The Story of Mount Cheam

Well, Mount Cheam is a lady, and Mount Baker is a man. This is an old legend. So Mount Baker, he comes over and he looks for a wife, and he finds a nice-looking girl. So he takes her over to the state of Washington. They live there and they have three boys, Mount Hood, Mount Rainier—I can't tell you what the other one is. And they have three girls, but the boys are the oldest ones. After the boys grew up and she had three little girls she says, "I had better go back home," she says, "to my people, to the Fraser River." So she comes back, and she says, "I'll stand guard," she says, "I'll stand and guard the Fraser River, that no harm comes to my people, and no harm comes to the fish that comes up to feed them." That's the legend. And then she takes her three children and she stands up there. And coming down from up the road, there's three little points, and those three little points are her children [Séyewòt—the oldest daughter and prominent peak in front of and below her mother; Óyewot—the second oldest daughter and smaller peak behind Séyewòt; and Xomó:th'iya—the youngest daughter, the small mountain at Popkum with Anderson Creek Falls, who cries because she cannot see the valley as her sisters can]. They say she holds the smallest one in her hand. And behind her, towards this way, is the dog head of the dog [Sqwema:y] that followed her, and she told the dog to go back home, and it stood there, and stayed there. So I guess right now there, if the snow isn't all off, you could see that dog head plain.

—As told by Óyewot (Amy Cooper), Stó:lō Elder, 1962
Th'ewá:lí / Soowahlie First Nation