

History of the Katzie People

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The following history of their nation has been provided by the Katzie People:

Long before the emergence of any other human community in the Lower Fraser region, the Creator placed five communities, each with its own chief, at different locations on the Land. Those locations are now known as Pitt Lake, Sheridan Hill, Port Hammond, Point Roberts and Point Grey.

The Katzie people are the direct descendants of these first people. The people came to be known as the Katzie people descend primarily from Oe'lecten and his people, created at the south shore of Pitt Lake, and Swaneset and his people, created at Sheridan Hill.

Xwoe'pecten and his people, created at Port Hammond, joined with Swaneset's people at Katzie, but later moved to what is now New Westminster and gave rise to the people now known as the Kwantlen people.

Smakwec and his people, created at Point Roberts, and their history, lands, resources, and culture were closely linked to those of the Katzie people.

The descendants of Smakwec and his people are many, but many have vanished. The Nicomekl, as a distinct people, vanished in the time of the smallpox epidemic of the 1700s.

C'simlenexw and his people, created at Point Grey, are the principle ancestors of the people now known as the Musqueam.

During these first days after the arrival of human beings, there were few trees, and although there were clams and mussels in the rivers and along the seashore, there was no wind and there were no birds, land animals, sturgeon, salmon, oolichan, seals or sea lions. The Creator gave these first five leaders gifts and powers to bequeath to those that followed after them.

When he placed Swaneset on the earth, the Creator provided the sun and the moon. For Oe'lecten, the Creator provided the seasons and the rainbow. Smakwec was granted power over all the underground channels that connected Point Roberts with Pitt Lake, Sechelt, and other places.

Xwoe'pecten and his people were given no special powers. C'simlenexw was given the powers of the Swayxway mask. Oe'lecten was then granted a wife, and their children, became the sturgeon and a white bird that can be

seen only by Oe'lecten's descendents. Oe'lecten's people first settled in villages at Fox Creek, Widgeon Creek and at the southwest corner of Pitt Lake, a village occupied until recently, presently known as Katzie I.R #4. Swaneset, honoring the Creator's instructions to finish making the territory surrounding the place he had been set down on earth, reshaped the land in order to make it abundant in berry and root crops. Standing on the peak of Sheridan Hill, which was once the highest mountain in the territory, Swaneset called on the help of the Creator and made Sturgeon Slough and its tributaries.

He then made the Alouette River and other sloughs, including Katzie Slough. Swaneset then named all these waterways and named the river now known as the Fraser. After a time, Swaneset traveled to the sky and returned to earth with a wife, setting down again on the peak of Sheridan Hill. From the pieces of Sheridan Hill, Swaneset created many of the distinctive hills that mark the countryside between the Fraser River and Pitt Lake. When Swaneset had finished reshaping the land to make it abundant for his people, he then instructed all his people to gather at Katzie to make homes for themselves there, in the vicinity of the present Pitt Meadows reserve. There on the banks of the Fraser River, his sky-born wife opened her dowry box and ushered oolichan and seagulls into this world, and she taught the people how to catch the fish and prepare them.

By this time, the descendants of the first people had multiplied and flourished and their descendants were establishing villages throughout the land. Swaneset encountered some of these villages in his travels downriver, during his journey to the island in the sea where he married his second wife. This woman was the daughter of a chief whose people who were different from all other people on the earth. These were sockeye people. Swaneset brought his new wife back to Katzie and in securing his relationship through marriage to the sockeye people, Swaneset assured Katzie people an abundance of sockeye for the coming generations. Since that time Katzie people have fished sockeye and other salmon species from a variety of fishing stations and seasonal villages along the Fraser, Pitt, and Alouette rivers.

What is clear from the outset of the Genesis is that the descendants of Oe'lecten and Swaneset – the Katzie people – established themselves as the first and only human communities throughout the entire Pitt watershed, including the Alouette watershed and portions of land adjacent to the Fraser River.