

Reflections on Quilomene Bar, 2016  
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Quilomene Bar's distinctiveness was urged on me by Isabel Arcasa (Bragg 2011), Colville elder extraordinaire and mainstay of the Nespelem community, in the late 1970s. This reflection is a tribute to her kindness and aid almost forty years ago, as well as a way of putting faces and people along this stretch of the Columbia: a face on a place. She had good reason to be sensitive to the Vantage area because of the treatment of her mother Elizabeth there as a young widow. Escorted to Chelan by an uncle, she met and married Isabel's father, who provided her with a better life. Elizabeth was herself the daughter of the chief at Entiat, and as such was first married into the dynastic family of the Split Sun line of Moses Columbia ~ Sinkyuse chiefs holding the hereditary name title referring to an 'eclipse' (Ray 1960, Ruby and Brown 1965). According to my chapter in the Plateau handbook,

The Snkyuse (or Columbias) were east and south of the Big Bend. Their main village was at the mouth of Rock Island Creek, and their resource domain was transected by Grand Coulee, Moses Coulee, Moses Lake, and the Potholes region. There were distinct subgroups at Quilomene Bar on the southwest, where a separate subdialect was spoken (the Quilomene band,  $snq^w\text{əlq}^w\text{əlmínx}^w$ ), and at Creston in the northeast. The central location of their territory and the siting of their winter villages along its borders put them in contact with all the other Middle Columbia River Salishans [as well as Sahaptin like the neighboring Wanapums] (Miller 1998: 253).

Because the Sinkayuse network was so extensive, they had access eastward and involvement with Flathead and Sahaptians. After acquiring horses, they led bison hunts onto the Plains, which encouraged the development of a confederacy of Middle Columbia tribes under the leadership of the family of Split Sun ( $səq'talk^w\text{úsm}$ , also known as Half Sun and Shooktalkoosum). Salishans living along the rivers draining the western Cascades developed trade and marriage networks with Coast Salish, such as between the Skagit (Southern Coast Salish) and the Chelan. Their hunting of mountain goats and other alpine mammals was important for the regional trade. The Wenatchee [~ Pskwaws] traded through formal partners with Kittitas and Snoqualmies (Miller 1998: 253).

The presence of the Sinkyuse and their task leaders on this land is apparent in present-day place names, which favor Moses himself at Moses Coulee and Lake (Kinkade 1981). The tribe occupied an extensive region, abounding in natural resources and well as introduced needs for gardens and horse pastures (Spier 1936, Kinkade 1967, Scheuerman 1982, Miller 1989, 1990). Aside from fords, horses were brought across the Columbia during low water in the Fall, when they were moved to protected winter meadows. Moses himself ranged as far east as Montana, where Blackfeet killed his father and older brother, in well organized bison hunts relying on horses. To the west, he went to the coast, especially Fort Vancouver on the lower Columbia, bringing back trade goods

and livestock. Though he ranged throughout the region, he seems to have had a personal preference for the western or right bank of the Columbia, with his birthplace variously given as Wenatchee Flats to Vantage. His father was said to have been born in Moses Coulee, where there was a tribal garden.

Quilomene Bar was of an older order (Nelson 1969, 1973), however, as the name itself indicates {snq<sup>v</sup>əlq<sup>w</sup>əlmínəx<sup>w</sup>}. In Interior Salish, {-q<sup>w</sup>1-} is a word root meaning ‘to roast,’ or, as Mattina (1987: 166, 296) says, ‘barbeque’. In Salish, repeating, doubling, reduplicating this root indicates a plural ‘barbequings’. The root {-min-} refers to a ‘skewer, spit, stick’ supporting whatever is being roasted, such as meat and fish, especially salmon along that shore of the Columbia. Game meat was also brought there to be roasted, and – given the present evidence in the 2014 drawdown of pestles, fire cracked rocks, and cooked animal bones – pounded into flour or pemmican.

It is this visible evidence that suggests that the place name derives from this human activity rather than something in the landscape that looks like skewers. By tradition, native places come from the land it(her)self and the actions of Coyote or another transformer in mythic times. In other words, the bar was “ordained” as a place favoring barbeque skewer from ancient times. Humans are not powerful enough to name aspects of nature; and only can name other humans because of past communal and family efforts passing on these designations.

Isabel noted that the Quilomene Bar dialect had longer endings on some of their words. Its position on the better watered west bank of the river provided easier access to hunting in the Cascades foothills, as well as the desirable sockeye fishery at Wenatchi. Indeed, the likely explanation for the Quilomene dialect is that it was an intermediate link in a linguistic chain transitional between Columbian and Piskwaws speech communities. Both spoke downriver forms of Interior Salish, but with different inflections and a few tell tale words.

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