

Séliš-Qłispé Culture Committee

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Historical timeline of the Séliš, Qłispé, and related nations

Creation	During time of creation & the animal people, Coyote & Fox prepare the world for the tısqélix ^w (human-beings-yet-to-come). Some animals and plants, including q ^w eyq ^w ay, decide to become food or medicine.
14-10,000 b.p.	End of last ice age. Occupancy of region by Salishan people dates to at least this time. Oldest known archaeological site with human remains in Séliš-Qłispé territories is over 12,800 years old.
Time Immemorial	Great Salish Nation splits into separate tribes. Some linguists estimate this was about 4000 years ago. Oral traditions recorded by SQCC and ethnographers indicate a dispersal from Montana to the west.
Time Immemorial	Salishan peoples flourish in aboriginal territories that include most of Montana, and portions of Wyoming, Idaho, Washington and Canada. In what is now Montana, territories include some of the most abundant buffalo country: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• The Séliš (Salish or “Flathead”) are organized in about six very large bands based in certain areas, mostly east of the Continental Divide in places that include Čx^wtx^wtpe (Confluence of Several Waters — Three Forks area); Sk^wurıncne[˘] Sewtk^ws (Waters of the Pocket Gopher — the Big Hole River); Sntapqey (Place Where Something (Bull Trout) is Shot in the Head — the Butte area); Čtmıše[˘] (Cottonwood Above the Water — Helena area); and Qlawqn Sewtk^ws (Beaverhead’s Waters — the Beaverhead-Jefferson River); a• A now-extinct nation called the Turıáxn (Plains Salish) have about five large bands throughout the Rocky Mountain Front area at places including Sensu?k^wı (‘Ice Piled Up,’ Fort Shaw), Sensu?tk^wı (‘Little Ice Piled Up,’ Floweree Butte), Nčtxsšhé (Where Water Goes over a Rocky Ledge — the Great Falls area), and the Dearborn River;• The territory of the Qłispé (Kalispel or “Pend d’Oreille”) encompasses the drainage systems of Ntx^wétk^w (“River” — the Flathead River), Nmesulétk^w (Shimmering Cold Waters — the Middle Clark Fork), Nč?umnétk^w (Bighorn Sheep Waters — the lower Clark Fork), Nčmıcí (River Delta — the Clark Fork Delta and Lake Pend Oreille), and the Pend Oreille River, throughout which country they are constituted in two “tribes,” five “divisions,” and at least 27 “bands;”• A smaller now-extinct Salishan nation, the Smtéúse?, holds territory centered around Naáyccstm Sewtk^ws (Bull Trout’s Waters — the Blackfoot River), including Qalsá (also known as Epł itx^we? — Has Camas), the great camas digging grounds near present-day Potomac that were known to tribes throughout the region.
1492-1520 A.D.	Columbus & Spanish conquistadors arrive. Smallpox, other diseases introduced to Americas and are spread from one Indigenous community to another.
c.1700	Séliš and Qłispé begin to acquire donkeys and horses from Shoshone and Nez Perce.
c. 1775-1780	Blackfeet gain access to firearms through Hudson Bay Co. in Canada; an uneven power struggle with the Séliš, Qłispé, Turıáxn (Plains Salish) and other tribes develops.

1782	First documented smallpox epidemic in Séliš-Qlispé region, estimated to have killed more than 3/4 of people in affected bands. Earlier undocumented epidemics occurred.
c. 1785	Salish prophet X̣alḷqs (Shining Shirt) foresees coming of “Blackrobes” (Jesuits).
1780s-1790s	In response to dramatic losses in population due primarily to smallpox epidemics and Blackfeet expansion, Séliš coalesce into a single band based along Nstečcx ^w étk ^w (Bitterroot River), in the western-most portion of their overall territory. During this time, these same factors lead to the elimination of the Tuḥax̣n and Smteúseʔ, most of whose survivors join the related Séliš and Qlispé nations. Salishan peoples consider this a strategic retreat, and never surrender their easterly territories. They use horses to continue accessing those areas, primarily to hunt buffalo in at least two large organized hunts per year.
1790s	First French and British fur traders appear in Séliš-Qlispé territories.
1805-6	Séliš allow Lewis & Clark Expedition to pass through their territory in the Bitterroot Valley.
1809-11	David Thompson establishes fur trade in western Montana, building Saleesh House, Kullyspell House, and other posts. Séliš and Qlispé gain access to firearms. For first time, animals are killed for export and sale in the market economy.
1810-1830	Height of fur trade. Far-reaching impacts on ecology, economy, and culture of the region. Iroquois people (Haudenosaunee) arrive among the Séliš and Qlispé people.
1820s	The Hudson's Bay Company intentionally creates a "fur desert" across Salish and Qlispé territories, decimating game populations.
1825-1839	Four delegations of Séliš, Iroquois, & Nez Perce travel to St. Louis seeking Blackrobes.
c. 1840	Tṃṭx̣ł̣c̣ín (No Horses – Chief Alexander) becomes head chief of upper Qlispé.
1841	At invitation of Séliš, Jesuits establish St. Mary's Mission at Łq̣eṭṃł̣š (Wide Cottonwoods – Stevensville) in the Bitterroot Valley.
1842	X ^w eł̣x̣ł̣c̣ín (Many Horses – Chief Victor) becomes chief of the Séliš.
1840s-50s	Westward settlement increases pressures on bison, herds noticeably decline.
1847	Hudson's Bay Company's Angus McDonald establishes Fort Connah at K ^w ł̣nc̣ṃép (Waters of the Narrow Opening – Post Creek).
1849	Séliš withdraw protection of Jesuits from Blackfeet raiders; Jesuits leave Bitterroot Valley.
1853	Isaac Stevens surveys route for Northern Pacific RR; assumes position as first Gov. and Supt. of Indian Affairs for Washington Territory (which includes today's Montana).
1854 (Sept. 24)	Jesuits relocate St. Ignatius Mission to Snyeł̣mn (Place Where You Surround Something).
1855 (July 16)	Stevens and leaders of Séliš, Qlispé & Kootenai nations, led by X ^w eł̣x̣ł̣c̣ín, negotiate Hellgate Treaty. Tribes reserve from cession Flathead & Bitterroot Reservations. Tribes also reserve right to hunt, fish, gather plants in aboriginal territories.
1855 (Oct. 17)	Judith River treaty defines buffalo hunting territories of various tribes, including CSKT.
1859	Mullan Road is built from Fort Walla Walla to Fort Benton. Hellgate Treaty is ratified by U.S. Senate and signed by President.

1862	Non-Indians discover gold in Montana, leading to gold rush that harms Séliš-Qłispé people as well as the lands, waters, plants & animals of tribal territories.
1863	First Catholic school built in St. Ignatius.
1864	First major Montana gold rush. Montana Territory established. Oct. 17, Sisters of Providence arrive in St. Ignatius. Nov. 21, they begin instructing tribal girls in catechism.
1868	Tm̄x̄łcín (No Horses – Chief Alexander) dies, succeeded by X ^w eʔx ^w iʔsče (Many Grizzly Bears – Chief Michelle).
1870 (July 14)	Séliš head chief X ^w eʔx̄łcin (Many Horses—Chief Victor) dies. He is succeeded by his son, S̄łm̄xe Q ^w ox̄qeys (Claw of the Small Grizzly—Chief Charlo).
1871	Decimation of southern Great Plains bison accelerates dramatically, spurred by westward reach of railroads, industrial tanning of hides, and the increasing use of buffalo hides for industrial machinery belting.
1871	President Grant signs Executive Order falsely asserting that Bitterroot had been surveyed according to stipulations in Hellgate Treaty and determined less suitable to needs of Séliš; orders tribe to leave Bitterroot, move to Jocko (Flathead) Reservation.
1872	Rep. James Garfield (R-OH) sent to Bitterroot Valley to negotiate removal of Séliš. Chief Charlot refuses. His "x" is forged onto official copy sent to US Senate for ratification. Most Séliš stay in Bitterroot; U.S. assigns them individual allotments of land.
1873	A few Séliš families move to Jocko with Arlee, who is treated by U.S. as head chief. By 1875, 123 Salish have moved to Flathead Reservation, but majority remains in Bitterroot.
1874	Southern Great Plains bison are virtually exterminated; commercial assault on northern herd intensifies.
1877	U.S. establishes Fort Missoula. In following decades, troops frequently deploy to the Flathead Reservation to suppress the Tribes.
1877	Army pursues Joseph & Nez Perce across ID and MT; Séliš decide not to ally with them, but also help ensure their safe passage through the Bitterroot Valley.
1877	Peter Ronan appointed U.S. Indian Agent for Flathead Reservation; serves until 1893.
1878-79	Duncan McDonald travels to Canada, invites White Bird's Nez Perce to settle on Flathead Res.; some accept.
1878-79	Six orphaned buffalo calves are herded from the plains back to the Flathead Reservation by Łatatí (Little Falcon Robe), fulfilling the idea of his father, Atatéx ^w (Peregrine Falcon Robe) to save the buffalo from extinction and provide a safely accessible supply for the reservation's Indian people. Łatatí begins growing the herd at Atatéx ^w (Atatéx ^w 's land), along Nt̄x̄ ^w étk ^w (the lower Flathead River), where Łatatí's mother, Sapín Mali (Mary Sabine) lives.
1880s	Łatatí's stepfather, Samwel, sells the bison to Michel Pablo and Charles Allard. Pablo and Allard later buy more buffalo from other sources, including C.J. "Buffalo" Jones. By the 1890s, there are about 1,000 buffalo ranging along Nt̄x̄ ^w étk ^w (the lower Flathead River).

1882	In meetings in St. Ignatius, U.S. officials demand a 52-mile right-of-way through the reservation for construction of the Northern Pacific Railroad. Tribes strongly oppose the railroad, instead advocate expansion of reservation, but are given no choice in matter.
1883	Northern Pacific Railroad completed across Montana, including across Flathead Reservation, despite protests of tribal leaders. Railroad sparks industrial development of mining, logging, and agriculture throughout tribal territories, with far-reaching impacts on tribal resources, including buffalo.
1883	Commercial hunters kill the last wild buffalo.
1884 (August)	Sisters of Providence boarding school built in St. Ignatius; Indians provide free logs.
1884 -85	Michel Pablo & Charles Allard buy bison from Łatatí's stepfather, Samwel.
1885	Indian police, judges, and courts established on reservation; many public forms of traditional culture are outlawed under federal policy.
1886	Enrollment at the Holy Family School in St. Ignatius rises to 186.
1888	Boys boarding school completed in St. Ignatius. Ursulines open kindergarten.
1888	Missoula & Bitter Root Valley Railroad builds its line from Missoula to Hamilton, passing through Séliš allotments with neither tribal permission nor compensation to tribal members.
1889 (August)	Chief Arlee dies.
1889 (November)	With increasing suffering of Bitterroot Salish and pressure from US government, Chief Charlo finally agrees to leave Bitterroot Valley. Salish, expecting to be moved, plant no crops in order to save seeds for planting on Flathead Reservation. But Congress fails to provide money for removal; over next two winters, Salish suffer greatly, with some nearing starvation.
1889	Montana officially becomes a state.
1890-1896	St. Ignatius mission reaches its height. As many as 320 tribal children enrolled each year in boarding and day schools.
1890	Boys boarding school completed in St. Ignatius. Ursulines open kindergarten.
1891 (October)	After 36 years of resistance, Chief Charlo and the Séliš are forcibly moved to the Flathead Indian Reservation by U.S. government.
1891	Kalispell, MT is founded, named after the Qłispe (Kalispel) people.
1893	Flathead Reservation Indian Agent Peter Ronan dies.
1896-1901	In 1896, Congress establishes "Crow, Flathead, Etc., Commission" to pursue tribal cession of reservation lands. In numerous meetings convened by the commission from 1897 to 1901, Séliš, Qłispé, and Kootenai leaders refuse to cede any lands at any price.
1897	X ^w e?x ^w i'tsče (Many Grizzly Bears – Chief Michelle) dies, is succeeded by his son, Nšalq̄n (Sapiel Charley Michel) (c. 1863-1929).
1897	U.S. appoints William Smead, an advocate of opening the reservation to white settlement, as Indian Agent for the Flathead Reservation.

1898	Tribes hold first Arlee July Celebration, in spite of protests from priests and Indian Agents.
1901	In the last documented smallpox outbreak among the Salish, a quarantine camp is set up near Snyel̓mn̓ N̓šiyétk̓ 's (Place-Where-You-Surround-Something's Creek/Mission Creek).
1901	Some of the buffalo belonging to Charles Allard, who died in 1896, are sold to the Conrad family in Kalispell. Others are sold to Howard Eaton, who in turn sells them to Yellowstone National Park.
1904	Despite nearly unanimous tribal opposition, Congress passes Rep. Joseph Dixon's Flathead Allotment Act, signed into law by President Theodore Roosevelt. The act forces tribal members to take individual allotments of land, and in violation of the Hellgate Treaty's guarantee of the reservation as a place set aside for the "exclusive use and benefit" of the tribes, it allows non-Indians to homestead remaining lands. Between 1910 and 1934, 540,000 acres of reservation lands are lost to non-Indian ownership. In 1971, US Court of Indian Claims rules the act a "breach" of Hellgate Treaty.
1905-1907	American Bison Society is formed in New York City, with President Theodore Roosevelt as honorary president. On January 10, 1907, the board meets and decides "to have the Flathead and Crow Indian Reservations examined with a view to having suitable portions of them set apart as buffalo ranges."
1906	Agent Smead forces Michel Pablo to get rid of buffalo. Evidence indicates that Smead denies Pablo's request to keep the herd on the very same land that the government would later seize to form the National Bison Range; Morton Elrod said that "on good authority...this is the range which Mr. Pablo wanted on which to keep his herd of Buffalo." Pablo is unable to find a buyer for the buffalo in the United States, and ends up selling them Canada. Beginning in 1906, the buffalo are gradually rounded up and shipped in special train cars to Canada from the Ravalli depot of the Northern Pacific. By 1908, some 695 bison have been shipped out.
1906-1907	S̓ł̓n̓x̓e̓ Q̓'ox̓'q̓eys (Claw of the Small Grizzly – Chief Charlo), Nk̓'w̓'ł̓ex̓'ncú (Sam Resurrection) and other tribal leaders travel to Washington, D.C., and communicate with officials in writing, to try to get the President to stop the Flathead allotment process and the planned breach of Hellgate Treaty's guarantee of the reservation as an exclusive tribal homeland. Officials dismiss their protests, which continue for many years, but tribal leaders leave behind a record of resistance.
1907-1908	On behalf of the American Bison Society, Professor Morton Elrod of the University of Montana examines four areas on the Flathead Reservation as potential sites for a bison reserve. He recommends the area that is then taken by Congress for the creation of the "National Bison Range." Elrod is shown the area by tribal member Duncan McDonald, who supports the creation of a bison refuge but is unaware that Elrod's scheme involves expropriating the area from tribal ownership. Elrod notes that five tribal allotments are located within the area, some of them near year-round springs, and calls for them to be "eliminated."

1908	Government completes first round of allotment of lands to tribal members, declares remaining land "surplus" and therefore available for non-Indian homesteading.
1908	Congress passes bill taking more than 16,000 acres from the Tribes for National Bison Range. Officials call tribal members to a meeting in St. Ignatius and inform them, giving them no choice or say in the matter. The government also dictates the price to be paid, which is not distributed to the tribal community, but deposited in the U.S. treasury and used to fund the further transformation and expropriation of tribal lands and resources.
1908	Congress passes Flathead Irrigation Project bill, justified as aiding Indians in transition to agriculture. Project actually benefits non-Indian farmers and ranchers, harms many native subsistence operations. Many Indians lack money to pay irrigation charges; allotments are seized to settle debts. Canal & dam construction continues into 1940s.
1908 (October 18)	State game warden kills four members of Q̄ispé family hunting party in Swan Valley and is in return killed by one of tribal women acting in self-defense.
1908-1910s	Congress also takes reservation lands from the tribes for townsites laid out throughout reservation; irrigation canals and reservoir sites; county roads; and perhaps most outrageously, many hundreds of lakeshore plots for "villa sites" for non-Indians.
1910 (Jan. 10)	S̄r̄n̄xe Q̄w̄ox̄w̄qeys (Claw of the Small Grizzly – Chief Charlo) dies.
1910 (Apr-May)	US government makes available to non-Indian homesteaders what it has designated as "surplus lands" within the Flathead Reservation, despite fierce tribal opposition and the Hellgate Treaty's guarantee that the land was set aside for the "exclusive use and benefit" of the Confederated Salish (Flathead), upper Kalispel (Pend d'Oreille), and Kootenai tribes.
1911	Public schools open on Flathead Reservation.
1915	U.S. sells to non-Indians 889 "Villa Sites" around south half of Flathead Lake.
1917-1919	World War I. Numerous tribal members serve in military.
1919-21	Second round of allotment transfers thousands of acres from tribal ownership to individual member ownership. Hundreds of thousands of acres of lands allotted to tribal members have already been sold to or taken over by non-Indians.
1924	Congress grants citizenship to American Indians.
1929	N̄šalqn (Sapiel Charley Michel), head chief of the Upper Q̄ispé or Pend d'Oreille, dies. Succeeded by Mose Michell.
1930	Federal Power Commission grants license to build a dam at the falls of the Flathead River to the Rocky Mountain Power Co., a jointly owned subsidiary of the Montana Power Co. and the Anaconda Copper Mining Co.
1934-35	Congress passes Indian Reorganization Act. Salish & Kootenai are first tribes in nation to incorporate under its terms. New tribal constitution adopted with elected council. U.S. says two traditional chiefs will be non-voting members of council, and their successors will not be recognized. U.S. fails to recognize the Q̄ispé head chief, Mose Michell.
1935	The CS&KT Council recommends an area of the Mission Mountains be kept undeveloped, allowing only foot and horse trails.

1936-38	Montana Power Company resumes construction of dam at the falls of the Flathead river, completed in 1938 and named for MPC's president, Frank Kerr. During construction, at least 15 workers are killed, including nine tribal members.
1930s-40s	Civilian Conservation Corps projects on reservation, building trails, roads, etc.
	U.S. establishes the Civilian Conservation Corps, which in time employed tribal members to build trails and roads on the Flathead Reservation.
1941-45	World War II. Many tribal members serve in all branches of military.
1941 (29 Jan.)	Martin Charlo, the last Séliš (Salish or "Flathead") chief recognized by the U.S. government, dies at age 84.
1942 (4 Oct.)	Eneas Kustata, the last Ksanka (Kootenai) chief recognized by the U.S. government, dies at age 85.
1944 (8 May)	Mose Michell, the last head chief of the Q̄lispé (upper Kalispel, St̄qetk̄ ^w m̄s̄cīnt̄, or "Pend d'Oreille"), dies at age 58.
1951-53	Korean War. Many tribal members serve in all branches of military.
1953	Congress adopts "termination" policy. Flathead Reservation is Congress's first target, but due to well-organized opposition by Tribal Council and others, action is averted.
1954	The Confederated Salish and Kootenai Tribes successfully resist Congress's attempt to "terminate" the tribes and reservation.
1950's-60's	Federal "Relocation" policy seeks to move Indian people into large cities.
1960	The Tribal Constitution is amended to require that members have 1/4 Salish, Kootenai or Salish/Kootenai blood.
1961	The CSKT consents to have the State of Montana assume criminal and civil jurisdiction on the reservation.
1963-75	Vietnam War. Many tribal members serve in all branches of military.
1960's-70's	Movement for Tribal sovereignty and cultural revitalization in native communities.
1970	Agnes Vanderburg starts her Salish cultural education encampment in Valley Creek.
1971	U.S. Court of Claims deems Flathead Allotment Act to have been "breach" of 1855 treaty.
1972	New Montana constitution adopted, includes important new provisions including "Indian Education for All" and the guarantee of a clean and healthful environment.
1974	With a dominant focus on cultural studies, Two Eagle River School is founded for Salish high school students.
1974	Elders Christine Woodcock, Louise McDonald and Annie Pierre convince the Tribal Council to stop the Ashley timber sale in the Mission Mountains.
1975	The CSKT Tribal Council establishes the Séliš-Q̄lispé (Salish-Pend d'Oreille or Flathead) Culture Committee and Kootenai Culture Committee as tribal departments, each comprised of staff and Elders Advisory Councils.

1977	Salish Kootenai College is founded by a group of educators including Dr. Joe McDonald, Jerry Slater, & Mike O'Donnell.
1970s-1988	Agnes Vanderburg runs her Salish cultural education encampment in Valley Creek.
1980s	Tribes reject proposals to build more dams on lower Flathead River, and secure minimum in-stream flow requirements for waterways affected by Flathead Irrigation Project.
1981	The CSKT establishes the Natural Resources Department.
1982	CSKT establish first tribal wilderness in US: Mission Mountains Tribal Wilderness.
1984	Agreement reached on relicensing of Kerr Dam; tribes have option to take over in 2015.
1985	The Tribes secure minimum stream flows to protect fisheries.
1986	Clarence Woodcock and others initiate annual “River Honoring” event.
1992	The Tribes build KwaTaqNuk Resort and Casino at Nčmqnétk ^w (Where the Shoreline Tapers to the Outlet of the Lake – Polson).
1993	CSKT adopt Lower Flathead River Management Plan, which establishes that “the natural and cultural values of the Lower Flathead River Corridor shall be preserved for present and future generations of the Tribes.”
1994	Congress passes Tribal Self-Governance Act. CSKT first propose taking over management of National Bison Range.
1997	National Trust for Historic Preservation names Flathead Reservation one of U.S.’s 11 Most Endangered Historic Places due to proposed radical expansion of U.S. Highway 93.
1998	To compensate for environmental damages to upper Clark Fork River, ARCO agrees to pay CSKT \$18.3 million for habitat restoration on Flathead Reservation.
1999	Montana legislature passes law authored by Carol Juneau (D-Browning) requiring renaming of all placenames in state containing the “s-word.”
2000	CSKT and PPL-Montana agree on mitigation of damages caused by Kerr Dam, and initiate operation of dam in less environmentally destructive way.
2000	CSKT, Montana Dept. of Transportation and Federal Highways sign historic memorandum on Highway 93, recognizing tribal sovereignty over transportation design.
2000s	CSKT continue to pursue management of National Bison Range.
2002	Nk ^w usm, a Salish language immersion school, is founded in Arlee, Flathead Reservation by a group of young Salish-Qłispé people.
2008	With help from CSKT and others, Milltown Dam is removed, restoring the confluence of Blackfoot & Clark Fork Rivers, an ancient traditional site known to the Séliš and Qłispé as Naáycčstm (Place of Bull Trout).
2015	The Salish assume ownership of Seliš-Ksanka-Qłispé Dam, formerly known as Kerr Dam.
2021	US Government returns ownership of Bison Range to CSKT as part of the CSKT Water Compact.