

**Respect, Reciprocity, and Right Relations:
Learning and Co-Producing Stories about the Chinese Market Gardens at
Musqueam**

by

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Abstract

This thesis demonstrates the significance of the Chinese market gardens that once populated the Musqueam reserve, underscoring the respectful and reciprocal relationships that were formed historically. Through reflecting upon the collaborative processes by which stories about this history were recovered and recorded, this thesis also explains how the values that animated the relations between Chinese farmers and their Musqueam hosts served as an inspiration for the process of revitalizing these stories in the present. By recounting my involvement in developing collaborative educational initiatives on the unceded lands of the Musqueam people, I hope to provide my own limited insights into some of the core principles that any collaborator and researcher must learn, and some of the pre-conceptions they must unlearn, if they are going to make the serious commitment to ethically and respectfully collaborate with Indigenous knowledge keepers. Through experiences that challenged me to deepen my understanding of my roles and responsibilities as a visitor to these lands, and as a student and staff member working at the University of British Columbia (UBC), the reader can perhaps learn from my path rather than make common mistakes that outsiders often inflict upon Indigenous communities. The creation of educational resources involved non-Musqueam individuals working in collaboration with members of the community in order to identify needs and bring together the necessary resources. Such partnerships require constant care and a willingness to reflect continually upon how decisions are made, and how consensus is maintained through iterative and repeated consultations throughout the process from beginning to end. I conclude that collaborative knowledge making in general, and in particular with Indigenous communities, involves a) a considerable amount of time

devoted to create and foster long term relationships; b) a genuine commitment to develop a connection to the territory and language of the community; c) a humble and respectful openness to recognizing misconceptions that need to be unlearned and work practices that need to be changed; and d) an attention to how reciprocal relations are needed both to identify and to create meaningful ways to give back to the community.

Lay Summary

This thesis demonstrates the significance of the Chinese market gardens that once populated the Musqueam reserve, underscoring the respectful and reciprocal relationships that were formed historically. Through reflecting upon the collaborative processes by which stories about this history were recovered and recorded, I conclude that collaborative knowledge making in general, and in particular with Indigenous communities, involves a) a considerable amount of time devoted to create and foster long term relationships; b) a genuine commitment to develop a connection to the territory and language of the community; c) a humble and respectful openness to recognizing misconceptions that need to be unlearned and work practices that need to be changed; and d) an attention to how reciprocal relations are needed both to identify and to create meaningful ways to give back to the community.

Preface

This thesis is original, unpublished, independent work by the author, Sarah W. Y. Ling.

This research was approved by the UBC Behavioural Research Ethics Board: Certificate Number H12-01948; Principal Investigator: Dr. Henry Yu. This research was also approved with a permit issued by the Musqueam Indian Band.

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There are members of the Musqueam community who have influenced and contributed to my journey but have sadly passed away in recent years. It is difficult to describe the impact that they had on their communities in words, but I know that their efforts will continue to live on through the lives of those they touched. I would like to

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Chapter 1: Introduction

From the turn of the twentieth century until the 1970s, Chinese migrants were growing and supplying produce on the Musqueam reserve for the City of Vancouver and throughout the Lower Mainland. The social and economic impact of these Chinese market gardens—farms where Chinese migrants grew a variety of vegetables to sell the public—and the distribution networks that were established were region-wide. Integral relationships were formed during a time when discriminatory policies and sentiments were commonplace for Indigenous peoples and early Chinese Canadians. While the history of institutionalized racism is increasingly being brought to the forefront in public dialogue¹, the story of early Chinese-First Nations relations, both provincially and nationally, has long been under-recognized. I argue that these stories—which are rooted in respectful dialogue and reciprocal obligations—can rekindle conversations and serve as models for how mutually beneficial relationships can be built between Indigenous and non-Indigenous peoples today.

In this thesis, I recount my journey as a non-Indigenous researcher interested in finding ways to collaboratively develop educational resources about this topic. When I first came to Vancouver, I knew very little about its colonial foundations and the dispossession of Indigenous communities and their lands that made the development of Canada possible. By taking courses in the First Nations and Indigenous Studies Program², I began to learn about ongoing issues that Indigenous peoples face today. At the same

¹ Examples of recent public dialogues include but are not limited to Dialogues between First Nations, Urban Aboriginal, and Immigrant Communities in Vancouver project (2010-2011), the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada: Calls to Action (2015), Historical Discrimination Against Chinese People initiative (2017-2018).

² The First Nations Studies Program (founded in 2001) was renamed as the First Nations and Indigenous Studies Program in 2015: <http://fnis.arts.ubc.ca>.

time, I was curious to learn more about my own roots as a Chinese Canadian who grew up in Prince Rupert, northern B.C. What brought my family to a small town on Tsimshian territory? What were the connections between my ancestors and the first peoples?

While I initially planned to write my thesis solely on the Chinese market gardens at Musqueam, I ended up on a long and winding journey that involved forming my sense of place and responsibility as a visitor to these lands; and participating in different community partnerships while making and learning from mistakes along the way. Little did I know that the process of developing my own set of relationships within the community, but also to their language and their territory was just as important, if not more important, than learning and sharing stories alone. I have come to realize through conversations with my supervisors and advisory committee, that sharing the values and lessons I gained during my time as a graduate student doing community-based research might be a useful and timely contribution for others considering the deep commitment and ethical considerations involved in collaborative research projects with Musqueam.

The focus of this opening chapter is to reflect upon my position as a non-Indigenous researcher and contextualize my journey by sharing about the first time I learned about Musqueam research protocols, and how important it is for any non-Indigenous collaborator to continually consider whether and how they are respecting these protocols. In Chapter Two, I discuss the research initiatives and personal learnings that preceded my work on Chinese-Musqueam history and how what I knew (and did not know) shaped this engagement. In Chapter Three, I share what I have learned about the significance and urgency of revitalizing stories of Chinese-First Nations relations, as well as some of the challenges I encountered. Through the process of creating the children's

book "ʔi ɛ neɪm ʔəɪxasəɪn!, 我們出去走走啦! , Let's Take a Walk!" (2013) as a co-author, and the documentary *All Our Father's Relations* (2016) as a co-producer, I reflect on how I was taught to prioritize community needs and values. While I share insights gained during those years of production, I also am reflecting at this moment upon what I have perhaps come to realize only in retrospect. Paying particular attention to the decisions made before, during, and after every project, my goal is to reflect upon the nature of community-based research and the deep commitment this involves.

In hindsight, many of the decisions I made to work on educational resources were in response to emerging needs and obligations that took shape through conversations centered on what could result in a legacy for both the community and UBC, rather than pre-determined plans of my own as a researcher. This thesis demonstrates that a) a considerable amount of time devoted to create and foster long term relationships; b) a genuine commitment to develop a connection to the territory and language of the community; c) a humble and respectful openness to recognizing misconceptions that need to be unlearned and work practices that need to be changed; and d) an attention to how reciprocal relations are needed both to identify and to create meaningful ways to give back to the community. I conclude that the type of knowledge revitalization I initially embarked on would have been much less impactful had I not learned the important lesson to not try to rush the process, and had I not been open to re-scoping timelines in order to incorporate emerging obligations and learning opportunities that arose throughout my time developing relationships with members of the Musqueam community. Through the re-telling, but also through sharing the necessarily long process of the recovering and

recording of the history of the Chinese market gardens at Musqueam, this thesis I hope reveals the significance of long-term, respectful and reciprocal relations.

1.1 Relationships to Place

The names we use for peoples and places reveal a lot about our relationships, or lack thereof with them. When I first came to Vancouver as an undergraduate student, I quickly learned the names of streets by commuting around the city, not realizing that many paid tribute to “architects of genocide”, including Joseph William Trutch, the first Lieutenant Governor of British Columbia who “was the architect of the reserve lands policy that meant that First Nations starved” and were imprisoned onto tiny parcels of land that are mere slivers of their traditional territories.³ As historian Timothy Stanley states in his reflective analysis of “artifacts of genocide and white supremacy” as a former resident of Vancouver, “[t]hese names mark relations of colonialism on an on-going basis, in which the colonizers are celebrated, their descendants made to feel at home and familiar.”⁴ I value Stanley’s work for modeling how to productively turn inwards as a fundamental part of creating decolonial change. This self-positioning is a subversion of the tendency to deny that racism exists in our individual institutions and communities⁵, and a call to action that demands a critical understanding of the contested spaces we occupy in Canada.

³ Timothy J. Stanley, “The Banality of Colonialism: Encountering Artifacts of Genocide and White Supremacy in Vancouver Today,” in *Diversity and Multiculturalism: A Reader*, ed. Shirley R. Steinberg (New York: Peter Lang Publishing, Inc., 2009), 152.

⁴ Ibid., 152.

⁵ Ibid., 153.

1.2 Location on unceded territory

The word *unceded* has created refreshing ripples across Vancouver, and this shift began years before the City of Vancouver officially adopted the protocol to acknowledge our location on Musqueam, Squamish and Tsleil-Waututh territory during the city's "Year of Reconciliation" in 2013.⁶ Local leaders and elders have long demanded public attention and responsibility to the meaning and implications of this word, and not just its need to be acknowledged and used. I am among many of those who have benefited and learned from witnessing Elder Larry Grant's welcome of visitors to the "traditional, ancestral, and unceded lands of the hən̓q̓əmin̓əm-speaking Musqueam people." On repeated occasions in both hən̓q̓əmin̓əm and English at UBC and across the Lower Mainland, Elder Grant and others who give welcome continually remind us whose lands we live upon as guests. Growing up, I knew I was on the land of Tsimshian people, but I was not aware of the term "unceded" in particular, nor was I encouraged to reflect on the severe losses Indigenous communities faced that this theft of land created. Hearing this term on a regular basis and witnessing traditional protocol unfold between Indigenous peoples in terms of acknowledging when they are guests on each others' territories has been a formative part of my journey.

Reflecting on the concept Bisbaabiiyang in her language Nishnaabeg⁷—"a verb that means to look back,"—and the different ways this term has resonated in her territory, Leanne Simpson has come to her own understanding of Bisbaabiiyang:

⁶ Peter Meiszner, "City of Vancouver formally declares city is on unceded Aboriginal territory," *Global News*, June 25, 2014, <http://globalnews.ca/news/1416321/city-of-vancouver-formally-declares-city-is-on-unceded-aboriginal-territory/>.

⁷ Leanne Simpson, *Dancing on our Turtle's Back: Stories of Nishnaabeg Re-creation, Resurgence and a New Emergence* (Winnipeg: Arbeiter Ring Publishing, 2011), 62.

it is a constant continual evaluation of colonialism within both individuals and communities. It also encompasses a visioning process where we create new and just realities in which our ways of being can flourish. Nonetheless, it is not just a visioning process. We must act to create those spaces—be they cognitive or spatial, temporal or spiritual—even if those spaces only exist for fragments of time.⁸

With this beautiful vision in mind, and the fact that there might be similar concepts in each of the sixty Indigenous languages in Canada, what realities can we envision within our own communities as new relationships are formed between Indigenous and non-Indigenous peoples? And ultimately, how are we going to act to create these spaces? Critical to reflecting on Simpson’s assertion is the fact these spaces are continually shifting and are not permanent. Within these spaces, are the relationships and frameworks we build ongoing and sustainable? Simpson’s quote speaks to the inheritance of colonial forms of education, but also to individual responsibilities to Indigenous peoples, and how relationships are not transferable—they must be created and maintained through processes built on mutual trust, honesty, and respect.

1.3 Research protocols

Musqueam protocols for sharing and producing knowledge serve as the foundation to each of the research initiatives outlined in this thesis, and guided the ways these potential partnerships could result in meaningful collaborations. In 2015, Graduate student Aaron Lao co-developed a report with the Musqueam Treaty, Lands, and Resources Department and staff from UBC called “Connecting Communities: Principles for Musqueam-UBC Collaboration” as a “resource for individuals for Musqueam and

⁸ Ibid., 52.

UBC who recognize the values of effective, meaningful collaboration, and seek to strengthen the relationship between our communities.”⁹ Lao found a “meaningful collaboration” involves Musqueam from the very beginning, early in the design of the project, and should have a long-term vision, versus one-time transactions that usually only benefit one party and are limiting in terms of providing opportunities to actually work together to create not only the project, but also to generate long-lasting impacts.¹⁰

More specifically, this resource acknowledges successful collaborations and relationships that have been built in a variety of ways between specific units and individuals from the university and departments at Musqueam. It is a valuable and thoughtful report that is a useful starting point for UBC staff seeking to engage with Musqueam for the first time, or Musqueam community members seeking to engage with UBC for the first time. Lao and his collaborators from Musqueam point out the salient values emphasized in the conversations he conducted with individuals from both Musqueam and UBC involved in these initiatives. These key principles were recognized as mutual benefit, timeliness, meaningful collaboration, listening and open communication, acknowledgement of history, and awareness of capacity.¹¹

This resource was not publicly available when I first began working with Musqueam as a researcher. It is useful in providing a broad overview of the values and principles that must be understood and agreed upon before new collaborations are formed. However, I hope that a retrospective account of my own experiences with

⁹ Aaron Lao, in collaboration with the Musqueam Indian Band and UBC. “Connecting Communities: Principles for Musqueam-UBC Collaboration,” November 2015, 3.

¹⁰ Ibid., 13.

¹¹ Ibid., 11-14.

establishing collaborations within the Musqueam community, along with insight into the decisions and challenges I faced, are useful to others who have the opportunity to engage in similar work. I will also reflect on missteps along the way and some of the unexpected circumstances that arose, as it is important to acknowledge that each relationship and partnership formed is unique, and that how you deal with challenging situations that emerge reflects on the commitment to the relationship itself.

Engaging in my own process of decolonization has also been a central methodology in the collaborative research projects and the development of multimedia resources with Indigenous communities within which I have been involved. As a non-Indigenous scholar, I am mindful that any attempt to develop and implement an “unsettling pedagogy” must be, as settler scholar Paulette Regan describes, “based on the premise that settlers cannot just theorize about decolonizing and liberatory struggle: we must experience it, beginning with ourselves as individuals.”¹² My methodology is also informed by the ways in which self-reflectivity and self-positioning in relation to the communities that one works with is central to the work of many Indigenous scholars.¹³

1.4 Supporting the revitalization of hən̓q̓əmin̓əm̓

I devoted a significant amount of my coursework to learning hən̓q̓əmin̓əm̓ on the reserve through the First Nations and Endangered Languages Program¹⁴. Elder Larry Grant, one of the co-instructors of the first-year introductory course, taught me my role as

¹² Ibid., 23

¹³ The work of Dr. Leanne Simpson, Dr. Kim Anderson, and Dr. Margaret Kovach in the following respective titles are just a few examples: *Dancing on Our Turtle’s Back: Stories of Nishnaabeg Re-Creation, Resurgence, and a New Emergence*, *A Recognition of Being: Reconstructing Native Womanhood*, and *Indigenous Methodologies: Characteristics, Conversations and Contexts*.

¹⁴ The First Nations Languages Program (founded in 1997) was renamed as the First Nations and Endangered Languages Program in 2015: <http://fnel.arts.ubc.ca>.

a non-Indigenous student in these classes was not restricted to the vital work of language revitalization, but it was also a part of reconciling the complex relationship our institution has had with the Musqueam community, and mending the knowledge gaps in society that settler-colonialism has produced. Ray Barnhardt and Angayuqaq Oscar Kawagley from the University of Alaska Fairbanks, referencing the work of Maori academic Graham Hingangaroa Smith, emphasize that languages embody epistemologies and it is only when we recognize this and today's ramifications of language loss that "we begin to understand what happens to an Indigenous knowledge system when the language associated with that system of thought is usurped by another."¹⁵ As noted in a reflection on UBC suspending classes on September 18, 2013 to participate in the West Coast National Truth and Reconciliation Commission,

Dr. Linc Kesler, Director of the UBC First Nations House of Learning and Senior Advisor to the UBC President on Aboriginal Affairs, deconstructed the two overarching horrific legacies we must confront as individuals living in Canada:

1. What the residential schools did to Indigenous students and their families.
2. What all of the other schools did to students in Canada and their families.¹⁶

Identifying the ways in which non-Indigenous peoples like myself have intentionally been disconnected from Indigenous communities across the country involves an examination of the ways our society has been conditioned to adhere to the laws and "official languages" of the colonial state rather than local Indigenous governance systems, languages and protocols that have been in place for millennia. A prime example is how the dominance of English and forced removal of Indigenous languages from

¹⁵ Ray Barnhardt and Angayuqaq Oscar Kawagley, "Indigenous Knowledge Systems and Alaska Ways of Knowing," *Anthropology and Education Quarterly*, no. 36 (2005), 13.

¹⁶ Sarah Ling, "Truth and Reconciliation at UBC: Confronting Our Legacies," Centre for Teaching, Learning and Technology, <http://ctl.t.ubc.ca/2013/07/25/truth-and-reconciliation-at-ubc-confronting-our-legacies-2/>.

Indigenous speakers through the Indian residential school system paved the way for the inability of the majority newcomers to these lands to readily identify who their hosts are, or to be able to identify First Nations languages that flourished here.¹⁷ The reality that Indigenous communities continue to face today, as articulated by Dr. Patricia A. Shaw, involves deep fractures that will take generations to heal:

the devastating internalized impact that the former deplorable practices continue to have on individual, family, and collective motivation *within* First Nations communities to value and perpetuate their linguistic heritage. The relentless external message - that these languages are worthless, futile, inconsequential, and undoubtedly detrimental to one's children's potential for success in life - has, over the past three generations, successfully infiltrated the belief system of many parents in many First Nations communities.¹⁸

When hearing of lesser-known histories for the first time, one of the most common reactions I have received is that people have not heard about or thought of these types of histories before. With calls for reconciliation - with its complex, contested and varying definitions¹⁹ - and a deep awakening to the concerns of Indigenous communities more prevalent in public discourse than ever before, these initiatives provide opportunities to unsettle and transform ignorance and complacency into concrete contributions towards right relations with Indigenous communities, their lands, and their waters at both individual and collective levels.

¹⁷ Patricia A. Shaw, "Language and Identity, Language and the Land," *BC Studies*, no. 131 (Autumn 2001): 44-45.

¹⁸ *Ibid.*, 40.

¹⁹ Howard E. Grant has spoken about how reconciliation is defined by the state, when Indigenous communities should be defining what this means. (personal correspondence, June 2017). Dr. Glen Coulthard takes up the problematic ways in which reconciliation is framed by the federal government in his lecture "Recognition, Reconciliation, and Resentment in Indigenous Politics" on November 16, 2011, and Dr. Leanne Simpson provides a vision for what reconciliation should look like in "Dancing on Our Turtle's Back." Coulthard and Simpson argue that land, restitution of land, and dismantling systemic forms of colonialism must be central to meaningful discussions of reconciliation, as opposed to limited and historically-oriented state discussions that frame reconciliation around the topic of Indian residential schooling alone.

1.5 Family History and Intersections

While learning what it means to be a settler on Musqueam's homelands has involved spending time to begin learning the language and histories of settler-colonialism that have occurred on their territory, a core part of this process has also involved tracing the roots of my parents in Guangdong province, southern China, and the relationships my ancestors formed with the first peoples they met in Canada. As I have shared in a reflective piece called "Rivers Have Mouths" for the magazine *Ricepaper*'s 18.4 issue, "Hyphen Nation," my transition into graduate school involved two personal life-long commitments: "to help decolonize my education and surroundings, and to help revitalize both Chinese Canadian and First Nations stories of the unceded Indigenous lands my ancestors and I have had the privilege of living on."²⁰ While it is easy to interpret this commitment in the world of academia as a "research focus" or an "interest area," learning about Indigenous and Chinese relations meant and continues to mean more than research to me. These relations as a Chinese Canadian growing up on Tsimshian territory were a "reality I was born into. It's a constellation of stories - stories that have been hidden or untold."²¹

During my first semester of graduate school in a course called Asian Migrant Communities in Vancouver, Professor Henry Yu encouraged me to research my family history. I came across a story in the *British Columbia Almanac* called "Water from Clouds" recounting my great-great-uncle's journey to Prince Rupert. His great-granddaughter Anne Ying Der recorded this story after it had been passed down orally for many generations. My great-great-uncle, Mah Bon Quen, was the first Chinese merchant

²⁰ Sarah Ling, "Rivers Have Mouths," *Ricepaper 18.4 Hyphen Nation*, Spring 2014, 30.

²¹ *Ibid.*, 30.

to settle in Prince Rupert.²² More noteworthy than the numerous contributions of him and his eleven children²³ to the formation of Prince Rupert and Canada however, are the relationships that led him to Tsimshian territory as well as the intercultural relationships he formed to provide for his family. In order to reach Prince Rupert, he had to travel north with a group of First Nations traders in their dugout canoes up the Skeena River, which carries the Tsimshian name “water from clouds”. As a merchant he continued to follow local Indigenous trade routes and traded with Haida, Tsimshian and Gitksan peoples; “tea, coffee, tobacco, flour and sugar for abalone, seafood, and potatoes as far away as Haida Gwaii, Hazelton, and into the Bulkley Valley.”²⁴ In the city, he established the Sunrise Grocery Store with his eldest son, which became a central service to surrounding communities as well. I view Mah Bon Quen’s journey as a model of respect and reciprocity between my great-great-uncle and the first peoples of the territories upon which he was a settler and guest. As fascinating and uncommon as this life story may sound, I have learned the racist and hostile environments early Chinese migrants and Indigenous peoples faced together at this time were actually commonplace for respectful and mutually beneficial relationships to be formed between First Nations and Chinese peoples in BC, as well as across Canada.

As Jesse Wentz asserts, “Colonialism is an extraction business. It extracts what it wants – from the land, from culture, from stories, and from people – and discards the

²² Anne Ying Der, “Water from Clouds,” in *British Columbia Almanac*, ed. Mark Forsythe (Vancouver: Arsenal Pulp Press, 2000), 48.

²³ Two of Mah’s children, Cedric and Albert Mah, are recognized by institutions such as Vancouver’s Chinese Canadian Military Museum for their brave work as pilots who flew dangerous routes over the Himalayas during the WWII.

²⁴ *Ibid.*, 49.

rest.” Reflecting on the subject of Canada 150²⁵, his call to action is for the creation of stories and art as acts of decolonization. If Chinese-First Nations relations have historically been discarded to the periphery of society, how can we disrupt the alienation of these complex histories and turn to these stories for guidance as we strive to build better futures?

Before I proceed with this exploration, I will use Chapter 2 to walk through the process leading up to these initiatives, which involved several years of developing relationships and through these relationships (rather than only reading the important intellectual work done by theorists) of unlearning and rethinking the ways in which I had formerly been taught to understand Canada.

²⁵ Through consultation with the Musqueam, Squamish, and Tsleil-Waututh Nations, the City of Vancouver celebrated “Strengthening our Relations: Canada 150+.” The addition of the plus sign acknowledge the millennia these nations have been here as well as the new relationships that continue to be built: <http://vancouver.ca/people-programs/vancouver-commemorates-canada-150.aspx>.

Chapter 2: Contributing to a Visible Musqueam Presence at UBC

My experience working with Musqueam research protocols began with an opportunity to serve on the naming committee for the first two buildings on UBC's Point Grey campus to be named in hən̓qəmínəm, the ancestral language of the Musqueam people. This initiative was born out of a response to a residence with a fraught history of building naming and the usage of these names.

As I completed my minor in First Nations and Indigenous Studies (FNIS) during my last year of undergraduate studies in 2011, I was struck by the ways colonialism has always permeated all aspects of society. Like many of my peers, I had grown up ignorant of the violent acts of legislation that were enforced by the Government of Canada to strip Indigenous communities of their lands and resources and deny Indigenous peoples their identities and cultures.²⁶ FNIS courses enabled me to critically analyze my surroundings and apply what I was learning beyond the classroom to spaces on campus. They enabled me to identify the normalized and invisible manifestations of settler-colonialism that have numbing and destructive effects if not queried or confronted. Dene scholar and professor Glen Coulthard defines a settler-colonial relationship as “one characterized by a particular form of *domination*, that is, it is a relationship where power – in this case, interrelated discursive and nondiscursive facets of economic, gendered, racial and state power – has been structured into a relatively secure or sedimented set of hierarchical social relations that continue to facilitate the *dispossession* of Indigenous peoples of their

²⁶ Useful resources to begin learning about government legislation and contemporary politics include *Indigenous foundations* – <http://indigenousfoundations.arts.ubc.ca>, *Indigenous Writes: A Guide to First Nations, Métis, and Inuit Issues in Canada* by Chelsea Vowel, and *First Nations 101* by Lynda Gray.

lands and self-determining authority.”²⁷ To illustrate, I learned to identify the proliferation of culturally insensitive and appropriative uses of mascot names and designs across North America as what Wenthe declares a “byproduct ultimately of colonialism,”²⁸ and link the erasure of Indigenous peoples from their territories, to their continual erasure in the public consciousness of settler society. This was a powerful realization during my time in the FNIS program.

2.1 *Decolonizing Knowledge: An Overview*

Towards the end of an introductory course entitled First Nations Endangered Language Documentation and Revitalization²⁹, Spencer Lindsay (Cree-Métis)³⁰ and I discussed how we both felt compelled to help advance dialogues rooted in critical Indigenous studies beyond the confines of the classroom. After meeting through this class and exchanging our common interests, we co-founded *Decolonizing Knowledge* as a student-driven movement to help combat issues of cultural misrepresentation and appropriation on campus and facilitate strategies for increasing a deeper awareness and understanding of these issues. Our primary mandate was to illuminate the dangers of decontextualized Indigenous representations on campus and use the power of place-based knowledge to transform the spaces within which we work, learn, and live.

²⁷ Glen Coulthard, *Red Skin, White Masks: Rejecting the Colonial Politics of Recognition* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2014), 6-7.

²⁸ Jesse Wenthe, “We are not your mascots, we are human beings,” *CBC Sports*, March 8, 2016, <http://www.cbc.ca/sports/naig/wente-racism-sports-mascots-1.3480910>.

²⁹ This course, taught by Dr. Darin Flynn (Visiting Lecturer from the University of Calgary), is currently offered by the UBC First Nations and Endangered Languages Program.

³⁰ Spencer Lindsay went on to complete his Masters in Indigenous Community Planning at UBC.

Our initiative took aim at a first-year dormitory on campus called Totem Park Residence, home each year to nearly two thousand new UBC students. When this residence was founded in the 1960s, Dr. Margaret Ormsby, former head of UBC's Department of History and an alumna of the same department, was responsible for the selection of broad First Nations linguistic and anthropological groups in British Columbia to be used as the names of buildings at Totem Park Residence called "houses": Salish, Haida, Nootka, Dene, Shuswap, and Kwakiutl.³¹ While the stated intent was to honour some of the First Nations peoples in the province, the Indigenous nations and communities misrepresented by these names were not consulted. To exacerbate this issue, the names Nootka, Shuswap, Kwakiutl and Salish are all inaccurate.

The absence of consultation with Indigenous communities during the original naming process, although common for the time, unfortunately set the stage for how decades of residents and leaders at this dormitory have engaged in their own harmful acts of misrepresentation and cultural appropriation. Without a critical understanding of the origins of the house names and the fraught history of naming practices that is inextricable from the dispossession of Indigenous peoples from their lands, generations of non-Indigenous students have unwittingly perpetuated deeply engrained stereotypes of Indigenous peoples through the ways they have used these names.

In the fall of 2010, Spencer and I approached the management of Student Housing and Hospitality Services (SHHS) with a proposal to partner with them and work with the knowledgeable units who specialize in critical Indigenous studies and initiatives. We suggested considering a formal strategy to provide residents information regarding the

³¹ University of British Columbia Archives, UBC Buildings, 1940s and 1960s.

origins of the house names and the residence's name, Totem Park.³² Due to a lack of this knowledge, we had witnessed first year residents - the majority entering university with inadequate knowledge in general of Indigenous topics and issues – consistently misrepresent and appropriate Indigenous cultures through inappropriate house t-shirt designs and names such as the “Dene Savages” and “Absolute Haida” (alluding to a marketing campaign for vodka) without considering or understanding how their actions might be harmful. While living in residence, Spencer encountered a number of his peers who decided to enter UBC's annual day of the longboat competition as the “Dene Savages,” dressed in costumes inspired by the film *Pocahontas*, and reproducing stereotypes of Indigenous peoples.³³ While they may have felt a strong sense of identity and peer bonding through this exercise, little did they realize they were reproducing destructive and problematic narratives that are offensive to Indigenous peoples. It was also quite common for students to abbreviate “Shuswap” to “Shu,” and “Kwakiutl” to “Kwak.”

It is also apparent that leadership within the residence, and other members of the university did not question these t-shirt designs and slogans. How did the students who called themselves the “Dene Savages” make it all the way to Jericho Beach where they would compete and be applauded without being queried? Why did their team's name sail through the vetting process when it was submitted? The incidents I have described

³² Totem Park, an outdoor museum that from 1951 until the late 1970s, displayed a selection of carvings representing styles of various First Nations across B.C. opened in 1951 adjacent to the site where Totem Park Residence at UBC is today. The Musqueam community was not consulted in regards to the development and placement of this museum, and they do not have a tradition of carving totem poles. Phil Nuytten, *The totem carvers: Charlie James, Ellen Neel, and Mungo Martin*, (Vancouver: Panorama Publications, 1982).

³³ Spencer Lindsay, personal conversations with author, 2010.

regarding Totem Park Residence are not isolated; they are systemic across institutions in North America.

2.2 The naming of hámłəsəm House and qələxən House

Spencer and I, like many others on campus, felt the need to help combat the alienating ways Indigenous peoples were being represented. When we brought a proposal to the management of Student Housing and Hospitality Services (SHHS) to develop educational resources to be used within Residence Life³⁴, two infill buildings were under construction at the time. We were then asked if we were interested in working with SHHS to find a way to name these buildings in a respectful manner. After a few collective discussions regarding this opportunity with mentors and colleagues on campus, it was determined that the most feasible plan would be for SHHS to hire Spencer and myself as co-chairs to develop and implement a community-driven naming process for these new houses. To foster a connection among the residents and staff of Totem Park Residence to the unceded land they are located on, and subvert the non-inclusive naming process that occurred in 1960s, we facilitated the process to invite members of the Musqueam Nation to join this naming advisory committee in the spring of 2011.

At a large institution like UBC, it can be difficult to figure out where to begin with a project such as this. Spencer and I were fortunate not only to have the support of Indigenous faculty within our program, but also to have made connections with the director and staff at the First Nations House of Learning (FNHL), an administrative unit that “leads strategic planning on UBC Aboriginal initiatives” but is also a “central hub for

³⁴ Residence Life is the umbrella term for the team of staff that serve all residents who have a contract through Student Housing and Hospitality Services.

programming and services for Aboriginal students, the university, and the wider community.”³⁵ Housed within the First Nations Longhouse, it was a staff member of FNHL who first encouraged us to meet with Musqueam Elder Larry Grant, the unit’s elder-in-residence, adjunct professor in the First Nations and Endangered Languages Program³⁶, and a consultant in the Musqueam Language and Culture Department. Grant introduced us to the existing protocols for proposing this type of initiative to the Musqueam Treaty, Lands, and Resources Department. Leona M. Sparrow, the Director of this department, serves as a liaison to UBC on a wide array of initiatives and partnerships conducted between Musqueam and UBC.³⁷ For this particular project, Sparrow and subsequently the department’s Senior Archivist Jason Woolman joined the committee on behalf of Musqueam, along with Elder Larry Grant from the Musqueam Language and Culture Department. Linc Kesler, Director of FNHL and Senior Advisor to the President on Aboriginal Affairs, was also a strong supporter of the process and offered invaluable guidance.

The initial concept was brought to these representatives, who expressed their vision for bringing the proposal to fruition and shaped the guidelines. In accordance with the Memorandum of Affiliation signed between the Musqueam Nation and the University of British Columbia in 2006, the naming process would enable the Musqueam Nation to “benefit from a more visible presence at UBC,” and UBC to “benefit from increased

³⁵ “UBC Vancouver Aboriginal Portal,” First Nations House of Learning, accessed January 24, 2017, <http://aboriginal.ubc.ca>.

³⁶ The First Nations and Endangered Languages Program was then known as the First Nations Languages Program.

³⁷ “Musqueam: A Living Culture,” accessed January 24, 2017, Musqueam Indian Band, www.musqueam.bc.ca/treaty-lands-and-resources.

interaction with members of the Musqueam Nation,” as well as a measure of credibility.³⁸

Due to the scope and wide-reaching impacts of this project, the naming committee’s recommendations also had to be approved by the Musqueam Chief and Council on behalf of the community, and UBC’s Board of Governors before becoming fully operational.

2.3 Deepening Connection to Place

As a result of the naming advisory process, the residence buildings opened in September 2011 carrying significant hə̀nqə̀mìnə̀m place names: hə̀mləsə̀m and qə̀ləxən. The Musqueam Place Names Web Mapping Portal, tə sʔa:nł syəθəs (Our History), illustrates how hə̀mləsə̀m and qə̀ləxən are two of numerous village, resource collection, and transformer sites that wrap around ʔəlqsən (Point Grey), and are part of a much larger network of over 160 heritage sites in Musqueam’s traditional territory.³⁹ This opening statement in the public program created for the house post raising ceremony on campus for sʔi:lqə̀y qeqən (double-headed serpent post) on April 6, 2016 powerfully situates UBC in relation to the ancient villages it was built within and is surrounded by:

sχwə̀yə̀m (AN ANCIENT HISTORY)

WE, THE MUSQUEAM PEOPLE, have been here as long as there has been land to live upon; our lands and waters serving as a source of knowledge and memory, encoding our teachings. Some of these teachings describe the landscape as it was over eight thousand years ago.

Our elders relate how people were made in the very beginning but they were not altogether right, it was like they had no teachings. Only some were right. But then the one called χe:lś (the transformer) arrived, and he took pity on the people. He traveled along helping them. Those people and creatures that were not right were taught, but those who refused to learn he fixed, transforming them. Many were turned to stone and others into animals. During these times it is said the delta was

³⁸ “Memorandum of Affiliation,” last modified June 24, 2016, accessed January 24, 2017, <http://aboriginal.ubc.ca/community-youth/affiliations/>.

³⁹ “Musqueam: A Living Culture,” accessed January 24, 2017, Musqueam Indian Band, <https://www.musqueam.bc.ca/our-story/musqueam-territory/place-names-map/>.

only water and Point Roberts was just an island.

These travels and transformations are written in the earth, captured in our *sxwəyem* (ancient histories), and recorded in our place names making these lands core to our teachings. The University of British Columbia (UBC), Vancouver Campus, within the heart of our territory, sits upon several of these sites, such as *tʰatʰələm*, *tʰəcəli?qw* and *qewəm*.

Through this post we pass some of this knowledge to you and reaffirm our continued connections to these places. Just as these lands continue to be a place for learning and sharing for us we hope UBC will be a place of learning and inspiration for you. Education brings us all together.⁴⁰

This concluding paragraph reiterates Musqueam's relational approach to the shared Musqueam territory we occupy, and emphasizes the passing on of knowledge from the Musqueam community to UBC.

It is also important to acknowledge only selected knowledge has been made publicly available, and only certain stories have been incorporated for public viewing. Some knowledge, stories, ceremonial rights and cultural materials belong with certain families within Indigenous communities, and thus access within a community must be carefully managed. Furthermore, when the Indian Act made it illegal in 1884 for Indigenous peoples to practice their culture and traditions through sections such the Potlatch Law,⁴¹ the Musqueam community brought their ceremonies which they traditionally practiced outdoors in many villages across their vast territory, inside their bighouses (longhouses), out of view from the Indian agents who would visit the reserve to monitor their activities.⁴² Considering the destructive impacts of this explicitly racist

⁴⁰ "UBC Aboriginal Centennial: Musqueam Post," First Nations House of Learning, accessed April 30, 2016, <http://centennial.aboriginal.ubc.ca/musqueam-post/>.

⁴¹ "Indigenous Foundations," First Nations and Indigenous Studies Program, accessed February 20, 2016, <http://indigenousfoundations.arts.ubc.ca>.

⁴² Larry Grant, Interview for *Chinese Market Gardens at Musqueam Project*, August 2012.

legislation, including the Indian residential schooling system that abused and dehumanized Indigenous children, it is evident why measures to educate the public by some First Nations communities have been gradual and calculated.

The concluding lines do not simply ask to learn knowledge and consume it for our own use either. They break us out of our myriad of academic disciplines and speak to us simply as human beings on unceded lands that are encoded with teachings and names that have historically been erased from the consciousness of Vancouver. I have also learned to read this type of statement as a call to action; providing us with the responsibility to share what we have learned and serve as respectful witnesses. Coastal communities like Musqueam have adapted their cultural practice of witnessing towards public spaces and events by providing protocols for their guests. For instance, the series of exhibitions called “*čəsnaʔəm: the city before the city*” open with the following greeting and framework for engagement:

ʔa:: si:yém tə siyeyəʔ ct ʔiʔ tə ɲa:lən ʔiməxneʔtən, hay ce:p qə tə ɬwələp kʷəθ xʷʔəmi. ɬwələp yəxʷ ceʔ xʷəxʷəyənəʔ. xʷəniwən ce:p ʔə tə sʔa:nɬ šxʷamət ʔə ɬ čəsnaʔəm, xʷəniwən ɬeʔ ʔə tə šxʷməθkʷəyəmaʔɬ təməxʷ, snəwəyəl, syəθəs ʔiʔ tə shəŋqəmiŋəmqən.

Our respected friends, relations, and visitors, thank you to all of you for coming. You will honor us to become witnesses. Commit our ancestral village of *čəsnaʔəm* to your hearts and minds. Commit also to your hearts and minds the land, traditional teachings, history and language of the Musqueam people.⁴³

As an embodiment of this call to be a witness, I have tried to share the stories of *həmləsəm* and *qələxən* with students and staff across campus over the years that I have continued to study and work at UBC.

⁴³ “*čəsnaʔəm: the city before the city*,” Museum of Vancouver, accessed February 20, 2017, <http://www.thecitybeforethecity.com>.

2.4 Teachings from the Stories of həmləsəm and qələxən

One day, as we were preparing to do an interview outdoors for *The Power of a Name*, I recall Elder Larry Grant saying when he thinks of the university, he does not think of it or specific buildings in the ways that our institution's branding strategies or the way that most students, staff, and faculty are familiar with. Instead he, as other Musqueam community members do, thinks of the village sites it occupies, and the wider territory it belongs to. UBC is simply one of many institutions within a young city on his unceded homelands. Grant's unwavering commitment to educating the public - through a deeply rooted understanding of place - works to unsettle the colonial lens through which newcomers have come to know the contested spaces we occupy.

In recounting the story of həmləsəm, Grant shares how xe:l's transforms a person into stone for being greedy and wasteful at this site of fresh water located south of Wreck Beach. He goes on to position UBC in relation to the student experience as a site where individuals can experience transformation: "Many times you come in thinking you're going to be one thing, but because people share resources which is the knowledge contained here at UBC, your life gets transformed into something else, something that you never even thought of."⁴⁴ This story contains many calls to transform, and points out the importance of being in good relationship not only to the people around us, but also the land and resources which sustain us.

In *These Mysterious People*, Susan Roy shares the story of how the late Wayne Point rediscovered a carved stone integral to the community's history named qeysca:m.

⁴⁴ "The Power of a Name: həmləsəm House at UBC," YouTube video, 6:06, posted by "UBC," February 19, 2014, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=XCjilM2M9Ho>.

Wayne⁴⁵ worked for his community as the Musqueam Archaeology Technician, and has rightly earned the nickname “eagle eyes” after decades of recovering vital aspects of Musqueam history and culture. During the 1980s, he rmercame across the site of həmləsəm and shared this story in an interview I conducted for a short film regarding the origins of həmləsəm House’s name:

I was trying to find a new location to hunt ducks, and I was going through, walking through the bulrush. And then I came this big boulder in the marsh. I was close to the treeline. And I climbed on top of the boulder and got a good view of the whole area, and I didn’t realize what it was at the time. Twenty years later, I started working in archaeology, for UBC and then Musqueam Indian Band. And going through some of the notes at the band office, I started to realize there was a transformer rock in about the same area called the həmləsəm rock.

After some careful looking at the maps and reading more about the story of the rock, I had to go back and see if I could find it again, this big rock I was on earlier in my life, and it took me about two weekends but I found the rock! It has been recorded before but I don’t think anyone had seen any photographs until that time.⁴⁶

Point embodies the moral values of the story of həmləsəm through the ways in which he recovers and shares knowledge for the benefit of his people. His work, as articulated by Susan Roy who has long collaborated with Musqueam as a researcher and curator, “reaffirms the idea of the local community as a repository of local knowledge – whether that knowledge is drawn upon in theatres of resistance and struggles for recognition of Aboriginal title and rights or for internal community-building purposes.”⁴⁷

qələxən is a fortification site where Musqueam warriors and their families resided, including qiyəplenəx^w, the war chief and renowned leader of Musqueam who welcomed

⁴⁵ Wayne Point suddenly passed away on December 1, 2017 while working at a local site. He will sorely missed by his family, friends, and many communities including Musqueam and UBC.

⁴⁶ Ibid.

⁴⁷ Susan Roy, *These Mysterious People: Shaping History and Archaeology in a Northwest Coast Community*, (Montreal & Kingston: McGill-Queen’s University Press, 2007), 13-14.

the first English and Spanish visitors to his territory, and defended the Musqueam community, their land and customs. It is also one of the sites where Musqueam runners were stationed to keep a lookout for guests and invaders.⁴⁸ In the film “The Power of a Name: ǰələχən House at UBC”, Elder Larry Grant looks out across the waters below the Museum of Anthropology, towards the shores where his ancestors resided. In the past, I have helped to facilitate tours in which I have been privileged to share his story of ǰələχən while standing at the same look-out area at the Rose Garden. This experience has turned out to be quite jarring for many students, producing a cognitive dissonance that many are completely willing to unpack and discuss, while some are more reticent. Some of the common reactions include the following types of remarks:

- *I have never had the chance to learn about the history of this space. I wouldn't have known that this area was used for anything other than the Rose Garden.*
- *Wow, there are so many foreign elements here. Why hasn't there been any signs of Musqueam presence added to this area?*
- *What does this part of Musqueam's history have to do with my studies at UBC? We should focus on the present.*

The Rose Garden has long been recognized and marketed as a beautiful site on campus to visit as well as convene at for celebrations after commencement. When I stood with Larry at the lookout point, listening to the story of how his great-great-great grandfather used the water and the land that surrounded us, it connected me to the territory as a settler in a way that I had rarely experienced. My imagination was brought to a time period when UBC did not exist. A space I frequented often had suddenly become unfamiliar, and the

⁴⁸ “The Power of a Name: ǰələχən House at UBC,” YouTube video, 4:22, posted by UBC, February 19, 2014, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ZkZHThNM8Cc&t=2s>.

importance and cultural significance of the space in terms of what I knew and what I could see, significantly changed. Dr. Evan Mauro, a sessional lecturer in the Coordinated Arts Program, describes the juxtaposing encounters that this type of experience produces in his reflection on taking students to the site while learning about ǰələχən from Larry:

Students learned to read the campus space critically, noticing, in the Rose Garden for example, how Musqueam presence is somewhat aggressively effaced by a classical English rose garden (a non-Indigenous plant species, representing a very specific aesthetic, and a vastly different use of the land), a giant Canadian flagpole visible from great distances, and a commemorative plaque listing settler place names for local mountains. These combine to produce a site that is then used in a good deal of UBC's promotional material. With the help of the tour, students unpacked layers of colonial relationships inscribed onto the land, and for some, onto their everyday experiences.⁴⁹

Knowledge of Musqueam's history and use of the territory which predates the university's allows us to place our experiences and more recent memories in relation to this. It creates a layering of stories, and a connection, rather than a dismissal of those of newcomers. Recognizing these layers and the intangible characteristics embedded within this place that are important to the communities who use them provides an important opportunity to think about our collective responsibility to take care of the land many of us have come to call home, despite our range of ancestral origins.

A true understanding of these places and the unceded status of these ancient villages can shift the way in which we relate to and interact with our institution. The fact that only 0.02% of Musqueam's traditional territory is currently within their jurisdiction is poorly understood.⁵⁰ As the interactive site "UBC Centennial: The Hidden History" points out,

Where once the Musqueam and other hənǰəmīnəm-speaking people controlled all of what would become greater Vancouver, their holdings, by the time UBC arrived in

⁴⁹ Excerpt from a presentation by Evan Mauro, used with permission.

⁵⁰ "nəcałmat tə šx^wq^weləwən ct - We Are of One Heart and Mind," Musqueam Indian Band, 54.

Point Grey, had been reduced to a primary reserve of approximately 190 hectares (470 acres) seven kilometres around the point south of the university. As the university became ever more present, Musqueam people lost much of their access and opportunity for traditional use of that land.

The unfolding of one history radically transformed another and, until very recently, the unfolding history of the university obscured the long presence of Musqueam from the memory of all but Musqueam itself. And because Aboriginal people were, for the most part, excluded from higher education, for the first half of its century, UBC would not be a source of opportunity, but of loss.⁵¹

Considering the ways in which UBC is part of a much larger process that denied and alienated the Musqueam community from much of its traditional territory demands that we critically reflect on the privileges we enjoy as the result of the denial of human rights and essential resources to our host community, for those of us who are newcomers.

2.5 Working through challenges in the naming process

As the naming advisory process unfolded as a new initiative and partnership between Musqueam, SHHS, and other UBC representatives, a number of challenges and concerns arose. Those of us who served on the committee and were not from Musqueam, were learning about *hənq̓əminəm*, one of thirty-four endangered First Nations languages in BC, for the first time. We were introduced to the North American Phonetic Alphabet (NAPA), the writing system that Musqueam uses to capture the 22 consonants in *hənq̓əminəm* that are not in the English/Roman alphabet.⁵² Encountering symbols for vowels like the schwa, ə, and consonants like *m̓* (a glottalized resonant), in a world that is dominated by the use of English, was disconcerting for some individuals. This learning process naturally began with many queries that have been posed as frequently asked

⁵¹ “UBC Centennial: The Hidden History,” First Nations House of Learning, accessed February 23, 2016, <http://centennial.aboriginal.ubc.ca>.

⁵² Musqueam: A Living Culture, accessed March 1, 2016, <http://www.musqueam.bc.ca/language>.

questions to not only Musqueam, but also other communities in the process of revitalizing their languages as well as educating the public through sharing parts of this knowledge.

- *Can we Anglicize the names so that it's easier to spell and use them?*
- *How will students be able to pronounce and communicate these names?*
- *There are technical barriers for using the phonetic symbols in our computer systems.*
- *How will emergency and delivery units be able to easily identify the houses within the larger complex (as they all share one address)?*

Throughout many meetings that followed the initial proposal of the names, discussions and consultations with some UBC representatives were preoccupied with these types of concerns that pertain to the practicality of using the North American Phonetic Alphabet (NAPA), along with concerns regarding how both international and domestic students would learn and engage with the new names.

All of these practical concerns were acknowledged and respectfully addressed by the Musqueam representatives, either directly or through the liaising of Spencer and myself. In the words of Elder Larry Grant, Anglicizing the hənqəmínəm language would erase its distinct sounds and render its words meaningless, so it was paramount that the committee use and respect the official orthography of the Musqueam community. Many of us had to continually reiterate this message.

Towards the end of the process, which was constrained by the amount of time remaining before the new house was to open in September that year, there still remained issues pertinent to SHHS' communication process that needed to be addressed. Some of the symbols were not compatible with the operating system SHHS was using at the time.

However, it became difficult to conduct consultations with certain individuals who demonstrated an unwillingness to listen with “an open heart and mind” and discuss differences in opinion in a respectful manner.

In order to build a consensus and find a solution that both parties would agree with, Spencer and I participated in one of our final meetings with a lead representative of both parties. The shared intention was to openly discuss the issues at hand. For data bases and other internal communication purposes in which certain characters of the font could not easily be incorporated, two short building codes using roman letters – hmsm and qlXn - were agreed upon.⁵³ Negotiating these codes, turned out to be a pivotal moment enabling the process to move forward.

Educational strategies focused on how to introduce UBC students, staff and faculty to hənqəmīnəm were then gathered and developed. The First Nations and Endangered Languages Program at UBC shared a unique font they created called the First Nations Unicode⁵⁴ that enables people to easily communicate with phonetic symbols on their computers. To teach people how to pronounce the names, audio clips were recorded with hənqəmīnəm speakers and pronunciation guides were collaboratively developed.⁵⁵

As I reflect upon the challenges that arose during this naming process and the ways these were overcome through respectful dialogue and recognition of diverse views,

⁵³ The building codes for the həmləsəm and qələχən Houses were negotiated as hmsm and qlXn respectively. The capital X is intentional, as a substitute for the symbol χ (chi). Some computer systems only render the codes in capital letters however.

⁵⁴ The First Nations Unicode Font is available to download on the First Nations and Endangered Languages Program website: <http://fnel.arts.ubc.ca/font/>.

⁵⁵ The audio clips and pronunciation guides are available on the Student Housing and Hospitality Services website at <http://vancouver.housing.ubc.ca/totem-park-house-names/>.

each of the values that are outlined in “Connecting Communities: Principles for Musqueam-UBC Collaboration” highly resonate and align with my experiences working in the community. While it is essential to learn and put into practice each of these key principles, I would stress the importance of establishing a “meaningful collaboration” at the start of any partnership and ensuring that “listening and opening communication” is fostered in a productive way throughout the process in order to achieve results that are mutually recognized and celebrated. The challenges that arose with certain individuals during the naming process could have been avoided if they were willing to communicate in a respectful manner, and to be open-minded to changing their practices. For instance, what seemed like practical challenges that would negatively impact people’s work and communication abilities were productively reframed as opportunities to learn and gain different forms of knowledge and different ways of doing things.

One of the important lessons I learned from being an active participant in the naming process was the significance of communicating and helping foster a recognition and understanding of how public use and treatment of *hənq̓əminəm* at UBC or beyond, is inextricably tied to Musqueam’s language revitalization efforts and goals for their own community members. Too often, there is a tendency to prioritize and address institutional needs during community consultation, rather than create space and time for community initiatives and concerns. In Aaron Lao’s report, it was refreshing to see equal attention devoted to the concerns of both the community and the institution, in particular the use of localized and culturally specific examples that resonated with readers. In a related way, one of the most crucial lessons I learned through the decision and goal-making practices of the building naming process was that projects such as the naming of new buildings

with *hənqəmīnəm* needed to be part of a long term process that reflected the priorities of the Musqueam community rather than only considering the needs of UBC as an institution.

Years following the formation of the naming committee meeting and development of affiliated educational initiatives, it has been very rewarding to witness the respectful ways in which many students have been engaging with the names of the houses in which they reside, including both those that were gifted by the Musqueam community and those that were not. One photograph that stands out is a picture of a group of students, each one with a letter on their back, spelling out the name “*həmłəsəm*” with purple body paint. While it would be difficult to police every individual use of the house names by students as part of their campus experience, I hope that the growing number of resources that are now available for students to learn the origins of the house names, systemic issues of appropriation and misrepresentation, and the importance of community consultation will encourage multiple modes of ethical engagement with Indigenous communities and their histories, cultures, and politics.

2.6 Lessons on time: it’s more than a sign

Although the naming process resulted in many positive results at the time and in continual ways through educational resources, there were downsides to the process itself being rushed. The unveiling of the building signage, independently developed at UBC, signaled an abrupt end to the partnership that had been formed, rather than a long-term commitment to an on-going relationship. I am proud to be a member of the storytelling committee that was formed between Musqueam and SHHS prior to the naming of the

final infill house at Totem Park Residence in September 2017. This project began after the naming of the two buildings described above, and it has produced more substantive materials and initiatives than the first collaboration. However, as I reflect on the obstacles and approaches that were present in the first collaboration, in hindsight there was one crucial shortcoming that needed to be corrected in order to have the more productive relationship of the naming process for the final building.

While Musqueam was involved in providing the content that would be shared in the original building signage, they were not involved in the design process. In fact, Spencer and I were also left out of the process at this stage, and as with Musqueam, we did not get to see the signage until it was installed. As of the writing of this thesis, nearly six years after the naming process for the first two buildings at Totem Park, these original signs will be removed and replaced with more vibrant and robust representations of Musqueam's history, language, and culture. The stark contrast between the original signage and the new, collaborative designs signify and are symbolic of two differing approaches to consultations and the relationship with Musqueam. The first one was a product of prioritizing institutional timelines, and the second one better reflected a healthy, ongoing relationship that is committed to a long-term process. Rather than the product of a single short-term project that is shaped and dominated by the priorities of the university alone, the signs created for the final building, and the two signs made to replace the original two building signs, now reflect particular moments in an on-going relationship.

Proper consultation involves iterative discussions and repeated collaborative decision-making. Doing it properly will take longer, but the results will be better and a

sign of a commitment to a continual relationship. The two sets of signage, in a sense, were themselves each a sign of something else, a symbol of two different approaches to consultation. The replacement signs will be installed beside two large storyboards designed with Musqueam style elements, include a partial map of Musqueam territory to situate the place names, and to assist viewers in pronouncing each of the unique *hənq̓əminəm* sounds in the names. Where there previously a series of lit, blue and green panels, place-based imagery reflective of the original *həmləsəm* and *q̓ələχən* locations will be printed on vinyl and applied directly over these panels; as a way to transform the space just aesthetically but in a way that is culturally reflective of Musqueam. In comparison, the first set of signage were produced from a rushed process that forced a timetable reflecting the needs and priorities of the University upon Musqueam. Decisions were based on priorities shaped by short-term planning needs, and a collaborative process was suddenly ended when the door became closed to further input. If there had not been the opportunity to renew the collaborative relationship between SHHS and Musqueam with the naming of the final infill building at Totem Park, the first naming process would have unfortunately ended with a less than optimal result, both in the sense of the signage themselves but also in terms of the relationship. In hindsight, the naming process that resulted in the final building being called *čəsnaʔəm* allowed for the creation of a better consultation process that both built upon and corrected the shortcomings of the first.

Public recognition of Musqueam language and territory has been a long unfinished process in the making. The most fundamental recognition of the continuing financial significance of colonial theft remains only partially acknowledged. In the words of Elder Larry Grant, “You know who the biggest benefactor of UBC is? It’s not [Walter

C.] Koerner, it's not [Irving K.] Barber, it's not [Peter A.] Allard—it's Musqueam! The billions of dollars of real estate that have been appropriated, that Metro Vancouver and UBC sit on.”⁵⁶ I have borrowed this simple yet provocative teaching from Elder Grant to spur us to think about how it is easier to imagine how quickly members of the University would act if errors were made on campus signage that featured the names of the donors listed above. In a similar way that those signs reflect respectful relationships and commitments for on-going engagement and stewardship between UBC and individual benefactors, so do any signs or other public materials produced in collaboration with Musqueam—and they should be treated with equal care and attention.

2.7 Emerging obligations: a movement to ‘Musqueamize’

Drawing from the work of Stuart Hall, Timothy Stanley stresses “it is not enough to replace bad representations with good ones. We need to pull the bad ones apart, to make them uninhabitable.”⁵⁷ In the context of encountering issues of misrepresentation of Indigenous peoples on campus, I believe this call to action involves not only being able to critically assess and determine what is wrong and simply get rid of it, but to build a broader awareness and understanding of the ways in which the cities we live in like Vancouver were designed upon the erasure of Indigenous presence.

As Chelsea Vowel notes, “the emergence of social media platforms has created amazing possibilities for Indigenous peoples to combat centuries-old stereotypes and

⁵⁶ “*A Musqueam View of Campus*,” Campus and Community Planning, accessed April 11, 2018, <https://planning.ubc.ca/vancouver/news-events/newsletter/2018-04-01/musqueam-view-ubc-campus>.

⁵⁷ Stanley, “The Banality of Colonialism,” 155.

misconceptions.”⁵⁸ While this work can be tiring and frustrating, “there is a real desire to get accurate information out there, for Indigenous and non-Indigenous people alike.”⁵⁹ The use of memorable hashtags such as #MMIW⁶⁰ and #RenameBC,⁶¹ enable posts regarding any topic to be collated and accessed at anytime, and provide an immediate avenue to respond to the overwhelming need to disseminate correct information, especially from Indigenous perspectives. Indigenous activists including Dr. Adrienne Keene, artist Louie Gong and writer Jacqueline Keeler regularly share content and facilitate conversations in relation to the issues they advocate for including #representationsmatter, #inspirednatives, and #notyourmascot respectively.⁶²

In addition to nurturing dialogue, they have also mobilized the public to collectively respond to instances of cultural appropriation⁶³, and to be vigilant in their own communities where interventions need to be made. While settler-colonialism is alive and well, the mechanisms and power to resist and decolonize continue to grow. Wenthe reminds us of this when he says that inappropriate names and logo, for instance, have “always been racist. They were racist when they were conceived. The big difference now is that the marginalized people that these logos depict now have a voice. There are now things like the Equity Summit Group to write a letter to say it's wrong. That's what

⁵⁸ Chelsea Vowel, *Indigenous Writes: A Guide to First Nations, Métis & Inuit Issues in Canada*, (Winnipeg: HighWaterPress, 2016), 88.

⁵⁹ Ibid., 88.

⁶⁰ #MMIW stands for missing and murdered Indigenous women.

⁶¹ The #RenameBC campaign was part of an exhibition at the Museum of Anthropology called Lawrence Paul Yuxweluptun: Unceded Territories, as well as a contest facilitated online at <http://renamebc.ca> and through a kiosk within the exhibition.

⁶² Each of these hashtag threads can be found on <http://twitter.com>.

⁶³ Vowel’s chapter called “What Is Cultural Appropriation?: Respecting Cultural Boundaries” provides a frank overview of the current debate on this topic, and offers practical advice as to how to respect and celebrate Indigenous cultures.

changed.”⁶⁴ In other words, the voices of Indigenous peoples are now increasingly being heard, and the number of platforms for mobilizing these voices has grown significantly.

In the work with which I have been privileged to collaborate, a primary focus of these initiatives has been to encourage students to be aware and vigilant of issues regarding representation. At the same time, it has also been to encourage them to actively respond to everyday acts of injustice; to detect and unravel threads of settler-colonialism in ways that suit their unique contexts and capabilities. Producing *The Power of a Name*, a collaborative film series and accompanying website,⁶⁵ allowed me to be part of a team that explored the contested history of naming practices at UBC. The films aimed to revitalize stories of relationships that had been formed between UBC and Indigenous peoples from some of the communities affiliated with the names in use at Totem Park Residence, while simultaneously encouraging dialogue regarding our individual and collective responsibilities on Musqueam territory. This work continues the vision that inspired *Decolonizing Knowledge* years ago, premised upon the idea that when students learned about local Indigenous knowledge and stories, there was less possibility of them replicating and repeating misrepresentations that erased and belittled Indigenous peoples in a broad range of contexts. These stories relate to many aspects of the university experience, and the conversations they catalyze need to permeate all parts of the cities in which we live. They should not be shunted off to the field of Indigenous studies or classified as “Indigenous issues.”

⁶⁴ Wentze, “We are not your mascots.”

⁶⁵ The website is available at <http://powerofaname.ubc.ca>. The development of this series began in 2013.

The burden of decolonizing institutions like UBC cannot be placed solely on the Musqueam Nation and other Indigenous peoples. As expressed by communities themselves, such as through the report “Connecting Communities: Principles for Musqueam-UBC Collaboration,” the capacity and resources in terms of individuals and trained staff in their community is quite limited in the face of growing demands for localized, decolonizing knowledge. This is particularly true when community needs and concerns must be prioritized, and requests come in from a wide array of institutions and organization across the city. However, there are ways to take action in conversation with these communities in ways that can benefit them and help advance their goals and values. One of the misperceptions that I have commonly seen, and which is easy to fall into for those of us in the position of being a non-Musqueam person, is that it takes a long time to do things in collaboration with Musqueam. It is important to remember that in the end, any proposal is not up to an outsider, whether you are an individual or organization, and that what begins as an idea must be developed in collaborative conversation and that a consensus with all required stakeholders must be reached before truly becoming operational. What seems to take a “long time,” in other words, is only taking exactly as long as it takes to be done properly within the array of priorities set by a consensus within the community.

In Musqueam’s award-winning Comprehensive Community Plan entitled “nóca?mat tə šx^wq^weləwən ct - We Are of One Heart and Mind”⁶⁶ (2011), one of the

⁶⁶ The plan won the 2011 Planning Institute of B.C. Award for Excellence in Planning Practice and received an honorable mention in 2010 for the Canadian Institute of Planners Award for Excellence in Recreation as listed on the EcoPlan International website: <http://www.ecoplan.ca/123/tools/strategic-planning/musqueam-comprehensive-community-plan-we-are-of-one-heart-and-mind/>. The plan is available in print, and on the Musqueam website: <http://www.musqueam.bc.ca/one-heart-one-mind>.

actions identified under the goal of providing cultural programming is to “[c]ontinue to ‘Musqueamize’ our Traditional Territory with art, signs, symbols, information and Musqueam names.”⁶⁷ The outcomes of naming advisory processes are part of a healthy and gradual process to ‘Musqueamize’ UBC’s Vancouver campus as a fraction of their territory within Metro Vancouver, and have laid the groundwork for additional naming processes such as the one for the final infill building at Totem Park Residence, named *čəsnaʔəm leləm* (House) by Musqueam in September 2017.⁶⁸ Over the past decade in particular, numerous initiatives and partnerships driven by the Musqueam community have resulted in an increase in Musqueam art, stories, and signage in public spaces. The raising of the house post of Capilano, *tə qeqən ʔə ʔ qiyəplenəx^w* in 2012 at UBC’s Allard School of Law; gifting of the name *snəwəyəl leləm* (house of teachings) to Langara College in January 2016; raising of the commissioned double-headed serpent post, *sʔilqəy qeqən*, on University Boulevard at UBC in April 2016; and gifting of the name *nəčaʔmat ct* (we are one) to the Vancouver Public Library’s Strathcona Branch in April 2017 are all recent examples of Musqueam’s efforts to have their traditions, language and culture recognized.

Parallel to efforts that visibly engage people on the land through tangible forms such as signage, the story telling film projects with which I became involved can be seen as digital resources that aspire to help ‘Musqueamize’ cyberspace. They are tools that through the application of technology can hopefully be used to mobilize and normalize the use of *hənqəminəm* in multiple learning environments, at the same time provoking

⁶⁷ “*nəčaʔmat tə šx^wq^weləwən ct* - We Are of One Heart and Mind,” (Vancouver: Musqueam Indian Band, July 2011), 91.

⁶⁸ The author was invited to serve on this naming advisory committee, building off of the work done in 2011 when Musqueam gifted the names *həmləsəm* and *qələxən* for use at Totem Park Residence.

users to rethink their relationship to the land upon which they live. In being involved with these projects, I learned many valuable lessons about the proper (and improper) ways to approach collaboration and consultation with Musqueam.

In the next chapter, I reflect on the projects that were developed with Elder Larry Grant's family in conversation with departments from Musqueam that share the history and significance of Chinese market gardening in their community. These projects helped highlight the intersections between the process of recovering Chinese-First Nations histories, and the development of reciprocal relations between Indigenous and non-Indigenous peoples.

Chapter 3: Chinese Market Gardens at Musqueam

Throughout the 20th century, numerous Chinese market gardens were in operation throughout the Lower Mainland, supplying the City of Vancouver with fresh produce, one of the many ways in which early Chinese migrants were embedded within the local food industry.⁶⁹ The unique situation the Musqueam community experienced is that it hosted Chinese farmers on their reserve lands⁷⁰. As very little documentation was available about the history of Chinese market gardening at Musqueam, I became a co-applicant for a UBC grant that was awarded to Musqueam Treaty, Lands and Resources Department that would provide resources to document and gather materials about the subject.

After compiling a list of recommended contacts within the community, we distributed an invitation to community members and members of the farming families that might be interested in sharing their memories of and connection to the Chinese farmers, to participate in the project through video interviews. To introduce the project⁷¹, we hosted a dinner at the Musqueam Cultural Centre for the individuals to learn about the project, as well as who I was as a new researcher working with the community. Fortunately, a number of individuals accepted the invitation and were available to attend the dinner. For those who could not attend, they were contacted afterwards on a 1-on-1 basis. This demonstrated the interest of some of community members to document this history, especially when a number of elders were still able and interested in sharing their

⁶⁹ The “Chinese Canadian Stories” web portal contains many stories about the contributions of Chinese Canadians to the formation of Canada and the array of industries and communities they joined: <http://ccs.library.ubc.ca>.

⁷⁰ The official name for the reserve where community members reside today is Musqueam Indian Reserve 2.

⁷¹ The Chinese Market Gardens at Musqueam Project took place from 2012-2013 and was funded as a UBC Community Learning Initiative funded by the Chapman and Innovation Grant.

stories. To assist with the project, then undergraduate student Faith Sparrow-Crawford⁷² from Musqueam was hired to be the videographer and co-interviewer.

Many of our interviews with community members suggest these relations first developed naturally. Leasing agreements between the Chinese tenants and Musqueam people were made on a “hand-shake basis,” and with a shared understanding of how the work was to be conducted.⁷³ Musqueam families began to lease the land to Chinese migrants who would work this fertile area located at the mouth of the Fraser River.

Unfortunately, the Department of Indian Affairs interfered with this economic partnership and took over the leasing process around 1906.⁷⁴ Musqueam families now would receive rent monies for the land that the Chinese farmed on in the form of store credits, rather than direct payments as they had previously. As Larry Grant describes, this would be like receiving a gift card with no cash value. Families were forced to use their credits at specific stores like Red and White on Dunbar Street, and this became one of the many ways in which the federal government intentionally aimed to remove financial responsibility from Indigenous peoples in order to foster dependency on their colonial system and services.⁷⁵ As in the Canadian government’s overall legal relationship with First Nations established by the Indian Act, the hierarchy between a paternalist government who would decide what was best for “Indians” played out in almost every aspect of life controlled by the Department of Indian Affairs. Even to this day, the same power to decide how rent monies from Chinese farmers should be given to Musqueam

⁷² Faith Sparrow-Crawford graduated with a major in First Nations and Indigenous Studies Program.

⁷³ Larry Grant, interview for *All Our Father’s Relations*, August 2015.

⁷⁴ “Larry Grant: Intertwining Cultures,” YouTube video, 11:22, posted by “chinesecanadianubc,” March 11, 2012, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=7Bh3QidIVFU>.

⁷⁵ Larry Grant, personal correspondence.

remains in principle the rationale for the Federal Government holding reserve lands “in trust” for First Nations.

3.1 Social and economic ties

Archival records show an account by an Indian agent following a site visit to the reserve, in which he expresses his surprising discovery of a Chinese farmer working on the Musqueam reserve.⁷⁶ Statements also suggest the reason for the Department of Indian Affairs allowing the farmers to remain “working” on the reserve (this is distinct from “living,” as non-Aboriginal people were not allowed to reside on reserves and thus the farmers had their legal addresses registered in Chinatown), is they wanted to further “assimilate” the Musqueam people and encourage them to become farmers rather than fishermen. However, these events did not unfold as government officials intended. According to the stories recorded through the *Chinese Market Gardens at Musqueam Project*, Chinese farmers and their Musqueam hosts formed a variety of strong relationships between each other, contributing to the social and economic well-being of both communities, the city, and beyond. The produce that grew at Musqueam was part of a much larger production and distribution network run by Chinese migrants and their relatives across the Lower Mainland. The connections these farmers forged created much community cohesion and capacity building in the Chinese Canadian network that is often underrecognized.

Edmond Leong and his three siblings grew up on the reserve during the 1950s and 1960s, and has many fond memories of not only playing with Musqueam children his

⁷⁶ RG10, Department of Indian Affairs, Volume 8089, Reel C-9654, 1911-1925.

age, but also working alongside them on the farm as his relatives would hire them as labourers. He recalls speaking to his father about how they had leased land to farm from members of the Sparrow family, how they were related to members of the Grant family, as well as how they were connected to the Musqueam people at large:

They were good to our family, they were good to us, because we were the tenants of their land. Everybody helped each other. Sure, mom and dad grew vegetables, but we shared the vegetables with the local people. We hired them as labourers on the farm, my father did. I remember those days that we played with them out in the field, but they were supposed to be at work.⁷⁷

Debra Sparrow spoke of farmers who found “lots of evidence of our people in the ground.” They would then give the belongings⁷⁸ to her father, the late Chief Willard Sparrow, who would then pass these belongings to Charles Borden at UBC, known as the “Father of Archaeology in British Columbia.”⁷⁹ Eddie Chan, who held a share of his family’s “Man Lee Farm” during the 1950s recalls burying small pieces of bone as “according to Chinese customs, we didn’t want to disturb the spirit.”⁸⁰

Archaeology Technician Wayne Point became interested in the field of archaeology when he would walk around the reserve as a young child with his mother, the late Rose Point. At the age of five, Rose would bring him and his brothers through the fields to one of their neighbors who operated the T.S. Jing farm in the 1950s to look for cultural belongings. They enjoyed a close relationship with the owner, referred to as Jing, and gave fish to his family, receiving fresh vegetables in return. In fact, the original house Wayne Point’s parents owned was later gifted to Jing’s family to use when they moved.⁸¹

⁷⁷ Edmond Leong, interview for *All Our Father’s Relations*, September 2016.

⁷⁸ In the čəsna?əm: the city before the city exhibitions, the use of the term “belongings” instead of “artifacts” is emphasized by members of the Musqueam community.

⁷⁹ Debra Sparrow, interview for *Chinese Market Gardens at Musqueam Project*, August 2012.

⁸⁰ Eddie Chan, interview for *Chinese Market Gardens at Musqueam Project*, July 2012.

⁸¹ Wayne Point, interview for *Chinese Market Gardens at Musqueam Project*, July 2012.

Point treasures these memories of exchange and reciprocity with the Jing family, as they have influenced the research and fieldwork he has done for his community:

My mother was the first one to bring me to look for artifacts and when I was five years old, she'd bring us for walks through the fields. We'd collect artifacts, arrowheads, from these fields...as long as we didn't disturb the garden, he (farmer named Jing) was fine with it, us going through the fields - and we respected his lifestyle.⁸²

3.2 (Re)Imagining relations

These encounters and stories of exchange and interaction reveal close ties that help us to imagine different ways of relating to each other as Indigenous and non-Indigenous peoples. Discourses of settler colonialism and the history of newcomers to Indigenous territories have long been centered around relationships between Indigenous and White peoples. These dialogues are important, and recent work by scholars and writers like Thomas King, in *The Inconvenient Indian*, and John Lutz, in *Makuk: A New History of Aboriginal-White Relations*, provide frank and robust accounts of the colonial nature of Indigenous-White relations in North America and how it was premised upon white supremacy. Recently, when I was faced with questions from Grades 4 to 6 students in Edmonton, Alberta on Treaty 6 territory who were puzzled by stories of how the Federal government made decisions that broke up Indigenous communities and families, the clear and simple passage by King came to mind:

What do Whites want?...Native history in North America as writ has never been about Native people. It's been about Whites and their needs and desire. What Native peoples wanted has never been a vital concern, and has never been a political or social priority.

...

What do Whites want?

The answer is quite simple, and it's been in plain sight all along.

⁸²

Ibid.

Land.
Whites want land.⁸³

While an understanding of white supremacy and its ongoing legacies is critical, conversations must broaden to include the array of relations formed between non-European migrants and Indigenous peoples. In British Columbia and across North America, very little scholarly research has been devoted to close encounters that took place between Indigenous communities and the early Chinese, South Asian, and Japanese migrants who came to their territories. However, community-based initiatives and collaborations in Aotearoa⁸⁴ (New Zealand) have produced a body of works on Chinese-Maori relations that provide inspiring models to look towards.⁸⁵ Many parallels can also be drawn to the history of Chinese migrants across Canada. While intermarriages between Chinese men and First Nations women were quite common during the late 1800s and early 1900s in British Columbia, only five Musqueam individuals are known to have been born to a Chinese farmer while the market gardens were in operation on the reserve.⁸⁶

The following collaborative research initiatives emphasize the importance of careful and respectful storytelling that centre genuine community-based and ethical forms of representation. These commitments grew from personal relationships and iterative conversations that had been nurtured over the period of several years.

⁸³ Thomas King, *The Inconvenient Indian: A Curious Account of Native People in North America*, (Toronto: Doubleday Canada, 2012), 216.

⁸⁴ The Māori name for what is known as New Zealand.

⁸⁵ Dr. Manying Ip has an extensive body of literature on Chinese-Maori relations as a Professor of Asian Studies at the University of Auckland. Lily Lee, Ruth Lam, and Nigel Murphy put together the book “Sons of the Soil: Chinese market gardeners in New Zealand.”

⁸⁶ Jean Barman, “BEYOND CHINATOWN: Chinese Men and Indigenous Women in Early British Columbia,” *BC Studies*, no.177 (Spring 2013).

3.3 Giving back in meaningful ways

I have learned a great deal from the ways in which direct interactions and ongoing relationships are emphasized by Musqueam’s research protocols. The value of consulting at every stage of a research initiative to create consensus leads to better results in the end, and ultimately—meaningful ways of giving back to the community because their authority to determine outcomes is respected. For far too long, researchers were entering the Musqueam community with their own agenda. As explained by Leona Sparrow, Musqueam’s liaison to the University of British Columbia at the “UBC Centennial Emerging Research workshop on Ethics and Pragmatism in Indigenous Research” in February 2016,

In terms of working with the university and institutions like universities, schools, or colleges – It has been a mixed bag. A lot of people came into the community and were doing their “research,” but what we found...is that there were no boundaries on what could be taken, what could be discussed, and what was removed...Most often, nothing came back into the community. So we finally said that’s it – no more. That persisted for many, many years.⁸⁷

She shared that this relationship began to change when a commitment was made at the President’s level to take a serious look at how to increase the involvement of Musqueam and other Indigenous students on campus and begin to work with Musqueam to increase their community’s representation on campus and help remove institutional barriers to education. She asked, “how can you have a working relationship with a community relationship with a community that is totally underrepresented, or it is sometimes not represented?”⁸⁸ Learning more about the gradual progress that has been made between

⁸⁷ “UBC Centennial Emerging Research Workshop on Ethics and Pragmatism in Indigenous Research, Capstone Session,” featuring Linc Kesler, Leona Sparrow, and Jordan Wilson, posted by UBC Research and Innovation, February 24, 2016, <https://research.ubc.ca/workshop/ethics-pragmatism>.

⁸⁸ Ibid.

Musqueam and UBC at the leadership levels, and the Memorandum of Affiliation that was signed in 2006, helps to put any singular effort into perspective and acknowledge the interconnected layers of relationships that need to function both sides.

Similarly, Plains Cree and Saulteaux scholar Margaret Kovach underscores how “relevancy is integral to giving back” to Indigenous communities in terms of sharing research in ways that are beneficial. She states that “giving back is not a difficult concept, yet one of the most egregious actions of Western research into the lives of Indigenous peoples is the negligence of this ethic. Giving back does not only mean dissemination of findings; it means creating a relationship throughout the entirety of the research.”⁸⁹ This teaching of “giving back,” which she goes on to unpack in relation to her own positionality and community, deeply resonated with me the first time I read it. I knew it had been done very poorly by previous researchers working with Indigenous communities in the past, and I had been exposed to many examples in the classroom. What I did not truly understand until much later, as I began collaborations with Musqueam such as the naming of *həmləsəm* and *qələχən*, is how the act of “giving back” would be in practice so difficult to execute properly. As demonstrated with the example of the house signage at Totem Park Residence, there can be ways of giving back that are mutually agreed upon, but the execution of this work and how this impacts the future of that relationship is more important. Nobody likes an empty promise, and not fulfilling a promise means the end of a relationship.

Embracing the concept of “giving back” and making a personal commitment is one thing, but figuring out what this means within a relationship and through continual

⁸⁹ Margaret Kovach, *Indigenous Methodologies: Characteristics, Conversations, and Contexts*, (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2000), 149.

consultation that takes into account and respects that all communities contain disagreements and conflict is another matter altogether. It involves time, trust, and respect to determine how to give back, and it is up to the community to make and guide these decisions. It is also up to the outsider to wait until potential disagreements between community members are resolved and a decision can be made about proceeding, including the possibility that no agreement can be made and so without a consensus decision nothing should proceed. Collaboration at every stage between UBC and the Musqueam community is important, but non-Musqueam must also respect the necessity of waiting for agreement within the community as well.

In numerous settings and situations as a non-Indigenous researcher working within the Musqueam community, I knew I had the responsibility to return the knowledge that was generously being shared with me and my colleagues. Perhaps most important here, is that the definition of “giving back” as Kovach articulates, should be inextricable from the relationship that is formed between a researcher and the community. As I have come to understand at Musqueam, how a person “gives back” is determined by the nature, strength, and evolution of that relationship. There are no simple solutions nor singular transactions that define a relationship because an on-going relationship is by definition an on-going process. The process is more important than any product because it is the relationship that should matter the most.

In the remainder of this chapter I go behind the scenes of the processes that led to the creation of two resources that are now widely used within and beyond the community. It would be easy for me to discuss and present these projects at this moment after they have been completed simply as results of an interdisciplinary project and

program. However, the truth is that I did not know from the outset of my studies what I would end up producing beyond a thesis. A number of experiences and conversations had to unfold in order for me to find out what kinds of resources might be more relevant and beneficial to the Musqueam community than a traditional thesis project. From the outset of each project, even before they were could be conceived, decisions had to be made, not just by me, but more importantly by my advisors within the community and by my collaborators whose authority and agency set the tone and path. While some may say this was not an efficient route, I would argue in this thesis that it is the only right path, and to have pursued this thesis project in a more seemingly “efficient” manner of laying out a thesis topic and relentlessly pursuing its completion without regard for the process of consultation and relationship building described in the remaining parts of this chapter would not have been conducive to the collaborative projects that emerged.

3.4 "ʔi ʔe nem ʔəmxasəm!, 我們出去走走啦 ! , Let’s Take a Walk!”

In the children’s book "ʔi ʔe nem ʔəmxasəm!, 我們出去走走啦 ! , Let’s Take a Walk!” co-authored with Elder Larry Grant in 2013, the soundscape of the Musqueam community during the late 1800s and first half of the 20th century is centralized and celebrated. Written from the perspective of a three-year-old child who takes readers on a walk around the reserve, the narrator encounters hənqəminəm, spoken frequently by his mother, alongside his father’s ancestral language, Cantonese. He hears the calls of wild fowl that fly across the village site maləy and the sounds associated with carrots being harvested from the Chinese market gardens on the reserve. The choice of presenting the organic presence of non-English languages in the soundscape was deliberate and

designed to upset the dominance of English in the colonial landscape. As Timothy Stanley observes, although southern Chinese migrants and their languages have been present in BC as long as the first European migrants, the domination of English renders other languages as “alien or foreign,” as if English wasn’t also a non-Indigenous language.⁹⁰

Near the end of the walk, Larry encounters a picture of himself, at which he beams with pride and marveled at its beauty. We decided to incorporate this scene after learning how Larry came across this same photo later in his life as an elder, in the photo collection of another community member. Seeing this rare photograph, which was taken during the 1930s on the reserve alongside elders in the community, brought back a lot of memories for Larry. The intent of the story is to help instill the same sense of pride in children who read or hear it; for them to be proud of their ancestral languages, identities, and homelands. While there is an increasing amount of diverse children’s literature being produced in British Columbia, it is still difficult for Indigenous and Asian Canadian children to find themselves and their complex communities represented in mainstream society. Perhaps stories like these, we hoped, would also encourage them to document their own stories and relations.

One memorable conversation I had during the *Chinese Market Gardens at Musqueam Project* was with Debra Sparrow. Her story brought to life a different narrative than those commonly portrayed in children’s literature and mainstream media. Sparrow and her sisters played a game called “Chinese gardens.”⁹¹ The sisters would alternate roles, one pretending to be a farmer, the other sneaking away vegetables and

⁹⁰ Stanley, “The Banality of Colonialism,” 147.

⁹¹ Debra Sparrow, interview for *Chinese Market Gardens at Musqueam Project*, August 2012.

occasionally getting caught by the farmer. This was a common experience for many Musqueam community members who grew up around the Chinese market gardens. As was referenced earlier, they actually did not need to take the vegetables and their families were often freely offered produce by the farmers, but the invention of the children's game reveals how the farms became an organic element within the landscape for Musqueam children and part of their outdoor playground.

Drawing from true historical events and oft-ignored or forgotten lived realities such as the presence of Chinese-Musqueam relations, how can we encourage children to celebrate and tell stories about the unique spaces they find themselves in today? As both community members and the general public gain exposure to resources such as the *hənqəmínəm* children's books that have been developed by the Musqueam Language and Culture Department, one of the goals is that they will serve as building blocks in the process of decolonial community building. We saw in the Chinese-Musqueam children's book that Elder Larry Grant and I set out to create a similar aim, to inspire new relationships and stories that draw from neglected histories that were nevertheless respectful and reciprocal, and therefore a counter to the dominance of settler colonial narratives.

3.5 Learning how to give back

When most individuals decide to write a book, it is common for them to make this decision on their own, and proceed with an attempt to fulfill their vision. In the context of community research and the use of oral history, this is potentially a harmful approach, and perhaps even disastrous. As much as it is important for me to speak to the importance

of sharing the story of Chinese market gardens at Musqueam and the impact that exposing this history to children can make, it is also crucial that I acknowledge and follow the authorities and protocols that are in place to determine whether or not a project like this should be made, and if so, how it should be done.

"ʔi ʔe nem ʔəm̓xasəm̓!, 我們出去走走啦! , Let's Take a Walk!" evolved through a series of stages and conversations. The concept of a children's book first emerged when I was student of the introductory hənqəm̓inəm̓ language course, in which each student is encouraged to create a bilingual project that could be kept and used by the language program and in some cases, the community. Inspired by his devotion to revitalizing language and culture at all levels in his community, I recall sitting down with Larry after class one day to ask what he thought about sharing his story in this format. I had enrolled in the course right after we had both finished working on the naming process for the həmləsəm̓ and qələχən Houses, as I wanted to learn more about hənqəm̓inəm̓ and the worldview it contains.

At that point in the semester, I had also become a member of the *Chinese Canadian Stories* (2010-2012) research team, an initiative led by Professor Henry Yu that was dedicated to collecting, digitizing, and distributing Chinese Canadian history. One of the opportunities I was fortunate to receive was the role of using editing software to create a set of short films from a series of interviews Henry had conducted with Larry about his life experiences being Musqueam and Chinese. It was through this process of spending hours listening to and logging footage of Larry's stories that I began to learn a lot about his life. His emphasis on childhood experiences and the teachings of his mother were notable. The storyline was drawn from these portions of his interviews, and in the

end, Larry was pleased and honoured that I had taken the time to put together a powerpoint-based book/slideshow with another classmate, Sarah Keller, who worked on the original illustrations.

A few years later St. John's College, a graduate residence on campus for which Larry serves as a Faculty Fellow, decided to host an event to honour his contributions on campus. They also established the Larry Grant Legacy Speaker Series to host continual dialogues on themes related to his life's work. To create a commemorative resource for this event, some of our colleagues encouraged us to turn the story we had worked on together and have it developed into an official Musqueam Language and Culture Department publication. However, this was not our decision to make. Any public materials developed in hə̀nqə̀mìnəm should first and foremost be decided upon by the Musqueam Language and Culture Department. Accordingly, we discussed this concept with the manager and her staff there, and quickly determined that the nature of this project was new to the department. Not only did it involve the inclusion of another language (Cantonese), but it would create a need for resources that were not readily available to commit to the project.

To ensure this initiative would not put any financial burdens on the Musqueam Language and Culture Department itself, given their existing priorities and already limited staff and funding capacity, two important offers were made. One was that I externally find a loan that would advance any production costs for the books and accompanying CDs⁹². Secondly, with the exception of the artist who was commissioned, everyone who devoted their time to the project would do so voluntarily. This included the

⁹² The CD includes narrations of the story in hə̀nqə̀mìnəm, Cantonese, and English.

translators, designer, and editors. In addition, everyone involved in the production process also agreed that any revenue generated would go to the Musqueam Language and Culture Department to support their hənqəmínəm language revitalization efforts, and the generation of future materials that could be used in the community.

This mutli-layered decision-making process reminded me to be aware of the impacts, both negative and positive, that my work could create within a community setting. I had to take into account that any idea or proposal that I came up with, no matter how “good” it seemed to me or any collaborators, would have an impact on existing priorities and initiatives, and that I would need to respect the needs and goals of the community rather than my own. While the book proposal was accepted in this case, if it had not been the right time for the department to review all the materials that were produced during this time period, for instance, then the right thing to do would have been to delay or abandon the project, or re-envision the project through further conversations. It is also important to remember that it is not just a matter of the community being willing and ready. The potential collaborator needs to be prepared with sufficient resources to not draw away from already strapped resources that Musqueam has devoted to existing priorities. .

3.6 Languages and Representation

It was important that the project help build upon existing expertise and capacity in Musqueam, and to be respectful about what should or should not be shared with a broader non-Musqueam public readership. The illustrations were done by Ena Point, an artist in the Musqueam community, based on early photographs from Larry’s family and

conversations,. In terms of the layout of the text and colour usage, we asked the designer to feature hənqəminəm most prominently, followed by traditional Chinese and lastly, English. As a result, hənqəminəm is the first language that appears on the page in black text, with the traditional Chinese in brown and English in light grey. As a unobtrusive statement of importance, this order of value provided a clear reinforcement to the priority of Musqueam language and culture. At the bottom of each page, an icon of a hop plant appears to highlight the time of year and circumstances that Larry was born in, təm haps (time of the hops), countering the calendar time that colonial settlement created and enforced.

Helping to make these careful designs for each page element taught me a great deal about the power of existing colonial representations, and made me even more aware of the importance of Musqueam reversing these representations in public spaces. I was also introduced to a set of Musqueam style guidelines that the community had developed, to reference during the development of the designs.⁹³ It includes important historical and cultural information, as well as “Dos and Don’ts” on a range of topics including appropriate colours, landscaping, interior design, language, and much more. Adhering to these guidelines was to respect the process of consensus-building that had led to their creation, and thus to the ways in which communities decide how to come to agreements about what is important despite the disagreements that will always exist between individual members in any community.

⁹³ “Musqueam: A Living Culture” (2006) is a style reference guide to interpreting and representing Musqueam culture, to be used during consultations and collaborative initiatives.

3.7 Family trip to China: deciding to go together

Prior to the official launch of “ʔi le nem ʔəm̩xasəm̩!, 我們出去走走啦!” in the fall of 2013, I heard that Larry, his brothers, and other members of his family would all be making a journey to their late father’s ancestral village in Guangdong, southern China. After much thought and persuasion from their cousin Edmond Leong, much of their family except for their sister had committed to making the long trans-Pacific journey. At this time, the Grant brothers were ages 66, 76 and 78, and they had never been to their father’s village of Sei Moon before. While it is hard to imagine in those days leading up to the trip how it must have felt for them to make this decision to go, I knew it would be a special and deeply meaningful experience that might only occur once. By this time I had gotten to know Larry’s siblings better through previous projects and by living in the community, so I felt comfortable asking each of them if they had the desire to record the trip through film.

I had a bit of experience and exposure to the power of film through collaborating on short film projects with Larry Grant and filmmaker Alejandro Yoshizawa (whom I met through the Chinese Canadian Stories initiative). Also, Howard E. Grant was one of four cast members of the 22-minute documentary *Cedar and Bamboo*⁹⁴ (2010). Both Larry and Howard have devoted a large part of their lives to raising public awareness and understanding of Indigenous issues that impact Musqueam and other Indigenous communities across Canada. I was not alone in believing that there was a potential that making the story of the Grant’s Chinese father and Musqueam mother better known

⁹⁴ *Cedar and Bamboo* (2010) is a 22-minute documentary directed by Diana Leung and Kamala Todd. It was produced by Jennifer Lau and Karin Lee on behalf of the Chinese Canadian Historical Society of BC.

among Chinese and other newcomers to Musqueam territory might help shape their perspectives on Indigenous issues. For these reasons, the Grants and their family members who accompanied them agreed to be recorded and gave consent for me and Alejandro to accompany them on the trip.

When this consensus was formed, each of us were committing not just to travel together for a week—we were undertaking a long-term commitment, and to engage in an ongoing process of working together, even though the relationship as a group was not well-defined at that point. The storyline of the film would be worked out later during the interview process, and the scope of the film would also depend on the funds that could be raised to sustain the project. Accordingly, the purpose of the initial trip would focus on capturing their experience of visiting their father's village and meeting their relatives, and there would be much more to share and unpack upon their return.

People often ask how this project came about, and many who first heard about the project were likely skeptical. After all, I personally had only a bit of experience editing or being the producer for short documentaries on campus, and Alejandro as an emerging filmmaker had little exposure to working on similar topics. Looking back, I think the essential ingredient to take that first leap of faith together was the trust that had been built through previous collaborations and the on-going relationship that had been developed with the Grant siblings and their families. While in this case we did not know what it would cost in terms of time, energy, and finances would be, Alejandro and I were expected to conduct our work in the right way; that we would help find responsible crew and professional services that were required throughout the process, and that we would respect the needs and priorities of both the Grants and the broader community within

which they lived. In hindsight, I have no doubt that if I had not been involved in the previous projects described in the preceding chapters, that I would not have been trusted to undertake this project. In other words, in answer to the question of how this project started, the answer echoes the overall theme in this thesis about the importance of on-going relationships. The project that led to the film *All Our Father's Relations* did not start with the filming of the Grants' trip to China; rather it was one stage of an on-going relationship with the Grants that also involved on-going relationships with others in the Musqueam community. I am certain that I was not alone in knowing that the final form of the film would involve a constant conversation and a series of decisions all the way to the end that involved full and repeated consultation with the Grant family. In a way, that was the only certainty, one that I had been taught through the previous collaborative projects involving Musqueam and UBC. Knowing that this was the right way for the film to be created and how consultation and decision-making must be conducted, allowed me to even imagine that I might be able to taken on such a responsibility and the obligations it would entail.

In the following sections I will introduce the documentary we worked on from 2013 to 2016⁹⁵, and conclude by reflecting on what this commitment became for us and how many people were persuaded and came to believe that this would be an important contribution to the community and beyond.

⁹⁵ The development of the hour-long version took three years, followed by another year creating a broadcast version in 2017.

3.8 *All Our Father's Relations*

Inspired by the ways in which *Cedar and Bamboo* ignited dialogues across British Columbia about the long history of Chinese-First Nations intermarriages in the province, *All Our Father's Relations* was originally envisioned as an hour-long documentary that would provide deeper insight into the policies that have shaped the lives of four elders and siblings of Chinese and Musqueam ancestry currently residing on the Musqueam reserve. The Grants' father, Hong Tim Hing, left the village of Sei Moon in Zhongshan County, Guangdong at the age of 16 as a pursuer of the "Gold Mountain"⁹⁶ dream, eventually reaching the Musqueam village of x^wməθk^wəy^əm in Vancouver, B.C.

Hong married Agnes Grant, descendant of Musqueam warrior of renown, qiyəplənəx^w and they had four children together.⁹⁷ During their childhoods, Elder Larry Grant and siblings Gordon, Helen, and Howard were grounded in the history, language, and culture of their Musqueam community, but knew little of their father's roots, other than growing up around some of their relatives from Guangdong who also worked on their family's market garden on the reserve. However, after their mother lost her "Indian status" through the Indian Act after marrying Hong Tim Hing, the Grants were considered by the Canadian government to be Chinese only. They went to school in Chinatown, exempt from being forced to live far away from their families and attend St. Mary's Indian Residential School in Mission B.C. like their cousins. Elder Grant recounts

⁹⁶ The term Gold Mountain or "Gum San" in Cantonese is a name that was given by Chinese migrants to multiple places as they followed gold rushes all around the Pacific, including places like California, Australia, New Zealand, British Columbia, and the Yukon. Henry Yu and Stephanie Chan discuss this "persistent geographic imaginary" in "The Cantonese Pacific: Migration Networks and Mobility across Space and Time," *Trans-Pacific Mobilities: The Chinese and Canada*, (Vancouver: UBC Press, 2017), 25-48.

⁹⁷ *All Our Father's Relations*, directed by Alejandro Yoshizawa, produced by Sarah Ling, Alejandro Yoshizawa, and Jordan Paterson, (Vancouver: Right Relations, 2016).

the difficult conversation he had with his mother as a child when he asked why he could not attend residential school like his cousins, as one of his first experiences of “not belonging” in the world. The government said he and his siblings were “not Indian” and “just Chinese.”⁹⁸ This arbitrary change in classification had profound effects on the Grants and their sense of belonging, but it also allowed them to stay rooted in their territory and be raised by their mother and other Musqueam relatives.

3.9 Respect and Reciprocity

Although this film aimed to explore Chinese Canadian and First Nations relations through the lens of one family, we hoped it would be a narrative many other families would be able to relate to and also help viewers reflect on the complexities of their own stories, whether this be mixed family roots, thinking about intercultural relations between communities, or being self-reflective as a settler on Indigenous territories. Howard often recounts the reactions and feedback he received after screenings of *Cedar and Bamboo*. He was moved by the number of people that came up to him and said they felt a sense of pride or a deeper connection to their mixed roots because they too were of Chinese and First Nations ancestry, but thought they were alone, or in some cases, were not fortunate to grow up with both of their parents.

As much as this film features events from the past, the Grants all agreed that they wanted *All Our Father's Relations* to be about the present and the future. The descendants of Hong Tim Hing and Agnes Grant are now carrying on the stories of the relations into which both Hong Tim Hing and Agnes Grant entered. They serve as a

⁹⁸ Larry Grant, interview for *All Our Father's Relations*, August 2015.

reminder of the responsibilities that help to drive forward the family's current commitments and contributions towards creating a more just and responsible society, in particular in terms of developing respectful relations between Indigenous and non-Indigenous peoples. The Grant's story is also part of a larger constellation of relationships between Chinese and Indigenous peoples that were built across British Columbia, and all along the Fraser River corridor.⁹⁹

In one of the animated stories in *All Our Father's Relations* narrated by Howard E. Grant, he recounts exchanges between his Musqueam grandfather Seymour Grant, and some of the Chinese farmers on the reserve:

We had many Chinese market gardeners living in their bunkhouses here at Musqueam. In the winter, they would hear these drums beating every night. One day, one of our Chinese relatives approached my grandfather, Seymour Grant, and said, "What is happening?" And my grandfather would commence to tell them that these were our winter ceremonies. Then he asked the question, "Would we be allowed to come, and watch, and listen?" My grandfather said they were more than welcome. So, one evening, a few of my relatives came to the door and asked if they could enter our big house. Like good neighbors, they didn't just come and observe, they came with an offering of fruit for that house. They wanted to be part of our community.¹⁰⁰

The principles of respect and reciprocity were emphasized by Howard in this segment, brought to life with relational ethics in mind. As Wendy J. Austin writes, "if ethics is about how we should live, then it is essentially about how we should live together. Acting ethically involves more than resolving ethical dilemmas through good moral reasoning; it demands attentiveness and responsiveness to our commitments to one another, to the earth, and to all living things."¹⁰¹

⁹⁹ The "Fraser Corridor Heritage Landscape Project 2014-2015" by Douglas Ross, Henry Yu, Michael Kennedy, Sarah Ling, and Denise Fong explores some of this history in further detail.

¹⁰⁰ Howard E. Grant, narrated animation script for *All Our Father's Relations*.

¹⁰¹ Wendy J. Austin provides this definition in an encyclopedia edited by Lisa M. Given: *The SAGE Encyclopedia of Qualitative Research Methods* (California: SAGE Publications, Inc., 2018).

The decision was made with the Grant siblings that making this film was to accomplish a number of goals: a) to document their stories within a film that could be kept as a record for their family and the community archives b) bring to life the history of their community in engaging ways, and c) contribute to public dialogues about Indigenous and Chinese Canadian issues and relations. It was a challenging yet enjoyable learning process for both the production team and the siblings. As part of our commitment to collaboratively develop the film, Alejandro and I committed to develop ways to respectfully bring stories to life for which we had no physical photographs. We were privileged to have access however, to the knowledge and memories of the siblings. To animate the story told by Howard about the exchange between their grandfather and the Chinese farmers, for instance, we asked his sister, Helen Callbreath, if she could sketch her grandfather's longhouse and some of his belongings. We also asked Larry to draw a map to locate the longhouse in relation to other houses and buildings on the reserve at that time. We then sent pictures of these sketches, along with a few photographs and reference images to our animator in Uruguay who has never been to Vancouver before. The drafts were then reviewed with the Grant siblings for their feedback, who were particularly glad to see their grandchildren, nieces, and nephews engage so intently with the film when it screened in the Musqueam community and other venues in Vancouver. The animation process became a tool for informing how sensitive material was presented, and the family ultimately had control over how they were to be represented.

It is pertinent to remember that their grandfather's story took place when the Potlatch Ban was still in effect. However, the Musqueam people continued to practice

their culture in their longhouse, out of sight from the Indian agent and other government officials who would prosecute them.¹⁰² As Cherokee scholar Dr. Jeff Corntassel points out, ‘If colonization is a disconnecting force, then resurgence is about reconnecting with homelands, cultures, and communities.’¹⁰³ When we were making the film, we constantly asked ourselves questions about the broader context within which the film would be viewed, and to be always mindful of how audiences might learn and unlearn when they watched the film. What is it that we, for those of us who are visitors, are able to create to give back to the hosts of the Indigenous peoples whose lands we are on? What are our unique capabilities and talents that we can contribute towards creating more just and decolonial realities? What acts of Indigenous resurgence could we support? The farmers gave life to fresh produce to feed the City of Vancouver, but also to help nourish the Musqueam families around them during hard times.

3.10 Envisioning an educational tool

From the beginning, there was a mutual recognition amongst everyone involved in the film that the audience for this story had to be much broader than the members of both sides of the family (in Musqueam and Sei Moon). We wanted to develop a resource that could be used within the Musqueam community, but also across Canada, the United States, and China. Originally, we started with the idea that the film would focus on the broader story of Chinese and First Nations in British Columbia, and even spent time filming with in locations like Lytton in Nlaka’pamux territory where Larry spoke about

¹⁰² Larry Grant, Interview for *Chinese Market Gardens at Musqueam Project*, August 2012.

¹⁰³ Jeff Corntassel, “Re-envisioning resurgence: Indigenous pathways to decolonization and sustainable self-determination,” *Decolonization: Indigeneity, Education & Society*, no.1 (2012): 97, <http://decolonization.org/index.php/des/article/view/18627/15550>.

social and labour ties in the region. As we took stock of the stories the Grant siblings were sharing, Alejandro and I realized that the core relationship that each of them returned to again and again, was their relationship to their parents and to their family. The moments and policies that either brought them into close ties with their parents--or kept them apart--were important for them to expound on because they are interconnected with the trauma their extended families and communities experienced on both sides. They were able to use this film as a vessel to bring these stories together- stories that for too long have been ignored, under-recognized, or kept in segregated discussions. Destructive policies and mechanisms that fractured families and communities--including the Chinese head tax, Indian reserves and Indian residential schools--are each featured prominently in the film, as it was important for the Grants to lay this foundation of knowledge down for viewers as they invited them to experience the deeper personal meanings of their trip to China. The fractures needed to be revealed, before any repairs of wounded relationships could begin to be understood.

3.11 Challenges during the process

While there is much to celebrate now that the film is circulating, I do not want to give a false impression that the filmmaking process was easy or straightforward. Although I could draw upon lessons already learned from my previous experiences collaborating on initiatives involving Musqueam customs and protocols, the film involved many more new lessons on navigating a project of this scope and size. Collaborative processes that were the basis of the production from start to finish required consultations for making decisions that a typical film does not need; indeed, it was ironic

that it was only because neither Alejandro Yoshizawa and I had been involved in a more typical film production process of this scale that we were not familiar with all the elements that could have been imposed on this film. Instead, we began with the core principles of producing a film collaboratively and in a manner that genuinely co-created the film with the Grants. Experiences gained in the projects described in previous chapters shaped every step in the journey ahead, and relied again and again on lessons learned before to guide the decisions we had to make. As the lead producer, I needed to be directly involved in nearly every aspect of the process, whether this was scheduling interviews or consultation sessions with the family, managing the workflow and boundaries of our research assistant, reviewing countless draft sequences that would be discussed with the family, or providing feedback to our animator. While I had exposure to working within a Musqueam context before, other members of the crew did not. Often this resulted in difficult or tense conversations behind the scenes, for instance during one heated discussion between me and one of the editors. The approaches I brought to the table were very different than what this person had been trained to do in his experience, and I found myself needing to stand firm on taking community and collaborative processes seriously, even if it would cost us valuable time. This was particularly difficult when it would take more time for key stakeholders in the film to reach a consensus and we were faced with pressing decisions involving content matter.

Upon reflection, I could have been more patient and taken the time to properly explain why it was so important to follow the proper protocol and how I myself had learned the lessons about the principles involved in each instance. If I had patiently explained the consequences of not trying to do things the right way, perhaps I could have prevented a

misperception that grew between me and one of the editors that I favoured decisions that were better for my relationships with the Grant family, rather than those that would be better for the film as a finished product. Looking back from the perspective now after the film has been finished, I would argue—in support of one of the major assertions of this thesis—that the continual consultation with and input from the family at each step of the way did make the film better. This collaborative approach may not have been the standard approach to documentary filmmaking, but it actually did result in a better product because the right process produces a better result than one focused only on the end rather than the means.

As discussed earlier in terms of who defines how to give back within a community context, the end results of a collaboration are an indication and a telling sign of the strength and quality of the relationship that produced it. For instance, if one had to choose between cutting thirty seconds of aesthetically engaging footage in one scene, or a scene that would a cast member believed was necessary to make a statement about the larger issues raised in the film, how should one approach this decision? In order to determine what came out of the editing process, or what still needed to be added, it was important for me and the editor to return to the collective goals of everyone involved in the film, as well as the synopsis we were encouraged to write down early on as a consensus agreement, in order to find workable solutions when we disagreed over matters that seemed to the other person to be primarily an aesthetic decision.

Reflecting afterward on the process of making the film, it becomes clear to me that when we agreed to co-create this film in a collaborative manner with the Grant family and with as much respect as possible to the protocols and procedures of the

Musqueam community, then right from the moment onwards the director, the producers, and everyone else involved in the production had to relinquish the traditional decision-making power and full control that filmmakers often expect to have. In our case, two of our cast members, Howard E. Grant and Henry Yu, became executive producers as well, helping to shape the broader educational mission of the film and to raise the funds required to complete the film, but also involved in every decision about the storyline followed. In many documentary film projects, it is common for an interviewee's involvement in the film to end after the interview is over. In the case of *All Our Father's Relations*, we followed the protocol that all interviewees would be involved in the iterative process of deciding how they were portrayed all the way to the final edit.

Despite constant efforts and a deep commitment to carry forward the process in a collaborative manner, there was a telling moment after the film was finished and being shown at film festivals that for me reveals the enduring effects of colonial structures on knowledge production and the representation of non-white subjects. As the film was nearing completion, our production team initially decided that because of the collaborative manner in which the film was created, it did not make sense to credit anybody as the "Writers" of the film. Our initial choice was not well thought out, and merely followed the film industry's categories for writing credit. Since no one had written a script for the film nor had we hired a screenplay writer, we presumed there was no writer; our approach was to do as many documentary filmmakers have done and find the film's narrative from within the interviews.

However, when a film festival for which we had applied asked if any Indigenous writers, producers or directors were involved in our production, it encouraged us to

reexamine the process we undertook to create the film, and to challenge the definitions of what a “Writer” was for a collaborative family and community-based story-telling project such as ours. As Henry observed at the time during a group conversation thread discussing giving “Writers” credit to the Grant siblings, “The words are theirs, and in an oral culture where saying things in an intentional way is just as important as “writing” them down and then saying them, perhaps we should give credit where credit is due; counting the careful way that Howard and Larry speak, choosing their words as carefully, so to speak, as “writing” their own script.”¹⁰⁴

In the end credits, each of the four siblings are now listed as writers in addition to their other roles in the film. Writing credit was also given to those who thought about and helped shape the content of the scenes that were staged, or adapted the stories for the animations, other scenes that were narrated, and transition pieces. Whether or not our process fits pre-defined roles and practices within the film industry and film festival circuit, it was important for us to properly acknowledge the family’s involvement in the film beyond and even against conventional understandings of what it means to be an interview subject in a documentary—and when that relationship begins and ends within the filmmaking process.

3.12 Ongoing dialogues

With friends, family, and general public in attendance, the public premiere of *All Our Father’s Relations* occurred on November 3, 2016 at the Vancouver Asian Film Festival. It was an unforgettable evening suffused with the energy of a genuinely curious

¹⁰⁴ Henry Yu, personal correspondence, July 2017.

and interested audience. Prior to this event, a near-final rough cut version of the film had been screened for not only the siblings and other primary participants, but also members of the Musqueam Protocol Office and the Treaty, Lands and Resources Department. The animation involving *hənqəminəm* narration was also done with the support and assistance of staff in the Musqueam Language and Culture Department. Although this was a family project, it was important to the Grants to respect the roles of their fellow community members and colleagues at Musqueam who ensure that their language and collective history is properly represented prior to public dissemination.

Since then, we have been fortunate to have been selected to screen the film across North America and even cities in China at a broad range of film festivals and educational and civic institutions. At many of these showings, members of the Grant family have enthusiastically participated in audience discussions following the film showings, motivated to travel sometimes long distances out of a shared desire to have the important histories and values that this story represent to make an impact far and wide, and hopefully to inspire similar stories to emerge from the shadows. To reach homes across Canada, a broadcast version was also made available through a distribution license with the Canadian Broadcast Corporation (CBC). This desire to share the film and to participate in open dialogues about the urgent issues and questions it raises is long term commitment. We have each found ways to incorporate such on-going engagements into our respective lives and we hope that the film will continue to provoke viewers to unlearn and rethink what they believe they already know about the history of where they live. Personally, this thesis and the reflections upon the journey that led me to this point have given me the opportunity to understand better the many lessons I learned—and will

continue to learn moving forward about the proper way to co-create knowledge with Indigenous communities in a collaborative, respectful and reciprocal manner as a non-Indigenous person.

Chapter 4: Conclusion

As an interdisciplinary project, this thesis project and its affiliated resources provide insight into how to ethically and respectfully develop initiatives in collaboration with Indigenous knowledge keepers and communities. With the encouragement of my supervisory committee, I took time to meditate upon and reexamine the initiatives in which I became involved as a non-Indigenous researcher working with members of the Musqueam community, with particular attention to the processes and relationships by which they were shaped.

By weaving in personal experiences that challenged and encouraged me to deepen my understanding of my roles and responsibilities as a visitor to these lands, I seek to help others to consider the ways they might strive to build more respectful, informed, and reciprocal relations or connections between Indigenous and non-Indigenous peoples. I hope that the experiences I have shared have made it clear that it is within these relationships that meaningful actions are determined—not beforehand. Good intentions are not enough to ensure that the process or the results will be good. I have also met people with ideas for working on projects with Indigenous communities who expect to be given a checklist of right steps, or to be taught an easy route to success. This is a harmful and short sighted approach. While there is no one model for collaboration, there are important guiding principles and unique protocols to identify, learn, and follow. It is also critical to be open-minded and flexible, allowing the space for unexpected opportunities, obligations, or even crises and disappointments. Perhaps most important is to retain a humility that accepts that the only right process is one that respects the authority of the

Indigenous community to determine and decide upon what should be done and not done in a collaborative project.

When I first began my graduate program, I was under the impression that I would be in the program for two or three years, and that my contribution would result in a thesis through which knowledge on the history of Chinese market gardening would be brought to light. I did not anticipate experiencing a deep sense of change as I continued to learn about my location and responsibilities on unceded Musqueam territory, and to build relationships with community members. When emerging obligations arose—both in terms of my relationships with knowledge keepers and the importance of respectfully working with them to share their stories—I learned that it was always a better choice to privilege relationships that would result in more meaningful and relevant benefits for all involved even if that took more time than the graduate degree calendar stipulated. I realized that I could not determine my research timeline on my own, and that it was always worth taking additional time to fulfill and complete obligations rather than doing them poorly. Although it has taken nearly six years rather than the two or three years I originally thought it would take to complete my Master's thesis, I do not think of the process as having taken longer than it should have. The time it took to complete the projects in which I became involved took as long as needed to do them properly.

I also came to believe that a degree for my gain alone would have little value. One aspect of doing these projects properly was to take the time to have them shaped within on-going relationships and within on-going priorities and processes, including the need for them to give back in some way that had been determined as valuable by the community rather than by me.

During this journey, the stories that have been shared with me about the Chinese market gardening at Musqueam bring to the forefront what respectful and relationships can look like between Indigenous and non-Indigenous peoples. As Jordan Wilson observes in his reflections on being a co-curator for the celebrated *časna?əm: the city before the city* exhibitions, as a UBC alumnus and a member of the Musqueam community, “my community, along with our collaborators, are taking control over our culture, research and representation...Our community members are putting forward more precise representations of who we are, with our own aspirations centralized, drawing from our own methodology, ways of learning, and way of knowing.”¹⁰⁵ I feel deeply grateful to live in an era when colonial practices are being challenged and dismantled on a regular basis, and to witness Indigenous communities like Musqueam drive this change.

As part of the process of creating, managing and disseminating *All Our Father's Relations*, an independent company was registered by me and the director. Many names were suggested, but in the end, we chose “Right Relations.”¹⁰⁶ From my perspective, this name symbolizes three types of right relationships: the kinds of respectful and reciprocal interactions that occurred historically on the Chinese farms at Musqueam; the relationships that the production company strived to build and to maintain during the process of making the film; and the new relationships the film can help catalyze both now and into the future. I hope that the film, along with the other projects described in this thesis, can in their own small way give something back to the Musqueam community to

¹⁰⁵ Jordan Wilson, “sqəqip – GATHERED TOGETHER,” 2015, 45.

¹⁰⁶ This name was inspired by the ways in which Elder Larry Grant speaks about the importance of building relationships between Indigenous and non-Indigenous communities and how this work should be carried out.

which I and others who live on their unceded territories owe so much, and in particular to those members of the Musqueam community who have been so hospitable to me.

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