

CHAPTER 8

Big Man, Little Man, Beggar Man, Feast

The factual differences between the housepits at Keatley Creek have been clearly set out and explored. While some small structures, such as Housepit 9, may have been used by individuals who were wealthy because of their specialized roles or their connections to larger, powerful households or ritual groups, most small houses were occupied by relatively impoverished domestic groups that had poorer quality and less salmon, meat, and plant foods. The prestige items in most small households were rare or of poor quality. Activities within small houses seem to have been communal undertakings, although probably divided according to sex. In short, there is no evidence of much surplus, wealth, hierarchy, or specialization within most of the small households.

On the other hand, the largest residential corporate structure that was excavated yielded great amounts of storage per person and has repeated indications of accumulated lucre in the form of shells from the coast, remains of animals used for prestige displays and showpiece rituals, worked nephrite and copper, pipes, dogs, and specially sculpted or shaped stone and bone pieces. Moreover, many sorts of evidence indicate that there was a fundamental division within the house between the corporate descendants of the house owners and poorer working families. While families on both sides of the house had hearths accompanied by anvils, abrading stones, fire-cracked rocks, stone tools, stone debitage, and bedding materials, only the domestic groups on one side of the house had large hearths accompanied by large storage pits. This division of the house into an elite half and a poor half corresponds in a remarkable way to James Teit's observation that one-half to two-thirds of the ethnographic communities were elite families (see chapter 2). There also appears to be one hearth area in the large house that was more "administrative" than labor oriented, and this may have been the domestic area of the headman of the corporate group.

From the analysis of salmon remains, it is clear that the large corporate groups had privileged access, if not ownership, of the most economically important fishing sites. This accords well with the ethnographic accounts of such sites being owned and inherited, usually with rights extending to closely related men. Ethnographically, it is clear that the elites of such corporate groups also tried to restrict access to the most important and valued hunted game, sometimes probably by promoting their own sons as the only qualified people capable of leading hunting parties due to their lengthy (and costly) practical and spiritual training. Elites also restricted access to deer by successfully claiming ownership of deer fences that they constructed and sometimes by simply trying to claim ownership of the best hunting territories (see Romanoff, 1992b; Dawson, 1892, p. 14; Teit, 1909). This may be the significance behind the greater amounts of deer bone remains in the largest house compared to any other ex-

cavated house at the site. In this fashion, consumption of deer meat could be used as a demonstration of economic and spiritual superiority.

But there is another indication that the large corporate groups held privileged access to hunting and root-gathering areas in the mountains behind the site, and they may well have owned these areas outright. This added piece of the prehistoric puzzle comes from the analysis of the many-hued bits of colored stone chipping debris that were found discarded at the housepits. How can stone debitage tell archaeologists that members of specific residential corporate groups owned hunting territories in the mountains? The trail of evidence is not entirely obvious at the outset. In fact, we stumbled upon it by accident while looking at stone debitage from various housepits for other reasons. In the process of looking at these bits of stone waste material, it became evident that there were some major differences between housepits in terms of the cherts and chalcedonies associated with each dwelling (Figure 8.1). A detailed petrographic analysis by Edward Bakewell confirmed the validity of the distinctive types of chert and chalcedony that were initially established by visual criteria alone. Since we knew that all the large housepits were occupied over the same period of time, these differences did not seem to reflect changes through time. What else could they represent?

In order to determine where the various cherts and chalcedonies were coming from, Mike Rousseau conducted a survey of the entire foraging range that the residents of Keatley Creek probably used during their yearly movements. He succeeded in locating the general source areas for a number of types of cherts and chalcedonies used at Keatley Creek. All of these sources were in mountain areas that are ethnographically used by the present-day Fraser River Indians near Keatley Creek for hunting and gathering mountain plant foods such as lily roots and mountain potatoes. Different kinds of cherts were found in different parts of the mountains. The conclusion seemed inescapable that the residents of each great house were going to separate parts of the mountains to hunt and gather plant foods. While there, they must have also gathered suitable cobbles and cores for making stone tools and brought these back to their winter village. There is little overlap between some houses that used these stone types. This implies a relatively exclusive use of mountain areas by the residents of different housepits rather than a free-ranging, communal, and changeable use. Our data indicated something approaching ownership in terms of the corporate groups' control over those mountain areas. It is therefore very interesting to note that Dawson (1892, p. 14) recorded that the Shuswap formerly owned hereditary family hunting grounds.

Some generalized hunter-gatherers, such as those reported by Richard Gould in central Australia (Gould & Saggars, 1985), transported exotic raw materials from distant locations. The materials were from their ancestral lands and helped maintain links between distant groups for alliance purposes. However, at Keatley Creek, the stone sources were *within* the area used by the community and there would have been no other groups occupying these lands. Residents of Keatley Creek may well have had ideological attachments to their stone sources, but it is clear they also had economic and practical reasons for using those lands. Those uses and ideologies caused partitioning of the landscape by the major corporate groups of Keatley Creek.

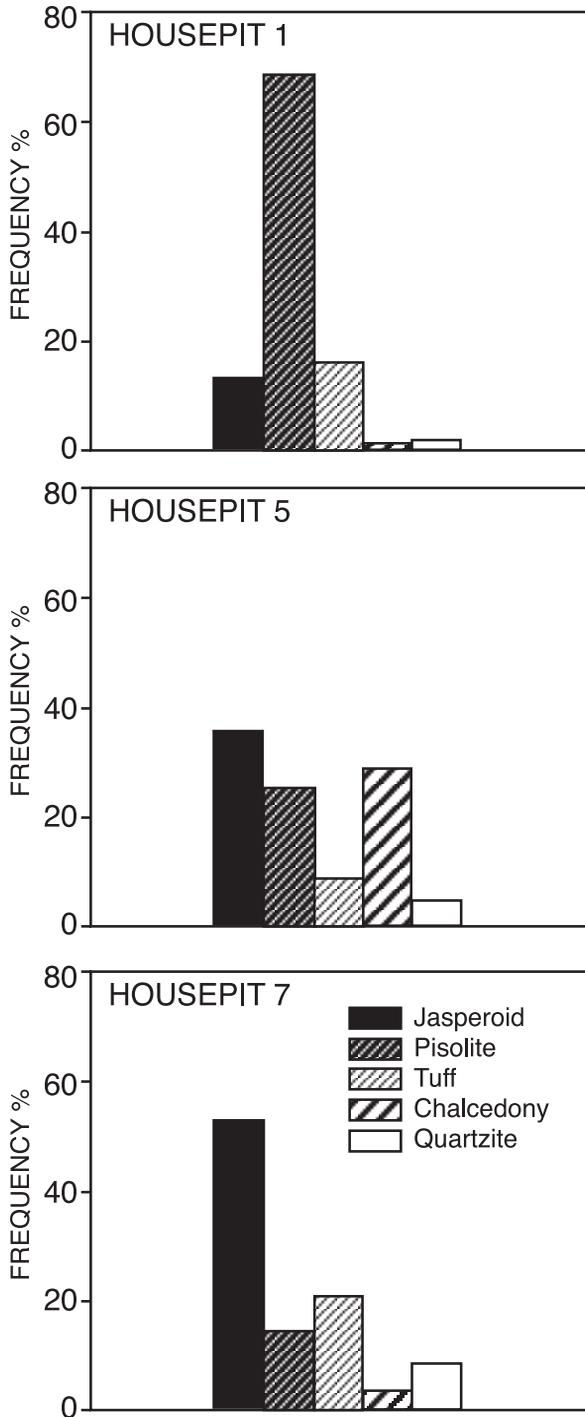


FIGURE 8.1. These graphs represent the varying proportions of different types of cherts recovered from Housepits 1, 5, and 7. There are only a few distinctive types of chert and chalcedony that occur in any substantial frequency in the large housepits that were tested or excavated. However, the differences in the use of these sources between houses is striking. Residents of Housepit 1 primarily relied on a distinctive type of speckled chert (pisolite) throughout its entire history from the Shuswap period deposits at the bottom of the rim until the last occupation floor. In contrast, residents of Housepit 7 primarily relied on a yellowish jasper chert from the Hat Creek Valley throughout its entire history while the inhabitants of Housepit 5 used far more chalcedony than in either of the other large houses. These results indicate that each of these houses retained its own corporate identity and control of different mountain resource areas for over 1,000 years, which is perhaps the longest documented persistence of any corporate group on record. From Hayden et al. (1996).

However, there were more surprises in store for us in these observations. When we began to look at the chert types in the roof deposits and in the rim middens associated with each large house, it became clear that for the large housepits these patterns persisted throughout their entire history of refuse accumulation (see Hayden *et al.* 1996). This had startling ramifications. It not only reinforced the notion that ownership of key mountain areas had been present at Keatley Creek, but also that the social and economic groups that possessed these rights had persisted from the beginnings of the rim midden accumulations in late Shuswap or early Plateau times until the time the houses were abandoned around 1000 B.P. *Minimally*, that represents a period of over 1,000 years (<2,100 B.P.–1,100 B.P.).

The indication that specific prehistoric corporate groups among hunter-gatherers could have lasted this long seemed unbelievable, and was certainly unheard of in the ambient opinion of the time. We literally had found the longest lasting corporate group ever recorded in the world under our feet. But there was still more.

Our analysis also indicated that ownership of the large house sites must have been maintained throughout this same period. It is inconceivable that such long-term house site ownership did not entail reoccupation of the house from year to year by the same corporate group for over a thousand years. This is entirely consistent with the stratified nature of the rim deposits, in which no major temporal breaks can be discerned. It is also consistent with the unchanging patterns of deep postholes and large storage pits observed in the floor of Housepit 7 (see chapter 4). If the large houses had been abandoned for any significant length of time and then reoccupied, it would have been unlikely for the new occupants to choose the exact same places to dig their deep postholes and storage pits. However, almost all main postholes and storage pits conform to the same basic pattern, as though a continuous tradition was being followed.

The above conclusions were so revolutionary that I wanted to be sure there was not a fatal flaw in the analysis. We therefore excavated additional parts of the rims of the large housepits involved in the study to obtain a larger sample. We also analyzed the cherts on three separate occasions using different individuals and differing levels of precision in the classification of the cherts. All the analyses were independent and “blind” in relation to each other. The results came out essentially the same in all cases. The conclusions therefore seem extremely robust and cannot be dismissed as spurious.

MECHANISMS OF CHANGE AND HIERARCHIES

In terms of firm, well-founded conclusions, we have now established that there were large residential corporate groups that controlled the best fishing sites and the best mountain resource areas, that amassed food surplus and wealth, and that created hierarchical relationships both within their houses and between other houses. But how did all this come about from a basis of egalitarian hunter-gatherers who must have existed prior to the establishment of pithouses? What was the mechanism and the means by which these developments came into being? Here we depart from the “tight” interpretations of the actual archaeological observations presented in preceding pages, and we

begin to delve into the realm of grander theories that are much more difficult to prove or disprove because they deal in such extensive generalities. However, such ideas are necessary to explore if we are ever to find out whether there are underlying principles that govern human behavior and cultural evolution.

There are many ideas about how social, economic, and political hierarchies emerge from more egalitarian types of societies. They include simple population growth and pressures; simple, increasingly complex mechanics of community organization with increasing community sizes; the need to make rapid decisions for survival and for waging effective warfare; internal transmutations of the social values or the ideological bases within a culture; the ability of some individuals to extort surpluses from others when labor-intensive improvements tie people to specific places; the usefulness of elites in times of famine or other crises; and the ability of ambitious individuals with more surpluses to lure other community members into lopsided contractual obligations. These and various other ideas can be put into three basic categories:

1. Explanations that view people as being forced into accepting hierarchies (due to population pressures, extortion, warfare, or other factors);
2. explanations that view people as being lured into hierarchies (by promises of sharing in wealth or obtaining other desirable advantages);
3. explanations that seem to be related to random, "black box" events, such as changes in cultural values, social relationships, or genetic mutations leading to domestication.

Debates surrounding these issues are more appropriate for specialized and advanced treatises. Rather than enter into the labyrinthine arguments involved in their discussion, I will simply present the scenario that I feel makes the most sense in general, and at Keatley Creek in particular. Those interested in following the detailed arguments may consult previous publications (Hayden, 1995).

As argued in the opening chapter of this book, hierarchies do not seem to flourish under conditions of duress, that is, conditions that frequently result in malnutrition, sickness, and death due to scarcity of food. Certainly on the Northwest Coast and in the Northwest Interior, there is an extremely strong relationship between abundant resources that are invulnerable to overexploitation, and the development of social and political complexity (Donald & Mitchell, 1975; Hayden, 1992). The same is true in New Guinea (Feil, 1987), Southeast Asia (Leach, 1954), and undoubtedly many other places. The ability to produce, and probably store, surplus items seems to be an essential condition for most developments of complexity. Although monopolistic trade may be a secondary condition that can promote complexity in otherwise poor environments, as in the case of the Owens Valley Paiute (Bettinger, 1978, 1983) and some Carrier groups (Goldman, 1940) and the high mountain passes of Burma (Leach, 1954).

Mesolithic types of technology were probably required to procure and store resources in such abundance, which is why complex hunter-gatherers do not occur prior to the Mesolithic (15000–5000 B.P.), Archaic (10000–3000 B.P.), or late Upper Paleolithic periods (25000–10000 B.P.). The empirical relation between abundant resources and social complexity seems relatively well established. It can be documented eth-

nographically from Coastal Peru to California, Alaska, Siberia, Florida, and Australia. It can be documented prehistorically in these same areas, as well as many North American riverine Archaic groups, European Mesolithic groups, and among the Near Eastern Natufians.

I have argued that general members of egalitarian communities will recognize claims of ownership over prime resources only when they have enough food for themselves, or when they do not feel threatened by other people having exclusive rights to the exploitation of important resources (Hayden, 1996). But how can surplus be converted into political power and economic benefits, especially if everyone has enough food for themselves in egalitarian types of societies? Because of the high degree of patterning associated with these developments (notably their lack of occurrence during the preceding 2 million years, and their strong association with abundant resources and specific types of technology), I do not think the notion of hierarchies emerging due to random events is tenable. If people were not being pushed into hierarchical relationships by resource shortages, then they must have been lured.

Ambitious, self-centered people could have used excess foods for their own personal gain. They undoubtedly began to develop schemes to use other people's surplus to increase their own wealth, power, and well-being—in short, to increase their own chances of survival and fitness. Such prospects may have motivated aggrandizers to invest heavily in schemes to separate productive people from the fruits of their labor. What were the lures that ambitious people could have used? I suggest that there are many strategies that prospective “aggrandizers” (ambitious, aggressive, accumulative, “triple-A” personality types) used in order to get other people to produce surplus food and then surrender control of some of that surplus to the aggrandizers (Table 8.1). Here, I will focus only on feasts, marriage payments, and child growth payments. For many years, Marvin Harris (1985) has emphasized the key role that “Big Men,” feasting, and warfare have played in these developments. My approach is very similar to his and owes much to his insights. The underlying principle that made all of these strategies work was the contractual agreement, or debt, whether this was a pledge to the community at large to provide food or other items for a common purpose, or whether it was a pledge between individuals, families, or corporate groups. Without binding contractual agreements, few people might honor agreements to produce or surrender surplus food or wealth items. Debts between individuals, families, or corporate groups typically took the form of feasts and gifts.

It is not uncommon to find anthropologists arguing that achieving status is the driving force behind increasing complexity and that this status is gained simply by giving goods away without any debts being created. However, in my experience, the altruistic act of giving by itself only confers ephemeral, and sometimes negative, respect for the giver. Most readers can probably remember incidents in their own lives where open generosity, lacking other constraints, has resulted only in subsequent ingratitude if not abuse of the giver. This behavior may not be universal in our own society, but it is certainly common. Such behavior was also common in more traditional societies where aggrandizers wanted to obtain wealth gifts but did not want to obey any higher authority (e.g., Helms, 1994, p. 56). Thus, if surpluses or wealth were to

TABLE 8.1
 THE MOST COMMON STRATEGIES USED BY
 TRANSEGALITARIAN AGGRANDIZERS TO INCREASE CONTROL

<i>Aggrandizer Strategies</i>	<i>Egalitarian</i>	<i>Despots</i>	<i>Reciprocators</i>	<i>Entrepreneurs</i>	<i>Chiefdoms</i>
Territorial conquest				.....	XXXXXXXXXX
Provoked war (extortion/death compensation)	.....	XXXXXXXXXX	XXXXXXXXXX	XXXXXXXXXX	.....
Bridewealth	.....		XXXXXXXXXX	XXXXXXXXXX	Elite Non-elite
Obligatory initiations	XXXXXXXXXX	XXXXXXXXXX	.....	.....	Elite
Childgrowth			.....	XXXXXXXXXX	Non-elite
Investment			.....	XXXXXXXXXXXXXX	xx.....
Feasts					
Solidarity	XXXXXXXXXX	XXXXXXXXXX	.....	.....	.....
Reciprocal exchange	.....	XXXXXXXXXX	XXXXXXXXXX	XXXXXXXXXX	.....
Competitive				XXXXXXXXXXXXXX	(Elite only)
Cults: Ancestors and others	.....	.....	XXXXXXXXXX	XXXXXXXXXX	XXXXXXXXXX

be used to increase aggrandizers' self-benefit, contractual agreements involving some types of gifts were essential.

It should be mentioned that there is a profound difference in the way social anthropologists versus cultural ecologists view aggrandizers. Social anthropologists are usually concerned mainly with kinship systems and cognitive structures. The implicit or explicit position of these anthropologists is that people in traditional societies who give away great amounts of wealth do it simply to achieve greater prestige or status. For social anthropologists, the motivating factor for the desire to give away wealth appears to be the psychological gratification that comes from favorable things people might say about these benefactors. In this view, there are no necessary practical benefits of gift giving; any practical benefits are at best incidental side effects. For instance, any increased political influence derived from giving gifts might simply stem from the "respect" that other community members have for people who give away wealth.

In contrast, cultural ecologists argue that if people systematically (versus the idiosyncratic behavior of individuals) give away substantial amounts of wealth, this can make sense only in terms of achieving some practical benefit for the givers. Practical benefits can include the obligatory return of the gifts (often together with interest payments), the establishment of alliances for wealth exchanges or military purposes, the

attraction of productive supporters or mates through lavish promotional displays of success (advertising), the more effective operation of an economic organization due to cooperation between members, and paying off some individuals for their acquiescence to events and claims so that they do not become disgruntled and create problems for aggrandizers. All of these situations have implicit or explicit contractual obligations attached to the receiving of gifts, even if some of these obligations, such as the pacification of potential troublemakers, might only be on an event-to-event basis. In his comparative study titled *The Gift*, Marcel Mauss (1924, pp. 1, 73) long ago realized that

in theory gifts are voluntary, but in fact they are given and repaid under obligation. Prestations which are in theory voluntary, disinterested and spontaneous, but are in fact obligatory and interested.

Kamenskii (1985, p. 48) made similar ethnographic observations. For Mauss, gift giving constituted an early form of contract and using wealth in this fashion was primarily a means of controlling others.

The form usually taken is that of the gift generously offered; but the accompanying behaviour is formal pretense and social deception, while the transaction itself is based on obligation and economic self-interest. (Mauss 1924, p. 1)

If people periodically impoverished themselves by giving away all the wealth they could accumulate plus all the wealth they could borrow, it was only because they hoped to reap as many benefits as possible, and as quickly as possible, in the following phase of the reciprocal cycle. This behavior is similar to modern-day land investors who broker millions of dollars, but live in impoverished conditions because they spend all of their wealth and everything that they can borrow to invest in land they think will dramatically increase in value. Just as some of these land investors misjudge future markets and go bankrupt, so too, the aggrandizers in traditional transegalitarian societies must have periodically lost everything due to poor judgments and investments. This cultural ecological view is the one I have adopted in trying to understand prehistoric complex hunter-gatherers. It seems to work best (for further details see Hayden, 1995). If status and prestige play any role in systematic transegalitarian giving, they are probably euphemisms for success, wealth exchange “credit ratings,” the ability to attract productive supporters or reliable exchange partners, or to arrange advantageous marriages.

Aggrandizers also created or took advantage of pretexts for getting other community members to produce and surrender surplus. For instance, allies were needed to protect all the families in the community; losses suffered by allies had to be compensated for by payments of highly desired foods or wealth; peace had to be secured by exchanging wealth; good marriages could be obtained only by paying high prices to desirable families; children had to be properly trained and socially promoted to increase their worth in marriage; displays of food surplus and wealth were necessary to demonstrate the success and desirability of marrying into specific groups; the spirits had to be appeased for misfortunes and thanked for good fortunes, and so on. All these

matters proved to be compelling pretexts that aggrandizers used to urge others to produce surpluses and relinquish control of some of those surpluses for their aggrandizer schemes. Enhancing the value of children as part of these strategies was more common than usually acknowledged by archaeologists and seemed to result in the burial of children with ascribed prestige goods even though there might be no hereditary classes or formal chiefdoms.

Once some pretext or lure was accepted by others for producing and surrendering some of their surplus, aggrandizers maneuvered themselves into positions of control over the use of these resources by acting as feast organizers, war leaders, peace negotiators, parents with control over children's marriages, and as ritual experts. From these vantage points, they could appropriate some of the contributed surplus and labor for their own benefit by claiming that they needed to be "reimbursed" for their efforts and expenses in organizing events.

One form of compensation was undoubtedly the privileged use, if not outright stewardship or ownership, of community surplus. Control of surplus food or wealth could be demanded under the guise of needing them for special events that the community had agreed to sponsor, such as feasts for alliances. Initially, in order to draw as many community members into such schemes as possible (thereby maximizing the benefits for the aggrandizer or organizers), it would have been necessary to make the events as appealing and beneficial to other community members as possible. It would have been necessary to offer key support personnel more advantages. Similarly, many families were undoubtedly included in the initial establishment of owned corporate resources. A wide base of support in all these endeavors was necessary to prevent the special privileges sought by aggrandizers from collapsing under the weight of lethargy or counter-claims of the egalitarian majority of the community. More than anything else, these considerations probably explain the surprising proportion of communities that were considered "elites" in both the ethnographies and archaeological investigations, that is, from one-half to two-thirds of the community. Similar proportions seem to characterize both prehistoric and historic elites versus commoners on the Northwest Coast where half of the long houses were occupied by elite families (Chatters, 1989, pp. 176–177; Mitchell & Donald, 1985; Boelscher, 1989, p. 50; Ames, personal communication, 1995). And similar situations also characterize many transegalitarian societies in Southeast Asia with "hereditary" elites (Leach, 1954, pp. 149, 162–163, 214). In all these cases, elite probably refers to those families with an active claim to decision-making and benefits in corporate groups that owned valuable resources. Commoners were those without rights to valuable, privately owned resources or to participation in the decision making of the major corporate groups. Active aggrandizers provided the main aggressive energy for organizing corporate groups, feasts, and other events from which they could derive benefits. These individuals were recognized as the real elites, that is, as people who had validated their hereditary status. However, it is unlikely that all the individuals who were born into elite families were politically, economically, and socially aggressive. Many elite individuals were probably content to passively participate in the advantages and responsibilities that they inherited or, in the case of very lazy people, even to lapse into relative obscurity or poverty, retaining

only the right to reactivate their claim to participate more fully in corporate affairs should they or their descendants become more ambitious and productive at a future date. Thus, it would be a mistake to view half of the communities, or even half of the large corporate groups, as being obsessively driven by social and economic advancement. Undoubtedly some were, but this number need not have been great for the system to have worked well. The proportion of aggressive, acquisitive, aggrandizing, triple-A personalities in the general population might be as low as 1 to 10%, which is probably not very different from the proportion of equivalent personality types in modern industrial societies.

If it seems that transegalitarian elites initially formed a large proportion of community populations, it also appears that as surplus production increased and the power of aggrandizers increased and was consolidated over time, the aggrandizers progressively excluded more and more people from elite status. In short, they began restructuring and minimizing the costs of running their support network wherever possible so that they could concentrate more benefits in their own hands and in the hands of those who they absolutely needed to make the system work. As a result, later chiefdoms and states probably had smaller proportions of elites than transegalitarian communities. For instance, Adams and Smith (1981, p. 346) argue that Classic Maya elites constituted only 1.5% of the population.

Thus, rather than elites emerging as a narrow, privileged group of people from the egalitarian ranks, it appears that elites became established by creating a broadly based privileged group with benefits widely shared. Only after such groups were created could aggrandizers then progressively let go of less useful or productive families without significant repercussions. The occurrence of productive resources in highly localized geographical areas, such as prime fishing locations, or prime agricultural land in the valley bottoms, or control over prime trade routes, probably helped aggrandizers concentrate their power in the form of corporate groups and narrow support bases, as suggested by Matson (1985) and Quilter (personal communication). However, these are issues best explored in subsequent readings (e.g., Hayden, 1995).

Feasts were important in most of the brokering of alliances, investments, and displays of success because they were both public and usually ritualistic in nature. Being public, they ensured that everyone present witnessed agreements between participants, the amounts given by one party to another, and the amounts therefore owed. Ritual gatherings were also used to solemnly bind those same agreements and exchanges, perhaps with the added threat of divine displeasure and consequent ill fortune if they should be broken. On the Plateau, pipe smoking was one such solemn ritual that bound individuals to honor their word and treat those who shared the pipe as allies. Pipes held enormous sacred power. Feasting contexts for these arrangements also provided a good opportunity for the hosts to show off their successes and to try to impress marriageable and other talented guests with the desirability or material advantages of being part of the hosts' economic and social consortium (chapter 2).

Aggrandizers not only promoted and presided over these feasts and the social/economic obligations that they entailed, but the aggrandizers also tried to organize the host group into as impressive dancing and ritual dramatic performances as possible.

For feasts, aggrandizers tried to get host participants to obtain impressive costuming. They also tried to obtain impressive foods and serving vessels. Aggrandizers tried to procure rare, impressive, novel, and costly objects to give to guests and place them in the debt of a reciprocal exchange-for an unreciprocated formal gift in traditional societies was a declaration of hostility and potential warfare (see Mauss's book on this topic). Aggrandizers used all means at their disposal to impress, indebt, and create pressures to produce ever more surplus. Once a costly gift was given in public to a corporate group, all members had to contribute to its repayment or face losing allies, future marriage partners, credit, and self-respect. The consequences could be dire. Aggrandizers knew this and used this lever to get corporate and community members to surrender greater and greater amounts of surplus to the maximum extent that members permitted themselves to be pushed.

For gift giving, it was often necessary to obtain rare, flashy objects from distant sources. This aspect shows up particularly well in the archaeological record. At Keatley Creek, we have obsidian from Anaheim Lake, 350 km to the northwest; moose antler from Prince George, 400 km to the north; dentalium and other coastal shells from 300 km to the west; and cherts from Idaho. In fact, regional trade of prestige items is one of the hallmarks of complex hunter-gatherers and makes sense in terms of feasting activities meant to lure others into debt relationships. I suspect that the holding of slaves and many types of prestige technologies, such as metalworking, also originated as part of aggrandizers' schemes to impress allies, foes, and followers. Keatley Creek and the other large Lillooet villages were especially important in this trade since they occupied the most easily traversable valley corridors between the Interior and the Coast (see Figure 1.1). They could therefore exert great control over this trade and amass great profits like their compatriots at the Coastal ends of these corridors (Ferguson, 1984, pp. 286–287, 304, 314).

In communities with large residential corporate groups, such as the Classic Lillooet and Northwest Coast groups, feasts were generally held within the large houses of the hosts. However, private feasting and debt creation probably also took place between smaller groups of powerful elites in these communities as part of secret societies or similar organizations. Thus, it is likely that special, elite feasting structures may also be present at Keatley Creek. We have identified three structures that could have been used for special feasts, and we are now in the process of excavating them. However, there are other indications of feasting activities at the site. These include large outside roasting or cooking areas that seem to be associated with the largest houses and the probable ritual structures. Remains of dance and ritual paraphernalia, as well as an impressive dog ceremony noted in the last chapter, were also likely part of major feasts. Central parts of the floor in Housepit 7 are suspiciously devoid of artifacts and consist of a finer loam matrix than other areas of the floor, indicating possible use for sacred performances meant to impress onlookers.

Why should ambitious aggrandizers emerge only in the last 10,000 to 20,000 years or so in the world? I believe that both genetic variations and variations in early-life experiences have ensured that some aggrandizing personalities have always been present in human populations. However, when resources were scarce or easily overexploitable

or unreliable, sharing was essential for survival. The majority of people in all communities refused to recognize aggrandizing claims or tolerate attempts by aggrandizers to use resources for their own benefit. People in these situations refused to enter into contractual debts that involved the production or surrender of surplus. They refused to recognize claims of private property. It was only when technological improvements made the production of surpluses possible on a sustained basis in some areas of the world, and when most people felt assured of being able to obtain adequate food for themselves in normal times, that the rigid proscriptions on aggrandizing behavior became relaxed. Elizabeth Cashdan (1980) has documented the profound effects that even simple improvements in resource reliability can have on private property, storage, sedentism, and the emergence of wealthy versus poor families among the Bushmen. This is another clear example of how basic resource conditions have a profound effect on the manner in which people structure their social and ideological world.

SUMMARY

We have chronicled the presence of considerable inequality within the Keatley Creek site and even within its larger residential corporate groups. The economic foundations and probably the reason for the existence of these corporate groups are tied to controlling lucrative salmon-producing sites and the substantial food surpluses these sites yielded. This not only makes logical sense, but it also is supported by the ethnography and by the archaeological finds at the site. The most powerful residential corporate groups were surprisingly stable, probably persisting over more than 1,000 years with very little apparent change. They thus constitute the longest persistence of specific corporate groups known to have existed anywhere in the world.

How did some aggrandizing individuals convince other members of the community to generate and surrender control over some food surpluses? I argue that aggrandizers manipulated the self-interest of other community members to their own advantage, much like the sharp businessmen and con artists of the modern world. Aggrandizers were forever dreaming up projects that would appeal to others and which required contributions of work and goods from others that they could control. Aggrandizers always tried to hook people into supporting their schemes by promising attractive benefits or gains. Only after the contracts were set did the full nature of the relationship probably become evident, and no doubt, it frequently turned out that the aggrandizer obtained the net benefit while the indebted person worked much harder to fulfill the terms of the contract than they had anticipated. Thus, I favor the "lure" explanation for the development of complexity.

Feasts were almost certainly an integral part of the strategies used by aggrandizers to attract supporters and to create debts. In their most developed forms, they functioned like modern banks requiring repayment plus an increment (interest) for all items given out. In fact, we can perceive many of the characteristics of modern, family-owned corporations or financial institutions in the corporate groups at Keatley Creek and among other complex hunter-gatherers. In essence, the elites of corporate groups were like

our own corporate board members holding varying amounts of stock. These holdings in both cases were frequently inherited and could increase or decrease depending on how much work a family invested in the corporation and how much effort they put into making the corporate group successful. In both cases, individuals who wasted their resources because of laziness, excessive spending, gambling, or other poor judgments might find themselves divested of their privileges. Common tenant families of the corporate groups were like the working employees of modern companies, except that a thousand years ago in the Northwest, the management-owners and the workers lived together in the same large corporate house. Part-time workers probably lived in other smaller houses in the same neighborhood. And, just as modern financial institutions charge different interest rates on loans according to levels of economic success and risk, so the traditional, native corporate groups charged varying amounts of interest on loans, or gifts, according to the borrowers success and status in other economic ventures (Codere, 1950, p. 70). Thus, the origin of our type of society and economic institutions can be found in the emergence of complex hunter-gatherers. While evidence for feasting has been relatively neglected by archaeologists, it is becoming apparent that feasting may have played a pivotal role in the emergence of complex hunting and gathering societies, as well as in the initial development of complexity among horticultural societies. There is reasonably good evidence for feasting, too, at Keatley Creek, and we are now looking for more evidence. There is also good evidence that children were used as investments for beneficial marriage alliances with other families and obtaining bride prices or dowries (another strategy used by aggrandizers to create debts and benefits). At the Bell site, only a few kilometers downstream from Keatley Creek, a small child was buried with a very rich array of dentalium shells and fine carvings, and other similar cases occur in the region that indicate some children constituted investments (Schulting 1995).

I would like to emphasize that in order to undertake these and the many other types of investigations into the social, economic, and political organization of past cultures, it is absolutely essential to have intact, undisturbed sites to study. Today, most national, state, or provincial governments recognize the importance of archaeological sites for understanding our common and specific human heritages. These government bodies have enacted strict laws to protect archaeological sites. In effect, they view the unauthorized digging in sites and any removal of objects from sites as just as destructive as taking shotguns to rock art sites. Any of these activities are purely and simply destruction of people's heritage. At Keatley Creek, some destruction of the site has occurred, but we have been lucky that it has been relatively limited. Otherwise, this book could not have been written. No subsequent destruction of the site has occurred while we have worked there. Other sites have been far less fortunate. The destruction of archaeological sites today is one of the most critical problems facing our human heritage and the discipline of archaeology.

In the course of the preceding analyses, we have seen numerous instances where the basic nature of food resources has had a very strong effect on how humans behave and structure their societies. At a general level, scarcity versus abundance has affected sharing, private ownership, the amount of economically based competition, the ability

to amass and utilize surplus for individual benefits, and the development of prestige technologies. On a specific level, the periodic availability and value of resources, and the need for labor to generate wealth, exerted strong pressures for the formation of hierarchical corporate groups and polygynous marriages. Can you extend this approach by thinking of ways that the nature of the energy resources in contemporary societies have shaped the general and specific social institutions and cultural values that you are familiar with?