

# **IN HER WORDS**

**Selected Works of  
Susan Louisa Allison**

**Compiled by Diane Sterne**

**Special thanks to Sue MacGregor for her kind permission  
to reprint these works of Susan Allison.**

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**Proceeds from the sale of this book will go to  
the Princeton and District Museum and Archives.**

**Dedicated to the memory of  
Susan Louisa Allison,  
Mother of the Similkameen  
(1845 – 1937)**

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**Susan Allison writing<sup>i</sup>**

## Foreword

In 1868, a young bride, Susan Louisa Allison (nee Moir), accompanied her new husband, John Fall Allison, on their honeymoon across the Hope mountains to the Similkameen. Only one other white woman had made the trip before her. Susan was a brave woman unafraid of the dangers she rode into and intrigued by the native Indian guides and packers who helped them along the way. This ride, side-saddle into the wilderness, was but the first of her many adventures. In her own words she explained, “then began my camping days and the wild free life I ever loved.”

Susan would bear fourteen children and her exciting life would span 91 years. This naive woman, with her fearless curiosity, became known as the “Mother of the Similkameen.”

Susan was very fond of, and respected the Natives in the Similkameen area. She learned their language and developed a close friendship with her neighbours who taught her survival skills which were foreign to her. She watched and listened with fascination as they shared their customs and ancient stories. After her husband’s death in 1897, she decided to save the Indians’ legends in the format of narrative poetry. She explained that Native stories weren’t merely “told” with words; the use of body language was equally important when retelling a tale. In her poetry, Mrs. Allison attempted to translate the legends told to her by her Indian friends in a manner which encompassed body language as well as words.

In 1900, the Scroll Publishing Company of Chicago published “In-Cow-Mas-Ket”, a book of two poems written by Stratton Moir. Princeton pioneer and matriarch, Susan Allison frequently used the pseudonym “Stratton Moir” for her poetry. This was the name of her brother who died of yellow fever in the West Indies in October, 1866. She penned his name to her writings to honour his memory.

Over the decades, many of her compositions have been forgotten on dusty shelves in museum archives. In 2010, Princeton will celebrate its 150<sup>th</sup> birthday and Susan Allison will be named a Person of National Significance for recording the Native history of the area. No more fitting a tribute could be made to the Mother of the Similkameen than a published collection of her works. After much research, we have compiled this montage of poetry, letters and articles written by Susan Allison in the hope that they will be remembered and cherished by future generations.

With the exception of a few explanations preceding some of the pieces, Chapters One through Thirteen are **“In Her Words”**.



Susan Allison at a very young age<sup>ii</sup>



## CHAPTER ONE

### In-Cow-Mas-Ket

NOTE: There are a few words in Mrs. Allison's poem that some may not be familiar with; therefore, a small dictionary of these words is below:

Chu-chu-e-waa – located near Hedley  
Fen – marsh/bog  
Grandsire – grandfather  
Hie – to hasten/hurry  
Ken – range of sight or knowledge  
Kine – cattle  
Looloo-hooloo – located east of Bromley Rock at the mouth of Arcat Creek  
'Reata – lariat – a rope for tethering animals  
Refulgent – radiant  
Tarn – mountain lake  
Teal – river duck  
Turgid – swollen  
Zephyr – gentle breeze

\* \* \*

By a rapid flowing river  
In-cow-mas-ket built his dwelling,  
Called it by the name Chu-chu-e-waa;  
There his kinsmen dwelt beside him  
In their circular mat houses,  
Made from bark of fragrant cedar.  
With him dwelt his aged grandsire,  
Now sightless, helpless and infirm;  
But his mental eyes were opened,  
Things he saw which others see not, –  
And men loved him for his wisdom.  
In the lodge of In-cow-mas-ket  
Lived his first wife Sem-min-at-coe;  
She was plain in face and figure,  
She had borne him many children,  
And she was now no longer young;  
In-cow-mas-ket's aged grandsire  
Tenderly she loved and cherished,  
When the men had gone a hunting, –  
When the young men left the village,  
Then she would lay him in the sun,  
On a pile of soft warm bearskins.  
She would sit and work beside him,

While he told her wondrous stories.  
Of the men and of the creatures  
That lived in days long past and gone;  
Stories told him by his father,  
Old even then, when he was young;  
How the rapid flowing river  
Once but a tiny brook had been;  
How the earth once shook and trembled  
When the Father in stern anger  
Reft the solid rock in twain, - then  
The deep lake pent in the mountains,  
Down – downward dashed to join the stream,  
Tore its way on through the valley  
And formed the great Similkameen.  
Madly dashing, like a wild horse,  
That hath broke its curbing rein, it  
Rushes swiftly, tearing downward,  
Swells Columbia, joins the main.

How one time upon the mountain,  
Where he had gone to hunt the deer,  
He had lost his band of horses,  
Amidst the mountain's summer snow.  
For though warm and bright the weather,  
Without a warning rose a storm.  
Suddenly across the mountains  
There swept a gust of freezing wind,  
Driving lead-grey clouds before it;  
Then suddenly the snow came down  
Burying the men and horses;  
Vainly did he try to save them.  
He tried himself to break a road,  
With his snow-shoes went before them,  
Sinking – still sinking deeply down;  
Ever wallowing before them,  
Weaken'd, starving, stumbling after,  
On came his poor dejected band,  
Ever getting weaker, fewer –  
Until at last but one remained;  
He, a sturdy dark grey stallion.

The grandsire sang of Chippaco:

“Once upon the Mount Chippaco  
There lived a monster grim and dread,  
Awful as that dreadful mountain

When thunder clouds enveil its head.  
Awful was his devilish laughter  
And fierce and scornful was his ire,  
When he found men on his mountain  
Where he hides 'midst clouds and fire.  
Women had he taken captive  
And kept them on that mountain lone;  
Men he mocked with fiendish laughter  
Who sought to take the women home.”

Sem-min-at-coe smiling listened  
To all the wondrous tales he told.

In the lodge of In-cow-mas-ket  
Lived his young wife little Chin-chin.  
She was famous for her beauty,  
For her lithe and slender figure,  
And for her large and lustrous eyes.  
In-cow-mas-ket gave her father  
Many horses, many kine, all  
For this beauteous dark-eyed maiden;  
But she loved not In-cow-mas-ket,  
She cherished not his old grandsire,  
Thought of nothing but her beauty,  
Cared for nothing but her pleasure.  
Mounted on her fiery broncho  
See, see her dashing o'er the hills,  
Driving in her herds of cattle,  
And laughing – jesting with the boys.  
Snatching at a long 'reata,  
She swings it lightly o'er her head,  
Lassoos, catches, overthrows one,  
Laughing she gives her horse his head;  
Shouts as on he swiftly gallops,  
She makes him yet more madly run;  
What cares she for Sem-min-at-coe,  
Now toiling, working hard at home?  
What cares she if Sem-min-at-coe  
Does the work she has left undone?  
Sem-min-at-coe tans the buckskins,  
Gets the wood and gets the water,  
Dries the berries, smokes the venison;  
She too, prepares the daily food.  
Little Chin-chin braids her tresses,  
Bedecks herself in gay attire,  
Smokes her dainty cigarettos,

And lounges idle in the sun;  
In-cow-mas-ket dares remonstrate,  
Then little Chin-chin pouts and frowns.

When the winter snows were melting  
From the forest and the mountain,  
From the hills and from the valley,  
And when the streams began to rise,  
In-cow-mas-ket hunted beaver;  
Set his traps in swampy meadows,  
He set them by the beaver dams,  
Stretched their skins on bended willows,  
Kept their tails for little Chin-chin.  
When the winter snow was melted  
By the south wind's balmy breath, then  
In-cow-mas-ket hunted grizzly  
Just waking from their winter sleep;  
Near their dwelling place he found them  
Close to the mountain's rocky caves.  
In-cow-mas-ket slew the grizzly;  
He took the meat, he took the skin,  
Saved the paws for dainty Chin-chin.  
In-cow-mas-ket hunted red deer  
In the mountains, in the valleys;  
Chin-chin gaily rode beside him,  
With his long musket on her knee,  
Cheer'd him with her lively prattle.  
In a hollow of the mountain,  
Where feeding, sheltered from the sun,  
They would find large herds of red deer,  
Pretty Chin-chin held the horses  
While In-cow-mas-ket shot the deer.  
When at eve returning homeward,  
With their weary horses laden,  
They were met by young Pen-que-nac,  
Good Sem-min-at-coe's darling child,  
Young Pen-que-nac on her pinto,  
With her fierce wolf hound by her side,  
Safe was she in the protection  
Of her great noble guardian hound.  
In-cow-mas-ket loved the maiden  
Dearer than all the world beside,  
Even more than pretty Chin-chin;  
Like her mother Sem-min-at-coe  
She was gentle, she was kind; thus  
All who knew her ever loved her

For her goodness and her beauty.  
Fair, fair was In-cow-mas-ket's child,  
And her lovely flowing tresses  
Fell about her like a garment,  
And her dark eyes beamed with beauty.

In the long, long days of summer,  
When the warm rays of the sun had  
Ripened the mountain berries,  
And the trout forsook the river  
To ascend the tribute streams, then  
In-cow-mas-ket left the valley  
And encamped upon the mountain;  
Coming from the narrow valley  
See, see the motley cavalcade.  
In a cloud of dust enshrouded  
Comes a herd of bellowing kine;  
Calves are bleating for their mothers,  
And cows are lowing for their young,  
Through the dust and bleating tumult  
Loud the drivers' whips are cracking!  
Now a band of driven horses,  
Quickly pass along the road; then  
After them rides Sem-min-at-coe,  
Close carrying her youngest child.  
And beside her young Hosachtem  
Upon a broncho fresh and wild.  
Gaily young Hosachtem chatters;  
He spurs his horse, then holds him in,  
Makes him buck to fright his mother.  
Kind Pen-que-nac on her pinto,  
Holds fast the grandsire's guiding rein;  
Bounds her faithful hound beside her.  
Spurring on comes In-cow-mas-ket  
With pretty Chin-chin by his side.  
Thus they all pass from the valley.

Happy now the summer passeth  
In gathering berries, drying fish,  
Sem-min-at-coe, never idle,  
Now gathers in the winter food;  
Kind Pen-que-nac helps her mother  
In all her pleasant daily toil.

Happy now is young Hosachtem  
Close watching by a mountain tarn,

Hid behind a clump of willows.  
How his dark eyes brightly sparkle,  
As the wild ducks skim the water  
And whirling settle lightly down.  
See him crawling nearer, nearer,  
While the wild ducks unconscious feed;  
See one rising in the water,  
Flaps about its dripping wings. See  
Young Hosachtem lifts his musket,  
And loudly now the mountains ring  
With a hundred thousand echoes,  
As every rock flings back the sound,  
Ha! A teal falls in the water!  
See – all the flock are on the wing!  
Hark! Again the mountains echo  
Thus the summer day he passeth.  
Autumn vying with the summer  
Bedecks the mountains and the hills  
With bright tints of many colours,  
Crimson sumac, golden maple,  
Mock summer sunset's brightest hues.  
Autumn mists begin to gather  
From out the marshy mountain fens,  
Where the dams made by the beaver  
Block the cold snow-born mountain stream.  
From the noxious exhalations  
Of the foul marshy mountain fen,  
All unseen there rose a spirit,  
That slowly draws the life from men,  
While unconsciously they sleep. This  
Spirit foul and awful fasten'd  
Upon young Hosachtem, and preyed  
Upon his life unseen. Larger,  
Brighter grew his dark eyes, glowing  
With consuming fires, kindled by  
That baneful spirit; and redder,  
Brighter flushed his young cheeks with the  
Hectic hue of fever; ever  
Happy, ever heedless, the young  
Hosachtem hardly knew that there  
Was anything the matter; but he  
Daily thinner grew. Ah! Little  
Dreamed he the dread Foul One, preying  
On his vitals hung; he only  
Said, "I am weary," and to  
His kindly mother closely clung.

Sem-min-at-coe, ever watchful,  
Too soon observed the coming change;  
Gather'd herbs and made him medicine:  
But the Foul One still remained. Then  
Thinner, weaker grew Hosachtem,  
And he wearied of the mountains,  
And much he longed to be at home;  
Longed once more to see the valley  
And the rapid flowing river,  
Fast rolling past his native home.

In-cow-mas-ket kindly yielded  
To the wishes of his child. Then  
Once more they descend the mountain,  
Down the rough narrow trail they ride,  
Slowly now they journey homeward.  
Hosachtem's flick'ring spirits rise;  
His sad eyes begin to sparkle  
As he sees up in the skies, far,  
Far above, an eagle soaring,  
With a marmot in its talons.  
"Father, shoot me down that eagle,"  
Low laughing gaily now he cries;  
"I would deck my head with feathers."  
In-cow-mas-ket shot the eagle.  
The young Hosachtem gaily decked  
His dark hair with downy feathers  
Torn from out the scarce dead eagle;  
And he seemed so bright and joyous  
That Sem-min-at-coe scarcely knew  
Whether he was worse or better.  
All too soon his brightness faded,  
And weary grew he all too soon.  
"Father, camp at Looloo-hooloo;  
Oh mother, surely it is noon!"  
They encamped at Looloo-hooloo,  
Where the red earth with hollow groan  
Echoes back each sounding footstep,  
Just like a prisoned spirit's moan.  
Grieved at heart was Sem-min-at-coe  
Whene'er she looked upon her child,  
Fading like a summer blossom  
In the chilly blast of autumn.  
In-cow-mas-ket's aged grandsire  
Ever thoughtful, ever wise, knew  
Her kind heart was sorely troubled;

He read it in her mournful voice;  
And he spake to In-cow-mas-ket,  
Half in sorrow, half in anger,  
“Wherefore are thine eyes so blinded,  
That thou seest not thy boy is  
Wasting as the snow in summer  
Melts fast before the burning sun,  
When the noontide rays refulgent  
Shine strong upon the mountain peaks?  
Bid thy young men bring a doctor;  
Now bid thy young men ride and bring  
A doctor from Columbia.  
Bid them promise all he asketh,  
If he hasteth back in time to  
Drive away the awesome spirit  
That consumeth young Hosachtem!”

When the old man thus reproved him  
In-cow-mas-ket bow'd low his head,  
Leaning silent on his musket,  
Listened sadly to his grandsire.  
When the old man finished speaking  
Then In-cow-mas-ket turned him round.  
“Mount ye, Toupes, and mount ye, Whylac,  
Ride ye quickly if ye love me;  
Oh, draw not bridle, spare not steed!  
Haste ye, Toupes, and haste ye, Whylac,  
For young Hosachtem's sore in need  
Of the mighty wise old doctor.  
Bid him come and chase the spirit  
So foul and awful that doth cling,  
Drawing life from young Hosachtem.  
I will give him all he asketh –  
Give skins and blankets, horses, kine,  
If he rescueth Hosachtem,  
If he but rideth back in time.  
Haste ye, Toupes, and haste ye, Whylac.”  
In-cow-mas-ket finished speaking.  
Then Toupes and Whylac quickly bound  
Into their high peaked saddles,  
And loud their steel spurs jingling ring  
As they onward, urged their horses.

Thickly now through all the valley  
Fast fall the faded autumn leaves,  
Glinting yellow in the sunshine,



Then whirling on the autumn breeze;  
And, sure sign of coming winter,  
High, high up in the leaden sky,  
Through the flocks of parting wild geese  
Uttering their discordant cry,  
Massing in a long triangle,  
Sinuous, through the sky they glide;  
Following their eager leader,  
See how their serried ranks divide;  
On in single file they flutter,  
And from all their wavering ranks  
Comes a ceaseless endless clatter,  
As fast they journey to the south.

While encamped at Looloo-hooloo  
Young Hosachtem seemed to rally.  
“Father, take me to Chu-chu-e-waa,  
Oh, take me while I yet can ride.”  
Once again they journey homeward,  
Sad, with the slowly dying boy  
Mounted on Pen-que-nac’s pinto;  
Mounted on before his mother  
He rested in her loving arms,  
With his head upon her bosom.  
Thus they journey to Chu-chu-e-waa.  
When they neared the little village  
All his dear playmates trooping came  
To meet their much loved little friend;  
Then his sad face lights with pleasure,  
Quickly he claps his poor thin hands.  
“Oh, my mother, see them – see them,  
With their bows and with their arrows.  
Oh, mother, mother, how I long  
To join them in their merry play,  
In their mimic games of hunting.”

Sadly did Hosachtem’s parents  
Wait the coming of the doctor.  
They watched and waited night and day,  
Ever hoping for his coming,  
And for their messengers’ return.  
Every night did kind Pen-que-nac  
Watch beside her brother’s bed; she  
Wiped the great drops from his forehead  
Shook his pillow, propped his poor head.  
Hark! A sound of horse hoofs ringing

On the damp, chilly, midnight air!  
Hark! A shout, 'tis Toupes and Whylac  
Fast returning with the doctor.  
Quickly bring the pitch pine torches!  
See – see from out the awesome gloom,  
Of the dark and starless midnight,  
Spurring on their jaded horses,  
Comes a group of weary horsemen.

Welcome! Welcome! Wise old doctor,  
Now thou hast come a weary road.  
Welcome! Welcome! Toupes and Whylac,  
Enter, enter and refresh ye;  
Enter ye now and take repose.  
Much thou need'st thy strength, old doctor,  
Hard and fiercely must thou struggle  
With the foul spirit that doth cling,  
Drawing life from young Hosachtem.

Potent was the wise old doctor,  
And he laboured hard and long to  
Drive the Foul One from Hosachtem;  
But the Foul One was too strong, he  
Threw the doctor when they wrestled,  
He threw him far and threw him hard.  
And he nearly slew the doctor  
With his foul fiery baneful breath.  
Vainly did the doctor charm him  
With powerful herbs and potent spells;  
Naught would make him leave Hosachtem.  
See the wise, the strong old doctor,  
Lying on a couch of pine brush,  
Fainting, weary and exhausted.  
Then he cried to In-cow-mas-ket,  
“Thou canst keep thy skins and blankets,  
Keep thou thy horses – keep thy kine;  
I am strong to fight with spirits  
I am subtle, I am wise; but  
Now my wisdom is as folly,  
For now in naught can I prevail  
'Gainst the foul and evil spirit  
That doth cling to young Hosachtem.”

In-cow-mas-ket loved Hosachtem;  
His heart grew sick and cold when he  
Heard the words of the old doctor,

And he called to Toupes and Whylac,  
“Haste and ride ye to the mountains,  
From the far mountains haste and bring  
My near kinsmen Cos-o-tasket,  
Who is strong to fight with spirits.”

Quick they hie them to the mountains  
On their swiftly bounding steeds; whence  
They bring back Cos-o-tasket, near  
Kinsman to their chief, Cos-o-tasket,  
Who is strong to fight with spirits;  
Cos-o-tasket great and powerful;  
Cos-o-tasket, wise though young, full  
Of strange, weird, unearthly knowledge.  
Glowing eyes had Cos-o-tasket,  
Full of strength and full of power;  
Thin and spare was Cos-o-tasket,  
Lithe and limber his slight frame. His  
Nights were spent in eerie vigils  
In the dark lonely mountain caves;  
Well knew he the powers of nature,  
He knew them in their own abodes;  
Well knew he the viewless spirits  
That throng the mountains’ misty peaks;  
And well knew he the flitting ghosts  
That at still midnight leave their graves;  
Yet his heart was stout and fearless  
And he spake to In-cow-mas-ket,  
His nearest kinsman and his chief.

“Thou hast called me from the mountains,  
Where alone in awful might  
I held commune with strange spirits,  
That must ever shun the light;  
At thy bidding, In-cow-mas-ket,  
I come with strength and power;  
I will struggle with the Foul One  
And chase the clouds that lower  
Thickly, darkly, o’er Hosachtem.  
Keep thou thy skins and blankets  
Keep thou thy horses, keep thy kine;  
Naught ask I, do not think it;  
My chief, my labour it is thine.”

Like a panther Cos-o-tasket  
Lightly on Hosachtem springs,

And he tears away the Foul One  
That tight to Hosachtem clings  
And they wrestle and they struggle,  
And they stagger round and round,  
And they strike and beat each other,  
Till they both fall on the ground  
Where they struggle yet more fiercely.  
But through all that fearful fight,  
Through the mad exhausting struggle,  
Doth the Foul One shun the light  
From the eyes of Cos-o-tasket,  
For there lay his strength and power:  
With his dark eyes wildly gleaming  
He could make the demons cower.  
Thus on they fiercely struggled  
Through all the day and through the night;  
And brighter as they struggled  
Beamed the baneful burning light  
From the eyes of Cos-o-tasket,  
The Foul One shrieked in anguish,  
Quick as he caught the fearful gleam,  
And his strength began to languish;  
Then he lured him near and nearer  
To the embers of the fire,  
Then, whirling like a whirlwind,  
With his aspect stern and dire,  
As to awe the fearless doctor,  
Stooping, raises with his wings  
The hot ashes and the embers;  
Catching Cos-o-tasket, flings  
The hot dust into his bright eyes,  
So quenching the flame that shone  
With such living force and brightness,  
Making the foul spirit moan.  
Then they struggle more and more,  
Till brave Cos-o-tasket vanquished  
Sinks exhausted on the floor  
Of In-cow-mas-ket's dwelling.

Then cried brave Cos-o-tasket:  
"Oh, my kinsman, oh, my chief,  
I am beaten I am vanquished,  
And my heart is sick with grief.  
I have struggled, I have wrestled,  
I have striven with all my power  
To avert from young Hosachtem

The sad agonizing hour,  
That shall free his youthful spirit  
From the form that holds it now;  
But the great Father hath spoken,  
And to him we all must bow.  
He alone can tame this Foul One,  
Alone can give the power  
That can drive him from Hosachtem  
And avert the dreadful hour.  
When thou called me from the mountains  
And the caves so dark and dim,  
I heard the call, I lingered not,  
But I came in hopes to win  
The fierce fight against the Foul One.  
Yet who living can withstand  
The Great Father? For the Foul One  
Now but fulfills his great command.  
Now return I to the mountains,  
I return now to the caves,  
To hold commune with the spirits  
That at midnight leave their graves.”

Sternly winter cometh, riding  
On the whirlwind’s biting blast;  
Nature, shivering, draws her mantle  
Of the softest whitest down  
Closer o’er her freezing bosom;  
Softly sweet sleep overpowers her  
Nestling ’neath its kindly folds;  
Although nature is but sleeping  
One might almost deem her dead,  
And in spotless snow enshrouded.

Through the drear cold days of winter  
The young Hosachtem dying lay,  
And so worn and wasted was he  
That scarcely looked he like a child.  
Sem-min-at-coe watched beside him;  
And the sorrowing old grandsire  
Tried to cheer them with his singing,  
Though his voice was weak and wavering;  
He sang them stories of his youth.

“Immanchuten in hunting grizzly  
Once was wounded sorely, sorely.  
It was when men had no muskets,

And he took his bow and arrows,  
And chased the grizzly to his den  
In the rugged Cascade mountains.  
When he shot him with his arrows,  
Then the fierce grizzly stood at bay,  
Loudly roaring reared upon him  
And threw him bleeding to the ground.  
But firmly against his body  
Closely he held his keen edged knife,  
Till he sheathed it in the grizzly –  
Aye, sheathed it in his very heart.  
While the grizzly closely hugged him  
And the warm blood spouted o'er him.  
Quickly dying the fierce grizzly  
Slowly released his hold; nothing  
More could he remember until  
His kinsman came, and back into  
The valley bore his torn battered  
Frame. Long, long he lay in anguish;  
Much, much he longed for death; but time,  
Time and tender nursing healed him.”

Softly sang he of a maiden:  
“Fair, fair was Cat-lem-ten-nac,  
Who roamed from her father's camp  
And went in search of berries;  
She lingered and she lingered,  
Still she lingered all that day;  
At evening she returned not,  
When the sun was in the west.  
At morning she returned not,  
When the sun was in the east.  
Her people vainly sought her:  
They sought her in the mountains,  
They sought her in the prairie,  
And they sought her in the woods;  
Never, never more they saw her.  
For while far she thoughtless roved  
Away from the encampment,  
The Great Souie Appoo came,  
And took away the maiden,  
And they saw her ne'er again!”

And he sang of a strange river:

“Midst our mountains is a river

That no man alive hath seen;  
Still among the rugged mountains  
It pours forth its turgid stream,  
And it flasheth and it dasheth,  
And it raging tears its way  
Through those dark and frowning mountains  
Where the evil spirits stray.  
And it flasheth and it dasheth,  
And it tears down a ravine,  
And across a little plateau  
Danceth like a bright sunbeam.  
Close to the verge of a high cliff  
Where, with wild and whirling roar,  
It leaps the giddy precipice,  
But it dasheth on no more;  
For it sinketh, ever sinketh,  
Till it sinketh to a fire,  
And there in a cloud of vapour  
That mad river doth expire.  
Once that old man saw that river,  
Madly followed down its stream  
Through those dark and frowning mountains,  
Through that terrible ravine,  
Right across that little plateau,  
Followed to the frowning height,  
The abode of evil spirits  
That forever shun daylight;  
He looked on the whirling water  
And his soul was filled with dread;  
Then bounding quickly up the pass  
Like a deer he wildly fled.”

Then he told them how it happened,  
When he was like young Hosachtem  
And had just seen twelve winters' snows,  
That his father took him hunting;  
And they went to Ashenola,  
And they climbed up the steep sheep hills  
To the grassy wild sheep pasture;  
And while shooting at the big horn,  
Once they came upon a black bear,  
With her two young cubs beside her:  
Madly they chased her to her lair  
In the Ashenola mountains,  
And his father's arrows struck her  
And when they wounded her to death.

He with his long strong 'reata  
Bound both the savage little cubs;  
Then he took them to his home,  
Where for many months he kept them,  
Until they grew quite tame; then they  
Broke the strong 'reata, swiftly  
Sought they their native wilds again.

Thus the old man sought to cheer them  
And strove to drive sad thoughts away;  
But Hosachtem scarcely listened,  
Scarcely moved he his large dark eyes  
From the sad face of Pen-que-nac,  
Who sadly sat beside his bed,  
Holding close their infant brother,  
Who had now just begun to talk  
And he learned to lisp "Hosachtem,"  
Whene'er he saw the dying boy.  
Oh, the pity 'twas to see him  
Lying upon his little bed,  
With his pinched and shrunken features,  
And with his large black lustrous eyes  
Looking out from hollow sockets;  
Oh, how piteous 'twas to see him,  
As he tossed his poor wasted form  
Restless on the soft warm bearskins.  
As he listless tossed and turned him  
Upon his bed of skins, he would  
Entwine his poor thin fingers through  
The long soft silky hair, and tear  
It out in handfuls, for he knew  
Not what he did.

And thus it was  
Through the dreary winter, that  
The young Hosachtem dying lay;  
And now overcome by sorrow  
Sadly the grandsire bowed his head,  
For sorely his heart was troubled  
With pity for his piteous plight.

Now on sunbeams slow descending  
Smiling cometh gentle spring,  
Softly lifts the snowy mantle  
Covering nature's frozen form  
Bids her bathe her in the sunshine,



Her bright tresses gaily bind;  
Bids her deck herself with flowers.  
Then breathing balmy zephyrs  
Spring passeth gaily through the land.  
Brooks, bursting their icy chains,  
In her pathway murmur loudly.  
The blue grouse drums a welcome,  
And the prairie chicken flutters  
From its winter's nest of snow,  
And the scented elder catkins  
Fling their perfume on the breeze,  
Drinking in the gentle showers.  
The slow swelling buds have burst  
Forth from out their winter prison.

The worn spirit of Hosachtem,  
Now wearied out with tears and pain,  
Burst forth from out its cumb'ring clay,  
Left its cell of pain and anguish,  
And soar'd to realms beyond men's ken.  
Then his parents, left in sorrow,  
Felt all the woe of bitter grief.  
Much, much they missed, they mourned for him.  
They bore him to their burial place  
And, mourning, laid him in the tomb.  
Then they left his dust to mingle  
With the dust of his forefathers.

Where's the sorrow like the sorrow  
That the poor crushed heart breaking feels,  
When the form once loved and cherished  
Is lonely mouldering in the tomb;  
And on earth no more we see it,  
Nor hear again the much loved voice  
That once made our sweetest music?  
Sem-min-at-coe's heart felt breaking,  
When sadly she left the silent  
Tomb where Hosachtem lay at rest.  
In dreamless sleep beside his sires.  
Kind Pen-que-nac led her mother  
Sorrowing, grieving, to her home.  
Her torn heart was full of anguish;  
In the day she ever saw him  
Low lying on his couch of pain;  
Ever heard his sad voice calling,  
"Oh, save me, mother, I would stay."

Through her midnight dreams he floated,  
Now an infant, and now a child;  
Happy, joyfully he sported  
And looking at her sweetly smiled.



**Susan Allison and her pet coyote named Synkelips (Chinook for coyote) <sup>iii</sup>**

## CHAPTER TWO

### Quin-Is-Coe

NOTE: There are a few words in Mrs. Allison's poem that some may not be familiar with; therefore, a small dictionary of these words is below:

Quin-is-coe – (Bear Hunter) an Indian hunter and Chief of the Chu-chu-e-waa tribe

Cumme-tat-coe – his sister

Pile-hat-coe – his sister

Scuse – a great doctor

Shnee-na – an owl, also a devil

En-che-chim – wolf

Synkelips – coyote

Skumahist – black bear

Callowna – grizzly bear

List – listen

Souie Appoo – Sasquatch/Big Foot/Stenwyken, Devil

Ska-loo-la – owl

Chippaco – Mt. Chopaka in Washington State, 17 miles south of Keremeos

\* \* \*

### PART I.

“Ah, what aileth our hunter Quin-is-coe,  
And wherefore blanched is the cheek of our chief?  
Hast thou come from the Mountain Chippaco,  
Snow-crowned Chippaco, the bearer of clouds?”

“I have come from the Mountain Chippaco,  
Snow-crowned Chippaco that beareth the clouds.  
I've seen things that are frightful and awesome,  
I've seen strange things that I dare not repeat.”

“Why, what fearest our hunter Quin-is-coe,  
And is there aught that thou darest not repeat?  
We know fear to thy heart is a stranger,  
Is it for us that thou fearest, O chief?  
Oh, distrust not thy kinsmen, Quin-is-coe,  
Their hearts are as stout, aye, as stout as thine own;  
Tell them wherefore their chief is affrighted,  
Thou, chief, that huntest the grizzly alone.  
Quickly tell us, thou hunter Quin-is-coe.  
Fain from thy heart would we drive out thy fear,  
As the rushing winds, rising tumultuous,

Drive off dark clouds from the face of the moon.”

“Ah, I have hunted the grizzly alone,  
With my sharp knife have I slain him alone;  
Why, say, why, then, should men call me coward?  
Will you hear me – hear me, my kinsmen and friends,  
Will you hear me and not mock at my fears?  
'Twas last night I encamped on the mountain,  
Snow-crowned Chippaco, the bearer of clouds.  
Just at sunset I slew a callowna,  
At night I slept in her yet bloody hide;  
My tired horse I tied trembling beside me,  
For he liked not the fresh smell of the blood;  
And the bear's flesh was piled up between us,  
I sought to guard it from fierce mountain wolves.  
Black and weird looked the dark mountain shadows  
Against the pale light of the moon; neither  
That nor the fierce wolves howling could fright me.  
I slept; – I slept, but was wakened too soon.  
I started, yet what waked me I know not;  
But my good horse snorted sudden and loud,  
And breaking his 'reatas leaped o'er me,  
And trembling sped with the speed of the wind.  
My first thought was to follow, but near me  
There stood a form that was awesome and grim.  
Souie Appoo, the spirit of evil,  
Was devouring – was tearing my bear's meat,  
And he laughed as he tore it limb from limb.  
Then close wrapped I the bear's skin around me,  
And each quick beat of my heart sounded loud.  
A thick mist seemed to gather around me,  
And just then, methinks, methinks that I died.  
But soon life again quickened within me,  
And trembling once more I arose and looked,  
Fearing to see him; but, no! he had gone,  
The great Souie Appoo had gone – had gone;  
And with him had taken all my bear's meat.  
Then, half dead, I descended the mountain,  
Snow-crowned Chippaco, that beareth the clouds,  
The dread home of the great Souie Appoo.  
Weary, on foot, I have travelled thus far;  
My poor horse, too, is lost on the mountain,  
Snow-crowned Chippaco, the bearer of clouds.  
Say, then, wherefore should men call me coward?  
And you, why shame ye with insult your chief?”

Tough and strong is the bow of Quin-is-coe,  
 Of hard mountain spruce it is made; 'tis tipped  
 With the horns of a wild goat, glossy and black –  
 In the sunshine they glitter reflective.  
 The bow of Quin-is-coe is bound with snake skin,  
 Even the skin of the fell rattlesnake  
 Is wrapped round and round Quin-is-coe's strong bow,  
 For a charm to keep off harm from our chief.  
 His aged grandsire hath taught him the spell.  
 Of twisted deer's sinew hath Quin-is-coe  
 Made a strong string for his magical bow;  
 Its twang is as one singing sweet music;  
 In his ear its singing is sweeter far  
 Than the summer south wind softly sighing.  
 Straight and swift are his sharp barbed arrows,  
 Keenly they are pointed, deadly the barb,  
 The barb of flint for him prepared, at night,  
 When the young moon in crescent ariseth,  
 By his grandsire, who in such things is wise.  
 With his keen arrows hath Quin-is-coe pierced  
 The heart of the great eagle, as upward  
 He soared in the sky, to meet the bright sun.  
 With his deadly arrows hath he struck down  
 The en-che-chim, as boldly he leaped forth  
 From out the dark woods of pine, on his prey.  
 The skumahist and the fierce callowna  
 Have both fallen prone before the arrows  
 Of Quin-is-coe; yet now even his bow  
 Is powerless, for where is the keen arrow  
 That can pierce the evil Souie Appoo?  
 Yet strong, strong is the heart of Quin-is-coe,  
 Strong, strong is the heart of the hunter chief;  
 Brave and strong are the hearts of his kinsmen,  
 His warriors and friends; and loudly they cry:

"We will go to the Mountain Chippaco –  
 Aye, we will go with Quin-is-coe, our chief,  
 To search for the great Souie Appoo; we will  
 Bind him with ropes and 'reatas; we will  
 Drag him along at our feet – yes, at our feet!"

"Oh, list, list to thy grandsire, Quin-is-coe;  
 List to the words of the man who is wise;  
 Seek ye not the high snow-crown'd Chippaco,  
 Chippaco, mountain of wonder and dread;  
 Oh, search not for the great Souie Appoo,

Who maketh on that dread mountain his bed.”

Ah, vain, vain is the warning they heed not;  
Alas! They heed not the words that are wise!  
They have taken their bows and their arrows,  
They have taken their ropes and 'reatas!  
And they mock at the great Souie Appoo;  
Gaily they mock him as onward they go.  
Yes, they've gone to the Mountain Chippaco,  
Snow-crowned Chippaco, the bearer of clouds.  
They will search for the great Souie Appoo,  
And then, mayhap, they will find him asleep.  
Ha! They will drag him in bound at their feet,  
Yes, they will drag him in bound at their feet.

Now the storm rageth fierce on the Mountain  
Chippaco, mountain of wonder and dread;  
And loud echoes the terrible thunder,  
Lurid flames leap from the curtain of clouds  
That envelop the wonderful mountain.  
But naught daunteth the soul of Quin-is-coe,  
And his brave kinsmen care not for the storm;  
They have climbed up the Mountain Chippaco  
And they have pierced through the gloom of the clouds;  
Up above them the sunshine is streaming,  
And down below them the thunder is loud.

“Why, what aileth our hunter Quin-is-coe?  
And why thus blancheth the cheek of our chief?  
Hush! Hush! There is the great Souie Appoo!  
Hush! Look yonder, where he lieth asleep,  
Yes, asleep on the Mountain Chippaco.  
See, his huge form is stretched on the mountain;  
Hark! Hark his breathing so laboured and loud;  
His black face is upturned to the sunshine.”

Yes – see, there on the Mountain Chippaco  
He lieth unconscious, asleep. His foes  
Shout aloud with derision and laughter,  
And quickly forward to seize him they leap;  
Then they bind him with ropes and 'reatas,  
Then tight they bind him with thongs made of hide.  
Souie Appoo awakens, he sneezeth;  
Slowly he stretcheth his long, hairy limbs.  
See, they take up their bows and their arrows,  
And their sharp darts fly as thick as the hail,

And they strike on the great Souie Appoo,  
 But like hail from a rock, back they rebound.  
 Ah, vain, vain are their bows and their arrows.  
 Great Souie Appoo hath opened his eyes.  
 Then they jump on the great form before them  
 And they cling to his long, silky, black hair;  
 He yawneeth, and half sleeping he riseth;  
 Ropes and 'reatas are snapped like a thread.  
 The men that clung to his long, silky curls –  
 Ah, ah, he lifted them up with his head.  
 Loosing their hold they roll off him, trembling  
 They fall to the ground, and Souie Appoo  
 In scorn shaketh his black, silky ringlets;  
 His mocking laugh peals out scornful and loud.  
 Then Quin-is-coe would fain have pursued him;  
 But, lo! he hid in a dark, thunder cloud  
 And mingled with the thunder his laughter  
 Broke loudly forth from the dark, threatening cloud.  
 Quickly fly they the Mountain Chippaco,  
 Snow-crowned Chippaco that beareth the clouds;  
 Quickly fly they the great Souie Appoo  
 Whose mocking laughter is scornful and loud.

## PART II.

A wail is rising from the dark valley,  
 And as it ariseth and ascendeth  
 The mountains, it swelleth louder, louder!  
 The voices of nature wake and echo  
 The lament, and the wooded mountain slopes  
 Join in the wailing chorus. The chill winds  
 Of night moan sadly through the straight, dark pines;  
 The flitting shnee-nas raise their doleful cry,  
 "Poom-papoom-poom!" The en-che-chim, listening  
 In his deep lair, howls in concert. Harken!  
 What saith the hooting shnee-na in the dark,  
 Gloomy wood; what answereth his mate in  
 The valley, as she resteth on the pole  
 Of Quin-is-coe's lodge? "Poom-pa-poom-poom!"  
 List, the shnee-na in the wood is saying,  
 "I come for you, I come for you!" His mate  
 In the valley repeats, "I come for you!"  
 The Indians collected round Quin-is-coe's lodge, sing low.  
 A sad, low, wailing chant are they singing. "He is going,  
 He is going; the brave, the mighty, is going from us.

From amongst us is he going, whither his father went.  
No more, no more shall our mighty hunter go forth with his  
Swift arrows and his bow, with his sharp knife and with his spears,  
No more. Ah! No more shall he pursue the great callowna,  
Pursue the great callowna even to her mountain den.  
No more, no more, shall his gleaming arrow cleave the clear air,  
As swiftly it wingeth its way to the callowna's heart!  
No more, no more, shall his knife be reddened with her life blood.  
Ah! No more shall he bring home the spoils to feast his children,  
And soft, soft skins to make a warm bed for the stranger guest!  
The grizzly may roam free, and her cubs frolic around her  
For he that slew them departeth, and our mighty hunter  
Goeth forth to hunt in far hunting grounds that we know not.  
The stranger when he cometh – who shall make him a soft bed,  
Who shall set before him a repast, who shall hunt him game?  
For he whose kind heart warmed toward him, will soon lie ice cold.  
Quin-is-coe, ah, Quin-is-coe, why leavest thou thy children!

“What saith thy sister, what saith the wise one, Cumme-tat-coe?  
Bring hither the pinto mare, - the pinto mare of your chief,  
Bring hither the steed most loved by my brother, Quin-is-coe  
Bind on her back a saddle, put a bridle in her mouth,  
Put on her the saddle and bridle of our Quin-is-coe;  
Take ye good heed the reins hang loose, and tie ye fast her colt,  
Tie her colt fast near the lodge of my brother Quin-is-coe!  
Now lead forth the mare, lead forth the mare and let her go free.  
Lo! if she travel up the valley toward the sunrise  
Then will our Quin-is-coe live – your much loved chief shall not die.  
If she travel down the valley toward the sunset, then  
He dieth with the sun, Quin-is-coe dieth with the sun!!  
Haste! Haste! Lead forth the mare, lead the pinto forth, lead her forth.”

The mare is led forth. See, Quin-is-coe's saddle is girthed on;  
His bridle is placed in her mouth, and her colt is tied fast,  
The colt is tied fast by the lodge of Quin-is-coe the chief.  
Kiwass, Kiwass, his own son, leadeth her on to the road.  
Alas! Alas! See, see now she turneth down the valley,  
She followeth the darkness. Quin-is-coe, ah, Quin-is-coe,  
Why leavest thou thy children thus in mourning and sadness?  
Never again shalt thou bend thy strong bow. Never again  
Shall thy swift arrows wing the morning air. In still silence  
Shall they lie by thy side, and thou, and thou, mighty hunter?  
Cold in the dust shalt thou lie, Quin-is-coe; ah, Quin-is-coe,  
Never more shall thy children behold thee, their kind father.

Who cometh riding up through the gloom and darkness of night?



His jaded horse reeketh and snorteth forth columns of steam.  
Whence comest thou, whence comest thou, O rider of the night,  
Whence comest thou thus from out the thick gloom and black darkness?

“I come from the Looloo-hooloo, from the Looloo-hooloo,  
Where the red earth soundeth hollow under my horse’s hoofs;  
From a strange place, a place of many wonders am I come.  
Hard, hard have I ridden, and weary is my panting horse.  
His sides heave and the foam flieth from his mouth like snowflakes.  
Swift, swift have I come; far have I come to save Quin-is-coe,  
Even to wrestle with the evil spirit, the Foul One  
That hath fastened on his vitals and devoureth his life.  
I will wrestle, and if I prevail he shall flee away –  
Quin-is-coe shall recover, life shall be his. Strong am I,  
Strong and of great power. Bring forth the chief, aye, bring him forth,  
The mighty hunter, the slayer of bears; bring him forth now,  
Even on the couch whereon he lieth.”

Ha! What saith Scuse?

What saith the mighty doctor? Bring him forth, bear him gently,  
Lay him near the fire; pile on the pitch wood, aye, make it blaze;  
More! More! Make it blaze, make it blaze, and make the darkness light.

What strange thing appeareth? It hath the beak of an eagle,  
It hath the claws of a bear, round its body is the hide  
Of a buffalo, round its neck a necklet of dried toads,  
Its waist is girt with a dead rattlesnake. – Ah, what is it?  
Who is it? It is Scuse, the mighty doctor, the great Scuse.  
With the eagle’s beak he will peck – he will peck out the eyes  
Of the evil Foul One; with the bear’s claws will he tear him;  
With the toads will he make him groan; with the dead rattlesnake  
Will he cause him to writhe in great anguish. Who is so strong  
To fight with the Foul One, as Scuse the wise one, the strong one?  
Ha! See, see how he danceth! Ha! List, list how he singeth!  
Oh, harken now to the song he singeth, as he draweth  
The Foul One, the Evil One, from our hunter Quin-is-coe.

“Hither, come hither, thou Evil One  
That draweth the life from Quin-is-coe.  
Hither, come hither now, thou Foul One,  
And fight with me, even with me, Scuse,  
Lo I, Scuse the doctor, defy thee.  
Come now, come, let us fight and wrestle,  
Our prize is the life of Quin-is-coe.”

Ah, see, see how Scuse danceth; ah, list, list now how he singeth!  
Ha! He draweth the Foul One, the Evil One, from our chief,  
Even Quin-is-coe. Ha! He lureth him on to the fight.

As the Evil One relinquisheth his hold of our chief  
 He sitteth up and with eyes starting he watcheth the conflict.  
 See, see how they struggle; round and round they roll, they stagger.  
 Over they roll onto the ground – Scuse the strong one  
 And the Evil One. Ah, ha! How they battle together.  
 Scuse pecketh him with the eagle’s beak; lo, he teareth him,  
 With the bear’s claws teareth he him; he groaneth in anguish  
 For the dry toads; he suffers agony for the fell snake.  
 But vain, vain, all is in vain; the Evil One is too strong  
 For Scuse the mighty doctor, he seizeth Scuse by the throat  
 And they struggle, they wrestle. Scuse the strong one grows weaker;  
 Ah, he staggers, he reels. Ah! Ah! He falls – senseless he falls!  
 The strong one, the doctor, lieth vanquished on the cold ground.  
 The Foul One darteth to Quin-is-coe and holdeth him fast.  
 As he clutcheth him, lo! Quin-is-coe falleth as one dead!

Wail, Cumme-tat-coe; wail, Pile-hat-coe; wail and lament;  
 Lament for thy brother! See, the sun riseth; it riseth,  
 But never more, never more shall Quin-is-coe see it rise;  
 When it dieth he shall die. Lo! Scuse riseth; he speaketh.  
 Hear his words of anguish: “Hard have I fought with the Foul One,  
 Long have I fought, but my strength hath failed me, I am vanquished.  
 He, the Foul One, is mightier than I, Scuse, the wise one.  
 Lo! now am I vanquished, Quin-is-coe dieth with the sun.  
 Go, go gather in the horses, send off the messengers,  
 Even the messengers of death; let them ride quickly forth  
 Up the valley, down the valley, and hither and thither;  
 Let them seek out the kinsmen of Quin-is-coe, bid them say,  
 ‘He is dying, he is dead; lo! he dieth with the sun.  
 Come ye, feast at his funeral; come, lay him in the earth;  
 Come, lay your mighty chief to rest with tears and many sighs.  
 Cumme-tat-coe bids ye come; Pile-hat-coe bids ye come;  
 They make ready the feast, the funeral feast, even now.’  
 Haste, Kiwas; haste, Lucca; haste, Owla; and haste, Yahoolo;  
 Mount, mount and ride swiftly, draw not your bridle, slack not speed,  
 Till all are warned, till all are bidden come to the death feast.”

How they fly up and down the valley, hither and thither;  
 Swift, swiftly they fly, seeking the kinsmen of Quin-is-coe.  
 Hew down the trees, let the forest resound with your axes;  
 Hew down the pitch pine to make a great blaze; bring in the wood;  
 More, bring in more, bring in much game. Come, come, prepare, prepare;  
 See, the sun declineth, breatheth the mighty hunter yet.  
 Hush, step soft, step softly. Ah, he liveth; yet he breatheth.  
 Throw a buffalo robe over him, cover up his head!  
 For his sister, the wise woman, Cumme-tat-coe, hath said:

“He dieth with the sun.” Scuse, the mighty doctor, hath said:  
 “He dieth with the sun.” See, see, he moveth, he struggleth.  
 Pile more robes over him, more, more. Is it meet ye watch him  
 In his last struggle with the Foul One? More robes, pile more on.  
 See, see the sun sinketh lower and lower! Wail, children;  
 Wail, children of Quin-is-coe, the sun is set! He is dead!  
 Shear your locks, ye children of Quin-is-coe! Cumme-tat-coe  
 And Pile-hat-coe, shear your long tresses! Pluck out your beards  
 And your eyebrows, ye warriors and servants of Quin-is-coe.  
 Blacken your faces that they may reflect your gloomy hearts.  
 Wail, wail and lament, he is dead, he has gone forth from us.

### THE BURIAL.

Fast, fast are they coming; fast they come from up the valley,  
 From down the valley, from hither and thither ride they in;  
 From over the mountain come the kinsmen of Quin-is-coe.  
 Wherefore come ye in such hot haste; why ride ye in the night,  
 In the gloom and black darkness, ye kinsmen of Quin-is-coe?  
 “We were bidden come to the feast; even to the last feast  
 Of our kinsmen, chief, and mighty hunter, were we bidden.  
 We come to lay him to rest with many sighs, and to mourn  
 With Cumme-tat-coe, to mourn with Pile-hat-coe, we come.”

Kindle many fires, pile on the pitch wood, make it blaze;  
 Quick, make a bright blaze to light up the darkness of the night.  
 Spread out the feast, the death feast for the kinsmen of Quin-is-coe.  
 Bring forth the corpse; aye, bring forth the mighty hunter, our chief;  
 Even on the couch whereon he lieth cold, bring him forth!  
 Why liest thou so still, mighty chief? Why mov’st thou not?  
 Calm is thy brow and steadfast, still and motionless thy breast;  
 Thy bright eagle eye we see not, and silent is thy tongue;  
 Thy buckskin shirt is rich with bright beads of many colours;  
 Thy rich fur robe is very soft and warm, yet ice cold art thou;  
 Thy feet, O mighty chief, are cased in buckskin moccasins,  
 Thickly embroidered with the quills of the porcupine, yet  
 Standest thou not on thy feet to welcome thy favoured guests.  
 See, thy friends make ready the feast; till sunrise they revel.  
 And thy portion of the feast, mighty chief, the flames devour it,  
 The fire consumeth it! Bring ye rich gifts, bring offerings  
 To the mighty chief; cast them into the fierce fire quickly,  
 Cast them into the bright blaze, let fiery flames consume them.  
 Lead out the horses of Quin-is-coe, lead them round the corpse;  
 Lead them again, and yet again. Speak, speak, Cumme-tat-coe,  
 Speak, Pile-hat-coe, ye sisters of the mighty chieftain:

Who shall ride Quin-is-coe's horses? Let Kit-tu-la take ten,  
Let Kiwas take ten, let Lucca take ten and Owla ten;  
Let the remainder be driven out into the darkness;  
Let the kinsmen of Quin-is-coe take lassos in their hands,  
Let them pursue the horses through the darkness of the night,  
That which they capture let them keep; haste, haste ere the day dawn.

Ah, the sun riseth. Wail, children of Quin-is-coe, wail – wail!  
What saith Scuse the Wise One, what saith the mighty doctor Scuse?  
Let not synkelips howl over him and break his rest;  
Let not en-che-chim disturb him; nor the ska-loo-la  
Hoot and hover near the grave where our chief lieth at rest;  
In peace let the mighty hunter sleep, while we still sorrow.

Thrice hath the snow fallen on the grave of the mighty chief;  
Thrice hath it melted and sunk to revivify the earth;  
Thrice hath the service berry ripened beneath the sun;  
Thrice hath the Indian gather'd the seeds of the sunflower.  
Abundant his harvest, contented and glad hath he been.  
But now what dark cloud ariseth to dim his simple joy?  
Why whispereth Owla; why shuddereth Cumme-tat-coe;  
Why trembleth Pile-hat-coe, as they gaze in terror wild  
At the slender crescent of the new moon? Hush, hush, hearken;  
Owla whispereth: "Last night it rose; I saw it rising  
Even from out the grave of our dead hunter Quin-is-coe.  
Slowly there came a tall, gaunt thing, a form, a fearful form;  
Lo! it whirled and it twirled, round and round, with many deep sighs,  
And with wild lamentable cries it glided up the valley.  
From out the hollow sockets of its sightless eyes there gleamed  
A fearful light; from out its fleshless jaws there went forth fire;  
Aye, fire and smoke. And I? fear dried up my blood: I trembled;  
My heart fluttered like a snared bird; my life went out; I died.  
For a time I died; when I lived again, lo! 'twas gone!"

Nay, nay, my Owla, thou did'st dream; and when thou did'st awake,  
Lo! thy dream had vanished. Laid we not Quin-is-coe to rest  
With sighs and many tears, in the grave by his own fathers?  
Ah, list, list, Cumme-tat-coe; ah, list, list, Pile-hat-coe;  
Hush! What meaneth that knocking against the walls of thy lodge?  
Why, what fearest thou, Owla? 'Tis naught but the woodpecker  
Seeking his food. List, Cumme-tat-coe; list, Pile-hat-coe;  
Say what meaneth that scratching? Ah, what meaneth that rustling?  
Fear not, Owla; 'tis naught but the wood-rat seeking his food,  
Why cling Cumme-tat-coe and Pile-hat-coe in that  
Close embrace; and why croucheth Owla so close to the ground?  
It cometh – it cometh, that form so awesome, so lonesome;

It beareth the foul fetid odours of the charnel house,  
 Clinging to its mouldering robes. Ah, those eyes of horror,  
 That breath of flame! Tell us whence comest thou, O visitant  
 From another world, tell wherefore art thou disquieted,  
 O mighty hunter? Why flittest thou through the midnight gloom?  
 Wherefore seekest thou the abode of man, thou that dwellest  
 In another world? Why terrifiest thou thy kinsmen?  
 Threaten us not; show us wherefore thou art disquieted.  
 Send for Scuse, the Wise One; send for Scuse, the strong, wise doctor.  
 What wouldst thou, Cumme-tat-coe; what wouldst thou, Pile-hat-coe;  
 Ye sisters of Quin-is-coe, what would ye with the wise Scuse?  
 Spread out thy mat, O doctor, even the mat whereunto  
 Thou beguilest the spirits of the living and the dead.  
 Spread out thy mat, O doctor; spread out thy mat, O Wise One.

Whence cometh this strange being? 'Tis not a man nor a bear;  
 Yet hath it the head and skin of a grizzly; it hath feet  
 And arms like a man. Tell us who art thou, whence comest thou,  
 O strange being, whence comest thou? It is Scuse, the doctor.  
 Ah, see, see how he danceth! Ah, list, list how he singeth!  
 Oh, list, list to the song of Scuse, the mighty wise doctor:

### SONG OF SCUSE.

Mighty chief, what grief hath raised ye?  
 Why hast left the silent tomb  
 Where with many sighs we laid ye,  
 Sad beneath the silent moon?

Wherefore is thy rest disturbed,  
 Mighty hunter, and thy shade  
 Wandereth alone perturbed  
 From the grave our hands had made?

Hither, hither, come ye hither;  
 We thine anger would appease:  
 Tell thy griefs in voiceless language,  
 Like the whispering of the breeze.

Who so strong as Scuse, the Wise One, to battle with the dead.  
 See, see how he draweth the spirit nearer and nearer;  
 Ah, how they struggle, Scuse the Wise One, and the shade of the  
 Departed; Scuse draweth him as a snared bird, even as  
 A bird with a noose round the neck; lo! he draweth nearer,  
 Nearer he cometh still! Ha, ha! He is safe on the mat,

The mat wherefrom no spirit escapeth. Ah, why dancest  
Thou round, mighty doctor? Why singest thou softly and low?  
“I talk with a spirit departed, with the shade of the  
Hunter, our chief; and he answereth in language that voiceless;  
This is the answer he giveth, this troubleth our chief:”

“In the ground am I laid and forgotten;  
My memory and flesh have departed;  
Because I am not none thinketh of me;  
Other men ride my horses and saddles;  
My dogs follow other men to the chase,  
And my sisters have ceased to lament me.”

“What wouldst thou, O being departed – gifts and rich offerings?  
Cumme-tat-coe and Pile-hat-coe, thy sisters, never  
Can cease to lament thee. Say thou but a word and ’tis done.”

“My robes are all musty and mouldy  
With the must and the mould of decay;  
No feast hath been held in my honour,  
My spirit is vexed by the delay.  
See, thou, then, that this wrong is righted:  
A great feast let my sisters prepare;  
Bid thither my friends and my kinsmen;  
I in spirit will also be there.  
Dig open the tomb where ye laid me,  
And my body raise up from its hold;  
My sisters, prepare me new garments,  
And a fur robe my body enfold.  
Then peace to my spirit returning,  
My dry bones restore ye to the earth;  
No more shall my phantom affright ye,  
Never more shall my shade mar your mirth.”

Gather in the horses, send forth the messengers, let them  
Bid all the kinsmen of Quin-is-coe to the feast given  
In honour of Quin-is-coe. Aye, let them bring offerings  
And many gifts. Let them open up the grave of the chief;  
Let them raise up the mighty dead and place him in new, clean  
Fur robes; let them bestow on him much honour, and again  
Lay him to rest with many sighs. Haste, haste, messengers, haste!  
Ride forth, bid the kinsmen of Quin-is-coe come feast with  
The mighty dead and perform the last sad funeral rites,  
That the disquieted spirit may calmly rest in peace.

See, see how their horses snort and prance; see how they shift and

Start. Haste, haste ye, messengers, mount and ride.  
Off, off they bound.  
On, on they rush. Ah, how madly they ride up the valley,  
Down the valley, hither and thither, swiftly, swiftly; on,  
On speed the messengers to the kinsmen of Quin-is-coe.

“Wherefore come ye in such hot haste, ye riders of the night?  
Wherefore come ye in such hot haste from afar?”

“We come from  
Cumme-tat-coe, from Pile-hat-coe are we come, to bid  
Ye to a feast in honour of Quin-is-coe, our dead chief.  
Scuse the wise doctor hath said: ‘Shall Quin-is-coe, the mighty  
Hunter be forgotten? Shall his memory and his flesh  
Perish together? Shall no man think of him because he  
Is not?’ Come raise him from out the deep, dark house wherein ye  
Laid him to rest with many sighs; feast ye with him once more,  
And pay him much honour. Come ere the moon waneth; come ere  
Three suns have died, ye kinsmen of our dead chief Quin-is-coe.”

Whence come those figures flitting about in the gloom of the  
Night over the grave of Quin-is-coe? Are they Scalloolas,  
Are they En-che-chim? Ah, say who are they, say what are they?  
'Tis the kinsmen of Quin-is-coe! Wherefore come ye to the  
Grave of the great chief? Declare, ye kinsmen of Quin-is-coe.  
We come to raise the mighty dead, to place him in fresh robes,  
To feast with him once more, to pay much honour to our dead.  
List, what saith Scuse, the Wise One, the strong one? Pluck grass, I say,  
Pluck sweet scented grass; stuff it in your ears, and your nostrils,  
Lest ye sicken when ye smell that that was living, and is  
Dead. Pluck sweet scented grass now, ye kinsmen of Quin-is-coe.  
Open, open the house, the deep, dark house wherein ye laid  
Our chief to rest with tears and many sighs. Raise up the dead,  
The mighty dead; bear him to the lodge of Cumme-tat-coe  
And Pile-hat-coe, his sisters. Uncover, uncover  
That which was but is not man; look on all that remaineth  
All that remaineth of Quin-is-coe your chief, the hunter.  
What saith Scuse, what saith the wise doctor? List, list, ye kinsmen  
Of Quin-is-coe, hear and obey. “Now open up the robe,  
Even the robe whereon lieth that that once was your chief.  
Let each kinsman raise a bone, even a bone from out the  
Mass of corruption: lay it on the robe, the new, clean robe  
Prepared by Cumme-tat-coe and Pile-hat-coe, sisters  
Of the chief; search diligently, leave not one bone behind;  
Raise the skull, place it at the head of the robe; now raise the  
Rib bones, place them in the middle; place the footbones at the  
Foot. Search, oh, search ye diligently amidst that that was

Mortal living flesh, but is not. Search ye for the bones of  
 Quin-is-coe your chief. Lay his bow and arrows at his feet,  
 Put his sharp knife at his side; lay on the new buckskin shirt,  
 The shirt rich with beads of many colours. Lay it upon  
 The bones. Lay a pair of broidered moccasins at his feet,  
 Moccasins embroidered with the quills of the porcupine.  
 List, list to Scuse, the Wise One. Wrap the chief in his new robes  
 Tight, wrap him tightly, lay him in the midst, gaze ye on him.  
 List, list to Scuse, the doctor. Hither, hither, bring hither  
 The robe from whence ye took the bones of your chief Quin-is-coe.  
 Quickly bring it to the fire. Aye, bring it to the bright blaze.  
 Hither, hither, bring hither that that was mortal living  
 Flesh, but is not; bring hither that that was corruptible  
 And is corrupt. Let fire devour it and flames consume it.  
 Bring hither your gifts and your offerings to the mighty  
 Hunter; let the fire devour and let the flames consume them.  
 Now bring hither that portion of the feast prepared for the  
 Great chief; let the fire devour and let the flames consume it.  
 List, list, ye kinsmen of Quin-is-coe, list to Scuse the Wise.”  
 “Eat, eat, ye kinsmen of Quin-is-coe, make merry with him  
 Till sunrise. Dance ye, sing ye, ye kinsmen of Quin-is-coe.  
 Lo, the sun ariseth. Lift up the mighty hunter,  
 Bear him with many sighs to his place of rest; let him sleep,  
 Let him sleep the sleep that is dreamless; lay him in the deep,  
 Dark house that is prepared for him; throw in many warm robes,  
 Throw on the earth. Wail, wail, ye children of Quin-is-coe, wail;  
 Wail, wail, ye that are his kinsmen, wail! Never more shall he  
 Slay the callowna; in silence shall he rest forever.”



**Drawing of Allison town site on the Similkameen<sup>iv</sup>**



## CHAPTER THREE

### Ne-Hi-La-Kin

#### (A Legend of the Okanagan Indians)

The winter had set in with unusual rigor. Snow lay deep on the ground, covering the herbs and grass with a spotless mantle. The extreme cold had bound the great lake in icy fetters, and the deep snow had driven the deer down from the mountains into the valley, and in their wake had come wolves and coyotes innumerable.

The deer, though plentiful, were thin and poor, and the Indians while capturing many could make use of only a few by reason of their thinness; but the love of hunting is so strong in the Indian breast that the young men could not refrain from needless slaughter, and amongst the eager hunters none were so reckless as Ne-hi-la-kin. The icy crust, that had formed on the incumbent snow and cut like a keen knife the legs of the hunted deer as they bounded through it, was not harder nor colder than his heart. He hunted for joy of killing, and killed for the pleasure of destruction.

The old men well knowing the consequences of indiscriminate slaughter, counselled the younger members of the tribe to refrain from killing game they could not eat, and so offending the Great Giver of good gifts. The young men with the exception of Ni-hi-la-kin bowed in submission to their leaders. Ne-hi-la-kin though he spoke not, listened with cold glittering eye and scornfully curled lip, when the aged Hapkin warned the youths that if they abused the good gifts of the Great Father, some dire punishment would follow; and earnestly besought them to think what the sufferings of the tribe would be should a scarcity of game result from their recklessness.

Moonlight is beautiful at all times, but in the winter it is transcendently beautiful. See how the flood of silver light breaks over the dark mountain tops, illumines the lofty pines, and darting downwards dances on the frozen glassy lake: all is silver where the moonbeams play, elsewhere all is dark and dreary; surely there is enchantment in the moonlight. Look at the phantom shadows of the rocking pines, how ghastly they appear as they flicker over the sparkling frost, each crystal glistening like a precious gem. A soft, sweet stillness seems to wrap the whole earth; it even penetrates the heart of man, causing him to lift his eyes to the heavens above where the moon is just rising from behind the rugged mountain peaks and lo! the great Orion stands ready to combat with the fiery-eyed Taurus. The deep red glitter of Aldebaran is surely reflected in the heart of Ne-hi-la-kin though all around him is cold and still. His heart is burning within him, and as he strains the saddle girth of Suppel-line he scarce notices his fingers adhere to the icy iron ring. Why should that grumbling old Hapkin grudge him his sport -, if punishment befell him would Hapkin feel it? Was it worse to slaughter half-starved deer in the winter and end their sufferings than to trap beaver, in summer, when they were enjoying life?

Ne-hi-la-kin frowned, shook his head, and urged forward his horse towards a wooded slope where he dismounted and tied his horse to the limb of a tree: then stealing along with his eyes fixed on the untrodden snow, he soon discovered the tracks of a herd of deer.

Keeping sheltered by the long shadows of the trees, he eagerly followed. A crisp rustling soon warned him to halt and examine his rifle. The sound came nearer and, as his eyes sought the direction from whence it came, he became aware of a large herd of deer. The leader, a stately buck, advanced close to where he, Ne-hi-la-kin, stood, its eyes fixed on him and the expression of its face was almost human. Ne-hi-la-kin raised his rifle but before he could put his finger on the trigger, a strange giddiness seized him; he could hear the sound of mocking laughter ringing in his ears. His rifle fell from his trembling hands. He reeled forward stretching out his hands to save himself. He lighted not on his hands but on his feet – hoofs. Lo! his strong sinewy arms, and long slender fingers, had undergone a strange transformation. They were no longer human, they were the limbs of a deer -, his body too had changed, he was no longer a man among men but a deer belonging to the herd he had seen. With the change of body came a change of spirit. The once fiery, fearless man looked timidly around him, the very wind that now moaned through the boughs startled him, and dim fears of hunters haunted him, his bewildered brain was dazed. Then a sound of horror fell on his ears, like the sound of a man in anguish and misery. The whole herd seemed to recognize the cry and with a bound started towards the stately buck, their leader. The buck threw back his antlered head with a proud air and putting himself in the lead, bounded onward followed by the whole herd. Ne-hi-la-kin tried to keep up with them and although his trembling heart beat loudly, he still managed to follow them far behind. The cry comes nearer and nearer, the hunter is now hunted. Again that frightful howl and Ne-hi-la-kin turning his head could descry a large band of wolves rapidly gaining on him. Forward bounded the unfortunate Ne-hi-la-kin in hopes of catching up with the herd, his eyes stared, his tongue lolled out of his mouth, foam gathered around his lips, his flanks heaved, and he plunged wildly over the crusted snow, now breaking through and cutting his slender legs, now stumbling in his haste. Nearer and nearer came the wolves; he could almost feel their burning breath as they pressed closer and closer, snapping at his haunches. A large, black wolf now plunged his fierce fangs into the deer's legs, another is springing at his throat, a rush and the whole pack is on him, struggling, fighting, tearing at his throat. Ne-hi-la-kin's brain swims, darkness descends, then it slowly clears off, and he finds that the wolves have left him and are devouring something close to where he is lying. He looks cautiously around; the wolves are tearing and wrangling over a large deer. While he looks on, a strange desire seizes him; he longs to join the bloody banquet. He springs to his feet, shakes himself, he is not himself not a man nor a deer, but a wolf. A wolf with a ravenous desire for blood. He darts forward amongst the mob of fighting, snarling wolves, and begins tearing and bolting down morsels of the slaughtered deer. He sees that another wolf has succeeded in tearing off a rib and in a moment he is on him, and they tumble over and over in a giddy whirl of combat, biting and tearing each other, making the hair fly in every direction whilst a third wolf daringly thrusts his nose under him and snatches the bone of contention. The banquet of blood is ended, gorged and weary the wolves disappear some to seek repose and some to search for more prey. Ne-hi-la-kin would fain have sought shelter in a clump of bushes, but as he crawled thither bitten and mangled from his fight, a large eagle that had been circling in the sky swooped down on him and, burying its long cruel talons deep into the back of the unfortunate animal, began to tear off morsels of skin and flesh. In vain the tortured wolf sought to dislodge the tormenting fiend on its back. The eagle continued to tear at the



**Bald Eagle<sup>v</sup>**

quivering flesh until the liver was exposed, then the eagle made a fierce and fatal stroke with its beak.

Ne-hi-la-kin felt his spirit rise from torture and enter the eagle. Then came another change of disposition – a desire to rise and mount to the heavens and soar nearer the glorious sun. He relinquished his hold of the mangled carcass. He flapped his broad wings and rose gradually circling upwards; he went no man knows whither.

The friends of Ne-hi-la-kin, finding he did not return, went in search of him. They tracked his horse to the tree where it was tied. There they found his horse and the tracks of his moccasins which they followed until they found his rifle lying on the ground, where he had dropped it; then his tracks became those of a deer. Still they followed: the deer tracks ended and those of a wolf took their place. Then they saw a large eagle which flew away when they came to the spot there were no longer any tracks – nothing but the wide expanse of spotless snow. And from that time on Ne-hi-la-kin was seen no more on the lake nor by the river, nor was his voice again heard in the chase. He had vanished and become part of that silence – that awful silence that sits upon the hills and shrouds the mountains.



**Young Susan Allison<sup>vi</sup>**

## CHAPTER FOUR

### The Glittering Hair

Long, long ago, when my Grandfather was a boy, an old man told him the following story of The Glittering Hair.

Before Incowla's time, there lived a very Great Chief named Immanchuten, who lived in a beautiful lodge made of buffalo hides, tanned and painted with the historic records of his tribe. Immanchuten was young, rich and handsome. He had fields of corn, large pasture lands, herds of cows and horses; besides a great number of robes of bear, wolf and marten skins, saddle cloths, fire bags and leggings of rich beadwork embroidery. All men feared and honoured him; for his fame had spread throughout the land as a mighty hunter and a brave warrior. At this time there also lived in a small kindred tribe, nearby, a youth, the sole survivor of his family. His parents having died of a fell disease, left him with nothing but one poor pony. "Take him," said his dying father, "be good to him and he'll be good to you."

The poor boy feeling desolate and lonely, resolved to forget his sorrows in work, so he went to the Chief Immanchuten and said, "Give me work for myself and horse."

"What can you do with that miserable little scrub?" demanded the Chief.

"Give me work and you will see how hard I can work, and as for the horse – he is my only friend."

"Can you prepare my field for the corn crop?"

"Try me, Great Chief, only try me," replied the boy.

"Well take your pony and prepare the ground."

Gladly the boy harnessed his horse with the poor rawhide harness and hitched him to the rough wooden plough he had made; then he went to work till evening, when Immanchuten came to inspect his workmen.

"Well done," cried the Chief, "you have done better than all the others. Work again tomorrow."

Early the next morning the boy and his horse went at work again and they worked till evening, when the other workmen ceased working – but still he went on, for Immanchuten had forgotten to come. It grew dusk. Glancing round, the boy, Katla, saw a glimmering light rising from the ground at a spot where his plough had loosened the ground; he stopped and raking in the dirt with his fingers drew forth a long, glittering, golden hair. It was fine as silk and glowed with the radiance of the sun. Katla looked, fascinated – he passed it through his

grimy fingers, and it curled round and round them glowing like a flame. Then he hid it in his shirt bosom. But the bright light streamed from it still.

The boy stopped work – took his horse to shelter – threw a robe over it and gathered its supper, the golden hair glittering and glowing in his shirt the while. Then he buried it in the ground, thinking that after he had eaten his evening meal he would take it up again. As he stood thinking, Immanchuten came and called him to supper. Glancing round, he saw the bright light from the hair. Katla put his foot over it to hide it. Still it glowed and shone.

“What have you there boy?” cried Immanchuten.

“Nothing,” answered the boy.

Immanchuten, stooping, drew the long, glittering hair from its hiding place. Amazed, he stroked it and it glittered and curled around his fingers like a living thing. He too was fascinated. Then he turned to Katla and in anger cried, “You would have hidden this from me. Go, go and never return unless you can bring her upon whose head this grew.”

Katla was overwhelmed with grief, for in the short time he had worked for Immanchuten he had learned to love him.

“Go,” thundered the Chief.

Katla ran weeping to his horse; while he clung to the pony’s neck weeping, the horse turned his head, and with a look of human intelligence in his eyes said, “What ails you Katla?”

The boy had never heard a horse speak before and, still weeping, he told the story of how he had found the sunbright hair.

Then the horse said, “Come early tomorrow morning, and I will take you to the woman with the sunlit hair. You shall win back Immanchuten’s respect.”

The boy patted his horse and hid himself from the Chief’s sight till morning, when he rose, and running to his horse said, “Are you ready?” The horse only neighed. So he sprang on his back. The horse, taking the bit in his teeth, started down the valley till he came to a canyon where they lost sight of Immanchuten’s beautiful, painted lodge, and the encampment of his people, and their fields. Then the horse neighed three times and Lo! Katla’s rags changed into a beautiful buckskin shirt, all overlaid with fringes and embroidered with beads. His leggings also were a mass of beautiful beadwork. He had a long string of large, white beads round his neck, also another of bear’s teeth. In his long, black locks were eagle feathers. But the greatest surprise of all was his horse: it was now a lovely charger with glossy skin and arching neck and distended nostrils, and it pranced and danced under a handsome saddle and flowing saddle blanket fringed with bear skin.

Proudly it trotted through the canyon to where a large prairie stretched. Here it broke into a mad gallop till it passed quite over the prairie and stood at the edge of a vast lake where, without hesitation, the horse plunged in and swam for miles and miles till he reached the further shore.

Now on the further side of the lake the shore was clothed in forest, a dark gloomy forest.

They were in midnight darkness, and still the horse went on. Then, as he made an abrupt turn, Katla became aware of a glow of light which increased as they went on till it became a glare. The heat was dreadful, and by the crackling noise the boy knew the forest was burning. As they journeyed on, the glare became greater and the heat more dreadful; flames burst from the dark woods and leapt from tree to tree! Tongues of fire licked up the underbrush. The trees began to crash and fall around them. The fire roared, till the boy nearly fainted, when Lo! he heard through the roar of the burning forest the cool splashing sound of water.

Looking through the smoke he saw a vista in the forest through which a wild stream flowed; into this the beautiful horse plunged, and following down it, bore his rider to safety from the burning forest to a lovely spot where a gentle slope stole up from the stream to the mountain. So gradual was the slope it must have been many miles in length. It was covered with rich grass.

A long trail seemed to run up to the mountain, and on either side of the trail were lodges. There were men and women, a very great assembly. Now the horse and boy rode proudly up the trail between the lodges. Men, women and children ran out to see the handsome stranger and his beautiful horse, for none of them had a horse like that, save the Chief's daughter.

Many of them begged for a ride on the beautiful horse. To some he granted their request, but none could long sit on the gay, spirited animal, till one came, a woman with a glory of sunbright hair that flashed and gleamed. As she stood before Katla, begging for a ride on his lovely horse, he affected to be unwilling to allow the girl to mount his noble horse, saying that her small hands could not hold nor control his steed; but when the Chief, her father, assured him that his daughter could ride any horse owned by her tribe, and that without saddle, the boy consented. The girl sprang lightly into the saddle; the boy bounded up behind her, muttering a cry. The horse bolted, plunged into the stream, and soon disappeared from the sight of the astonished Chief and tribesmen. At first they merely thought the Chief's daughter could not control the animal and waited long, expecting her to return; but when they realized that she had indeed gone, they too mounted and started in pursuit, but they never sighted the horse and its riders. They were gone.

When the horse had dashed into the stream he headed up it for the forest, and when he gained the forest, it was night, and Lo! all the fires had burned out. The darkness was intense. There was no light save the princess' sunbright hair, which glittered and glowed, shining out as a light in the darkness.

Now when they came to the lake, the horse plunged in as before. As they swam through the water the princess' hair was reflected in its depth like a glowing star. "Now," thought Katla, "now will my Chief be pleased." And he rode on gaily, quite regardless of the girl's entreaties to be allowed to return.

At noon the next day they stood before the lodge of Immanchuten, who seeing the beautiful sunlit hair, thought he had never seen anyone as lovely. Her hair hung down her back in long tendrils and light seemed to radiate from it. Her skin was white as milk; her cheeks like roses. He was astonished and delighted. He begged her to dismount and enter his lodge; everything he had was hers if she would deign to stay with him as his wife.

The girl was much struck with the dignified young Chief and thought that she never before had seen such a handsome man; but, hesitating, she said: "I am a Chief's daughter, and not as other women am I, for my father found me, when he was on a distant warpath. I was sent from the clouds to comfort my mother who mourned the death of her first babe. None of my brothers or sisters are like me. I must be treated as a Chief's daughter and a princess. Bid your boy go bring my glass that I may dress my hair every day; meanwhile give me a lodge to myself among the women, or I will go back to the clouds if I may not return to my father."

Now Immanchuten, instead of thanking Katla for what he had already done for him, told him roughly, "Go, bring the glass – do you expect a Chief's daughter to live without a glass to see how to dress her hair, and such hair."

Poor Katla once more slunk out of sight and went weeping to his horse. "Weep no more Katla," said the horse kindly, "you were good to me. Now I will be good to you. First you must tell me why you weep."

"I have brought the princess, as my Master bade me, thanks to you, dear friend; but now I must get her glass. How can I go back to her father's people? They will know us and kill us."

The horse laughed, a kindly laugh, and said, "Come to me tomorrow morning."

Again Katla hid till morning – then he went to his horse, and after greeting him, bounded on his back. Off went the horse as before.

The boy found the horse under him changed from a noble, glossy steed, into a poor, shaggy, shambling pinto pony, and his own clothes changed into those of a Medicine Man: the beads round his neck changed into a string of dried toads, the beautiful bears' teeth into a wriggling snake. His hair became frowsy and full of feathers.

His horse shambled over the prairie through the lake and forest, then down the stream that led to the encampment of the princess' father.



When they arrived at the encampment they found everyone bewailing the lost girl. When they saw Katla and his pinto they rejoiced for “Now,” they said, “we shall find our princess. This certainly is a very great doctor. He will find out where she is.”

The old Chief came out of his lodge and promised Katla blankets, horses and tobacco if he would find out where his daughter had gone. “Show me her house,” said Katla, “I must first look at it, and take something from it that she has held in her hands. Then I will ride out with it, and it will lead me to where she is.” Katla was now quite bold; for he was sure that he was not recognized.

They took him to her lodge and on the wall hung the glass. Katla took it – “Now I go to look for the maiden,” he said as he left the lodge and climbed slowly onto his horse. Then when he was out of sight, the horse once more became a beautiful, swift animal, and away he went faster and faster, through forest, lake, prairie and canyon, till he stood once more before the lodge of Immanchuten.

Now as Katla rode up to the door of Immanchuten, he felt sure of a kindly welcome, and indeed the Chief advanced to meet him with a smile and his hand held out in welcome. The princess came running from her lodge and snatched the mirror. As she admired herself in it she cried, “Now will I gladly stay if you will bring me my own horse.”

“Katla,” said the Chief, “Go once more. Get the horse and I will make you my head man, and your voice shall be heard when the Chiefs and warriors meet in council.”

“I will try,” replied Katla, “one more visit to Sun-lit Hair’s father’s encampment, but they will surely kill me this time.” Again Katla stood weeping before his horse, and again the horse comforted him.

This time when they reached the stream, the horse bade the boy dismount and wait while he went in search of Glistening Hair’s horse, and told him that if he did not come back soon and the water became very troubled and muddy, to return home, for by the muddy water he would know that his true friend, his horse, was dead. Saying this the faithful horse plunged in the stream.

Katla waited all night, and part of the next day. Then Lo! at noon, the sky clouded, the wind rose; the water rose also, and foamed and roared in a turbulent manner. Katla watched and wept for now he felt sure that his friend was dead and he would see him no more.

Just as he was giving way to despair, he heard a splashing and dashing sound. Through the foaming flood he saw two horses’ heads appear. Gradually they emerged. Then his own dear horse and another beautiful creature stood side by side on the bank. “Come quickly now,” said the horse.

Katla mounted, and away they flew, ever faster and faster in a mad race, on and on till they stood before the princess’ lodge. As soon as she heard the horse neigh the beautiful girl

ran out. Her joy knew no bounds. She threw her arms round her horse's neck, "Now, now," she cried, "am I content to abide with Immanchuten." And cutting off one of her long glittering curls, she hung it around Katla's neck. There it hung glittering like a golden coil.

Immanchuten kept his word with Katla, made him head man and gave him cattle and horses. His voice was ever heard amongst the wise men. And he was esteemed the wisest, for he ever sought courage of his horse. And both Katla and his horse lived many, many years and prospered.



**Susan Allison in a wheelbarrow being pushed by granddaughter, Gladys with Mrs. Martin on right.<sup>vii</sup> Photo ca. 1934**

## CHAPTER FIVE

### The Big Men Of The Mountains

#### (A Legend of the Okanagan Indians)

On the shore of the beautiful Okanagan Lake, Torouskin encamped. The summer was well advanced, and with the great heat of the long, long days, a dead calm set in. The lake that had so recently been rough and tempestuous now shone still and placid as a mirror, reflecting the surrounding mountains and groves of vine maple, and cottonwood, that fringed its margin. The white swan floated majestically on the smooth surface; the loon, uttering her sad wailing cry, dived into the depths of the beautiful lake; in the cloudless sky above circled the osprey.

Near Torouskin's camp the snow-born Look-look-shouie (ed. note: Look-look-shouie is Trout Creek which ran into Okanagan Lake) emptied its icy waters into the great bottomless lake. The Look-look-shouie, like the lake into which it flowed, had undergone a remarkable change since the summer set in; the deep, dark torrent that had raged so furiously had now dwindled into a small pellucid stream alive with kik-e-ninnies (kokanees). Torouskin's aged grand sire lay stretched on the upper bank of the Look-look-shouie, smoking quilshettleman in a small pipe of dark green stone, and watching the antics of Torouskin's children as they splashed about in the clear, cold stream, endeavouring to catch the bright denizens of the water. As the venerable old man gazed, he recalled the days of his own childhood. So absorbed was the old man in his dreams that he never noticed the approach of his grandson until he felt the touch of Torouskin's hand on his shoulder.

"Wherefore dost thou gaze so earnestly at the stream, father of my father?"

"My thoughts," replied the old man, "were back in the days of my childhood when I too was young; then would my mother take me by the hand and swinging a basket over my shoulder, lead me forth up the stream to my father's fish trap. There we would fill our basket with the shining kik-e-ninnies. Sometimes we would stray into the silent woods and gather ripe berries until we grew weary, then flinging ourselves down on the soft moss watch a family of skunks frisking about catching large brown beetles. Oft I would stand on my mother's shoulder and thrusting my hand into a hole in a dead tree, draw forth from its nest a young sparrow hawk. Day by day would I watch the downy little balls until their eyes were opened, then would I take one home. Ah! How fondly did I treasure my little pet till it found wings and flew off leaving me mourning. Thus hath it been all the days of my life, all that was loved, all that was treasured, hath gone – even as that much-loved bird. Youth, strength, everything I prized has departed and I remain useless, helpless."

"Nay, say not so, my father," said Torouskin tenderly, "for thy wisdom remaineth. Who so esteemed in counsel as thou art? Even now I was about to ask thine aid in weaving osier baskets such as my father used to catch these fish, even as thou and thy father caught them of old."

The old man, soothed with these words, smiled with pleasure. Torouskin, summoning his children, started off to cut willows in a grove near the lake shore; but bright-eyed Minat-coe lingered and taking her grandfather by the hand led him out to gather bundles of wild hemp, the filaments of which her deft fingers would twist into strong twine, to bind the osier baskets with.

Happy was the group which sat on the shore of the great lake weaving the long, pliant osiers into a trap or conical basket. The old man sat smoking, or instructing the younger members of his family.

“Ke-ke-was” (grandfather), said the lively Minat-coe, “what if it should happen to my father even as it happened unto thee, when thou wert young, when the Big Men came down from their caves, allured by the abundance of fish?”

“Jest not, my child,” replied the old man fondly stroking Minat-coe’s glossy head, “for once they took him, hardly would he escape.”

“Tell us about the Big Men, Ke-ke-was,” cried everyone in a breath. The old man shook his head.

“Tell me. Ke-ke-was,” persisted Minat-coe, coaxingly, and the old man slowly filling his pipe began thus:

“In the days that are gone, I hunted in the mountains alone and fearless. Game of all kinds was plentiful and every night I returned to our camp my horse heavily laden. At last my father and mother grew weary of meat, and longed for the bright trout that frequent these waters. My father went up the stream a day’s journey from our encampment, and built a fish trap, similar to the one we are making now. When he had finished, he put me in charge of it. I visited it daily, every morning. I went at sun rise and returned with fish enough for all our tribe. Suddenly the supply of fish ceased. Day after day I went but found nothing in the trap. Thinking it must have been robbed, I resolved to watch, so taking my blanket with me one night, I lay down by the trap. The moon had not risen, and the night was dark and cloudy. All night I watched but no one came near the trap. Towards morning I fell fast asleep and soon I began to have troubled dreams. I heard a shrill, shrieking whistle as of the north wind, and my senses were oppressed by a vile, suffocating odour. Suddenly I woke to a consciousness of being lifted off the ground. Upward I was lifted until I found myself on a level with a monstrous face.

“I was too frightened to observe much, for a huge pair of jaws opened, and emitted a laugh that sounded like thunder. I expected every moment to be put into that huge mouth and devoured; but the great creature in whose hands I was, stooped down and lifted up my blanket which had fallen to the ground, and wrapping it carefully around me, placed me in the bosom of the goat skin shirt he wore. I struggled until I got my head into the air, for there was a fearful smell of garlic about this huge creature that nearly choked me.

“Soon he began to whistle. It was the same sound I had heard in my sleep and thought it was the north wind. The Big Man calmly filled a basket with fish out of my trap, then, slinging it onto his shoulders, began to ascend the mountain still whistling with all his might. Once he stopped, and taking me out of his breast, he took a fish and tried to cram it down my throat, but seeing me choke he desisted, and putting me once more in his bosom went on his way whistling.

“Peeping out of the bosom of his shirt I saw we were in a huge cave. It was dark save for the red glow of some smouldering embers at the farther end. Throwing a few twigs on the embers, the Big Man blew them until, with a sharp crackling sound, they began to blaze; then I saw how vast a cave we were in. It was somewhat low for its size, and from the roof hung garlic, meat and herbs. Taking me out of his shirt the Big Man tied me with a rope by the leg to a log that lay near the fire. There he stood looking at me, and then for the first time, I had a good look at him. Thou knowest, Torouskin, that I was ever esteemed a large man, but standing by the Big Man my head was scarce level with his knees. His body was covered with garments of goat skin and was white, and he had a long, bushy beard that hung down to his waist. After taking a long look at me he went to a dark corner of the cave and presently returned with an armful of soft furs which he threw on the ground at my feet and signed me to lie down. He next began to string fish on a long, slender willow which he hung in front of the fire. I watched his movements with fear and curiosity; soon I heard a shrieking whistle outside of the cave. At first it seemed distant, then it came nearer and soon it ceased, and with a loud trampling noise another Big Man entered the cave. He had evidently been hunting, for he carried three fine does supported by their necks from his belt as thou, Torouskin, would hang a grouse. Pulling them from his belt, he threw them on the ground and advancing, squatted down beside the Big Man who had taken me, and they began to converse in voices like thunder. As I watched the two Big Men I was struck with the mild kindly look on their big faces. Presently my captor came to me and loosing the strong rope that held me, took me over to the firelight for his companion to look at. The other Big Man after examining me closely burst into a fit of laughter in which his companion joined. Then he seated me on his knee while his friend took the fish from before the fire and they began to eat their evening meal. They gave me a portion and seemed much amused to see me eat. Suddenly one of the Big Men gave a howl of pain and moaning, held out his hand for his friend to look at. The other Big Man examined it tenderly and big tears of sympathy streamed down his cheeks. Standing on his knee I could see that a fish bone had run into his thumb and as their fingers were altogether too clumsy to remove it, I seized the bone in my teeth and pulled it out. The Big Man smiled, looked grateful, and soon dried his tears. I afterwards found that these Big Men were extremely sensitive to pain; the least hurt would make them cry and moan.

“After they had eaten their supper my captor rose and, rolling a large stone to the mouth of the cave, blocked the entrance. Then he took me and laid me on my bed of skins, carefully tucking me in.

“The fire died down and the cave grew dark, then I heard the most horrible sounds which I felt could only be the snores of these men. Long, long was I kept by my kindly captor. In vain I tried to escape but they watched me too closely. Every day I went out in the

fisherman's shirt until the run of fish was over. Every day the hunter came back laden with game. When they left me alone, they always left me securely tied. They treated me with the greatest kindness and were affectionate with each other, but they would never let me go free and my heart grew sad, and I longed to see my own people once more. I watched unceasingly for a chance to escape, and at last one night I observed a ray of light stealing in between the rock and the entrance. I rose softly and found a crack left open through which the moonlight was streaming; it was large enough for me to force my way through. As soon as I was outside of the cave I ran with all my might. I cared not whither as long as I was free. For months I wandered living on roots and berries, and at last I struck the head waters of the Look-look-shouie and following downstream I found my father's camp.

"How my father and mother rejoiced to see me again! But even now as the winter approaches I dread to hear the shrill, shrieking whistle of the north wind as it rises in gusts and sweeps over the great lake, for in it I hear the whistle of the Big Men."

"Ke-ke-was," cried Minat-coe when the old man had finished his story, "are the Big Men spirits? Do they die even as we die?"

"Who can tell my child? No one knows. There are strange things in these mountains."

Next morning Torouskin went up the stream and built a dam and set a trap which he visited daily. He always returned with an abundance of fish. One day he returned empty-handed and in terror. At first he refused to tell the cause of his fear but when pressed by the old man, he told the following story:

"I went to the fish trap as usual this morning, and after I had gathered the fish into the basket and was about to return, I heard a shrieking whistle! Nearer and nearer it came. I hid in the long grass trembling and waited and waited. Then, with a heavy tramp that shook the earth, a man of monstrous size came whistling along. His face was turned upwards watching a large, white swan. He passed close to me and I quaked lest his huge foot should crush me; he never heeded me, but went on gazing after the swan and so passed my hiding place, whistling. A strong smell of garlic filled the air around. When he had passed my hiding place I crept out and came home as fast as I could run regardless of my fish. Never will I doubt the wisdom and truth of the aged, for, as thou sayest Ke-ke-was, there are many strange things in these mountains."



**Susan Allison and "Dummy"<sup>viii</sup>  
A totem given to her by the Indian people**

## CHAPTER SIX

### Evening On The Similkameen

One eve I stood on the river's brink,  
And looking upward saw serene above,  
The silvery moon, in stilly splendour float,  
Light fleecy clouds that scarcely veiled her face,  
Were drifted upward by the autumn breeze  
And as the lacy veil of some fair bride,  
O'er her soft shining tresses now upflung,  
Revealed to mortal eyes her bright, calm face  
Surrounded by attendant sister stars.

But though so stilly bright in heaven, the moon  
Her image in the shallow stream beneath  
Danced gaily while the gliding water broke  
Into a thousand waving ripples.  
From out the shallow depths a song arose,  
A murmuring song of joy and gladness.  
So fair the scene, it seemed a joy to be.  
A joy it would have been to gaze forever  
Without thought of the world's pain and care.

While yet I gazed, a wolf's discordant cry  
Resounded hideous through the evening air,  
Like to a soul in agony and pain,  
Recalled me from a trance of mute delight.  
I thought of restless ghosts and dying men.  
Anon – a pack of fierce mountain wolves,  
Loud echoing their scout's unearthly cry,  
Rushed panting by, a mad ferocious crowd  
Their shadows in the moonlight hard and cold,  
Stretched long and ghastly, flitting through the pines.  
Me thought twas hell broke loose, and all the fiends  
Pursuing some poor soul with wild halloos.

And thus for me the witching spell was broke,  
The glory of the glorious scene was marred,  
The moonlight changed from fair to hard and cold,  
The river's voice too, grated harsh and loud  
It told of floods and death and friends bereaved,  
And all life's sorrows rushed upon me now  
Loosed by the demon wolf's infernal cry.

And wild and weird, the solitary place  
Was now bereft of all its former charms,  
Environed by stern mountains, now I felt  
Pent in hell's darkest, deepest prison walls,  
The ghoulish wolves in hateful concert, now,  
Filled the cool air with fiendish, thrilling cries,  
Hell's carnival – trembling, I fled the place,  
But the awakened thoughts I could not fly.



**Susan Allison on the Similkameen River<sup>ix</sup>**



## CHAPTER SEVEN

### Okanagan Lake Monster Was Baleful Creature With Supernatural Powers

Printed in the Princeton Star on August 12, 1926  
(Foreword to the Poem was written by the Princeton Star Editor  
Note: the Indian name for Ogopogo was “N’Ha-A-Itk”)

There has been a good deal of sceptical comment with regard to the monster serpent which is reported to have been seen at various times in the waters of Okanagan Lake, but here is the experience of one of the oldest and most highly esteemed members of our own community, one whose veracity is unquestionable.

It is now more than half a century since Mrs. S.L. Allison and her husband chose a spot on the west side of Okanagan Lake, where Westbank now stands, to start a cattle ranch, which grew to be one of the largest in the district. They called it Sunnyside, and for many years lived a practically isolated life there, their only white “neighbours” being the Vernons at the head of the lake, the Ellises at Penticton, and the residents of the Mission across the lake, near where Kelowna now stands.

One day Mr. Allison and one of his sons rowed across the lake, intending to return in the evening. Meanwhile however, a sudden and terrific storm arose (those who have lived beside Okanagan Lake know how unexpectedly such storms arise on its waters) and he was of course prevented from returning home that night.

By morning the storm had abated and Mrs. Allison went to the top of the cliff to watch for the return of her husband and son. The lake was still turbulent – a strong north wind was blowing, causing the waves to roll toward the south with all the force of an ocean tide.

As she watched, Mrs. Allison observed a giant serpent, resembling a huge log, making its way northward with considerable rapidity, against the wind and waves. It swam with an undulating, up and down motion. Later it was reported that a man named Smitheram, who was employed at the Mission, had seen the monster the same day.

This experience recalled to Mrs. Allison’s mind a legend which had been imparted to her by the Indians, who averred that a certain small island, situated about twenty or twenty-five miles from Penticton, was the home of a certain malevolent monster, which had a supernatural power over the earth and air, and frequently made use of winds and storms to destroy any fool-hardy individuals who ventured into his domain.

When crossing the lake during stormy weather the Indians were wont to carry a pup, a pig or a chicken which they would throw overboard to appease the monster. Nothing would induce them to approach the island, and they deemed it impossible to land there even had they wished. We may excuse the aborigines’ belief on the ground that it is really very

difficult to make a landing at the island in stormy weather. Charles and Forbes Vernon, after whom the city of Vernon was named, were once blown completely away from the place while attempting to land. Monster Island, as it has been called, was later bought by Lord Aberdeen.

The following is a poem written by Mrs. Allison, the theme being a tale told her by the Indians. It is taken from the rough copy as it was written at Sunnyside fifty years ago.

**Ogopogo, Okanagan  
Lake Monster<sup>x</sup>**



**Okanagan Lake**

The lake is like a mirror,  
And the bright stars in the sky  
Are reflected in its waters  
Where wavering shadows lie.  
No shimmer on the water,  
Not a stir in the warm air,  
And not an insect murmur  
Nor a sign of life is there.

Amidst the calm bright waters,  
Where it scarcely seems to float,  
Between two starry heavens  
Lies a little fishing boat.  
Far westward from the Narrows,  
Where the cliffs are tall and white,  
But dark and stern the shadows  
Cast far by their fearful height.

Miles westward lies an island,  
A small island all men dread;

Upon that barren island  
A fell monster makes his bed.  
The night is calm and pleasant,  
All fears are laid at rest –  
How could evil lurk beneath  
The calm lake's pellucid breast?

A ripple on the waters,  
And the shadows on the lake  
Are dancing in confusion  
Though they do not seem to break.  
A breeze upon the waters,  
And the broken shadows play  
Upon those deep blue waters  
Where the fishers idle lay.

They idle there no longer  
For the boat is drifting fast;  
They haul the line, take in the fish,  
The boat is full at last.  
So busy are the fishers  
That they scarcely seem to hear  
The sad cry of the wailing loon  
As she dives in the waters near.

So busy are the fishers  
That they scarcely spare a glance  
To the black line of white-crested waves  
That so rapidly advance  
From westward, from the island,  
From the island all men dread,  
From the rocky barren island,  
Where the fell monster makes his bed.

Over the lake a moaning comes  
Like a soul that's full of woe,  
Softly breathing forth its sorrows  
In a mournful voice and low.  
The black waves are drawing nearer  
And their white crests foaming gleam,  
As the wind that drives them onward  
Bursts forth with a ghastly scream.

Dark clouds from the west are drifting,  
Obscuring the stars' pale light,  
The water is growing blacker,

The Narrows are still in sight,  
Where over the heaving water  
A lurid storm light lowers,  
At their base on the hard, white rocks  
White spray is cast in showers.

Then the fishers saw the warning,  
But they heeded all too late;  
God knows the cause that held them back –  
It was apathy or fate.

They have headed for the Narrows,  
They are paddling now like men,  
They speed before the rushing blast,  
And they fly the monster's den,  
As, with loud demonic laughter,  
The wild storm swept screaming past,  
And the night grew dark and darker,  
Till no light was seen at last.

The reverberating thunder  
Echo'd from the mountains round,  
And broke o'er the raging waters  
With a wild unearthly sound.  
And the lightning's zigzag flashes  
Showed how fearful was the gloom,  
How terrible the storm that raged,  
When those fishers met their doom.

They met their doom on that wild night,  
And the Indians on the shore  
Could hear their cries above the blast  
And above the tempest's roar.  
With the dawning of the morning  
The wild wind was lulled to rest  
And a little boat was floating  
On the lake's still heaving breast.

'Twas floating on the heaving lake,  
Two troubled skies between,  
But of the crew that mann'd her  
Not a living soul was seen.  
Far westward on the island,  
The grim island all men dread,  
Their bones lie bare and bleaching  
Among rocks all stained with red.

## CHAPTER EIGHT

### Omnipresence

I sat upon the sea-beach  
To hear the sad sea sing,  
Screaming gulls flew o're me  
With scarcely moving wing.

The waves were breaking softly  
Upon the silver sand,  
The dull grey sky was lowering,  
A storm was hard at hand.

The waves took on the colour  
Of the grey lowering sky,  
The waves began to whisper  
Of men about to die.

But still I sat and listened  
The winds began to blow,  
And lashed the waves to fury,  
Their crests gleamed white as snow.

A madness seemed to seize them  
They rushed across the sand,  
With wild tremulous laughter  
As if to engulf the land.

Then sweeping swiftly backward,  
With frenzied rush they tore –  
The wreckage that was scattered  
From off the sandy shore.

As rapidly returning  
Rearing in seething foam,  
Threw back the broken fragments  
With sob and hollow groan.

Dark purple clouds came creeping  
Over the dull grey sky,  
And stained the dull grey ocean  
With a dark and purple dye.

And as I sat serenely  
Beside the seething sea,

A Voice came from the waters  
And whispered thus to me.

I am the changing ocean;  
I am the changing sky;  
I am the winds that murmur;  
I am the gulls that fly.

I am all life and motion;  
I am all strength and power;  
Seek where you will find me,  
In a star, or in a flower.

Always changing I change not,  
I am ever the same;  
Although my aspects vary –  
The Absolute, my name.

Fear not the raging waters  
Fear not the changing skies  
Know all, that life is immortal  
Know that it cannot die.

Fear not the sins of mortals  
Fear not the errors they make,  
The cause of disease and disaster;  
For our dear Master's sake.



**Aurora**

## CHAPTER NINE

### The Aurora In The Okanagan

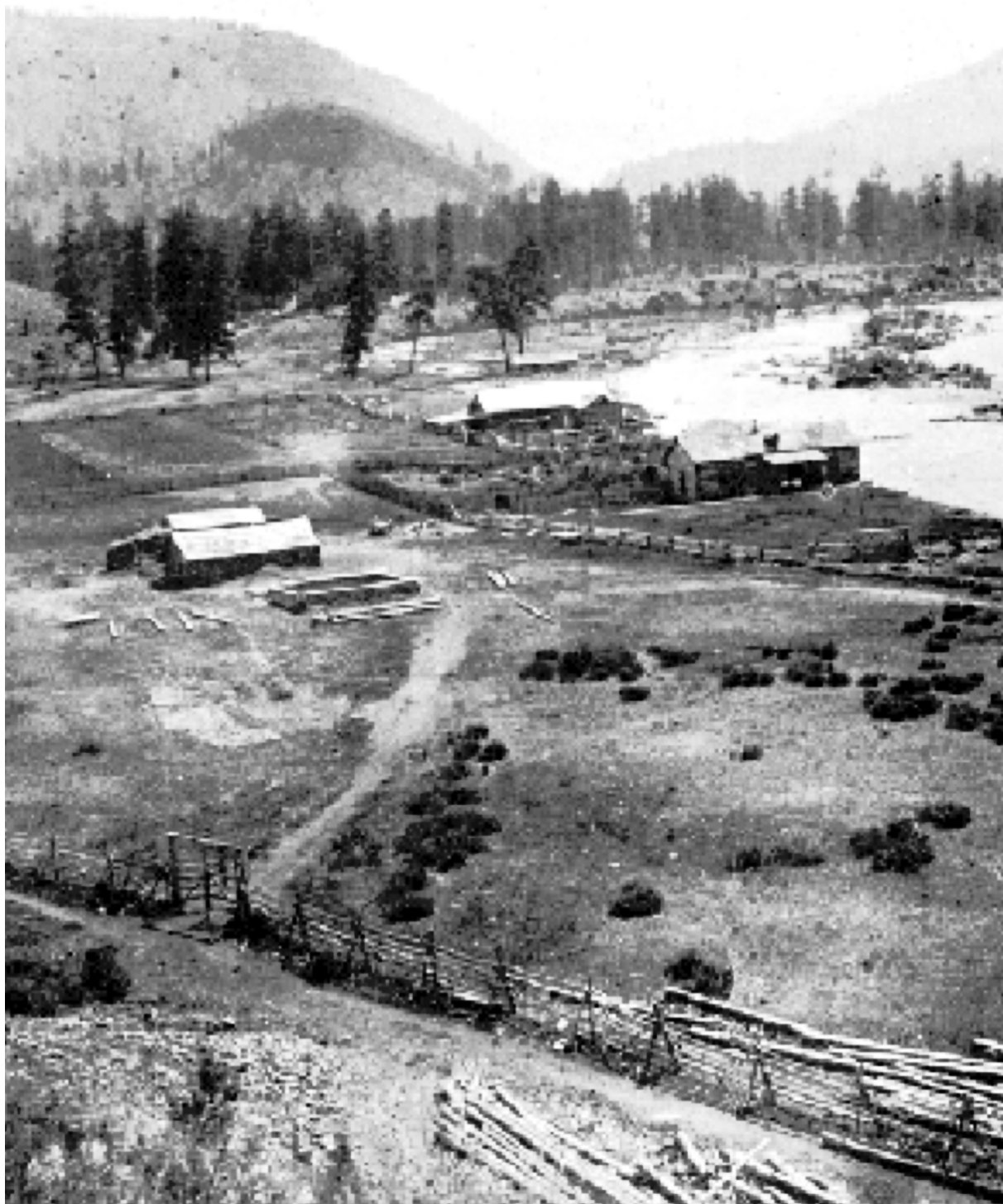
To me, it seems very strange that the Encyclopaedia Britannica should question the fact that the Aurora at times emits a sound. I have heard it frequently and very plainly.

Once when a child in Scotland, in going up Union Street in the city of Aberdeen with our old nurse who was bringing me home from a children's party at Bishop Skinner's, I heard a crackling noise just like fire among dry branches, and was frightened; but Belle, the nurse, told me to look up at the sky and see the merry dancers. Such they really seemed to be, for the columns of light that were dancing across the sky seemed to be like dancers with castanets. Ever since I have loved to watch the Aurora. I found out later that the term then used by the nurse, "merry dancers", is a term in common use in Scotland and in the north of England, to designate a certain form of the Aurora.

When we were living at Sunnyside near Westbank, on the Okanagan Lake, I heard the Aurora quite frequently, over the mountains across Okanagan Lake from where we lived. Great columns of light would appear and remain stationary but vibrating and then, with a swishing sound, they would move over to Okanagan Mission, which is east of Westbank, and then back again. As I recollect it, the sound heard in Scotland was a crackling sound, but at Sunnyside it was more of a rustling or swishing sound.

Once, when we were living at Allison near Princeton, I saw one of the grandest sights imaginable. My husband was away from home and I and the children had been in bed for some time when I was aroused by the sound of voices and someone tapping at the window. I went to investigate and there stood R. L. Cawston, Harry Hobbs, William McKeown and William Elwell. They said: "Come out; please do; you must not miss this sight." I slipped on my dressing gown and slippers and joined them and witnessed a sight never to be forgotten. Above us was a vast dome of rosy light with shafts of gold and crimson darting through it; the whole was of varying colours and vibrating – a dome of living light. I sat with the boys and watched it for more than two hours. There was no sound but the awed voices of the men. It was like a glimpse of the "Beauty of the Lord", and we all felt it to be such.

Again, at Keremeos in 1915 there appeared in the sky an immense scimitar which changed its position from time to time, but not its shape. As the war was on at the time many regarded it as an omen. No sound accompanied this auroral display either.



**Allison Homestead<sup>xi</sup> in Princeton**



## CHAPTER TEN

### When The River Rose

I think it was in the middle of June, 1894 after a cold and backward spring that there was a sudden change in the weather; the night frosts suddenly ceased and it set in unbearably hot. Then both the Similkameen and the Tulameen rose at once, and the Similkameen from a small wasted stream became a roaring, raging flood tearing on, gathering all the flotsam and jetsam within its reach – great logs and slender saplings; eating away the banks and moving huge boulders that we had for years considered landmarks.

Our house was standing on the river's bank, but not on the brink. There was a sugar beet patch of rich, deep soil and a store house between us and the river, so at first we had no fear of the flood. Mr. Lawston had come up for a few before the one of which I write, and we sat on the kitchen steps which led down to the river where we got our water. We were all as usual enjoying the shade after the burning sunshine of the day, and discussing the cause of Mr. Lawston's visit – the shape of the road over the mountain, which he wanted to ascertain, in order to drive a bunch of beef steers to Hope – when we noticed some very large logs floating down. The bank seemed to be hit by them as they passed. Mr. Lawston made some joking remark about the sugar beets. He decided to hold his drive for a few days until the river fell.

Our bridge had gone out the year previous. After Mr. Lawston started for Keremeos, the river continued to rise and Mr. Allison and I sat and watched the sugar beets going down the river as it ate away the soil of the bank – we sat and watched as long as we could see, but could not stop the damage. When we did go to bed, the river was at least twenty feet from the house but the whole patch between seemed to be saturated with water.

All night long we could hear the roaring of the river, and once or twice there came a shock that seemed like logs bumping against the corner of the house. After a while, tired out, we slept the sleep of the just.

We woke the next morning with the daylight. My husband said, "It sounds funny. I will just get up and look." In a few moments he was back. He told me quietly that he thought I ought to get up and dress adding quite calmly that half my bedroom was undermined and would soon have to be cut adrift from the house.

I got up at once and made the children get out of their beds and then I went out to take a look round. The river was running under both my room and Louisa's. There were two rooms above these, and it seemed as if that part of the house was doomed. I saw my husband and the boys coming with two long saws. I asked what they were going to do and was answered, "Saw the house in two – and try to save half. Get out the bedding and furniture and store it near the side hill!"

So to work we went taking all our things out of the doomed part of the house while the boys sawed manfully to split the house in two. We had most fortunately built a new

stable to accommodate ten horses and a harness room over near the side hill. The horses had not been occupying it for more than a week, and my husband said, rather grimly, that if we could not save half the house, we could turn the horses out and live in the stable. The boys did turn the horses out for they had no time to feed them.

The river was still rising and at noon we moved the cook stove out to the shed near the stable and when my husband and boys had sawed off four rooms from the house and lowered them into the river, I gave them a lunch under the old shed and went with Grace and Carrie to see what was going on.

We found that the dairy was gone, the calves' shed, the blacksmith's shop and the slaughter house and numerous other buildings. There was yet a small chicken house clinging to the bank and the door was swinging open. Grace cried out, "I am going in there." I begged her not to try, but she ran on and jumped in and as she did so, the chicken house began to float down stream. She then jumped quickly back and fortunately landed on solid ground. Next we inspected the garden. It was going quickly. The asparagus bed we had planted twenty-five years before, was rapidly disappearing. Some of the asparagus roots were 17 feet long (we measured them afterwards). The young fruit trees had gone and now the currents and gooseberries were going. Rose and Carrie sat on a dry spot and watched the demolition. "The Lord giveth and the Lord taketh, blessed be His name," said Rose. Carrie jumped up, seized a shovel and cried out, "He shan't get away with the currents and gooseberries if I can help it," and set to work digging them up.

By this time some people from the new town of Princeton had come to see what was going on and offered help, but that was out of their power for who can curb a torrent? When night came, we had most of our effects out of the house except books and papers. We hoped to save the nursery, sitting room and Mr. Allison's office and half of the dining room. We thought that it would be safer to sleep in the stable. The small children had had a glorious day wading in the puddles and using our wash tubs for boats. Little Alice was paddling a tub for her own canoe when Jack Pioto, an Indian friend, rode up and splashed into about two feet of water, grabbed her by one arm and, swinging her up onto his saddle, brought her to the stable. He said the ground was too rotten near the river for children to play there.

When we were ready to retire for the night, we looked out from our stable at the house and thought that though much smaller than in the morning, we still had a pretty good house left. So we went to bed tired out and thankful. When we arose next morning and looked, the house was gone and the river flowing where it had stood. So for the second time, we lost our home and most of our possessions.

Our loss when the river rose was serious. We had altogether lost fourteen buildings including the house, our garden and a lot of good ground. The girls' flower garden alone was left with its bright flowers.

We made the big stable comfortable and even managed to entertain such of our friends as passed our way. Soon we had another garden started, though we missed our well-established asparagus bed; but the currents and gooseberries flourished as well as ever.

## CHAPTER ELEVEN

### Account Of The Similkameen Indians Of British Columbia

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Of the origin of the former inhabitants of the Similkameen I know nothing, but of the tribe at present occupying the valley tradition relates that about 150 years ago a small band of the warlike Chilcotins, accompanied by their wives and decked in their war paint and feathers, crossed the Frazer (sic) River on the warpath to avenge a wrong (the death of a chief) inflicted on them by the Shuswaps of the Bonaparte and Thompson.

Penetrating too far into the interior, the winter suddenly set in, they found their retreat cut off and themselves hemmed in by their enemies. They were, however, in a country abounding in game of all kinds, which, together with the long black lichens that descended from the pine trees, afforded them ample sustenance.

Establishing themselves in the upper valley of the Similkameen they manfully faced the rigours of the winters, and bravely held their own against their foes. Making friends with the Spokans (who admired the fairness of their women) they inter-married with that tribe and increased in numbers for many years till, in common with all the neighbouring tribes, they were nearly obliterated by that dire scourge, small-pox. Since that time civilization has nearly finished the work begun by small-pox, viz., the extinction of the tribe. Whether this is due to the entire change that has taken place in their food and manner of life it is hard to say, but I know from personal experience that the Similkameen Indians of to-day are totally different both physically and mentally from what they were thirty or even twenty years ago. Though the women are of small stature (possibly from the custom of marrying them before they have attained their full growth) the men average five feet six in height; their frames are lithe and muscular, their movements quick and graceful.

In complexion they are very light, being more of the yellow paleness of the Chinese than the copper colour of the Red Indian, and like the Chinese they have small hands and feet. Their hair varies from jet black to red brown, and in some cases there is just a glint of gold in it; many of them have a kink or wave almost amounting to a curl in their locks, of which they are very proud. Formerly they were hardy and enduring, and capable of sustaining great fatigue. Before there was any regular means of transport over the mountains lying between Hope, on the Frazer (sic), and the Similkameen, the Indians used to be employed to pack provisions over on their backs. Their packs were suspended by means of a band or strap passed over their foreheads, and I have known some of them pack three sacks of flour (150 lbs.) on their back, while travelling on snow-shoes for a distance of 65 miles over a rough mountainous road, with a depth of 25 feet of snow on the summit of the Hope Mountain, over which the trail ran.

Sometimes a whole family would start out on one of these packing expeditions, the children, as well as their parents, each taking a load, and accomplishing the journey in six or eight days according to the state of the road. If an unusually violent snowstorm overtook an Indian while travelling in the mountains he would dig a hole in the snow, cover himself with his blanket, and allow himself to be snowed up; here he would calmly sleep till the snow had passed, then he would proceed on his journey. The Similkameens are not good runners, though I have known some of them when sent a message keep up a steady jog trot for ten hours and cover a long stretch, but they are not by any means swift-footed, nor do they develop pedestrianism. They are born horsemen; as soon as a child can sit alone it is placed on horseback, indeed before that it becomes familiarised (sic) with horses, for while a child is still bound on a "papoose stick," it is hung by a strap to the pommel of its mother's saddle, and away it goes flying with her over the bunch grass hills, and they thus make good riders with firm, easy, graceful seats. As they depend on hunting for a large portion of their food they are, of course, good shots. They now use the same weapons as the white settlers – Winchesters, .44 bore generally, Ballards, Remingtons, and Henry rifles. Formerly they used bows and arrows, lariats, and snares.

Deer were often snared; two saplings growing in a convenient spot on either side of a deer run were selected and bent down, and a noose suspended between their tops; the deer were then driven down the run by men and dogs. The frightened animals bounded heedlessly along till they came to the snare, where they were quickly involved in the noose, releasing in their struggles the bent saplings, which, springing into their natural position, hung the deer thus caught. At regular times in the autumn the whole tribe would assemble, and scouring the country for miles with their dogs, would drive large herds of deer into some mountain *cul de sac* where the hunters with their bows and arrows were stationed beforehand, ready for the wholesale slaughter of the bewildered creatures.

Deer were often pursued on horseback and lassoed with a strong reata. I have been told by an old man of the tribe that the sharp horns of the mountain goat fixed on shafts of hard wood were formerly used as spears both in hunting and warfare, as also stone knives and hatchets. I have seen the rude flint arrowheads used in past times, also a stone chisel. Some ten or twelve years ago an Indian who was in need of an axe, but too poor to buy one, made himself a very serviceable one of stone, the same he said as his father had used.

In pursuing deer, sheep, or goats, the Similkameens used a species of dog crossed with the wolf or coyote (the wolf making the best cross, the result being a braver, fiercer animal, while those crossed with the coyote had more of the cowardly, slinking nature of that cowardly creature); these were fleet, strong, and highly prized by their owners. In early times the women were nearly as good hunters as the men, but since they have grown civilized they have given it up lest the white settlers should laugh at them, for they are highly sensitive to ridicule.

Before shot guns were plentiful among the Indians, birds were snared in slip nooses set in the trees they frequented. The fool bird (a species of grouse quite deserving its name) was caught with a loop tied to the end of a long pole; the loop was thrown over the bird's head and just "yanked" off the tree or bush on which it sat.

Fish were caught in the Similkameen and its tributaries in basket traps and by horse-hair lines with thorn or cactus hooks attached. The fish were also caught in nets placed across a stream; these nets were formed of twine made from a native hemp which the women gather, beating out the fibre with stones and forming a twisted thread or twine by rolling it with their hands on their bare thighs. It is rather a comical sight to see a group of women manufacturing twine; this twine is strong, and is used for many purposes.

Before matches found their way to these Indians fire was produced by inserting a piece of hard wood into a punk, stump, or log, and twirling it round between the hands until the friction induced combustion. The inconvenience of kindling fires in this manner made the Indians chary of allowing their fires to be extinguished.

I cannot learn that there was any particular significance attached to fire (though it was the medium through which offerings were made to the dead), but they have some tradition of an underground fire.

I have been told both by an Okanagan and a Similkameen Indian of a river that is said to be somewhere in the mountains that after a rather turbulent course, leaps over a high precipice and sinks into a deep hole that goes down into the earth till it reaches "kee-kee-lee fire" (underground fire), and steam or smoke, as they call it, ascends from the hole – the river is here lost. Neither of the Indians who told me the story had seen the place himself, but both said their fathers had seen it; they were both old men, and, as far as I could learn, were not acquainted – they both, however, told the same story. The other Indians knew nothing of this river, but said the old men had heard of it from their fathers. This may have been a tradition brought with them from their old home, or it may have been a lie manufactured for the amusement of their friends.

As I have before remarked, the Indian of to-day and the Indian of former years are altogether different beings; their food to-day is the same as ours, or rather they live more luxuriously than any poor white settler would think of doing; they will not do without tea, coffee, sugar, flour, sago, rice, jams, jelly, canned fruit, in fact all that is good. Formerly their food consisted of venison, fresh and dried game of all kinds, beaver tails and bears' paws being esteemed a dainty. The seeds of the sunflower pounded furnished a sort of flower (sic) that was made into cakes. The root of the speetlum (a plant resembling portulaca) was dug in the spring and eaten either boiled with the bark of the service berry, which imparts an almond flavour, or dried; when dried it made an excellent substitute for bread. The cactus, or prickly pear, was roasted and eaten with meat. The stitome (a sort of wild potato), a root growing abundantly in wet land, was gathered in its season. Various edible fungi growing in the earth or in the woods were much used. The long black lichens on which the deer feed were gathered and soaked for a long time in the river; a pit was then dug and lined first with a layer of hot stones, over these a layer of green branches was placed; the wet lichens were then put in the pit, and covered with another layer of green branches, and more stones and weeds; the whole was then earthed over. When the pit was opened some days later the lichen was found run into substance resembling india-rubber in taste and tenacity; this was cut into cakes; it is not much wonder that the delicacy was given up. The berry of the quilshettleman (or nic-a-nic) was called ike, and when dried and pounded was

used as sweetening, and no doubt it tasted sweet to people unacquainted with sugar. The nic-a-nic or kinnekinic (ed. note: kinnikinnick) is an evergreen creeping plant with a brilliant red berry. Though the berry is no longer used as sugar the leaves are still dried and smoked when tobacco or the money to purchase it is scarce.

The wild onions are still dug and cooked in pits in the manner similar to the mode of cooking lichens. There are numerous edible roots – the bulb of the tiger lily and a yellow snowdrop are much used – also a kind of celery. Lebrew is made from the soap berry, which is beaten with the hand in water till it forms a stiff froth resembling soap-suds – this is very nice. There is a tea they used to drink said to possess many virtues (very good for consumptives), which the Hudson's Bay Company tried to introduce into England under the name of Labrador tea. The service berry was a staple with the Similkameens. When the berries were ripe mats were laid under the bushes and the berries were beaten off them on to the mats; these were then dried in the sun; a portion was then reserved for home consumption, the rest were put in sacks made of rushes strung together by threads of wild hemp, and traded with either the Hope or Okanagan Indians for dried salmon or watertight baskets, in the manufacture of which the Hope Indians excelled. These baskets were used for boiling water or meat; the baskets were filled with water and hot stones thrown in till it boiled. To roast the meat was transfixed with stakes which were driven into the ground in front of their fires. The Hope Indians wove mats of cedar bark, and these the Similkameen Indians greatly preferred to those they made themselves with tule or rushes threaded on twine (also of their own manufacture) as they were stronger and did not harbour vermin. The summer dwellings were made of these mats thrown over a circular frame of poles. The winter houses were simply pits dug in the ground and roofed with poles and earth. A hole at the top afforded ingress and egress to the dwellers (a notched pole serving as a ladder or stairway); this orifice was also sole chimney.

These houses were known as kee-kee-lee (a Chinook expression), and were very dirty, unwholesome dens, harbouring every kind of filth and disease. After the last visitation, however, of small-pox, the Indians were persuaded to give up using them. It is now about twenty-five years since they built their first log cabin at their village of Chu-chu-ewa (sic). This village now boasts a church and many good warm houses. The Similkameens to-day are Catholics, having been won over to that faith by the patience and long-suffering of the Oblate Fathers. Their old religion, as far as I can ascertain, was very simple.

They believed in an Almighty Spirit, the Creator of all things, and Master of all – Him they adored as the father: there were other spirits – the woods, mountains, water, and even fire were full of them, but they were subordinate spirits entirely under the control of “the Father,” some of these subordinate spirits were good and some evil. The spirits called Sonnie-app-ooos (ed. note: Souie Appoos) were not altogether as bad as their name indicates (devils); most of them seem to have been neutral. The old chief Tumisco (? Minisco) (ed. note: Quin-is-coe) used to tell me of one he met with in Mount Cluppaco (ed. note: Chippaco) and Mount Baker (where he was hunting across the present boundary line). This Sonnie-appoo (ed. note: Souie Appoo) is described by Tumisco (ed. note: Quin-is-coe) as being in form like a large black man covered with long, silky hair, and so strong that when once caught asleep by Tumisco (ed. note: Quin-is-coe) and his followers, and by them bound

to the ground by strong reatas, on waking he merely stretched himself and rose up with ease, snapping the thongs like threads, and shaking off the hunters who clung to him to hold him down, as if they had been mosquitoes, but doing them no further injury, though his scornful laughter as he eluded Tumisco (ed. note: Quin-is-coe) must have been provoking. I have heard the Indians describe some Sonnie-appoons (ed. note: Souie Appoos) (that used to frequent a certain place in what is now our cattle ranch), as having the body of a man, the head of a deer, with a human face covered with deer's hair, the limbs were also those of a deer. From the shoulders sprung the wings of a bat, which seemed to vibrate in the air perpetually. These spirits were kindly rather than otherwise. The spirits most dreaded were the spirits of the dead, which the Indians imagine are very easily offended and very vindictive, even to their late friends. Their eyeballs gleam with baneful fire, and from their nostrils smoke proceeds, their appearance is altogether frightful, and they don't glide about like honest, Christian ghosts, but spin round and round as they advance to meet their friends, making the while the most unearthly noise; these frightful apparitions are generally appeased by a feast or potlatch, which I think is nothing more nor less than a feast in honour of the dead. The medicine man or doctor was a very important personage, and really not the entire humbug he is represented by those who merely give him a cursory glance.

Some of them have developed a strong magnetic power, and the extraordinary power they do exercise over their patients is due entirely to animal magnetism. I have not the least doubt of it, for I have seen many cases where they have really effected cures. The music they use is a sort of half drum resembling a tom-tom, and they kept up a low, monotonous chant while charming the evil spirit from their patient; sometimes a certain mat was used, and the spirit once beguiled on to it had to stay there till released by the doctor. All sickness was supposed to be the work of an evil spirit who fastened on a victim and hung on, drawing away his life till charmed away by the doctor, who worked himself into a state of perfect frenzy, singing and dancing while he was trying to lure the evil spirit from his patient, and he would go through the motions of wrestling with some invisible foe, the sweat pouring from his body; he would fall down perfectly exhausted, or fall and roll over and over as if struggling with some powerful adversary. I have watched them from a little way off and am sure that if there is any deception it is themselves the doctors deceive. I think they are really possessed of the belief that they are struggling with some supernatural power. I have often seen a strong man so exhausted after six hours of doctoring that he could hardly walk.

In one case where the patient was consumptive (a prevalent disease amongst them) the doctor worked by suction, that is to say, he sucked a certain part of the patient's chest till he had made a hole through which he sucked portions of the diseased lungs and quantities of clotted blood, varying the operation by endeavouring to draw the "Evil One" from his patient by dancing and singing; some white men who were present during the climax of his struggle with the "Evil One," left the house in perfect horror, they said that the doctor was so terribly in earnest that it seemed impossible to doubt that he was fighting with some unseen adversary. Some of the doctors claimed to be clairvoyants also, if anything was stolen they said they could, by touching something that had been near the stolen article, find out the thief. They claim to be able to extract toads and other horrors from the bodies of their patients. Setting the mysterious part of the doctors aside, they have some really valuable medicines. I have seen people apparently in the last stage of consumption cured by them – it

seems a pity they should have taken to “white man’s medicines.” For blood-spitting they use a decoction of the fibrous roots of the spruce. For rheumatism, the root of the soap berry (from which lebrew is made), while the berry itself is considered an excellent stomachic. A decoction of swamp poplar bark and spruce roots is used in syphilis. The bark of the wild cherry is much used by the women, also tansy root.

The wild cherry is used both as a tonic and expectorant, and is good for consumptives. There is a plant resembling the anemone, the root of which when bruised makes a powerful blister; and another resembling the geranium, the root of which will cure ringworm and dry up an old sore. The inner bark of the pine is used early in spring when the sap is rising; the tree nettle is used as physic, also as a wash for the hair, which it renders thick, soft, and glossy. Wild strawberry acts as an astringent; it would take too long to enumerate the different herbs used by these Indians.

Their chief panacea for all ills is the sweat bath; this is nothing more than a hole dug in the ground and covered by a conical roof formed of green branches and earth, a small aperture is left in the side for the bather to crawl into; a fire is built outside, and a number of stones heated – these, when sufficiently hot, are placed in the sweat house; the bather then crawls in, taking with him a small kettle of water; closing the orifice, he drops the water gradually on the hot stones, till the house is filled with steam and heat; this he endures as long as possible; when he can stand it no longer, he rushes out and plunges into the cold river; the performance is repeated three or four times, according to taste. When the doctor cured, he was paid in blankets, horses, or cattle, according to agreement; but when unsuccessful, he often had to pay for it with his life. The doctors were often employed as mediators between the living and the dead; that is to say, when an offended ghost disturbed its late friends by unseemly scratchings and knockings the doctor was employed to enquire into the matter, and having ascertained the cause from the perturbed spirit, informed those whom it might concern. The general cause of trouble between the living and the dead being some neglect or slight to their memory; to appease the poor wandering spirit it was often necessary to exhume its late habitation. The disinterred bones were then carefully gathered together, each relation in turn lifting a bone from out of the mass of corruption, and placing it as nearly as possible in its proper place, on a clean new robe or blanket (the head being placed at the top, the rib bones in the middle, and the feet at the foot), clean new clothes were laid on the bones, the old weapons, if in good condition, restored to place, the whole being once more wrapped up and laid in the tomb; during this operation, the chief actors had their noses and ears stuffed with sweet-scented grass. When an Indian died, he was laid out in state on a couch of skins – everything put on the body was new – his bow and arrows were laid at his side along with his knife, his friends then assembled around him to feast – a portion of the feast reserved for him was burned, as also certain gifts and offerings, such as calico, clothing, &c.; when the feast was over, his friends advanced, and, taking his hand, bade him farewell. There was rather an amusing story, current some years ago, of a young man who bore little good will to a deceased chief, expressing an uncomplimentary wish while shaking hands with his corpse, when, to the horror of those present, and the young man in particular, by some relaxation of the muscles, the dead man’s hand closed on that of the living man, who tugged in vain to free himself from the vice-like grasp, and had finally to be released by his friends forcing open the dead chief’s hand; the young man was so terribly



frightened that he afterwards dwindled to a mere skeleton, and the doctor had hard work to chase away the evil spirit that, quitting the chief's corpse, had fastened on him. Immediately after a funeral takes place, the encampment is moved, lest the spirit of the deceased should revisit it; the friends next go about enquiring into the debts of the deceased, which are promptly paid, no matter of how long standing they are; the near relatives cut their hair and shave their eyebrows, and go about singing a low, wailing chaunt, in which the name of the deceased is very prominent. One strange custom is that a widow or widower is forbidden to eat meat and certain vegetables for a month, and must wear quantities of spruce bush inside their shirts, next their skin; this, I am told, is done to ward off the evil spirit now set free by the death of its victim, and ready to pounce upon a fresh one; it is also considered shocking for a widow to smoke for a month after the death of her husband. I was recently told of the death of a woman through neglect of these precautions, so that this superstition, at any rate, survives. A widow or widower invariably takes another spouse within three months. Carved figures, representing the deceased were frequently placed on their graves; these figures were clothed in their garments, which when faded were renewed. Cannibalism was never known among the Similkameens, though at some of the potlatches a live dog was torn to pieces and devoured. This practice is now quite given up; but about ten years ago, while living on the Okanagan Lake, I observed a dog with a thong tied round its nose, and the nose attached to one hind leg drawing the body of the dog into an uncomfortable position; on enquiring the reason, I was told that there was to be a potlatch, and the dog was getting ready for that; they were ashamed to say that it was to be eaten. That was the last time I have observed anything of the kind. The Indians were in a state of wild excitement over Chief Joseph's troubles across the border, were holding nocturnal war dances, and for the time being had gone back to a good many of their savage customs. Belief in the immortality of the soul prevails, and the departed spirit, in some cases, is supposed to take up its abode in some bird or animal. They are particularly afraid of a white owl on that account. There is a small owl which is supposed to give warning of impending death by sitting on a tree and calling, "I come for you – for you." Also, when a coyote or dog howls in a peculiar manner, it is said to denote death. The rattle of a rattle-snake is considered both a preventive and cure for headache. Eating the heart of a bear inspires courage. Certain herbs – also toads and snakes dried – have some occult virtue.

Some of the old women have great skill in brewing love potions, which, I am told, are in great request. A lock of a person's hair in the hands of certain women, gives the possessor control over the person from whose head the lock was severed. In the mountains there is a certain stone which is much venerated by the Indians; it is said that striking it will produce rain. Two years ago there was a bet between a Christian Indian, by the name of Wicam, and one of the few remaining heathens, about the striking of this stone; and it was agreed that if rain followed, the Christian should ride in the rain all day without any clothes on. As the weather was fine, and the sky cloudless, Wicam did not hesitate to agree to the heathen's terms; the stone was struck with a scoff at old traditions; shortly after the wind rose, the sky became overcast, and rain followed – not a little – but a week of steady, downpouring rain. The old heathen was triumphant. There is a place near Keremeos, where some large stones stand (possibly hurled down from the mountains by some earthquake), of which the Indians relate that some of their enemies coming to attack them were, by the power of a doctor, turned into stone.

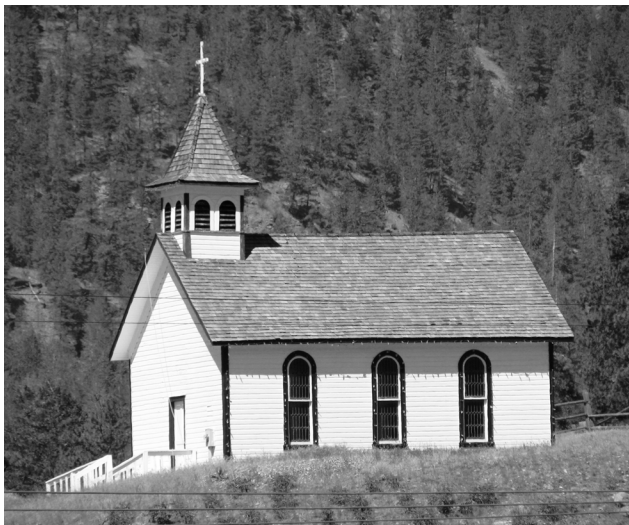
There are numerous other stories that the old men are fond of relating while sitting round their camp fires. One in particular struck me (because the Chinese, whom they greatly resemble, tell a similar story of the mountains of Thibet (sic)). In the mountains there live certain huge men; these men are so large, that a deer, hung by its neck in their belts, looks no larger than a chicken would do in a man's – the earth trembles as it echoes their tread – they resemble white men with long beards, and seem to be kindly in disposition. They are sensitive to pain, and shed tears for a mere nothing – one of their favourite amusements is catching fish. An Indian affirms that he was once made a prisoner by these “big men,” and although they kept a close watch on him, he was petted and kindly treated. Buckskins, which the women are expert at tanning, formerly formed their chief supply of clothing; both men and women were clad from head to heel in buckskin. These clothes were durable and variously ornamented. Beads obtained in trade from the whites, or dyed horsehair, or porcupine quills were used; the horsehair was dyed with ochre and roots; these garments looked remarkably nice. For shoes they used moccasins. The following process was employed in tanning: the deer's hide was first soaked in the river till the hair could be easily scraped off. It was then stretched over a pole and scraped with a bone, in the shape of a chisel, till all the hair was removed; the skin was then beaten with a round stone till the fibre was thoroughly broken; it was then rubbed with a mixture of deers' brains and wood ash, after which it was thoroughly manipulated till partially dry – a pit was then dug, in which a smouldering fire was started, a frame of poles was erected round the pit, the skin was wrapped round the poles, and a slow steady smoke kept up for some days – when removed, the skin was once more thoroughly manipulated, after which it was ready for use. It is a tedious process to make a good article, as it requires no end of elbow grease. Tobacco pipes are made from a soft stone, of a greenish-grey colour; this stone is also an article of trade, the other tribes valuing it highly; it is known by them as Similkameen stone. The pipes are very simple in form.

Red and yellow ochre is dug out of a cave or cleft in the bluffs of the Tulameen (north fork of the Similkameen). The word Tulameens (sic) means red earth or paint; this is used both as a paint and as a dye. Buckskins were often painted with it, and the young girls, when arrived at a marriageable age, have a strange custom of painting their faces with it. The marriage tie was not particularly sacred or binding – a wife was generally purchased for a certain number of cows, horses, or blankets, according to the estimated value of the woman; and if the husband or wife tired of each other, the price or its equivalent was returned by the woman's father or guardian; the parties were then free to contract another matrimonial alliance, or if both parties were agreeable, wives were “swapped,” and often boot given. I have known as many as ten horses given by an old man for a young wife, and when the girl eloped with a younger man, the disconsolate husband insisted on having not only the horses, but their increase returned. Another man gave a log house as boot in trading his wife. It was thought wicked for a man or woman to marry any of their mother's relations, but they might marry their father's relatives if they liked. A plurality of wives was allowed, two being the general; old Spentlum had six; he employed them rocking gold dust. Adultery was sometimes punished by cutting off the woman's nose, or splitting her ears; though it was generally compromised by the other party doing likewise, or receiving compensation (usually horseflesh) from the offender.

In one case where the wife of a chief was carried off by an Indian of a kindred tribe, but living across the boundary line, the chief despatched (sic) a messenger with orders to ride after the runaway couple night and day, and take summary vengeance on the man and bring the woman back; this order the messenger did not hesitate to perform most thoroughly, for on overtaking the rival of his chief he slew him, carved him up to his own satisfaction, smeared himself from head to foot with his blood, and returned in triumph with the woman. This man was in ordinary circumstances a polite, kindly individual; he only obeyed orders. As the Indian thus killed was considered by his own kinsmen to be a very bad man, no revenge was taken but the minister of justice was warned to keep the British side of the line lest the American authorities should make it unpleasant for him. Husband and wife do not hold property in common, but each retains whatever they possessed before marriage, and also anything they may subsequently acquire. The strongest affection that an Indian seems capable of exists between father and son and mother and daughter. Slaves taken in war were well treated, but always had one eye blemished to mark them. The Similkameens will often prove their devotion to a dead relative in a most revolting manner. Once when a corpse was being removed from one burial ground to another, a friend of the deceased perceiving some drops oozing from the corpse instantly caught and rubbed himself with the loathsome exudation, in the belief that some portion of his late friend would become incorporated with himself. In another case, where a young woman died from rupture of a blood vessel, a portion of her blood remaining clotted on the floor, her mother gathered it up and swallowed it up in her frenzy of grief; afterwards when she reflected on what she had done she could not sleep or eat, but came to me for medicine to drive the horror she felt from her mind. This woman was a Christian, and usually kind and mild in disposition. The Okanagans of the lake did not originally belong to that locality, but came from Spokane (sic) and the Columbia; they drove the Shuswaps (a mild race) out before them. In the wars between these people it was a favourite practice of the victorious Okanagans to drive the defeated Shuswaps into their kee-kee-lee houses and then throw down fire-brands into the midst of them, killing those who tried to escape death by the flames. There were many cruelties practised by both the Okanagans and the Similkameens from kindness, and without the least idea of their being cruel. I was told once that one of the tribe was sick, so sick that he could not eat or move himself; but as he knew that the other members of his family wished to go hunting he told them to go; so the dying man was laid on a mat and covered over, face and all, with robes and blankets and left for a week. When his friends returned from their hunt he was dead. Then they went to a great expense to bury him. Another case that was brought under my notice was that of a young man dying of lingering consumption and thoroughly tired of life. One day his father came into the store and asked for grave clothes. I asked, "Is Chilk-palst dead?" "No," replied his father, "but he wishes to be buried to-morrow, he is tired of waiting." And buried he was sure enough, some said before he died, others indignantly denied this when asked; the Indians are chary of mentioning such matters now, as they are amenable to the laws of the whites. I cannot, however, help thinking that such things are sometimes done now, and also that there is a good deal of infanticide practiced among them. Chiefs formerly had the power of life and death, and did not scruple to use it. The late Incow-la, who was head chief both of the Similkameens and the Okanagans, was a stern, just man, a friend to the whites, and feared by his own people. He used to execute justice in rather an appalling manner; the delinquent or delinquents, as the case might be, were lassoed and dragged at the heels of a wild horse till death ensued. When one man killed

another, where summary vengeance was not taken, blood money was demanded. In one case five cows, several horses, and a hundred dollars was the price agreed on. Nevertheless the Indians have a strong sense of justice. An Indian who was dying from the effect of wounds received in a drunken brawl, called his friends together and told them that the fault lay with himself as he had begun the quarrel, and he was alone to blame for the consequences. He then made them all promise that the man who had inflicted the wounds on him should be held blameless, and also that they would defend him from “white man’s justice.” This promise made to the dying man was faithfully kept. Theft was punishable by whipping, though in some cases restitution was sufficient. The Indians are said to be great thieves, but I have not found them so; I have lived surrounded by them for many years, but as long as there were none but Indians near I never locked the house door; indeed, in summer the door was often left open all night, and no one ever disturbed me.

I have lived alone among these people for years (sometimes not seeing a white face for three months) and never met with anything but kindness; they have always been ready to help when any assistance was wanted, and on the alert to give warning of any danger. Some five or six years ago, when the Nicola Indians meditated a rising, an old Indian travelled fifty miles on foot to warn us and beg us to go, or at any rate send our children to Hope, out of danger. The Similkameen of to-day are a peace-loving people: indeed, they have too much property to wish for war, and they have frequently said that if trouble arose between the white settlers and any of the kindred tribes, they would go to the mountains and abide the event, as they would neither fight the whites or their own kinsmen. These Indians are proud and independent. They will accept nothing from the Government; though they have been offered agricultural implements, they prefer buying them themselves. They have their own farms on the reserve, and employ white and Chinese labour, they disdain manual labour. They possess cattle and large bands of horses, hogs, and chickens; they are employed in driving cattle and in breaking horses. Formerly they were expert horse thieves. An Indian who was known to me boasted that he could steal any horse, the following occurrence took place. A man travelling through the country, not wishing to lose his horse, tied a long rope to it and slept on the end of the rope. The Indian, who had been watching for the horse, crawled



up, severed the rope with his knife, then deliberately filling his mouth with grass, chewed the end of the rope left with the sleeper and quietly led the horse away. The traveller waking and examining the rope, imagined that the horse had bitten it in two itself and escaped. At the Indian village Chu-chu-ewa (sic), there is a small church, and most of the Indians have comfortable cabins. They are every day becoming more civilized, and the time is not far distant (if they survive the civilizing process) when there will be little or no distinction between a Similkameen Indian and his white brethren.

**St. Anne’s Church - present day Chuchuwayha<sup>xii</sup>**

## CHAPTER TWELVE

### Brought Music To B.C.

**Printed in the Similkameen Star on February 4, 1937  
(Foreword written by the Similkameen Star Editor)**

Which is the oldest piano in British Columbia?

It is probably that dainty, beautiful, little instrument belonging to Mrs. S. L. Allison, Vancouver, a pioneer woman whose adventures in the Similkameen and whose literary talent have made her well known.

Let her tell herself about this famous piano:

On April 5, 1859, my sister's sixteenth birthday, she was taken by my mother and stepfather to choose a little piano for herself that she might practice on it without using the grand.

There were a variety of makes to choose from – Chapels, Colins, Birkenhead – but the one she liked was by William Evestaff, an old gentleman living on Sloan Street, London. He personally supervised the manufacture of his pianos and gave the finishing touches himself.

Some people called him a crank; my sister liked him. He explained the double action to her and the other then modern improvements in his pianos.

I can remember when the piano came home it was put into a small room off the conservatory; the weather was still cold and there was a glowing fire that helped the twilight to lighten the room, which was furnished with dark oak, the hangings crimson, and my sister in all the glory of sweet sixteen, dressed in a cashmere gown that harmonized with the hangings. Her gowns were fashioned in mid-Victoria style, with wide sleeves that were opened at the shoulder and a yard long. I remember her seated at the piano playing sweet, now old-fashioned themes, such as the girls of those days liked to play. It lives in my memory to this day as fresh as ever.

In 1860, when we made up our minds to emigrate to B.C., she resolved to take the piano too, as it was small and easy to pack. It was shipped on a Hudson's Bay boat to come around the Horn, we ourselves travelling by Royal Mail route via Panama. We arrived in British Columbia in August and the piano arrived in December, 1860.

The dear old piano was taken from the steamboat landing in Captain Irving's boat to Hope, thence by oxcart over a rough road through snags and stumps for a distance of two miles to Hopelands, where we lived, and great was the rejoicing when it arrived. I feel sure that our two black cats, Smutty and Fusty, which we had brought from home, recognized it, for they began rubbing themselves against it and purring.

Many a good musical evening we had that winter. When Judge Saunders and Annie Moresby were married, it was again taken to Hope by oxcart, and on other festive occasions, served that same joyful purpose.

When my sister and Edgar Dewdney were married, it went once more by Captain Irving's boat down the Fraser to New Westminster, where it entertained many people.

Then, again, when my sister and her husband took up a place on the Cariboo Road and went there to live, it was left with my mother and myself at Hope, and when I married, my sister gave it to me, but there was no road fit to convey it over the mountains, so it was left with my mother until she went to Ottawa with my sister.

Then poor, old piano's troubles began. It was used by the school children, was taken to saloon dances, and generally banged about until the wires were broken and finally one leg – then it was thrust into a leaky shed, where the poor thing remained until the Great Northern Railway was completed into Princeton. There it was again brought to me like a wounded warrior, and now it stands in my Vancouver home, bravely facing the world again. It still has the power of reflection, for its mirrors are perfect.

If it can think as well as reflect, it certainly has food for thought.



**Pencil sketch of Hopelands by Edgar Dewdney<sup>xiii</sup>**

## CHAPTER THIRTEEN

### Correspondence

**The following was a letter to the editor written by  
Susan Allison and printed in the  
Princeton Star on January 8, 1925**

\* \* \*

**“TULAMEEN”**  
Yactulameen. Jan. 4<sup>th</sup>

Editor, Star:

I see by your last week's paper that you question the correctness of Mr. Logie's statement that the name "Tulameen" when translated into English means "red earth." I have lived here for fifty-eight years and I have always understood that that was the proper translation.

The old Indians, Immanchuten (the father of his people), Tattle-hasket (the man who stands high) and Nic-o-lace (the man with tooth ache) told me that Tulameen meant red earth, and Similkameen, yellow earth. The Hudson's Bay Co. knew the junction of the two rivers as the Vermilion Forks and I think that you will find that name on the old government maps. The place where I now reside was and still is called Yac-tu-la-meen, "the place where paint is sold."

It may interest you to know that formerly the Similkameen Indians, every summer traded with the Blackfeet and that Yactulameen was their camping ground during their transactions. The commodities exchanged were red paint, fish and berries, which the Similkameens offered in exchange for buffalo robes and dried buffalo tongues. The paint was obtained from the bluffs on what is now the Coalmont Road, some distance above Chas. Hunter's coal mine. I think that Billy Britton has the place staked. In ploughing we often find at Yactulameen old flint arrow and spear heads.

Mr. Logie has also said that Kelowna meant grizzly bear, so it does in the Similkameen tongue, Skum-a-hist is the black bear – this I learned in tradings. Nicola is the corruption of Incowla, who was a very great man amongst the Indians and gave his name to his home. Incowla's sway extended over Nicola, Thomson River and Okanagan. When J.F. Allison came here in 1858 the memory of this chief was still fresh in the minds of his people and no doubt is mentioned in the records of the Hudson's Bay Co. When Mr. Allison visited Nicola in '58 there were no white settlers in that valley and it was then called Nicola – the Italian from whom it is sometimes said to have derived its name had not then arrived.

Yours sincerely,  
(Mrs.) S. L. ALLISON.



**Susan and her daughter, Alice<sup>xiv</sup>**



## CHAPTER FOURTEEN

### A Tribute To Grandmother

What follows is a beautiful and touching tribute written by Evadne Mackenzie who was the granddaughter of John Fall and Susan Louisa Allison:

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Sometimes it's nice, for just a moment, to return to those golden days of yesteryear - to a time when life was less complicated, manners mattered and looking after each other was a given, not an option.

My name is Evadne Mackenzie and I am the granddaughter of Susan Allison. "Who?" you ask! Well, to some, the Allison name has a special meaning. It is synonymous with early Canadian history but more specifically with early B.C. history. It represents the passion, toil, love and loss for pioneering, among many accomplishments, the road we drive to go to the Okanogan via Vancouver. Allison Pass leads to that quaint little town called Princeton, where we stop to grab a sandwich and refuel to continue on from here to there. But to me, it is so much more than that. It is a name which invokes magical memories, and the determination of an early feminist woman and her philosophies that to this day, are a part of my waking hours.

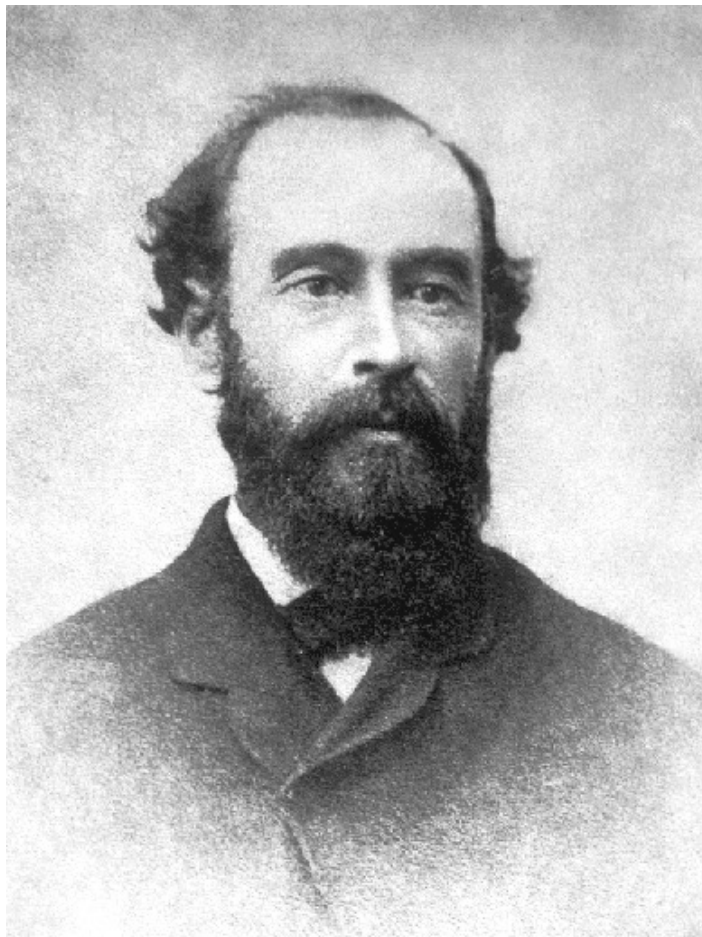
Grandmother was a grand dame; a woman of intrigue courage and substance. She stood tall through adversity, and was at the forefront of racial equality. She was a woman of dignity and honour as well as a woman who could tell a story and have a room spellbound in a way that still eludes the Hollywood big shots. My grandmother was as wise as she was mysterious. She was my mentor. For me she was a consistent, solid, creative, loving human being, who was regarded by all who knew her as a trustworthy confidant. When Grandmother was in the room you simply knew you were in the presence of greatness.

The mystery of my grandmother, I now realize, was her quiet intelligence coupled with her deep spirituality. She was born in Ceylon and it was there that she developed a profound and lifelong interest in eastern philosophy. She took up meditation and it soon became a way of life for her. Nothing took priority over this practice. As a young girl I remember distinctly that sunrise, high noon and sunset would find Grandma and my mother, Alice, observing this practice; oblivious to everything, but their inner peace. At that time, I resented this absence from reality, particularly at noon, as it left the care and feeding of all the younger children to me. It would be a long time before I would see that their beliefs and practices were the key factors in retaining their sanity and health during the harsh times of war, poverty, chaos, death and uncertainty. In fact, so strong were Grandma's beliefs, and so honoured were her writings, that when the young East Indian philosopher and prince, Krishnamurti, visited B.C., my grandmother was on his visit list. I thought at the time he was a rather strange fellow dressed in his vibrant purple robe with wide sleeves embroidered with gold and orange, wearing shoes that looked like comical slippers with long, pointy toes that curled back around to his ankles. Regardless of this unusual style for men (we were not

accustomed to men in dresses), Grandmother had instilled in us the value of listening and respectful behaviour and that is exactly what we did. He turned out to be a fascinating individual and a profound thinker. Today he is regarded as a foremost 20<sup>th</sup> century thinker and philosopher. Krishnamurti was extremely impressed with Grandmother's willingness to seek solitude and meditation as a means of cultivating her compassion and understanding of life and death. He made quite a fuss over our grandmother. She sat quietly and absorbed it all with her usual, unassuming dignity.

While her mannerisms, speech, and parenting skills rode on the tails of the Victorian era, clearly she was an icon of freethinking. She respected women who could do for themselves, and admired people who read and thought for themselves rather than simply following the dictates of society.

Shortly after the prince left, I remember a friend of Grandma's dropping in to visit. Naturally she came with a calling card. People just didn't drop in. They came by with a



**John Fall Allison<sup>xv</sup>**

calling card that had an appointment date on it and thus the visit was arranged. When the woman came, I recall Grandma saying adamantly, that she could not understand a woman needing to wait for her husband to make the final decision. How ridiculous. A while later the conversation turned to death and Grandma said, "I really don't want to die for sometime as we are living in such interesting times, and I do want to see what is going to happen next. But when I do die, I will not be cremated, but put in a box and shipped to Princeton." Death in our family was embraced rather than avoided. Perhaps it was her eastern views in combination with her willingness to embrace life and death that gave all of us a feeling that death was not a time to single out sadness, but a time to reflect on the positive events of a life, regardless of how long or short that life was. So many loved ones died at early ages that there was barely time to know them. Clearly Grandmother feared neither life nor death.

Another colourful visitor to her home was Billy Miner, the infamous and ever-charming bank robber. Of course at that time, she was unaware of the true nature of his occupation. Yet like most women, she was engaged by his charismatic manner, nimble dance style and of course his animated and delightfully told stories. Grandma loved to recall that Miner had the ability to weave a story of colourful truths, half truths and truths that had potential. But then, Grandma was a charmer and story teller herself. Naturally her stories were all truths. While she could spin a colourful yarn with the best of them, her shining strengths were her ability to listen and pay attention. In fact, she was a femme fatal long before the word had even been coined. She made both men and women, regardless of race or creed, feel unique and interesting. Alas, she was an original bohemian and, if alive today, would take the country by storm.

Grandma was as complex as she was simple. Her principals were as ridged as steel, and they were both preached and practiced. She was indeed a stern, yet somehow loving task master. She often said, "Good manners are the passport to good society." Dear me, this poor woman would turn in her grave if she could see what we call acceptable behaviour today. She taught each of us (and God knows there were plenty of us) to be honest, resourceful, and compassionate and above all, to respect our elders. Our home was always open to travellers and distinguished guests. First Nations people were as welcome at our hearth and table, as were the frequent government dignitaries.

Her life with John Fall Allison had brought her in contact with many of the early politicians, government agents and First Nations people. She would often comment that of all the things he brought to the relationship it was his love of plants and their medicinal qualities that she most enjoyed. John was an early herbalist and taught my grandmother the ancient art of healing with plants. His knowledge came primarily from his many First Nations friends. As children, however, we didn't especially appreciate the molasses and sulphur given to us as a spring purge or the honey and comfrey poultices plastered on our wounds or the sick people who constantly sought out Grandma as their only doctor; but she helped anyone who came to her door. John was seldom home, and so the duties and burden of the family fell to Grandma. As with everything, she handled it with dignity and grace.

My grandmother truly loved her husband. She often remarked that it was his constant courage and loyalty that drew them together. She said of him, that his word was his bond, and that he could be trusted in business with a mere hand shake.

His death was a great loss to her, for she had lost not only a husband, but a trusted friend.

I feel blessed to have had such a beautiful lady as a grandmother and mentor. Her presence has never been forgotten; and her courage to live each day to the fullest, laid a path that helped cornerstone the foundation of early B.C. history.



**Painting of young Susan Allison<sup>xvi</sup>**



**Susan Allison with her youngest children<sup>xvii</sup>**

## CHAPTER FIFTEEN

### The Biography Of Susan Louisa Allison

**By Lori Thomas (Great-Granddaughter)**

Susan Louisa Allison (nee Moir) was born on August 18, 1845 in Colombo, Ceylon. She was the youngest child of Stratton Moir and Susan Louisa Mildern.

Her parents married in London in April, 1841. Stratton's father was William Moir of Elgin Scotland, son of John Moir who came from Sterlingshire to Aberdeen married to Helen Roy granddaughter of "Rob Roy." Susan was the daughter of Jan Mildern, a Dutch sea captain of Amsterdam.

Stratton and Susan's oldest child, a son, Stratton Jr., was born in London. Their daughters Jane Shaw, born April 5, 1843 and Susan Louisa were born at "Dhekinde", Ambegamoa, a plantation owned jointly by Stratton Moir and Alexander Rogers.

Their father, Stratton, died before Susan was five years old. The family returned to London, England where they lived with relatives who enabled the children to attend good schools where they learned French, Latin and Greek.

In 1860, Susan's mother married Scotsman, Thomas Glennie. A man of limitless charm, Glennie had previously acquired and squandered several small fortunes, but that did not deter Mrs. Moir from marrying him. He had recently inherited yet another fortune and had made up his mind to immigrate to the gold shores of British Columbia to assume the life of a country squire.

Susan wrote of herself and her sister Jane: "As we were young and keen for adventure we insisted on going (with our Mother)...I think we had all seen farms but that was all we knew about them." Their brother, Stratton chose to remain in England.

The family sailed from England to San Francisco by way of Panama, where they rode the newly completed railway across the Isthmus. In early August they departed on the "Otter" for Victoria. Thomas Glennie had letters of introduction to Governor James Douglas as well as Dr. J.S. Helmcken. Douglas advised Glennie to continue to Hope, which was the head of the navigation on the Fraser River at that time. On the steamer from New Westminster to Hope, the family met Edgar Dewdney and Judge Begbie. It was Susan's 15th birthday when they arrived in Hope.

In Susan's memoirs she wrote, "None of us knew how to wash clothes, we had a tin bathtub that we brought out with us that we used for a washtub and as we were ignorant as to the use of washboards, we bent over the bath and rubbed with our hands until they bled." She went on to say, "another difficulty was baking bread ... We sometimes forgot to put in the baking powder and once, in a hurry, grabbed a can of sulphur by mistake and did not find out until the bread began to cook."

They were from a privileged English family that was raised with servants to do their cooking and cleaning.

In 1864, Susan's sister, Jane married Edgar Dewdney and the couple moved to New Westminster. That same year Thomas Glennie, who was once again out of money, sold the family's home and property and deserted Susan and her mother in Hope. Jane invited her mother and sister to live with her in New Westminster. At the age of 21, Susan received a modest inheritance from a great-aunt and rented a cottage with her mother.

The following year Mrs. Landvoight, a friend in Hope, advised Susan and her mother to come back and start a small school. This they did, and it was at the home of Mrs. Landvoight that Susan first met John Fall Allison.

John Fall Allison at the age of 43 and Susan Moir, then 23, were married on September 3, 1868 at Christ Church in Hope. Their honeymoon consisted of riding by horseback to the Similkameen.

In July, 1869 Susan and John had the first of fourteen children. All of her children were raised as ladies and gentlemen and were each, in turn, sent to stay with Edgar and Jane Dewdney for their schooling. Edgar and Jane did not have children of their own and embraced the opportunity to have their nieces and nephews stay with them.

Beginning in 1872, the Allison family took their cattle to winter pasture in the Okanagan at Sunnyside (now known as West Kelowna). Their home was constructed near a den of rattle snakes and each spring the family was overrun with rattlers - they were found in the beds, cooking pots and bureau drawers. John purchased some pigs, which proved effective in exterminating the snakes, but Susan found the pigs more of a nuisance than the rattlers and soon got rid of them. During the five seasons the Allisons spent in the Okanagan, no one was ever bitten. Their original home has been restored by Quail's Gate Winery and up until 2009, was used as their wine tasting room. It is aptly named Allison House.

Susan learned the Native customs and to speak the Chinook trading language. As well she learned to make her children's clothes and moccasins, and to braid straw for hats and lariats. She baked bread, cured fish, dried venison, ploughed and planted a garden and kept accounts for their store in Princeton.

John built good relations with the Indians by learning to speak their languages and learning their customs. He started ranching, discovered new routes into the Similkameen, and was among the first to discover Princeton possessed gold, copper and coal for mining. He acted as Gold Commissioner, Post Master, and Justice of the Peace in the Princeton area. John Fall Allison caught pneumonia while roofing an addition to their home and died on October 28, 1897 at the age of 72.

After the death of her husband, during the last 30 years of her life, Susan was able to dedicate much of her time to writing. The Chicago Scroll Publishing Co. in 1900 published her long narrative poem, "In-Cow-Mas-Ket", as well as other poems and Indian legends under the

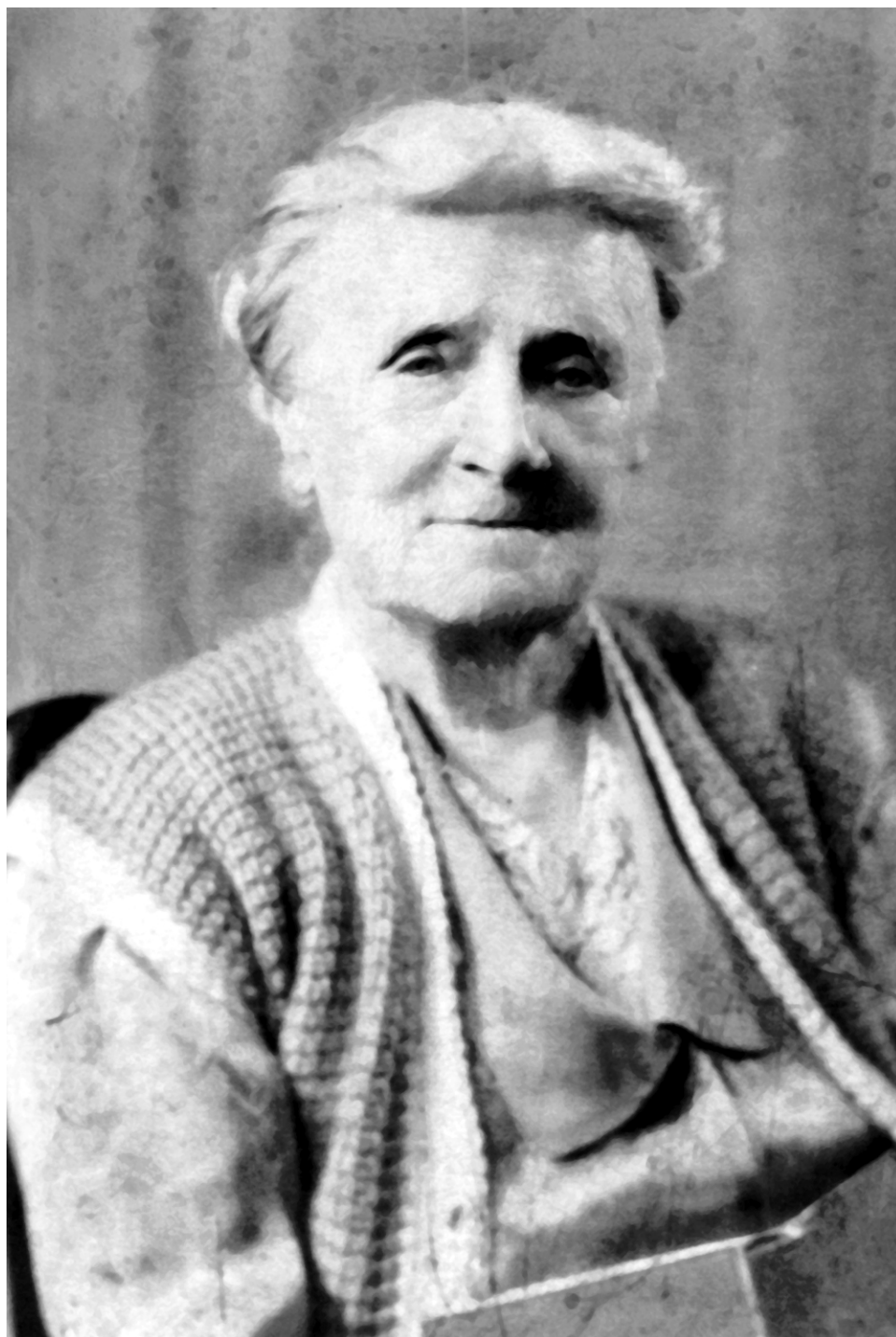
pen name Stratton Moir. “Account of the Similkameen Indians” was published in the British Association for the Advancement of Science report in 1892, and was later reprinted in the Similkameen Star. Susan Allison’s “Recollections” originally appeared in series in the Similkameen Star as well as in the Vancouver Province. Her writings are of considerable importance as they present wonderful insight into the lives of the settlers and the aboriginal peoples in the late 1800’s and early 1900’s.

Susan remained in Princeton until 1929, at which time she sold much of the property to her son-in-law, Dickson Sandes, who subdivided the land and sold the first town lots in Princeton. In 1929, Susan moved to Vancouver to live with one of her daughters. Susan Louisa Allison died in Vancouver on February 1, 1937 at the age of 91. She was buried alongside her husband at the Castle Rock family cemetery on the Allison property just outside of Princeton.

On September 4, 2010 Susan Louisa Allison will be named a Person of National Significance by the Federal Government for recording life in the Okanagan and Similkameen Valley settlements in early British Columbia.



**Grave of Susan Allison<sup>xviii</sup>**



**Susan Allison in her older years<sup>xix</sup>**



## CHAPTER SIXTEEN

### Mother Of Similkameen Comes Home To Rest

#### **(Obituary of Susan Allison from the Similkameen Star, February 4, 1937)**

A life that all but spanned a century, and, for the Similkameen that knew and honoured it best, linked past and present, ended beautifully in a Vancouver nursing home on Monday, 1<sup>st</sup> February and on Friday, Mrs. Susan Louisa Allison returned to the Similkameen to rest in the vale she loved, and the land of her labours.

No sorrow need be felt in the passing of Mrs. Allison. Hers was a beautiful life, full and rounded: a life of labour and of love, where the constant threat of the untamed elements established real values. Hers was a double mother's joy: she lived to see a family and a community grow up about her. "Mother of the Similkameen", she rejoiced in that dual felicity. And, realizing with a calm and kindly philosophy, the truth of life and of nature, she neither regretted nor opposed the inevitable, but accepted her decline with placid assurance.

Few lives could hold more of experience than hers. She was born, Susan Louisa Moir, in far-off Colombo, Ceylon 18<sup>th</sup> August, 1845, daughter of an emigrant tea-planter. From her father she inherited a poise and refinement, nurtured by a girlhood spent in Old England, that all the rigours of pioneering in the wilderness could not disturb or dismay. She arrived in Hope, with her foster-father and her family, via Panama and Victoria, in 1860. For a time she assisted her mother in the conduct of a pioneer school there, and in 1868 accompanied John Fall Allison as his bride to his new-found empire of Similkameen. Here, save for a sojourn in the Okanagan in the seventies, she lived until declining health forced her to seek the milder climate of the Coast in 1929. In a land where doctors were an unknown luxury, she reared fourteen children, and ministered to the needs of the valley at large.

When the century turned, and obsolescent shaded into modern, she became an authority on the early story of the Interior, and wrote copiously. She will be best remembered for her understanding of the native Indian, nowhere better illustrated than in her poem of the "Hiawatha" pattern, "In-cow-mas-ket."

The funeral Friday was in simple appropriateness. Bearing the tributes of the entire community, she went to rest in the land of her labours, in the family plot on the wind-swept slope of Castle Rock, at the side of her husband, called thirty years before.

A service was held in Vancouver Wednesday, conducted by Rev. R. Herbison, formerly of Princeton. Rev. J. C. Goodfellow officiated at a local service in St. Paul's, and at the grave-side. Pall-bearers, selected to represent the Dominion and Provincial Governments and old timers, included: E. J. Rotherham, C. Nichols, A. Gould, S. R. Gibson, P. W. Gregory and P. Russell.



**Restored Allison home – now part of Quails’ Gate Winery<sup>xx</sup>**

**Plate References**

Cover photo courtesy Lori Thomas.

<sup>i</sup> Photo courtesy Lori Thomas.

<sup>ii</sup> Photo courtesy Lori Thomas.

<sup>iii</sup> Photo courtesy Princeton Museum and Archives.

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