

W̱SÁNEĆEL EN SKÁU

Revitalizing W̱SÁNEĆ Law through Stories

Collected Stories

Tsawout First Nation RELAW Project

These stories were collected by Shauna Johnson and Joshua James for the Tsawout First Nation and West Coast Environmental Law RELAW Project. All stories are the property of W̱SÁNEĆ and are for the use of W̱SÁNEĆ community members only. They are not to be used for personal benefit.

WSÁNEĆ Stories

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1A The Flood Story

Recording (0-25 mins.)

RELAW ŁÁUWELNEW Storytelling Session, July 25, 2016

Recorded by Shauna Johnson and Joshua James

Told by John ("JB") Williams (Tsawout)

This is how the story was told to me when I was a still in the Long House, when I was a new one.

So long ago, there were some of us Saanich that weren't listening to the Creator's laws and teachings. Because it's those laws and teachings that gave us an abundance of seafood and abundance of medicine and food on land. It's because some weren't listening to those teachings anymore that he sent a message with Raven saying that he is going to cause a flood to wipe those of us that aren't heeding those laws, out. Those of you that are still listening can heed this warning now. He wanted us to do three different things that will prepare us for the flood:

- 1) Prepare and dry a lot of foods then place those in our cedar boxes and bags. Take those cedar boxes and bags in our travelling canoes.
- 2) Weave three different lengths of cedar rope. The first length of cedar rope will be to tether all the travelling canoes together that will make one giant raft of travelling canoes. The second length of rope will be to tether all the family canoes for those of us that are still listening, so that we can share our food when it's time to go. The third length of cedar rope will be the longest length of rope that we have woven as people that will be our anchor rope.
- 3) The third he wanted us to do is to make sure that our children were on the canoes at all times. That way we can just pick them up and go when it was time and be off.

Within that message, Raven told them to stay near land until there is only a small piece of it left and this will greatly increase your chances of surviving this flood.

We happened to be in our village site down in TSAWOUT, and Raven pointed to a mountain. Well, it will take a few days to get to this mountain because you will be paddling flood waves. And after those few days go by, you notice a welcoming figure standing on the horizon. As you paddle closer and closer to it, you will come to realize that it is *KEKEILC*, the arbutus tree. So, we did as we were told and prepared all our food, wove the three different lengths of cedar rope, made sure the children were near the canoes at all times, and waited until a small amount of land was left. And we started paddling this way; we got blown off course and started paddling towards the Gulf Islands. 'Cause there was a storm happening at that time, but when that happened a crow came and landed on the lead canoe, dropped an arbutus branch down, looked at the lead captain of that canoe, hopped up, and did a perfect 90 degree turn away from that canoe.

At that moment, the captain knew that the crow was there to guide us. So, he turned and followed that crow, which led them straight to the arbutus tree that was up on this mountain. When we got here, we rafted up all our travelling and our family canoes then anchored down to the arbutus tree. Floodwaters rose and covered the land, underneath the tree, covered the tree itself, and still kept rising until we couldn't see the trees through the water anymore. And it still kept rising until we only had a small piece of that cedar rope left, at which point our ancestors were a little bit worried that they didn't prepare enough to survive the flood. But, by that time the flood had already peaked and was starting to recede. The tree showed itself, then the land beneath the tree showed itself, and that's when someone jumped up and looked at the land then said, "Look, look, *ŁÁU,WEL,NEW*, look, look, *ŁÁU,WEL,NEW*". That is the proper name for this mountain — it's not Mount Newton, its *ŁÁU,WEL,NEW*. Waters returned to their normal tidemark. And our chief and councilor's, at that time, got together.

Historically, we were a matriarchal society, so all our positions of power were traditionally held by females. Our chief said there were two things that we need to do,

and one was that we have to name ourselves as a people; then the second thing is that we need to do something to honour this tree. One council member stands up and said, “Well, how about we call ourselves W̱SÁNEĆ? This will remind ourselves of this flood and why this flood had happened”. If you take our name and translate the meaning into English, it will translate into “the emerging people”. The chief said, “That’s good. Now we are named, but now we need to do something to honour this tree”. Another council member stands up and said, “Well, how about we promise this ḴE̱IŁĆ as W̱SÁNEĆ that when we cut it down that we will not use them in any of our ceremonial fires and use them in any of our carvings until the end of time.” This was around the period where humans could speak to plants and animals, and they could speak back to us. The arbutus tree overheard us say this, and said, “If you W̱SÁNEĆ make me that promise, I will take on this peeling of my bark where your cedar rope was attached to me throughout my whole body, as a reminder to you that it was me that you guys made that promise to. If it wasn’t for me, you guys would not be here.” And to this day, that is why the arbutus tree peels. If it wasn’t for that tree we wouldn’t be here as a W̱SÁNEĆ people.

I usually add that this is our flood story, because that I have come across many mainstream Christians that are saying that we adapted their Noah’s Ark story to suit us as a people. But our story is well over 10,000 years old and our visitors have only been in our territory for about 200 years, so there is a little bit of a time difference. We have rocks and minerals scattered all over the top of this mountain that have been carbon dated to be 10,000 years old, which is how old our story is. And, these rocks and minerals could only be found in the Fraser River today, because that’s where our flood actually came from. When our last ice age was receding, it left a giant ice dam across the Fraser River and it allowed it to build up so much water that our ancestors were able to see that wave, pardon the pun, engulfing the Gulf Islands.

John Williams: Arbutus Tea

The arbutus tree has gone a step further than just peeling its bark to remind us that they are sacred trees, and that bark that he peels can be made into a tea. I call it end of the day tea 'cause it makes you tired when you drink it. The students that go through Earl and I's nature walk program; they have named the arbutus tea "giggle tea" because it gives you the giggles before falling asleep. It's nothing hallucinogenic so you aren't going to be seeing pink bunnies or purple elephants; it is just happy giggles to relieve the stress of our days. Because we all have those little stresses that can build up, and this tea will help to relieve that. It can also be used to treat insomnia, and I've used it to treat my daughter's insomnia and mine.

For people that want to try this tea for the first time, I usually recommend to take a piece of bark that is the same length and width as their pinkie finger for one tea cup. Bring your water to a running boil, let it sit until the bubbles stop, stick the piece of bark in the tea cup, pour the water into the cup, and let it steep for two to three minutes. It will taste fairly similar to the Chinese green tea, like the ones that we get in restaurants and teashops. It can be stored the same way as conventional teas, so just in a paper bag that is in a nice cool and dry area. Statistically speaking, the medicinal value of the bark that is used to aid sleep doesn't diminish for about a year after picking it.

You can harvest it one of two ways; one way is to pick it up off the ground. If you do harvest by picking it off the ground, just be aware that there are dog walkers out there and you don't want to bring home any unwanted nutrients. And if you are wary about picking it up off the ground, you can just go up to the tree and just gently take the paper-thin bark off the tree. You won't damage it and I usually recommend taking it at eye level, because I haven't seen a dog on Vancouver Island that can pee that high and only when the bark is peeling.

1B The Flood Story

Saanich Native Heritage Society, *SENĆOŦEN: W̱SÁNEĆ Legends and Stories* (2007), p. 9

Told by Chris Paul (Tsartlip), Philip Pelkey, Dave Elliot Sr,
Baptist Jimmy, and Agnes Smith

One day a long, long time ago, the tidewaters started to rise. The people began to worry as the water was starting to reach their homes. They collected all their belongings and put them into their canoes. As the water rose, the canoes were carried away. The water rose even more. They paddled to the highest mountain. When they reached the top of the mountain one of the men made a long anchor rope of cedar bark. He made a huge pile so they could stay anchored.

Finally, the whole mountain was covered except the very tops of the trees. The rain was very heavy and soon covered the treetops. No one knows how long it rained. They were anchored there for a long, long time waiting to see what would happen. They were well prepared and had lots of dried salmon to eat. After many days, a raven came and landed on the bow of their canoe. He seemed to be telling them something. Suddenly, a man said “NI, QENNET ṮE W̱SÁNEĆ!” (Look what is emerging), as he pointed to a mountain in the distance. This is the news the raven was bringing.

Finally, the flood was over. The floodwaters finally began to go down. When the water went down enough, they got out of their canoes and rested, as they were very tired.

Before they left the mountain, they gathered together in a circle around the huge coil of rope. They prayed and gave thanks for being alive. They gave thanks for the mountain that had saved them. They said from now on, this mountain would be called the ŁÁU,WEL,NEW (the place of refuge), and we will be called the W̱SÁNEĆ people. They went back to where their village was; the people that remained in the village had all drowned. Only the people who went to the mountain on their canoes survived.

Even today, it is said that if you are of pure mind, body, and spirit, you can still find the huge pile of Indian rope on the mountain.

This story of the Great Flood has been told for many generations. The people who survived the flood were the ancestors of the W̱SÁNEĆ people today.

2 Thunder

Saanich Native Heritage Society,
SENĆOŦEN: WSÁNEĆ Legends and Stories (2007), p. 45
Told by Catherine Jones and Sandy Jones

There was once a particular young man who used to ponder about where the thunder came from. For days on end, he would sit and wonder how he could find the answer to all his questions.

The young man's parents told him that he couldn't learn anything about the thunder unless he worked for it. He was told that he had to take cold baths daily. Even after doing these countless times, he still didn't receive his answers. His parents' only answer was to continue taking baths daily.

Finally, one day he heard the thunder's loud noises, so he decided to go up the mountain and find the thunder. It took him several days to reach the top of the mountain to watch the thunder. While he watched the thunder, he saw a young girl come out of a cave, which was the home of the thunder. The young man spoke to the girl, and she answered, asking him how he found their home. He told her how hard he worked to reach the top of the mountain.

The "Thunder Girl" told the young man that she was alone; her parents had gone to dry some fish. That was the reason why it was thundering. The parents were gone for several days.

Only when the fish was completely dry did the parents decide to come home. When they arrived back to the cave, they realized that their daughter was living as man and wife with the young stranger and there was no way that they could discourage them from doing so.

The young man stayed on for several years and they bore a child from this union.

Several years later he returned to his village to visit his parents. He didn't stay with his parents very long because he was used to living up in the mountain with his thunder family.

His thunder family was very pleased to have him back with them to live in their cave up in the mountain.

3 Thunderbird Story

Saanich Native Heritage Society,
SENĆOŦEN: W̱SÁNEĆ Legends and Stories (2007), p. 109
Told by Agnes Smith

Long ago there was a teenager who was alone in the world except for his old grandfather. His mother and father had died. He had no brothers and sisters. He was very poor. It seemed to him that life was cruel and lonely, and hardly worth living at all.

One day his grandfather talked to him for a long time. “We cannot count on other people to do things for us,” he said. “Each one of us had to take responsibility for his own life. It is up to you to make something of your life.”

“How can I do that, grandfather?” replied the boy. “I have no family, and I have no wealth. Life is very hard.”

“You have to start by accepting yourself,” said the grandfather, kindly. “Spend time alone in the forest. Make your body and your mind clean. Take a cold bath each morning. Do not eat too much and go on fasts once in a while. All the time you are doing these things, pray to the Creator who made you and me and everything else in the world.”

The teenager did what his grandfather told him to do. He spent many years in the forest and on the beach, fasting, and praying.

Now the Thunderbird had his home on Mount Newton. He heard the prayers of the young man, and his wings moved like dark clouds across the sky. His eyes flashed lightning that hit a cedar tree and peeled off its bark.

The young man found this peeled tree. He bathed himself in a nearby stream and rubbed his body with the bark of the tree. The spirit of the Thunderbird told him to go to Mount Newton and bathe in the sacred lake. He found this lake; many impure things came out of his body when he bathed there. He was purified.

The spirit of the Thunderbird told the young man that he was ready to use his power, but that he must use his power to help people and not to hurt them. He was given a war club to protect the people from war parties of strangers, and he was given the powerful eyesight of the eagle. Not only could he see a long distance, but also, he could see into the hearts of the people and help them with their troubles. With the help of the Thunderbird, the young man became a provider of good things and a protector for the SAANICH people.

4 ŁEL,TOS

**Robert YELKÁTFE Clifford, “Listening to Law” (2016)
33 Windsor Yearbook of Access to Justice 47, p. 52**

A long time ago, when the Creator, XÁLS, walked the Earth, there were no islands in the WSÁNEĆ territory. The islands that are there today were human beings (our ancestors). At this time, XÁLS walked among the WSÁNEĆ People, showing them the proper way to live. In doing this, he took a bunch of the WSÁNEĆ People and threw them out into the ocean. Each of the persons thrown into the ocean became the islands there today. Each of those islands were given a particular name that reflects the manner in which they landed, their characteristics or appearance, or the significance they have to the WSÁNEĆ People. “James Island” was named ŁEL,TOS, meaning “Splashed on the Face”. ŁEL,TOS reflects the way the island landed in the ocean. The southeast face of ŁEL,TOS is worn by the wind and the tide.

After throwing the WSÁNEĆ People into the ocean, XÁLS turned to speak to the islands and said: “Look after your relatives, the WSÁNEĆ People.” XÁLS then turned to the WSÁNEĆ People and said: “You will also look after your ‘Relatives of the Deep.’” This is what XÁLS asked of us in return for the care our “Relatives of the Deep” provide for us.¹

¹ Rob Clifford says that this story was told to him by John Elliott.

5 The Transformer

Saanich Cultural Education Centre, *Saanich Medical Practices* (1975)

Collected by Adelynne Claxton

Told by Chris Paul (Tsartlip)

There was a man living in Deep Cove. He heard that XÁLS the transformer was coming. He decided to make some spears so that he can kill this transformer. Just as he was finishing his spears a stranger came and stood beside him.

“What are you doing?”

“I heard about a transformer who is coming this way,” replied the man. “I made these spears for him. I am going to kill him.”

“Let me look at those spears,” said the stranger. The man didn’t expect the transformer to be around yet, so he wasn’t suspicious. So, he gave the spears to the stranger.

“It would be better if one spear was over here and another spear was over there,” said the stranger as he placed the spears in the air. The spears stayed where they were placed. Then the transformer sprinkled something over the man, which caused him to turn into a deer. The deer jumped into the water and swam across the bay.

Then the transformer sprinkled something on the man’s wife, his son and his dog. They changed into three rocks, which still can be seen today. When the dog was changed into a rock, he had his head in the air. This place was called TEUEN (Land’s end). It means “Howling Dog.”

6 The Raven Story

Saanich Cultural Education Centre, (1975)

Collected by Adelynne Claxton

Told by Violet Williams (Pauquachin)

This is a story about a father who didn't take proper care of his children. Raven was the father, and he had many children. They were always hungry because they were always so poor.

Raven left daily to catch fish, but he never did bring anything back for his family to eat. His wife suspected that he ate all his catch before he came home, which he did.

Whenever Raven caught enough fish, he would stop at and make a fire and cook his catch and eat it all by himself.

One day his children noticed some fish pieces in his canoe. So one day one of the boys said to his mother, "I want to go along with father. I suspect he is eating his catch." His mother said, "Alright son, go, but you be very careful."

Early in the morning, he got up and went and hid behind some mats on his father's canoe. On previous fishing trips the boy asked his father if he could accompany him, but Raven always refused, saying, "No, you stay home and wait and I'll be home with enough fish for all of you." But he always lied. He didn't want to share his fish with any of his family.

Just then Raven approached his canoe, got on and started out on his fishing trip, not knowing his son was hidden under some mats. Not very far from the shore, Raven started to catch some fish, and the boy could hear his father when he brought the fish into the canoe. When Raven got enough fish he went ashore, unloaded his fish and made a big fire. He started cooking his fish. When it was almost cooked, his little son got out of his hiding place.

He went where his father was cooking the fish, but as soon as he saw his son coming towards him, he said, “Look son, see over there on that tree that’s floating, there’s a seagull or something.” The son told his father that the seagull was just sitting on a log. But Raven kept telling his son to row out and check. The boy wouldn’t leave so Raven said that they’d both go out and check.

As they got near, the seagull flew away. When they reached the log, Raven told his son to get off and go over and see what the seagull was eating. As soon as Raven’s son got off the canoe and onto the log, he pushed the log away and he rowed back to where he was cooking his fish.

Meanwhile the boy was left on the log and he watched his father eat the fish. When he had eaten all his catch he got back on his canoe and went home, leaving his son on the log.

The log drifted for days and days, and the boy cried day and night. When one day he was visited by XÁLS (meaning a god that performs miracles), XÁLS told the boy, “Stand up and stop crying”, so he did. XÁLS touched him and he became a tall, nice looking young man.

After he was transformed into a tall young man, XÁLS told him to go and get a mate at a particular place. So he went to where he was told to go.

When he arrived at this place, he heard some laughing and talking. He kept going in the direction of laughter. When he got there, it was two girls swimming. He called out to the two girls and they came to him.

The tall, nice looking young man explained to the young girls that he was instructed by XÁLS to get himself a mate, and one of them would become his mate. Both girls wanted to have the nice looking man for their mate. He didn’t know which one to choose so he decided to take both of them, which they agreed to.

After they had agreed among themselves, they went to their father, and he consented to this union and they held a big potlatch where the whole village attended.

One of the young man's wives was able to turn things into rock whenever she puts paint on her face, so that anything she looked at would turn to rock.

The next day they travelled to the home of the young man in search of his family. When they reached his village, everyone went to shore to greet them. When he got ashore, he asked the villagers where his mother and brothers were.

He found his mother who was now blind from crying all the time. He touched his mother and instantly her sight came back. He touched his brothers and sisters, and they were all transformed into nice looking people, but he did nothing for his father. One wife turned the young man's father into a rock and the other wife turned him back to human again.

A potlatch was held in honour of the young man and his two wives. Everyone in the village was invited.

Raven tried to be good to his son who he had left to die on the log. His son forgave him, and everyone was happy.²

² Moral: Greed – the child was taught to share. Society has its strength in family bonds.

7 The Wondrous Pit

Saanich Cultural Education Centre, *Saanich Medical Practices* (1975)

Collected by Adelynne Claxton

Told by Elsie Claxton (Tsawout)

Stuart Island, USA, an island quite near Saanich, was called “Whale Island”, or in Indian language, “KWENES”.

An Indian doctor would go to this island on canoe. Every night he would go to KWENES to have a walk around the border of the island; this customary act was supposed to give the doctor powers.

One night, towards daybreak, the doctor was on his way home and astonished by luminous light and stopped. Bewildered, he observed what seemed to be a bottomless pit. Still stunned by this sight, he threw a rock into it but it never seemed to hit bottom. It was the strangest thing he had ever seen in his whole life. This amazing hole in the ground did not contain any water; so, for curiosity’s sake he stuck his leg in but it did not touch bottom.

This impossibility made him more and more inquisitive; he stood and wondered if he should jump into the hole. If he did, he thought, he might receive greater powers. But he went home undecided, wishing he did make a leap into the amazing site.

8 The Two Brothers

Saanich Cultural Education Centre, *Saanich Medical Practices* (1975)

Collected by Adelynne Claxton

Told by Elsie Claxton (Tsawout)

This is a short story about two brothers, William and Tommy James. The boys lived on Pauquachin Reserve. William and Tommy were very young when their mother passed away. They had an aunt named LUMXHALT, but they were still unassisted.

These two boys developed and supported themselves by being brave, reliable, growing, and challenging their own survival.

At daybreak, William and Tommy set out for a deer hunting trip. They would travel to the Malahat by canoe and range up the mountain by foot. They would not cease their hunt until they caught two deer.

The boys would return home proud and contented. They would do the cleaning, skinning, cutting, and dividing meat. William and Tommy were proud to share the meat with elders.

The brothers have perished but are still admired and remembered for their closeness to their people and their thoughtfulness towards each other and older people.

9 The Black Fish

Saanich Cultural Education Centre, *Saanich Medical Practices* (1975)

Collected by Adelynne Claxton

Told by Catherine Jones (Patricia Bay)

This is a true story about the black fish, which white people call the “killer whale”.

There were two men from Tseycum village who went out fishing near Mill Bay when something happened to their boat. While this problem occurred, a black fish approached.

More black fish were sighted, so one man said, “Do not say anything critical about the fish because they will get mad if something bad is said about them.”

The other fishermen just laughed, doubting the serious man’s comment. “I will never believe that tall tale.”

The other two replied, “It is true. The blackfish understand our language.”

But the young foolish man still disbelieved. He sat there and called down the black fish, calling them names.

“The fish are too far to hear what I am saying,” he would say. The wise fisherman answered, “You’re going to find out for yourself that you are wrong.”

A long time passed before the smart man said, “You’d better hurry and repair the motor before the black fish reach here.”

The motor was finally repaired and they headed home. As they were just going to enter the bay, they met up with a school of black fish. The large hungry fish swarmed around the fishing boat. From that day on the doubtful man believed all elders and stories.

10 Eulachon Trail

Saanich Cultural Education Centre, *Saanich Medical Practices* (1975)

Collected by Adelynnne Claxton

Told by Elsie Claxton (Tsawout)

Indians long ago used goat and sheep wool to make blankets; the weaving method was used. Blankets were used for trading and selling.

The areas mainly camped at were the Fraser River and Sechelt area. These short journeys were always enjoyed by the people because travelling was a life-long work and pleasure.

The main trail the Indian people followed through was called the “Eulachon Trail” because eulachon oil was dropped all along the trail.

During the travel back home, the people gathered wool which was snagged on the bushes and branches. Good quantities were found. The wool was used for clothing, blankets, hats, and belts, etc.

Present times, sheep wool is used for knitting and other costumes. The disadvantage now is that it must be bought for a good sum of money.

11 SXÍXI

Saanich Cultural Education Centre, *Saanich Medical Practices* (1975)

Collected by Adelynnne Claxton

Told by Catherine Jones (Patricia Bay)

This Indian name is a customary mask dance. Very seldom do Indians have this dance, mostly for special occasions.

This story goes back a long time ago. There was a young couple that used to take cold baths before going fishing.

One day the couple went out on their canoe; right away they caught something on their line. They tugged the line for a while, then the man said, "Let's leave it."

But the lady said, "No, I think we should keep it and try to pull it up." Finally they pulled the heavy object up and it was a SXÍXI mask.

The wife stated, "We might as well go home now."

Her patient husband answered, "No we should stay away from home temporarily, take cold baths, and must try to find out about what have found." For several days the couple stayed out at sea; they met up with two brother fishermen.

The fishermen asked what the couple were up to. They replied, "We have caught a mask during travelling and we were just studying it on our travel." The fishermen were surprised because they also caught a mask while fishing. The four people got together and said, "Let us compare these masks of skilled carving." They talked it over and studied the art; both masks were different. They didn't learn anything about the masks but continued talking.

They finally danced and used this special mask in their dance. This is how the SXÍXI originated.

This mask was from the deep waters. The SXÍXI mask was handed down from generation to generation. If a girl belongs to the SXÍXI, her children will also belong to this distinctive dance. This rule is also the same for boys; when they have children, they will have the privilege of taking part in the SXÍXI.

This dance was first started on the mainland but came over to Vancouver Island. SXÍXI is used for several ceremonies like: weddings, naming a person, a girl changing into a woman, funerals (no song sung, only dancing), and welcoming people. People that do not pertain to this unique dance cannot take part in it. SXÍXI is also used in potlatches.

12 The Porpoise-Hunter and Thunderbird

Saanich Cultural Education Centre, *Saanich Medical Practices* (1975)

Collected by Adelynn Claxton

Told by Chris Paul (Tsartlip)

This is a legend of three young porpoise hunters.

Early one morning, they started out to go porpoise hunting. They searched for a long time, but they couldn't find any porpoises. They went as far as Sooke, and still, they couldn't find any porpoises.

It was getting dark when they reached Sooke. They noticed some lightening ahead of them. They could see the reflection on the water. They became frightened because they were young and had never seen lightening before. Travelling a little further, the boys came upon a large bird, a monster. The bird had killed a whale that weighed many tons. When the boys got closer, the bird flew away. As the bird flew, it made a rumbling noise like thunder. "That's what it is; it is thunder," the boys agreed. That is why this bird is called Thunderbird.

When they got ashore, the boys saw that the bird had dragged the whale up onto the beach. The Thunderbird was flying away, making its thunder noise. It was very late, so the boys decided to make camp.

Early in the morning, they went to look at the large whale on the beach. Two of the boys wanted to cut off a piece off the whale and eat it; for they were very hungry. "No, you better not", the other boy told him. "You know what the old people say – anything that Thunderbird touches is poisoned. You had better remember that."

The two boys ate some of the whale meat anyway, and they both died. The third boy went home right away.

When he got home, he thought about two of his friends. He couldn't get them out of his mind. He couldn't sleep at night. Early one morning, after very little sleep, he

thought of carving the Thunderbird, the whale and the two young men. This was the first totem carving ever carved.

13 Raven and Willow Grouse Go Hunting

Saanich Cultural Education Centre, *Saanich Medical Practices* (1975)

Collected by Adelynne Claxton

Told by Chris Paul (Tsartlip)

Willow Grouse went hunting. He took his bow and arrows. He shot a deer. He started to clean the deer. A man appeared, and asked Willow Grouse if he could have the heart. Willow Grouse gave the heart to him.

“If your pack gets heavy while you are going home,” the man said, “shake your back and your pack will become lighter.”

Then the man disappeared.

Willow Grouse carried the deer home. When his pack became heavy, he shook his back and the pack became light again. His wife was happy to see the deer that he had killed.

Raven wanted some deer meat. He asked Willow Grouse where he had shot the deer. Willow Grouse told him where the place was. Then Raven went hunting. He took his bow and arrows. He shot a deer. He started to clean the deer. A man appeared and asked Raven if he could have the heart.

“No! I won’t give you anything. I shot this deer myself,” Raven said. Then the man disappeared. Raven carried the deer home. The deer was very heavy. Raven was tired by the time he got home.

He left the deer outside his house and went inside to tell his wife that he had killed a deer. When she came out of the house, all she could see was a big root. The deer had been changed into a root. Raven thought of the man that had asked him for the heart of the deer. He knew the man was XÁLS, the transformer. “Maybe I should have given him the heart,” thought Raven.

14 Mink Goes Fishing

Saanich Cultural Education Centre, *Saanich Medical Practices*, (1975)

Collected by Adelynne Claxton

Told by Chris Paul (Tsartlip)

One day, Mink went fishing. He waited for something to come inside his fish trap. "Oh, what is going to come in?" he pondered. A salmon swam in, it made a noise at the trap. "What are you?" he asked.

"I am a dog salmon," replied the fish.

"Oh, get out!" cried Mink. "I don't want you. You are an ugly fish. You are all different colours."

The dog salmon did not like the way Mink spoke to him, and he swam out of the trap right away.

"What is going to come into my trap?" wondered Mink again. Another salmon swam into his trap.

"What are you?" asked Mink.

"I am a coho salmon," said the fish.

"I don't want you," said Mink. "Go back! You have a crooked nose and are the ugliest fish that I have ever seen." Mink was being very fussy.

He called for another fish; one swam into the trap.

"What are you?" asked Mink.

"I am a humpback salmon," replied the fish.

"Oh, I don't want you. Get out!" cried Mink.

Then a steelhead trout swam into the trap. “You are the thinnest, narrowest fish that I have ever seen,” said Mink. “I don’t want you, get out!”

When Mink called for another fish, spring salmon answered. “I don’t like you. You are too big and too wide,” said Mink. The spring salmon ran away. Mink hollered for fish once more. When he heard a noise, he pulled the trap out of the water. This time there was a sea serpent inside the trap! The sea serpent grabbed Mink and held him so tightly that he could not breathe. Mink fainted. Then the sea serpent left, as he thought he was dead.

Sometime later, Mink woke up. He lay on the ground, grunting and groaning, until he recovered his strength. Then he remembered his fishing and decided to accept any fish that came into his trap.

“What is going to come in?” asked Mink. A spring salmon swam into the fish trap. Mink pulled it up.

He took the salmon to the barbeque on a rack over the fire. Just before the fish was cooked, the wolves snuck over to see what Mink were cooking. The wolves made Mink fall asleep, and then they ate the salmon. After they had finished eating, they rubbed Mink’s face with salmon grease and put a piece of fish between his teeth. Before they left, they cut off his tail.

When Mink woke up he thought he had eaten the salmon. Then he noticed that the tail was missing. He began to curse the wolves, for he knew they had taken it. He also knew where to find them.

The wolves played in a large open field at the end of the road. Mink walked there and saw the wolves playing with his tail. They had made it into a ring and were throwing it to each other.

“Hey! That’s my tail!” Mink yelled out.

He noticed that sometimes his tail was thrown too far. He watched where it landed when the wolves missed it. Mink got ready to grab his tail and run. When his tail was thrown too far, he picked it up and ran home. After he reached home safely, he stuck his tail back on. If he had not found his tail, Mink would have short tails today.

15 Wolf Story

Saanich Cultural Education Centre, *Saanich Medical Practices* (1975)

Collected by Adelynne Claxton

Told to Gus by his grandfather, Dr. Bill

A Marriage

Long ago a young man fell in love with a young woman. He liked her so much that he visited her for a year before he felt ready to ask her father for permission to marry her. Also, he wanted to be sure that he was strong enough to support a family.

When the young man told the father his wish to marry his daughter, the father advised him to speak to the girl's mother. The young man left saying he would return next week.

Then he went out and hunted with all his skill and concentration. He killed three deer and a great many ducks for he wanted to impress the mother with his ability as a good provider.

A week later the young man returned to the home of the woman he loved. He placed the food outside the door of the house, and then sat down and waited. All day he sat there alone. Nobody spoke to him. Nobody noticed him. He might as well be invisible. As the day went by, he became very hungry. Finally, the young woman told her mother that a young man was waiting to see her. "What young man?" said the mother. "I don't know anything about a young man." She went outside and brought all the food into the house. Then she invited the young man inside. "Say what you have to say," she said to him.

"I want to marry your daughter," said the young man.

"You have honoured my daughter by asking for her in the right way," replied the mother. "I know that you respect her, and that you will be a good provider. How can I say no?"

So, it was decided that the marriage would take place about a week later. The young man was very happy. He finished building a house of cedar bark and hunted for food in preparation for the celebration. At the wedding ceremony, the young people received a lot of advice about living properly and treating each other fairly. They became husband and wife.

The Two Boys

After a while a son was born to the young man and woman. Then another son was born about two years later. When the boys were around twelve and fourteen years old, their father took sick and died. Now the mother and sons were left without a provider. Life became very hard.

During the next winter, dried fish, which was soaking in the river began to disappear. People in the village began to blame the two boys. In fact, people began to blame to the two boys for everything that was going missing around the village. The poor mother was desperate. It seemed as though her sons might get on the wrong path.

One evening, there was terrific thunder and lightning storm. Each time the thunder rumbled in the sky the earth trembled. Lightening hissed through the air, making the night as bright as day. Rain poured down like a waterfall. The mother, hoping to put the boys on the right path, whipped the two of them as hard as she could and then sent them to pray and to bathe while the fierce storm raged around them. The boys howled with fear pain and fear, but they went out in the storm with the hope of finding a power which would help them live a good life.

The younger boy went in the direction of the beach. He found a tree which had been hit by lightning, and around the tree found scales. He collected these scales in a clam shell and placed them in his canoe. This boy became a very successful fisherman.

The older boy went into the forest. He walked until he became very tired. Then he took shelter under a large tree and went to sleep. After a while the boy woke up

because he heard wolves sniffing around him. He became very frightened, and his first instinct was to run. He knew that would be wrong, so he lay very still and pretended to be dead. He tried not to breathe at all. The wolves pawed at him and smelled him to find out if he was dead. They decided that he really was dead and took turns packing him back to their den. When they heard him take a short breath of air, they threw him down again and sniffed him. "He is dead," one of the wolves said. "I thought I heard him breathe but I must have been wrong."

When they arrived at the den, the wolves threw the boy on a shelf and took off their wolf skins. When they did that, they became people like you and me. Then the wolves prepared to cut up the boy as they had planned to eat him. Just as he was about to be skinned, the boy jumped up and surprised the wolves. The old man of the den said they should kill the boy all the same, but the young woman spoke up and said that she wanted him for her husband. The wolf family decided that the boy could stay if he became the girl's husband, and he agreed to this suggestion. After living with the wolves, he became an excellent hunter.

Neither of the boys forgot their mother. The younger son would bring her fish every morning and each morning she would find a deer in front of her door. She had so much food that she was able to give away her fish and meat to people less fortunate than herself.

The Grandson

After a year, a son was born to the young man and woman in the wolf den. When the baby was about a year old, the young father decided to visit his mother. Before leaving, the old man gave advice to his son-in-law. "Be careful when you visit your mother," he said. "Never go fooling around with other women. If you do, your wife will die. It is like taking your wife's breath away when you fool around with another woman."

So, the young husband, his wife and baby went to his mother's home and the mother welcomed her daughter in law with open arms. For a time, everything went well. Then almost without knowing what he was doing, the young man became interested in another woman. He met her secretly while on a hunting trip, and when he returned home his wife was dead. The young man felt very bad about the death of his wife. He knew it was his fault, and he had wished he had never seen the other woman. He decided that he would stay single and look after his boy.

When the son came to be about twelve years of age, he decided to visit his grandparents in the wolf den. The father decided that he would also go but his son told him he'd better stay behind for he had done wrong in his life. "I'll be alright," said the father. "Don't worry about me. Nobody is going to bother me."

So the two of them went back to visit the wolves. The old man welcomed them and liked his grandson very much. "Would you like to stay with me, or would you like to go with your father when he returns to his mother's people?" asked the old man.

"I would like to be with both of you," replied the grandson, "and so I will divide my time between you." And that is what he did.

16 Origin of SMÍET

Diamond Jenness, *Coast Salish Mythology* (1934-35), p. 8, para. 1

Told by Edward Jim (Patricia Bay)

While XÁLS was wandering on earth, a certain man took a deer bone and went down to the beach to sharpen it. While he was thus engaged, XÁLS appeared before him in the shape of a man and asked, "What are you going to do with that?" The man answered, "I have heard that XÁLS is coming around and changing everything, so I am going to shoot with this bone when he comes here." XÁLS said, "Let me see your hand?" The man held out his hand. XÁLS placed the bone on his wrist, slapped it and drove it on. Then he picked up the mussel shell in which the man had been scraping the dust from the bone and clapped the two valves on the side of his head as ears, shook the dust over him and told him to run. The man began to run away like a deer. XÁLS called him back and said, "This is how you will act throughout all time. You will flee from people, and then run backwards towards them."

17 XI,YEU,EN

**Diamond Jenness, *Coast Salish Mythology* (1954-35), p. 8, para. 2
Told by Edward Jim (Patricia Bay)**

Other people heard that XÁLS was coming, so they went to a seer (SIYEU,E) and asked her when they might expect him. She covered her face with red ochre and began to sing. While she was singing, a stranger, XÁLS himself, approached them and asked, “What are you doing?” They answered him, “We are trying to find out how long it will be before XÁLS appears. Thereupon, XÁLS changed them all into stones, which you can see at Patricia Bay on Saanich Peninsula. “All those who come after shall see you,” he said. The place is now called XI,YEU,EN (boulders on the North part of Patricia Bay).

18 Raven and Partridge Go Hunting

Diamond Jenness, *Coast Salish Mythology* (1934-35), pp. 8-9, para. 3

Told by Edward Jim (Patricia Bay)

Raven and Partridge went out to spear some herring. Raven was successful but Partridge caught nothing. Partridge's children ran down to the beach to meet their uncle Raven when he returned, but he only splashed them with water and said, "Run home. I caught nothing, but your father has plenty of fish." The children went home, and since their father had caught nothing, they had to go to bed hungry.

Early the next morning, Partridge went hunting and sighted an elk. He shot an arrow at it. As it flew through the air, another arrow followed close behind it like a streak of fire. Partridge hurried forward to examine the animal; there were two arrows in its body. He drew them out, laid them on the ground side by side and proceeded to cut up the carcass. XÁLS approached and said to him, "Where is my arrow?" "It is here," said Partridge, and handed him the arrow. "Give me the heart of the elk," said XÁLS. Partridge gave it to him. Then XÁLS helped Partridge to lift the carcass on his back and said to him, "If your load becomes heavy, shake it a little and it will become light again." Partridge thanked him and, by shaking his load a little whenever it became heavy, reached home without any trouble. His children were delighted.

Raven heard the noise they were making and smelled the toasted fat. He said to his family, "What are Partridge and his children doing?" They did not know, so he sent his eldest son over with a few herring to give his uncle Partridge. The child knocked on the door until he was tired, and when there was no answer, returned home. Raven sent his second son, with the same result. Then he sent his wife, but she too could not gain admittance. Angrily, he shouted, "You are all lying! Give me the herring; I'll take it over myself." He knocked and called to his nephews, "My Nephews, here are some herring for you." But no one would open the door for him. Then he ran to his canoe, lay down under it and out of sight, and ate the herring himself. After he had eaten the last one,

he bit his thumb until it bled and, going home, told his wife that his nephews had been so excited about the herring that one of them had actually bitten his thumb.

The next morning, Raven himself went hunting. The same thing happened to him as befell Partridge; he shot an arrow at an elk, and another arrow sped like a shaft of fire behind his own. When he approached the carcass, the strange arrow was lodged in its flank, but his own had fallen short and was lying on the ground. He pulled out XÁLS' arrow and threw it on the ground and inserted his own into the wound. Just then XÁLS approached and said, "Where is my arrow?" "It is lying there," Raven answered. "You missed." XÁLS picked it up and said, "I just want the heart." But Raven answered gruffly, "You can't have it, I want it myself." XÁLS stood and watched him dress the animal. When it was ready, he even helped to load it onto Raven's back, and said to him, "If your load becomes heavy, just shake it and it will become light." But Raven responded, "No one needs to tell me how to carry an elk." As soon as he reached his home, he threw down the carcass outside and carried his quiver into which he had stuffed the fat, inside the house. His sons came running up to him. "Go and bring the elk indoors," he said to them. They looked for it but could not find it. He then sent his wife. She too returned and said, "I can't find any elk. There is only a stump outside."

"You are like a child!" said Raven. "You can't do anything!" And he went outside himself. His elk had turned into a stump. He rushed to his quiver to examine the fat; it had turned to moss. Even his arrows were changed to snakes, which fell to the ground and wriggled away.

Old people therefore counsel their children to be truthful like Partridge.

19 Southeast Vancouver Islands

Diamond Jenness, *Coast Salish Mythology* (1934-35), p. 10, para. 2

Told by David Latess and his wife

A number of Indians were travelling in their canoes. Some of them had joined their canoes together in twos by means of boards and piled all their baggage on the boards. Suddenly, XÁLS appeared and sprinkled them with something and changed them into stone. These are the islands that now lie off Southeast Vancouver Island.

20 Raven and Mink Help XÁLS Change the Earth

Diamond Jenness, *Coast Salish Mythology* (1934-35), p. 10, para. 4

Told by David Latess and his wife

When XÁLS was going around changing the earth, Raven and Mink went with him. At one place Raven said, “The capes here should extend farther into the sea so that people would have to go around; and they should lie further apart – exactly a day’s journey. Then each day the people would camp on the point, and I could follow them and gather up the food they had left.” XÁLS made it so. Then Mink spoke up, “The sea should return farther; then I would come down and gather fish and clams.” XÁLS kicked the sea back. Mink said, “Farther still.” Again, XÁLS kicked it. So now when the tide reaches different lower levels each day, these mark the steps forward that XÁLS took when he kicked back the sea.

21 Mink and SOTEĆ

Diamond Jenness, *Coast Salish Mythology* (1934-35), p. 11

Told by Louis Pelkey (Tsawout)

SOTEĆ, the north wind, blew so hard that Raven, who was a big man with many children, could not keep his house warm, or his children from suffering from the cold. He said to Mink, who lived with him, "I am going over to SOTEĆ's home to steal one of his children". They paddled until they reached SOTEĆ's home, which was covered with ice on the outside, even though it was warm inside. Raven snatched up SOTEĆ's little daughter and fled with her to his home, where he seated her near a fire and told one of his boys to poke her with a lit stick every time the wind blew strong. After time the wind died down, and SOTEĆ came over with his people to rescue his daughter. Raven and Mink stayed in the house and did not go out to meet them. SOTEĆ called out, "We'll give you anything you want if you will give me back my daughter, we'll make you very rich." Raven said to his son, "Poke her in the stomach again." The boy did so and the girl screamed, while her father and people wept. SOTEĆ called again, "What do you want? We'll give you anything you wish, if you will restore her to us." Raven said, "I want refuse." They gave it to him, but XALS was so disgusted that he changed Raven into a bird. Mink said, "I want the box that produces calm weather." They gave it to Mink, who placed it on the bow of his canoe and went out fishing. As he was looking down into the water, SOTEĆ sent his followers to steal the box from him. Just as they were rushing to spear him, Mink dove down into the water. That is why Mink now dives after fish.

When XALS changed Raven to a bird he said, "Hereafter everyone who uses bad words shall be called by your name. So now when anyone uses bad words the Indians say, 'He must be SPAL'."

22 XOǾDES (Bear Island) and ǾELTOS (Spieden Island)

Diamond Jenness, *Coast Salish Mythology* (1934-35), p. 12, para. 1

Told by Louis Pelkey (Tsawout)

Bear Island XOǾDES was once a baby girl. Its mother is an island ǾELTOS (Spieden) on the American side of the boundary, which the Saanich call XOǾDES. XOǾDES in some way lost her baby, which drifted away on the tide. She called to various people to recover it, but none succeeded except for the Saanich people. Now at XOǾDES' feet was an immense whirlpool that sucked everything in. XÁLS came along and said, "This will not do." He told XOǾDES to lie down with her face towards the rising sun. Before XOǾDES laid down, she asked for various foods, such as cod, clover roots, dried fish, big owl and 'red' fish for oil. XÁLS gave them to her. There are rocks that lie near her and bear these names. XOǾDES laid down and was then turned to stone. XÁLS then turned her baby into stone.

23 SIYEU,E Transformation Story

Diamond Jenness, *Coast Salish Mythology* (1934-35), p. 12, para. 2
Told by Louis Pelkey (Tsawout)

Some men had gone up the hill to net deer, leaving the wife of one of them, a SIYEU,E woman, in their canoe at a certain point. The men, however, quarreled and fought with one another. XÁLS came along and turned them to stone; you can still see their net. He then approached the woman, who was lying on her back in the canoe trying to divine what had happened to the men. He asked her what she was doing, and she answered, “I am singing for my husband. I am a SIYEU,E.” XÁLS changed her also into a rock. You can see it today, exactly the shape of a woman lying down.

24 Raven and XÁLS Create Death

Diamond Jenness, *Coast Salish Mythology* (1934-35), p. 12, para. 3

Told by Louis Pelkey (Tsawout)

Raven said to XÁLS, "There are too many people. The smoke of their fires hurts my eyes. It would be better if people should die." XÁLS said, "Alright." Thereafter people began to die; that is how death began. Later Raven went hunting and shot an elk. He was carrying it home when XÁLS met him, in changed form, and said, "What is it that you are carrying?"

"Oh, it is something I got."

"I would like a little of the fat."

Raven answered, "Who do you think I am hunting for? It is for myself and my children. I am not giving any of it to other people"

XÁLS said alright and went away. Raven carried his booty home and threw the pack down at the door. His youngest child was crying for food as usual. Raven said to him, "What are you crying for? Do you want something to eat?" and threw the heart of the elk, which he was carrying at his breast, at the child's body. It turned into a white stone that struck the boy on the heart and killed him. Raven examined the body and said to his older child, "Run and ask your uncle to change the arrangement of things and restore my child to life." But XÁLS answered, "I can't change things twice." And refused.

25 KINEŽES, the Pender Islands and Devilfish

**Diamond Jenness, *Coast Salish Mythology* (1934-35), p. 13, paras. 1-2
Told by Louis Pelkey (Tsawout)**

At Pender Island lived a man named KINEŽES, whose legs were covered with long hair. Whenever he shouted, his hair shouted with him, intensifying his cry 100-fold. One day he was catching young perch on his canoe. He filled the bottom of the canoe with grass, turned it on its side so that small perch 2 or 3 inches long would enter the grass, then tipped it right side up, bailed out the water, and extracted the fish from among the grass (a few Indians still do this). KINEŽES turned his canoe right side up and shouted. Just then XÁLS and his companion Mink were coming around a hill.

Mink said to XÁLS, "There must be a great number of people here."

XÁLS said, "We'll see." KINEŽES saw XÁLS approaching and said to himself, "That must be XÁLS."

When XÁLS drew near, he said, "You have come, my grandson." XÁLS was pleased at being addressed so politely. KINEŽES told him that they could not cross over the narrow channel where he was fishing because of the strong current. XÁLS said, "I'll soon arrange that." He picked up a piece of bark and stone, laid the bark on the ground in front of him, placed the stone on top and stamped on it. Immediately the channel became dry land. Water, however, was seeping through it. XÁLS picked up the bark and stone again, told KINEŽES to place his canoe beyond them, so that they would be on the right side, placed some clay under the bark, and stamped the stone on top of it again. Now the channel was completely sealed by dry land.

KINEŽES said further to XÁLS, "We cannot get fresh water here, for though there are two pools, some monster attacks us when we dip our pails. XÁLS said, "I'll amend that." He took a pail and dipped it into one of the ponds. Immediately a giant devilfish caught hold of him and dragged him under. He called to Mink, "Come and help me."

But Mink answered, “Why don’t you turn the devilfish to stone?” XÁLS however was unable to extricate himself and called again, “Dive and bring me my knife. I’ll call you my older brother, and you shall live longer than I.” Mink dived with the knife. XÁLS cut off the arms of all the devilfish, then threw them to the surface, and flung the different parts of the monster to various parts of the country, naming Sooke, Clallam, Pender Island, etc. So now devilfish are found in all those places. He threw the body of the fish to Clallam, that is why the devilfish are larger there than in other places. Only the Fraser delta he omitted because devilfish there would spoil the salmon fishing.

26 Origin of Eagle

Diamond Jenness, *Coast Salish Mythology* (1934-35), p. 13, para. 3

Told by Louis Pelkey (Tsawout)

Another time, XÁLS met a man in a canoe who had killed some ducks. XÁLS said, “Brother, I would like one of your ducks.” The man answered, “Whom do you think I am working for?” XÁLS said, “Alright. What is it that you are kneeling on?” He pulled out the mat from under the man, clapped it on his back and slapped him. The man changed to an eagle, which continues to hunt ducks to this day.

27 Origin of Clams

Diamond Jenness, *Coast Salish Mythology* (1934-35), p. 14, para. 3
Told by Louis Pelkey (Tsawout)

People heard that XÁLS was going around changing things. The clams heard of it and said to one another, “We had better go and hide at the low tide mark.” They started off. The parents travelled faster than their children, who had only reached the half tide level when XÁLS appeared and changed them all to clams. That is why you find the big clams at low tide level and the bigger clams at half tide.

28 Raven and Deer

Diamond Jenness, *Coast Salish Mythology* (1934-35), p. 16, para. 1

Told by David Latess and his wife

Raven went out for deer. Instead of going ashore and pursuing them in the woods, he sat in his canoe and called for them. Three of them came down.

“Where have you come from?” he asked them.

“From the thick tall trees,” they replied. He did not think them fat enough, so he went farther and called for fat deer. More came down to his canoe.

“Where have you come from?”

“From the salal berries.” They were not fat enough either, so he went on. Again, he called and more came.

“Where have you come from?”

“From the places where there are many blossoms.”

“Well get into my canoe.” Still Raven wasn’t satisfied. He thought he could still get fatter deer. He went on and called again. More deer came.

“Where have you come from?”

“From the berry bushes.”

“Get in my canoe.” They got in and he paddled home. When he reached his beach, he called to his wife. She went out of the house.

“Bring me that,” he called, not daring to name what he wanted, lest the deer understand him. She did not know what he wanted. At last, he became exasperated and called, “Bring me my skinny knife (K’WÁTSTAN, made of bone or stone, and later of hoop iron).” But the deer understood this word and, upsetting the canoe, ran away.

29 The Salmon Girl

Diamond Jenness, *Coast Salish Mythology* (1934-35), p. 29

Told by David Latess and his wife

The son of a noble went to seek a helping spirit but failed. Time went on and his parents began to enquire for a wife for him but could not hear of a suitable girl. One day the youth decided that he would not fish at his usual places but would go far away to see what he could catch. He paddled on and on through the fog – it was September – and came at last to an island, where he landed. At first, he could find no trace of inhabitants; then he came on a young woman sitting all alone on the grass, with not a house in sight.

He asked her, “How do you come to be here all alone?”

She answered, “This is my home. I live here nearly all the time.” He did not like to question her farther, for he began to think that she must be a spirit. Presently she asked, “Why don’t you catch some fish for yourself?”

“There is no place here where I could fish,” he answered.

“Would you like me to catch some for you?”

“Yes” he answered.

She rose, took her stick, which was quite plain and unadorned, walked over to a little slope and drove it into the ground. Presently, water oozed up into the hole. She dug a little trench for it and it quickly became a stream.

Then she returned and said to him, “Go over now and catch your fish.” He took his spear and went over. Shoals of coho salmon were poised in the stream. He speared two of them.

She said to him, “Light a fire and I will cook them for you.” So, she cooked them and they ate.

That night the youth slept on a mat in his canoe. Where she slept, he did not know. So they lived several days like this.

Then she said to him, “Don’t you want to go home?”

He answered, “Yes, but I don’t know which direction to take.”

“I know,” she said. “I know where your home is. I know who you are. Would you like me to go with you?”

“Yes.”

So, they embarked. At night they camped on an island, as before. He slept in the canoe and where she slept, he did not know. Thus, travelling for several days, they reached his home.

“Here,” she said to him. “Go and tell your people to partition off a corner for me with mats and provide mats for me to sleep on.”

He went forward, met a kinsman and sent him off with a message. Then he led the girl to the house. His mother had the room all ready. So, they married, and she would accompany him fishing, while his mother tidied the room. The old woman noticed what seemed to be fish slime on the mats but was afraid to say anything.

In time the young woman had a son. Then she went back up the slope a little way with her stick and made another stream in which the coho made their appearance. Thereafter, the villagers were never short of fish. The fish woman had lived a very long time when she died.

30 Origin of Whale (Hunting)

Diamond Jenness, *Coast Salish Mythology* (1934-35), p. 44

Told by Johnny Claxton

A girl was trying to become a ŚNÁ,EM (obtain medicine power). She wandered in the woods, bathing night and morning, and nourished herself on herbs alone so that she might make herself pure. After she had done this for some years, Thunder carried her off while she was asleep and deposited her in his home. He then went off to find food for her, and discovering a whale, carried it to his home. The girl became his wife, and in time bore him a child, a little Thunder.

Meanwhile the girl's brothers had missed her and began to purify themselves in order that they too might obtain medicine power and discover where she had gone. After preparing themselves in this way for three years, they said to one another, "It may have been Thunder who took her away. Let us go to his house." They tried to reach him, but a great wind blew them back. Again, they bathed and purified themselves for a long time, then made a second attempt to reach Thunder's home. This time they succeeded, and entering the house, sat down beside their sister. Presently, they heard a noise outside, and looking out, saw Thunder dropping a whale at the door. He removed his clothes, laid them on the ground and entered. After they had all sat around for a long time, Thunder said to his wife, "I had better take your brothers home." So, he too them back to their home. Thereafter he provided them food by leaving a whale at their door in the morning, and when that was consumed by the two young men and their neighbors, a second whale, and a third.

Thunder's wife now wanted to see her parents again, so Thunder took her to her old home. Her friends visited her so often to examine her baby that Thunder became afraid that something might happen to it and to them, for the baby "little Thunder" almost set them on fire. The girl's parents however, did not want her to leave them. Thunder decided that he would have to take her away and began to roar. At once the

people approached the two brothers and said Thunder had already broken down some of the houses. Let him take his wife and baby again. So, Thunder recovered his wife and child. The people did not see him take them away but knew that he must have done so when he roared right afterwards.

Now that he had recovered his family, Thunder was very happy, and from time to time, would leave a whale on the beach for her people. After a time, however, he became tired of doing this and gave the two brothers his whaling equipment instead so that could go out and catch their own whales. He gave them, too, his fishing equipment, so that now they could not only catch whales, but fish of every kind. Next, he gave them bows and arrows so they could hunt the deer and other land animals. Whenever they went out to hunt, they would look up to the mountain where Thunder lives and pray to him for help. Last of all he gave them the canoe. This is how the Indians obtained their weapons and their boats (canoes).

31 Origin of Salmon

Diamond Jenness, *Coast Salish Mythology* (1934-35), p. 45

Told by Johnny Claxton

Once there were no seals and the people were starving. They lived on elk and whatever other game they could kill.

Two brave youths said to each other, "Let us go and see if we can find any salmon." They embarked on their canoe and headed out to sea, not caring what direction they travelled. They journeyed for 3½ months; then they came to a strange country. When they reached the shore, a man came out and welcomed them and said, "You have arrived."

"We have arrived," the youth answered, though they did not know where they were. They were given food to eat, and after they eaten, their host led them outside the house and said, "Look around and see what you can see."

They looked around and saw smoke from KEXMIN (Indian consumption plant) that the steelhead, sockeye, spring and other varieties of salmon were burning, each for itself, in their houses. The youths stayed in the place for about a month.

Their hosts then said to them, "You must go home tomorrow. Everything is arranged for you. The salmon that you were looking for will muster at your home and start off on their journey. You must follow them."

So the two youths followed the salmon; for 3½ months they travelled, day and night, with the fish. Every night they took KEXMIN and burned it so that the salmon might feed on its smoke and sustain themselves. Finally, they reached Discovery Island (TÍĆÁS), where they burned KEXMIN all along the beach, for their hosts has said to them, "Burn KEXMIN along the beach when you reach land, to feed the salmon that travel with you. Then if you treat the salmon well, you will always have them in abundance."

Now that they had plenty of salmon at Discovery Island, they let them go to other places – to the Fraser River, Nanaimo, etc. Because their journey took them 3½ months, salmon are now absent on the coast for that period.

The coho said to the other salmon, “You can go ahead of us, for we have not got what we wanted from the lakes.” That is why the coho is always the last of the salmon.

The young men now had salmon, but no good way of catching them. The leaders of the salmon, a real man and woman, taught them how to make SXWALA (purse nets), and how to use KEXMIN. They also told the young men how their people should dress when they caught the salmon and that they should start to use the purses in July, when the berries were ripe. So today when the Indians dry their salmon, they always burn some KEXMIN in the fire (or on top of the stove); and they put a little in the fish when they cook it. Also, when they cut up the salmon, before inserting the knife they pray to the salmon that they may be plentiful.

32 The Whale and the Thunderbird

Diamond Jenness, *Coast Salish Mythology* (1934-35), p. 46

Told by Tom Paul

Long ago a Becher Bay whale hunter said to his crew, "Let us go whale hunting tomorrow." They rose early, sighted a whale heading over towards Port Angeles and went after it, but could not overtake it. They pursued it until sunset, when the whale man in the bow said, "We had better give up. I do not know what is wrong, but there is some reason why we cannot get near it." The crew stopped paddling, just when the whale man noticed a flash of lightening ahead. He turned to his crew and said, "Did you see that flash of lightening ahead?"

"No," they answered.

"Watch for it," the whale man said.

Presently the lightening flashed again, and this time they all saw it. Their leader said, "Steer straight towards it." Their course took them near Race Rocks. As they drew near the monstrous whale, they saw a huge bird that had driven its talons in its back and killed it.

The whale man said, "I am going to harpoon the whale."

He hurled the harpoon and sent it quivering into the monster's side. The Thunderbird flew up and disappeared. The man landed, fastened the end of the harpoon line to some rocks that the whale might not drift away, after which they re-embarked and returned to Becher Bay. The next morning, when the tide was low, they went back to cut up the whale, which was now stranded high and dry on the beach. They hacked out as much meat as they could take with their stone knives and carried it home to roast on hot stones in a pit oven. As soon as it was cooked, all gathered around to eat except a few people who did not care for whale meat.

Hardly had they eaten, when they all became violently ill and died, for the Thunderbird's lightening had poisoned the meat.

33 The Son of KINEŽES

Diamond Jenness, *Coast Salish Mythology* (1934-35), pp. 47-49

Told by Tom Paul

KINEŽES, the “hairy” one, went fishing, but came home with his canoe empty and told his wife and son that he had caught nothing. He went fishing again the next day. As he approached the beach his little son went down to meet him, being hungry; but again, he had nothing in his canoe. Instead of paddling home, however, he pulled in to the beach, built a fire in a pit over some large stones, and when the stones had heated, raked out the coals, unloaded the fish from the canoe and set fish on the stones to roast. First, he poured a little water over them to make steam, then covered them over with branches and sand. As soon as the fish cooked, he took them out and fed himself, not putting the fish in his mouth, however, but rubbing them all over his hair and rolling his hairy body in them; for he was feeding his hair.

Meanwhile his son had been watching him from the canoe. The boy came out and approached his father, who stared at him in surprise and anger. He said not a word, however, and washed his canoe. When he had removed all trace of fish, he told his boy to get in and paddled away with him until he came upon a large log with upstanding roots. He paddled alongside it, told the boy to get off, and himself disembarked on the log also, taking his kelp ropes. Then he lashed the boy securely to the roots and paddled to his home. When his wife had asked him what become of their son, he told her he had left the lad at the fishing place and would return for him later on. She suspected that he had killed him and wept for many days. Her brother held council about the affair and drove KINEŽES out of the house.

Meanwhile, the log drifted along until after many days it stranded on a beach. The rising sun spoke to the boy and asked him what was the matter.

He answered, "My father lashed me to this log and the cords are cutting into my flesh; for I have lain here so long that I have grown, and the cords become tighter and tighter." The rising sun released him, dressed his wounds and said to him,

"Here is your fortune. When you arrive home, your mother will be blind from weeping; but wipe her eyes with this shred of cloth from my clothing and she will regain her sight. When your little dog comes to meet you, drop some shreds on his body and it will change." It then pointed out the direction that he should take to get home and bade him walk over the surface of the water without fear. He gave him also a tiny box, which he was not to open for five days; after the five days, he might remove the lid and everything he needed, blankets, etc., would be in a pile beside him. Finally, it told him to summon his father, KINEŁES, bid him crouch down, and rub him with the cloth; and then KINEŁES should change into a rock.

So walking over the water, the boy regained his home. He sent some children who met him on the beach to summon his mother, but she could not believe her son had returned and refused to go. He sent them again, and again she refused, saying that she was blind and ill. However, she changed her mind and stumbled down to the beach, followed by the little dog. There, her son rubbed her eyes with the cloth, and also her body and limbs; her sight came back to her, she regained her strength and vigor. He then scattered a few shreds on the little dog, which instantly changed into a little girl.

The mother enlisted the help of her brothers in setting the house in order and extending invitations to all the neighbors' to take part in a potlatch. The people gathered the next day and were surprised to see the missing boy. Greater still was their amazement when he opened the box and poured from it an enormous pile of goat's wool blankets. He sent an uncle to bring his father, KINEŁES, and set him in front of him KINEŁES, astounded at the wealth in which his son was surrounded, sought to take credit to himself.

"Now you wonder that I treated you as I did." His son ordered him to crouch down, and as he crouched down, the boy touched him with the cloth. Immediately, the

man turned to stone, planted on the floor in the middle of the house. Thereafter, people broke their bark on his forehead when it was too large to put in the fire.

After distributing all his blankets among the guests, the boy stood up and related how his father had treated him and how the sun had come to his aid.

As soon as she was old enough, KINEZES' son married the girl who had metamorphosed from the dog. She bore him a daughter. When this daughter reached marriageable age, a noble man's family sought her as a bride for one of his sons. She married him. Soon after the wedding, KINEZES' son, who had caught many ducks with his net, set out with his mother to visit her, and take her parents in law some birds. Raven embarked with them. As they paddled along, the mother chanted a song about her husband being changed to a rock, a song that is called HIWE'NAX, and Raven, sitting in the stern, chanted it even more lustily than she did.

The young bride painted her face, dressed in all her finery, and with little children holding up her trailing dress, went down to the beach to meet her father and grandmother. As soon as they entered the house KINEZES' son climbed onto a platform and distributed a number of blankets. His hosts then set about cooking for him and his companions. Raven bustled around them, asking them what they were cooking. KINEZES told him to behave himself, but he took no notice. As soon he learned that they were cooking seal meat, he exclaimed, "That is just what I like." He ate all the meat before anyone else tasted a scrap. He ate too much, and finally became very ill, rolling on the ground in agony. KINEZES' son was very ashamed, but he called in a number of medicine men to try and cure Raven. All failed but Ratfish, who extracted the meat from the patient's stomach. KINEZES' son, deeply mortified, took Raven home, Raven asserting all the way that it was the medicine man who made him ill.

KINEZES' son now invited a great host of people from all around to a feast in his home. Whale arrived among the guests, but the host paid no attention to him, never imagining he would try to go up to the house. However, when Whale heard Raven making a speech inside the house to all assembled guests, he thought he had better go

up and see what was taking place. Skunk, bustling around inside under pretense of helping, stopped and listened as while exclaimed from the doorway,

“This noble man is giving a feast, but I cannot enter.” And when the whale had finished his speech, he called out, “I am going to entertain Whale.” KINEØES’ son ordered him to be quiet, but he took no notice. He danced and sang SEYUWATIN ANSWATI (meaning unknown) over and over again, gradually drawing closer to the whale in the doorway. Suddenly, he fired his scent. Whale died from it, the people cut up his carcass and cooked the meat.

34 The Blackfish Spirit

Diamond Jenness, *Coast Salish Mythology* (1934-35), p. 200

Told by David Latess and his wife

A man who lived at Gordon River (near Sooke), before the smallpox, went out constantly to get a spirit, but secured only unimportant ones. Still, he tried, hunting constantly without success. At last, he went down to the beach. There he saw a number of canoes, smoke, and what seemed to be people moving about. He sat down and watched. Presently the canoes moved off and became a school of Blackfish, which lingered near the shore. He was sure there had been smoke and that someone was around. So, after waiting for a time, he went over to the place. There on the beach were seals, sea lions, porpoise, octopus, cod, and fish of every kind. Not knowing to whom they belonged he waited without touching them, then retreated into the woods and slept. In the morning the fish were still there and still no one had appeared. Not having to touch them he went home. There at night the Blackfish spirit appeared to him and said, "Henceforth you shall catch, in abundance, all the fish you wish." After that the man could catch anything. He would go out with a small net and catch a huge cod with it; the fish would make no attempt to escape.

Once this man decided to hunt whales. He invited a number of strong young men to accompany him, and they paddled away. They sighted a whale, and he drove his harpoon right into its heart. He got onto the whale's back to change the rope on his harpoon preliminary to towing it. His companions, however, suddenly left him and paddled away. There he was, marooned on the whale's back. With his knife he cut out a large square just behind the dorsal fin to sit in and bored a hole through the fin to hold onto, so that the waves would not wash him off. However, the night was calm. He dreamed he was to order the whale to take him ashore. In the morning the whale suddenly stirred. The man struck up his whaling song, the chant used by whalers to make the wounded whale go to some creek to die. Immediately the whale moved steadily forward, the man guiding it by its fin towards a creek near the man's village.

As soon as it entered the creek it died. The man got off it, and entered the village, interrupting the wailing of his relatives who were mourning his supposed death.

35 XELÁT̓E and TÁYAKEMOLT̓

Diamond Jenness, *The Saanich Indians of Vancouver Island (1934-35)*, p. 59

Author unknown

XALS, the great creator and transformer, created human beings in various places from some kind of earth, but he fashioned the stomachs of the women from bands of cherry bark so that they might expand during pregnancy. In Duncan he created a man named XELÁT̓E and a maid for the daughter. The girl and her maid walked from SOOKE up to Duncan, where they spied on XELÁT̓E as he talked with a female image he had made from rotten cedar; for XELÁT̓E was lonely, and whenever he left his home to hunt or fish he would leave his distaff and the wool he spun on it in the hands of the image, as though it could spin for him. After he had gone, the girls slipped into the house, spun the wool, and hid in some bushes before he returned. XELÁT̓E was delighted at the industry of his image, and the next time he went out he left more wool for it to spin; but this time the girls spun his wool and burned the image. He was sorely puzzled when he found only its ashes, but called out at last, "I don't know who you are, but come out and let me see you." The girls came out from their hiding place and XELÁT̓E married TÁYAKEMOLT̓'s daughter. From their children sprang the groups of Indians around Duncan, while the T'Souke Indians are descendants of TÁYAKEMOLT̓'s other children. Later, XALS created at Malahat a man named WENÁM and his wife, and from this last couple came the Malahat and WSÁNEĆ Indians. In the earliest times they were all alike ranked as nobles; after they began to raid and enslave one another, some of the nobles married their slaves and the offspring of the mixed marriages became the commoners.

36A Origin of the Willow Fish Net

**Diamond Jenness, *The Saanich Indians of Vancouver Island* (1934-35) Appendix 1
Author unknown**

A W̱SÁNEĆ couple and their marriageable daughter joined some relatives on a fishing excursion to Blaine, which is in the state of Washington. There the girl used to wander outside the rush wigwam and sit by herself at night while her parents were sleeping. One night someone approached her and before leaving arranged to meet her again the next night; thereafter they met night after night.

Shortly afterwards some strange youths began to join the girl's brothers and cousins as they played around the camp, and she wondered whether one of them might not be her nightly visitor. Towards evening, she smeared red ochre on her hands, when her suitor joined her, and she playfully rubbed them on the back of his clothing. The next day she noticed in the crowd of players a youth who seemed more serious than the others and when he turned his back to her, it was red.

When night came, her suitor urged her to go away with him, but she refused unless he first spoke to her parents. He was afraid that if he spoke to them, they might be angry and send him away, so he suggested that it would be safer if she went herself. She did so, and her father consented to their marriage if they remained, for a time, with her family. So she married the youth, who thereafter ceased to play with the other young men and occupied himself with serious matters about the camp.

Soon afterwards fish became very scarce, and the community was threatened with famine. The youth then said to his young wife, "Tell your father and his people to bring me a lot of S̱OLE." No one knew what he meant by S̱OLE, so all the names that he gave to the various plants and land animals were strange. They brought him bundles of one plant after another, but he rejected them all until they brought him bunches of willow. From its bark he made a S̱OLE net, showed them how to use it and taught

them the expressions that should accompany its handling. Then they were able to catch plenty of fish.

Now that they were prosperous once more, he proposed to his wife that they go to his home. With the consent of her parents, the two of them embarked in a canoe and took a large number of mats. Instead of heading for some point or island in the distance, where one might expect a village, he steered the canoe towards a very deep place in the sea, where it vanished from the view. Not many days later, the girl reappeared above the surface of the water, showed herself to her people, and vanished. They knew who it was from her singed hair, for along with the other women of the camp she had been mourning the death of a relative. But she never returned to them, because she had married the fish spirit, SXOLE.

36B Origin of the Reef Net

Reef Net Technology of the Saltwater People (1994)

Told by Earl Claxton Sr and John Elliott Sr

It is the belief of the Saanich people that the SXOLE originated in the following way:

A Saanich couple had a beautiful and eligible young daughter. The family travelled together to visit their relatives at ÉLTENEM. While they were there, the young lady would often sit alone at the shore. One evening, a handsome young man came walking along and spoke to the beautiful young Saanich lady. Thereafter, they met one another at the shore and became fond of one another.

The young man wanted the young lady to run away with him. Being a strong believer in the Saanich traditions, the young lady refused and told the young man that he must speak to her parents. The young man wanted the beautiful Saanich girl for his wife, and he respected her wish. He spoke to their parents.

In a short time, the salmon became very scarce and hard to catch. The Saanich people were suffering. Help was needed.

The young man said that he could help the Saanich people if they brought him some SXOLE. The Saanich people noticed that the young man spoke differently and that he had different names for many of the things that he spoke of. No one knew that he was speaking spiritual terms, only that he was using different words.

The young man requested items with which he could help provide for the Saanich people. When he requested a certain plant, they didn't know what plant he was asking of them. As they brought bunched of boughs, branches and roots, he rejected them until someone brought the willow bush.

The young man accepted the willow bush and stripped it of its entire inner bark. From the inner bark, he made twine and began to construct a reef net. The young man completed the reef net with the boughs, branches and roots which they had brought to him previously.

He taught the Saanich people the names of all the different parts of the net and all the terms used while fishing with the reef net. He taught the people how to fish using the net.

The Saanich people became successful once again with their catches of salmon. Thereafter, the Saanich people used the SXOLE (the reef net), the gift of the young man.

A short time later, the young man told the Saanich family that it was time for him to take their daughter to his home.

With their possessions all loaded on their canoe, they departed. The family watched as they left. The young man and the young lady headed for the deep water, not in the direction of the other villages. When they reached a distance away, they simply vanished... It is the belief of the Saanich people that the young man who married the beautiful young Saanich girl was the Salmon spirit in human form.

He gave the Saanich people their own way of fishing. The reef net is referred to as Princess of the Tides, as she symbolizes a woman that is capable of giving and supporting life. The young man gave the gift of the reef net while receiving a gift from the Saanich people: his beautiful wife.

It is the belief of the Saanich people that all living things are our relatives and that long ago, the birds, animals, trees and fish too were people just like ourselves and must be respected.

The Saanich people have fished this ancient fishery for a long time and have been taught as young people to respect all life as if they were our very own relatives.

“That is the way it is taught.”

37 WSÁNEĆ and Sechelt Quarrel

Diamond Jenness, *The Saanich Indians of Vancouver Island (1934-35)*, p. 65
Author unknown

Two East Saanich men who had been hunting seals near the mainland pulled in at an island to boil an octopus, but just when their meal was ready, four natives from Sechelt approached them in a canoe. One of the Saanich men would have let them pass, but his companion invited the strangers to share the octopus. They accepted but carried their guns ashore with them, which so alarmed the first Saanich man that he quietly moved away along the beach. His suspicions were justified, for his companion, while dishing up the meat, was shot in the back and killed. The survivor fled into the woods and eluded pursuit by climbing a high tree; but the Sechelt natives carried away their seals and canoe, leaving him marooned.

Three days later he sighted another canoe manned by men and women who he recognized from their speech as Victoria natives. At his hail they took him on board and conveyed him to Saanich, where the murdered man's widow organized a war party to seek revenge.

Three canoes set out. In one was a Saanich medicine woman, in another a medicine man from Malahat; it was their duty to capture the souls of some Sechelt natives and make their bodies follow, thus delivering them into the hands of the Saanich. Actually, near Sechelt they did sight a canoe occupied by a man and his son, and, hastily putting ashore, left the medicine man and medicine woman on the beach as decoys while they hid in the woods with their guns. When the Sechelt natives paddled close into shore the Saanich shot them dead.

The Sechelt then organized a counter raid that resulted in the death of a Saanich man, and the feud continued for several years. Finally, a Saanich Indian married a Sechelt girl who happened to be visiting some relatives at Nanaimo, and the two groups composed their quarrel at the wedding celebration.

38 ŁELOWENTET

Diamond Jenness, *The SAANICH Indians of Vancouver Island (1934-35)*, p. 66
Author unknown

When ŁELOWENTET was only 13 years old, some Kwakiutl Indians carried away his father, leaving the boy and his mother dependent on the other members of the STÁUTW community of East Saanich. One day his mother caught him stealing food. She thrashed him with her wool beater, told him that such conduct would never make him a warrior, and drove him out of the village. The boy wandered into the hills on the western side of the peninsula and, when it grew dark, crawled into the hollow base of a giant cedar tree, drawing in some moss to keep himself warm. That night snow fell, and for ten days kept him imprisoned. Finally, the snow turned to slush, and faint from hunger, he set out for his house barefooted. Just as evening fell a man discovered him crawling on hands and knees on the outskirts of the village and carried him into his mother's home.

After recovering from this ordeal, ŁELOWENTET made himself a bow, arrows, club, and spear, so that he might train to be a warrior; for a terrible epidemic of smallpox had just decimated the WŚÁNEĆ Indians and crippled their resistance to the raids of their enemies. His first fight was against some southern natives who were visiting relatives at the big settlement near Sydney. He and a friend attacked and killed them at sea, then upset their canoe so that their relatives would think they had drowned. A few years later he visited with his people some notorious raiders on Mayne Island. The Mayne Islanders invited their visitors to participate in a deer hunt, but ŁELOWENTET noticed that they were bathing in the sea, blackening their faces, and rubbing their bodies and hair with deer fat, which indicated that they were really preparing for battle. He warned his companions, and while the hunters were setting up the deer net he and his people fell on them, killed most of the men, and carried away all the women and girls whom they had enslaved.

This exploit carried his reputation far and wide. It reached the Comox Indians, who challenged him several times to a single combat. Every time he accepted one of their challenges he returned victorious.

A Mayne Island Indian once sent him this challenge: "I am ready to fight you. If you are not afraid of me, come." ŁELOWĒŦET mustered his followers and paddled north. As they drew near the island they saw his challenger strutting up and down the beach, brandishing his spear, and the villagers lined up behind him. ŁELOWĒŦET shouted, "I'll fight you single handed," and the man accepted, expecting to stab him as he disembarked from the canoe. ŁELOWĒŦET, however, leaped into the water and reached the beach before his enemy could strike at him. Both parties drummed and sang to encourage their champions, who began to fence with their spears. Gradually ŁELOWĒŦET gained the upper hand, and step-by-step forced his enemy back. The man's father then rushed to his house to seize a spear, and ŁELOWĒŦET's own warriors dashed ashore to protect their leader from a treacherous attack in the rear. Before anyone could interfere, however, ŁELOWĒŦET killed his adversary, after which he and his warriors slew the father and several other men in the village.

The Cowichan natives once sought his help to settle a score with the Indians of Port Angeles after the latter had massacred some Cowichan visitors during a squabble over a gambling game SLEHÁL. Four Cowichan canoes from four different villages, each manned by about ten men, pulled in at Deep Cove, where many WŚÁNEĆ Indians had collected to gather clams; and they invited ŁELOWĒŦET, together with another warrior who had married a Cowichan woman, to join their party as volunteers. ŁELOWĒŦET consulted his uncle, who advised him to accept if he wished to uphold his reputation and promised to go with him. So, after bathing in the sea, and oiling his head and body, ŁELOWĒŦET tried on his elk skin armor, and his friends drummed and sang to kindle his fighting spirit. Afterwards, they drummed for the other WŚÁNEĆ warrior, who strutted up and down the beach in his armor catching the arrows that his people shot at him. The WŚÁNEĆ contingent then embarked in a canoe and paddled with the

Cowichan natives to T'Souke, where they all rested a night, before crossing over to Port Angeles.

When the Port Angeles natives observed the canoes approaching, they mounted with drums to the roofs of their houses while their champion, a man named SKAIYUS, marched down to the beach in full war panoply to repel the invaders. ŁELOWENFET kept his canoe in the background so that the Cowichan's could begin the combat. While both sides drummed and sang the leader of each Cowichan canoe sprang another and drove them back into their canoes. Then KWALARHUNZIT drew near, standing on the front crossbar and leading his crew in a war song. He leaped into the water, which swirled up round his waist, parried SKAIUYS' spear thrust and gained the beach. There he countered thrust with thrust until his opponent gave ground and turned to flee, when he speared him and cut off his head with a knife. Immediately the villagers leaped down from the roofs and sought refuge in the woods, but the Cowichan natives killed several before they could escape. The Vancouver Islanders did not carry away any women and children, however, because they were their own kindred.

After becoming very old and totally blind, ŁELOWENFET met his end at the hands of the Comox Indians. One of his sons with a slave man and some women, were taking him to the fishing grounds at Point Roberts when they sighted a Comox canoe bearing down on them. They paddled hurriedly to shore and the women, leaving the old man in the canoe as a decoy, fled into the woods while the son and the slave hid behind a tree. At this period, the Indians had obtained muzzle-loading guns. The Comox fired several shots at ŁELOWENFET, but his son fired back at them and apparently hit one man, for as they paddled away, they tilted their canoe on its side for protection. After they had gone ŁELOWENFET's party joined other WŚÁNEĆ Indians at Point Roberts, and were followed by a canoe of Songhees Indians, who, however, refused to stay ashore after it became dark, but kept watch in their canoe. About midnight they heard footsteps and saw dark figures moving along the beach towards the WŚÁNEĆ camp, whereupon they shouted and fired two or three warning shots. The WŚÁNEĆ fled into the woods, all but

ŁELOWENTET, who was decapitated by a Comox Indian while still struggling to put on his coat. His son shot three of the Comox before receiving a bullet in his side and split the skull of a fourth enemy when the latter stooped over him, chanting, to cut off his head. However, he too died the next day.

39 Received Songs

Diamond Jenness, *The Saanich Indians of Vancouver Island (1934-35)*, p. 80

Author unknown

When I was about 12 years old my grandfather said to me, “You see Mount Newton yonder. If you act right you will find something near the summit. Follow a small creek up its slope until you reach a pond, near are some circles of stones. The thunderbird dwells in a deep cave within the high bluff behind the pond. Bathe in the pond, rub your right side with a bundle of yew boughs and place them under one of the stones. Rub your left side with another bundle and place it under the next stone. Rub your right shoulder, your left shoulder, your right arm, your left arm, your right leg, your left leg, and your back, until bundles of yew underlie all the stones in a half circle. When you have done this, lie down and sleep, but next morning bathe again and complete the circle.”

I carried out his instructions, noticing as I placed my bundles under the stone’s fragments of other yew branches, which my own grandfather probably had deposited there some fifty years before. As I looked round after my pond bath, I heard a loud whirring above my head and many leaves floated down to the ground at my feet. Looking up, I saw a giant bird, the thunderbird, soaring out of sight in the sky. Alarmed, I hurried home but that night, as I slept in my bed, the thunderbird entered me and taught me two songs. The first I sing before I begin my dance at the winter festivals, the second while I am dancing. Neither have any significant words.

A few months later, again at my grandfather’s bidding, I climbed up the slope of Malahat Mountain, bathed in a pond and slept. About midnight I awoke, and feeling very thirsty, groped my way in the darkness to drink from the pond. Just as I was dipping up the water in my cupped hands, a loud cry echoed near me and made my hair stand on end, and as I drank the cry echoed again. I returned to my fire and lay down again; and while I slept two songs, both wordless, came to me, though I do not know to this day what spirit entered me. These songs too I have sung at the winter festivals.

40 SŁEMEW

Robert YELKÁTTE Clifford, “WŚÁNEĆ Legal Theory and the Fuel Spill at SELEKTEL (Goldstream River)” (2016) 61:4 McGill Law Journal 755, pp. 772-73

SŁEMEW, the first WŚÁNEĆ man, was placed on the Earth in the form of rain. SŁEMEW assisted XÁLS in forming the world. SŁEMEW carved the mountains, the rivers, streams, and formed the lakes. He makes things grow and brings life to the land.

XÁLS said to SŁEMEW, “You will cleanse yourself in the lakes and streams.” He listened to XÁLS and purified himself in the way he was told. XÁLS gave SŁEMEW a gift, a wife and family. SŁEMEW taught his family to be clean of mind, body, and spirit, the way XÁLS had taught him. The WŚÁNEĆ should never forget SŁEMEW. If he had not followed XÁLS’ teachings, he wouldn’t have been given the gift of his wife and family. Without a wife and family for the first man, there may never have been WŚÁNEĆ people. Honour SŁEMEW by always honouring XÁLS’ teachings and XÁLS’ wish for the WŚÁNEĆ people.³

³ Rob Clifford cites this story to Earl Claxton Sr, John Elliott & Philip Kevin Paul, “TĆÁNCIE I TIÁ: The Way We Were and the Way We Are” [unpublished].

41 Douglas Treaty Story

Recording (00:33:03-5 mins.)

Trailmark Interviews for *Tsawout Marine Use Study* (2014)

Told by Eric Pelkey

But when he brought about that treaty it was as a result of the killing of a young boy. The boy that was running between Cadboro Bay — the village that we had there — and there was a trail that ran all the way to STÁUTW from there, and the runners used to go back and forth to bring messages and important things that needed to be brought back and forth. So, the runners used to run all the way between there [STÁUTW] and there [Cadboro Bay]. And what happened was a young boy, messenger boy, was running, had to deliver something back to STÁUTW and when he was running into the Gordon Head area he came upon a fence across the trail. He couldn't figure out what it was and why it was there, and so he jumped over it and started running. And it was a field, and that farmer saw him and shot him and killed him. And there was a big uproar amongst the Saanich chiefs. And the chiefs got together and said that they wanted to meet with whoever was responsible, and they said that this Sir James Douglas was the leader of the white people. But what they intended on doing when they met with him is they were going to kill him. They were going to kill him and then wipe out the army that he had there, and then they were going to go down and wipe out the settlement at Fort Victoria.

So, there was a missionary priest that was working amongst our people at the time, and he learned the language and spoke SENĆOŦEN. And they told that priest to contact Sir James Douglas and to meet him up on PKOLS [Mt. Douglas], up on the mountain, and wanted him to explain himself. So, that's what they were planning to do that day is they were going to meet him up there and then they were going to kill him. So they had 5,000 warriors surrounded the mountain once he got up there, and they were going to kill him. And when the chiefs were up there and they were about to give the signal to attack him, that priest came forward and he knew what the plans were

because he knew the language. He knew what the chiefs were planning. He brought out this great big cross and he was holding it out in front of him and telling them in SENĆOŦEN that these were good people, they have spiritual beliefs just like you do. They believe in God. And that you shouldn't kill them because they're God-fearing people and asked the chiefs to have mercy on them and make peace with them. And the chiefs, seeing that symbol of the cross, took it to really be a symbol like they had symbols. And they took it to really be a symbol of God and believed him that these must be a good people — if they believed in God then they must be basically a good people.

So, they stopped the attack, they called off the attack, and agreed to make peace with Sir James Douglas, and that he would protect their way of life. That's what they asked the priest to tell him, that they wanted him to honour their way of life and protect their way of life, and really just leave their people alone. Let them live in their villages, and leave their villages to themselves, and leave them to their way of life. And then, they would make peace with them, and they would trade with them; so that's what they thought was agreed to that day. And when Sir James Douglas was making hand signals, they didn't really understand what he was talking about, and he was waving across there, and they took it to mean that he was recognizing their territory. But he was talking about actually a sale of land. So that's what they took him to mean, that he was recognizing their territory by waving his hand across their territory while he was there. So that's what they believed was agreed to that day up on the mountain, and they gave their names to the person that was documenting what happened there. That's why so many of the Indian names appear on that document because the person who was writing it down was trying to, as best they could, document the names of the chiefs.

42 Origin of the Robin

Recording (35-40:15 mins.)

RELAW ŁÁUWELNEW storytelling session, July 25, 2016

Recorded by Shauna Johnson and Joshua James

Told by John Williams

Long ago, there was a very prideful chief, and he goes to his medicine people then tells them to go get his son ready to send him up the mountain, so that he can get his song. His medicine people said, “No, he is not ready, there is no sign that it’s time to get his song, so please rethink this.” The chief said, “No, I told you to go get him ready and send him up the mountain.” So, his medicine people very reluctantly got his son ready to go up the mountain.

They put four lines of TEMEŁ on his feet, four lines of TEMEŁ on his shins, covered his chest with the TEMEŁ, and put the four lines of TEMEŁ on his face. They went back to the chief and pleaded with him, “Please reconsider. There is no sign showing it’s his time, and there is no sign showing that he is ready for this.” The chief told them, “No, I told you it was his time to go up and get his song, now send him up there.”

So, the medicine people reluctantly sent the young man up the mountain. The first day goes by, no singing or drumming. Second day goes by and still no singing. The third day, no drumming, or any sound coming from the top of the mountain. Fourth, fifth, sixth, seventh, and eighth day goes by, but still no drumming or singing at all. The medicine people, very angrily, went up to that chief and told him that they said that he wasn’t ready, they said that there were no signs that showed it was his time. They told him to march up there, and bring your son home right now.

The chief was still being very prideful and thought he was right; so, he crossed his arms and stomped his feet all the way up the mountain to go look for his son, and grumbling all the way up there about being right. He makes it to the top of the

mountain and finds his son's campsite, but he is nowhere to be found. The chief starts calling his son that it's time to go home, come on. There was no reply, so the chief started circling round his son's campsite. Each time the chief did a circle, he would move out a little bit further and periodically call to his son that it's time to go. The chief would wait for a reply but nothing, which went on for hours. Each time the chief stopped; there would be a bird that would land in a tree next to him, on a path in front of him, or a shrub right next to him.

After doing that for so long trudging through the thick brush, looking for his son, and the chief became very tired. He looked for a log and sat down. As soon as he did, the bird that was following him around came and sat down next to the chief. The little bird looks up at the chief and told him that he is his son. The creator took pity on me, so he changed me into this bird. Now whenever I'm hungry, I can tap my feet on the ground to mimic the sound of rain and that will fool the worms into coming up, so I can have a meal. If I'm ever thirsty I can hop up, fly away, and find myself water to drink. That was the creation of the robin.

What this teaches us is that, if we remain in that prideful state, it will take our family away, it will take our friends away, and we will never see them again. There is nothing wrong with being proud, but there is a difference from taking it to the next step and being prideful.

43 QOLEW

Robert YELKÁTFE Clifford, “WŚÁNEĆ Legal Theory and the Fuel Spill at SELEKTEL (Goldstream River)” (2016) 61:4 McGill Law Journal 755, pp. 777

The story of QOLEW tells us that there was once a young man who was changed into the chum salmon. He was sexually forcing himself on his own sister. He kept sneaking into her bed at night when it was dark, and she could not see who it was. The sister used red earth on her hands to mark the person who was coming into her bed so she could identify them. When she went to look at the different boys the next morning, she saw that it was her brother, and she cried. XÁLS came and changed the young man into the chum salmon and thereby made a teaching and example that there should not be rape, nor incest in the family. In speaking with elders, I have been told that people do not often talk about this story today or ask about its real meaning, though its story and meaning should be shared with the young people where the chum are spawning.⁴

⁴ In his article, Rob Clifford thanks John Elliot for sharing this story with him.

44 Origin of the Killer Whale

Recording (40:20-46:30 mins.)

RELAW ŁÁUWELNEW Storytelling Session, July 25, 2016

Recorded by Shauna Johnson and Joshua James

Told by John Williams

Long ago, there was an old blind wolf and because he was blind, he could not hunt for himself anymore. Since he could not hunt for himself anymore, he became very starving. He was starving for seven to eight days straight, not being able to eat, so he started howling as hard as he could with a lot of pain up into the sky.

As he was howling, eagle hears him, then swoops down and lands beside him. Eagle asks him why he is howling in such pain. Wolf told Eagle that he is blind, that he can no longer see, no longer hunt: “It has been days since I have eaten, and I am starving.” Eagle tells him that he can help him, by hopping up on his back and guiding him to all his food. Wolf asks Eagle if he would do that for him and help him like that. Eagle replies of course he would help him because they are friends. So, Eagle hops on Wolf’s back and guides him to all his food. Eagle ensures that Wolf gets a nice full belly and enough food to last him a few days. Eagle says to Wolf, “I need to go home, check on my family, and make sure that they are doing alright.” Wolf told Eagle to go and thanked him for ensuring that he has a nice full belly and the food that should last a couple days. So Eagle hops up and flies away to go check on his family.

Wolf starts praying, “What becomes of me, what becomes of a blind wolf ... and what’s his place in this world?” Wolf keeps repeating this prayer over and over again to himself, and as he is repeating it a nearby mountain starts to draw towards him. And as he walks up the mountain, he continues to repeat the same prayer: “What is to become of me? What becomes of a blind wolf, and what is his place in this world?”

Wolf makes it to the top of the mountain, sits down, and says the prayer out loud up into the sky. As soon as he is finished saying the prayer out loud, he hears the

sound of ocean waves crashing on the shoreline. That sound begins to draw towards him, and as he moves closer the sound becomes louder and faster on the shoreline. Wolf starts matching his footsteps to the sound of the crashing waves, and begins to run as fast as he can. Eagle was flying high above and seen Wolf taking off down the mountain. Eagle swoops down beside wolf then asks him, “Where are you going, why are you in such a rush, and what is the rush?” Wolf pays no attention and continues running. Wolf makes it to the cliff and jumps off into the ocean; just as his front paws touch the water, he begins to transform into the killer whale.

Just when this happened, Eagle tried to catch his friend, but just as he closed his talons, all he got was Wolf’s fur. Right where he grabbed, Eagle pulled out the killer whale’s dorsal fin on his back. Wolf had completely changed into the killer whale that we know today, and that is why can still see Eagle sitting on the shoreline. Eagle is staring out at the ocean and waiting for his friend Wolf to come back home.

John Williams mentions that Eagle teaches us to always help someone out, especially when it is in our own power to do so and when people are struggling. It is important to do it without any expectation in return, not even a thank you. Just do it out of the kindness of your heart and if we all start doing so, this world will be a peaceful place to live in (45:20).

45 Raven

Diamond Jenness, *Coast Salish Mythology* (1934-35), p. 16, para. 1

Told by David Latess and his wife

Raven went out for deer. Instead of going ashore and pursuing them in the woods, he sat in his canoe and called for them. Three or four came down. "Where have you come from?" he asked them. "From the tall trees," they replied. He did not think them fat enough, so he went on farther and called for fat deer. More came down to his canoe. "Where have you come from?" They replied, "From the salal-berries". They were not fat enough either, so he went on. Again, he called and more came. "Where have you come from?" "From the places where there are many blossoms". "Well get into the canoe". Still raven wasn't satisfied; he thought he could get still fatter deer. He went on and called again. More deer came. "Where have you come from?" "From the berry-bushes." "Get in my canoe." They got in and he paddled home. When he reached his beach, he called to his wife. She went out of the house. "Bring me that," he called, not daring to name what he wanted, lest the deer understand him. She did not know what he wanted. At last, he became exasperated and called, "Bring me my K'WATSTAN (skinning knife)⁵. But the deer understood this word, and upsetting the canoe, ran away.

⁵ K'WATSTAN: made of bone or stone, later of hoop iron

46 Origin of Cedar

Recording (0:35 mins)

RELAW Storytelling Session, November 2, 2016

Tsawout Administration Office

Recorded by Shauna Johnson and Joshua James

Told by Earl Claxton Sr, told to him by Ray Sam

The W̱SÁNEĆ got the idea of using the Cedar Tree, which is from when the Thunderbird came, and lightning shot from its feet. The lightning hit the top of the tree, came down, shot out the bottom, and burnt a whole in the tree. When the W̱SÁNEĆ saw that burn hole in the bottom of the tree, they realized that they could hollow out the rest of the tree and make a canoe out of it.

Then I talk about the canoe, how it's widened, how it's finished, and that kind of thing.

47 James Island Giant

Recording (Time stamp?)
RELAW Storytelling Session, November 2, 2016
Tsawout Administration Office
Recorded by Shauna Johnson and Joshua James
Told by Earl Claxton Sr, told to him by Ray Sam

There was a giant that lived at the south end of James Island, and he did something that riled up the Saanich. The Saanich took him and weighted him down with stones then sank him off this end of James Island. The crabs ate the giant, and the crabs became giants too. There were giant purple crabs at this end of James Island; they were huge, but not sure if they are still there anymore.

48 Raven

Recording (19:25 mins)
RELAW Storytelling Session, November 2, 2016
Tsawout Administration Office
Recorded by Shauna Johnson and Joshua James
Told by John Williams

We used to leave food throughout all of our territory for Raven, knowing that he will find it sooner or later. More sooner than later. One hot summer day, he was walking along and came across three plums that were lying in the creek. It was a nice cold creek. He thought to himself, oh those would be a real good snack on this hot summer day. Those plums would be cooling off in the nice cool creek water, so I am going to eat them. So he walks up to go and grab them, but just as he went to grab them, the three plums disappeared. Raven was taken back by this, jerks his arm, and the three plums reappear in the water again. He becomes curious, tries to grab them again and they disappear just before he touches them. Raven was surprised. He thought that he wanted that magic, need that in me, and wanted that power. So, he thought to himself, "If I just try a little bit harder and faster, I could get those plums." This went on for hours, hours, and hours.

His wife was standing up on the hill behind him and watching him. As time went on, she became more and more frustrated with her husband. After a while she yells to him, "Hey, what are you doing?" Raven didn't know that she was standing behind him, watching, and gets startled. "Oh, trying to get these plums but they keep disappearing just before I touch them, so I want their magic". She lets him go along with his business again.

Each time raven gets a little bit faster, so that he can try to get them, but just before he touches them, they disappear. Finally, his wife had enough of him and yells, "Hey, why are you chasing shadows when the truth is right above your head?" Raven had been seeing a reflection of three plums that were hanging above his head on a tree.

49 Creation of Cedar

Recording (23:50 mins)
RELAW Storytelling Session, November 2, 2016
Tsawout Administration Office
Recorded by Shauna Johnson and Joshua James
Told by John Williams

Long ago we didn't have cedar, when the Creator was in our territory and changing us either as punishment or as a reminder for us to make this world a better place than when we entered. The cedar became to be because this couple hosted the Creator but they didn't know whom they were hosting. They just welcomed him into their house and while he was there:

- If he were thirsty, they would get him a drink of cool water
- Made sure he had the softest seat in the house
- Warmest and softest bed
- Whatever he wanted to eat, and if they didn't have it for him, they would go and get it for him

He was taken aback by their generosity, how much they were willing to share with him, and how willing they were to share what they had. They weren't a very rich couple; they barely had enough for them to last through the winter. And he says to them, "Well, because of how kind you guys are, I am going to change you guys into something for the benefit of the W̱SÁNEĆ people." He throws his magic into them, they start twisting, and transforming into the cedar that we know today.

As they are transforming he says to them, "Your people will be able to use your feet, your roots, to make any baskets that they need. They will be able to use your skin, your bark, to make all the clothing that they need, which keep them warm and dry. They will be able to use your bones, your wood, to make their canoes, carvings, and

their houses. They will be able to use your arms for medicine and to brush themselves off. They will be able to use the leaves from your limbs, to make a medicine that will draw out any infection, nasty ones like gangrene. They will be able to use all of you, for the benefit of the W̱SÁNEĆ people. To this day, cedar is one of the only trees where there are male and female genetics, throughout the entire tree.

50 The Titans: Origin of Trees

Recording (27:26)

RELAW Storytelling Session, November 2, 2016

Tsawout Administration Office

Recorded by Shauna Johnson and Joshua James

Told by John Williams

The Titans — that is how we got all of our trees.

Putting the bad ones away, because they were quite a mean race of people and lazy. They never liked harvesting anything for themselves. So, they would steal all of their food/medicines from us, break our houses, step on us, and skip us across the water like we were stones. The Creator heard about them acting like that and sends a message with Raven, telling them that they need to treat us with respect, because we are living just like they are. They listened for a while, and then they fell back into their old ways and doing all the same stuff.

The Creator had heard about it and started coming into our territory again. At that time, he was a giant himself, a titan. They could see him coming into our territory, in the horizon. The reason they fell back into their old ways was because of their physical strength. They thought, “We are big, we are tough, and we can handle anything.” But when they saw our Creator, they started quivering, because they knew he had the power to change. Once they saw him coming into our territory they got spooked and ran in the opposite direction. They thought if they hid on top of the mountains that they would be out of the range of his magic; they weren’t.

He threw his magic at them and froze them in place. He changed their feet into roots and their arms into the branches. That’s why to this day you can look at some trees, especially ones on top of the mountains, and it looks like they have swinging arms that are trying to run away still. They still haven’t learnt their lesson; they still trip us with their roots when we walk through the forest. They still fall on our houses and our cars. They still haven’t quite learnt their lesson about treating us with respect.

The reason that we have different types of trees is because each tree is a different family that got changed.

51 Origin of WJOŁŁP

Reef Net Technology of the Saltwater People (1990), pp. 9-17

Told by Dave Elliott Sr

The mother of my great, great-grandfather on my mother's side was the founder of WJOŁŁP, which is the place called WJOŁŁP (Tsartlip) today. She established the village there after a great tragedy. It was here that she raised her son to be a warrior and leader of our people because of this tragedy. His name was ĖLOWĖNTĖT, and his mother's name was SEXSOĖELWET.

One day when ĖLOWĖNTĖT was only twelve years old, his mother, father and mother's brother were out in the islands here, part of our territory, when the northern raiders came upon them. At that time, people from the north, Haida and Kwagiulth, were always coming on raids down here. SEXSOĖELWET hid in the woods, but her husband and brother were both killed and their heads were taken. These raiders took heads away as prizes. She came back to STÁUTW, which is now called Tsawout.

She was really in a state of shock, and she began walking around. She would have been in such grief as her husband had just been killed and his head taken away; her brother, the same. She walked and walked and finally she came out into this beautiful place.

In her grief she thought what a beautiful place she had come to. It was like a large meadow, divided by four streams. Each has a name in our language. In the bay she could see all the kinds of salmon jumping, their bodies shining and flashing in and out of the water. It was very beautiful and in her grief she thought, "This is where I'll raise my son to be a man."

When SEXSOĖELWET got home she told her people of the place she found, and she wanted to move there and raise her son to be a man. Some people decided to go with her, and they established the village there, now known as TSARTLIP.

ƎELOWENTET became a leader. She raised him to be a strong, tough man. She raised him to be a brave warrior. He became a leader in this whole territory.

At seventeen years of age he said, “I am ready for revenge.” He headed a war party to revenge the killing of his father and uncle.

XIACECTEN was his younger brother. One morning XIACECTEN came to his brother ƎELOWENTET and said, “I want to use some of your slaves, I have a canoe up in the woods, it’s just about light enough to bring down to the shore and work on it. I want to use your slaves to help me bring it down.” ƎELOWENTET said, “Go ahead take them, if they can help you.” He took the slaves and he went to where this canoe was partly dug out.

Instead of getting the slaves to help him bring it down, he made them lay down on the ground, and he pulled the canoe over the top of them. He used them for skids, which was what other tribes had done to their enemies, to show their hatred for them. This is what XIACECTEN did. These slaves were captives from warfare. He dragged this unfinished canoe over the top of them; he never intended to use them for help, and he just wanted to show his contempt for them.

Later on in the day ƎELOWENTET heard about what his brother had done to the slaves, so he confronted his brother. They got into a quarrel and ƎELOWENTET killed XIACECTEN. He killed him right there. He took his knife and stabbed him. He killed his own brother, because of what he had done to his slaves.

XIACECTEN’s remains should be still on Samuel Island, because that’s where he was laid to rest. The name of Samuel Island is TEL, LAY. This is part of our history.

Many, many years later, ƎELOWENTET died an old man, but it was in battle with our ancient enemies from the north. It was during the time when they were using guns. He had many wives, and many sons. When the attack came his sons said, “You go up the mountains with the women and children, old honourable man.”

He said, “No, I will stay here and fight.” He was killed that night. The northern raiders always attacked at night. In the morning they found him on the beach with his head cut off.

GELOWENTET had many sons, because he had several wives. He is my ancestor. My ancestors came from Mayne Island and that is part of SAANICH territory.

The real name of the TSARTLIP People is JESESINSET, meaning “the people that are growing themselves up”.

52 Legend of the Star Men

Saanich Native Heritage Society,
SENĆOŦEN: WSÁNEĆ Legends and Stories (2007), pp. 87-91
Told by Elsie Claxton (Tsawout)

My mother told me told me this story when I was eight years old. I will now pass it on to you.

There was a time when the people would go and gather fern roots which was used for food. When the people went on this short expedition, several families would go out and camp for a few days while they gathered roots.

During one camp-out, there were two sisters and a girlfriend. One girl was really quite shy and the other two would always tantalize and jest around. The girls were lying on their backs ready to go to sleep; instead, they gazed in the black velvety sky that turned luminous by the shiny stars. They dreamed in the cool clean night, "I wish I could have that star with the tremendously bright eyes for my husband."

The other girl said, "I wish the star with the red eyes would be my husband."

The quiet girl would constantly tell the two senseless girls to go to sleep, but they never paid attention to her at all. They kidded around until they both dozed off.

In the twinkling of morning, the quiet girl awakened to find her sister and friend had vanished. She searched everywhere for them.

In the meantime, the two frivolous girls awoke in a world of paradise. They both marvelled at the place they had come to. Suddenly, two men approached them. "Who are you?" It seemed like a spaced dream world that would not be forgotten.

The two men replied, "We are your husbands." Instantly the girls told the men that they were not married.

The men stood there looking down at the girls, one with brilliantly glossy eyes; the other with crimson red eyes again replied, “We are your husbands, you had wished for husbands like us, so here we are.”

There was no way out of this mysterious fantasy for the girls as it was their own wishing that brought this on.

Every day the girls went out gathering camas bulbs, they were told by the star men to never dig up broken bulbs. The ladies wondered why this strange rule was set. So when they came across a broken bulb they lingered on with their digging. They continued digging until they came to a hole. They could see a tiny little village site in the very distance.

One girl said, “That must be our place, where we came from, I’m quite sure it must be our home.” The other girl agreed.

Instead of gathering more camas bulbs, they began gathering cedar bark; with this they made a long rope. This took a lot of time and patience. When the rope was completed, they dug the see-through hole a bit bigger. They then attached the rope so they were able to climb back down to earth. They both returned home from “the land way up”.

After this mysterious experience the girls would never go outside at night. They would always recall flashbacks from this heavenly secret world.