

# Ethnohistory Field School Report 2011

## Under the Cedar Mat: Uncovering Warriors in Traditional and Contemporary Stó:lō Society

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



Many years ago in Alámex<sup>1</sup> a young boy was left in charge of his infant sister while the women of his family went berry-picking. The young girl began to cry, and despite his best efforts the boy failed to calm her. Eventually the boy became so angry that he pushed his sister into the longhouse fire. When the women returned home later that day they found to their horror that the child had been burned to death. As the boy grew older he increasingly resorted to violence and cruelty in his everyday dealings with his tribe. Soon the young man began attacking visitors from other areas, other tribes. Retaliatory raids from the coast brought on by these violent outbursts eventually forced the boy's family to break apart and disperse, all in an attempt to distance themselves from the lad who was known later in life as Tómtomiyéqw.<sup>2</sup>

Abandoned and left to the solitary life of a hermit by his asocial nature, Tómtomiyéqw spent his days at the mouth of his cave above the Fraser River. There he patiently waited until, seeing canoes paddling up river, he would descend from his perch and hide under a woven mat in a river eddy. As soon as a paddler lifted so much as a corner of the mat to investigate, Tómtomiyéqw would leap from the water and trundle the canoe over before quickly bludgeoning all the men to death. Tómtomiyéqw readily attacked canoes regardless of whether they came for commerce or warfare.

Traditional Stó:lō<sup>3</sup> *sqwélqwel* ("true stories" like Tómtomiyéqw's<sup>4</sup>) and *sxwóxwiyám* (stories from the myth-age, before the Transformers made all right in the world) regularly

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<sup>1</sup> Near present-day Agassiz, British Columbia.

<sup>2</sup> The story of Tómtomiyéqw is told by various cultural informants, though few refer to him by name; see my discussion of Tómtomiyéqw below for a possible reason for this omission. Sto:lo Nation staff archaeologist David Schaepe however confirms the lad's name as Tómtomiyéqw; David Schaepe, "Rock Formations: Archaeological Insights into Precontact Warfare and Sociopolitical Organization Among the Sto:lo of the Lower Fraser River Canyon, B.C." *American Antiquity*, Vol. 71, No. 4 (October, 2006), pg. 679

<sup>3</sup> The Stó:lō are the aboriginal inhabitants of the Lower Fraser River Valley in British Columbia. For the purposes of this paper I use "traditional" when applied to Stó:lō culture to qualify cultural aspects (practices, stories, etc) which seem to have originated pre-contact or around the time of contact but continued to be culturally significant for Stó:lō well into the twentieth century to the present. I use "traditional" with no intention of imply "purity" or an un-affected original state of being. Such cultural practices would not have been un-affected by European influences, but

associate warriors with violence and unpredictability, and though this has largely remained the dominant view fluid Stó:lō ways of knowing have seen a change in the use of warrior stories. Not all their actions were necessarily senseless violence. Despite the inherent dangers associated with them, warriors might be called upon to protect their community in repelling enemy raids or organizing retaliatory attacks against coastal raiders. Indeed, it was in this latter function that warriors had authoritative influence over non-warriors as “war-chiefs” or warrior *sí:ya:m*.<sup>5</sup> Stó:lō today continue to tell warrior stories in a variety of culturally significant ways while faithfully moulding traditional culture to serve today’s generation.

Warriors often – though not always – remained on the edges of Stó:lō villages, either “banished” liked Tómtomiyéqw or as part of a self-imposed solitude. Warriors would re-emerge as needed, returning to collective consciousness as violently as Tómtomiyéqw leapt from beneath his woven mat. As archaeologist David Schaepe has argued elsewhere, warriors should not be understood simply as a “necessary evil,” but rather as fulfilling a complicated social role visible in the connection between warriors and leadership. Schaepe contrasts the violent brutality of the *stómex* (“violent brute”) Tómtomiyéqw to the elevated leadership status of the *siyá:m* T’ixwelátsa; Stó:lō warriors in other words could be understood within the spectrum between *sí:ya:m* and *stómex*, a spectrum I will employ in this paper. By viewing warriors over time as resembling either *sí:ya:m* or *stómex* we see the gradual shift in the continuum of Stó:lō perceptions of warriors from brutes feared for their violence to community servants known for

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as recent scholarship on the contact relationship has shown scholars would do well to approach the contact-relationship as one of dialogue or “exchange” between aboriginal and settler in order to investigate the play of forces on both colonizer and colonized; see John Sutton Lutz, *Makúk: A New History of Aboriginal-White Relations* (Vancouver: UBC Press, 2008), pg. 4-7

<sup>4</sup> The name Tómtomiyéqw itself refers to the process of upending canoes and people falling into the water; Schaepe, “Rock Formations”, pg. 678

<sup>5</sup> *Sí:ya:m* – “respected leaders.” Singular: *siyá:m*

their sacrifice and leadership within changing cultural contexts. Warriors can neither be relegated to *sí:ya:m* nor *stómex* status easily, for they existed and continue to exist in a world of fluid understandings allowing for a “multiplicity of perspectives on warriors and warfare.”<sup>6</sup> These perspectives have gradually shifted over time, allowing Stó:lō individuals and communities to alter the significance of warriors in contemporary culture, thereby affording warriors new cultural significance.

While the days of “Yekeltes”<sup>7</sup> raids may be long gone, stories about warriors continue to be told and influence today’s Stó:lō society. Warrior names and traditions guide the way community leaders operate and serve their people, setting an important historical precedent for the proper role of leaders while legitimizes historical kinship links, crucial to Stó:lō notions of leadership. Because of their association with violence stories about warriors are seldom told, unless they demonstrate skills such as good leadership qualities and not just senseless violence.

To appreciate the presence of warrior stories within traditional and contemporary Stó:lō society, we must consider aboriginal ways of knowing as legitimate. Historians have largely rejected the Rankean notion of „*wie es eigentlich gewesen*” – “how it actually happened” – as a guiding goal for history as postmodernism and new guiding theories of history undermine Western Euro-centric understandings of history. Conflict arises when scholars insist that their way of determining “how it actually happened” alone yields truthful statements. Ways of knowing, as J. Edward Chamberlain has pointed out, resemble fiscal currencies that only operate

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<sup>6</sup> Schaepe, “Rock Formations”, pg. 479

<sup>7</sup> A Stó:lō figuring of *Lekwiltok*, a group of Kwakwak’wakw raiders from north-eastern Vancouver Island known to have raided into the Fraser River valley. Lekwiltok raiding was largely brought to an end in the mid nineteenth century after the Battle of Maple Bay where a unified force of Coast and Straits Salish annihilated a large body of Lekwiltok raiders; for more on the Battle of Maple Bay, see Chapter 3 (pgs. 223-241) in William Angelbeck, “*They Recognize No Superior Chief*”: *Power, Practice, Anarchism and Warfare in the Coast Salish Past*, PhD Dissertation, Department of Anthropology, University of British Columbia, 2009

so long as groups of people (societies) believe in and accept the justification of their worth.<sup>8</sup> Different currencies (or ways of knowing) are still seen as valuable alongside one another when one demonstrates their relation to one another in terms understandable to both. By accepting alternative ways of knowing as legitimate scholars may tap into other ways of viewing the world through perspectives often obscured by their own ways of understanding the world.

Ethnohistory opens one such door, offering historians an alternative way of establishing relationships in order to approach other ways of knowing. By engaging with groups whose histories become the subject of study, ethnohistory re-figures the relationship of scholar and “subject”, striving to put them on equal footing. The ethnohistorian neither speaks on behalf of nor in place of the subject; the ethnohistorian and subject engage in dialogue, a conversation between cultures where all are given an opportunity to speak. I was introduced to ethnohistory while taking part in the 2011 Ethnohistory Field School, a partnership between Stó:lō Nation and the Stó:lō Records and Resource Management Centre, the University of Victoria, and the University of Saskatchewan. For the month of May I lived on Stó:lō territory with nine other graduate students, each of us with our own specific topic of research identified as important by the Stó:lō community in order to best serve both communities.

Inspired by experience among the Stó:lō I knew that I am not here only to speak, but also to listen. In order to respectfully learn about Stó:lō concepts of warriors in traditional and contemporary society I approach both European and Stó:lō ways of knowing equally. This includes archaeology, anthropology, history and oral testimony.

Conflict and violence continues in contemporary Stó:lō society. Though Stó:lō Nation unifies many of the nations and tribes within the Fraser River Valley, words such as “warrior”

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<sup>8</sup> J. Edward Chamberlain, “Close Encounters of the First Kind” in John Sutton Lutz (ed), *Myth and Memory: Stories of Indigenous-European Contact* (Vancouver: UBC Press, 2007), pg. 15

and its cognate “war” threaten to awaken old rifts among the Stó:lō. These rifts could potentially break apart the tenuous unity enjoyed by the Stó:lō today; if modern fishing and land allocation disputes amongst Stó:lō and with the federal and provincial governments are any indication, a break in unity could lead to more conflict. Understandably many community members hesitate to discuss these delicate issues lest they be seen as compromising unity. With this in mind, I can only say that (to borrow a theme from Bruce Miller’s work) I endeavour to “be of good mind.”<sup>9</sup>

European explorers, traders, and missionaries recorded instances of Stó:lō warfare, instances echoed in the Stó:lō oral tradition. While western Euro-Canadian or *Xwelitem* (literally “the hungry people”) society sees little problem accepting the former as capable of telling the truth, some hesitation exists in regards to the latter. Oral traditions have much to offer for the ethnohistorian however, not only as a vehicle to transmit knowledge but also to evaluate how such knowledge is used within traditional and contemporary societies.

Western historiography of Stó:lō is gradually increasing as historians, ethnographers, archaeologists and anthropologists increasingly accept oral testimony and First Nations agency as valuable and above all relevant to understanding the complicated past of British Columbia. Some historians who have looked at Sto:lo and more broadly Coast Salish warfare and leadership argue on behalf of a decentralized leadership structure, arguments occasionally corroborated by anthropologists and archaeologists. From almost at the beginning of the contact process Europeans took note of aboriginal warfare in the Salish Sea and Fraser River Valley. The journals kept at the Hudson’s Bay Company post at Fort Langley discuss raiders coming up

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<sup>9</sup> The title phrase of Miller’s book appears within the text of an interview about the relationship of scholar and community; see Bruce Granville Miller (ed.), *Be of Good Mind: Essays on the Coast Salish* (Vancouver: UBC Press, 2007)

river.<sup>10</sup> While these raids may have changed in nature in the post-contact period, they still represent a continuation of longer standing cultural interactions similar to trading among North West Coast aboriginals.

Defensive sites as uncovered by archaeologists enrich the picture of warriors within traditional Stó:lō society. Schaepe argues that Fraser Canyon defensive sites acted as political signs of authority, asserting a variety of social functions modifying intertribal relationships.<sup>11</sup> These relationships were complex and fluid rather than static. It is unclear how these relationships would have been kept up, though stories about the Sumas warrior Xéytéleq's marriages argue on behalf a continued process of intertribal marriage and kinship bond forging that was largely changed – though not replaced – by contact with Europeans.<sup>12</sup>

Defensive sites such as trenches, palisade walls and hide-aways reveal the industry of the Stó:lō and Salish towards their traditional territories. These sites attach a longer history to aboriginal warfare on the coast beyond the raids mentioned in the Fort Langley journals, but with only these sites in mind we can assume little about the interaction of warfare with lived society. Archaeology focuses on objects from the past and has little ability to articulate how objects, individuals and communities operated with one another.<sup>13</sup> All these processes come together to hamper the ability of the researcher to make faithful truth-statements about the past without a clear narrative necessary to fulfill the expectations of western ways of knowing. Without

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<sup>10</sup> For a broader catalogue of these raids, see Keith Thor Carlson, "Intercommunity Conflicts" Plate 14 in Keith Thor Carlson (ed), *A Stó:lō Coast Salish Historical Atlas* (Vancouver: Douglas & McIntyre/Chilliwack: Stó:lō Heritage Trust, 2001), pg. 49

<sup>11</sup> Schaepe, "Rock Formations", pg. 701

<sup>12</sup> Keith Thor Carlson, "Stó:lō Exchange Dynamics" in Arthur J. Ray (ed), *Native People in British Columbia: Recent Research* – Special Edition of *Native Studies Review*, 11:1, 1996, pg. 6. Helen Codere, as discussed below, argues that for the coastal "Kwakiutl" these relationships were enforced and continued through a process of "potlatching". Similarly, William Angelbeck (also discussed below) seeks to explain these relationships as part of a broader social process based upon cultural, social, and material capital exchanges in place of a formal governing structure.

<sup>13</sup> Carlson, "Stó:lō Exchange Dynamics", pg. 7

engaging with other methods of knowing the past archaeology runs the risk of relegating the past to an image seen solely from the present. Archaeology remains an important tool for informing our understanding of pre-contact Stó:lō defensive and by extension offensive practices, but without any methods of tying archaeological findings to the more recent past it remains of ambiguous value. Connection must be made to the present to demonstrate the significance of these sites to Stó:lō narratives, not just to western archaeology.<sup>14</sup>

Anthropologists meanwhile combine historical and archaeological data in pursuit of a broader understanding of Stó:lō and Coast Salish cultures with limited degrees of success. Anthropological work largely challenges the idea that any sort of centralized authority figured in the construction of such defensive sites as the fortified Fraser River site of Xelhálh. Some anthropologists have fallen into a Eurocentric trap of materialist structuralism to make sense of warfare in relation to traditional Salish leadership patterns. These scholars ignore Stó:lō ways of knowing by basing their analyses solely on European methodologies. By exploring aboriginal cultures in this way these scholars ignore any comparison between Europeans and non-Europeans, denying the legitimacy of aboriginals to speak for themselves within these structures.

Helen Codere's study, though of the "Kwakiutl"<sup>15</sup> of northern Vancouver Island, falls readily into this trap in her discussion of the place of warriors and warfare within pre- and post-contact society. Potlatching, according to Codere, replaced "wars of blood" by "fighting with property" in materialist shows of wealth and importance as a replacement to physical violence in the post-contact period.<sup>16</sup> While one might be tempted to apply her work to the Coast Salish,

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<sup>14</sup> Schaepe's work tends to avoid this trap by actively engaging with the Stó:lō today, the people whose ancestors are the subject of his study. Indeed, Schaepe orients his research towards providing information *for* the Stó:lō rather than simply *about* them.

<sup>15</sup> "Kwakiutl" is an archaic misidentification of one tribal group's name often used to denote the broader language group of Kwakwaka'wakw of northern Vancouver Island.

<sup>16</sup> Helen Codere, *Fighting With Property: A Study of Kwakiutl Potlatching and Warfare, 1792-1930* (New York: J. J. Augustin Publisher, 1950), pg. 8-9

Codere undertook her research with a flawed relationship with aboriginals: namely, she failed to engage in a dialogue with her Kwakiutl subject. Absent from Codere's work are the questions of how Kwakiutl interact with the memories of warriors today, and whether or not those memories still have social currency.

More recently William Angelbeck defined Coast Salish warriors as existing within an "anarchist" social structure reliant on social, cultural, and material capital as currency to inform social relations, taking his departure from Wayne Suttles' recommendation that more needed to be done on the relationship between authority and conflict in traditional Coast Salish society.<sup>17</sup> Initially Angelbeck's language may seem culturally insensitive because of his repeated assertion that Salish communities were "anarchist." Anarchism, according to Angelbeck, provides an opportunity to escape the predominately state-oriented focus of Marxism. He continues:

Anarchism, on the other hand, is about small-scale social organization, societies that form from the bottom-up, rather than those that are directed centrally from above. Local organization, however, can lead to the operation and maintenance of larger projects and even industrial endeavors as groups cooperate and federate into larger scales of organization, albeit the locus of control remains on the local level.<sup>18</sup>

While Coast Salish and by extension Stó:lō *did* have complex governing structures, Angelbeck is clearly aware of these indigenous structures, and he broadly argues on behalf of a decentralized leadership model not wholly inconsistent with that of Keith Carlson or Schaepe. Understanding Salish governing structures in such a "bottom-up" way affects how we understand the role of warriors within Stó:lō and Salish society.

Into this model Angelbeck injects warfare as a tool to enforce or resist leadership structures based on power relationships. These power structures describe social relationships between as well as within tribes: by carrying out raids warriors exerted power over their victims,

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<sup>17</sup> Wayne Suttles, "They Recognize No Superior Chief": The Strait of Juan de Fuca in the 1790s" in José Luis Peset (ed), *Culturas de la Costa Noroeste de América* (Turner, 1989), pg. 251; quoted in Schaepe, "Rock Formations", pg. 701; and Angelbeck, "They Recognize No Superior Chief", pg. 1

<sup>18</sup> Angelbeck, "They Recognize No Superior Chief", pg. 10

while the defenders demonstrated their own power in resisting attack.<sup>19</sup> Furthermore, Angelbeck argues that throughout the last three thousand years of Salish occupation instances of warfare do not argue on behalf of a centralization of power into the hands of chiefs. Rather, warfare occurred as a way of exerting power over social relationships.<sup>20</sup>

Despite his recognition of Salish cultural flexibility, Angelbeck engages with little aboriginal input, often relegating aboriginal knowledge to supporting roles for *his* findings, rather than making space for aboriginal voices to be heard. Though he does thank aboriginal scholars and cultural experts in his acknowledgements, the vast majority of his citations stem from western archaeological, anthropological and ethnographical sources. Angelbeck's work, like Codere's, *tells* rather than *discusses*. To respectfully describe aboriginal cultures anthropology and archaeology must first be willing to engage with those cultures and accept their systems of belief as viable. Without such an understanding anthropologists, archaeologists and even historians run the risk of speaking on behalf of, rather than with. Angelbeck and Codere both fail to articulate how views of warriors have changed in order to better serve the present generation's unique set of goals, beliefs, and needs.

The ambiguous image of Salish and Stó:lō warriors we see in the archaeological and anthropological record continues however in different historical narratives. *Sxwóxwiyám* accounts of the Transformers *Xexá:ls* from the myth-age contain direct references to warriors. These stories occasionally use warriors to remind Stó:lō that *Xexá:ls* made the world "right" by fixing wrongs, such as their punishment of the Ts'elxweyéqw chief T'ixwelátsa. There are also at least two other warrior-specific transformation sites, as well as a myriad of other

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<sup>19</sup> Angelbeck, "They Recognize No Superior Chief", pg. 4-5

<sup>20</sup> Angelbeck, "They Recognize No Superior Chief", pg. 310

transformations done to stop or resolve conflicts between individuals, or to remove dangerous people from the landscape.<sup>21</sup> These troublesome warriors existed therefore *before* the world was made right by Xexá:ls, setting the initial standard of warriors as violent.

Warrior spirits also help illustrate the historical bearing of warriors within traditional Stó:lō society. Contrary to modern popular images of warriors drawing on powerful animals for their strength and ferocity, Stó:lō warrior spirit powers often came from animals not usually associated with aboriginal warriors in western culture. One Twana narrative recorded by William Elmendorf mentions a mercenary-like warrior associated with wolves engaged to revenge against raiders, but predominately Stó:lō spirit powers seem to have been associated with creatures known for their tenacity and resilience rather than brute strength, such as wasps or mosquitoes.<sup>22</sup>

Stó:lō orally-transmitted *sqwélqwel* set in more recent times reveal a complex warrior tradition. Some warriors are remembered for their violence like Tómtomiyéqw, while others are remembered for their transition into leadership figures. Other stories relate a deep ambiguity about warriors, reminding us that things were not quite as black and white as we may like to believe. Stories about *stómex* like Tómtomiyéqw often convey explanations for the reasoning for past actions, such as Tómtomiyéqw's "psychopathic nature" prompting the migration of his people from Alámex to Cheam, Pilalt, and Ohamil.<sup>23</sup> Tómtomiyéqw's *de-facto* banishment also has implications in a society based heavily on kinship when one considers the importance of

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<sup>21</sup> For a list of these sites and locations, see Albert (Sonny) McHalsie, David M. Schaepe, and Keith Thor Carlson, "Making the World Right through Transformations" Plate 1 in Carlson (ed), *A Sto:lo Coast Salish Historical Atlas*, pg. 6

<sup>22</sup> For the Twana narrative see William W. Elmendorf, *Twana Narratives: Native Historical Accounts of a Coast Salish Culture* (Vancouver: UBC Press, /Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1993), pg. 60-1; for other warrior spirit powers see Keith Thor Carlson, "Expressions of Collective Identity" Plate 8, in Carlson (ed), *Sto:lo Atlas*, pg. 28. Similarly, a warrior named Kitsap from the related Hul'q'umín'um language speakers on Vancouver Island drew his powers from lice. Some accounts maintain that Kitsap employed his lice power over the Lekwiltok during the Battle of Maple Bay; Angelbeck, "*They Recognize No Superior Chief*", pg. 36

<sup>23</sup> Keith Thor Carlson, *Power of Place, The Problem of Time: Aboriginal Identity and Historical Consciousness in the Cauldron of Colonialism* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2010), pg. 129-130

relationship networks and their necessity for supporting life. While Tómtomiyéqw still nominally serves his people by killing raiders bound for up-river, he does so from without society with no family of his own.<sup>24</sup>

Ambiguity surrounds other warriors such as Xéytéleq. Traditional stories remember Xéytéleq as a great warrior of Sumas (*Smáth*) alternatively as a threat or as a community servant while acknowledging that he was originally from Vancouver Island.<sup>25</sup> Some allege that different *sí:ya:m* married their daughters to Xéytéleq to create kinship bonds with the enormous warrior.<sup>26</sup> By forging these bonds the *sí:ya:m* would likely have gained protection as well as the ability to call on Xéytéleq for his skills as a “professional” warrior to organize and lead defensive or retaliatory actions against enemies. These multiple marriages may also have led to the widespread use of the Xéytéleq name throughout Coast Salish territory, as sons would often take on the Xéytéleq name from their fathers.<sup>27</sup> One modern Xéytéleq (Ray Silver) remembers his namesake as warrior in the service of his community. One story told to Ray involves his namesake and companion-warrior Qwá:l disguising themselves to repel raiders:

XÉYTELEQ: ...One of the stories I hear about is that there used to be a look out on top of Sumas Mountain where these people were looking out over the river to see if raiders were coming to fight and try to steal the women and children and if they see the raiders coming the person on the look out would run down to the village and let all the people know and all the women and children and some men would go and hide in the pit houses. And near the bottom of [Sumas Lake] Xéytéleq and Qwá:l would go and dress in dresses, they would put on cedar dresses and look like they would be picking berries down at the lake [...] Xéytéleq and Qwá:l would look like they were picking berries and these raiders would come in and stop off and run across the beach to get these two women that they saw and Xéytéleq and Qwá:l would, just as they got to them, they would stand up and throw the dresses off. [They] were big men, and

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<sup>24</sup> William Duff, interview of Mr & Mrs Edmond Lorenzetto of Laidlow (Ohamil) field notes, *Stalo Notebook #4* (1950)

<sup>25</sup> Xéytéleq is usually remembered as being from a related language group on Vancouver Island, particularly from the Island Halkomelem (Hul’q’umín’um’) speaking Cowichan; for information on the Hul’q’umín’um’ dialect see David A. Smith, “Halkomelem Dialects” Plate 7 in Carlson (ed), *A Sto:lo Coast Salish Historical Atlas*, pg. 22

<sup>26</sup> Personal interview with Herb Joe, 16 May 2011

<sup>27</sup> William Duff, interview of Patrick Charlie field notes, *Stalo Notebook #1* (Summer 1950)

underneath the dresses were war clubs [...] They would stand up and the war party would stop and sink in the reeds and Xéytéleq and Qwá:l would just slaughter them.<sup>28</sup>

Xéytéleq's story here should sound familiar – it bears marked resemblance to Tómtomiyéqw's disguise under the cedar woven mat. Other ethnohistorical research reveals the *Smáth* (known as Sumas or Kilgard today<sup>29</sup>) practice of trapping raiders in the mat of dense reeds at Sumas Lake's edge. Kilgard warriors with their knowledge of the local geography could easily run over the reed beds while unknowing attackers would fall through. This left the raiders trapped and open to lethal blows from the defenders.<sup>30</sup>

The Ts'elxweyéqw hero T'ixwelátsa also exemplifies warrior violence. T'ixwelátsa employed his warrior skills to aid his community, and these qualities led to him being selected as an interim leader during in a time of conflict: lately a nearby chief had begun to assert his authority over land that had not traditionally belonged to his people. Other local *sí:ya:m* met to discuss the issue, as today's T'ixwelátsa was taught:

T'IXWELÁTSA: Of course, my namesake was a warrior at the time – older, probably in his mid-life. He was called to the gathering, where the *siyá:ms* were. In council they discussed the issue, then gave direction to my ancestor, because he knew – I think it was by marriage – he knew this warrior. He was given direction by the *siyá:ms* to talk to this warrior and invite him to talk about it so there wouldn't be conflict, and it was suggested to him that he stop imposing himself and his tribe on other tribal areas. That, apparently, didn't work [coughs]. So the council of *siyá:ms* gathered, and they talked about the issue again. They told my ancestor, “This man, this chief, is claiming territory that isn't his. This needs to be stopped: he's your relative, you look after him.” My ancestor had found out by this time of course that this warrior wouldn't

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<sup>28</sup> Emmy Campbell, interview with Ray Silver, 26 June 2007, as cited in Emmy Campbell, “That's How I Became Xéytéleq': The Life Stories of Sto:lo Elder Ray Silver”, Unpublished Stó:lō Ethnohistory Field School paper (2007), pg. 8-9. The practice of ambush was used extensively in Northwest Coast aboriginal warfare, as shown in the Tomtomiyéqw anecdote above, as well as at the Battle of Maple Bay where Salish warriors, disguised as women, lured the northern Lekwiltok into the ambush set at Maple Bay; see Codere, *Fighting With Property*, pg. 100; Angelbeck, “*They Recognize No Superior Chief*”, pg. 233

<sup>29</sup> Oliver Wells, *The Chilliwacks and their Neighbors* (Vancouver: Talonbooks, 1987), pg. 53

<sup>30</sup> Keith Thor Carlson, interview of Hugh Kelly, 28 August 1992 as re-printed in Hugh Kill, Harry Edwards and Andy Commodore, compiled by Keith Thor Carlson, “Memories of Defence” plate 15 in Carlson (ed), *A Sto:lo Coast Salish Historical Atlas*, pg. 50

back down. The warrior was invited to a meeting, and upon his arrival, my ancestor and a couple of warriors ambushed him and killed him.<sup>31</sup>

As T'ixwelátsa relates here, his namesake killed the enemy *siyá:m* who was encroaching on their traditional territory, even though he was a relative.

Both Xéytéleq and T'ixwelátsa carry with them notions of service and community protection, fulfilling an important role in society. These warriors might easily be figured on the historical spectrum of warriors between *stómex* and *sí:ya:m*, with Tómtomiyéqw more *stómex* and Xéytéleq and T'ixwelátsa somewhere closer to *sí:ya:m*, but still violent. Xéytéleq and T'ixwelátsa clearly enjoyed broader social integration and status due to their abilities to organize and lead other members of their tribes. Stories about T'ixwelátsa and Xéytéleq intersect, though different communities tell the stories in different ways. According to Albert Louie, Xéytéleq attempted to conquer the Ts'elxweyéqw but was killed by his grandfather T'ixwelátsa and Teméxwte.<sup>32</sup> In this way, Louie depicts his grandfather and family as fighting against the brutal aggressions of a *stómex*-like Xéytéleq, similar to T'ixwelátsa (Herb Joe) learning that his namesake killed a nearby aggressive war-chief to protect the Ts'elxweyéqw from violent expansion. Stó:lō *sqwélqwel* allow for a fluid understanding of warriors, often depicting the enemy as more violent than the defenders, though violence has been a constant theme of these stories.

While tradition holds that violent warriors often existed on the periphery of society, emerging from beneath their cedar mats only when needed, it is clear that warriors can be seen within a broad cultural and temporal spectrum of definition. Today some warrior names continue to be handed down, leading Stó:lō families and individuals to re-figure the violence of warrior

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<sup>31</sup> Interview between Maria Melenchuk (University of Saskatchewan) and T'ixwelátsa/Herb Joe, 16 May 2011 (see appendix for interview text)

<sup>32</sup> Louie's grandfather T'ixwelátsa would likely have been a descendant of the original T'ixwelátsa who had been turned to stone by Xexá:ls; Oliver Wells, interview of Albert Louie (August 5, 1965), pg. 81-2

stories into examples of leadership to positively serve their communities. As Stó:lō society no longer relies on warriors for their protective violence, those who carry warrior names search for other non-violent defining characteristics within their namesake's stories. Indeed, Keith Carlson's work on World War II veterans in Stó:lō communities argues that Stó:lō veterans were seen as violent warriors or *stómex* by fighting overseas in battles clearly not for the direct protection of Stó:lō. Popular understanding holds that *sí:ya:m* rely on their "wisdom and gentle nature" to lead, qualities not associated with *stómex* and the returning veterans. Once back in Canada and *S'olh Temexw* ("Our Land", the Stó:lō expression for the Fraser River Valley and nearby areas) veterans were not welcomed as heroes, but rather as social pariahs for almost 50 years.<sup>33</sup> Episodes such as the treatment of Stó:lō veterans help mark the significant shifts in the changing understanding of warriors.

While today Stó:lō society accepts the important sacrifices and contributions of war veterans, many communities hesitate to glorify warriors and violence, continuing instead to promote level-headed and wise *sí:ya:m*. Stó:lō ways of knowing allow for a profound shift in how the community remembers warriors, favouring the usefulness and necessity – including the self sacrifice – of warriors to inspire those who carry the names. These ways of knowing rely on fluid meanings where any change in emphasis or moral stress in stories does not necessarily mark a change in importance or cultural authenticity. By continuing to use warrior names tailored in such a way to serve modern needs, contemporary Stó:lō build legitimate links to their ancestors, therefore revitalizing important traditional kinship networks.

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<sup>33</sup> Keith Thor Carlson, "Stó:lō Soldiers, Stó:lō Veterans" in Carlson (ed), *You Are Asked to Witness*, pg. 135

Ancestral names remain an important part of contemporary Stó:lō society with a variety of meanings for both the community and individual.<sup>34</sup> Men such as Xéyteleq and T'ixwelátsa use their names as a reminder to protect and serve their families and communities; indeed, the original Halq'eméylem word often used for enemy was *sxemá:l* (“one who did your family wrong”).<sup>35</sup> Warriors, though trained ultimately to kill, did so to serve their families and communities by protecting them. Such logic easily shows how one might be a good leader, one who ultimately must also serve his community. In this way contemporary Stó:lō re-evaluate the traditional roles of warriors and war-chiefs to better inform *sí:ya:m* how to faithfully serve and protect their communities.

One Xéyteleq<sup>36</sup> (Ray Silver) today – and there are more than one – remembers his namesake with a plurality of meanings. Ray, who takes great pride in his name, remembers the service Xéyteleq did for his community in protecting his family and people.<sup>37</sup> That many Xéyteleqs exist today presents an interesting – perhaps unique – case of aboriginal north Pacific Coast naming. Typically only one individual at a time in a community will carry an “Indian” or traditional name. This however is not the case with Xéyteleq. As mentioned above, Xéyteleqs used to pass their name onto their sons, a tradition reported by Victor Underwood Sr. to Siyémches (Frank Malloway) as stemming from Pat Bay among the W'sáneć (Saanich) on Vancouver Island.<sup>38</sup> While this practice may originally have served to build a reputation of the warrior family, today the unique sharing of the Xéyteleq name demonstrates the fluidity and re-

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<sup>34</sup> For a broader discussion of Stó:lō ancestral names, see Anastasia Tataryn, “What *is* in a Name? Identity, Politics and Stó:lō Ancestral Names”, *The University of the Fraser Valley Research Review*, Vol. 2, No. 2, based upon her work with the 2005 Ethnohistory Field School in cooperation with Stó:lō Nation.

<sup>35</sup> Carlson (ed), *A Stó:lō Coast Salish Historical Atlas*, pg. 48

<sup>36</sup> While some Xéyteleqs associate their name with the warrior from Smáth, others still associate it with a famous *sxwó:yxwey* dancer. Ray Silver, as identified in Emmy Campbell's 2007 Stó:lō Ethnohistory fieldschool report, associates himself with the warrior; Campbell, “That's How I Became Xeyteleq”

<sup>37</sup> Campbell, “That's How I Became Xeyteleq”, pg. 7-8,12

<sup>38</sup> Heather Myles and Hychblo (Tracey Joe), “Through the Eyes of Siyémches te Yeqwyeqwí:ws”, interview of Siyémches (Frank Malloway) in Carlson (ed), *You Are Asked to Witness*, pg. 9-10

figuring of warrior stories into positive examples of community leadership where the significance of a story or name does not stem from its unflawed perfection of transmission but rather its continued relevance for Stó:lō society.

Still other carries use their names to negotiate with their ancestors' pasts, offering an alternative image of warriors as kin servants rather than *stómex*. The modern T'ixwelátsa (Herb Joe) remembers the stories associated with the name he carries as a reminder how to live his life, almost as a guide-book for personal composure. Other stories of T'ixwelátsa stress his importance as a leader. The stone ancestor T'ixwelátsa acts as a reminder for various Sto:lo as to the appropriate way to act towards others.<sup>39</sup> Speaking more broadly about warriors, T'ixwelátsa recalls his own education as a community leader and the traditional Ts'elxweyéqw attitude towards warriors:

T'IXWELÁTSA: [Because of the isolation in which] our culture evolved, violence was ultimately the last resort. So the warriors were a select group. And I don't remember seeing anybody writing this, or reading it anywhere, I just got the sense when talking to my teaching elders that I learned from was that warriors were not elevated to a social level in our communities that made them automatic leaders. To me, I got the sense that these elders were telling me that, yeah, our warriors were there and they were respected, because they were needed, but they were tolerated within our communities.<sup>40</sup>

While T'ixwelátsa speaks here specifically about the Ts'elxweyéqw, his comments stand for other Stó:lō as well. T'ixwelátsa stresses not only the conditional respect given to warriors, but the desire for non-violent conflict resolution favoured among the Ts'elxweyéqw who lived in relative isolation until their movement to the confluence of the Chilliwack and Fraser Rivers.<sup>41</sup>

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<sup>39</sup> The stone T'ixwelátsa was recently repatriated from the Burke Museum at the University of Washington due largely to the efforts of T'ixwelátsa as well as other individuals associated with Stó:lō Nation; "T'xwelatse Comes Home" *Seattle Times*, 28 January 2007

<sup>40</sup> Personal Interview with Herb Joe/T'ixwelátsa, 16 May 2011 (see attached Appendix for text)

<sup>41</sup> Vedder Crossing was also the site of a prominent watchtower with a commanding view of the Fraser and Chilliwack Rivers, where the contemporary confluence of the two rivers was; see for instance Oliver Wells, interview of Bob Joe, 8 Feb 1962, pg. 93.

With his name doubly invoking both a warrior and a famous leader, T'ixwelátsa draws on the teachings of his elders to inform his understanding of a leader today:

T'IXWELÁTSA: [In] a community that preaches non-violent ways of resolving conflict, the warriors don't always fit into that kind of environment. That's where I got the sense that the warriors were tolerated. I was also told at one point in time, a village of warriors, separate from the main tribal community, was created. All the warriors and their wives and children lived in a village at the edge of the territory, so if any of the marauding tribes entered our territory they'd have to go by the village of warriors first; they were our first wall of defence. Those were the kind of things I was told about warriors, so as you can imagine, there wasn't as much talk about historic warriors and a warrior society. There was very little talk about that all from my teachers, they always tried to lead me the other way, how to teach me how to be patient, and humble. They said "That's the kind of *siyá:m* we want you to be, we don't want you to be a warrior and kill other people."<sup>42</sup>

Warriors existed to serve their community, but a warrior's qualities were not always the qualities that made a good *siyá:m*. In some cases being *stómex* and being *siyá:m* simply wasn't possible. Even when he killed his violent relative to stop the appropriation of territory, T'ixwelátsa inspires leaders today to go to extreme lengths of their communities. While this sort of practice would likely not be condoned as Stó:lō justice today, it serves to illustrate the temporary use of warriors and the connection between warriors and leadership in Stó:lō culture today.

That T'ixwelátsa remembers the Ts'elxweyéqw as a peaceful and non-violent folk until provoked may seem at first to clash with Oliver Wells' interview of Albert Louie in 1965. As Louie related to Wells, the "Chilliwacks" (a corruption of Ts'elxweyéqw and the origin of the modern municipality's name) were ferocious fighters:

LOUIE – But these Chilliwack tribes they were regular warrior fellows, you know. You couldn't beat them, you know.

WELLS- Strong, eh?

LOUIE– Yeah. They knew how to fight you. They knew how to fight. And they're scared of it, you know.<sup>43</sup>

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<sup>42</sup> Personal interview with T'ixwelátsa/Herb Joe, 16 May 2011

<sup>43</sup> Oliver Wells, interview of Albert Louie (August 5, 1965), pg. 46

Upon further consideration however Louie does not contradict T'ixwelátsa, for Louie only mentions them as good fighters, not as aggressive raiders. What Louie meant about the Ts'elxweyéq̓w being scared of however remains unclear: was it their fighting ability, their warriors, or the very act of warfare? Or was Louie referring to someone else's fear of the Ts'elxweyéq̓w? Either way, Louie's testimony helps challenge the idea that Stó:lō warriors can be discussed as simple participants in a pre-determined players in a structuralized scheme of conflict. Evident too from Louie's interview is the fact that Ts'elxweyéq̓w warriors were seen as violent and powerful (albeit perhaps only when needed), demonstrating that different communities have mobilized memories of warriors differently at different times.

Warrior names inspire their carriers. Both T'ixwelátsa and Xéyteleq are remembered today for their kind treatment of their slaves, with both men accepting individuals that were by common belief their property as members of their family.<sup>44</sup> As these examples show, warrior names today allow contemporary Stó:lō men emphasize the compassion and community service of their namesakes to inform their daily lives. Modern Stó:lō therefore negotiate with their pasts to ensure continued value to the present.

Xéyteleq (Ray Silver) himself considers the stone T'ixwelátsa as a reminder not to be a liar, or lazy, and not to “go after other guys' [women]” and ultimately to “be a good person.”<sup>45</sup> In this way Ray not only draws on his own name but other associated *sqwélq̓wel* and *sxwóxwiyám* to inform his understanding of proper qualities for a man and community leader. This shows that different individuals employ different names in a variety of ways to inform their daily lives.

“Omissions” about certain warriors in story telling occur within a complex dialogue of many participants. At the forefront of this discussion are the ethnohistorian and community in

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<sup>44</sup> For T'ixwelátsa see personal interview with Herb Joe, 16 May 2011; for Xéyteleq see Campbell, “That's how I became Xeyteleq”, pg. 9

<sup>45</sup> Xéyteleq/Ray Silver, as quoted in Campbell, “That's How I Became Xeyteleq”, pg. 18

question, both of which strive to navigate the shifting waters of memory. Within these memories we see a constant re-figuring of narrative significance, a re-figuring in the case of warriors which focuses on emphasis on warriors' services to their communities and their ability as temporary leaders rather than their brute violence. Such shifts in warrior discourse help reveal the motivations of the speaker in regards to how they see themselves as interacting with the community. Alternatively, these shifts also illustrate the tenuous position of the academic researcher to faithfully engage with these narratives, making it all the more apparent that researchers must engage in dialogue rather than authoritative knowledge salvaging or construction.

We should take note of the ambiguity surrounding warriors and the temporal spectrum figuring their violence and leadership capabilities and the changes seen over time, and caution ourselves against making authoritative statements about exact roles of warriors and leaders in traditional Stó:lō society without first considering how Stó:lō themselves might figure warriors within their own culture. Such discrepancies displayed along this spectrum between historical and contemporary narratives should not be viewed as compromising, but rather equally and significantly valid to different communities in different ways.

While warrior stories may be selectively re-told to inspire *sí:ya:m*, conflict lingers as the Stó:lō continue to negotiate new battlegrounds with the inspiration of warrior names. Some community leaders approach their dealings with non-aboriginals over fishing and land rights with the inspiration of past warriors, finding that aggressive attitudes offer some degree of success.<sup>46</sup> Intertribal disputes about land title and resource use resemble historical conflicts

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<sup>46</sup> Personal interview with T'ixwelátsa/Herb Joe, 16 May 2011

alluded to by Siyémches (Frank Malloway) in one published interview.<sup>47</sup> Conflicts such as those with Yale as well as within Stó:lō Nation exist in a sub-layer beneath the blanket of current intertribal cohesion, and some fear that discussion of wars and warriors will only re-ignite old battles and compromise a unity that has been a long time in the making. Any reluctance on the part of informants however should not be viewed as intentional omissions of truths, but rather as an act of maintenance over the construction and propagation of traditional narratives and knowledge.<sup>48</sup> In light of these 21<sup>st</sup> century considerations, Stó:lō turn to warriors for inspiration for a various reasons, always focusing on their role as competent leaders.

Some names like Tómtomiyéq̓w are not handed down. Does this mean that the *stómex* Tómtomiyéq̓w is not worthy of remembrance today? Perhaps the answer to this question lies in the fact that, though the name is not transferred, the story is still told and considered relevant. Warrior stories also tend not to be handed down, as story-tellers seldom like to recall past conflicts and strife associated with warfare.<sup>49</sup> Because of this unwillingness to discuss warrior stories many have been “forgotten” as modern western academics may figure it, though it may well be an active process to remove from the cultural lexicon any inappropriate knowledge to define what is important for contemporary Stó:lō society. Such “censuring” experienced by T’ixwelátsa (Herb Joe) during his training to become *siyá:m* demonstrates this process to modify culture to keep it relevant for modern Stó:lō Sí:ya:m rather than as an “incomplete” transition of culture. Culture is a complex and fluid process rather than a set dictionary of practices which

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<sup>47</sup> Heather Myles and Hychblo (Tracey Joe), “Through the Eyes of Siyémches te Yeqwyeq̓wí:ws”, interview of Siyémches (Frank Malloway) in Carlson (ed), *You Are Asked to Witness*, pg. 9

<sup>48</sup> Lynn Abrams, *Oral History Theory* (New York: Routledge, 2010), pg. 104

<sup>49</sup> Albert Louie related while in interview with Oliver Wells that though his war-chief grandfather travelled as far away as Vancouver Island, he would never speak of any particulars of raids or battles; Oliver Wells interview of Albert Louie, 1965, pg. 80-1

remain unchanging through time; culture continually shifts, all the while being informed by as well as informing the everyday lives of individuals.

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