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Stó:lō Wedding Ceremonies: Ritual and Change

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Stó:lō Archives

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.



STÓ:LŌ WEDDING CEREMONIES: RITUAL AND CHANGE

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INTRODUCTION

The idea of one model of a traditional aboriginal wedding ceremony is as erroneous as the common misconception that all aboriginal peoples are alike (Harkin 1996). Marriage ceremonies in the past, much like today, are as diverse as the individuals participating in them (McHalsie 1998; Point 1998). Obviously, traditional aboriginal ceremonies have undergone many changes due to the arrival of European populations (Collins 1974; Galois 1995; Harris 1987, 1997; McIlwraith 1996). Intermarriages, as well as the arriving missionaries, played a role in this alteration. The focus of this thesis is the documentation of changing aboriginal marriage ceremonies over time; providing the Stó:lō people with a source of information on elements common to most ceremonies, in the past, and information on what makes a ceremony legal to the Stó:lō as opposed to the province of British Columbia.

This research topic was created by the Stó:lō Nation for the purpose of defining what elements create a "traditional" Stó:lō ceremony. There is interest among community members to develop a current wedding ceremony that reflects the Stó:lō culture and meets the provincial requirements for a legally binding union (Canada 1997; Hogg 1985; Monk 1896). There are complex issues involved in this project stemming from the influence of religion in Stó:lō peoples lives in the past and present, as well as what Stó:lō people and past ethnographers define as traditional. The result of this work will be one source that provides information on Stó:lō weddings and addresses the topic for future treaty negotiations, through the examination of what is a legally binding marriage to the Stó:lō versus the provincial requirements (Asch 1984; Berger 1981; Canada 1996a, 1996b; Cumming 1972; Fleras 1992; Woodward 1997). The problems inherent in this work are the belief that there was one traditional ceremonial form and that to recreate it one only needs a simple recipe. As well, there is a compromise necessary to met the legal needs of the province and the privacy (not to mention agency) needs of the community.

Throughout the summer of 1998 research for this thesis was carried out in the Fraser Valley. The interviews were mainly with people thirty years of age or older; however, six of the interviews were conducted among individuals in their twenties. In total, twenty-six people were interviewed, eleven men and fifteen women. As well as these interviews, archival information was referred to in the form of written and taped material.

It is the goal of this researcher to document the changes over time that the Stó:lō wedding ceremony has undergone. To highlight these changes the varying factors that influencing the Stó:lō peoples will be addressed and the voices of individuals, living with the culmination of these changes, will be

employed to illuminate the perceived importance of the wedding ritual today.

CONTEXT

The Stó:lō are aboriginal peoples currently inhabiting the region surrounding the lower Fraser River. Traditionally these people spoke the Halq'emeylem language and the word "stó:lō" in Halq'emeylem means "river people" (Thom 1996: 2). Although the current territory of the Stó:lō includes the regions along the shore and tributaries of the lower Fraser River, traditionally it encompassed the entire watershed of the lower Fraser River (see attached map in the Appendix Section). This area "extends west to the Strait of Georgia, east to the Cascade Mountains, north to the headwaters of the Pitt and Harrison lakes, and south to include the drainages of the Chilliwack and Nooksack watersheds" (Thom 1996: 2).

Archaeological work carried out in this region produced evidence suggesting that the beginnings of the Stó:lō culture occurred approximately 10,000 years ago (Schaepe 1998). However, according to Stó:lō oral traditions, the Stó:lō peoples have occupied this region since "time immemorial" (Thom 1996: 2). The population of the Stó:lō prior to European contact, is estimated between 10,000 and 30,000 individuals (Thom 1996: 2). This figure dropped drastically when the Stó:lō were decimated by the first smallpox epidemic of 1782 and at least three other suspected epidemics: "smallpox or measles in 1824; measles in 1848; and smallpox in 1862" (Carlson 1997: 37). At its lowest numbers the Stó:lō population is estimated at approximately 1,300 people, but by 1996 it had climbed to around 6,000 (Thom 1996: 2).

There is a unity of cultures in the Lower Fraser River region. This unity is "manifested in such things as the common use of the [Halq'emeylem] language, intermarriage between individuals in the separate tribal groups, and a constant friendliness and social intercourse between villages" (Lerman 1952: 1). The Stó:lō have also been referred to as the Central Coast Salish, or more specifically, the "Upriver Halkomelem" component of the Central Coast Salish aboriginal peoples (Suttles 1990: 455, 1980).

Marriage is an element of Stó:lō culture. Kathleen Gough defines marriage as "a relationship established between a woman and one or more other persons, which provides that a child born to the woman under circumstances not prohibited by the rules of the relationship, is accorded full birth status rights common to normal members of his society or social stratum" (1959: 32). As the topic of marriage has been discussed in numerous anthropological works, the task of this particular thesis will be to place the analysis of the Stó:lō ceremony within a larger anthropological context. Lewis Henry Morgan (1877), Roger Keesing (1975), Jack Goody (1969), and Anita Jacobson (1967) all examined marriage for the purposes of cross-cultural comparison. Anthropologists such as Paul Bohannan and John Middleton, in their text Marriage, Family, and Residence (1968), take a more specific look at marriage within particular cultures such as the Nayar. This examination of the Stó:lō ceremony will be a

specific look at the ceremony's change over time.

The only written records pertaining to traditional aboriginal wedding ceremonies were produced by white, European, and generally male anthropologists, missionaries, and "adventurers" (Barnett 1938; Boas 1966, no date; Jenness 1977; Wells 1988; Hill-Tout 1907). The Reverend Thomas Crosby, in 1907 wrote an account of a marriage ceremony he had apparently witnessed while in Nanaimo (Crosby 1907). Although this is not an account of a traditional Stó:lō wedding ceremony, the elements that Crosby describes parallel those accounts found throughout ethnographies of Northwest Coast peoples. For example, aboriginal marriage is described by Wilson Duff as occurring in different forms that accommodated the different classes represented in the Stó:lō community. Classes in Stó:lō culture are flexible categories determined by family wealth and prestige (Duff 1952).

Duff writes in his text, The Upper Stalo Indians Of The Fraser River Of B.C., that the upper class usually arranged marriages between their children and the ceremony itself consisted of lavish gift giving during a time of year considered to be a "slack period" (Duff 1952: 92-93). The grandparents were the planners of the union, with some input from the parents, and witnesses were asked to comment on the marriage and given gifts in recognition of their work. The recognition of the marriage by the witnesses and the seating of the bride and groom on top of the wedding gifts from the groom's family signified the completion of the event.

The form of wedding ceremony occasionally used by the lowest class families consisted of the groom-to-be sleeping with the bride-to-be while her parents were away. In well-to-do families this would not be considered a legitimate union but an insult.

An exception to the above forms would be the post-contact Prophet Dance wedding. The Prophet Dance arose from the introduction of Christianity, the European belief that Jesus Christ is God incarnate (Webster's 1988: 175), to Northwest Coast aboriginal peoples and is too complex to describe here. However, it should be noted that when this was a popular religious event it enabled marriages to occur across class lines. Men and women danced in a circle and when one of the dancers decided that they wanted someone for their spouse they merely tapped that person on the shoulder or locked arms. The speaker of the event then lined up the couples and had them repeat brief vows witnessed by those present. This form of marriage is not agreed upon by all writers to have existed, but well-known scholars of Northwest Coast aboriginal peoples such as Wilson Duff and Wayne Suttles both describe the Prophet Dance as having occurred (Duff 1952: 92 and Suttles 1990: 633).

Although there exists a variety of sources detailing the gifts given, the food eaten, and the people in attendance at prominent individuals' ceremonies, due to the brevity of this particular proposal these details will be omitted (see Coqualeetza Archives 1994; Maud 1977; McFeat 1966; Pidocke 1965; Stó:lō Archives 1902).

It is now important to discuss changes the above "standard" ceremony has gone through during the course of approximately two hundred years of European contact. The significance of this contact is evident in the frequency of intermarriages and the number of marriages preformed by the Church.

The first non-aboriginal inhabitants of the Northwest Coast were the fur traders. As European women did not join their male counterparts at first there were obvious social reasons for marriages between aboriginal women and European men. However, there also existed economic reasons for these marriages as well.

Intermarriage was definitely encouraged by chief factors of the forts and company heads as it was seen as the means to forming more intimate bonds with aboriginal groups who were believed to have access to valuable furs. Hudson's Bay Company junior officers preferred to marry women of the perceived noble class of aboriginal society because of the beneficial political and economic alliances such unions provided. At Fort Langely, the chief factor even went so far as to consider affairs of a "clandestine nature" as against company policy (McNeill 1982: 39). As Van Kirk has written, "the norm for sexual relationships in fur-trade society was not casual, promiscuous encounters but the development of marital unions which gave rise to distinct family units ... fur-trade society developed its own marriage rite, marriage *a la facon du pays*, which combined both Indian and European marriage customs" (VanKirk 1980: 4). It is documented, in Hudson's Bay Company records, that aboriginal women had an aboriginal husband who she might live with for varying periods of time as well as a British fur trade husband (McNeill 1982: 2).

At first these inter-racial marriages were conducted according to the "custom of the country" or "laws of the land" (Van Kirk 1980: 28-52). Van Kirk defines marriage "after the custom of the country" as

...an indigenous marriage rite which evolved to meet the needs of fur-trade society...practised by both Hudson's Bay Company men and Nor'Westers, although marital patterns within each company framework differed, largely because of the contrast in official company policy toward intermarriage with the Indians (1980: 28).

No one, such as a member of the clergy, presided over the ceremony and they often took place in the bride's family's home territory or within the encampment that members of her band erected to be nearer the fur traders' forts. At the fort, the marriage ceremony was publicly acknowledged by the holding of a dance and perhaps the issuing of an extra ration of liquor. McNeill writes that:

...until the presence of the clergy in 1841, it appears that public recognition through bride price and ceremony provided the only social stability in a relationship between a white trader and native woman. Also,

for many of the men the expense of the bride price ensured that the trader stayed with his native wife for at least the duration of his employment (McNeill 1982: 43).

As a fur trader's time stationed in various locals was unpredictable, husbands would leave, separate from, or divorce their aboriginal wives. In some cases, they would arrange for their wives to remarry a fellow trader to assure the continued support of their family; this was called "turning off" (McNeill 1982: 7).

This began to change with the arrival of the first missionaries and the traders' increased concern for their families. As well, there occurred an "evolution of marriages towards the European model as traders began to find marriage partners among the mixed blood population" (McNeill 1982: 7).

The church had a great impact on the course aboriginal wedding ceremonies took and the form they currently assume. With the advent of the clergy, sanctioned wedding ceremonies began to take on a uniform design with little of the elements of the past ceremonies that represented the distinctiveness of each Coast Salish band. Oral interviews conducted by this author discuss the relevance of the church wedding as well as the prominence of this new tradition in the lives of an overwhelming number of aboriginal peoples (Gordon 1998; Victor 1998). The implications of this ceremony are evident directly and indirectly in the testimony of the Stó:lō people (Douglas 1998; Fowler 1998; Fraser 1998; Hall 1998; Herb and Helen Joe 1998; Tracy Joe 1998; Gina Kelly 1998).

METHODOLOGY

Enrolled in the University of Victoria's pilot History field school, I remained in Sardis, B.C., for four weeks. During this brief period of time archival research was undertaken at the Stó:lō and Coqualeetza Archives. Interviews with twenty-six Stó:lō people were also conducted. Prior to the time spent in the field, research was undertaken at the University of Victoria's McPherson Library, the Begbie Law Library, the Royal British Columbia Museum Library, and the British Columbia Archives.

For a period of two weeks leading up to my departure for Sardis, numerous secondary sources were located on the subject of North West Coast aboriginal marriage ceremonies at the University of Victoria's McPherson Library. The majority of these sources were written accounts by nineteenth century anthropologists and missionaries. The Royal British Columbia Museum Library contained similar material, as well as the field notes of two prominent anthropologists of the region (Boas 1966; Duff 1997) and one lesser known researcher of North West Coast peoples (Smith 1945). The British Columbia Archives contained these same field notes, newspaper documentation of aboriginal-non aboriginal marriages (usually aboriginal women to European men), and "RG 10" files on the paper trail of the Department of Indian Affairs. Finally the Begbie Law Library was consulted for information on existing

provincial and federal marriage laws.

While in Sardis numerous secondary and primary sources were researched at both the Stó:lō and Coqualeetza Archives. Overlap in sources occurred between these archives and between those sources of information found in Victoria, B.C. However, there were some distinct differences with the archives located in Sardis. The Stó:lō (Heritage Trust) Archives are designed to specifically house information on the Stó:lō people. Most written material directly or peripherally discussing the Stó:lō can be found here. This includes primary and secondary written accounts, information on the continuing treaty process for North West Coast peoples, as well as tapes of oral interviews, photographs, maps, and basketry. The Coqualeetza Archives have a large portion of the Marion Smith field notes collection which can be a valuable resource for anyone doing research on North West Coast peoples. This archive also contains numerous videotapes on the region and genealogical data to aid those in search of family connections and family names.

The oral interviews were the most complex means by which I gathered information for the topic at hand. The Ethical Review Committee of the University of Victoria granted Dr. John Lutz of the History Department approval for research under the file number 173-98. This approval was granted for the research of the History field school participants with the Stó:lō people.

The Field School

The Stó:lō Heritage Trust is located at 7201 Vedder Road, Sardis, B.C.. This governing body speaks on behalf of nineteen of the thirty Stó:lō bands located along the Fraser River from Hope to Fort Langely (Sam 1998). It was on this Crown property, considered by some to be a *de facto* reserve, that the field school was located. It was through the Stó:lō Heritage Trust, specifically employees affiliated with the Aboriginal Rights and Title branch (Keith Thor Carlson and Albert "Sonny" McHalsie), that the field school operated. The Trust invited the University of Victoria to operate a field school in cooperation with the Stó:lō and provided preliminary help in meeting Stó:lō community members. For my own research I first made connections with the Stó:lō staff on this site and then began making connections further afield with the help of these first connections.

I drafted my first questionnaire during the first few days of my arrival (see appendix for all three drafts of the questionnaire I followed while conducting interviews and the consent form used). The open-ended questions asked the consultants about such topics as:

- why get married?
- why have a ceremony?
- what makes a ceremony legal?
- describe "traditional" ceremonies versus ceremonies since contact
- describe your ceremony
- what form will wedding ceremonies take in the future?

- discuss divorce and inheritance in relation to the bond of marriage
- discuss the treaty implications in relation to whom legalises a ceremony

Throughout the interview process two questions were asked pertaining to treaty negotiations. These questions were: "who has control over marriages versus who would you like to see have control over marriages?" and "as treaties are being established, would you like to see Stó:lō marriage ceremonies included in this process? How?" Although many did not feel knowledgeable enough about the topic to comment, those that did had very strong opinions. Generally, the majority of those interviewed felt that control over aboriginal ceremonies should be under specific band control. However, no one had a problem with aboriginal commissioners being appointed by the provincial government (Pat Charlie 1998; Doug and Sherry Kelly 1998; Elizabeth Thomas 1998). The general consensus was that aboriginal couples, much like non-aboriginal couples, have to have someone say "this is a legal union" in order to have that union recognized not only by their community but also by their country. What is interesting to note is that wedding ceremonies are becoming more complex; it appears to be desirable to combine religious and traditional ceremonial elements. For example, Kelsie Charlie, a Stó:lō man with whom I consulted, explained that he felt the religious aspects of his marriage were in honor of his deceased grandmother and the traditional elements honored his more distant ancestors (Kelsie Charlie 1998).

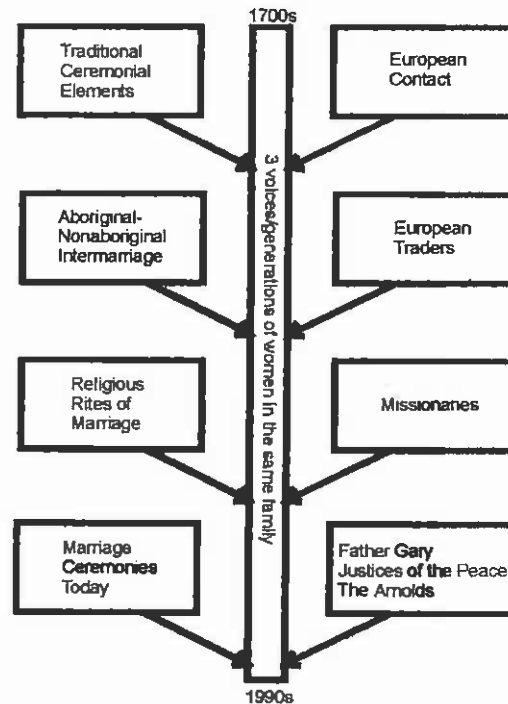
Those members of the Stó:lō community necessary to interview for the completion of this work are Wendy and Arnold Richie. These individuals are the only federally appointed aboriginal commissioners to date. This means that they are the only members of the community that can legally join two people in marriage.

The question of who has jurisdiction over aboriginal marriage rites is in a long line of issues being discussed throughout treaty negotiations in this country. Although it exists under the larger title of social issues it is no less important to the people who will forever have to live with the final outcome. This discussion of who has power to legalize aboriginal marriage ceremonies only makes one realize that there are many elements of the social/cultural nature of aboriginal peoples that will have to be looked at in detail before anyone signs on the dotted line. The treaty implications of the data collected for this thesis are exciting, however, the focus of this work is the changes the Stó:lō wedding ceremony has undergone since contact.

I will first employ a computer program called NUD•IST (Non-numerical Unstructured Data Indexing Searching and Theorizing) to index the data I gathered through the interview process (Qualitative Solutions 1996). This system will manage my data through a document and tree-structured index system and enable me to develop my project and expand the techniques that I will be using to make meaning from the data. I am using a computer program to qualitatively analyze the data because it is efficient to systematically organize raw data. In this way the data are contained in one place with the ease of

accessibility a computer program affords to group the data based on the themes of the questionnaire sections. These are: what is a marriage?, what was a "traditional" marriage ceremony?, what form do marriage ceremonies take currently?, what form will future marriage ceremonies take?, what will be the effects of the treaty process to marriage ceremonies?. These themes will focus on the details of the ceremonies that are in the data and the influences that have altered them over time.

Figure 1. Narrative Model



To isolate the theme of change over time and use the data as support or context, a narrative methodology will be employed (Silverman 1993). This process will focus on the interviews of three generations of women in the same family. As the voices of these women discuss the topics outlined in the questionnaire, the context of Stó:lō weddings such as politics, religion, and economics will be used to illuminate their discussion (see Figure 1). The use of the secondary material and the other interviews will provide this context. The result will be a comprehensive work isolating the ceremony's change over time within a background of historic dynamic change. The use of a narrative methodology allows the voices of the consultants to be heard as they guide the discussion of the thesis topic.

CONCLUSION

It has been this author's experience that this topic is wider in breadth of information than has previously been compiled in one source. It is important to

triangulate perspectives in order to create a more comprehensive picture answering the question “what is a Stó:lō marriage ceremony?” in the past and today. The three perspectives that need to be understood in conjunction, for this thesis, are: past Stó:lō peoples’ recorded oral accounts, the perspectives of past and present ethnographers in this field, and that information conveyed to this author through interviews.

European contact caused a shift in the wedding ceremonies of the aboriginal peoples of the Northwest Coast. As marriages began to occur between traders and aboriginal women, ceremonies began to reflect elements from both cultures. However, this form was not to last with the arrival of the clergy. Missionaries, who took up residence in and around the forts, enforced marriage by religious rites in order to have the union accepted as legally binding. Today there are many more options for a couple trying to decide how to legally consolidate their relationship. With the provincial government’s creation of two aboriginal commissioners who have the legal power to solemnize a marriage, many couples are now including a more “traditional” element in their ceremony.

The unfortunate outcome of the search for the “traditional” way is a belief that past, pre-contact cultures were static. Due to a dearth of information from that period of time, the dynamic nature of the aboriginal marriage rite can not be fully explored. The caution then is to avoid the creation of a dogmatic set of elements believed to be traditional that will not withstand the test of time and prove to be inflexible for future culture change.

The results of this research are intended to provide a framework for the examination of what a wedding ceremony today can include to be classified as traditional. By charting the change over time the Stó:lō wedding ceremony has undergone, this researcher provides a source of information about the ceremony and the reasons for its change. This thesis will explain what is believed to have occurred and why in as comprehensive a document as the data will allow. This would be the first such document giving the project historical and applied importance.

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APPENDIX

STO:LO MARRIAGE QUESTIONNAIRE: A Guidline For Interviewing On
The Meaning And Methods Of Legal Marriage Within The Sto:lo
Communities (first draft 25/5/98)

PROTOCOL

- begin by introducing self and explaining affiliation with Sto:lo Heritage Trust (Keith Carlson - Department of Aboriginal Rights and Title)
 - explain that the research design of personal project, as well as that of the University of Victoria field school, is intended to create a cooperative vehicle in which to research topics relevant to the Sto:lo peoples (all topics pursued by the school were developed or suggested by the Sto:lo Heritage Trust in association with Sto:lo elders and the Sto:lo cultural advisor, Sonny McHalsic)
 - do not begin session with a rigid, straight-to-the-point firing off of questions directly related to the topic; for example, ask about the area, the length of time that the interviewee has lived there, etcetera
 - be clear that the time of the interview will only be as long as the interviewee would like and that the information volunteered is entirely the interviewee's choice
 - explain the various ways in which the interview can be recorded and encourage the interviewee to choose the format they would be most comfortable with
 - explain what the accumulated knowledge will be used for and ask if this is acceptable
 - ask if the interviewee would like to place restrictions on that knowledge and if they would like copies (tapes, transcriptions, notes, finished report)
 - inform the interviewee how they can contact self if they have further questions and/or comments (Sto:lo phone number and Victoria phone number)
 - ask if self can contact the interviewee if there arises further questions
 - give a thank-you gift
-

why get married?

what does it mean to be married?

why have a ceremony?

how is one legally married?

what was/were the traditional Sto:lo marriage ceremony/ies?
(**bearing in mind that the Sto:lo were never static**)

were traditional marriages considered binding/legalised by the community?
how?

what was marriage in relation to the Prophet Dance of pre-missionary(?)
times?

has the traditional Sto:lo ceremony been altered since the times of European
contact? how?

what form do marriages typically take today?

does status affect marriages?how?

what form did or will your marriage ceremony take? what was involved?
what was unique/different about it?

who will organise it? who will be consulted?

what form did/are the preparations take/ing?

why have a ceremony/feast/potlatch?

DID SOMEONE SOLEMNIZE/OR PRESIDE OVER THE UNION?

(if a religious ceremony) are you and your spouse religious? (if yes) what does
it mean to you to be religious?

what form(s) would you like to see Sto:lo marriage ceremonies take?

should Sto:lo ceremonies be SOLEMNIZED?

how do you feel about Wendy and Arnold Richie being recently
commissioned to PRESIDE over Sto:lo marriage ceremonies?

who has control over-marriages versus who would you like to see have
jurisdiction over marriages?

as treaties are being established, would you like to see Sto:lo marriage
ceremonies included in this process? how?

was divorce present in Sto:lo culture pre-contact times? what was its form?

what was divorce and what did it mean to be divorced in pre-contact times?

do Sto:lo divorce their partners today? how (typically)?

what does it mean to be divorced today?

would you like to see divorce incorporated into the treaty process? how?

what is inheritance (typically)?

was inheritance affected by marriage (and divorce?) in the past, before European contact? how?

is inheritance affected today by marriage and divorce? how?

would you like to see inheritance incorporated into the treaty process? how?

****always bear in mind that every choice made by each individual comes from a framework borne of the times in which those decisions are being made****
(Historical Context)

STO:LO MARRIAGE QUESTIONNAIRE: A Guidline For Interviewing On
The Meaning And Methods Of Legal Marriage Within The Sto:lo
Communities (first draft, 25/5/98)
second

PROTOCOL

- begin by introducing self and explaining affiliation with Sto:lo Heritage Trust (Keith Carlson - Department of Aboriginal Rights and Title)
 - explain that the research design of personal project, as well as that of the University of Victoria field school, is intended to create a cooperative vehicle in which to research topics relevant to the Sto:lo peoples (all topics pursued by the school were developed or suggested by the Sto:lo Heritage Trust in association with Sto:lo elders and the Sto:lo cultural advisor, Sonny McHalsie)
 - do not begin session with a rigid, straight-to-the-point firing off of questions directly related to the topic; for example, ask about the area, the length of time that the interviewee has lived there, etcetera
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 - ask if self can contact the interviewee if there arises further questions
 - give a thank-you gift
-

why get married?

what does it mean to be married?

why have a ceremony?

how is one legally married?

what was/were the traditional Sto:lo marriage ceremony/ies?

(**bearing in mind that the Sto:lo were never static**)

were traditional marriages considered binding/legalised by the community?
how?

what was marriage in relation to the Prophet Dance of pre-missionary(?)
times?

has the traditional Sto:lo ceremony been altered since the times of European
contact? how?

what form do marriages typically take today?

does status affect marriages?how?

what form did or will your marriage ceremony take? what was involved?
what was unique/different about it?

who will organise it? who will be consulted?

what form did/are the preparations take/ing?

why have a ceremony/feast/potlatch?

DID SOMEONE SOLEMNIZE/ OR PRESIDE OVER THE UNION?

(if a religious ceremony) are you and your spouse religious? (if yes) what does
it mean to you to be religious?

what form(s) would you like to see Sto:lo marriage ceremonies take?

should Sto:lo ceremonies be SOLEMNIZED?

how do you feel about Wendy and Arnold Richie being recently
commissioned to PRESIDE over Sto:lo marriage ceremonies?

who has control over marriages versus who would you like to see have
jurisdiction over marriages?

as treaties are being established, would you like to see Sto:lo marriage
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was divorce present in Sto:lo culture pre-contact times? what was its form?

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what does it mean to be divorced today?

would you like to see divorce incorporated into the treaty process? how?

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was inheritance affected by marriage (and divorce?) in the past, before European contact? how?

is inheritance affected today by marriage and divorce? how?

would you like to see inheritance incorporated into the treaty process? how?

- IS THERE A DICHOTOMY BETWEEN WHAT IS CONSIDERED PRIVATE VERSUS PUBLIC? IF THIS EXISTS, HOW CAN THE PRIVATE ASPECTS OF A CEREMONY BE INCORPORATED INTO TREATY NEGOTIATIONS? WHAT ARE THE IMPLICATIONS FOR KEEPING THE PRIVATE ASPECTS PRIVATE AND NOT INCLUDING THEM INTO THE TREATY PROCESS? WHAT IS THE MIDDLE-GROUND THAT WILL ENABLE PRIVATE CEREMONIAL ASPECTS TO BE RECOGNISED AS LEGALLY BINDING AND YET NOT HAVE TO PLACE THESE PRIVATE ASPECTS ONTO THE NEGOTIATION "TABLE"?
-

****always bear in mind that every choice made by each individual comes from a framework borne of the times in which those decisions are being made****
(Historical Context)

... and ...

STO:LO MARRIAGE QUESTIONNAIRE: A Guidline For Interviewing On
The Meaning And Methods Of Legal Marriage Within The Sto:lo
Communities (third draft 25/5/98)

31/5/98

PROTOCOL

- begin by introducing self and explaining affiliation with Sto:lo Heritage Trust (Keith Carlson - Department of Aboriginal Rights and Title)
- explain that the research design of personal project, as well as that of the University of Vicyoria field school, is intended to create a cooperative vehicle in which to research topics relevant to the Sto:lo peoples (all topics pursued by the school were developed or suggested by the Sto:lo Heritage Trust in association with Sto:lo elders and the Sto:lo cultural advisor, Sonny McHalsie)
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- explain what the accumulated knowledge will be used for and ask if this is acceptable
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- inform the interviewee how they can contact self if they have further questions and/or comments (Sto:lo phone number and Victoria phone number)
- ask if self can contact the interviewee if there arises further questions
- give a thank-you gift

why get married?

what does it mean to be married?

why have a ceremony?

how is one legally married?

what was/were the traditional Sto:lo marriage ceremony/ies?

(**bearing in mind that the Sto:lo were never static**)

how do you know about traditional ceremonies? where did you learn this; did you witness "traditional" ceremonies"; did an elder explain past ceremonies to you; did you learn of "traditional" ceremonies by reading ethnographies?

were traditional marriages considered binding/legalised by the community? how?

what was marriage in relation to the Prophet Dance of pre-missionary(?) times?

has the traditional Sto:lo ceremony been altered since the times of European contact? how?

what form do marriages typically take today?

does status affect marriages? how?

what form did or will your marriage ceremony take? what was involved?

what was unique/different about it?

who will organise it? who will be consulted?

what form did/are the preparations take/ing?

why have a ceremony/feast/potlatch?

DID SOMEONE SOLEMNIZE/OR PRESIDE OVER THE UNION?

(if a religious ceremony) are you and your spouse religious? (if yes) what does it mean to you to be religious?

what form(s) would you like to see Sto:lo marriage ceremonies take?

should Sto:lo ceremonies be SOLEMNIZED?

how do you feel about Wendy and Arnold Richie being recently commissioned to PRESIDE over Sto:lo marriage ceremonies?

who has control over marriages versus who would you like to see have jurisdiction over marriages?

as treaties are being established, would you like to see Sto:lo marriage ceremonies included in this process? how?

IS THERE A DICHOTOMY BETWEEN WHAT IS CONSIDERED PRIVATE VERSUS PUBLIC? IF THIS EXISTS, HOW CAN THE PRIVATE ASPECTS OF A CEREMONY BE INCORPORATED INTO TREATY NEGOTIATIONS? WHAT ARE THE IMPLICATIONS FOR KEEPING THE PRIVATE ASPECTS PRIVATE AND NOT INCLUDING THEM INTO THE TREATY PROCESS? WHAT IS THE MIDDLE-GROUND THAT WILL ENABLE PRIVATE CEREMONIAL ASPECTS TO BE RECOGNISED AS LEGALLY BINDING AND YET NOT HAVE TO PLACE THESE PRIVATE ASPECTS ONTO THE NEGOTIATION "TABLE"?

was divorce present in Sto:lo culture pre-contact times? what was its form?

how did you learn about these acts/ceremonies?

what was divorce and what did it mean to be divorced in pre-contact times?

do Sto:lo divorce their partners today? how (typically)?

what does it mean to be divorced today?

would you like to see divorce incorporated into the treaty process? how?

what is inheritance (typically)?

was inheritance affected by marriage (and divorce?) in the past, before European contact? how?

how do you know about past practices?

is inheritance affected today by marriage and divorce? how?

would you like to see inheritance incorporated into the treaty process? how?

always bear in mind that every choice made by each individual comes from a framework borne of the times in which those decisions are being made
(Historical Context)

PROBLEMS: