



Samish Journey Home  
VOLUME I: LEGEND OF SLA'HAL

The acclaimed Skokomish elder Subiyay, Bruce Miller, graciously offered this recording of messages of encouragement to the Samish people. Also a descendent of the Samish Nation, Subiyay shares the teachings that were passed down to him, and continues in our oral tradition to weave information and guidance throughout.

As an avid member of the Sla'Hal society, Bruce can be found at most gatherings of stickgame throughout the northwest and the interior, often the first to arrive and among the last to leave. Although the game and songs are popular in native communities throughout the region, many people are not familiar with how the game originated. We are extremely fortunate to have captured Bruce telling the story of how Sla'Hal, or stickgame, came to be. Much more than just a simple tale, this story tells how the world was nearly destroyed by the seeds of greed, lust, hate and jealousy. The Creator responded to pleadings by the poor pitiful human beings and intervened on their behalf. According to the teachings, as long as we remember to live our lives with proper generosity, fidelity, love and respect, the world may not be ultimately destroyed.





Samish Journey Home  
VOLUME 2: SONGS FOR THE SAMISH PEOPLE

According to the Legend of Sla'hal, the Creator gave human beings the gift of song to lift them up spiritually and give them power during a time when the world was facing great destruction. This collection of songs reaches out to lift up and welcome the Samish people on the Journey Home.

As our elders have taught, many songs belong specifically to families or to individuals and it is considered disrespectful to sing them without permission or acknowledgment. Pauline Hillaire, who sings the "Lummi Chiefs Song" on track 11, clarified she sings this song to honor the Samish people on their Journey Home and does not release the song for use by others who are not from the Lummi Nation.

Jack Cagey, past member of the Samish Council, shares two songs that he learned from his grandfather, the Eagle Song and the Blue Jay Song. Currently Jack's grandchildren perform these as a part of the Swan Dancers, a group started by Jack and his wife Beverly.

The Coast Salish Anthem song originally belonged to Chief Dan George of the Burrard Band in British Columbia. During the 1994 British Commonwealth Games at Victoria, his family gifted the song to the Tribes of the Coast Salish region, and thus it became known as the Coast Salish Anthem, and is an example of an "Open" song, which can be sung by everyone, as long as the originator is properly acknowledged.

Wally's Stick Game song belongs to our dear friend Wally Selam of Yakama Nation, and he graciously approved of the version sung by the Samish Singers being included on this album as a tribute to his love for singing and the Stick Game way of life.

Isadore Tom Jr. received the "Song for Samish" during the recording session on March 24, 2002, and in his words, this song may well be considered a blessing for our people.

Now' Si'am is the Samish informal phrase for welcoming respected guests, and Tom Wooten offers this song for use by all the Samish people because the inspiration for it came to him during the preparations for this project.

George Adams, Nooksack Tribe, graciously provided translation for Amazing Grace into the Samish language.





Samish Journey Home  
VOLUME 3: LISTEN WHEN ELDERS SPEAK

Excerpts from the messages recorded 3-24-02 express the hopes of all about the power of our culture to heal, to renew, and to bring us home.

"Right now you have taken the first couple of steps in that direction. You're fulfilling a dream of the ancestors of yesterday that once sat on the council."

—Isadore Tom Jr

"I'd like to reach out to the Samish Tribe and hopefully touch their hearts with some words of encouragement and love. These two things have no bounds, or boundaries, or limits. Your children and your grandchildren will in turn learn from you by what we call, "The living example." So have your best foot forward, keep your head up, and learn some legends."

—Pauline Hillaire

"My grandfather was Samish. And my grandmother on my father's side was Samish. Sounds like a lot of Samish blood. There is a lot of blood that's missing from our Samish. It's kind of scattered around the country. We're going to have to hunt it down and bring it back."

—Jack Cagey

"We are all proud of our father's teachings. He left many good teachings with us and this is one of them."

—Vic Underwood Jr.

"We are so blessed to have information about our people left for us by the wisest of people who knew how important it was to put forward for coming generations the things that would allow them to be proud of who they were and to let them know that they also have a responsibility to keep the culture alive in an honorable way. Not for power, not for prestige, but because it needs to happen. We each need to contribute what the wisest of our people left for us to share."

—Vi Hilbert

