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Selish| Spartans of the West

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The University of Montana

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The SELISH; SPARTANS of the WEST

by

Albert J. Partoll

Presented in partial fulfillment of the requirement for the degree of Master of Arts.

State University of Montana

1930

[Signature]
Chairman Exam. Com.
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Introductory Note

This historical narrative is concerned with the Selish or Flathead nation of Western Montana. In this thesis the treatment of them has not been of a laudatory nature but strictly concerned with verified historical facts. It is but fitting that this treatise of them be dedicated to the memory of their chieftain and counsellor—Chief Charlot—last to govern the Selish in their traditional home, the Bitter Root valley.
The Selish or Flathead tribe originally inhabited the Bitter Root valley and also the Jocko valley, as far north as Flathead Lake and southward as far as Thompson Falls. The Bitter Root valley with its mild climate was ideally suited to year-round residence and to horse raising, and was regarded as the true residence of the Selish, while the Jocko district was chiefly a temporary abode and hunting place.

The Bitter Root valley is drained by a river which was called In-schu-te-schu, Selish for red willow. The flat connecting the Bitter Root and Jocko valleys was called Spletemen, meaning the place where the Bitter Root plant grew in abundance. Almost centrally located between the two valleys was a stand of tall pines, known as council grove, the meeting place of the Selish and their friends, for council, for buffalo hunts, or for war.

The neighbors of the Selish were the Kalispell or Upper Pend d'Oreilles, the Kootenai, and the Nez Perce over the mountains to the west. The Kalispells or Upper Pend d'Oreilles were also horse Indians and engaged in the chase as a means of securing food. They were closely allied with the Selish both in friendship and by inter-marriage, and often accompanied them on their buffalo hunts east to the plains. Their home

was more northerly and above that of the Selish in the vicin-
ity of the northern end of Flathead lake.

The Kootenai lived around Flathead lake and along the
Flathead river, and were for the main part canoe Indians.
They were also close friends of the Flatheads or Selish and
mingled with them and the Kalispells. Both the Kalispells and
the Kootenai shared the hunting ground in the Jocko district
with their Bitter Root friends.

A traditional affair was the meeting of the tribes at
Council grove, situated seven miles west of Missoula, where
they were frequently joined by the Nez Perces, their friends
to the west, in their buffalo hunting expeditions. It was at
Council grove that Governor Stevens in 1855 negotiated the
treaty with the Confederated Flathead nation.

The home of the Selish, the Bitter Root valley, is
located between the main ridge of the Rocky Mountains to the
east and the Bitter Root range to the west, on the Pacific
slope. Situated in the Jocko\(^2\) district is a large lake,
Flathead or Selish lake, from which drains a large river.
This river together with the Bitter Root and the Missoula
river, form for the main part the Clark's Fork of the Columbia
river.

\(^2\) So called because Jacques Finley had early opened trading
with the Selish on what is now Jocko creek. The Indians
pronounced Jacques as Jocko. An early map (1841) by
Charles Wilkes lists such a creek as Jacques.
According to tradition the Bitter Root valley was the home of the Selish from the beginning of time. It was here that the tribe originated, and lived. Little wonder that they so cherished this valley, for here and in the vicinity the Bitter Root grew abundantly, and streams supplied fish, and other necessities of life were easily secured. A natural phenomena was the mildness of the climate of this valley, the year round, and the favorite wintering place of the Selish.

The Selish were undoubtedly a most unique western tribe, for they possessed certain characteristics that were apparently eastern. Their traditional buffalo hunts that were made year after year, even at great risk and danger from hostile tribes through whose territory they travelled east to the plains, suggests a plains tribe. Their permanent dwelling, the tipi was also a plains characteristic, and their great versatility in talking with signs, which is not characteristic of western tribes, are undoubtedly significant features that must be mentioned.

The Selish were also noted for their exceptional bravery, their heroism in battle, their good faith toward others, and their generally inoffensive conduct, all of which contrasts them with other Indians of the west.

Much controversy has arisen over the name of Flathead as applied to the Selish or Flathead tribe of western Montana, whose early residence was in the Bitter Root valley. Many theories have been offered as to why they were so called since they did not mutilate their heads as the name implies.

One theory is that they were so named (Tetes-Plates) Flatheads by the early first Canadian voyageurs, because slaves from the coast with deformed heads were among them. Another theory is that owing to the manner in which they fixed their hair, which gave the impression of flatness to the head, they were so called.

Still another theory is that they were so called in derision to the fact that they did not deform their heads, in contrast to those who did.

However in research covering every possible source of the origin of the name as applied to them one theory has come to light that is without question the basis for the name of Flathead as applied to the Selish.

In the sign language, better known as the gesture language of the Indians, it was customary for tribes linguistically different to identify themselves and others by signs designating characteristics of body or dress. The Selish or Flatheads


were identified in this sign language by patting the head with the right hand above and back of the ear. It is self evident that in seeking the verbal equivalent the translation of Flathead might easily be inferred. Thus the name of Flathead was applied to the Selish in translation of their tribal sign and not because of any ethnic mutilation.

With the facts self evident that the Selish were called Flathead due to their tribal symbol, it is not surprising that they would be confused with certain coast tribes that deformed their heads and were also called Flathead.

Larocque, a fur trader for the Northwest Company of Canada, in 1805 was trading east of the mountains and came in contact with the Indians of that locality, the Crows, the Mandans and other tribes. Here he also met the Selish or Flatheads and states in his journal that the Crows represented the Flatheads by pressing with both hands on the side of the head.

In giving the residence of the Flatheads in question Larocque says in his journal, "The Flatheads inhabit the western side of the Rocky Mountains at the heads of the rivers that have a southwesterly course and flow into the ocean." He also states that conversation with the Crows and Indians was carried on by the use of gestures. He does not mention anything peculiar about the shape of the heads of the Flatheads, who cross the Rockies at intervals to hunt buffalo and trade horses to

6. Statement of Duncan McDonald

eastern tribes.

When Lewis and Clark were with the Selish or Flatheads they mention that conversation was carried on by means of signs and gestures, however in their description of the Flatheads they mention nothing peculiar about their heads. Neither do Patrick Gass and Sergeant Ordway in their respective journals of this expedition, mention anything peculiar about the heads of these Indians. Hence the inference that the designation of Flathead was derived from their tribal sign seems well grounded.


The designation of Flathead has been applied to the Chinooks and Clatsop tribes on the Pacific coast, due to their practice of deforming the heads of infants as a sign of aristocracy. See appendix for Irving account.

The name Selish is apparently the name by which the Flatheads were known to other tribes and their name for themselves. It is also spelled Salish.
DRESS AND CHARACTERISTICS

The dress of the Selish was made of tanned skins preferably of the buffalo, deer and elk. The men of the tribe wore moccasins, leggings which extended from the ankles to the hip, and a shirt that extended below the hip. The edges were generally fringed.

The garment of the women was generally a loose hanging dress, that covered the entire person from head to foot. The garments of course were frequently ornamented with dyed porcupine quills woven into designs. Later however the primitive quills gave way to the glass beads of the fur trade commerce.

Ross Cox, who was with the Selish in 1813 and was qualified to tell of the aboriginal garments, gives this description:

"The dress of the men consists solely of their leggings, called mittasses by the Canadians, which reach from the ankles to the hips, and are fastened by strings to a leathern belt round the waist, and a shirt of dressed deer-skin, with loose hanging sleeves, which falls to their knees. The women are covered by a loose robe of the same material from the neck to the feet, and are ornamented with fringes, beads, hawk-bells, and thimbles. The dresses of both are regularly cleaned with pipe clay, which abounds in parts of the country; and every individual has two or three changes. They have no permanent covering for

9. Ross Cox, Adventures on the Columbia River, (New York, 1832) p. 239.
8.

the head, but in wet or stormy weather shelter it by part of a buffalo robe, which complete answers the purpose of a surtout."

Regarding the hair a brief mention should be made that the men of the tribe generally kept their hair in two braid-like rolls. It was thus that the Selish were wearing their hair when members of the Lewis and Clark expedition visited their valley. 10

"Those people wore their hair as follows, the men qued with otter skin on each side falling over the shoulders forward, the women loose promisquisly over their shoulders and face....."

Physically the Selish were of medium height and possessed of a complexion lighter than most aborigines. This characteristic was common to both sexes and is commented upon by several early visitors.

"Both sexes are comparitively fair, and their complexions are a shade lighter than the palest new copper after being freshly rubbed. They are remark-ably well made, rather slender, and never corpulent." 11

10. Lewis and Clark, op. cit. p. 53.

11. Ross Cox, op. cit. p. 239.

"....These natives are well dressed, decent looking Indians, light complexioned." Sergeant John Ordway, in His Journal of the Lewis and Clark Expedition. p. 281.

"They are the whitest Indians I ever saw." Patrick Gass, in his Journal of the Lewis and Clark Expedition.
This characteristic is also mentioned by Lewis and Clark in their journal. Sergeant Ordway and Patrick Gass, who kept individual journals of the Lewis and Clark expedition also record this peculiarity regarding their complexion.

An examination of the morals and ethics of the Selish reveals that they were an exception among Indians. After due consideration of historical evidence it may justly be said that the Selish were a noble people and easily distinguished by their virtues and morals, according to Christian standards.

"To the honour of the Flatheads, who live on the west side of the Rocky mountains, and extend some distance down the Columbia, we must mention them as an exception; as they do not exhibit those loose feelings of carnal desire, nor appear addicted to the common customs of prostitution; and they are the only nation on the whole route where anything like chastity is regarded."

This is the statement by Patrick Gass and by no means the only one that speaks in this light. David Thompson, Alexander Henry and others spoke of the Selish the same way.

"With the exception of the cruel treatment of their prisoners, (which, as it is general among all savages, must not be imputed to them as a peculiar vice,) the Flatheads have fewer failings than any of the tribes I ever met with. They are honest in their dealings,


See also Appendix.
brave in the field, quiet and amenable to their chiefs, fond of cleanliness, and decided enemies to falsehood of every description. The women are excellent wives and mothers, and their character for fidelity is so well established, that we never heard an instance of one of them proving unfaithful to her husband. They are also free from the vice of backbiting, so common among the lower tribes; and laziness is a stranger among them."

Concerning the future life the Selish had a fixed conception that good and evil would be rewarded accordingly. Mention of this is made in the various early writings including the Cox\textsuperscript{14} account which will be here quoted.

"The Flat-heads believe in the existence of a good and evil spirit, and consequently in a future state of rewards and punishments. They hold that after death the good Indian goes to a country in which there will be perpetual summer; there he will meet his wife and children; that the rivers will abound with fish, and the plains with the much-loved buffalo; and that he will spend his time in hunting and fishing, free from the terrors of war, or the apprehensions of cold or famine. The bad man, they believe, will go to a


This high estimate of the Selish is also supported by Governor Stevens, Captain Mullan, the missionary fathers and many others. In the appendix of this narrative will be found a compilation of opinions regarding the Selish.
place covered with eternal snow; that he will always
be shivering with the cold, and will see fires at a
distance which he cannot enjoy; water which he cannot
procure to quench his thirst, and buffalo and deer
which he cannot kill to appease his hunger. An impene­
trable wood, full of wolves, panthers, and serpents,
separates these "shrinking slaves of winter" from
their fortunate brethren in the "meadows of ease."
Their punishment however is not eternal, and according
to the different shades of their crimes they are
sooner or later emancipated, and permitted to join
their friends in the Elysian fields."

Marriage to the Selish was sacred and the violation of the
sanctity of the marriage contract was punishable by death. 15
Marriage was generally approved by the chief who gave his best
wishes to the venturesome couple. However marriage with out­
siders was another question and was discouraged especially
with traders and trappers of the white race.

A mixed marriage was permitted between a Selish woman and

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15. David Thompson, Narrative of Exploration in Western America,

Cox states in his book of adventures, p. 253: "Their code
of morality, although short, is comprehensive. They say that
honesty, bravery, love of truth, attention to parent, obedience
to their chiefs, and affection for their wives and children, are
the principal virtues which entitle them to the place of happy­
ness, while the opposite vices condemn them to misery."
a half breed Canadian, a member of the Ross Cox fur trading brigade in 1813, and is recorded by Cox. Many of his party sought to secure Selish wives but only Pierre Michel, the Canadian was approved. Of the young Selish woman Cox says:

"She proceeded in the evening to the chief's lodge, where a number of her friends had assembled to smoke. Here she received a lecture from the old man, her mother, and a few other ancients, on her duty as a wife and mother. They exhorted her to be chaste, obedient, industrious, and silent; and when absent with her husband among other tribes, always to stay at home, and have no intercourse with strange Indians."^{16}

The Selish, as was universal among the Indians, had their medicine men, who had special prayers and exhortations for bringing favorable action by the deities. DeSmet gives several accounts of medicine men and calls them "jugglers."^{17}

The Selish did not for the main part make a practice of taking scalps,^{18} mention of this is made in early journals. Nor did they mutilate the bodies of alien enemies, but, occasionally went to the other extreme of giving honorable

[^16]: Boss Cox, op. cit. p. 257.


[^18]: Thompson, op. cit. p. 425.
burial, even to their enemies. 19

Names of Indian warriors were given them in consideration of some manifestation by the supreme being. So with the Selish, when a young man grew up he was not considered a man until he had discovered his medicine. His father or the chief would send him to the top of some high mountain, where he would be obliged to fast until he had a vision making known to him his name. Generally he dreamed of some animal which then became his medicine for life. In the course of the fast lasting several days at times it was not unusual for the young man to dream of what he wanted to, his weakened condition giving shape to his


According to historical evidence Christianity was early introduced by Catholic Iroquois, among the Selish. They early acquired a desire for the Faith and gave early proof of this by expeditions for Christianity to St. Louis. Being naturally of high caliber, it is not surprising that the Selish sought Christianity on their own accord.

The Selish never made war on the whites and it was their boast that they never spilled the blood of a white man. Even after Chief Charlot had been mistreated by the whites especially by the Garfield negotiations, he did not alter his policy of peace. When Chief Joseph and his Nez Perce asked Charlot to join him in his flight Charlot replied that he would protect the whites, and any hostility in the Bitter Root valley by the Nez Perces would be retaliated by him. See page 135 in papers accompanying the Report of the Commissioner of Indian Affairs for 1877.

See Appendix.

See also, chapter on the Quest for the Black Robe.
thoughts. 20

The chieftainship of the Selish was hereditary and passed from father to son, however a war-chief was chosen annually, whose authority pertained only to expeditions. Quite often a war-chief one year was merely a brave the next.

As was customary among most western tribes the war-bonnet made of eagle feathers was worn by the leading braves and the chiefs. This was however worn only on special occasions, such as preparation for a battle.

20. Statement of Duncan McDonald.

In certain cases a family name was passed on from father to son. The name of Bear Track among the Selish was one of these. The name generally had a mark of distinction which was deemed worthy of perpetuation.

20a. Chief Victor, the son of Chief Three Eagles was followed as chief by his son Charlot.
The vegetable food of the Selish was rather limited in scope since no actual agriculture was engaged in until introduced by the Jesuit fathers. The most important food plant was the bitter root, which grew abundantly in the region of the present Missoula and Bitter Root valleys.

Next in importance as a plant food was the kamas root, the huckle berry, the roots of the sunflower, sunflower seed, pine tree moss, the sap and inner bark of certain trees, and the bulbous root of the rock lilly which grew in ponds and along lake shore.

The Selish name for bitter root was Spletemen and the place where it was found was also known by this name; the site of Missoula was this place since here the Selish came every spring to dig the bitter root.

In the spring just before the bitter root plant was about to bud, the Selish dug for the root. Their method of judging just when to secure the root was based upon the theory that if the root skinned when the cortex was pulled firmly, then was the time to dig. The digging of the bitter root was an annual affair since the root yielded both a food and a medicine. The root was dried and stored away in bags, in winter it was cooked with water and eaten as a paste.  

21. Information in this chapter is based for the main part upon statements of Duncan McDonald.
The kamas plant yielded a bulbous root resembling an onion bulb, and was prepared for use by being cooked in a pit. A pit several feet deep was dug, then heated stones placed at the bottom and covered with leaves. The sides of the pit were also lined with leaves. Into this cavity the kamas bulbs were put and carefully covered with a layer of leaves and an outside coat of soil. A fire was lit on top of the buried bulbs and kept up until they were cooked through, then the damas mass was moulded into cakes and placed in the air to harden.

From the yellow moss that grows on pine trees the Selish made a type of bread. Duncan McDonald states that the method of preparing this bread was similar to that of preparing the kamas. However, in the journal of Daniel Harmon mention is made of this moss bread and another method given for preparing it. Mr. Harmon states, "On the Columbia River, there is a people who subsist, during the greater part of the summer, on nothing but roots, and a kind of bread, if it may be so called, made of the mossy stuff, which grows on the spruce fir tree, and which resembles the cobwebs spun by spiders. The substance contains a little nourishment. They gather it from the trees, and lay it in a heap, on which they sprinkle a little water, Evemia vulpina, one of the Lichens.

22. Evemia vulpina, one of the Lichens.

and then leave it to ferment. After that, they roll it up into balls, as large as a man's head, and bake them in ovens, well heated, which are constructed in the earth. After having been baked about an hour they are taken out for use. This substance is not very palatable; and it contains but little nourishment. It will however, barely support life, for a considerable time."

Another important plant food of the Selish was the silken sunflower, not the helianthus but the balsamorrhiza the perennial. The entire plant was of food value. In spring the roots were dug and dried for future use, they were apparently cooked in ways similar to the kamas and moss. The inner stalk was also prepared in spring as an article of food, and the seeds were gathered in the fall. The seeds were highly prized as a flavoring for soups. They were carefully cleaned of the outer coating and split in halves before served with meats or soups.

The various wild berries furnished food to the Selish, both fresh and dried. The most outstanding was the huckleberry, a wild blue berry. This berry was most highly esteemed for its sweetness. When dried this berry would keep many months and help change the diet in winter months. Its greatest value as a food lay in its worth for flavoring pemmican.

The inner bark of the cottonwood when gathered in June was also of food value, as well as the sap from the pine tree and tammarack.
The bulbous root of the rock-illy\textsuperscript{23x} although bitter when fresh provided food qualities similar to the potato. This plant is essentially native to water and was found chiefly along the upper Flathead river and along shore of Flathead lake. The manner of preparation was similar to that of the kamas.

Although not of food value certain other products were derived from herbaceous growths. The roots of the cedar provided a long and tough fiber which was employed in making fish dams or weirs, mats, bags and baskets. The basket was bowl shaped and was extensively used for storing things, when coated with pitch it was practically waterproof.

For berry picking a bark container was chiefly used. It was made from the bark of a soft wood tree, preferably birch or ash. The bark was removed by making two cuts around the tree the height of the desired container, and making two lateral cuts on opposite sides, by skilful pounding the bark was then peeled off. The side and bottom openings were then closed by sewing with cedar root fiber.

It was customary for men of the tribe to smoke on certain special occasions, however, tobacco was unknown to them until the coming of the whiteman. The bark of the

\textsuperscript{23x} Trillium ovatum
kinniknick when dried and chopped fine was their smoking material. Red willow bark was also smoked, but only when the kinniknick was unobtainable. Sometimes the two were mixed in preference to smoking either straight.

Smoking was not a habit among the Selish in its present sense, but was reserved for occasions such as a council meeting, a symbol of amiety, and as a tribute to nature. This latter was of daily occurrence. In the morning shortly after rising the chief or headman of a lodge would light his pipe face the east or the rising sun and offer several puffs to mother earth as a symbol of tribute.

Among the Selish the practice of medicine was very limited. The bitter root plant, already taken up in this narration under food, also provided a stomach tonic and a laxative. There undoubtedly was medicinal value in many of the plants eaten by the Selish, they themselves, however, were unacquainted with the use of medicine proper.

The sweat bath was widely advocated for fever, rheumatism and stiff joints, however, this bath often proved fatal to the participants for a cold plunge invariably followed the hot one. The old saying among
early residents that Indian doctoring would bring results soon, the patient either was killed or cured. The sweat bath was taken in an entrenchment in the ground, covered over with stocks and stones and mud. Hot stones would be placed inside and water poured upon them, thus giving rise to steam.

Common fractures caused by the pitch of a horse, or other falls were cured by tight bandages and splints around the injury. For contusions bleeding was practiced, either in the temples, arms, wrists or ankles.24

INDUSTRIAL ACTIVITIES

The chief dwelling of the Selish was the tipi or teepee, consisting of a covering of buffalo skins over a frame of poles, conical in shape, with the ends of the frame work protruding at the top. About fourteen skins were required to cover a good lodge.

The skins were tanned with hair removed and sewed together in a semi-circular piece. The poles or frame-work were from the tree now called "lodge pole" pine since its slimness was ideally suited to the needs of the tipi.

According to reliable evidence the tipi was erected by first fastening three poles together forming a tripod, after which additional poles were added. The covering was put into place and pegged at the bottom, the union of the two encircling sides was held together by wooden pins. At the top the pole ends protruded, thus giving an outlet for smoke and admitting light. At the top of the covering were two wing-like flaps known as the wings or ears, these were attached to poles which could be moved according to the direction of the wind.

The Selish always faced the opening of the tipi to

Personal observations of the author.
the east. They also used the tipi as a recording place for tribal wars, winters, and chronology.

Another use for the tipi covering was in the construction of a raft to cross deep streams. The clothing and camp equipment was piled onto the covering which was drawn into a huge bundle. The women and children would sit upon this bundle while the men ferried it across stream.25

Fishing was also extensively carried on by the Selish, who caught their fish in weirs or dams built of reeds and sticks across stream. Spearing was also used to secure fish. The fish were cooked in water, and also dried in the sun.

The Selish also made shields of buffalo hide, preferably of the bulls, owing to the thickness and toughness of the hide. The shields were generally circular in shape and often decorated with paint, with a magic symbol that would help turn enemy arrows.

The weapons of the Selish consisted chiefly of the stone hatchet (tomahawk) and the bow and arrow. The bows of the Selish26 were similar to those of western tribes.

25. Hazard Stevens, Life of Stevens, (Boston, 1890) II, p.76
and were of three kinds - the horn, the red cedar and the plain wood. The horn bow was the most difficult of these to make, since it was made of a ram's horn of the big horn sheep. The horn was softened in hot water and cut into shavings, which were glued together to form a bow. Then the bow was wrapped in sinew and permitted to harden. This bow was about three feet long and was very powerful, it's one drawback was it's susceptibility to damp weather, when it was too relaxed to be used.

The red cedar bow was overlaid with sinew and glue like the horn bow, however, it was longer. The plain wood bow was of any seasoned wood and used chiefly for small game.

Arrows were about three feet long and were tipped according to the use for which they were intended. For small game bone was used to tip the arrow, but for war and buffalo hunting flint was used, and later iron and steel. The shaft of the arrow was always feathered to guide it.

It was customary for some warriors to specialize in arrow and bow making, they were for the main part retired warriors. They received compensation for their labor in sharing in the results of the chase.

Frequently each warrior had his own arrows marked, a notch or speck of paint would suffice for this identification.
Fire-making was a hard task for the Selish, prior to the introduction of flint and steel by the white man. It was produced by placing one end of a small dry stick against another piece of dry wood; and by rolling it briskly between their hands, the friction in a short time would communicate fire to dry hay or touch wood placed around it.

When camp was moved fire was taken along. A special container made of hollowed out horn was the receptacle for a live coal, which when nourished by small fragments of fuel, retained its life for many hours.

The making of paint was engaged in by the Selish or Flatheads. The best authority on the subject being Duncan McDonald, so his narration on this subject will be here stated.

"Before the white man came the Selish made their own paint. They would make it as they needed it from things around. Parts of some plants could be used for coloring. The roots of the Oregon grape and the moss that grows only on pine trees would make quills yellow when they were boiled with the juice.27

27. Al Partoll, in the Montana Kaimin, Supplement, March 12, 1929, (Missoula)
"Some berries gave a red paint. A clay also gave red, but it was hard to get, a long trip east had to be made. The Selish made black paint from asphalt material. When a well of asphalt was found, long poles would be dipped into it, then the black was scraped into a bag and stored. When it was wanted it was mixed with water.

"Another yellow was obtained in a place east, about the upper Yellowstone river, but this does not mean that yellow came from there. The Selish had another Yellowstone there too. They called this Yellowstone, E-schu-meen, after a tool made for scraping skins. After the white man came, iron tools were used, but before that, the E-schu-meen was made from a piece of bone, something like a chisel.

"One end of the E-schu-meen was ground down with a sand-stone and little teeth made on the edge. So it wouldn't slip something was wrapped around the grip, rawhide or leather was used for this. These tools were used to get yellow clay out of caves down east. The caves were long and dark. A rope was tied outside to something, then around the waist when going into the caves, then the way out was not lost.

"The Selish used a green paint, but that was long ago. They had to make hard trips to get it. No living person can tell where the green came from. Names were given to the
paints, In-poom-poom-laugh was yellow, Yoo-tzi-min for red, Koo-nay-oot for black, and Tzi-tzi-koo for dark red."

See chapters on The Buffalo, The horse, and Plants and Foods.
THE HORSES OF THE SELISH

According to tradition the Selish secured their horses from the west and southwest, which is probably true. The name given by them to the horse was oayuse, perhaps due to some of the earliest horses coming from that tribe of Indians living to the west of them.

Franchere, in his narrative, states this regarding certain western tribes including the Selish or Flatheads:

"They procure their horses from the herds of these animals which are found in the wild state in the country extending from the northern latitudes and the gulf of Mexico, and which sometimes count a thousand or fifteen hundred in a troop. These horses came from New Mexico, and are of Spanish race. We even saw some which had been marked with a hot iron by Spaniards,..." 28

Hamilton who also was among the Indians in the early days mentions the incident as follows: 29

"Cayuse and Walla Walla Indians visited us.

... The tribes owned large numbers of horses, and I


have been asked where they got them from. Many years previous to this the Indians had learned that there were great numbers of horses in southern California. There upon the Nez Perces, Yakimas, Cayuses, and others made up a strong war party and went to Sacramento Valley and returned with a vast herd. In later years, when I asked them, the Nez Perces confirmed this story."

Speaking of the Snakes, Nez Perces, and Flatheads, Franchere continues, 30

"These Indians are passionately fond of horse races and by bets they make on these occasions they sometimes lose all they possess. The women ride as well as the men. For a bridle they use a cord of horsehair, which they attach around the animal's mouth; with that he is easily checked and by laying the hand on his neck, is made to wheel to this side or that. The saddle is a cushion of stuffed deer-skin, very suitable for the purpose to which it is destined, rarely hurting the horse and not fatiguing


Hazard Stevens in Life of Stevens, p.76 states that the Selish trained their horses to swim.
the rider so much as our European saddles. The stirrups are pieces of hardwood, ingeniously wrought, and of the same shape which are used in civilized countries. They are covered with a piece of deer-skin which is sewed on wet, and in drying stiffens and becomes hard and firm. The saddle for women differs in form, being furnished with the antlers of a deer, so as to resemble the high pommelled saddle of Mexican ladies."

This description of riding equipment for Indians was, of course, variable yet it serves as an illustration of the primitive Indian workmanship.

The horse served many purposes to the Selish, especially when they made long trips or migrated. The travois\(^{31}\) or Indian chariot was used almost universally by the horse Indians, and was made by simply trailing poles (generally tipi supports) from the saddle, and placing cross pieces so as to prevent the poles from spreading. The finished travois was shaped like the letter "A" with the apex fastened to a cinch belt around the horse.

Camp equipment was generally carried in this way, the tipi covering serving as the outside of a large bundle which was secured to the travois.

\(^{31}\) The travois was used chiefly in moving camp and not for riding generally.
In hunting the buffalo the fate of the rider often depended upon the horse, which was trained for this purpose. The Selish had well trained mounts which were indispensable for hunting on the plains, for with them the game could be easily approached and shot at by the riders, and also carry them away from charging animals.

As an animal of sport the horse was the object of many bets, since the Selish like many other American Indians were addicted to gambling. Horse racing was their favorite dissipation in this respect.

The wealth of the Selish consisted chiefly of horses, of which they had great numbers. Due to the mildness of the climate of the Bitter Root valley in winter this place was a favorite wintering place for both the Selish and their stock. Near the present site of Plains in early days was much rich vegetation and the land was ideally suited to horse raising, so it became the center for horse grazing there. At one time this locality was known as wild horse plains, then Horse Plains, and of more recent time just as Plains.

The Selish were interested in horse breeding both to supply their own needs and also to carry on trade with other.

Mention of the horse is also made under the chapter headings of "War With the Blackfeet", and, "The Buffalo".
Indian tribes. The shrewdness of these Indians in horse trading was remarkable as was stated by Judge Woody.  

"Nobody ever traded quickly with an Indian,"..."and this was especially true when they were bartering for horses. They traded deliberately and with solemnity as if they were debating questions of state. A horse-trade was carried through with all the formality of a council. There were two or three pipes smoked over every horse that was swapped and there was any amount of parley with each pipe smoked. The Flatheads had a great many buckskins; these were tough horses and were in demand. When they bought up a bunch of horses for trade or sale they always showed the poorest one first. They would haggle over the price to be paid for this animal until they had forced up as high as they thought they could get it. Then they would close the deal and in a horse that was a little better than the first. The start in the negotiations would be made at the figure received for the poorer animal and would be boosted as the patience of the white man would stand. This concluded there would be a better horse trotted out. This performance would be repeated as long as the Indians had any horses left. The Indian usu-

32. Arthur L. Stone, Following Old Trails, (Missoula, Montana, 1913), p. 204
ally got the price he wanted. Time was no object to him and the white man was usually in a hurry."

The horses of the Selish as well as of other western tribes, were trained to stand for hours with merely a lariat thrown loosely around their necks, the end tied to a peg or more often trailing upon the ground. In breaking to the horse for riding the Selish would usually blindfold them before mounting, often tying down their ears in addition. A strap or cord was passed around the body of the horse, loose enough to admit the knees of the rider. The horse was quieted as much as possible before being mounted. The rider would mount the horse and remove the blind. When the horse attempted to throw himself, the rider by merely straightening his knees would be free from the horse and ready for an emergency.

The Blackfeet Indians made continual raids upon the horses of the Selish and their allies. The Crows also engaged in active horse stealing. It was partly on account of this that deadly enmity existed between the Selish and these robber tribes. See also chapter on "War with the Blackfeet."

Information based upon interviews with early residents. This statement is apparently true, there is no evidence to show contradiction.
THE SELISH AND THE BUFFALO

It was the great love for the buffalo that was the cause of most misfortunes of the Selish. To them the buffalo of the eastern plains was legitimate game, and as proof thereof they made their semi-annual trips east, braving death at every side at the hands of the Blackfeet and the Crows, who claimed that the Selish were poachers and deserved death. 38

38. Gibbs Vol. I Stevens Report on page 145, says: "Their custom is to make two hunts annually across the mountains - one in April for bulls, from which they return in June and July; and another, after a month's recruit, to kill cows, which by that time have become fat. In these excursions they are accompanied by that portion of the Pend d'Oreilles who live in their country, and about one hundred lodges of the Nez Percés, as well as parties of such other tribes as see fit to join them."

Alexander Ross in 1823 was in the locality of the present Missoula Valley and says in Fur Hunters of the Far North", Vol. II, page 12, "... we reached a defile in the ridge, called Hell's Gate, a distance from Flathead Fort of about seventy miles, general course, S.E. This place is rendered notorious as being the great war-road by which the Piegans and Blackfeet often visit this side of the mountains; by the same pass the Flatheads and other tribes cross to the Missouri side in quest of buffalo. This spot has, therefore, been the scene of many a bloody contest between those hostile nations."

David Thompson in his narrative, page 426, states that the Selish sometimes went by way of a pass eastward of Flathead Lake, probably Cutbank pass or Marias Pass. Routes varied according to the danger from enemies, often a round about way was taken to the plains, but the two above mentioned were regular routes.
However, on the trips east in quest of buffalo, the Selish were often accompanied by their kindred tribe, the Kalispells or Upper Pend d' Oreilles, and often by their friends the Nez Perce and Spokanes.

To the Selish the buffalo represented the symbol of food and shelter as well as other things. Hence their continued hunts even in the face of death as it were. When they went after the buffalo they were prepared for war and actually were forced to hunt by stealth.

In order to be ready for any danger it was necessary to travel in force and as has been mentioned before the Selish generally traveled with their friends. The Nez Perce followed an ancient buffalo hunting trail that led from their homes through the land of the Selish, and stopped to join their friends at a place now known as "Council Grove".

Ross Cox summarizes the situation in his book, "Adventures on the Columbia", vol. 1, page 236 as follows:

"The Flatheads were formerly much more numerous than they were at this period; but owing to the constant hostilities between them and the Black-feet Indians, their numbers had been greatly diminished. While pride, policy, ambition, self-preservation, or the love of aggrandisement often deluges the civilized world with Christian blood; the only cause assigned by the natives of whom I write for their perpetual warfare, is their love of the buffalo. There are extensive plains to the eastward of the mountains frequented in the summer and autumnal months by numerous herds of buffaloes. Either the rival tribes repair to hunt these animals, that they may procure as much of their meat as will supply them until the next succeeding season. In these excursions they often meet, and the most sanguinary conflicts follow. The Blackfeet lay claim to all that part of the country immediately at the foot of the mountains, which is most fre- (continued on next page)
As has been mentioned before the Selish relied upon their horses when hunting the buffalo. The bow and arrow were the chief means of killing buffalo before the advent of the white man, after which iron and steel arrow heads replaced the more primitive one of flint and later firearms were used.

A certain incident worthy of mention here was performed by one Flathead on a buffalo hunt and is recorded by the missionary, Father Desmet. The missionary once met seven Flatheads just returned from a hunt; they had killed one hundred eighty-nine buffalo altogether. One of the seven had achieved three remarkable kills. Armed merely with a stone he had pursued a buffalo cow and had killed her by striking her between the horns with the stone. Another he killed with a knife and a third he first downed with a spear thrust, then strangled the animal.

39. Desmet, (Chitenden and Richardson), op. cit. IV, p.1011

(continued from last page)

quented by the buffalo; and allege that the Flat-heads, by resorting thither to hunt, are intruders whom they are bound to oppose on all occasions. The latter, on the contrary, assert that their forefathers had always claimed and exercised the right of hunting on these "debateable lands;" and that while one of their warriors remained alive the right should not be relinquished. ..."
The buffalo supplied many wants and necessities of the Selish. The meat was used fresh, smoked or jerked as it was called, and also made into pemmican. This food preparation was by cutting the buffalo meat into small strips and jerking it over a slow fire, then pounding it up fine between stones, and adding marrow, fat and berries. The Selish would make pemmican of the meat while on the plains and store it in the paunches of buffalo. This food was highly concentrated and was the chief commodity in winter.

The hides of the buffalo provided many things. The two chief classifications of buffalo hides are buffalo hides secured for robes and the other, those secured for shelter. The hides for robes were generally of the cow buffalo and were tanned with the hair attached, while those for shelter, namely the tipi were of both cow and bull buffalo with the hair removed.

The horns provided cups for the Selish and also spoons, which were made by a tedious process. The horns were soaked in hot water to soften them and to remove the brittleness. After the softening process a likely horn was split lengthwise, scraped and sanded and allowed to harden again.

The tendons and muscles provided sewing and lacing material, the softer skins robes and garments, the hoofs
were made into glue, the bones provided the material for
tools and implements, and the spinal cord the string for
the bow.

Of unusual relish was the tongue of the buffalo cows
and calves. The Selish always smoked them for future use.
David Thompson records purchasing some of them from the
Selish.

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Note - additional uses of the buffalo are taken up under
the heading of Arts and Crafts.
WAR WITH THE BLACKFEET

Traditional war had existed between the Selish and the Blackfeet for many generations. The cause of these wars is attributed to the poaching by the Selish upon the buffalo plains of the east, and the continued horse stealing by the Blackfeet.

For many years the battle had been an uneven one for the Blackfeet were more numerous and better armed for they had secured fire-arms from traders, many years before the Selish had. The question of buffalo rights on the "debatable lands" cost the Selish dearly in human lives. However, the Selish were undaunted and in spite of this handicap fought and dared the Blackfeet to stop them.

The bravery of the Selish was such that they dared attack the Blackfeet even at a handicap in numbers. Yet the domination of the Blackfeet received its greatest set back when the Selish purchased arms and ammunition from McMillan, a furtrader in 1813. The history of the conflicts took on a more balanced aspect and marked the beginning of a series of defeats for the Blackfeet.34

However, the Blackfoot threat was not over, for prowling bands continually menaced the horses of the Selish and the Kalispells. The most serious losses were by way of a

34. Ross Cox, op.cit. I. p.238
pass situated above the northern end of Flathead or Selish lake. This pass led directly into the Blackfoot territory, into which the Selish owing to their small number, dared not follow.

Of such greed and cruelty was the nature of the raiding Blackfeet that they were called the "scourge of the mountains". Even after the advent of the missionary fathers and the founding of the mission at St. Mary's the Blackfeet continued their inroads, and it was necessary for the fathers to post a sentry and to fire a rifle now and then at night to scare off prowling bands.

It was this hellish disposition of the Blackfeet that literally baptised the canyon of Hell Gate with Selishian blood. This canyon was the pass by which the Selish and other western tribes went east to the buffalo plains, and was in actuality a war road. The western Indians shunned the canyon, and when the fur traders came transferred their dread to them. The French traders called the place Port d' Enfere, or gate of hell.

36. L.B. Palladino, S.J., Anthony Ravalli, S.J., Forty Years a Missionary, (Helena, 1884), p.6

See note under buffalo
37. Footnote
In his Indian and White in the Northwest, New Edition, Father L. B. Palladino, S.J. states in Chapter XII that the name of Missoula is the result of the Indian name given to Hell Gate pass and the river flowing through it. TheSelish called it a place of dread, a chilly dreaded place, the place of cold chilling waters of surprise, all apparently due to the encounters with the Blackfeet.

Duncan McDonald claims that the name Missoula is derived from a combination of Indian words meaning "sparkling water."
Indelibly written in the annals of the northwest are the trips east by the Selish or Flathead, in quest of Christianity, between 1831 and 1840. This tribe had early been informed of the way to heaven by an immigrated band of Catholic Iroquois, under the leadership of Ignace La Mousse, or Big Ignace, as he was called, due to his stature.

It was with the fur trade that this band of Iroquois came to the land of the Selish, and liking it there and being well received, they settled among the Selish. From Ignace the Selish learned of the "Black Robe" who was the leader of the faithful in the way of the Creator. So impressed were the Selish that they took up this new belief, learning the sign of the cross from the Iroquois, and formulating a system of religious holidays and feasts among themselves, not unlike those of Christian belief.

Unable to longer be content with merely the idea of Christianity, the Selish determined to have the Black Robe come and live with them. So in 1831 a delegation of four Indians volunteered to go to St. Louis for the Black Robe. The delegation arrived in St. Louis in October, 1831, after going through many hardships, since the way there was for the main part through enemy territory.

40. David Thompson mentions Ignace, an Iroquois guide, in his Narrative, as early as 1811. (pp. 460-472.) Based upon the accounts by DeSmet (all editions), the works by Palladin, A. L. Stone, and others.
In St. Louis the Selish or Flatheads found the explorer Clark, now in charge of Indian affairs. Mr. Clark treated them kindly and had them conducted to the Catholic church, where they visited for some time. While in St. Louis two of the Flatheads fell ill, and not being able to convey to the people there any information about themselves, since no one there understood their language, they were exceedingly unfortunate. When two priests visited them the Indians seemed delighted with the visit, and made the sign of the cross, which Ignace had taught them. However, the trip east had been too much for them, for they weakened and passed into the great beyond. Not, however, before they had been baptised. They were buried in the cemetery of the parish, and according to the records there had received the names of Narcisse and Paul.

It was this visit of the Selish or Flatheads that electrified the east, and reminded the national government of the United States of the great empire in the west, awaiting possession. Immediately throughout the churches of the east an appeal for missionaries was made, on behalf of the Flathead tribe. The Macedonian cry (come and help us) was the incentive for western action.

In 1834, under the auspices of the American Methodist Episcopal church, the Reverend Jason Lee, and his nephew
the Reverend Daniel Lee,\textsuperscript{41} with three laymen, were sent to found a mission among the Flatheads. These gentlemen travelled west with Nathaniel J. Wyeth and his party as far as Fort Hall, and on July 30, 1834, started northward for the Bitter Root valley, the home of the Selish or Flatheads, who had sought Christianity in St. Louis a few years previous.

The missionary delegation, however, saw fit to go farther west, and so passed on, leaving the Selish still in hopes of their Black Robe.

Another party of missionaries also sought to render service to the Indians of the west; this was the party under the Rev. Samuel Parker,\textsuperscript{42} of Utica, N.Y., which also included Marcus Whitman. In 1835 the party reached Green River. By some means the Selish or Flatheads had learned that a delegation was coming west, so, prompted by such hope, a band under the chief Insula went to meet the delegation. Insula and his band were compelled to fight their way through hostile lands, and were three days on the ride.

The band under Insula was dissatisfied in not finding

\begin{footnotesize}
\textsuperscript{41} Daniel Lee and J. H. Frost, Ten Years in Oregon. (New York, 1844) p. 127. Whether the Selish rejected these reverend gentlemen or whether they went away of their own volition is hard to say. The Selish had sought the "Black Robe" and were to know him by the great prayer, (the Mass), the black gown or robe he wore, the crucifix he carried, and the fact that he did not marry. The Lee party did not answer to these specifications. Palladino, Indian and White, 2nd ed., p. 21.

\end{footnotesize}
the long expected Black Robe, so immediately returned to the Bitter Root valley. Another trip for the Black Robe was proposed, this time Big Ignace offered to go himself. Accompanying him were his two sons. The party arrived in St. Louis where the sons of Ignace were baptized Charles and Francis, Charles being a lad of 12 and Louis 14.

Ignace and his sons returned home safely, assured that the Black Robe would soon be on his way. When the Black Robe did not appear as was expected, Ignace in 1837 again went east; this time the party consisted of three Flatheads proper, one Nez Perce, and Old Ignace himself. It so chanced that W. H. Gray was on his way east at the time from the Presbyterian missions on the Columbia, and with this party Ignace traveled.

The party was attacked and the Flathead delegation killed by enemy Indians, Gray and the whites having taken no part in the conflict. Thus ended in martyrdom the third expedition for the Black Robe on the part of the Flatheads.

Not dismayed by three apparent failures to secure their coveted Black Robe the Selish prepared a fourth delegation. This time two Iroquois Peter Gaucher and Young Ignace decided to carry the message of the Flatheads.

The fourth delegation left the Bitter Root valley in the summer of 1839, and joining with some Hudson Bay men travelled down the Yellowstone and Missouri rivers, by canoe. At St. Louis they were welcomed by the Jesuits, who, listening to their quest, made arrangements for the Black Robe
expedition west to the Selish the following spring. Peter Gaucher set out with the news that the Black Robe was coming, while Young Ignace remained in St. Louis to serve as guide for the missionary father.

The Black Robe chosen to carry Christianity to the Selish was the Jesuit Father Peter DeSmet, the apostle to western Indians. Accompanied by Ignace, who had remained in the east to act as guide, Father DeSmet left St. Louis April 5, 1840. After three months enroute, during which time part of the western trip had been made in company of a fur trading party, the missionary and his guide arrived at Green River where a delegation of ten Selish warriors awaited him.

The following day, (July 5) Father DeSmet said Mass and held Sunday service, for the traders and the Indians. By reason of this, the spot has from that time on been known to both Indians and whites as "The Prairie of the Mass."

Father DeSmet and his guides set out for Pierre Hole valley where there had assembled 1,600 Indians for his reception, including the Flatheads, Nez Perce, Kalispells. Some of the Indians had travelled as far as 800 miles to meet the missionary.

So pleased were the Indians to have the Black Robe among them, that Big Face, the great chief of the Selish, offered him his chieftainship, which of course the father refused.

However, the stay of Father DeSmet with the Indians was merely a temporary one, for he returned in the fall to St.
Louis to secure help and funds to found a mission. In 1841 DeSmet returned with two zealous young priests, Father Men-garini and Father Point.

A mission was established in the Bitter Root valley, the home of the Selish, and called St. Mary's, being incidentally also the first permanent "white" habitation in western Montana.

The zealous Father DeSmet, after founding his mission, introduced the first agriculture in what is now Montana from seed secured from Colville, which included wheat and potatoes. Here at the mission was also the first grist mill and first saw mill, introduced by the Jesuit Fathers. 43

43. Palladino (Forty Years). pp. 4-6.

The mission continued until 1850, when it was temporarily abandoned due to the hostility and danger from raids by the Blackfeet. The mission buildings were purchased by John Owen, generally known by the title of Major, in 1850. In 1866 the mission was reopened at what is now Stevensville. A mission was also established in 1854 at St. Ignatius and is still in existence.
LEGEND OF THE MEDICINE TREE

The Selish have a legend regarding a large yellow pine tree, 12 miles south of Darby. The first written account of this tree was by Alexander Ross, whose narrative is here quoted, together with information from Chief Martin Charlot of the Selish nation, who is still alive.

"Out of one of the pines I have just mentioned, and about five feet from the ground, is growing up with the tree a ram's head, with the horns still attached to it; and so fixed and embedded is it in the tree, that it must have grown up with it: almost the whole of one of the horns, and more than half of the head, is buried in the tree; but most of the other horn, and part of the head, protrudes out at least a foot. We examined both, and found the tree scarcely two feet in diameter. Here we put up at an early hour, and called the place Ram's Horn Encampment."

"Our Flathead Indians related to us a rather strange story about the ram's head. Indian legend relates that one of the first Flathead Indians who passed this way attacked a mountain ram as large and stout as a common horse; that on being wounded, the fierce animal turned upon his pursuer, who taking shelter behind the tree, the ram came against it with all his

force, so that he drove his head through it; but before he could get it extracted again, the Indian killed him, and took off the body, leaving the head as a momento of the adventure. All Indians reverence the celebrated tree, which they say, by the circumstances related, conferred on them the power of mastering and killing all animals; hundreds, therefore, in passing this sacrifice something as a tribute to the ram's head; and one of the Iroquois, not to incur the displeasure of the god of hunters, hung a bit of tobacco on the horn, to make his hunting propitious."

A traditional legend among the Selish is that the imbedding of the horn in the tree was the work of the Coyote, the great sachem and protector of the Selish.45

The story is that the ram (mountain sheep) held sway over a trail over which the Coyote was traveling. When the Coyote came to the ram he devised a plan to rid the trail of its tyrant, so invited the ram to test his strength upon a large yellow pine near by. So viciously did the ram strike the tree that one of his horns was buried in the tree. The Coyote had a flint knife in readiness and as the ram was held fast by his horn, he severed the head from the body. The body and blood he threw upon the mountain side, where the impact and splashing left an imprint resembling human faces. The head was then cut from the horn, which remained in the tree as a symbol of victory for the Coyote. Passing Indians made offerings at this tree to the Manitou or Great Spirit.

45. Based upon statements by Martin Charlot.
GOVERNMENTAL RELATIONS

In accordance with the policy of the United States government it was customary to seek title to certain Indian lands by treaty, with the intention of opening the country to settlement, the building of roads and the defining Indian title to lands in terms of reservations. So in 1855 negotiations were concluded with the Flatheads and confederated tribes, the Kootenai and the Kalispell.

According to the terms of this treaty the Flathead nation, as the other two tribes were to receive specific compensation for land deeded and were to have the question of the location of their reservation decided by the president of the United States. However, the treaty definitely made and defined the reservation as consisting of the Jocko district.

The exact wording of the provision relating to the location is given in Article 11, \(^{46}\) here quoted:

"It is; moreover, provided that the Bitter Root Valley, above Loo-Lo Fork, shall be carefully surveyed and examined, and if it shall prove, in the judgment of the President, to be better adapted to the wants of the Flathead tribe than the general reservation provided for in this treaty, then such portions of it as may be necessary shall be set apart as a separate reservation for the said tribe. No portion of the

Bitter Rock Valley, above the Loo-Lo Fork, shall be opened to settlement until such is had and the decision of the President made known."

This was the first signed agreement between the Flatheads and the government. The next treaty was made with the Blackfeet, October 17, 1855, between the Flatheads and other western tribes, and was concluded by Commissioners A. Gumming and Isaac I. Stevens, near the mouth of the Judith River, in the Territory of Nebraska. Article 14 is here quoted from the treaty.

"The Aforesaid nations and tribes of Indians, west of the Rocky Mountains, parties to this treaty, do agree, in consideration of the provisions already made for them in existing treaties, to accept the guarantees of the peaceful occupation of their hunting-grounds, east of the Rocky Mountains, and of remuneration for the depredations made by other tribes, pledged to be secured to them in this treaty out of the annuities of said tribes, have made in this treaty.

"The Indians east of the mountains, parties to this treaty, likewise recognize and accept guarantees of this treaty, in full compensation for the injuries or depredations which have been, or may be committed by the aforesaid tribes, west of the Rocky Mountains."

In this treaty the tribes designated as "east of the mountains" consist of the Blackfoot nation, the Piegan, Blood,

47. Kappler, op. cit., p. 739.
Blackfoot, and Gros Ventres tribes of Indians. The tribes "west of the mountains" are the Flathead and Nez Perce nations, the Flathead nation consisting of the Flathead, Upper Pend d'Oreille, and Kootenay tribes of Indians, and the Nez Perce tribe of Indians.

Apparently nothing or very little was done concerning these treaties until 1872 when the removal of the Flatheads from the Bitter Root valley was attempted. By an executive order in 1871 President U. S. Grant provided for the removal of the Flatheads, stating that the survey provided in the treaty of 1855 had been made and the Bitter Root valley was to be open for settlement. James Garfield, later President of the United States, was in charge of negotiations for the Indian removal.

When the government sought to draw up the agreements for the removal of the Indians from the Bitter Root, Charlo, the head chief of the Selidh or Flatheads, refused to sign away what he deemed his home and the home of his ancestors. Charlo claimed that the terms of Article 11, concerning the survey of the Bitter Root had not been lived up to, so he was not obliged to move to the Jocko reservation, where the Kootenai, Pend d'Oreilles, and some Flatheads had already taken up residence.

Whether the survey as provided for in Article 11 was actually made is not clear, at least there is no record or evidence to uphold the affirmative, although it was stated that the survey was made.
With the refusal of Chief Chariot to sign the agreement of removal, another chief was recognized as the head chief of the Selish or Flatheads. This was Arlee, not a Selish at all, but a Nez Perce by parentage and a Flathead by adoption. The negotiations were concluded with all the validity as though Charlot had signed the treaty, illegal though they were.

Charlot refused to move from his home, saying that he had not signed it away and that his father Victor had claimed the Bitter Root valley for his own. The treaty was published as though Charlot had signed it; he was outraged, and resented the fact bitterly.

Incoming civilization apparently knows no obstacles and undoubtedly the prospect of settlement in the Bitter Root valley played an important part. Land had already been taken up in this valley by the whites, who desired to have the Indians removed.

So after a struggle of passive resistance Charlot was at last forced to leave the home of his ancestors. Bullets, however, did not make him move, but the love for his tribe which was apparently in great need. In the summer of 1890, assisted by funds from the government, Charlot moved to the Jocko reservation. Here in a short time the tribe would no

50. Ibid., p. 8.
doubt lose its identity.

Gallantly had the Selish fought against their primitive foes their Indian enemies, and more gallantly had they stood up for their birth right, their home in the Bitter Root valley, yet in bowed regret had Charlot led his tribe from their ancestral home - the Spartans of the West had lost their home.
APPENDIX

1806

"To the honour of the Flatheads, who live on the west side of the Rocky Mountains, and extend some distance down the Columbia, we must mention them as an exception; as they do not exhibit those loose feelings of carnal desire, nor appear addicted to the common customs of prostitution: and they are the only nation on the whole route where anything like chastity is regarded." p. 204.

1810
David Thompson, Narrative of Explorations in Western America, 1784-1812, Ed. by J. B. Tyrell, (Toronto, 1916.)

"The Saleesh were a fine race of moral Indians, and the finest I have seen, and set high value on the chastity of their women; adultery is death to both parties." p. 422.

1813-14
Ross Cox, Adventures on the Columbia River, (New York, 1832.)

"With the exception of the cruel treatment of their prisoners (which as it is general among all savages must not be imputed to them as a peculiar vice), the Flatheads have fewer failings than any tribes I ever met with. They are honest in their dealings, brave in the field, quiet and amenable to their chiefs, fond of cleanliness, and decided enemies of falsehood of every description." p. 121.

"I could not discover why the Black-feet and Flat-heads received their respective designations; for the feet of the former are no more inclined to be sable than any other part of the body, while the heads of the latter possess their fair proportion of rotundity. Indeed it is only below the falls and rapids that real flat-heads appear, and at the mouth of the Columbia that they flourish supernaturally." p. 128.

1811

"There they generally encounter the Piegans, and fight

*Meaning on the buffalo plains to the east.
desperately when attacked. They never attempt war themselves, and have the character of a brave and virtuous people, not in the least addicted to those vices so common among savages who have had intercourse with Europeans." p. 110.

"Chastity is particularly esteemed, and no woman will barter her favors, even with the whites, upon any mercenary consideration." p. 116.

1823

".... we .... proceeded .... until we reached a defile of the dividing ridge, called Hell's Gates, a distance from Flathead Fort of about 70 miles, general course, S.E. This place is rendered notorious as being the great war-road by which the Piegsans and Blackfeet often visit this side of the mountains; by the same pass the Flatheads and other tribes cross to the Missouri side in quest of buffalo. This spot has, therefore, been the scene of many a bloody contest between these hostile nations." p. 12, Vol. II.

1831

Here are excerpts from the writings of Warren Angus Ferris, an employee, from 1830 to 1835, of the American Fur Company, as quoted in the *Trail of Lewis and Clark* by O. D. Wheeler. Ferris was with the Selish or Flatheads in 1831 and regarding them states:

"The Ancient superstitions have given place to the more enlightened views of the Christian faith, and they seem to have become deeply and profitably impressed with the great truths of the Gospel. They appear to be very devout and orderly, and never eat, drink, or sleep, without giving thanks to God." p. 70, Vol. II.

1832

"The Flat-head Indians are a brave and, we have reason to believe, a sincere people. We had many instances of their honesty and humanity. They do not lie, steal, nor rob any one, unless when driven too near to starvation; and then any man, black, white, or red will seize anything to save himself from an agonizing death. They wore buck-skin frocks and pantaloons, and moccasins, with seldom anything on their heads. They draw a piece of fresh buffalo hide on their feet, and at night sleep with their feet not far from the fire, and in the morning find their shoes sitting as snug to their feet as if
they had been measured by the first shoe-maker in Boston. It is probable that no people have so little shoe-pinching as these savages. I never heard any one complain of corns, or kibed-heels, severe as the weather is in winter. The women wear moccasins also, but whether made in the same extempore method as those of the men, I know not. I suspect they must experience some shoe-pinching. They wear a petticoat, and a frock of some sort of leather, according to fancy, but all decent and comfortable. In rainy weather, or when very cold, they throw a buffalo-skin over their shoulders, with the fur inside. They have no stationary wigwams; but a sort of tent, which they fix down or remove with facility. In Major Long's book may be seen an engraved representation of them. Their mode of cooking is by roasting and boiling. They will pick a goose, or a brant, and run a stick through its body and so roast it, without taking out its entrails. They are, according to our notions, very nasty cooks.

"I know not what to say of their religion. I saw nothing like images, or any objects of worship whatever, and yet they appeared to keep the sabbath; for there is a day on which they do not hunt nor gamble, but sit moping all day and look like fools. There certainly appeared among them an honor, or conscience, and sense of justice. They would do what they promised, and return our stray horses, and lost articles. Now and then, but rarely, we found a pilferer, but not oftener than among the frontier white people. The Indians of all tribes are disposed to give you something to eat. It is a fact that we never found an Indian tribe disposed to treat us with that degree of inhospitality that we experienced in crossing the Alleghany Mountains, in the State of Pennsylvania." p. 74-76.

1832
Milton Sublette's Brigade, 1832. F. B. Victor River of the West.

"As to the Indian's moral nature, that is pretty much alike everywhere; and with some rare exceptions, the rarest of which is, perhaps, the Flatheads and Nez Perces nations, all are cruel, thieving, and treacherous." p. 119.

1833
Francis Fuller Victor, The River of the West, (Hartford, 1870.)

Camp at the junction of the Portneuf and Snake river - Statement of Joseph L. Meek.

"The Indians suffered very much. Fuel was scarce on the Snake river, but a little fire could be afforded - just sufficient for the children and their mothers to get warm by, for the fire was fed only with buffalo fat torn in strips, which blazed up quickly and did not last long. Many a time
I have stood off, looking at the fire, but not venturing to approach, when a chief would say, "Are you cold, my friend? come to the fire! - so kind are these Nez Perces and Flatheads." p. 137.


"The Selish proper, or Flatheads, inhabit St. Mary's or the Flathead valley, and the neighborhood of the lake of the same name.... "The tribe was once a very powerful one, but has been much diminished by the attacks of the Blackfeet, who enter their country through the mountain passes, or meet them in their hunts upon the eastern side. p. 415.

"The tribe, in fact, seem to be an exception among the Indians of Oregon. Their heroism in battle, their good faith toward others, and their generally inoffensive conduct have been the theme of praise both from priest and layman. They are, however, rapidly disappearing before the murderous warfare of the Blackfeet...." p. 416.


"Near Cantonment Stevens were several lodges of Flatheads; and, during our stay there, we were visited by many of that tribe, who were anxious to hear the news from the other side of the mountains, and to learn if the Blackfeet were still at war with their neighboring tribes. They have so often entertained deluded hopes of peace, and so often trusted to treaties and promises which have been broken at the pleasure of their treacherous enemy, that they had well nigh despaired of ever leaving their own country unmolested. "These poor Indians, whose boast it is that 'they never shed the blood of a white man,' are, on account of their peaceful dispositions and their wish to follow the counsels of the whites, almost incessantly harassed by their more powerful neighbor across the mountains. Every year bands of their horses are run off, and more or less of their people fall victims to their lurking foe." p. 505.
Dear Sir:— With a select party consisting of the Piegan guide (the White Crane) Mr. Rose, Mr. Burr, and two voyageurs, you will visit the Flathead camp, on the Muscle Shell river, about one hundred miles south of this place; and procuring the most intelligent and reliable Flathead guides, you will make your way to the St. Mary's village, exploring the best pass to that point from the headwaters of the Missouri river. You will collect every possible information as to routes, streams, prominent landmarks, and characteristic features of the country; noting particularly the general quality of the soil, the forest trees, grasses, quality of water, and particularly the route for the passage of wagon trains. With the barometer you will make the best profile the time will allow of the route you pass over for a railroad.

But the great duty which I place in your hands, is to carry from me a message of the Great Father to the Flatheads. Assure them that the Great Father appreciates their services and understands their merits; that he will hereafter protect them from the incursions of the Blackfeet, and other Indians east of the mountains, and make them live as friends; that he will send to them, each year, certain articles which they most need; and that a faithful and intelligent agent shall live among them.

Speak of your own duties, and of your occupation of the St. Mary's post. I want to meet the prominent Flathead chiefs and braves at the St. Mary's village, at the close of the present month; and rely on your energy and tact to induce them to accompany you to that point.

It is my determination to bring the tribes north of the Missouri, and those west of the mountains, into a general council at this point next year, and to make a lasting peace between all of the tribes of Indians not included in previous arrangements. Dwell on this in the Flathead camp.

You understand well the general character of the Flatheads, the best Indians of the Mountains or the plains. Honest, brave, docile, they need only encouragement to become good citizens. They are Christians; and we are assured by the good Father DeSmet that they live up to the Christian code.

Dwell on the good Father, and say that his words in their favor have reached the Great Father and made all good men their friends.

I want to build up anew the village of St. Mary's. Let
the Flatheads understand I am their friend - one who will join hands with former friends for their good. No labors will be more sweet than those which will enable me to place in permanent homes, in that beautiful valley, those interesting children of the mountains.

Truly yours,
ISAAC I. STEVENS,
Governor of Washington Territory, in Charge of Exploration.

Lieut. J. Mullan, Jr.,
1st Artillery, United States Army.

pages 34-35.

Irving, Astoria.

The process of head deformation by the Chinooks was begun in infancy and is described in Irving's "Astoria" in Chapter 10 as follows:

"A singular custom prevails, not merely among the Chinooks, but among most of the tribes about this part of the coast, which is the flattening of the forehead. The process by which this deformity is effected commences immediately after birth. The infant is laid in a wooden trough, by way of cradle. The end in which the head reposes is higher than the rest. A paddling is placed on the head of the infant, with a piece of bark above it, and is pressed down by cords, which pass through holes on each side of the trough. As the tightening of the paddling and pressing of the head to the board is gradual, the process is said not to be attended with much pain. The appearance of the infant, however, while in this state of compression, is whimsically hideous, and 'its little black eyes,' we are told, 'being forced out by the tightness of the bandages, resemble those of a mouse choked in a trap.'"

"About a year's pressure is sufficient to produce the desired effect, at the end of which time the child emerges from its bandages a complete flathead, and continues so through life."

From these paragraphs it is self evident that the name "Flathead" to these coast tribes is not without foundation.


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