, utilized Fort Langley as their source for trade goods. To combat American competition from the Puget Sound region, the Hudson's Bay Company reduced its standard exchange rates in 1829 encouraging the Native populations to trade at Fort Langley.¹⁹ Natives from as far east as the junction of the Fraser and Thompson Rivers also frequented the Fort. This confirms the peaceful relationship that the Sto:lo had with the Thompson Bands further up River.²⁰

By 1830, salmon became the most reliable and profitable trade commodity for the Hudson's Bay Company at Fort Langley rivalling furs. Between August and September

¹⁶ McHalsie, "Sxwo':yxwey Origins." 10

¹⁷ Archibald McDonald, This Blessed Wilderness: Archibald McDonald's Letters from the Columbia, 1822-44. ed Jean Murray Cole, (Vancouver: UBC Press) 2001: 65.

¹⁸ McDonald, This Blessed Wilderness: 68.

¹⁹ McDonald, This Blessed Wilderness: 69.

²⁰ McDonald, This Blessed Wilderness: 66.

1830, 15,000 salmon were processed and shipped from Fort Langley.²¹ The salmon trade increased the capacity of the Sto:lo people to procure trade goods and to some degree provided security from raiding neighbours along the coast. The Union Bar Band, including Iwowis, would have been in an advantageous position as numerous prime fishing stations were located above Hope. Family and community were an important aspect in participating in the salmon trade as it required a concerted effort to catch and process large quantities of salmon for trade and preserving sufficient amounts for consumption throughout the year. This need for co-operation may have resulted in the Sto:lo population being aggregated into larger communities but there is no direct evidence to this occurring. This aggregation occurred at numerous locations throughout the Fraser Canyon and along the Northwest Coast and can be considered a by-product of trade especially for perishable goods such as salmon that required some sort of processing even if it was limited to gutting and cleaning. The Hudson's Bay Company

58 consensus of 1839 recorded 555 people belonging to the "Teates" tribe. The name "Teates" or as Duff referred to this group "Tait" included the Sto:lo people residing from Seabird Island east to just above Yale which included Iwowis.²² This number indicates that the region was still densely occupied with some larger communities existing although high death rates were experienced due to disease. Interestingly, the consensus included the number of canoes per tribe and the "Teates" tribe possessed the highest number of all the tribes along the Fraser River.²³ This fact indicates that the Sto:lo of this region were very mobile and had the means to transport salmon well down river to Fort

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a
making
action?

²¹ McDonald, This Blessed Wilderness: 83.

²² Duff, The Upper Stalo Indians: 130.

²³ Keith Thor Carlson, "The Numbers Game: Interpreting Historical Sto:lo Demographics." In A Sto:lo-Coast Salish Historical Atlas, ed. Keith Carlson (Chilliwack: Sto:lo Heritage Press) 2001: 79.

Langley, Hope (established in 1848), and up river to Yale (established in 1844). Having the means and two posts in the vicinity put the occupants of Iwowis in a favourable position to take advantage of the salmon industry that had developed along the Fraser River.

The following thirty years after the establishment of Fort Langley was a time of co-operation between the Sto:lo and European ~~element~~ along the Fraser River. The Hudson's Bay Company had a policy of non-interference with Native culture and tradition as disputes and violence hindered commerce and restricted profits. As posts were established further up river, Hope and Yale, Sto:lo access to trade goods increased and Sto:lo relationship with the traders was stable and ^{mutually} beneficial. The publicized discovery of gold on the Fraser River changed that relationship drastically as European and American miners came into contact with the Sto:lo people.

In 1858, the Fraser River Gold Rush was well underway with thousands of miners and prospectors entering Sto:lo territory. This mass encroachment of White miners had a greater effect on the Sto:lo people east of Hope than other groups as this was the area of greater White concentration. Iwowis, located just below Union and American Bars must have been affected directly by the influx of approximately 33,000 people into the region. The Fraser River Gold Rush created contradicting results as the Sto:lo experienced a new source of income while the rush as Keith Carlson states:

“represent[ed] the pivotal moment in Sto:lo history when Aboriginal title and rights were first genuinely challenged and Sto:lo resources alienated by Xwelitem forces... within Sto:lo society this same event is remembered as the beginning of the end of effective self-governance and land management.”²⁴

²⁴ Keith Thor Carlson, “The Fraser River Gold Rush, 1858.” In A Sto:lo-Coast Salish Historical Atlas. ed. Keith Carlson, (Chilliwack: Sto:lo Heritage Press) 2001: 68. 7/2/2010 • p. 92-3

An in-depth history of the Fraser River Gold Rush has not been published and in most publications only a handful of pages are devoted to this pivotal period. Robin Fisher down plays the Fraser River Gold Rush and suggests that the dilemma encountered by Natives due to the Rush was the result of Natives being “attracted by the possibility of trade and work.”²⁵ The violence that did occur during this period does not support this statement as miners dispossessed many Native groups from traditional villages and fishing sites. The mining operations did have long term effects on salmon spawning streams and the Fraser River itself as areas were dredged for gold and streams were diverted to supply much needed water for slues boxes. Fisher’s interpretation of the events of the Fraser River Gold Rush can be summarized by the statement: “Had the mining areas returned to their pre-1858 conditions after the miners had departed, their impact on the Indians might have been transitory as their presence.”²⁶ The impact of the Rush on Iwowis has not been documented or directly mentioned in any published source so no conclusions can be made, but there certainly was a shift in land use and resource ownership as Carlson states.

The Gold Rush was immediately followed by the opening of the region for settlement and the conflicts between the Sto:lo Nation and Europeans turned to land which was crucial to both interests. After British Columbia joined confederation, the Indian Land Question was still unresolved and to address this issue the Joint Indian reserve Commission of 1876-78 was established. Iwowis officially came into existence during this period when Gilbert Malcolm Sproat allocated land for the Reserve in 1878. A census was taken in November of that year and showed that the population of

²⁵ Robin Fisher, Contact and Conflict: Indian-European Relations in British Columbia, 1774-1890. (Vancouver: UBC Press) 1992: 101

²⁶ Fisher, Contact and Conflict: 101.

“Aywaw.wis” numbered 75 people consisting of 40 males and 35 females divided into approximately 18 families.²⁷ This number of families can be taken from the census as it enumerated the population by male heads of families including his wife and children. Sproat in allocating the Iwowis Reserve lands commented on the “rugged and uneven” nature of the land and suggested that the official surveyor use his discretion on drawing the permanent boundaries and incorporate a portion “best fitted for a stock run on which timothy might be sown to improve the feed, which run is required as an addition to the arable land at the village the whole reserve not to exceed about 160 acres.”²⁸ This notation was prompted by the number of cattle (26) and horses (26) found on the reserve during enumeration during the census.

Sproat’s allocation commenced at the mouth of the “Kwe.Kwe.hahla” River and followed the Fraser River east to the existing village of Iwowis. The course of the Coquihalla River would be altered during the construction of the Canadian National railway less than 50 years later. In his report to the Land Commission, Sproat made the following observations of the Union Bar Band:

“It is the peoples’ country, however, and they would not go elsewhere for residence, and indeed another place could not be easily found. They are necessarily scattered having located on arable spots at mouths of Streams and where they could cut timber for steamboat fuel.”²⁹

The real arable land for these and other Indians in the neighbourhood is to be at Sea Bird Island between Skawlets and Popkum.”³⁰

Sproat’s observations demonstrated the ties to traditional settlements and that he was convinced that the small allocations east of Hope such as Iwowis was insufficient for the Sto:lo to cultivate enough crops to survive and that these reserves would be abandoned in

²⁷ Census conducted 1878, Sto:lo Nation Archives.

²⁸ Gilbert Malcolm Sproat, Joint Indian Land Commission Report 1879. Sto:lo Nation Archives: 206.

²⁹ Sproat, Commission Report, 1879: 273.

³⁰ Sproat, Commission Report, 1879: 277.

later years. Sproat did advocate for increasing the Iwowis Reserve but made the following statement to describe the existing dilemma:

“They wanted a considerable tract added to Ay.waw.wis, up toward Kow.Ka.wa Lake but the land was so rough and is no near possible town at Hope that I could see no object in making a large reserve. Were I to have squared it up to give them a little room outside their arable reserve for fuel and as a small pasture, if they can make it such by feeding, as the Ay.waw.wis people cannot get round the bluff with stock to Trafalgar Flat.”³¹

Sproat’s report also gives further insight as to the subsistence strategies the people of Iwowis employed during this period. The mention of cattle and arable land suggests that Iwowis had become an Arcadian community with stock being raised and vegetables grown in small gardens to supplement traditional salmon fishing and hunting. Other sources of income were pursued including the sale of firewood for the steamboats plying the Fraser River up to Yale. Sproat also noted that Trafalgar Flat still yielded gold “but can only be mined with Skill and at low water.” In fact, Sproat mentions that “a chinaman is at work there and has a house as the Indians do not mine.”³² By this account combined with the 1878 census, Iwowis supported its population and opportunities for wage labour (wood for steamboats) were present.

The conditions described by Sproat continued for some 16 years until 1894 when Iwowis experienced a natural disaster as a good portion of the reserve was flooded by unusually high water levels in the Fraser River. The water levels rose to a point where the cemetery located on Lhilheltalets Island and Iwowis were relocated further south on to a higher bench above the present day railway. This cemetery was surveyed and noted during the archaeological investigations conducted in the 1980s. This flooding had other effects on Iwowis as during the proceedings of the Royal Commission on Indian Affairs

³¹ Sproat, Commission Report, 1878: 274-275.

³² Sproat, Commission Report, 1878: 276.

for the Province of British Columbia, the McKenna- McBride Commission, conducted from 1913 to 1916, the evidence presented stated that the population of Iwowis was only 18 persons.³³ Why there was such a reduction in the population is unrecorded but there must have been considerable damage to any structures near the Fraser River and considerable amounts of silt deposited destroying any gardens or crops that were planted. ~~Of these~~ silt deposits can be seen today as sand and clay are visible well above the water line.

The other disruptive occurrence at this time was the construction of the Canadian National Railway which split the Reserve into two parcels. The construction of the Canadian National Railway brought some 300 workers to the area as a camp was established between Iwowis and Trafalgar Flat.³⁴ This close proximity of the camp may have influenced the decrease in population by reducing the arable land available, but other events contributed. For instance, in the Department of Indian Affairs Annual Report for 1913, the Indian Agent reported that the Upper Fraser Valley had been inundated with caterpillars which destroyed many of the orchards along the River. This infestation affected the Union Bar orchards to a lesser degree and as a result a good portion of the fruit was harvested by "Some Indians from farther up river."³⁵ Another overriding factor was that in 1913 the Union Bar Band total population only numbered 65 with only 14 people residing on the Iwowis Reserve.³⁶ The agent's report also described the condition of the houses, occupations and the characteristics of the residents. His report noted that

³³ Canada, Report of the Royal Commission on Indian Affairs for the Province Columbia, 1916.

³⁴ Henry Pennier, Chiefly Indian: The Warm and Witty Story of a British Columbia Half Breed Logger, ed. Herbert L. McDonald. (Vancouver): 29

³⁵ Canada, Dominion of Canada Annual Report of the Department of Indian Affairs for the Year Ended March 31, 1913, taken from the web <http://www.collectionscanada/indianaffairs>: 278

³⁶ Canada, Dominion of Canada Annual Report of the Department of Indian Affairs 1913: 231

although the houses were old, the residents maintained them well. The list of occupation included “farming, fishing, basket making, hop picking, and labouring on the railroad” and stated that the people were industrious, fairly temperate, and having good moral conduct.³⁷

The list of occupations suggests that the people of Iwowis had depended upon other sources of income to supplement the traditional subsistence strategies prior to the Gold Rush. Whether the shift in lifestyle and livelihood was the result of the 1894 flood or by the intrusion of the railway construction can only be speculated. As Sproat had forecast, Seabird Island became the agricultural centre for the Upper Fraser River Sto:lo people and the easiest access to labouring employment was with the railroads, either the Canadian Pacific, Canadian National, or Kettle Valley systems. The logging industry in this area was still in its infancy and selective and did not present an alternative source of income for the residents of Iwowis.

On Lhilheltalets Island a Roman Catholic Church was erected during the early settlement era of the region. The exact date of its construction is not known but it would have occurred after 1860s when the Oblates of Mary Immaculate arrived in the region. The Indian Affairs Annual Reports do not mention the church or any information as to its construction or if it was a residence for a priest or other missionaries. The Annual Report of 1914 did record that of the 44 members of the Union Bar Band were of the Catholic faith while 9 declared that they were Anglican.³⁸ The report did not break this statistic down by reserve but one can surmise that the eastern members of the Union Bar Band made up the Anglican population as there was an Anglican Mission at Lytton and these

³⁷ Canada, Dominion of Canada Annual Report of the Department of Indian Affairs 1913: 231

³⁸ Canada, Dominion of Canada Annual Report of the Department of Indian Affairs for the Year Ended March 31, 1914, taken from the web <http://www.collectionscanada.ca/indianaffairs>: 8.

reserves were in most frequent contact with the Thompson people further up river. Further research in the Church's role on Iwowis is necessary as there is no documentation available at this time and little is known concerning the influence religion had on the Reserve population.

The first 100 years plus of Sto:lo contact with Europeans contains two distinct phases lasting approximately 50 years each. The first phase or fur trade era saw little change in traditional culture and society as the European interest was purely mercantile in nature. The people of Iwowis still depended heavily on the annual salmon runs, hunting, and resource gathering within the region. They certainly welcomed the opportunity to supplement there existence by trading not only furs but also salmon and other fruit gathered such as cranberries. Disease took its toll on the population at various periods but in most instances survived with fatalities much less than other coastal and interior groups as immunity past on to the generations especially smallpox. Measles and tuberculosis were becoming the new plague on the younger generations.

The second phase, beginning in 1858, brought the Sto:lo people of Iwowis in direct continuous contact with Europeans. The Gold Rush had contradictory impacts; new opportunities for wage labour while the beginning of the alienation of resources. The Reserve allocations followed within the next two decades which limited the land base of the Sto:lo and forced the people of Iwowis to seek other methods of procuring sufficient resources. Wage labour became an important factor in the redistribution of the Sto:lo population along the Fraser River and Iwowis experienced a pronounced decline as people sought work in various industries. It is difficult to assess the impacts on Sto:lo tradition and culture other than the loss of land, subsistence, and self-determination as

communities such as Iwowis clung onto the fringes of European society and were becoming marginalized limiting their access to jobs and opportunities.

The Historical Record: 1915 to Present

The historical record for this period is more accessible as there are Sto:lo elders that have recollections of this time period and give unique insight as to the events and social history of Iwowis. The Sto:lo Nation has taken up the task of recording interviews with these elders and archiving transcripts which are a valuable resource for historical and cultural research. Interviews with such elders as Amelia Douglas, Tilley and Al Guterrez, Jackie Pat, and Roy Wells are valuable primary sources in reconstructing the social history of Iwowis.

The 1915 Annual Report of the Department of Indian Affairs noted that the total population for the Union ²Bar Band (including Ewawooes) stood at 69 people.³⁹ This figure is consistent with the steady decrease in population over the ~~past~~ two decades since the allocation process took place. The Agent also reported that the people of the Union Bar band had "more of a fishing nature, but of late have not done so much of it except just for their own use."⁴⁰ The fishing pattern near Iwowis was disrupted by the Canadian National Railway who had diverted the Coquihalla River ⁺relocated the mouth further down stream towards Hope. This diversion would have changed the flow patterns around Lhilheltalets and restricting access to the Coquihalla River itself as settlers had taken up land around the town of Hope. The original river bed can be seen at certain sections of

³⁹ Canada, Dominion of Canada Annual Report of the Department of Indian Affairs for the Year Ended March 31, 1915, taken from the web <http://www.collectionscanada.ca/indianaffairs>: 8.

⁴⁰ Canada, Dominion of Canada Annual Report of the Department of Indian Affairs 1915: 92.

Roscoe
1878

the present day Hope Golf Course which have created sloughs and recognizable banks and slopes. *Senior staff*

The 1915 Annual Report also contains information concerning other occupations that were pursued during these years. Farming was limited to "mixed farming on a small scale," with "not a great deal of stock." The Agent explains this lack of agricultural utilization by stating:

"Taking these bands as a whole, they may be classed as industrious and law-biding, and are realizing more fully the importance of cultivating their land properly. The members of these bands are at a great disadvantage in making rapid progress in agricultural pursuits, owing to the heavily timbered land, and the heavy cost of clearing and bringing the same under cultivation with their limited means and often large families to support."⁴¹

This statement explains why numerous families partook in the annual hops picking industry that had developed in the Fraser Valley. This migration to the hop yards usually took place in the autumn giving the Sto:lo people an opportunity to earn an income that would be used to purchase the necessary supplies for the following winter and included whole families. Robert Hancock recorded some of the Sto:lo experiences in labouring in these hop yards states that this seasonal work also "enabled social interaction between people who might not otherwise have had the chance to see each other during the rest of the year."⁴² The hop yards also fit well into Sto:lo tradition of family as the entire family had a job and the income was pooled for the entire family not individually. *the work* *endure?* much like the pre-history era where sharing and the family corporate unit was the centre of Sto:lo culture. Interviews with Elders confirm the seasonal migration which ceased in the

⁴¹ Canada, Dominion of Canada Annual Report of the Department of Indian Affairs 1915: 92.

⁴² Robert Hancock, "The Hop Yards: Workplace and Social Space." In A Sto:lo-Coast Salish Historical Atlas, ed. Keith Carlson (Chilliwack: Sto:lo Heritage Press) 2001: 70.

1950's when mechanized pickers were employed. Roy Wells and Tilley Guterrez participated in this endeavour and have varied tales of their experiences.

The years between and immediately after the two wars saw various Reserve populations decrease as many residents left the confines of the Reserve, including Iwowis. The main factor for these migrations can be attributed to families seeking wage labour within the European economy or seeking more arable land to produce subsistence crops to augment salmon fishing and hunting. The people of Iwowis began to seek off-reserve employment as the difficulty in obtaining sufficient resources diminished. Roy Wells stated that his four older brothers worked at various jobs from fireman to section labourers on the Kettle Valley Railway and eventually resorted to logging after World War II were he learnt the skills necessary to obtain work in this industry until the 1990s. This type of employment took many residents away from the Reserve and in some cases not to return.

For those that remained lifestyles did not alter to great extent as many followed their traditional lifestyles and subsistence strategies. Roy Wells gave a unique insight into growing up in Iwowis in the pre-war and post-war eras and will be the primary source for the following narration (See Appendix 1). Roy described how his mother and he with assistance from his brothers lived and the social relationships with neighbours. The Wells resided at the eastern edge of Iwowis in a frame house which did not have any electricity or water system with the only source being the Fraser River. Roy has vivid memories of hauling water for his Saturday night bath and stated the only real difficulty was procuring enough wood for the year. Roy's mother would gather wood using a Swede saw. The traditional method of travel still remained along the Fraser River via canoes. His

description of the local store at Hope included the existence of a dock where Sto:lo people would land and obtain supplies. The rail line also yield another method of getting into Hope as the Canadian National run a flag train on the line running through Iwowis but it always came at a cost, usually a fish for the conductor or engineer. Access to Iwowis was limited until 1959 when a logging road was constructed into the area so the only means of travel was along the railway or by river.

The Wells family (Roy and his mother) used a variety of subsistence strategies but the traditional fishery was the main source for winter food stores. Their family utilized a root cellar for storage of preserved foods and several of these cellars are visible at Iwowis. Most of the fruit and vegetables were grown in very marginal soil. The orchard had been cut in half during the railway construction by the work camp located on the flat but still yielded enough fruit for the few families that remained on Reserve. Additional supplies such as flour, rice, and tea were bought in Hope. Roy states that his older brothers would pan gold to obtain the cash needed. He did not know exactly where the brothers panned but remembers how they utilized quicksilver (mercury) to pick out the gold from the debris. He knew that his brothers panned since the needed supplies would appear after a trip into Hope and the assay office.

Roy's education consisted of 10 years of residential school and three additional years of high school in Hope. His love of baseball came from his residential school experience and continued during his military service. The Wells family answered the call for servicemen during and after World War II. Four of Roy's brothers served during the war and he served during the 1950s. Keith Carlson discussed the dilemma that many of the Sto:lo men experienced after the War upon returning home with many finding their

Reserves abandoned or sparsely populated. Many having experienced some measure of equality in the military took enfranchisement upon return. The Sto:lo archives notes that Jackie Pat was one of those who chose to relinquish their status. It was not until many years later that Sto:lo veterans were recognized and Roy's brother Harold was instrumental in obtaining that recognition.

Socially, the Wells family maintained friendly relations with their neighbours, three families still residing on the Reserve as well as having friends and family in Hope. Visits were common especially when trips to Hope were made but a majority of the time Roy and his mother were isolated. The relationship with the Thompson did not change during this period as Roy mentioned that his mother and he could speak Thompson Salish and several acquaintances were fluent in both. Roy's ability to speak the Thompson dialect may have come from his exposure to the language at residential school as he attended the Anglican School in Lytton. Roy mentioned the church on Lhilheltalets but only remembers that by the 1940s the church structure had collapsed and was not used.

Presently Iwowis has only one resident, Roy Wells, although there is visible evidence of a row of houses and collapsed cellars exist on the Reserve. The Reserve still does not have electrical service and no water system serves the Reserve. Roy spends his time between his home on Reserve, his family fish camp, and Hope. The cemetery located near the railway line is overgrown but is used on occasion for the burial of past residents. The history of Iwowis has been replayed on several of the Union Bar Band allocations. The reason for this situation is complicated and varies from location to location but has its roots in Indian Land Policy and Administration that has dominated Aboriginal people over the last century.

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