

## Winds of Change: Contact History

### Part 1

The winds of change swept over the landscape of the *Schitsu'umsh* with the coming of Euro-Americans and their imposition of the term “Coeur d’Alene” onto its people.<sup>1</sup> Many of these winds would bring a harsh chill over the *Schitsu'umsh* landscape, threatening its very integrity and incorporating much of it into a Euro-American landscape. While these winds severely threatened, they would not, however, obliterate the trails over which Crane and Coyote and the other First Peoples continued to travel. And more recently, warmer winds would, in turn, contribute to a rekindling of a sovereign *Schitsu'umsh* landscape.

**The Horse** The first winds of Euro-American change actually occurred long before any Euro-American and *Schitsu'umsh* set eyes upon each other. The initial Euro-American impact was set in motion with the arrival of a new animal into the *Schitsu'umsh* landscape - the horse. It

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<sup>1</sup> I am using of the analytical construct, “history,” to refer to the marking of events on a lineal time-line, from past to present. As such, past events are necessarily only remembered events, no longer events participated in. This Euro-American concept contrasts with the *Schitsu'umsh* understanding of the possibility of participation in past events. As will be discussed, in the act of storytelling, the creation time is made immediate and the listener allowed to become a part of it. Similarly, in the act of singing and dancing during a Jump Dance, there is a sense that the dancer has become his *suumesh* animal spirit, transcending his temporal and spatial immediacy. What might be considered a past event is made an immediate event. With this consideration in mind, “Coeur d’Alene history” necessarily begins when the Euro-American concept of “history” is imposed on the *Schitsu'umsh* experience.

While reluctant to apply “history” to an aboriginal *Schitsu'umsh* society, this is not to suggest that prior to Euro-American contact *Schitsu'umsh* society was somehow changeless through time. Regular contact with other tribal groups resulted not only in the exchange of trade goods and spouses, but certainly in the diffusion of material culture as well as ideas about culture. For example, the artistic appreciation and use of dentalium and abalone, the shells not native to the area, must have originally came about via the exchange of ideas and objects with neighbors linked to the Pacific Coast. Such inter-tribal contact coupled with innovation internal to the society resulted in a dynamic *Schitsu'umsh* society. Though it was never a dynamic that approached the pace and pervasive nature of change encountered following Euro-American contact, nor were there events in that dynamic that had such catastrophic consequences. My point here is to suggest that the participatory manner in which temporal dynamics was and is conceptualized by the *Schitsu'umsh* is fundamentally distinct from the lineal-based, non-participatory conceptualization of time held by Europeans and Americans. Thus the concept of “history” must be used cautiously.

As a “history” of a particular people’s “landscape,” my intention in this chapter is to nevertheless convey how the *Schitsu'umsh* have reaffirmed, as well as redefined, the meaning of “landscape” given the influences of Euro-American contact and assimilation on their society. The portrayal of Indian-White history has been far too often represented by only the voice of the instigator and not the recipient of the contact. Despite severe threats to their economic viability and political sovereignty, the *Schitsu'umsh* have, through it all, continued to give voice and definition to their “landscape.” It is the *Schitsu'umsh* perspective on their own history of “landscape” that I seek to convey.

For additional discussion of Coeur d’Alene history consult Fahey (1997), Kowrach and Connolly (1990), and Peltier (1981). Along with Fahey and Kowrach and Connolly, and other specific published works and interviews cited below, Sprague (1996) also contributed to the writing of this chapter.

was an animal reintroduced to the New World during the Spanish Conquest. When the *Schitsu'umsh* first acquired the horse and under what circumstances is not entirely certain, but James Teit offers the following account.

#### **The First Horse**

The first horse came to the Coeur d'Alene country at a place about 3½ miles northwest of DeSmet. A large number of people were gathered there, digging camas. They saw a man approaching on horseback, and became greatly excited. The rider was a Kalispel Indian, who remained several days with the Coeur d'Alene. The people examined the horse closely, and wondered much at the strange animal. As the horse was gentle, many people tried to ride him; but when he trotted, they fell off, excepting one man. (From Teit 1930:109).

It was likely that by the 1760s the horse had become a fully integrated member of the *Schitsu'umsh* landscape and society. With it also came changes. The horse provided a means to travel farther from the home territories. Access to the important Columbia River salmon fishing and trading sites, such as Kettle Falls and even as far away as The Dalles and Celilo Falls, was made much easier. The distances now traveled could, in fact, be quite significant. Being gone for up to nine months of the year, individual *Schitsu'umsh* families, often joining with Spokane families, would travel over the Bitterroot Range, meeting up with Flathead families, and hunt the buffalo found in the valleys east of the Bitterroots and farther onto the Plains east of the Rocky Mountains. Leaving in August, "after the harvesting of the principal root and berry crops, and after the salmon had been put up," the *Schitsu'umsh* would travel "by a short trail over the Bitterroots, by Old Mission [and likely along the St. Regis and then Clark Fork Rivers], returning in April by Kalispel River [which may have also been called the Saleesh River and later renamed the Clark Fork River] where the snow goes off early in the spring, and grass for horses is abundant" (Teit 1930:97). Buffalo hunting soon became a regular part of a changing transhumance pattern. Entire families went on the hunt, "women and children went along with their husbands and other relatives. Only the oldest and a few others remained behind" (Teit 1930:96). Thus while many families traveled to the winter villages along the lake's shore, some would begin their trek over the mountains into buffalo country. The following year, some of those who had wintered along the lake's shore would be among those buffalo hunting in the

valleys east of the Bitterroots, while those who had hunted the buffalo the year before now hunted the deer in the Coeur d'Alene Mountains.

**Buffalo Hunt**

Buffalo were hunted by parties of mounted men advancing on them in a line, usually not far apart, and often quite close together. At a signal by the hunting chief, the hunters dashed at full speed at the herd of buffalo, stampeding them. They shot and speared the animals in the rear and sides of the herd. The pursuit and slaughter continued until the party considered that they had sufficient meat and skins. (From Teit 1930:103).

As a more mobile form of lodging, the *Schitsu'umsh* soon relinquished their tule-mat lodges in favor of the skin-covered tipis of the Plains peoples and adopted the horse-travois. Upon a successful hunt, much of the meat of the buffalo would be smoked and brought back home. In addition to acquiring sustenance, the travel across the Rockies meant an opportunity to educate the young. As Lawrence Aripa continually emphasized to me, “they didn’t go to the buffalo country just to hunt. They had plenty [of deer and elk to hunt] right here. They’d learn about different things, pick up things along the way. And they’d say, ‘the children would leave as children, and they’d come back as grown ups.’” The nine-month journey would be a kind of “rite of passage” for the young and inexperienced of the family.

The adoption of the horse also meant that families had to consider good grazing lands for their herds throughout the year close to their home territories. There was an incentive to spend less time in the heavily-forested mountainous country to the east and north of Lake Coeur d'Alene, and more time in frequenting the grass-covered prairie country north of the Spokane River, along Hangman Creek, and south into the Palouse River region. The berries continued to be gathered, the deer hunted and the fish caught, but buffalo meat and a new rite of passage were now added to the diet and well-being of the *Schitsu'umsh*. In this sense, the range of travel through the *Schitsu'umsh* landscape was expanded.

While in buffalo country, not only were the eyes of the hunters searching the horizon for game, but they were alert to Blackfeet and Crow warriors. After the arrival of the horse, intertribal warfare escalated among the *Schitsu'umsh*, as did the importance and power of the “war chiefs.” While traveling in the valleys and on the open plains, so much was vested in the sound judgements being made by these leaders. Unlike travel within the boundaries of their

traditional landscape, virtually every time *Schitsu'umsh* families ventured into buffalo country and the territory of the Blackfeet and Crow, “war dances and war ceremonies” would first be held. The warriors would sing their *suumesh* songs and imitate the deeds they might have to accomplish in battle. These dances were also held at intertribal gatherings and at fur-trade rendezvous. While not preparing for battle per se, these “intertribal war dances” were held to celebrate past war exploits, to reaffirm resistance to any and all adversaries, and reestablish kinship relations with families and friends. They typically lasted for several days, with intervals of feasting and games held throughout the dance. In the songs and dance, prayer for protection from the increased and inevitable danger was sought. And with the coming of the horse even travel in the once safe boundaries of their traditional landscape was now less so.

#### Crow War Party

A large Crow war party traveled into Coeur d’Alene country and was poised to attack the Coeur d’Alene village located near Cataldo. The Crow chief came to the Old Mission because he was mad the Coeur d’Alenes no longer went through their territory, and thus the Crows could no longer raid them and make their children and women slaves. They were looking to count coups and make war on the Coeur d’Alenes. The Coeur d’Alene headman asked to first parlay with the Crow war leader and challenged him to a contest. Who was the better marksmen with the bow and arrow, the Crow or the Coeur d’Alene? Now the Crows, a tall and physically strong people, are well known as great warriors. A huge fellow came forward, with a long and powerful bow. So the Crow hung a large bag full of straw from a rope and behind it a smaller bag and a wood plank with a target on it. He had the two bags swung in opposite directions. He took aim and shot his arrow through both bags and hit the target. The Crows cheered and felt real confident. Now the Coeur d’Alene Bowman came forward, a rather short fellow, with a small bow. You wouldn’t think he could do much against that Crow. As he took aim, he signaled to some women who were hidden on the other side of the hill below the Mission to chase the horse up and over, and into range. “Oh, no! No!” the Crow chief shouted. It was his stallion. With his little bow, the Coeur d’Alene shot the white stallion as it came over the hill. The arrow went straight through the horse and into the wood plank, the target.

Oh, that Crow chief was mad. It was his prized horse. He was very angry, and about to have his warriors come down and take care of the Coeur d’Alenes. But the Coeur d’Alene headman came forward and reminded the Crow chief of his word. And he honored it. Indeed, that short Coeur d’Alene Bowman had triumphed over the best Crow archer. And the Crows left the Coeur d’Alene country never to return. (Abbreviated as told by Lawrence Aripa, April 15, 1995).

Teit suggests that there were occasions when “nearly the entire tribe” hunted buffalo, doing so for up to eight or nine months leaving in the fall and returning during the spring months (1930:97). It was likely a gradual escalation of numbers participating in the hunt each year until nearly the “entire tribe” went, occurring at “a time, before 1800, when the Coeur d’Alene were

well equipped with horses, and the Blackfeet were often attacking the Flathead, the latter extended invitations to the Coeur d'Alene and other western tribes, and welcomed them to hunt buffalo in their territory" (Teit 1930:97). The number of such "tribal" hunts is not clear. They were likely initiated as ad hoc responses, providing military assistance to the Flathead against a common foe, rather than a reflection of a permanently changed transhumance pattern based upon subsistence considerations. Given the dispersed pattern with which the buffalo wintered, the winter's cold and heavy snows of western Montana which inhibited ease of travel, and the prevalent method of buffalo hunting, I suspect the majority of buffalo hunting actually transpired during the fall and spring seasons. The winter saw individual *Schitsu'umsh* families scattered among their Flathead relatives, sharing in their hospitality and food, and living with them throughout the winter in their long houses. Having abandoned their own "long communal houses" along the shores of Lake Coeur d'Alene meant that the *Schitsu'umsh* Jump Dances, one of the most important of all ceremonials, were held among the Flathead, who shared the same religious tradition. The last *Schitsu'umsh* buffalo hunt occurred in 1876, likely influenced by the virtual extinction of the herds on the Montana plains.

As a result of the expanded landscape of the *Schitsu'umsh*, brought on by the arrival of the horse, and while known as "good warriors" themselves, the *Schitsu'umsh* may have found themselves at a distinct military disadvantage against the numerically stronger Blackfeet and Crow. These are tribes who had much more developed traditions of coup counting and organized warrior societies than did the *Schitsu'umsh*. The expanded *Schitsu'umsh* landscape was now also a less hospitable landscape.

**Smallpox** Like the horse, a second wind of Euro-American influence also came long before the eyes of any two strangers met. A new, unseen, and very deadly creature now roamed the *Schitsu'umsh* landscape - smallpox.

The *Schitsu'umsh* suffered from smallpox epidemics perhaps as early as the mid-1770s, probably carried inland along the Columbia River from Euro-Americans exploring the west coast of the Pacific for possible fur trade opportunities. It may have also been the case that smallpox spread from the epidemics occurring on the Plains and returned with the *Schitsu'umsh* buffalo hunters. The *Schitsu'umsh* certainly suffered the ravages of smallpox in 1801, and again in 1830

or 1831, and the 1850s. While smallpox was the most destructive of the infectious diseases for which there were no natural immunities, the ravages of chickenpox, measles, scarlet fever, and whooping cough likely also took their toll, especially among the children. Healthy bodies, the advice of the chiefs, and the *suumesh* of the shamans were of no protection.

The diseases decimated the population of the *Schitsu'umsh*. Entire families and camps were wiped out. From an estimated 5,000 before the epidemics, by the 1850s the *Schitsu'umsh* numbered some 500 individuals (Joset 1838-77: JP 69 and Stevens 1854).<sup>2</sup> If a person lived through these epidemics, dying of old age in the 1850s, he would have survived episodes during which nearly every *Schitsu'umsh* he knew would have died a horrible death.<sup>3</sup> One can not even imagine the terror and sorrow such a person must have felt. The United States Indian Department reports that the *Schitsu'umsh* population was still numbering 494 individuals in 1905, all of whom lived on the Coeur d'Alene Reservation.

#### **Smallpox and the Five People**

It was about the 1870s and the people were preparing to go to the reservation. Some of the Coeur d'Alene people were living on both sides of the Spokane River, at the mouth of the river, near Fort Sherman. It was during the winter and it was very cold. There were probably two hundred people there. The lake itself froze over with ice. And at the time there was a smallpox outbreak in the Fort, but because everybody was quarantined, it stayed in the Fort.

There was a young lieutenant, from back East. He felt sorry for the Indians. So he ordered his men to gather the blankets and clothes from the dead soldiers, and give them to the Indians so they could warm themselves. And soon after the epidemic hit the Indian camp. The people were just dying, and they were very sick, and it took a lot of our people.

At the same time, there was a young boy and his grandfather out on the lake, fishing through the ice. They had with them a young girl and two women, who were trying to gather some food from the shores of the lake. A pretty bad storm came up. They had been gone from the camp for five days after the smallpox came.

So when they came back to the camp all their own people, their own families, were dying. Only five people were still alive. The boy and the old man helped bury them, and helped to comfort the ones that were dying. And it was very, very sad and very bad.

All the rest of the people were over in the Harrison area, and up at Hayden Lake, and so they weren't here at that time of the outbreak. But they came back and heard the news that the people were dying. When they arrived these five people, the little boy and his grandfather and the three women, were

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<sup>2</sup>Isaac Stevens was the Governor of the newly established Washington Territory and provided his population findings of the regional tribes in his report to the Commissioner of Indian Affairs (1854).

<sup>3</sup>This hypothetical example must be placed in its demographic context. Pre-contact *Schitsu'umsh* society was likely characterized by a relatively high infant mortality rate, but, once surviving infancy, by the fact that it was not unusual for individuals to live past sixty-five years of age.

busy burying the dead and doing all they could to help. But one of the medicine men said, "These five people must be the cause of the dying, because they are not sick. They have a bad spirit - the devil in them! And we must get rid of them!" And so without consulting the Black Robe like they usually do, the sub-chief gave the order, "Those people are to be banished, because they have bad spirits within them." So they are banished from the tribe. And they were told to get away.

And so they leave and go up to the Cusick area [in Washington]. The old man knew some people up there who would feed them - the Kalispel. But somehow word already got there. And when they arrived the people there told them to leave. So they went to the Spokane Tribe. But as they got close they were met again, and told to leave. They next went to the Nez Perce, but they were kicked away.

It was a very hard winter, but those five people stayed away. They lived in a little tipi they made. They never had enough to eat and were always near starvation. But for five years they wandered, these five people. People would pass by, traveling to the reservation or going to trade over in Spokane. They'd see these five pitiful people out there all by themselves, but nobody would talk to them, nobody would even look at them. Their clothes became ragged. They were in very, very bad shape. Their camp was down towards Tekoa, and they were out there.

The people had embraced the Catholic religion. The priests at Cataldo Mission told the people that what they were doing was wrong and that they should not be banished. So some Coeur d'Alene went out to bring the five people back. They wouldn't come at first, but finally did. For five years they were gone. They were accepted by the people again. And they became very strong Catholics. The young woman had a large family. And the young boy grew up to become a well-known man on both the Coeur d'Alene and Kalispel Reservations. (Abbreviated as told by Lawrence Aripa in April of 1991).<sup>4</sup>

The effects of the smallpox epidemics on the *Schitsu'umsh* not only took their toll in lives lost, which was disastrous in and of itself, but for those who lived through the devastation, life became much more challenging. While the traditional transhumance patterns spawned a certain degree of social and economic family autonomy, the scale to which human beings were eliminated from the social structure would threaten the integrity of any society. Much of the expertise and collective wisdom necessary for leadership roles, and subsistence and religious coordination was removed within a relatively short period of time. In addition, with the sheer loss of able-bodied men came a loss in warriors and thus an increase in the threat brought on by the ever menacing Blackfeet and Crow. Much of the *Schitsu'umsh* landscape became even more inhospitable.

**The Fur Trade** Under the guidance of President Thomas Jefferson, the United States purchased the Louisiana Territory from France in May of 1803. Soon after, President Jefferson

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<sup>4</sup> As stated by Lawrence Aripa in reference to the "Smallpox and the Five People," "It's a story that is away from the Coyote stories. It's different. But yet it has a lesson. It is tragic, but it is something we must all think about. Don't say anything bad about your neighbor. It may be bad for them and it could be bad for yourself. Anyone who we may slander may become a greater person." Lawrence was told this story by Bill Meshell who had, in turn, learned of it from his grandfather who was a small boy when this story occurred.

authorized Meriwether Lewis and William Clark to undertake a transcontinental expedition to map and report what had been acquired, and to discover a water route to the Pacific. On their return trip from the Pacific coast, near the confluence of the Clearwater and Potlatch Rivers, William Clark and three *Schitsu'umsh* first set eyes upon each other. It was May 6<sup>th</sup> of 1806. A competing set of eyes, accustomed to another landscape, would now also view the landscape of the *Schitsu'umsh*. We have the words of Clark recorded from his journal entry.

#### The Skeet-so-mish

at this place we met with three men of a nation called Skeets-so-mish [*Schitsu'umsh*] who reside at the falls of a large river dis[c]harging itself into the Columbia on it's East side to the North of the entrance of Clark's [Fork] river. this river they informed us headed in a large lake [Coeur d'Alene] in the mountains and that the falls below which they reside was at no great distance from the lake. these people are the same in their dress and appearance with the Chopunnish [Nez Perce], tho' their language is intirely different, a circumstance which I did not learn untill we were about to set out and it was then too late to take a Vocabulary. (Thwaites 1904-05 (4):363).

The journals of Lewis and Clark record, in total, 120 *Skeet-so-mish* lodges with "Probable No. of Souls" of 2000 (Thwaites 1904-05 (6):119). Also referred to was "Waytom Lake" (Lake Coeur d'Alene) which is "10 days around it, has 2 Islands and is 7 days from the Chopunnish" (Thwaites 1904-05 (5):94). The landscape of the *Schitsu'umsh* would soon be frequented and inhabited by many more Euro-Americans.

Three years later, in 1809, David Thompson of the Northwest Fur Company built the Kullyspell House near the modern town of Hope, Idaho. It was the first fur trading post in the Pacific Northwest. The *Schitsu'umsh* were also noted by Thompson in his journal writings. On September 9 of that year a group of twenty-three "Pointed Hearts" "made a handsome present of dried Salmon and other Fish with Berries and a Chevrui [deer]" (Elliott 1920:90). While the Kullyspell post existed only briefly, it succeeded in opening the door for the fur trade with the *Schitsu'umsh*. It was at this time that the first guns were introduced to the Salish peoples, along with other trade objects.

The following year, Spokane House was established by Jaco Finlay, at the confluence of the Spokane and Little Spokane Rivers, a short distance down river from Spokane Falls. The Northwest Fur Company and the Hudson's Bay Company were merged in 1821, establishing a

virtual monopoly over the fur trade throughout the Northwest. Fort Vancouver, established in 1825, became the center of this new empire. Spokane House was abandoned after a few years in favor of its close neighbor, Fort Spokane. But by 1826 Fort Spokane was also closed and the regional center of the fur trade moved to Fort Colville at Kettle Falls. The distance to this post seemed to have inhibited the *Schitsu'umsh* from continuing active participation in the fur trade. By the early 1840s the short-lived fur trade had all but ended throughout the region.

In addition to “trade goods,” the *Schitsu'umsh* acquired something else from the fur traders. While the precise origin of the term is unknown, “Coeur d’Alene” was likely derived from French-speaking, fur traders of European or Iroquois descent in their initial dealings with the *Schitsu'umsh*.<sup>5</sup> The term “Coeur d’Alene,” meaning “heart of [like] an awl,” and often loosely translated “pointed hearts,” is in reference to the tough bargaining conducted by the *Schitsu'umsh* with these fur traders.

The fur trade was a period of mixed blessings for the *Schitsu'umsh*. From the Euro-Americans came “trade goods,” including glass beads, wool blankets, cotton shirts, and an assortment of utilitarian metal products, such as knives and axes, cooking pots, arrow points, and eventually rifles. The great trading gatherings, or “rendezvous,” were certainly an exciting time of games and family renewal. While there was no overt attempt on the part of the fur traders to alter the institutions or way of life of the Indian, changes did occur. With those few White traders and trappers who spent extended time among the *Schitsu'umsh* came the first exposure to Euro-American attitudes and values. The fur traders were, it best, an interesting lot of emissaries. The reliance on the landscape for certain bone, wood, and stone materials was now also augmented by an inclusion of new technology, which generally made life physically easier. But continual access to such trade items as metal axes and rifles also meant dependency on rather entrepreneurial, not always honest traders, on distant Euro-American manufacturers, and on a capitalistic-based, market economy itself. The *Schitsu'umsh* were now linked to economic processes they had little control over - to the oscillations of continental and global markets. When beaver-felt hats were no longer in fashion, beaver belts lost their value and the means of

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<sup>5</sup> See Gary Palmer (1998:325) for a more complete discussion of the root of the term, “Coeur d’Alene.”

acquiring new axes as well as gun powder and lead for their muskets became much more difficult.

The *Schitsu'umsh* were also introduced to a new way of viewing the phenomena of the landscape itself. Furs and other items, once used only for subsistence needs, were now collected in ever greater quantity and began to assume new meanings. The “fairly abundant” beaver (Teit 1930:97), was now valued relative to what its pelt might command in exchange for a trade good; the beaver became valued as a commodity. Any spiritual or social significance it once had was now supplemented by its market significance.

And from the fur traders alcoholic drink was also introduced. The long-term effects of excessive liquor consumption were devastating to individual lives, as well as to family structures.

With the Louisiana Purchase and the ensuing fur trade, the *Schitsu'umsh* landscape acquired new “gifts” to be obtained and an increased dependence on distant forces beyond the control of the *Schitsu'umsh*. With the relatively sudden collapse of the fur trade also came the societal disruptions caused by lack of access to certain commodities and trade goods recently integrated into *Schitsu'umsh* society. And it was now a landscape beginning to be inhabited by Euro-Americans, who were redefining it and making it a part of their own landscape.

**The Jesuits** Even before the Jesuit priests arrived, their coming was foretold. Living “a couple of hundred years before the coming of the White man,” Circling Raven was given “a great vision.” Joseph Seltice notes that Circling Raven was head chief of the *Schitsu'umsh* “for a hundred years,” from 1660 to 1760 (Kowrach and Connolly 1990:13). His *suumesh*, the Raven, would circle above his head and tell him the location of game animals or an enemy. On one occasion, the Raven told of the coming of men wearing “long black robes with crossed-sticks under their belts” and that they would teach the *Schitsu'umsh* a new “way to the heaven trails.”

Among the Flathead there was also such a visionary. As a small boy, Shining Shirt was out with his parents on a hunt when they were killed and he left orphaned (Peterson 1993:14). When he returned to his people he went to the mountains to pray. He spent many days there and finally a vision came. In his vision he was taught the ceremony of the Winter Jump Dance, and that when he did this dance he would be able to help others. He was told he would become a powerful shaman, and “when he died, lightning, thunder and hail would shake the earth”

(Peterson 1993:14). In his vision the future was also seen. Teaching a new way to pray, “fair-skinned men wearing black robes” would come. These “Black Robes,” as the Jesuit priests were called, would not only bring a “new way to the heaven trails,” but, in so doing, indelibly alter the Indian way of life.

During the fur trade era and before the Black Robes actually arrived, Christianity began making an impression on the Plateau peoples. By the 1820s, several French-speaking Iroquois families had settled among the Flatheads to trap and trade fur. They began sharing their version of Catholicism, which included elements of their own Indian ritual and belief. Spokane Garry had spent two years at the Anglican Mission’s Red River School (near present-day Winnipeg, Ontario), and, by the early 1830s, was teaching the tenets of the Protestant faith and King James Bible to the Spokane and very likely influencing the *Schitsu’umsh* as well.

Beginning in 1831, the Flathead and Nez Perce sent three successive delegations to St. Louis to request the Black Robes. It was a dangerous journey, as the 1837 delegation, the third to set out, was “attacked and wiped out by Sioux warriors.” In 1836, Presbyterian Missions were established by Henry Spalding on Lapwai Creek in Nez Perce country and by Marcus Whitman at Waiilatpu in Cayuse country, near Fort Nez Perces (Fort Walla Walla). A fourth delegation of Flathead and their Iroquois relatives left in 1839. At Council Bluffs, Iowa, their requests were heard by the Black Robe, Father Pierre-Jean DeSmet, a 38 year old Jesuit Priest from Belgium. For DeSmet “the appeal came as a voice crying from the wilderness” (Peterson 1993:23), and his was the vision of establishing a “wilderness kingdom for God.”

DeSmet first traveled to the Bitterroot in 1840, and returned the following year with Jesuit Fathers, Nicholas Point and Gregory Mengarini, and three lay brothers. They established the St. Mary’s mission among the Flathead in the Bitterroot valley in what would become western Montana. The prophecies of Circling Raven and Shining Shirt were being fulfilled.

#### Finding the Lost

“The Black Robes were found wandering around on the prairie out there by Hayden Lake area. They were lost and trying to find the Coeur d’Alenes, but they were lost. The Flatheads that were with them were trying to find them, but they were just wandering around. They were found out there wandering around looking for the Coeur d’Alenes, by Stellam, which was Thunder, was his name.” (From an interview conducted on June 7, 1996.)

In the spring of 1842, while on his way to Fort Colville, Father DeSmet first met with Stellam, the head chief of the *Schitsu'umsh*, at the north end of Lake Coeur d'Alene.<sup>6</sup> It was noted by one elder that the encounter with Father DeSmet was seen by some *Schitsu'umsh* as much an opportunity “to learn from the priests as to teach the priests about the Coeur d'Alene ways and traditions!” DeSmet, in turn, instructed Father Nicolas Point to work directly among the *Schitsu'umsh* and begin a modest mission among them. Built the following spring near the north bank of the St. Joe River, the Mission of the Sacred Heart of Jesus was established.

Father Point found a landscape abundant with life. He noted with interest that fishing and hunting was done year around and, where the Spokane River meets the Lake, "the catch is unusually so abundant that canoes are filled and emptied within a space of a few hours" (Point 1967:175). He also observed that in one day 180 deer were killed by a single group of hunters and another group killed 300 in the space of six hours (Point 1967:67).

As the location of the Mission was on a flood plain and thus not well suited for long-term use, in 1845 Father Joseph Joset, who had replaced Point, surveyed the lake and river region and moved the Mission to a hill overlooking the Coeur d'Alene River. The mission was built near a traditional village and burial site. Father Joset served the *Schitsu'umsh* until his death in 1900, at the age of 90. He learned the language of the people and was extremely influential in their lives and with relations with the growing Euro-American community. By the 1850s, under the architectural guidance of Father Antony Ravalli, “without the use of a single nail,” and with the labor of the *Schitsu'umsh*, the construction of the Mission of the Sacred Heart of Jesus, or, what is known today as the “Old Mission” or the “Cataldo Mission,” was completed. In the years that followed its construction, as many as forty to fifty *Schitsu'umsh* became closely associated with the Mission’s activities, likely settling at the site in a semi-sedentary fashion. The children of these families were, in turn, instructed by the Jesuits in Catholicism, as well as farming techniques and animal husbandry.

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<sup>6</sup>Stellam, translated as “Thunder” and called “Twisted Earth” by his father, was the eldest son of Circling Raven and “head chief” as early as 1760 (Kowrach and Connolly 1990:13) and certainly by 1820 (Teit 1930:153), and continued in that capacity until 1844. It was Stellam’s sister’s son, Vincent, “a man of wisdom and courage,” who succeeded him as head chief in 1844, serving until at least 1865. Teit fails to list Vincent as a head chief, stating that Andrew Seltice followed Stellam at his death in 1844 as head chief (1930:153).

Beginning in 1876, under the direction of Father Alexander Diomedi, who arrived that same year, and assisted by Father Joset, the Jesuits began moving the Mission of the Sacred Heart to a new site near Hangman Creek and Moses Mountain. The design of the new “DeSmet Mission” was fashioned after that of the Cataldo Mission. Flanking the Mission, a girls and boys dormitory would be built and a boarding school established by the Sisters of Charity in 1878. To the north of the Mission and under its watch, wooden houses were constructed and the small community of *Schitsu’umsh* flourished. The settlement was named “DeSmet” in memory of “the beloved” priest who died in 1873. While fire would consume the church building in 1939, the Mission was soon re-built. The Sacred Heart Mission continues to actively serve the *Schitsu’umsh* to this day.

The desire by the Jesuits to move the Mission to Hangman Creek was the culmination of several concerns.<sup>7</sup> Among the considerations was the opening of the Mullan Road in 1862, which passed right by the Cataldo Mission. Literally thousands of settlers on the way to the Pacific and a new start traveled through the *Schitsu’umsh* landscape each year. In 1866 alone, an estimated 20,000 people, 5,000 head of cattle, and 6,000 mules traveled the Mullan Road from Montana to Walla Walla, Washington (Winther 1945). And many stayed. By 1870, hundreds of gold seekers were in the mountains along the north forks of both the Clearwater and Coeur d’Alene Rivers. There was thus a growing encroachment and influence by the White settlers, especially miners, in the Coeur d’Alene River basin. The Jesuits feared the moral influences of these Whites on the *Schitsu’umsh*. The Sisters of Charity also needed additional land to support a school they sought to establish among the *Schitsu’umsh*. Larger tracts of good farming land was also needed if more *Schitsu’umsh* families were to settle around the Mission. The Cataldo site had only limited land for such expansion. With only a small percentage of the entire tribe living permanently at the Mission, the Jesuits actually had marginal control over the movements and thus lives of the *Schitsu’umsh* (Palmer 1981a:1). Most of the *Schitsu’umsh* families lived in their traditional villages and camps, and continued their transhumance pattern throughout their

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<sup>7</sup> Gary Palmer (1981a) offers an excellent review of the historical forces which prompted the Jesuits to relocate the mission to DeSmet.

landscape. The move of the entire tribe to a “remote location” with good farming lands would address these concerns.

#### **Do You Wish to be a Great People?**

I have many times spoken to you before, to kindly ask you to leave these rough mountains where there is not enough land to raise feed sufficient for animals, where there is not enough vegetables for all your people.

Therefore, go to the vast prairie lands where you can raise all the wheat and all the vegetables you need for both your stock and yourselves, and also for your children’s children, and children to come for always.

The White people will come in great numbers. As they are so many, you cannot count them. Across the big waters where they come from are thousands upon thousands of them. You would not know how many they are. They will come across and settle upon all the buffalo plains in the land of the Rising Sun and upon these, our camas plains of the Setting Sun. They will settle upon the shores of all our lakes and rivers, they will settle in the forests, in the hills and even on the very summits of our highest mountains.

There will be no more vacant or open land. They will kill off all the buffalo, the elk, all the big game, the birds of game. They will destroy all the salmon, trout and all fish in our lakes and streams. They will plow up the prairie lands where the camas and all eatable roots grow, and there shall be no more camas.

They are now many in our country and have their laws, and they shall still come a thousand fold more times than what they are now.

No doubt this is a serious matter. Now I want the Sisters to come and teach your children. Suppose the Sisters come; they must have a house and a mile square of good tillable land, and very well you, yourselves, know that cannot be had here, and therefore we ought to leave this place, and go to the region where such land is available.

Moreover, let me tell you that this moving of the Mission is for the greater good of all of you, old and young. Do you wish to die? Then remain here; live by hunting and fishing, spend your time in the Church will be in mourning. She will mourn for her children and have no comfort because they are gone.

Do you wish to be a great people? Go to the beautiful land; break the sod and grow grain, plants, vegetables, and your children will live, your wives will be safe and well dressed and you will have plenty. (Reported by Basil Peone of Father Diomedi's 1876 speech to the Coeur d'Alene people attempting to convince them to move to Hangman Creek. *The Coeur d'Alene Tepee* 1938 March 1 (5):14 and 1981:85)<sup>8</sup>

By November of 1877, the move of the *Schitsu'umsh* to the traditional camas region along Hangman Creek was completed, with the construction of the church completed by 1882. By 1880, Cataldo was no longer used as a permanent *Schitsu'umsh* village site, though it continued to produce hay for the horses at the nearby Fort Sherman, located at the mouth of the

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<sup>8</sup>Compare this speech with that remembered by Diomedi (1978:68). Peone may have learned of the speech from Peter Moctelme.

Spokane River.<sup>9</sup> At Hangman Creek, *Schitsu'umsh* settled in permanent homes near the new Mission and began supplementing their camas digging, berry gathering, deer hunting and trout fishing with agricultural pursuits. After the move, the annual travel over the Bitterroot Range to hunt the buffalo with their Flathead relatives had all but ended.

While the move to Hangman Creek was desired by the Jesuits, the resettlement was not supported by all the *Schitsu'umsh* families. Besides Augusta (see “Must We Leave” below), many spoke out against the move. Basil Peone reported that among those dissenting were “Isadore Bernah (Bernard), Joseph (Old Agath’s husband), Aripa of the St. Mary’s clan, Francis Regis, the Rocky Mountain Steer (Zu-lemi-gu-zo) and his brother Basil (Kui-kui-sto-lem) Blue Steer” (*The Coeur d’Alene Tepee* 1938 April 1 (6): 17 and 1981:110). Upon arriving, Aripa recounted to his son, Felix, “We look around, we’re lost. All we seen was tall grass and prairie chickens. We look around, we felt lost.” Even after the resettlement to Hangman Creek, many families, albeit in modified form, continued their seasonal transhumance travels over their traditional landscape. For example, “From 1883 to 1900 Coeur d’Alene were seen hunting mule deer and berrying along the Little North Fork of the Coeur d’Alene and on Grizzly Mountain,” despite the move to DeSmet (Palmer, Nicodemus and Felsman 1987:59).

#### Must We Leave?

Must we leave this land where the bones of our fathers mingle with those of our children? Must we leave these woods which supplied us with fuel and game? This prairie which has fed our horses? This river which has given us trout and beaver? We are good and healthy. Our children are fat. Our wives are comfortable in our lodges and log houses. We are not like you. You need bread. We have camas. You require good clothing; we are satisfied with deer skins and buffalo robes. We can live comfortably on what you would think poor and wretched. I know not what my fellowmen may decide but as for myself, I will stay to live and die in my native land and there will my bones be buried with those of my fathers, and children’s bones. There ends my talk from heart. (Reported by Basil Peone of the response given by Augusta to Father Diomedi’s speech to move to Hangman Creek. *The Coeur d’Alene Tepee* 1938 March 1 (5):14 and 1981:85. Peone described Augusta as “a good man, but overfond of his native land”).

The appeal of Christianity by the *Schitsu'umsh* was un-mistaken. The vision of Circling Raven had established an indigenous legitimization for the Jesuits. The years immediately

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<sup>9</sup>In 1913, the flood broke the dikes of the impoundment areas and mining tailings from the silver mines located up-river severely polluted the Cataldo area, rendering the land useless for farming.

preceding their arrival were exceedingly chaotic, disruptive, and dangerous. Smallpox, Blackfeet raiders, and the collapse of the fur trade meant population decimation, and economic and societal strain. The skills and *suumesh* powers of the shamans, warriors and hunters could not completely abate these challenges. But the power of the Black Robes promised to do so. There was also a sharing of certain values and ritual behaviors that contributed to the appeal and eased the transition. Both the Jesuits and the *Schitsu'umsh* valued generosity and respect for family and community. Catholic rituals had general similarities with Indian rituals, such as the use of chants and prayer, the application of sacred objects, the uses of water and incense for purification, holding processions and feasting days, and accessing the sacred through spiritual intermediaries, be they “guardian spirits” or “saints.” The importance of religious practitioners, shamans and priests, was also well established in both traditions.

#### **Burn Their *Suumesh***

But the Coeur d'Alenes was ruined by the priests coming in. They took everything away from them. They made them give it up. They made them burn their *suumesh*, their bundle. A lot of them died because of that. And some, I guess, hid theirs, and some got away with some. (From an interview conducted on February 11, 1998.)

Unlike the fur traders, the Jesuits sought to transform the way of life of the *Schitsu'umsh*. Using varied techniques, the Jesuits endeavored to undermine and suppress all forms of traditional culture that they felt would prevent them from instituting “civilization.” The priests became well versed in the language and customs of the *Schitsu'umsh* people. One of their first actions taken was to replace the traditional Indian names of the people with “Christian names.” Upon baptism, a name from the Bible, such as “Andrew or Debra,” would be assigned. The Christian name helped transfer one’s identity away from his family ancestry and perhaps animal *suumesh* power from which that name was derived to that of the scriptures. The priests targeted the established leadership for conversion. To convert the chiefs would win important allies and provide Christian role models for the others. The Jesuits brought many families together under those chiefs who had become catholic.

The Sisters of Charity of Providence of Montreal founded the Convent of Mary Immaculate and opened a boarding school at DeSmet in 1878. The children of the *Schitsu'umsh*

were “forced to attend.” Upon arrival, children had their long hair cut and, throughout their stay, were prevented from speaking their native language. The cutting of one’s hair must have been particularly traumatic, as the act was so closely associated with mourning the death of a relative. Upon the death of a parent, for example, the immediate family members would cut their hair shoulder length. Hence these policies had the effect of figuratively and literally severing ties with parents and grandparents, and thus with the traditional culture of the *Schitsu’umsh*. By removing such “negative influences” and assuming many of the parental responsibilities over the *Schitsu’umsh* youth, the Sisters could more easily teach a new moral code, as well as the economic skills and technical expertise, all necessary for a Christian and “industrious” lifestyle. The intensive education of the *Schitsu’umsh* youth would be an essential prerequisite for the successful transformation of the society.

With the loss of the *Schitsu’umsh* language came an eroding of social cohesiveness and a singular cultural identity obtained in speaking a language distinct from one’s neighbors. With the loss of language also came a loss of the unique linguistic markers that help tie a people with their landscape. For example, *Q’emiln* would become “Post Falls,” “celebrating the settling” of that area by Frederick Post in 1871. Estranged from the landscape is the story of a boy whose canoe capsized on *Hnt’aq’n* (Hayden Lake) and after three days journey emerged out of an underground passage near the falls on the Spokane River. The opening became known as *Q’emiln* or “Throat” (Palmer, Nicodemus and Felsman 1987:85-86). Lost are such descriptive names as ‘*L’lkhwi’lus*, “Little Hole in the Head” for the site of DeSmet and named after a small spring near DeSmet Hill; *Hnch’mqinkwe*’, “Surface on the Head of the Water” for the large village site at the mouth of the Spokane River and what would later become the city of Coeur d’Alene; *Stseqhwlkwe*’, “Splashing Water” for Spokane Falls; *Hnch’emtsn*, “Inner Mouth” for the site of one of the largest villages along the St. Joe River, at the confluence of the St. Joe and St. Maries Rivers and future city of St. Maries; and *Altkwari’t*, “Source of Gold,” for the village site at what would become Harrison (ibid 1987: 24, 64, 79-80, 119, 43). As Felix Aripa recalled, the “gold” of Harrison is in reference to the “gold color” of the lake’s surface as one looks out toward the sunset from the Harrison area. Today only a handful of *Schitsu’umsh* speak their native language with fluency.

The Jesuits made every effort to discourage particular social and religious practices. The priests attacked traditional marital habits, ceremonials, dances, and gambling, such as the stick game. For the Jesuits the “war dances” were “evil.” Indian dance regalia was burned and participants fined for dancing. Medicine bundles, the tangible representation of one’s *suumesh*, were also collected and publicly burned. *Suumesh* songs were not to be sought in the mountains and the stories of Coyote and Crane held to be of little importance, other than as “fairy tales.” With the assistance of the “Soldiers of the Sacred Heart,” the Jesuits sought to curtail the Jump Dances and use of the Sweat Houses, as both were considered “evil.” The Soldiers of the Sacred Heart were a “type of police force” made up of *Schitsu’umsh* who helped enforce the policies of the Jesuits and their allied chiefs. Members of the Soldiers of the Sacred Heart exemplified the values of the church, being “industrious, honesty, respectful for authority, good ways.” If the Soldiers of the Sacred Heart would hear of a Jump Dance, for example, they would attempt to “put a stop to it.” The use of “whipping,” a form of corporal punishment previously unheard of, was instituted for continued offenders. The priests also imposed fines, incarcerated “trouble makers,” and threatened to withhold communion from those deemed “lazy” and evil. As one elder explained in referring to the priests, “not only did they bring the word of God, but they acted like they were God.” Those that followed them “were sort of fanatics.”

#### **None Take Part**

To Superintendents:

1. That the Indian form of gambling and lottery known as the “give away” be prohibited.
2. That the Indian dances be limited to one in each month in the daylight hours of the midweek, and at one center in each district; the months of March and April, June, July and August are excepted.
3. That none take part in the dances or be present who are under 50 years of age.
4. That a careful propaganda be undertaken to educate public opinion against the dance and to provide a healthy substitute.
5. That a determined effort be made by the Government employees to cooperate with the missionaries to persuade the management of fairs and ‘round-ups’ in the town adjoining the reservations not to commercialize the Indian by soliciting his attendance in large numbers for show purposes.
6. That there be close cooperation between the Government employees and the missionaries in those matters which affect the moral welfare of the Indians. (From the Department of Interior, Office of Indian Affairs, on Indian Dancing, dated February 14, 1923).

Many of the efforts of the Jesuits coincided with those of the United States government. Policies of “assimilating” Indians into American society predominated Federal relations with the

tribes throughout the late nineteenth and early twentieth century. In 1884, the United States government formally prohibited most forms of traditional ritual practice on all Indian Reservations, such as Sun Dances and dream societies. The so-called “war dances” did continue on the Coeur d’Alene Reservation as “exhibition and for exercise until about 1900,” when they were finally discontinued due to the influence of the priests.

### **Everything We Do a Sin**

We the undersigned wish to call your attention to some conditions existing on the Coeur d’Alene reservation which are greatly annoying us and causing a great deal of dissatisfaction among the Indians and particularly among the younger members of the tribe, Joseph Caruana the priest has with the assistant of one of the Indians Bonamancha who he calls an Indian police, made a rule and is endeavoring to enforce it to the effect that all Indian clothing and Indian ware which we wish to wear on the 4<sup>th</sup> of July and on other occasions, shall be burned up and destroyed and that if any of the Indians refuse to deliver this property to them then and in that event they will not let us attend church and to go to confession and communion, now the priest has such control over the Indian police and even with Peter Wildshoe one of the chiefs that he makes rules without calling in the head chief Peter Moctilma, and after he has made the rules then some of the Indians over whom he has control will endeavor to enforce the orders delivered by the priest . . .

The priest has also issued orders that no Indian shall go from one reservation to another especially on the 4<sup>th</sup> of July, and if they do they will be arrested.

They have done this three or four times in the past, and will not let them go to church but will lock them up.

The priest will not allow us to have any races on the reservation and no war dancing as a past time in our idle hours, as he claims it is a violation of the laws of the catholic church and the worst sin on earth.

It is not only the young fellows who are complaining against these rules but one half of the old ones are complaining but are afraid of the priest and therefore submit to these conditions and say nothing.

Now if any of the young fellows drink anything while away from the reservation and should get arrested as soon as they come home they will be arrested and fined and possibly be confined in jail for a couple of weeks.

Now we would like for the department to investigate these matters at its earliest convenience as we believe that we can show what we say is absolutely true and is not at all satisfactory to a majority of the Indians on the reservation.

The young fellows who like to enjoy themselves in racing and all kinds of sports are continually being called down and the priest calls everything we do a sin. (From an undated letter addressed to the Commissioner of Indian Affairs. It was signed by Morris Antelope, principal writer, and ten other *Schitsu’umsh* around 1907).<sup>10</sup>

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<sup>10</sup> Morris Antelope’s “head chief” chronology differs from Teit (1930:154), who records that Wildshoe became “head chief” and Moctelme “second chief” in 1902, and with Wildshoe’s death in 1907, Moctelme then became “head chief.” Teit’s order of head chiefs is corroborated by Kowrach and Connolly (1990:13). I date his undated letter “around 1907” as Antelope states that he started writing business letters for the tribe during 1907, the year Wildshoe died (*The Coeur d’Alene Tepee* 1938 1(8):17 and reprinted 1981:158).

If the Jesuit vision of establishing a “wilderness kingdom for God” was to ultimately succeed, the priests would need absolute control over the lives of the people. A “wandering, nomadic people,” whose subsistence and very identity was so interwoven with an expansive territory, would not fit into such plans. But a sedentary, self-sufficient agricultural community fit perfectly. The Jesuits applied a management style known as “the reduction system.” Having been successfully applied in Paraguay among the Guarani Indians, Father Point drew up plans for its implementation among the *Schitsu’umsh*. Point sketched actual architectural plans for the reduction site, which included row houses and fields radiating out from a centrally-located cathedral. The priests would convince individuals representing important families from the dispersed areas to relocate into an all-Indian town, called the "reduction." Over time it would become self-sufficient, supported by its own agricultural harvests and livestock raising. The relocation of the *Schitsu’umsh* families from the Cataldo area, and the Spokane and St. Joe River regions to Hangman Creek was a direct reflection of this policy. The Hangman Creek area, with its good camas prairie, was ideal for farming and ranching, and was an area isolated from White settlements and a growing influence felt “harmful” to the Indian.

The eventual success of the reduction policy would thus hinge on the adoption by the *Schitsu’umsh* of farming and their settlement in a permanent community.<sup>11</sup> The practice of horticulture may actually have been adopted by the *Schitsu’umsh* prior to Jesuit instruction. As noted by the anthropologist Gary Palmer (1981b), the German botanist Charles Geyer observed *Schitsu’umsh* successfully growing potatoes along the Coeur d’Alene River in 1843. Geyer believed the *Schitsu’umsh* had obtained the English white potato from Hudson’s Bay Company fur traders, likely at Fort Spokane, “about ten to fifteen years ago,” dating potato cultivation among the *Schitsu’umsh* back as early as 1828 (Geyer 1846). It is not difficult to understand a transition to tuber cultivation by a people who relied so extensively on a root digging tradition.

Under the supervision of the Jesuits, the scale of plant cultivation intensified significantly. It was no longer gathering a “camas-like” tuber, but potatoes were harvested, as well as wheat, hay and the raising of cattle. Agriculture had been fully introduced and with it

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<sup>11</sup> See Gary Palmer (1981b) for an excellent over-view of *Schitsu’umsh* farming from 1842 to 1876.

new ways of viewing the role of the landscape. The land became “sod to break” and fenced with barbed wire. New technologies, such as plows and threshers, were to be applied to the land in the expectation that a “cash crop” would be harvested.

By 1845, Father DeSmet reported that the *Schitsu'umsh* families associated with the mission harvested “upward of 1,200 bags of potatoes; some families had each upward of 100 bags” (Chittenden and Richardson 1905:997). Palmer notes, however, given the amount of land under cultivation, ranging from 100 to 200 acres, and the number cows and pigs raised, that most of the harvest was probably consumed by the priests and visitors to the mission, and “to supplement the subsistence of a larger number of families who still derived their primary subsistence from the prairies, woods and streams” (1981b:81). Besides farming around the mission, *Schitsu'umsh* families were also observed cultivating on the prairie adjacent to the Spokane River and along the St. Joe River, providing evidence that members of all three bands had begun farming to complement their transhumance subsistence (Palmer 1981b:83).

*Schitsu'umsh* agricultural “success” was most noticeable after the resettlement to Hangman Creek and particularly after “the 1892 payment.” That year the tribe received a half-million dollars from the United States in compensation for ceding their northern territory as part of the Indian Commission’s 1889 agreement. The money was divided equally among the families, each member receiving an approximate \$1,000 per capita payment. Most funds were, in turn, invested in state-of-the-art farm implements, wire fencing, and work horses. According to the reports of the Indian Agents, wheat production alone rose from 8,000 bushels in 1892, to 27,600 in 1883, to 45,000 in 1894, and in 1896 to 100,000 bushels (Commissioner of Indian Affairs Reports 1892-1896). Besides wheat and potatoes, *Schitsu'umsh* families were successfully raising oats, peas, and hay for cash income. This level of production suggests going beyond the subsistence needs of individual families.<sup>12</sup> Some families had fenced farms and ranches ranging in size from several hundred to two thousand acres. This was the era when many families had two homes, one on their farm land and another, the “weekend home,” at DeSmet.

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<sup>12</sup>This high level of production may not be unanticipated, if, following the traditional patterns of food distribution as exemplified by the actions of the designated hunters, the high-yield production of some families was, in fact, redistributed among other, less-successful, farming families. However, I have not found historic evidence that would support such a scenario.

On the weekends, the families would congregate at and around the mission for religious services and social gatherings. As Felix Aripa remembered, this was a time when “we even hired Whites to help in the farming.” He referred to this period as “a time of good feeling.”

Despite initial success, resistance to the teachings of the Jesuits was evident. Many families held onto their medicine bundles, keeping them in secret from the priests. Jump Dancing continued as participants would “sneak” off to a remote and hidden site. “You knew which families not to tell,” as “our religion sort of went underground.” “You couldn’t even get the older ones to talk to you about it.” As the ethno-historian Jacqueline Peterson states, the Indians never understood “why a loving God would send his children to hell. Nor did they at first understand the appeal of heaven, since there were no relatives or buffalo there” (1993:98). Indeed, the *Schitsu’umsh* had looked to the teachings of the Animal Peoples, such as Badger and Coyote, for their guidance. In contrast, the Jesuits asked the *Schitsu’umsh* to look to the example set forth by a wandering Hebrew tribe and a man from Galilee. The *Schitsu’umsh* were now being taught not to look to the landscape for guidance and “life’s lessons.” The Indians objected to and did not conform to “Catholic authoritarianism, the concepts of sin and hell, and the imposition of European social, political and economic structures” (Peterson 1993:24). As the *Schitsu’umsh* had sought out Jesuits, when the priests began establishing a mission among the Blackfeet, they saw this as a betrayal. Now their most feared enemies would also acquire what had protected them.

While both traditions relied upon religious practitioners and intermediaries, priest and shaman, and saints and guardian spirits, there were also fundamental differences. The *suumesh* power of the shaman was ultimately derived from his personal relationship with the landscape, with an animal guardian spirit. In the *Schitsu’umsh* tradition, “spirit” was understood as endowed throughout the landscape. In the tradition of the Jesuits, with its focus on the redemption of human souls and with the saints emanating out of human communities, the “natural world” was, in essence and by contrast, rendered temporal, secular and “wild.” For the Jesuits the emphasis was on the spiritual residing only within the human portion of the landscape. Sought was a personal and exclusive relationship with the “human son of God.”

While their farming endeavors established them “as the most successful of all the tribes in the northwest region of the United States,” the reduction did not prevent *Schitsu’umsh* families from continuing their seasonal round of digging roots, gathering berries, catching fish, and hunting deer (Palmer 1981b:66 and undated manuscript). As noted by Palmer, some families did not even move to DeSmet until after 1900, but continued to rely upon “hunting and gathering” (undated manuscript). In the instance of the Vincent family, before moving to DeSmet, they lived at the southern end of the lake, hunting water fowl, digging water potato, and fishing the lake. Even after their migration to DeSmet (sometime after 1914) and at the point they took up subsistence farming, the Vincent family continued to depend upon winter deer hunting and trout fishing. Hunting along the Little North Fork of the Clearwater River, the “meat from over 30 deer shot on a hunt would go into jerky. They also caught a lot of trout which they smoked and dried” (Palmer undated manuscript). The anthropologist Roderick Sprague has suggested that “political pressure” to emphasize *Schitsu’umsh* farming successes influenced the Indian Agents to inflate their reports on grain and produce harvest (1996:59). While the Indian Agent was reporting in 1902 that “75% is gained from ‘civilized pursuits’ and 25% through hunting and gathering,” and acknowledging family variation, “the true figure thus was easily 50%” (Sprague 1996:59).

Not only did the Jesuit priests and the Sisters of Charity bring a new “way to the heaven trails,” but they imposed a new form of leadership, as well as a new view of the land itself.<sup>13</sup> With the power of the priests unquestioned and the catholic chiefs becoming more absolute, the *suumesh* power of the shaman was further undermined. There was a shift toward the use of punitive measures, relying on the Soldiers of the Sacred Heart to enforce policies. A competing view of the landscape was also established. Under the stewardship of the Jesuit priests the landscape would no longer be viewed as a source of guidance brought by a *suumesh* song, an “Indian name,” or a Crane and Coyote story. With the accompanying loss of language, a uniquely *Schitsu’umsh* identity with the landscape would be diminished and the oral traditions

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<sup>13</sup>The teachings of the Jesuits had and continue to have a tremendous effect on the *Schitsu’umsh*. The comments provided here primarily address those Jesuit influences which directly affected the *Schitsu’umsh* view of and relationship with their landscape.

themselves would be further detached from the landscape. It would become a landscape viewed as “sod to break” and for the cash crops it would produce. It would become a commodity to be fenced and “owned.” Ironically, in seeking to establish a “wilderness kingdom for God” the new spiritual leaders ushered in a much more secular view of the landscape. With “the reduction” the spiritual and subsistence connections and seasonal transhumance patterns linking a people with their landscape were thus compromised, though not discontinued. The Jump Dances and stories of Coyote continued, though “in secret.” For most *Schitsu’umsh* families, the new agricultural pursuits more typically supplemented rather than replaced all together the gathering of camas and the hunting of deer, and the singing of the *suumesh* prayers which accompanied such activities.

It should be pointed out that the restrictive efforts of the Jesuit priests were most pronounced during the first third of the twentieth century. But as the Federal policy toward the Indian pursued new directions beginning in the 1930s under John Collier’s administration of the Bureau of Indian Affairs and solidified in the Indian Reorganization Act of 1934, so too did the Jesuit policy on the Coeur d’Alene Reservation. The changed policy was exemplified in the work of Father Cornelius Byrne, who helped initiate the newsletter, *The Coeur d’Alene Teepee*, which was published from 1937 through 1940. Father Byrne wrote in the first “Editorial” that “The Coeur d’Alene Teepee is dedicated to the preservation of Indian culture and advancement. . . .” and going on to state, “We maintain that there is no conflict between the Indians’ ancestral heritage of a peculiar art and his Christian Faith. . . . The Indian’s culture and art, unlike his pagan beliefs, are eminently true, beautiful and good. These we accept, to preserve for posterity. The latter we reject” (1937:2). Today, Father Thomas Connolly of the Sacred Heart Mission is a “strong supporter of the Indian way,” able to speak much of the *Schitsu’umsh* language, eminently knowledgeable in their traditions, history and culture, and a regular and “well respected” participant and dancer at the *Schitsu’umsh* Pow Wows, often asked to give the opening prayer. The changed attitude is reflected in the comment by some *Schitsu’umsh* that a Jump Dance would “not be complete” without a priest present!

While our focus has been on the Jesuit influences on the landscape of the *Schitsu’umsh*, the legacy of the Jesuit experience must be appreciated in the context of the “good deeds” brought by the Black Robes. Motivated by a sincere desire to “help the Coeur d’Alene people,”

the Jesuit priests and the Sisters of Charity implemented a Euro-American educational system, encouraged agricultural and other “industrial pursuits,” challenged alcohol abuse, improved health care delivery, were diligent against various outside economic and political interests who sought control over the *Schitsu’umsh*, and brought celebration to birth and marriage, comfort in death and a new “way to the heaven trails.” Among many devout “Catholic families” today, the “teachings” of Jesus Christ are central to their lives, fully integrating Catholicism into a *Schitsu’umsh* way of life. For them the priests and sisters are indeed “beloved.”