

## 1876 Establishment of Squamish Valley Indian Reserves

### Excerpt from Alexander Caulfield Anderson's "Diary as Indian Reserves Commissioner"

November 1876

Tuesday 21<sup>st</sup>. Fine day. After making divers preparations we start at 9.40 a.m. in 3 canoes to ascend the Squawmish River.

1. A.C. Anderson & A. McKinley.
2. G.M. Sproat.
3. Mr. Mohun & the Chief Joseph.

At 10.40, after passing the head of the big Island of *Stâ â mis*, reach the first village of which Paul is the Chief.

At 11.10 Kowtain; at 11.53 the village of *Se-o chum*, above which we put ashore to allow the crews to lunch and refresh themselves, which involved a long delay of nearly an hour and a half. Arrive at mouth of Che-âk a mus River, joining from the Eastward, at 2.35. Examined the vicinity and reembarked at 3.7. Encamp at 4 p.m. about 2 ½ ms higher up.

N.B. The Cheakamus is extremely rapid, apparently very shallow, and enters the Squawmish by several mouths, the delta being low and swampy. All the villages visited today, except that opposite the Forks of the Cheakamus, are on the left bank of the River.

Wed. 22. The cloudy weather which proceeded our encamping yesterday resulted in a heavy rain which commenced in the evening and continued without intermission throughout the night. For expedition's sake we left our tents at the Camp, and the "fly" of sheeting to which we trusted for our shelter proved a very inadequate protection. Breakfasted early; but everything being wet and unmanageable did not succeed in leaving camp till 9.30. Rain continued incessantly until 2 p.m. when we put ashore to make some tea, and to allow the men to warm themselves. Continued our route; and at 4.15 p.m. encamp half a mile below a beautiful cascade on the right bank. This Cascade, issuing from the snowy mountains and descending finally by a series of gradations very abruptly for about 1000 feet, is very picturesque and beautiful. From its appearance I have called it the "Staircase Fall".

Thursday 23<sup>rd</sup>. Fine. Leave encampment at 9 a.m. Pass along close to the foot of the Staircase Fall on a bench near the summit of which a flock of wild goats were standing, regarding our proceeding apparently with great curiosity. The temptation to recruit our larder was great; but as the ascent of the mountain &c would have involved the delay of several hours we proceeded on our way. At 10.40 reached the Village of *Skow a shin* on left bank, where we disembarked.

This point being the uppermost inhabited Village it is unnecessary for us to proceed any further.

The country here is densely wooded; but the few patches that have been cleared by the natives around the village exhibit a prolific soil, and yield, by their account, good returns of the few vegetables cultivated – chiefly potatoes. The Indians value this point for the fine timber (Red Cedar = *Thuja Gigantea*) which it produces, and which to them is important for the making of canoes. Accordingly we laid off for them a tract, as indicated by themselves, extending from the river bank to the Mountain-base, comprising, by a rough estimate, about \_\_\_ acres or more. We also gave them two Cedar posts to place at as many ancient burial grounds. The first of these, marked “Indian Grave-yard”, and distinguished by a single circle at the head, with a Cross at the back of the Post, is to be placed at *Pooy-awm*, on the left bank, about 7 ms above and North of *Skowashin*. The second, similarly marked, but distinguished by two circles, is to be placed at *Chuk-chuk*, on the right bank, about midway between *Skowashin* and *Pooyawm*.

Embark at 1.40. Run down; and about \_\_\_ ms below *Skowashin*, on the left bank, mark a tree as before, distinguished by three circles, to indicate a burial place on a rocky bluff. Continue downwards; and about 3 encamp on right bank opposite to a point called *Che-mâi* near which the Indians express a desire to have land. By the time our camp was arranged, having to adopt divers precautions to diminish the leakiness of our miserably fly in view of impending rain, it was dark. Plenty of wood, however, for fire which, as may be imagined, we do not spare.

Friday 24<sup>th</sup>. Rain during the past night, and rain during the greater portion of the day. Mr. Mohun was sent up the river early this morning to mark a tree on the left bank, near *Che-mâi*, as an initial point for the future survey of a reserve which we purpose giving hence downwards towards the Junction of the Cheakamus. Run down to *Chee-mis* (the long point on right bank, over the neck of which there is a portage, available for ascending canoes at high water), put ashore, make some tea, and await the arrival of Mr. Mohun & the Chief Joseph from above.

Mr. Mohun having arrived, and after he had warmed himself, at 12.50 we reembarked. (N.B. From this point, requesting the Surveyor to do likewise, I take careful notes of the courses and distances towards the Forks, so as to be able to delineate with some accuracy the river boundary, with the mountain background, so as to form an estimate of the acreage for a large general reserve from the Cheakamus upwards.)

Reach Forks at 1.40. Run down below the delta of the Cheakamus in quest of an encampment. Find a very good one. Leaving our people to prepare shelter for the Commissioners accompanied by the Surveyor, return in a canoe to the village opposite to the upper Fork. Lay off village site there so as to include the flat on which the village is situated, with burial ground &c, a few acres only, the background being precipitous rocks. (N.B. The site of this village and the adjacent burial ground is very picturesque.)

Reach camp after sunset.

Saty. 25<sup>th</sup>. The rain ceased during the night and today proves moderately fine, though the fog enveloping the mountains prevents our enjoying the beautiful scenery around, and, what is more important impedes our observation for the purpose we have in view. Having breakfasted at daylight we ascend to the point above the northern branch of the *Che-âkamus* – disembark, and, accompanied by a number of Indians proceed on foot to the village of the *Che-âk a mus*, situated on the right bank about 3 ms up that river, a little above the Tchek-kâi, a torrent-stream falling in on the opposite side from the direction of Chee-âk a mus Mountain (Mt. Garibaldi of the map). The mountain range bounding the river on the East from Kin a shin downwards, after bending gradually round, here abuts abruptly on the river; pass round it in a canoe, about 150 yards and reach the village. Set a post to indicate the limit, on the Che-âk-a mus River of this village site,

which we may find it desirable to connect with the large general reserve of which the northern boundary is indicated by the tree marked at *Chemâi* yesterday morning. Return, and reach camp about noon. Lunch and embark, the camp-lads having meanwhile having partially dried our wet blankets.

We determine on assigning an extension Reserve extending from the Che-ak a mus River northward along the left bank of the Squaw-mish, and including the village visited by us today about 3 ms up the Cheak a mus, and following along the base of the mountains to *Che-mâi*, before noted. Thus, within one undivided area, a large extent of excellent land will be included, and with a river frontage on two sides of some eight continuous miles. Our object in thus deciding is, that, in the event of a local agency being hereafter established this will be a position in which agricultural operations on an extended scale may be encouraged, in conjunction with schools and other means of education. This spot, too, is beloved by the Indians, and, picturesque in itself, is in all respects eligible for the objects in view. Included within this area is a very extensive meadow, producing an abundance of luxuriant grass, within which is a small lake frequented by ducks and other wild fowl.

Elsewhere, between this point and the mouth of the River, it is our intention to assign all the village sites and fishing stations pointed out to us by the natives as desired by them, with such land about them as they may wish to have for partial cultivation. Of these a more particular memorandum will be annexed.

Leave our encampment below Chee-ak-a mus River at 1 p.m. Stop at *See-o-chum* on left bank. Examine the vicinity, and establish Reserve with grave-yard, about 20 acres, exclusive of adjacent Island in which the houses are at present situated, some 20 or 25 acres more – but to which the natives assign little value, as it is subject to inundation at high water.

Reach *Kow-tain*. Examine neighbourhood. Mark a tree, and establish reserve embracing graveyard, potato patches &c and extending to the river at a point some distance below. Estimated to contain some 80 acres – exclusive of the low Island on which the fishing huts are stationed, as in the case last mentioned.

At *Euk-quat-sum* (where the Chief Paul \_\_\_\_ resides) 3 miles below *Kowtain*, mark a tree and assign the Indians; as they request the whole point on which the village is situated, from a stake planted by the Chief opposite to the head of *Stâ â mis* Island, northward to include the bend and low island above the village. Acreage doubtful – probably will exceed 150 acres. Mark a post \_\_\_\_ planted in grave yard on steep shore on opposite side.

Embark. Reach our main camp at 3.18 p.m., Mr. Mohun having been sent round with his canoe to mark a village site opposite to the middle of *Stâ â mis* Island, visited by us on the \_\_\_\_ instant.

Preliminary to arrival our Indian Canoe-men, who are in the highest spirits, brought our two remaining canoes in line, and, keeping slow stroke in unison, sang an agreeable but rather plaintive chorus in admirable time – reminding some of us of bygone days when the more lively paddle-song of the French Canadian voyageurs was a familiar sound.

Half an hour after reaching camp the “Leonora” hove in sight. She brought our mail from Burrard Inlet. Together with various letters, telegrams & newspapers for the Commissioners generally, I received a letter from Mr. Meredith dated 8<sup>th</sup>. Novr.

Sunday 26<sup>th</sup>. Fine. Being the Sabbath no business was done, beyond exposing Blankets &c to dry.

Monday 27<sup>th</sup>. Sharp frost last night. Strong Westerly gale during the day – some rain and snow – in all a very disagreeable day. Busily occupied till late at night, completing details of our assignments to the Indians this quarter, writing letters &c. Before retiring for the night I, on the part of the Commission, addressed the Indians who were assembled for a parting interview around our principal camp fire. Response made by Joseph \_\_\_\_ and another expressing the satisfaction of the Indians in each respect of the action of the Commission, and repeating their assurances of loyalty to the Queen and their determination to strive for improvement in all the conditions of life under the instruction given to them.

Then, after a general hand-shaking all round, the mail-bag was given to Joseph for delivery at the Post Office at Moody's Mill, B. inlet, and the Indians retired to rest.

During the day the "Leonora" moved down at high tide a few miles, into deeper water below the Bar of the River, so as to be independent of tide for an early start tomorrow. We then start for *Se-chelt*, (Jervis Inlet), having sent notices to the Post-masters at Burrard's Inlet and N. Westminster to return all future mail to Victoria, to be there forwarded to Comox there to await our arrival.

Tuesday 28<sup>th</sup>. Breakfast over by daylight. Sharp frost during night. Fine day. Wind N.E. Weighed anchor, after shipping our tents &c at 8.50 a.m. Reached Trail Bay at 3 p.m.

On our way, 11.30 a.m., we stopped at a point called *Kâ-ak-ul-tun* and staked a fishing & hunting station of about 20 acres, on N. Shore opposite to Woolridge Island & marked a post to be planted on the burial ground adjacent. After half an hour's delay proceed.

At 1 p.m. reach *Sch-unk* (?) (See-in-che the Head-man being absent hunting, and an old woman being the sole occupant at the time.) This place is on N. shore opposite to Keat's Island.

This is the last outlying village of the Squaw-mish.

Encamp at Trail Bay on a narrow gravelly ridge – the Gulf of Georgia close to us on the one side, a swampy flat on the other. There being no safe anchorage for the Leonora we despatch her to wood & water in a safe...

Excerpt from A.C. Anderson's "Diary as Indian Reserves Commissioner", concerning November 1876 expedition up the Squamish River Valley to establish Indian Reserves. (Transcribed from typescript photocopy in Squamish Public Library.)

Notes:

- "the big Island of Sta a mis" = Presumably Squamish Island (later Reserve No.21, and Downtown Squamish), as Sta a mis proper (Reserve No.24) is not an island. Evidently, Chief Paul (who delivered the written reports of the expedition to the post office at Moody's Mill) resided at Sta a mis (Stawamus). So did a later Chief Paul, who in 1913 was "Chief of Skulwilemi, Ahtsann, Skwawmish, Mamquam and Stawamus", all in the lower estuary area.
- "reach the first village of which Paul is the Chief" = Yewaupsum IR 18
- "Se-o chum" = Seaichem IR 16 (near Eagle Run)
- "Staircase Fall" = Madden Creek Falls?, or Crooked Falls (Sigurd Creek)?
- "Skow a shin" = Skowishin IR 7 (below High Falls Creek)
- "Pooy-awm" and "Chuk-chuk" = North of Skow a shin, south of junction of Elaho and Squamish rivers
- "Tchek-kai" = Cheekye
- "Euk-quat-sum" = Yekwaupsum (North Yards)

- "Ka-ak-uil-tun" = Near Port Mellon
- "Moody's Mill" = North Vancouver

The first recorded pre-emption of land at Squamish (by van Brummer, on banks of the East Branch of the Squamish River and lower Squamish Island) was in 1874, two years prior to the arrival of this Indian Reserves Commission.