

“WHO WERE THESE MYSTERIOUS PEOPLE?”
THE MARPOLE MIDDEN, COAST SALISH IDENTITY, and the
DISPOSSESSION OF ABORIGINAL LANDS
IN BRITISH COLUMBIA

by

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A THESIS SUBMITTED IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF
THE REQUIREMENTS FOR DEGREE OF

DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

in

The Faculty of Graduate Studies

(Interdisciplinary Studies)

March 2007

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ABSTRACT

The Marpole Midden, located near the Musqueam Indian Reserve on the Fraser River's north arm, has been the subject of anthropological research, institutional excavation, national commemoration, and controversy. From the late 1880s to the 1960s, major international museums, local historical societies, and university archaeologists mined the site for human skeletal remains and cultural objects for their collections and research into the origins of the early inhabitants of the area. However, this place is known to the Musqueam First Nation as an ancient village and burial ground called *čəsna:m*. The historical construction of the midden as an archaeological site and not an Aboriginal village distanced, in the minds of non-Natives, the Musqueam from association with the place. Importantly, this distancing contributed to the non-recognition of Aboriginal rights of ownership to ancestral places, and unoccupied or seasonally occupied villages that were not recognized by the reserve creation process. Thus, this study explores how western ideology and narrative worked to redefine Aboriginal land as sites of archaeology and science, and interrogates several enduring western dichotomies: prehistoric/living, unoccupied/occupied, archaeological/ethnographic, and cultural/ historical.

This research traces shifting indigenous, archaeological, and popular theories about the identities of the people who lived at such "prehistoric" sites, paying attention to how identity is conceptualized and how power is drawn from this process. In other words, it does not determine who these people were, but asks, who claims the authority to assign meaning to the skeletal remains and cultural objects taken from these places and

what are the historical and political circumstances in which such assertions are made?

This study explores the relationship between the local colonial culture, which served to disassociate Aboriginal people from ancestral sites, and an anti-colonial or reclamation culture, which reasserted these connections, especially as Aboriginal interpretations of the past gained increasing legitimacy in the second half of the twentieth century. It traces the linkages, both conceptual and material, between anthropology, popular representations of indigenous peoples and their connections to place, the political regime in British Columbia, and First Nations' ongoing struggles to gain recognition of Aboriginal title.

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ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

As many writers have made clear, the research and writing of history is not a solitary endeavour. I owe a tremendous debt to many individuals who gave me their time and expertise over the years during which I pursued this project. I would like to thank the Musqueam Chief and Council for permitting me to research this aspect of their history. I am also deeply grateful for the privilege to continue to learn from many Musqueam community members over many years. In this regard, I thank Leona M. Sparrow, the community's Treaty Director, for her generous and thoughtful guidance throughout this project. I also thank Howard E. Grant and Larry Grant for their willingness to share their knowledge of Musqueam history and culture -- even over lengthy phone calls as I worked from Toronto. I send a special note of appreciation to Andrew C. Charles, whose direct experience with archaeological research has been a great inspiration. Two community researchers have been extremely generous with their time and resources: Larissa Grant, provided research assistance while I was living away from Vancouver, and Tracy Point has always kindly responded to my urgent calls for help. Jill Campbell and Larry Grant provided the Musqueam spellings. All of these individuals have tremendous demands on their time and expertise and I appreciate their ongoing support. Of course, any mistakes, omissions and misinterpretations are my own.

There are many other people who have offered crucial assistance and guidance along the way, including Michael Kew (who pointed me towards the work of Charles E. Borden and the importance of looking at the history of archaeological research), the late

Wayne Suttles, Leonard C. Ham, Michael Blake, Dorothee Schreiber, Ruth Taylor, and Susan Neylan. I also would like to acknowledge the dedicated work of many librarians and archivists, including Patricia Ormerod, of the University of British Columbia's Laboratory of Archaeology, Lynn Maranda of the Vancouver Museum, Patricia Forget at the Canadian Museum of Civilization Archives, Jana Buhlmann of the Federal Records Division of the National Library and Archives, Krisztina Laszlo of the Museum of Anthropology Archives at UBC, and the staff at the American Museum of Natural History's Division of Anthropology. This thesis would not have been written without the support of the following individuals: Persilia Caton, Jeannie Dunn, Poonam Jingham, Maria Carvalho, Christian Lamer, Catherine McPherson, Monica Palacios, and Dianne Yee. And, of course, I am indebted to the generous support of Margaret Roy, the late John Roy, Mary Rankin, the late Ronald Rankin, Jonah and Jay Rankin. My children Sam and Max have (usually) put up with my distractions, and I thank them for their patience. I am grateful for the financial support provided by the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council, the University of British Columbia, and British Columbia Heritage Trust. John Beatty and Janice Matautia of the Interdisciplinary Studies Graduate Program at UBC have always offered invaluable assistance.

I acknowledge the work of my supervisory committee: John Borrows of the law faculty at the University of Victoria, historian Dianne Newell, and art historian Charlotte Townsend-Gault -- all extremely generous scholars who offered superb insights and contributed to the interdisciplinary nature of this research. I thank external examiners Robert McDonald, Douglas Harris, and Lawrence Rosen for their careful reading of the work and for their thoughtful, challenging questions pointing to its larger significance.

And finally, I would like to extend my sincerest thanks to research supervisor Arthur J. Ray -- an extremely supportive scholar, mentor, and friend. He went far beyond the call of duty in his reading of early versions of this thesis and offered tremendous guidance and insight. And I am honoured to have been his "last" graduate student at the University of British Columbia.

*I lovingly dedicate this thesis to the memory of John R. Roy.
March 5, 1927 - January 5, 2006.*

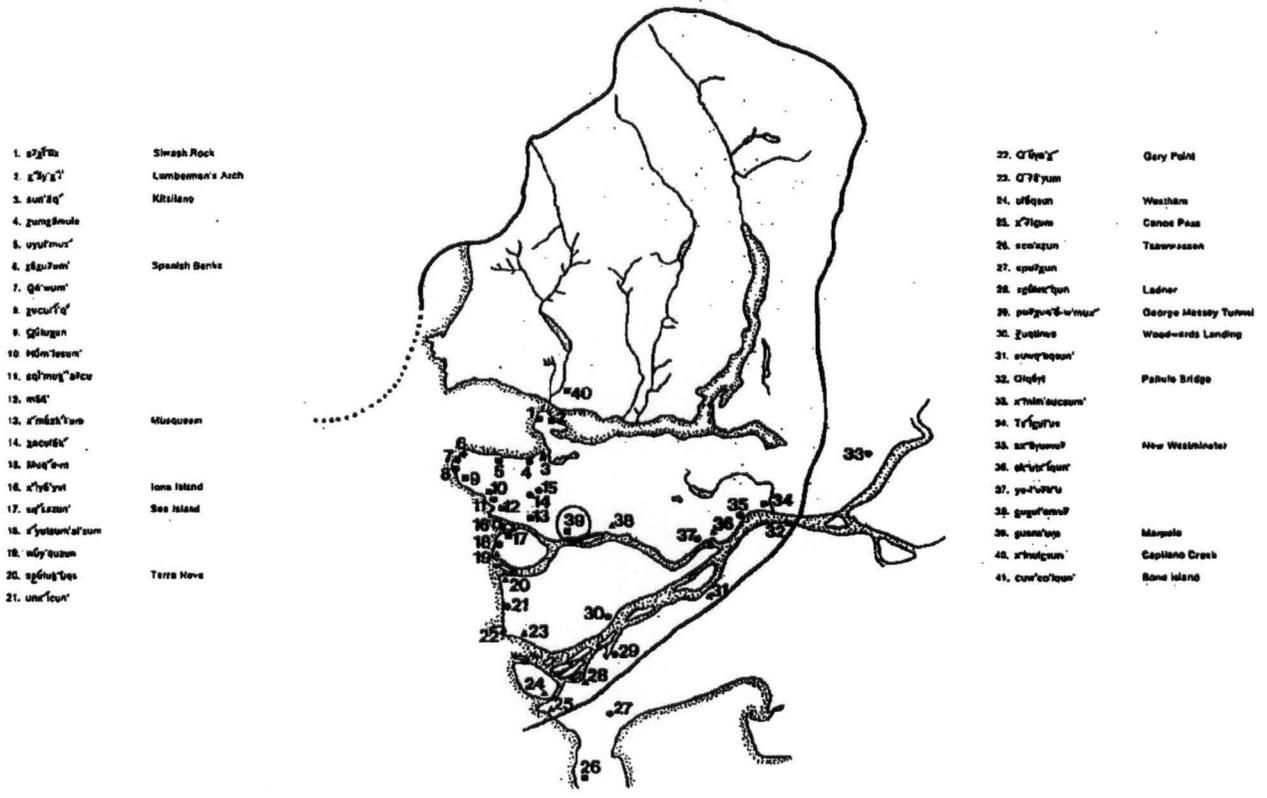


Figure 0.1: Map delineating Musqueam territory, included in the Musqueam Declaration, June 1976 (see Appendix III), showing location of c̓sna:m as site no. 39. Reproduced and modified with permission of the Musqueam Indian Band.

CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION

“Who Were These Mysterious People?”

In 1991, the Musqueam Indian Band purchased the Fraser Arms Hotel, a property located in South Vancouver, close to the mouth of the Fraser River where the community's main reserve is found. In itself, this real estate transaction was not a remarkable event. Frustrated by the slow progress of the resolution of land claims in British Columbia, many First Nations have often purchased property as a way of increasing their land base and for commercial enterprises. For the Musqueam, the acquisition of fee-simple property was part of a strategy to re-acquire territorial lands in the urbanized metropolis of Vancouver. What made this particular purchase out of the ordinary was what could be found beneath the hotel and adjacent parking lot. Here lay the remnants of an important village site and burial ground known in archaeological circles as the Great Fraser Midden, and more recently, the Marpole Midden. The Musqueam -- the First Nation whose traditional territory encompasses the site and whose reserve is in closest proximity -- know this place as the ancient village of *čəsna:m*. The late James Point, a Musqueam historian, recounted that *čəsna:m* was “at one time a large village of people. The first people upriver from Musqueam.” These people were “the same kind as here at Musqueam” but had been “wiped out” by small pox. As a young boy in the 1880s, Point recalled seeing at *čəsna:m* the remains of posts and “lots of bones.”¹ The Musqueam bought the hotel in 1991 to prevent renovations to the building

¹ James Point and J.E. Michael Kew, “Notes including and supplementing those recorded in Field Note book, April 24, 1968, from James Point,” unpublished typescript, 1968, Musqueam Indian Band Archives

that would most certainly have destroyed the site's surviving physical remnants. Their long-term plan was to establish an interpretive centre -- a scheme that would both support community educational and cultural programs and publicly reinforce their tradition of lengthy occupation. As Chief Wendy Grant explained in a letter alerting the Department of Indian and Northern Affairs to the pending destruction, "The Musqueam Nation considers the Marpole Midden site to be one of the most meaningful storehouses of the history and culture of our people."² Through purchase, the Musqueam regained control of sacred lands that had been lost to them through colonial dispossession.

At the end of the twentieth century, the association of the Marpole Midden with the Musqueam was automatic and unquestioned. Yet this was not always the case. In 1884, a construction crew upgrading a road that ran along the north arm of the Fraser River from New Westminster to the new farming settlement at Eburne (or Marpole) uncovered an extensive and artifact-rich shell midden, containing bone and stone tools, intricately carved objects, and human skeletal remains.³ The midden was reported to have covered an area larger than four and a half acres, with an average depth of five feet to a maximum depth of fifteen feet.⁴ Shell middens are layered deposits of discarded

(MIBA); and James Point and Wayne Suttles, "MS placenames," unpublished fieldnotes, 28 September 1962, MIBA.

² Chief Wendy Grant to Janice Cochrane, Regional Director General, Indian and Northern Affairs Canada, Vancouver, 26 November 1990, MIBA, file 205.2.

³ From the 1860s to the 1880s, road building along the north arm of the Fraser River would have also severely disturbed the site. The earliest documentary reference to the Marpole Midden is from 1884, when Reverend H.H. Gowan of Seattle and James Johnson of New Westminster inspected the site and obtained a skull and spear point. See Harlan I. Smith, "Shell Heaps of the Lower Fraser River, British Columbia," in *Memoirs of the American Museum of Natural History: Publications of the Jesup North Pacific Expedition* (New York: American Museum of Natural History, 1903), vol. 2, part 4: 135. For a detailed review of historical road and railway construction and its impact on the Marpole Midden, see Leonard C. Ham, *Archaeological Potential Model for the Marpole Midden* (Calgary: Canadian Heritage Parks, 2002).

⁴ Charles Hill-Tout, "Later Prehistoric Man in British Columbia," in *The Salish People: The Local Contributions of Charles Hill-Tout*, vol. 3, *The Mainland Halkomelem*, ed. Ralph Maud (Vancouver: Talonbooks, 1978), 21.

shells, fish and animal bones, as well as cultural objects such as tools, jewelry, art, and, in the case of Marpole, human burials.⁵ Today some archaeologists consider the Marpole Midden to be “the single most important site on the Northwest Coast” because of its tremendous size and extensive history of excavation and interpretation.⁶ The midden is used as a reference for analysis of other archaeological sites on the Northwest Coast, especially in relation to identifying a developmental sequence of Coast Salish culture. R.G. Matson explains that the “Marpole Culture,” named after the site, had the same characteristics as those associated with Northwest Coast indigenous culture at the time of contact with European society, namely “large winter villages, large multi-family households, stored salmon economy, ascribed statuses and abundant evidence of art.”⁷ From the point of “discovery” until the 1950s, when recovery operations attempted to salvage the skeletal remains and cultural objects before further urban expansion and the construction of the Fraser Arms Hotel destroyed the site, the midden was the subject of intensive archaeological research, institutional and amateur excavation, national commemoration, public interest, and controversy. As Leonard C. Ham puts it, “It was the richness of the Marpole Midden which was its undoing.”⁸

⁵ In relation to shell-midden burials, see Jerome S. Cybulski, “Culture Change, Demographic History, and Health and Disease on the Northwest Coast,” in *In the Wake of Contact: Biological Responses to Conquest*, ed. Clark Spencer Larsen and George R. Miller (New York: Wiley-Liss, 1994), 77-78.

⁶ R.G. Matson, Department of Anthropology and Sociology, University of British Columbia, quoted in *Site to Sight: Imagining the Sacred*, exhibit at the Museum of Anthropology, University of British Columbia, 2004-2005.

⁷ Matson, quoted in *Site to Sight*. See also Ham, *Archaeological Potential Model*; and David V. Burley, *Marpole: Anthropological Reconstructions of a Prehistoric Northwest Coast Culture Type* (Burnaby, BC: Department of Archaeology, Simon Fraser University, 1980).

⁸ Ham, “Archaeological Potential Model for the Marpole Midden,” 6.



Figure 1.1: Seated Human Figure (28 cm). In the collection of the Vancouver Museum. Photograph by Hilary Stewart,⁹ and reproduced with permission of the Musqueam Indian Band.

In the late 1890s, archaeologist Harlan I. Smith, of the American Museum of Natural History's Jesup North Pacific Expedition, mined the site for human skeletal remains and cultural objects for the museum's collections. These items were also to serve in the museum's investigations into the biological and cultural relationship between Northwest Coast indigenous peoples and those of northeastern Asia. In the 1920s and 1930s, local ethnographer Charles Hill-Tout and the Vancouver's Art, Historical, and Scientific Association sponsored extensive excavations as well. The retrieved objects and skeletal remains became the basis of the association's "prehistory" collection and the focus of its research into the racial origins of the Marpole residents. In 1938, Hill-Tout and his colleagues succeeded in having the Historic Sites and Monuments Board of Canada dedicate the midden, an act that won the site a place in the national historic canon, but failed to preserve it. At mid-century, Charles E. Borden, of the University of

⁹ Reproduced in Ham, *Archaeological Potential Model*, 32. See also Charles E. Borden, "Prehistoric Art of the Lower Fraser Region," in *Indian Art Traditions of the Northwest Coast*, ed. Roy L. Carlson (Burnaby, BC: Department of Archaeology, Simon Fraser University, 1985), 131-165; and Wilson Duff, *Images, Stone, BC: Thirty Centuries of Northwest Coast Sculpture* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1975), 60.

British Columbia, anticipating that further urban development would destroy the midden, conducted salvage operations to recover its human skeletal remains and cultural objects. Aside from their various collecting agendas, these institutional researchers -- Smith, Hill-Tout, and Borden -- were all interested in the theoretical question of the identity (whether biological, racial, cultural, or ethnological) of the people who had lived there. Most often they theorized that the ancestors of the local hə́nqəmínəm -speaking communities of the Lower Fraser Delta had settled in the area in the remote past, and displaced an earlier, “mysterious,” pre-Salish peoples. These theories of migration and displacement in turn informed popular perceptions that disassociated contemporary indigenous peoples from ancient archaeological sites within their territories. And often the question of identity was framed as a mystery waiting to be solved. As a reporter with the *Ottawa Citizen* asked in 1948, “Who were these mysterious people who lived long ago at Sea Island at the mouth of the Fraser River?... They were not Indians certainly.”¹⁰

This thesis concentrates on the history of the Musqueam First Nation and the excavations at the Marpole Midden. The term Musqueam has been used to define both a people and a place. Musqueam elders tell the story of a two-headed serpent -- a dangerous and feared creature that wound and twisted its way from its home in the Camoson Bog to the Fraser River, its droppings destroying vegetation and terrain along the way. The serpent’s trail became Musqueam Creek and upon its banks grew a river grass called məθkʷə y (m-uh-th-kwi). The people of the river grass became known as the

¹⁰ A.C. Cummings, “Dawn-Men of North America,” *Ottawa Citizen*, 13 October 1948, in Charles Hill-Tout Papers, file DIV, Vancouver Museum.

x^wmθk^w?əm (hwm-uh-th-kwi-uhm), or, anglicized, the Musqueam.¹¹ The Musqueam are descendents of the people who spoke hənq̓əmiñəm, which forms part of the hulq̓əmiñəm - hənq̓əmiñəm – halkemeylem - dialect continuum, spoken by people living on the east coast of Vancouver Island from Victoria to Comox, in Burrard Inlet, along the Fraser River to Yale, and in parts of northern Washington State. These people may have framed their identity in terms of language, as well as membership in a network of interconnected families and alliances that reached beyond village boundaries to a larger geographical, cultural, and spiritual space. Anthropologists have classified these communities as forming part of the Central Coast Salish cultural group.¹² Today, the Musqueam are a First Nation in British Columbia. There are more than 1,200 registered band members, the majority of whom live or have relatives who live at the Musqueam Reserve No. 2, a reserve of 416 acres located at the mouth of the Fraser River. Archaeological evidence indicates that this village has been the site of uninterrupted residency for more than 3,000 years.¹³ Musqueam oral tradition tells us, however, that their ancestors have lived in the area “from time immemorial.”¹⁴

Today, Musqueam’s traditional territory is more widely known by its Euro-Canadian designations: the Fraser River Delta, Burrard Inlet, English Bay, and, a major

¹¹ Larry Grant, presentation to FNSP200 class, University of British Columbia, 28 September 2006. See also the Musqueam’s website, www.musqueam.bc.ca accessed 10 November 2006.

¹² Wayne Suttles, “Central Coast Salish,” in *Handbook of North American Indians*, vol. 7, *Northwest Coast*, ed. Wayne Suttles (Washington: Smithsonian Institution, 1990): 435-475; and J.E. Michael Kew, “Central and Southern Coast Salish Ceremonies since 1900,” in Suttles, *Handbook of North American Indians*, 476-480.

¹³ Objects from the Musqueam reserve have been dated at approximately 3,000 BP (before present). Archaeological materials retrieved from the site known as the Glenrose site, have been radiocarbon dated to between 5730 and 8150 B.P. Musqueam Indian Band, “Musqueam Comprehensive Land Claim: Preliminary Report on Musqueam Land Use and Occupancy” (Vancouver: Musqueam Indian Band, 1984), 12-19.

¹⁴ Musqueam Indian Band, “Musqueam Declaration,” 10 June 1976, MIBA.

Canadian urban centre, the City of Vancouver. Non-Aboriginal settlers began to populate this area in large numbers during the 1858 Fraser River gold rush and the establishment of New Westminster and Burrard Inlet as international ports for the colony's burgeoning lumber and salmon canning industries. By the early 1860s, the colonial government began to establish small reserves for the Musqueam and other communities of the Lower Fraser, leaving much of the territory to be preempted, crown-granted, or purchased by non-Aboriginal newcomers. As Chief Delbert Guerin observes, "In the short space of a hundred years, the City of Vancouver has grown up to a huge monster which has almost swallowed our land."¹⁵ While many scholars have studied the histories and experiences of Native people who have moved to urban centres, this thesis examines the historical experience of an urban First Nations community that has witnessed the encroachment of a major city within their traditional territory.¹⁶

This dissertation offers an interdisciplinary study of the relationship among indigenous views about place, anthropological and archaeological knowledge, and the dispossession of territorial lands in British Columbia. While the Marpole Midden is the location -- geographical, intellectual, and political -- for my study, I also draw on late nineteenth century and twentieth century examples from throughout the province, the rest of Canada, and the United States to provide a larger historical and cultural context. The research traces shifting indigenous, anthropological, and popular theories about the

¹⁵ Chief Delbert Guerin, "Preliminary Statement of a General Claim, Respecting and Arising from the Aboriginal Rights of the Musqueam Indians," 22 September 1977, MIBA, page 5.

¹⁶ In relation to urban First Nations, see, for example, Bonita Lawrence, *"Real" Indians and Others: Mixed-Blood Urban Native Peoples and Indigenous Nationhood* (Vancouver: University of British Columbia Press, 2004).

identities of the people who lived at such “prehistoric” sites, paying attention to how identity is conceptualized and how power is drawn from this process. In other words, it does not determine who these people were, but asks, who claims the authority to assign meaning to the human skeletal remains and cultural objects taken from these places and what are the historical and political circumstances in which such assertions are made?¹⁷ While I examine archaeological/anthropological theory, it is not my intention to write a historiography of these disciplines nor assess the legitimacy of differing theories or contributions to these academic fields. Rather, I look at this research’s wider political implications and legacy. My point is that, as many scholars have noted in relation to colonialist archaeology in other parts of the world, theories about identity and migrations (whether they are true or not) have influenced broader ideas about the legitimacy of First Nations’ territorial claims and European settlement.¹⁸ Despite new academic models, old ideas persist.

¹⁷ For a recent study that examines the identity politics surrounding contests over cultural property, see Elazar Barkan and Ronald Bush, *Claiming the Stones/Naming the Bones: Cultural Property and the Negotiation of National and Ethnic Identity* (Los Angeles: Getty Research Institute, 2002). For a detailed case-study on how archaeology legitimized white settler society in late nineteenth century Rhodesia by presenting black Africans as recent migrants, see Henrika Kuklick, “Contested Monuments: The Politics of Archaeology in Southern Africa,” in *Colonial Situations: Essays on the Contextualization of Ethnographic Knowledge*, ed. George W. Stocking Jr. (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1991), 135-169. In relation to how British interpretations of Benin (Sudanese) material culture related to imperial discourses of degeneracy and to theories that the Benin people did not have a lengthy history in Africa, see Annie Coombes, “Material Culture at the Crossroads of Knowledge: The Case of the Benin ‘Bronzes,’” in *Reinventing Africa: Museums, Material Culture, and Popular Imagination in Late Victorian and Edwardian England* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1994), 7-28.

¹⁸ See, for example, the work of Bruce G. Trigger, “Writing the History of Archaeology: A Survey of Trends,” in *Objects and Others: Essays on Museums and Material Culture*, vol. 3, *History of Anthropology*, ed. George W. Stocking Jr., (Madison, WI: University of Wisconsin Press, 1985), 218-235; and Trigger, *Artifacts and Ideas: Essays in Archaeology* (New Brunswick, NJ: Transaction, 2003); Joe Watkins, “Through Wary Eyes: Indigenous Perspectives on Archaeology,” *Annual Review of Anthropology* 34 (2005): 429-49; and more recently, in relation to Australia, Ian J. McNiven and Lynette Russel, *Appropriated Pasts: Indigenous Peoples and the Colonial Culture of Archaeology* (Lanham: Altamira, 2005).

This thesis also examines the history of collecting cultural objects from communities living in close proximity to archaeological sites and further interrogates the western practice of dividing indigenous material culture into the categories of “archaeological” (something ancient and extinct) or “ethnographic” (something traditional and endangered). I look at materials collected from the Musqueam community during the late nineteenth and early twentieth century and the specific histories of those transactions. Consequently, this dissertation is not restricted to a cultural history of archaeology; rather it includes an examination of the broader and interrelated disciplines of ethnology and anthropology, as they related to Northwest Coast indigenous cultures, as well as a study of Aboriginal perspectives on these practices. I trace the relationship between a colonial culture, operating at the local, national, and continental levels, which disassociated Aboriginal people from ancestral sites within their territories, and an anti-colonial or reclamation culture through which indigenous communities (re)assert and/or revitalize this association, especially in the second half of the twentieth century when Aboriginal interpretations of the past gained increasing legitimacy.

Further, this thesis presents the Marpole Midden as an example of what happens to land that does not become an Indian Reserve but is clearly marked with Indianness. The historical, popular, and legal construction of the midden as an archaeological site, and not a village or burial ground, distanced the Musqueam and other local Aboriginal groups from association with Marpole. Importantly, this distancing contributed to the non-recognition of Aboriginal rights of ownership to ancestral places, including unoccupied or seasonally occupied villages, which were not recognized by the reserve

creation process. Distancing legitimized the actual dispossession of Aboriginal people. The research explores how western ideology, law, and narrative worked to redefine Aboriginal land as sites of archaeology and science, and interrogates the enduring western dichotomies such as prehistoric/contemporary, dead/living, unoccupied/occupied, anonymous/ known, cultural/ historical, and traditional/scientific. Then, I examine how, in the second half of the twentieth century, Aboriginal communities, and the Musqueam in particular, recapture this past for their own initiatives and purposes. Thus, this thesis interrogates both Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal views on what constitutes evidence about history and scales of time or periodization, as well as their distinct approaches to the construction of a nationalistic heritage. It traces the conceptual and material linkages among anthropological discourse, popular representations of “Indians” and their connections to place, the political and legal regime in British Columbia, and First Nations’ struggles to gain recognition of Aboriginal title.

I argue that a critical history of archaeology is an important (but often neglected) component of Aboriginal-non-Aboriginal relations on the Northwest Coast. Certainly for the Musqueam, the history of excavation at Marpole and the removal over the years of countless skulls, skeletal fragments, and ancient cultural objects is a history of colonialism and dispossession. In the words of Musqueam’s treaty director, Leona M. Sparrow, this history constitutes a form of “cultural abuse.”¹⁹ Scholars have long recognized the colonial implications of the disciplines of archaeology and anthropology. Since the 1970s, many observers have pointed out that these disciplines are linked to

¹⁹ Leona M. Sparrow, personal communication, October 2006.

western expansion and the colonial enterprise.²⁰ In addition, many Native-American scholars have forcefully posited a link between the discipline of archaeology and the colonial exploitation of indigenous peoples. The late Lakota scholar, Vine Deloria Jr., highlighted the confrontation between indigenous tradition and science, noting, “Archaeology has always been dominated by those who waved ‘science’ in front of us like an inexhaustible credit card, and we have deferred to them -- believing that they represent the discipline in an objective and unbiased manner.”²¹ Seneca historian Barbara Alice Mann condemns the violent history of “murder, theft, and grave robbing” visited on indigenous peoples in the name of scientific research.²² In Canada, First Nations peoples have also harshly criticized the interrelated and, historically, museum-based practices of anthropology and archaeology. In 1995, two Shuswap men staged a hunger strike outside Victoria’s Royal British Columbia Museum to protest the museum’s refusal to return the remains of what they referred to as their “incarcerated ancestors -- imprisoned in numbered cardboard boxes in a sterile cement room.”²³ In the view of these many scholars and activists, archaeological excavations have serviced both the colonial project and numerous academic careers.

Yet, when considering the shifting nature of archaeology’s relationship to identity, it is also necessary to take account of the history of Aboriginal peoples’ participation and interest in archaeological projects. For example, as a young man in the early 1950s, Musqueam elder Andrew C. Charles, worked with Charles E. Borden, of the

²⁰ Watkins, “Through Wary Eyes.”

²¹ Vine Deloria Jr., foreword to *Skull Wars: Kennewick Man, Archaeology, and the Battle for North American Identity*, by David Hurst Thomas (New York: Basic Books, 2000), xviii.

²² Barbara Alice Mann, *Native Americans: Archaeologists and the Mounds* (New York: Lang, 2003).

²³ “Hunger-Strikers Battle BC Museum,” *Vancouver Sun*, 21 July 1995, as quoted in Miriam Clavir, *Preserving What is Valued: Museums, Conservation and First Nations* (Vancouver: University of British Columbia Press, 2002), 87.

University of British Columbia, on the Marpole excavations. In more recent years, indigenous condemnation of archaeology has eased somewhat (at least in the public sphere). Indeed, many First Nations have established on-going working relationships with archaeologists and place great faith in the strength of cultural objects as evidence of their Aboriginal rights and title. Certainly, from the 1960s onwards Aboriginal control over the interpretation of the past, including the interpretation of archaeological findings, has increased.²⁴ In my experience, many First Nations individuals express a profoundly emotional connection to ancient cultural objects and passionately draw upon archaeological sites, features, and artifacts as indisputable material evidence of territorial ownership. At the same time, these individuals are keenly aware of the argument that cultural objects and human skeletal remains cannot disclose ancestry. Knut Fladmark, in *British Columbia Prehistory*, describes the disciplinary difficulties of linking ancient and historic peoples through artifactual evidence alone:

An important example is the problem of correlating archaeological and historical cultures. A prehistoric archaeological culture is really just a collection of artifacts at about the same time by people sharing some kind of socio-cultural relationship. Differences in content between such collections through time are taken to signify changes in the way of life of the people involved and perhaps even the occasional wholesale replacement of original groups by newcomers. While most such interpretations are probably valid, the relationship between archaeological collections of survival material fragments and former whole societies is far from clear, and it is seldom possible to state confidently that a specific archaeological culture is the predecessor of any particular tribe of the historic period.²⁵

²⁴ See, for example, Clair Smith and H. Martin Wobst, eds., *Indigenous Archaeologies: Decolonizing Theory and Practice* (New York: Routledge, 2005). The 1997 UBC Museum of Anthropology exhibit, *Under the Delta*, which displayed cordage and basketry retrieved from wet-sites at Musqueam, Tsawwassen, and other communities of the Fraser Delta, was produced in collaboration with the Musqueam Indian Band.

²⁵ Knut R. Fladmark, *British Columbia Prehistory* (Ottawa: Archaeological Survey of Canada, National Museum of Man, 1986), 5.

Nevertheless, when examined in the context of oral traditions that describe an uninterrupted occupation of the land, such objects, for many First Nations individuals, become a tangible representation of the connections among people, their ancestors, and place. Julie Cruikshank warns us that we should not weigh these distinctive knowledges against each other or use them to validate one view or another; we must examine their separate historical, social, and cultural contexts of production.²⁶ Keeping this in mind, I am interested in interrogating how these different descriptions of the past relate to one another and how they acquire power and/or acceptance in various historical and political contexts.

It is clear the conviction “we were here first” has become an important component of Aboriginal history and identity. “We have lived here since time immemorial,” proclaims the 1976 Musqueam Declaration of Aboriginal Rights, referring to the community’s tradition of ongoing and continuous occupation of a specific, delineated territory. “Aboriginals are not just another ethnic group,” historian Arthur Ray more recently concurs, “They were here first.”²⁷ By 2006, the indigenous peoples of Canada have made it clear that they are Canada’s first nations. And for many people, these rhetorical pronouncements make commonsense. Tying identity to place grounds modern concepts of nation, but it also informs contemporary legal understandings of Aboriginal title -- as an uninterrupted culture, which exercised exclusive occupation of a bounded territory at the time “effective” British sovereignty was established, which in British Columbia is dated at 1846. It is not surprising that linking identity to place also

²⁶ Julie Cruikshank, “Discovery of Gold on the Klondike: Perspectives from Oral Tradition,” in *Reading Beyond Words: Contexts for Native History*, eds. Jennifer S.H. Brown and Elizabeth Vibert (Toronto: Broadview, 1998), 433-453; and Cruikshank, *The Social Life of Stories: Narrative and Knowledge in the Yukon Territory* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1998).

²⁷ *The Ubyyssey*, 20 September 2005.

permeates First Nations' discourse in contemporary rights and title discussions. These are not only rhetorical expressions, however; they are rooted in a deeply historical and spiritual connection of people to place.

Many indigenous peoples have stories of origin -- including, in the case of many *hul'q̓amiñum*, *hən̓q̓amiñəm*, and *halkemeylem*-speaking peoples, histories of originating people who "fell from the sky" and were given specialized ritual knowledge by the re-creator or transformer *xe:łs*.²⁸ The Musqueam explain, "Our oral history tells of a connection of these lands and waters since time immemorial, *xʷənəθət* – our first ancestors – are said to have descended from the sky, wrapped in clouds, before there was anything else."²⁹ Such cherished histories inscribe meaning onto the landscape and link community to place. In the late twentieth and early twenty-first century, as the need to present one's community history to non-Aboriginals reaches new intensity, these origin stories are increasingly called into new contexts to service legal demands and cultural expectations and are translated as expressions of belonging, ownership, and distinctiveness. They are deliberate statements that meet non-Aboriginal expectations for authentic tradition and culture.

As will be discussed in the following chapters, much of the theory of the late nineteenth and early twentieth century challenged the oral tradition that the contemporary Aboriginal people of the Fraser Delta were here first. Charles Hill-Tout was the first to

²⁸ Suttles, "Central Coast Salish," 466. In relation to Cowichan origin stories, see Daniel P. Marshall, *Those Who Fell from the Sky: A History of the Cowichan Peoples* (Duncan, BC: Cowichan Tribes, 1999); and for the *Stó:lō*, see Keith Thor Carlson, ed., *A Stó:lō - Coast Salish Historical Atlas* (Vancouver: Douglas and McIntyre, Seattle: University of Washington Press, and Chilliwack: Stó:lō Heritage Trust, 2001).

²⁹ Musqueam Indian Band, *Musqueam: A Living Culture* (Vancouver: Musqueam Indian and Coppermoon Communications, 2006), 9.

articulate the view that a “hostile people” had displaced a race of people at the Great Fraser Midden. “The intrusion of the Salishan emigrants into this district, and the inevitable extermination of many of the former inhabitants, is...the real cause of the desertion of this and the many other ancient camping-grounds of this region,” wrote Hill-Tout in an 1895 publication of the *Transactions of the Royal Society of Canada*.³⁰ Hill-Tout’s idea that the Aboriginal peoples of the Lower Fraser Delta were not the original residents of the area but had migrated from the interior of British Columbia in turn informed later anthropological research.³¹ And certainly, western theories about migration and displacement continue to emerge and re-emerge in various anthropological, popular, and legal discourses long past the work of Franz Boas, Harlan I. Smith, Charles Hill-Tout and their colleagues. For example, during a 1996 case in the Federal Court of Canada regarding the establishment of the False Creek Indian Reserve in Vancouver’s English Bay, the Crown Counsel employed the theory of migration to suggest that the Tsleil-waututh (Burrard) First Nation were not the original peoples of Indian Arm, but had emigrated, over mountain trails, from the interior community of Lillooet many years before. While, as we will see, these lawyers were not the first to suggest such a dramatic relocation of Coast Salish peoples from the interior to the coast, the implication seemed designed to challenge the Tsleil-waututh’s own tradition that their first ancestor had transformed from the Wolf, that they were hənq̓əminəḿ-speakers, and

³⁰ Hill-Tout, “Later Prehistoric Man,” 23.

³¹ For a critique of the enduring “myth of a recent Salish emergence” in the anthropological and archaeological writings from time of the Jesup Expedition to the 1970s, see Wayne Suttles, “The Recent Emergence of the Coast Salish: The Function of an Anthropological Myth,” in Wayne Suttles, *Coast Salish Essays* (Vancouver: Talonbooks, 1987), 256-264. Regarding Hill-Tout’s theory that a hostile people migrated into the Fraser Delta, based upon his understanding that there were two distinct biological skull types found in archaeological sites in the area, has endured and influenced subsequent analysis, see Owen B. Beattie, “A Note on Early Cranial Studies from the Gulf of Georgia Region: Long-heads, Broad-heads, and the Myth of Migration,” *BC Studies* 66 (Summer 1985): 28-35.

that they had a lengthy territorial connection to Indian Arm and Burrard Inlet.³²

Remnants of colonial ideology remain with us. There remains a fundamental dilemma for indigenous historical traditions and western systems of knowledge, as recently pointed out by American Museum of Natural History curator David Hurst Thomas in relationship to the discipline of archaeology: How do we reconcile archaeology's claim to "scientific" endeavor with Aboriginal historical traditions that place indigenous people in their territories since "time immemorial" or with other origin and migration traditions?³³

Important in examining First Nations' relationships with archaeology and identity is the question of what is accepted as evidence in diverse contexts and cultural traditions. The 1997 Supreme Court of Canada's *Delgamuukw* decision acknowledged the relevance of oral tradition in determining a group's historical connection to the land.³⁴ Yet in court proceedings and political negotiations or consultations over land and resource issues today, First Nations are still expected to supply documentary, material "proof" of their historic existence and their connections to specific pieces of land. Just as a frustrated elder, Rose Sparrow, proclaimed in 1977 to a federal land claims official when she was asked to elaborate on Musqueam history: "What more proof do you want? When the first whiteman came here there was nothing but Indians from here on...I think you've got proof right here, we're the first ones that owned this land...It was all Indians' territory as

³² Tsleil-waututh Nation, "Our Tsleil-waututh Nation Declaration," <http://www.burrardband.com> (accessed 23 October 2006). The Crown's theory was based upon the linguistic similarities of the terms "Tsleil-waututh" and "Lilloet." See transcript of April 14, 1997, pp. 3884-3907, hearing in the case of *Mathias et al v. the Queen et al*, Federal Court of Canada.

³³ Thomas, *Skull Wars*.

³⁴ *Delgamuukw v. British Columbia*, [1997] 3 S.C.R. 1010.

far as you can see.”³⁵ Sparrow was responding to the federal government’s demand that Musqueam “prove” Aboriginal ownership of the land and show that the contemporary manifestation of the Musqueam community descended from the people who occupied the lands from the time before the European’s arrival. However, for Sparrow, the community’s physical and cultural survival was in itself evidence of the Musqueam’s existence as a Nation. It seemed straightforward enough.

Such outsider questions surrounding nationhood and territoriality are based, then, on a restrictive view of the past and of what constitutes evidence – a view derived in large part from western academic, legal, and even colonial discourse: Were your villages recorded on early preemption records and government surveys? Did early British and Spanish explorers, Hudson’s Bay Company traders, and colonial officials recognize your community as an “organized society” occupying and controlling an “exclusive territory”? Where you able to repel outsiders from a delineated territory? Or, as Fae Korsmo summarizes, “Were you sufficiently like us to gain our recognition, yet different enough to be kept separate?”³⁶ Certainly, part of the demand for documentary chronology lies in the fact that western lawyers and judges are more comfortable with the written European record; the law still tends to view documents as largely “plain on their face,” that is, unbiased and disinterested, despite overwhelming evidence to the contrary.³⁷ This line of theorizing grants primacy to the site-specific model of occupation instead of a more

³⁵ Musqueam Indian Band, “Minutes of a Meeting between Musqueam People and Brian Harley, Office of Native Claims,” 1977, quoted in Guerin, “Preliminary Statement of a General Claim.”

³⁶ Fae L. Korsmo, “Claiming Memory in British Columbia: Aboriginal Rights and the State,” in *Contemporary Native American Political Issues*, ed. Troy R. Johnson (Walnut Creek, CA: Altamira, 1999), 120. Also cited in Thomas, *Skull Wars*, xxxv. For an example of the way First Nations history is expected to fit within the parameters of European concepts of law, see *R. v. Marshall*, [1999] 3 S.C.R. 456.

³⁷ See John Borrows, “Listening for a Change: The Courts and Oral Tradition,” *Osgoode Hall Law Journal* 39 (2001): 1-38.

integrated view of territoriality that encompasses a wide range of land use and residency: spiritual and material, seasonal and permanent, exclusive and shared, and so forth. It resonates with western property theory, itself strongly influenced by the English philosopher John Locke's premise that ownership is created through the input of labour. In this view, the visible, tangible results of physical "input" -- village sites, developed fishing places, graveyards and other sites that can be physically located and marked on a map -- establish ownership of land. In other words, the law treats Aboriginal territory as property, instead of sovereign territory, which, for any other nation-state, would include "unlaboured" lands. This is especially true in British Columbia, where in contrast to elsewhere in Canada, Indian Reserves were largely limited to small and scattered land acreage centred on permanent villages and some fishing, resource, and burial sites. Many western legal practitioners have minimal familiarity with or experience in assessing oral tradition, genealogy, material culture, visual, performative, or expressive culture as evidence of territoriality. Such forms of non-written evidence require specific interpretive frameworks that are not well developed in the legal arena.³⁸ It is hoped that this dissertation will contribute to the discussion of how to recognize, reconcile, and assess differing cultural interpretations of the past.

Accordingly, the present study explores the relationship between and amongst people and objects, paying attention to the changing meanings of "archaeological" objects (skeletal remains, ancient stone carvings, the Marpole Midden), as well as "ethnographic" objects (Musqueam houseposts and plaster face casts) as they move through various institutional contexts and are transformed into cultural artifacts. In his

³⁸ Borrows, "Listening for a Change"; and Borrows, *Recovering Canada: The Resurgence of Indigenous Law* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2002).

book *Captured Heritage: The Scramble for the Northwest Coast Artifacts*, Douglas Cole describes this journey through various western and indigenous “orbits of value”:

Objects become “artifacts” or “treasures” by a particular process. In themselves, they are merely artificially contrived bits of wood, stone, fur, or bone. Within their original setting, they possess whatever meaning that society may give them; they may even be valued as process rather than as products or possessions. They may be commodities or they may be sacred. Even these values will change as Native society changes. When Western ethnologists and collectors enter, the objects move into another orbit of value, one determined by Europeans. In this orbit they have a different value, higher in monetary terms than the one they are given in their indigenous sphere. For a moment they are cross-cultural commodities, appropriated to science. But their biographies continue. They may become treasures of a European-conceived art, then also acquire a vicarious value as part of the heritage of Canadian and American societies, and then, in an evolution both remarkable and ironic, become transformed into a value to their former cultures.³⁹

While the object remains relatively stable physically, its meanings and values are, as Cole suggests, “shifting, multiple, transitory, mutable, invented, even reinvented.” This thesis, however, pays attention to how western and indigenous cultures have differing concepts of value; Native people do not always access value in relation to monetary terms. By focusing on what other scholars have termed the “trajectories,” “life histories,” or the cultural or social “biographies,” of the things themselves, I do not intend to determine the original meaning or purpose of a particular object. Rather, I examine how meaning and value are produced through exchange and in different historical and cultural milieus. As Arjun Appadurai explains in his seminal study, *The Social Life of Things: Commodities in Cultural Perspective*, “Even though from a *theoretical* point of view human actors encode things with significance, from a *methodological* point of view it is the things-in-

³⁹ Douglas Cole, *Captured Heritage: The Scramble for Northwest Coast Artifacts*, 2nd ed. (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1995), *xiii-xiv*.

motion that illuminate their human and social context.”⁴⁰ The social biography approach emphasizes the physical mobility of objects, the larger histories of exchange and ownership, and argues that objects cannot be understood at any single point in time, but “should be understood as belonging in a continuing process of production, exchange, usage and meaning.”⁴¹ In stressing the material nature of objects -- that they occupy varied physical and cultural contexts -- I also hope to better trace their trajectories. This allows us to recognize that terms such as “artifacts,” “human skeletal remains,” “specimens,” “cultural objects,” and “ancestors” are not neutral descriptions of particular things, but are construed through particular historical, cultural, and politicized processes. It also highlights that many non-western cultures do not place much emphasis on the visual or material aspect of cultural objects and instead value things because of their particular histories of use or ownership.⁴² In some cases, objects perform as mnemonic devices or signify larger family or lineage prerogatives.

This thesis also examines the historical and cultural processes whereby objects are incorporated as expressions of community or national identity. Cultural heritage, suggests Claire L. Lyons, holds “the power to create a profound sense of belonging.” She observes how archaeological materials are often at the centre of such identity negotiations. The originating communities that produce “artifacts,” and the nations that appropriate them into their constructions of nationalistic heritage, come to “locate their

⁴⁰ Arjun Appadurai, “Introduction: Commodities and the Politics of Value,” in *The Social Life of Things: Commodities in Cultural Perspective*, ed. Arjun Appadurai (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1986), 5. See also Igor Kopytoff, “The Cultural Biography of Things: Commoditization as Process,” in Appadurai, *The Social Life of Things*, 64-91; Elizabeth Edwards, *Raw Histories: Photographs, Anthropology, and Museums* (Oxford: Berg, 2001); and D. Miller, ed. *Material Culture: Why Some Things Matter* (London: University College Press, 1998).

⁴¹ Elizabeth Edwards and Janice Hart, eds., *Photographs, Objects, Histories* (London: Routledge, 2004), 4. See also Edwards, *Raw Histories*, 13-16.

⁴² Clavir, *Preserving What is Valued*, 148-149.

historical identity in [these] material expressions.”⁴³ Nationalistic histories and identities, however, are often framed in relationship to “the Other” through the historical processes of appropriation, possession, display, and repatriation. We see this process at work in Canada as First Nations increasingly intervene in colonial narratives and appropriate western archaeological and museum practices for their own purposes. Ancient cultural objects recovered through archaeological excavation become important components in the public articulations of indigenous cultural traditions, protocols, and identities. And if we think of identity as constituted and expressed through social or political relations, cultural property has often been front and centre in political struggles between indigenous and non-indigenous communities. This is especially the case on the Northwest Coast, because many objects “belonged” to specific kinship groups. Accordingly, the present study also analyzes the political contexts in which Aboriginal people put cultural objects to describe their histories and to advance Aboriginal rights and title claims. It examines cultural reclamation and revitalization as an important form of social and political action.⁴⁴

Of all the objects found there, including bone needles, spearheads, and carved stone sculpture, it was the deposit of human skeletal remains that propelled the Marpole Midden into the international limelight. New York City’s American Museum of Natural History, the Vancouver City Museum, the Royal College of Surgeons in London

⁴³ Clarie L. Lyons, “Objects and Identities: Claiming and Reclaiming the Past,” in Barkan and Bush, *Claiming the Stones*, 116.

⁴⁴ In relation to cultural performance as a form of social action, see Fred R. Myers, “Culture-Making: Performing Aboriginality at the Asian Society Gallery,” *American Ethnologist* vol. 21, no. 4 (1994): 679-99; Julie Cruikshank, “Negotiating with Narrative: Establishing Cultural Identity at the Yukon Storytelling Festival,” *American Anthropologist* vol. 99, no. 1 (1997): 56-69, and Susan Roy, “Performing Musqueam Culture and History at British Columbia’s 1966 Centennial Celebrations,” *BC Studies* 135 (Autumn 2002): 55-90.

England, the Royal British Columbia Museum in Victoria, the Canadian Museum of Civilization, the University of British Columbia's Laboratory of Archaeology, and other museums around the world hold cultural and skeletal remains from c̓sna:m in their collections, obtained either through their own collecting programs or received from other institutions and collectors. Furthermore, many unidentified skulls in the collections of smaller local history museums in British Columbia are likely to be from the Marpole Midden, a large, urban and, thus, leading "pot hunting" site for amateur collectors in search of tokens representing the ancient past. Even in the 1970s, a local guidebook directed artifact collectors to the Fraser Arms Hotel, where there "lies a very large midden, which has yielded a very large quantity of fine artifacts." It promised "still a few places around this site which do still yield good quality artifacts."⁴⁵ In fact, skeletal remains, so delicate and fragile, often disintegrated in the hands of collectors when they were pulled from burial sites. Institutional and amateur collectors looked for intact skulls for their museum and private collections; fragments were often tossed away.

There are clear differences between indigenous and western ideas regarding the meanings of sacred and/or culturally sensitive objects. For example, in many Northwest Coast belief systems, the physical separation between life and death is not as easily demarcated as it tends to be in western belief systems.⁴⁶ Many Coast Salish peoples, of which the Musqueam form part, experience death as inextricably linked to the lives of the living, to the world of spirits, ghosts, and souls. There is no clear-cut distinction between the living and the ancestors, or between the more recently deceased and those who passed

⁴⁵ L. Lazeo, "Collectors' Guide to BC Indian Artifact Sites," pamphlet, 1970, MIBA.

⁴⁶ Mary Ellen Kelm, *Colonizing Bodies: Aboriginal Health and Healing in British Columbia, 1900-50* (Vancouver: University of British Columbia Press, 1998).

away long ago.⁴⁷ As Michael Kew explains in his anthropological study of Coast Salish ceremonial life,

The dead were thought to enter a life like that of the present world where they would have largely the same emotions and desires and live much as they had. The world of the dead was not in another place but right here: 'it's like going through a curtain -- we can't see the other side but they say that they can.' The dead and their world, for all the avowed similarities, are mysterious. They can be dangerous and malicious at times, but they are not universally or invariably so. One's own dead kin remain in the family -- and are thought of as being essentially kindly.⁴⁸

The dead are part of daily life and have the power to interfere with the living, "taking away their souls (sməsteyux") and ultimately taking the living to the world of the dead."⁴⁹

Children, babies, and pregnant women are especially vulnerable to the power of deceased loved ones. Ritualists with specialized knowledge, who can hear and see the dead and are relatively immune to the danger of this contact, are charged with acting as undertakers, overseeing death rituals, burial, and reburial.

Although human skeletal remains are a profoundly spiritual and cultural matter, theoretical and academic questions arise. Can we apply the theory of materiality and social biography to skeletal remains, emphasizing histories of mobility and transformed meaning? If the answer is yes, how can we reconcile academic research with the possible moral obligation to give precedence to contemporary Aboriginal histories and protocols regarding these skeletal remains? These questions point to the dilemma of post-modern theory, which asserts that all knowledges, whether western or indigenous, are social constructions. Analysis that finds indigenous discourses to be shifting, uncertain, and

⁴⁷ Howard E. Grant, personal communication, February 2006.

⁴⁸ J.E. Michael Kew, "Coast Salish Ceremonial Life: Status and Identity in a Modern Village" (PhD diss., University of Washington, 1970), 211.

⁴⁹ Ibid.

multiple, for example, relativize rather than correct the asymmetries of colonial dislocations.⁵⁰ In some cases, “deconstructions” of Aboriginal histories are subject to backlash politics, which argue that if indigenous knowledges shift, they are somehow less real, or worse have been “invented.” This is a theme explored by James Clifton in his 1990 study, *The Invented Indian: Cultural Fictions and Government Policies*.⁵¹ Clifton claims that Aboriginal people have adopted myths invented by non-Aboriginal people and have re-broadcast false notions of Indianness to suit their political and legal purposes. This approach reflects the tired adage that “real Indians” do not change: a transformed indigenous culture is an inauthentic one. It also points to the power and politics surrounding the production of knowledge about indigenous peoples. As Cherokee artist Jimmie Durham has described it, “Postmodernism is just another lockout for Native people.”⁵²

Questions concerning the appropriateness of analyzing the meanings surrounding human skeletal remains also relate to and arise from contemporary Aboriginal and cultural property rights issues. In 1990, the United States congress passed the American Graves Protection and Repatriation Act, mandating the return of skeletal remains and sacred cultural objects to Native American communities. David Hurst Thomas explains the affect of the legislation: “No longer did science have a monopoly on defining the meaning of archaeology; instead, native groups were invited to assign their own spiritual and historical meanings to archaeological sites and their contents.”⁵³ As First Nations in

⁵⁰ Thanks to Charlotte Townsend-Gault for pointing this out.

⁵¹ James Clifton, *The Invented Indian: Cultural Fictions and Government Policies* (New Brunswick, NJ: Transaction Publishers, 1990).

⁵² Charlotte Townsend Gault, personal communication, September 2006.

⁵³ Thomas, *Skull Wars*, xxxv.

Canada increasingly possess the economic and political means to recover their ancestors and cultural objects from western museum institutions, they are also re-asserting the authority to define these objects and, therefore, their own identities.

Methodology and Description of Chapters

This thesis pays attention to representations of history that emphasize either rupture and change, or continuity and persistence. For some scholars, the search for similarities between the past and the present or for transformations from then to now is important -- what is remembered and how it is remembered gives us entry into the past. For others, the discovery of events, practices, ideas, or objects that have been “left behind” or forgotten helps to show that “there were once other possible futures.”⁵⁴ Today, many First Nations histories and publications stress cultural continuity, survival, and persistence in the face of ongoing oppression.⁵⁵ This does not mean that scholars should avoid critically examining these histories and the contexts of their telling. As historians, we can reach back to retrieve those discontinuities or abandoned practices and we can look at the genealogies of what has persisted. For example, we can either search for the objects that did not make it into the official state-sponsored museum (an especially important consideration in the case of the Coast Salish, whose objects and culture were not as sought after by museum ethnographers and collectors as the work of northern coastal groups) and the experiences that are not represented by the national story, or we can try to explain the contemporary presence of specific histories and ideas

⁵⁴ H.V. Nelles, *The Art of Nation Building: Pageantry and Spectacle at Quebec's Tercentenary* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1999), 229.

⁵⁵ In relation to Coast Salish histories, see for example, Carlson, ed., *A Stó:lō - Coast Salish Historical Atlas*; Marshall, *Those Who Fell from the Sky*; and Musqueam Indian Band, *Musqueam*.

about our societies. It seems, however, that the two strategies are closely intertwined and both will help uncover the linkages between official nationalistic stories and the nationalistic histories by First Nations. Thus, this thesis considers the histories produced by both Aboriginal and western societies and their differing emphases on persistence, continuity, and change.

This study depends largely on historical documents retrieved from formal, or institutional archives, including the Harlan I. Smith correspondence at the American Museum of Natural History in New York City and the Canadian Museum of Civilization in Ottawa; the Charles Hill-Tout records at the Vancouver Museum; the Charles E. Borden papers in the University of British Columbia Archives and the university's Laboratory of Archaeology; as well as the voluminous records of the Canadian Department of Indian Affairs. In these documents, government officials, ethnographers, and archaeologists have transcribed their conversations with Aboriginal peoples, a rich source of oral tradition and history. The Musqueam Indian Band administration has generously allowed me access to their community archives -- an extensive collection of materials and documents generated by various researchers over many years of dedicated work. I have attempted to reciprocate by providing the Band with copies of the documents retrieved during the course of my research. I also draw on my own interviews and ongoing conversations with Musqueam individuals, including Andrew C. Charles, Howard E. Grant, Larry Grant, and Leona M. Sparrow; with the community's researchers, Larissa Grant, Terry Point, and Tracy Point; and with the anthropologists Michael Kew and Wayne Suttles, prior to the latter's passing in May 2005.

Discussions with these generous and knowledgeable individuals have led me to many different kinds of sources, including the rich visual, material, and documentary records that can be found outside the formal archive (whether museum, civic, provincial, national, or First Nation).⁵⁶ My attention has also been directed to objects that could be described as belonging to the realm of western popular and museum cultures, such as ethnographic photographs and plaster face casts of Aboriginal people, and diagrams or cartoons of Aboriginal history. I include analysis of objects that have been “abandoned” or relegated to the museum basement storage rooms (for example, a series of sculptural busts in the collection of the Vancouver Museum that were reconstructed from skulls taken from Marpole, and an old National Historic Sites and Monuments plaque in the collection of the Musqueam Indian Band). I draw on objects and locations that are closely related to indigenous culture, such as Coast Salish house posts, reserve cemeteries, memorial markers, and administrative emblems. Few historians have looked to such sources for expressions of identity or nationalism (and instead view material or performative culture in terms of identifying western or indigenous discourses surrounding authenticity), but they have proven very rich and expand our reference of expressive, visual, and emblematic culture. Furthermore, these sources have proven particularly applicable to the study of Aboriginal history in Canada, where, with the exception of work by art historians such as Ruth Phillips and Charlotte Townsend-Gault, many

⁵⁶ Raphael Samuels points out the failure of professional historians to acknowledge the rich visual and material records found outside the formal archive. See Raphael Samuels, *Theatres of Memory*, vol. 1, *Past and Present in Contemporary Culture* (London: Verso, 1994), 114.

academic histories are based solely on documentary and ethnographic records and, increasingly, oral tradition.⁵⁷

The chapters that follow are organized chronologically around the three major digs at the Marpole Midden between the 1890s and the 1960s. This is not a chronological, progressive history of archaeological ideas about cultural development in the area, but offers instead a situational example of a particular site. I emphasize the political effects of the scientific and popular discourses surrounding the digs, especially with respect to the distinction between off-reserve burial sites and on-reserve cemeteries. To be sure, some of the historic excavations discussed would not attract the attention of all archaeologists. For example, the non-scientific methods of Harlan I. Smith's 1890s excavations as well as the practices of the Vancouver City Museum or amateur collectors in the 1920s and 1930s would likely be considered outside accepted disciplinary methods of the day and therefore may not be considered a chapter in a developmental history of the discipline. Even Charles E. Borden, who was a professor of German at the University of British Columbia, was not formally trained as an archaeologist. However, if we consider these museum or amateur undertakings to be "ruptures" or "discontinued practices" from a "progressive," chronological history, the larger implications of the

⁵⁷ Ruth B. Phillips, *Trading Identities: The Souvenir in Native American Art from the Northwest, 1700-1900* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1998); Ruth B. Phillips and Christopher B. Steiner, *Unpacking Culture: Art and Commodity in Colonial and Postcolonial Worlds* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1999); Charlotte Townsend-Gault and Karen Duffek, eds., *Bill Reid and Beyond: Expanding on Modern Native Art* (Vancouver: Douglas and McIntyre, 2004); and Charlotte Townsend-Gault, Scott Watson, and Lawrence Paul Yuxweluptun, eds., *Lawrence Paul Yuxweluptun: Born to Live and Die on Your Colonialist Reservations, June 20- September 16 1995*, exhibition catalogue (Vancouver: Morris and Ellen Balkin Art Gallery, University of British Columbia, 1995). On the western tendency to privilege the visual over other senses, see Svetlana Alpers, "The Museum as a Way of Seeing," in *Exhibiting Cultures: The Poetics and Politics of Museum Display*, eds. Ivan Karp and Stephen D. Lavine (Washington: Smithsonian Institution Press, 1991), 25-32.

particular site's history and its relationship to the Musqueam's ongoing efforts to have their histories recognized by settler society are highlighted.⁵⁸

I concentrate on this one specific archaeological site to better understand how people -- archaeologists and non-archaeologists alike, Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal people alike -- have interpreted this place. To that end, this research examines the continental colonial culture of the American Museum of Natural History's Jesup Expedition, the national colonial culture of Harlan I. Smith and the Victoria Memorial Museum (by 1927, the National Museum of Man and today known as the Canadian Museum of Civilization), the civic colonial culture of the Vancouver City Museum, and the provincial colonial culture of Charles E. Borden. Harlan I. Smith figures prominently in this thesis, largely because of the work he conducted on the Northwest Coast throughout his career at the American Museum of Natural History and later at Canada's National Museum. Smith worked for the Peabody Museum at Harvard University, and organized ethnographic exhibits for the 1893 World's Columbian Exposition in Chicago. In 1895, he secured a job at the American Museum of Natural History where he remained until 1911, when he became head archaeologist for the Geological Survey of Canada, in its Division of Anthropology. He held this position until his retirement in 1937.⁵⁹ This meant that Smith was able to exert a strong influence on the professionalization of

⁵⁸ Drawing on the work of Michel Foucault, art historian Eilean Hooper-Greenhill urges historians to search for rupture and change rather than tradition, continuity, and universality. She suggests that "The dismissal of all those things that have failed to continue through the years to the present time may well be the dismissal of that which demonstrates the difference of the past from the present." See Eilean Hooper-Greenhill, *Museums and the Shaping of Knowledge* (London: Routledge, 1992), 83.

⁵⁹ Douglas Leechman, "Harlan I. Smith," *The Canadian Field Naturalist* 56 (1942): 114. See also Canadian Archaeologists Association, "Awards: Harlan I. Smith," <http://www.canadianarchaeology.com/awards/smith.lasso>, (accessed February 2006).

archaeology in the United States and Canada at a time when it was emerging as a distinct discipline from the field of anthropology.

Although throughout this study, I critique the archaeologist's use of chronological time, I employ, as do many historians, chronology as an organizing principal to better trace transformations, shifting meanings, discontinuities, and abandoned practices. Thus, Chapter Two begins with the first extensive excavations at the Marpole Midden in the late nineteenth century. It examines the work of Harlan I. Smith and the Jesup Expedition and the collection of physical evidence, including photographs, plaster face casts, and measurements of Aboriginal people, as well as skeletal remains taken from burial grounds. Anthropological and legal processes that distinguished such burial sites as either "active" or "abandoned" transformed indigenous burial grounds into sites of archaeology. However, in their many petitions over land and resource rights, indigenous people often pointed to graves as something very different -- as expressions of ownership that described their ancestral connections to place.

Chapter Three continues with an examination of Smith's Jesup Expedition work, specifically his collection of "ethnographic" objects from indigenous communities. This chapter explores the dichotomy of "archaeological," as something older and abandoned, and "ethnological," as something traditional and endangered. I examine how indigenous people refute these categories. For the 1913 visit of the Royal Commission on Indian Affairs, established to address the long-standing debate between the provincial and federal governments about appropriate Indian Reserve acreage, the Musqueam prepared a display of house posts associated with family history to make statements about cultural

persistence -- visual statements that enhanced their spoken testimony regarding territorial and resource rights.

Chapter Four provides a detailed analysis of the Musqueam's 1930s sale of a burial box to Harlan I. Smith and Canada's National Museum of Man, paying attention to both national and indigenous priorities with respect to this transaction. Here, I look specifically at on-reserve cemeteries, cemetery monuments, and reburials as a form of cultural production and translation describing Aboriginal-non-Aboriginal relations. During the first half of the twentieth century, Vancouver's Indian Reserves were not protected sanctuaries of land, but were subject to the threat of alienation by industrial development and urban expansion. In response, concerned relatives relocated their deceased ancestors from some urban reserves, such as the Seymour Creek Indian Reserve in Burrard Inlet, to cemeteries outside the city. Funerary ceremonies surrounding these relocations were performances that reached beyond indigenous networks of kin and community to larger anthropological, state, and public audiences. Consequently, this chapter examines how such ceremonies became entangled in identity politics, archaeological interpretation, and First Nations' own views on death and genealogical history.

With Chapter Five, I turn to the civic colonial culture to examine the work of the prominent local ethnographer, Charles Hill-Tout, and the Art, Historical, and Scientific Association of Vancouver (forerunner to the Vancouver City Museum) during the first half of the twentieth century. The extensive excavations conducted by the association and Hill-Tout at the Marpole Midden in the 1920s and 1930s, were largely to obtain artifacts for their museum's displays on Vancouver's "prehistory." This chapter

examines the local historical Association's and the city's appropriation of this lengthier history of human occupation as a precursor to their own history of settlement. And it reviews Hill-Tout's theories that the contemporary indigenous peoples of Vancouver displaced an earlier "mysterious," race of people, a people with no apparent connection to contemporary indigenous communities of the Lower Fraser Delta. Such narratives of migration and displacement contributed to the settler conviction that Aboriginal peoples did not own the land because they were neither the original occupations nor used the natural resources productively. The archaeological research of the first half of the century most often posited theories about the distinct racial origins of the people who lived at Marpole and other sites on the Lower Fraser and therefore distanced Aboriginal people from their territories.

The final segment, Chapter Six, turns to the post-WWII period and the influential work of Professor Charles E. Borden of the University of British Columbia. It was not until the 1950s and 1960s, when Borden conducted salvage operations at the Marpole Midden and other sites in British Columbia, that archaeologists more consistently considered the possibility that local Aboriginal people would be interested in the research and consider the cultural objects and human skeletal remains relevant to their culture, histories, and land claims. While Borden's concern was for increased public awareness regarding the importance of archaeological sites to the province's heritage, he also recognized that First Nations were interested in formal archaeological research. Furthermore, Borden's excavations on the Musqueam Indian Reserve marks an important turning point in the colonial culture of archaeology, for it recognized connections between contemporary peoples and those who came before. This post-war period was

marked by the beginnings of a shift from colonial culture to an anti-colonial or reclamation culture (from the point of view of Aboriginal people) as Aboriginal peoples intervened more forcefully in colonialist narratives and struggled, on both the local and national scene, for self-determination and legal recognition of Aboriginal rights. Thus, this chapter examines how the Musqueam put archaeological research, objects, and imagery to their own nationalistic purposes. This is the story of a people who have maintained their identity in spite of being surrounded by one of Canada's largest cities. The Musqueam have done this, in part, by taking an increasingly active role in the "writing" of their history.⁶⁰

For many First Nations, the history of Aboriginal-newcomer relations is a history of dispossession. This thesis argues that the archaeological discourses (broadly defined) of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries contributed to distancing indigenous peoples from their territories. It attempts to understand the relationship between archaeological, anthropological, and settler discourses and state policy. The persistence of theories asserting the recent migration of First Nations to the Lower Fraser Delta and the idea that indigenous peoples had not occupied the land long or did not have the capacity to utilize its resources justified the establishment of white settler society in British Columbia. First Nations counter these colonial discourses by reclaiming archaeology for community improvement, putting archaeology to use in the construction of their own nationalist histories, and, in the case of the Musqueam, purchasing sacred

⁶⁰ Many Musqueam individuals claim that the public re-writing of history has been an important strategy of the Squamish First Nation in making territorial claims to Burrard Inlet. According to many Musqueam commentators, popular historians, drawing from the work of Vancouver city archivist Major Matthews and his conversations with August Jack Khatsalanough, have presented a skewed account of the indigenous history of this area. See Major J.S. Matthews, *Conversations with Khahtsahlano, 1932-1954* (Vancouver: City Hall, 1955).

lands such as the Marpole Midden. Yet, despite indigenous attempts to close the distance created by colonial discourse, dispossession remains with us.

CHAPTER TWO

Harlan I. Smith and the North Pacific Jesup Expedition: Collecting Physical Evidence from the Past and Present

The most important results obtained up to this time are probably the finds in the shell mounds of the Fraser River in British Columbia, in the lowest layers of which beautiful carvings have been found which resemble in character the art of the present Indians. These layers also contain skulls of narrow and elongated form, with high noses, while the present inhabitants of this area have wide rounded skulls and flat noses. It may be assumed that the ancient population of this area has been displaced by immigrants from Asia. The languages, customs and traditions of the region also point to extensive migration.⁶¹

In 1899, Franz Boas translated the text of a Berlin newspaper reporting on the progress of the Jesup North Pacific Expedition for the expedition's New York benefactor and American Museum of Natural History president, Morris K. Jesup. The paper, which referred to the discoveries at the Great Fraser Midden and other shell mounds on the Lower Fraser River, suggested that the present-day indigenous residents (the Musqueam and other *hulq̓əmin̓um* and *hənq̓əminəm* speaking peoples of the Lower Fraser) were the descendents of immigrants from Asia. The newspaper also declared the project to be one of "the greatest anthropological undertakings that [has] ever been put into execution," its findings, "of great importance." Jesup personally financed the expedition's research conducted between 1897 and 1902 on both sides of the North Pacific Ocean, in British Columbia and Washington State, and in northeastern Siberia. Under the direction of Boas, the expedition aimed to investigate scientifically the biological and cultural relationships that might have existed between the indigenous peoples of North America

⁶¹ Franz Boas to Morris K. Jesup, 15 October 1899, Jesup North Pacific Expedition Records, box 2, folder 9, Division of Anthropology Archives, American Museum of Natural History (AMNH).

and of northeastern Asia. A *New York Times* editorial agreed that this question of Amerindian origins was “about the biggest problem of the unsolved anthropological and ethnological problems” and “alive with human and historic interest.”⁶² The theory that migrating peoples from Asia crossed the Bering Strait land bridge and populated an unoccupied American continent captured the popular imagination. As the German newspaper testified in relation to the Marpole Midden, “It may be assumed that the ancient population of this area has been displaced by immigrants from Asia. The languages, customs and traditions of the region also point to extensive migration.”⁶³

Stripped of its archaeological and scientific detail, the overland migration theory goes something like this: Around thirteen thousand or so years ago, during a period of glaciation when sea waters froze and caused ocean levels to drop, a land bridge between Siberia and North America was exposed. Asian hunter-gatherers with their Clovis spears, traveled over Beringia, set foot in the New World, traveled down the eastern side of the Rocky Mountains, branched out, and populated the North and South American continents for the first time. The Bering Strait theory is the dominant paradigm for explaining human presence in the Americas and continues to hold popular, archaeological, and scientific currency.⁶⁴ But today, archaeologists vigorously debate the theory, citing alleged discoveries of older, pre-Clovis peoples at scattered sites throughout North and South America, which suggest that when the Clovis hunter-gatherers entered the New

⁶² *The New York Times*, 14 March 1897. Quoted in Laura Kendall, B. Mathé, and T.R. Miller, *Drawing Shadows to Stone: The Photography of the Jesup North Pacific Expedition, 1897-1902* (New York: American Museum of Natural History, 1997), 9.

⁶³ Franz Boas to Morris K. Jesup, 15 October 1899, Jesup North Pacific Expedition Records, box 2, folder 9, Division of Anthropology Archives, AMNH.

⁶⁴ See, for example, Knut R. Fladmark, *British Columbia Prehistory* (Ottawa: Archaeological Survey of Canada, National Museum of Man, 1986); R. Cole Harris, ed. *The Historical Atlas of Canada* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1987), vol. 1, plate 1; and Peter L. Storck, *Journey to the Ice Age: Discovering an Ancient World* (Vancouver: University of British Columbia Press, 2004), 12-13.

World they were entering a land that had been settled previously by others. With the 1996 discovery on the banks of the Columbia River of a 9,400-year-old skeleton (dubbed the “Kennewick Man” by archaeologists and the “Ancient One” by Native Americans such as the Umatilla Tribe) came renewed popular and scientific claims that the first Americans predated the Bering Straits migrants. When archaeologist James Chatters first examined the human remains, he suggested that the skull was “Caucasoid-like,” a claim quickly taken up by some Americans to proclaim that America’s first peoples were of European decent and had simply been decimated by newcomers.⁶⁵

In the same way the discovery of the Kennewick man fuelled an intense and highly racialized public debate about continental Indian origins in the United States of the late twentieth century, one hundred years earlier, during the time of the Jesup Expedition, Native American identity was also located by the press and others in a story of migration, violence, and displacement. Native American tribes were, it was thought, not the originating peoples, but descendents of these Asian migrants. This chapter and the ones that follow explore the ideological significance of such grand ideas about migration, identity, and national origins. It reveals the political, cultural, and economic implications

⁶⁵ Since its discovery, the Kennewick man has become the subject of numerous journalistic and scholarly commentaries. Regarding the political consequences of these claims, see David Hurst Thomas, *Skull Wars: Kennewick Man, Archaeology, and the Battle for Native American Identity* (New York: Basic Books, 2000); Douglas W. Owsley and Richard L. Jantz, “Kennewick Man – A Kin? Too Distant,” in *Claiming the Stones/ Naming the Bones: Cultural Property and the Negotiation of National and Ethnic Identity*, eds. Elazar Barkan and Ronald Bush (Los Angeles: Getty Research Institute, 2002), 141-161; and Patty Gerstenblith, “Cultural Significance and the Kennewick Skeleton: Some Thoughts on the Resolution of Cultural Heritage Disputes,” in Barkan and Bush, *Claiming the Stones*, 162-197. For recent press interpretations, see Jack Hitt, “Mighty White of You: Racial Preferences Color America’s Oldest Skulls and Bones,” *Harpers Magazine*, July 2005; and Michael D. Lemonick and Andrea Dorfman, “Who Were the First Americans?” *Time*, 13 March 2006.

of what Vine Deloria Jr. calls, in relation to Native Americans, “the myth of scientific fact.”⁶⁶

While many of British Columbia’s First Nations clearly have their own historical traditions of migration and mobility, the scientific theory that indigenous people came from elsewhere -- and especially that they were violent, aggressive intruders -- created a conceptual distance between local Aboriginal communities and the archaeological expeditions, artifacts, and sites within their territories. Vine Deloria Jr. forcefully points to the larger political significance of the theory of a transcontinental migration:

People want to believe that the Western Hemisphere, and more particularly North America, was a vacant, unexploited, fertile land waiting to be put under cultivation according to God’s holy dictates... The hemisphere thus belonged to whoever was able to rescue it from its wilderness state. Coupled with this belief is the idea that American Indians were not original inhabitants of the Western Hemisphere but latecomers who had [migrated in from the Arctic and] barely unpacked before Columbus came knocking on the door. If Indians had arrived only a few centuries earlier, they had no *real* claim to the land that could not be swept away by European discovery.⁶⁷

Deloria argues that, because of their residual guilt over the brutality of the European invasion and settlement of North America, many non-Native people cling to the dual “myth” of a vacant land and continental migration. These ideas do not need western remorse to persist, however. And whether or not we agree with Deloria’s categorical refutation of the Bering Strait’s migration theory, discourses about migration imply that displacement, no matter how brutal, of one group of people by another is a natural

⁶⁶ Vine Deloria, Jr., *Red Earth, White Lies: Native Americans and the Myth of Scientific Fact* (New York: Scribner, 1995). For a study of the relationship among scientific theories, such as the Bering Strait migration and the “over-kill” thesis (indigenous over-hunting caused the extinction of large Pleistocene mammals), and popularized, self-presentations of Native Americans as conservationists or ecologists, see Shepard Krech III, *The Ecological Indian: Myth and History* (New York: W.W. Norton, 1999).

⁶⁷ Deloria, *Red Earth*, 82.

process in *all* human settlement, which, in turn, legitimizes European modes of colonization.⁶⁸

This chapter examines how archaeological theories about origins, migration, and residency relate to decisions by late nineteenth-century and early twentieth-century provincial and federal agents and policy makers regarding the establishment of Indian Reserves at specific sites and, especially, in relation to reserving gravesites. While not positing an explicit or conspiratorial link between anthropology and the state, this thesis suggests that anthropological or archaeological projections of identity informed government actions and vice versa.⁶⁹ For example, in 1876, Indian Reserve Commissioner Gilbert Malcolm Sproat cited the historic migration of the Squamish Indians from their “real home” in Howe Sound to Burrard Inlet to work in the sawmills to justify moderate reserves in the inlet and more extensive reserves in their territorial homeland of Howe Sound.⁷⁰ In many cases, evidence that indigenous people had *moved* -- whether through ancient or historic migration, or through patterns of seasonal mobility -- informed the state’s response to territorial or reserve claims to land. In other words, colonial officials have interpreted indigenous mobility “as erasure rather than enactment and entitlement to place.”⁷¹ Both Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal peoples’ ideas about

⁶⁸ Linda Tuhiwai Smith, *Decolonizing Methodologies: Research and Indigenous Peoples* (London: Zed Books, 1999), 87.

⁶⁹ A point made by Keith Thor Carlson in, “The Power of Place, The Problem of Time: A Study of History and Aboriginal Collective Identity,” (PhD diss., University of British Columbia, 2003), 14. For a study of the relationship between Aboriginal identity and outsider categorizations, see Alexandra Harmon, *Indians in the Making: Ethnic Relations and Indian Identities around Puget Sound* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1998).

⁷⁰ G.M. Sproat to the Minister of the Interior, 27 November 1876, RG10, vol. 3611, file 3756-7, National Archives of Canada (NAC).

⁷¹ Paige Raibmon, “Meanings of Mobility on the Northwest Coast,” forthcoming.

movement, migration, and residency created powerful and conflicting discourses and moral claims about belonging and ownership of land.

This chapter concentrates on the physical anthropology research of Harlan I. Smith, the Jesup Expedition's archaeologist for the Northwest Coast and also assistant curator of archaeology at the American Museum of Natural History. Smith spent four seasons in British Columbia and Washington State between 1897 and 1900, investigating the history of human migration and occupation. This chapter looks specifically at his time spent on the Lower Mainland in the spring of 1897, conducting excavations at the Marpole Midden, and how these excavations contributed to the theory that in the past, Salish people from the interior had migrated to the coast. Smith collected evidences for physical anthropology from "dead Indians,"⁷² including skulls and other skeletal remains, as well as physical evidence from living people, such as plaster facial casts, measurements, and photographs. In her book, *Colonizing Bodies: Aboriginal Health and Healing in British Columbia*, Mary Ellen Kelm argues in relation to the expansion of western medicine, that Aboriginal "bodies" became a key site of colonial struggle.⁷³ In a similar way, this chapter exposes not only how archaeological theories about origin, migration, and residency relate to developing policy about where to set aside Indian Reserves, but also how the colonial struggle literally and discursively played out on the "bodies" (both living and deceased) of indigenous peoples. This point becomes evident when we look at sites such as the Marpole Midden in the context of the politics of burial

⁷² Smith's colleague, anthropologist Douglas Leechman, fondly recalled his first encounter with Smith in 1923 while "grubbing in the black, dry dust of a shell-heap near Esquimalt," where he heard "a friendly voice call, 'Hello, are you interested in dead Indians, too?'" Douglas Leechman, "Harlan I. Smith," *The Canadian Field Naturalist*, vol. 56 (1942): 114. See also Canadian Archaeologists Association, "Awards: Harlan I. Smith," http://www.canadianarchaeology.com/awards/smith_lasso (accessed February 2006).

⁷³ Mary Ellen Kelm, *Colonizing Bodies: Aboriginal Health and Healing in British Columbia, 1900-50* (Vancouver: University of British Columbia Press, 1998).

grounds and archaeological sites. Consequently, this chapter also examines how Aboriginal people themselves employed the concepts of permanence, lengthy duration, and occupation in making their own claims for legal recognition of ownership to specific sites and especially to their graveyards and burial grounds. It carefully draws out the relationships between an intellectual colonial culture situated at the American Museum of Natural History, the colonial culture operating in the province, and the local Northwest Coast Aboriginal culture.

Today, Franz Boas is remembered and celebrated for rejecting the dominant anthropological theories of his day that explained racial/cultural change and difference through evolution and racial determinism. In the late nineteenth century, race was the fundamental human category. Anthropologists and archaeologists viewed Aboriginal peoples as evidence of racial distinctiveness.⁷⁴ Rejecting race as an indicator of culture, Boas regarded migration and diffusion, or the spread of cultural traits through inter-group contact, as the major force behind culture change. Hence, Boas' anthropology (which became a major branch of North American anthropology known as "historical particularism") provided "local historical" explanations for difference and change drawn from cultural comparisons of contiguous groups.⁷⁵

⁷⁴ Thomas, *Skull Wars*, 102-110.

⁷⁵ Douglas Cole, *Franz Boas: The Early Years, 1858-1906* (Vancouver: Douglas and McIntyre, 1999). See also George W. Stocking, *Race, Culture, and Evolution, Essays in the History of Anthropology* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1982); and Stocking, ed. *The Shaping of American Anthropology, 1883-1911: A Franz Boas Reader* (New York: Basic Books, 1974); Ronald P. Rohner, ed., *The Ethnography of Franz Boas: Letters and Diaries of Franz Boas Written on the Northwest Coast from 1886-1931* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1969).

This emphasis on diffusion -- on the geographical movement and distribution of ideas and cultural attributes, and on the dynamics of culture -- partly explains Franz Boas' interest in possible transcontinental migrations. It also explains why, as the director of the Jesup Expedition, he provided a work plan to uncover evidence of cultural exchange among the indigenous people of Asia and of the Americas. More specifically, Boas wanted to know, "what relation these tribes bear to each other, and particularly what influence the inhabitants of one continent may have exerted on those of the other," problems he considered "of great magnitude."⁷⁶ Boas felt that detailed archaeological, linguistic, and ethnological studies would provide a comparative picture from which to disentangle the effects of intermixture, linguistic borrowing, and exchange of cultural forms, and "trace the historical development of the tribes inhabiting a definite region."⁷⁷ In other words, for Boas and his colleagues, biological data and cultural artifacts (broadly defined) would serve as the 'documents' for their culture history research. In the end, Boas reported that,

We found clear proof of cultural acquisition everywhere. Not only that; this method allowed us to reconstruct population migrations. Thus, the people of the North Pacific coastal region no longer appear to be unchanging, ahistorical entities. We see culture as changing constantly, each people influenced by its proximal and distal, spatial and temporal, neighbors.⁷⁸

⁷⁶ Franz Boas quoted in Brian Thom, "Harlan I. Smith's Jesup Fieldwork on the Northwest Coast," in Krupnik and Fitzhugh, *Gateways: Exploring the Legacy of the Jesup North Pacific Expedition, 1897-1902*, ed. Igor Krupnik and William W. Fitzhugh (Washington: Arctic Studies Centre, National Museum of Natural History, Smithsonian Institute, 2001), 140. Original in Franz Boas, "The Jesup North Pacific Expedition," in *Memoirs of the American Museum of Natural History: Publications of the Jesup North Pacific Expedition* (New York: American Museum of Natural History, 1898), 1:6.

⁷⁷ Ibid.

⁷⁸ Franz Boas, "The Results of the Jesup Expedition: Opening Address at the 16th International Congress of the Americanists, Vienna 1908," in Krupnik and Fitzhugh, *Gateways*, 19.

Jesup Expedition anthropologists and archaeologists were deeply engaged with large, interdisciplinary questions regarding the nature of cultural change and the relationship between populations around the world. Boas' biographer, the late Douglas Cole, has shown the expedition also met the museum's mandate to obtain ethnographic, archaeological, and physical anthropology artifacts for public display. Expedition researchers shipped to New York City boxes of cultural objects, human skeletal remains, plaster "life masks," casts of pictographs and rock carvings, photographs, body measurements, myths and histories, cultural information, word lists, and recorded songs. It was the era of salvage anthropology, so Boas and his associates filled the museum's display cases and archives with materials collected from communities where, it was assumed, tradition was fading away.⁷⁹

Historians of anthropology consider the Jesup Expedition an ambitious interdisciplinary, transnational project and celebrate or critique its accomplishments. Scholars have analyzed the expedition in terms of the emerging disciplines of anthropology and archaeology, and the development of Boas' career and his theories on the relationship between biology and culture.⁸⁰ Other work, notably by Douglas Cole, has examined the expedition in the context of the highly competitive field of supplying international museum collections with Northwest Coast objects.⁸¹ More recently, Catherine Carlson in "Letters from the Field: Reflections on the Nineteenth-Century

⁷⁹ Douglas Cole, *Captured Heritage: The Scramble for the Northwest Coast Artifacts* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1995).

⁸⁰ See for example, Kendall, Mathé, and Miller, *Drawing Shadows*; and Krupnik and Fitzhugh, *Gateways*. Alexia Bloch and Laurel Kendall offer a more recent exploration of the relationship between ethnography and travel-writing in their part travelogue, part critical history re-tracing the Jesup Expedition in the Russian Far East. Alexia Bloch and Laurel Kendall, *The Museum at the End of the World: Encounters in the Russian Far East* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2004).

⁸¹ Douglas Cole, "The American Museum and Dr. Boas," in *Captured Heritage*.

Archaeology of Harlan I. Smith,” has provided a historical chronology of Smith’s correspondence to Boas, paying attention to his field practices and relationship with the interior Secwepemc (Shuswap), Nlaka’pamux (Thompson), and St’at’imc (Lillooet) communities in which he was working. As Carlson shows, the archival record reveals early mistrust among Northwest Coast peoples of the emerging discipline of archaeology. Such attitudes, which are rearticulated today in contemporary indigenous critiques of archaeology, reflect the expedition’s colonial legacy.⁸²

Like Carlson, I attempt to retrieve Aboriginal viewpoints from the archival record in order to better understand their relationship with these early archaeologist/ethnographers who entered their communities asking for photographs, objects, plaster face casts, and human remains. But I am also interested in how such anthropological practices relate to questions of identity. How did Smith and his colleagues conceptualize the relationship between shell-middens, which they attributed to “prehistoric” peoples, and contemporary Aboriginal communities? How did Smith reconcile his ethnographic collecting in communities with the archaeological excavation of shell middens that were not located on Indian Reserves, but at places where people no longer permanently resided? These are important questions because much of Smith’s archaeological work took place at sites that were not set aside as Indian Reserves. He selected them

⁸² While this analysis is based on archival research in the Division of Anthropology at the American Museum of Natural History, I also rely on the research of archaeologists Catherine Carlson and Brian Thom, who have independently provided detailed chronological reviews of Smith’s correspondence. Catherine C. Carlson, “Letters from the Field: Reflections on the Nineteenth-Century Archaeology of Harlan I. Smith in the Southern Interior of British Columbia, Canada,” in *Indigenous Archaeologies: Decolonizing Theory and Practice*, ed. Claire Smith and H. Martin Wobst (London: Routledge, 2006); and Thom, “Harlan I. Smith’s Jesup Fieldwork.”

deliberately because they afforded him seclusion and distance from Aboriginal people who increasingly objected to the removal of human remains.⁸³

Collecting Evidence from "Living Indians"

Boas and Smith spent much of their time on physical anthropology, collecting data and statistics to scrutinize further the relationship between race and biology. With respect to "living Indians," this included the related tasks of photographing, recording physical measurements, and making plaster face casts or "life masks," of "full-blooded" indigenous "subjects."⁸⁴ Casting was a relatively new and popular ethnographic method and judged "the only feasible method of permanently preserving the vanishing type of American natives."⁸⁵ In 1899, when Smith learned that only four speakers of Upper Willasah (an Athabascan language) remained in Washington State, he planned "to get casts of their faces so that...we will have casts before extinction."⁸⁶ Smith's attempts to salvage disappearing facial features reflected the perception that indigenous culture was vanishing before the onslaught of European culture because the Native population was in sharp decline due to the ravages of disease and poor health. In the anthropological imagination, plaster casts offered the prospect of preserving for science vanishing "racial typologies" that could be employed in a meta-narrative of American Indian origins.

Possibly to heighten interest and support for the project in the United States, in 1899

⁸³ See Rohner, *The Ethnography of Franz Boas*.

⁸⁴ While in Victoria, Smith cast three men and one woman from Clayaquot on the west coast of Vancouver Island, noting that "They claim to be full and the men here tell me they are good types and full and they seem to me to be so." [Harlan I. Smith] to Franz Boas, 4 November 1897, Accession 1897-27, Division of Anthropology, AMNH. At Port Hammond, Smith was concerned that "half-bloods are more plentiful than full here." See Harlan I. Smith to Franz Boas, 8 October 1897, Accession 1897-27, Division of Anthropology Archives, AMNH.

⁸⁵ Quoted in Cole, *Captured Heritage*, 152.

⁸⁶ Harlan I. Smith to Franz Boas, 14 June 1899, Accession 1900-7, Division of Anthropology Archives, AMNH.

Jesup presented Congress with a series of plaster busts “of great artistic merit,” representing the varied types of Indians of the Northwest Coast, along with a considerable number of implements collected from British Columbia.⁸⁷

The practice of facial casting raises an interesting question. How did Smith convince people to submit to what must have been at best a strange and uncomfortable procedure? A candidate would have been subject to sitting for lengthy periods with mouth and eyes closed and his or her face completely encased in wet plaster, leaving only small openings in the nostrils for breathing. Throughout his travels in British Columbia and Washington, Smith carted around heavy boxes of dental plaster, hoping to persuade Native people to be cast. In 1897, while Smith was conducting fieldwork at the Port Essington canneries on the Skeena River, a number of people agreed to the procedure following five days of negotiation, a significant accomplishment in Smith’s eyes: “They are ALL independently rich. They are well dressed and dignified and self supporting. Perhaps for this reason money does not buy the right to cast their faces and so I get the casts very cheap only \$1.00 per face and 50 cents for the interpreter for each man.” Once the first group of men had their faces cast, Smith anticipated “smooth sailing” with the remainder of the community.⁸⁸ In 1898, he reported that he would “try for some Salish faces from the region between Comox and Victoria.”⁸⁹ However, in this Coast Salish area on southern Vancouver Island and on the southern coast of the mainland, where “all

⁸⁷ Franz Boas to Morris K. Jesup, 15 October 1899, Jesup North Pacific Expedition Records, box 2, folder 9, Division of Anthropology Archives, AMNH.

⁸⁸ Harlan I. Smith to Mr. Winser, 10 August 1897, Jesup Correspondence Box, Division of Anthropology Archives, AMNH.

⁸⁹ Harlan I. Smith to Franz Boas, Accession 1898-41, Division of Anthropology Archives, AMNH.

these lower Frazier people seem to object to casting,” Smith was not able to persuade anyone to yield to the procedure.⁹⁰



Figure 2.1: Plaster “life mask” of unidentified man in the collection of the Canadian Museum of Civilization, Ottawa. Some members of a delegation visiting Ottawa (possibly the 1908 delegation of 25 coastal chiefs who petitioned Prime Minister Wilfred Laurier regarding their unsundered lands) were measured and had their faces cast by museum staff.⁹¹

From the vantage point of the twenty-first century, the practice of facial casting epitomizes anthropology as colonialism. To be sure, one explanation for Aboriginal participation in ethnographic research is that it paid cash. Aboriginal people responded to new economic opportunities emerging at the intersection of anthropological pursuit and the new industrial economy. In the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries,

⁹⁰ Harlan I. Smith to Franz Boas, 10 November 1897, Accession 1897-27, Division of Anthropology Archives, AMNH.

⁹¹ “Indian Delegation Visiting Ottawa,” undated and incomplete list, Charles E. Borden, 1973, Physical Anthropology Notes, MS 4687, Canadian Museum of Civilization Archives (CMCA). In relation to the 1908 delegation, see Union of B.C. Indian Chiefs, *Stolen Lands, Broken Promises: Researching the Indian Land Question in British Columbia* (Vancouver: Union of British Columbia Indian Chiefs, 2005), 22; and R. Cole Harris, *Making Native Space: Colonialism, Resistance, and Reserves in British Columbia* (Vancouver: University of British Columbia Press, 2002), 226.

ethnographers often visited the sites of industrial capital such as the salmon canneries along the Fraser River and on the northern coast where large numbers of Aboriginal people lived and worked in the summertime. During his research trips to British Columbia in the 1890s and in 1909, Harlan I. Smith photographed Aboriginal people from northern communities who congregated in Victoria to await word from the Fraser River cannery bosses before making the journey across the Georgia Strait.⁹² Though unlikely to be a significant long-term source of income, acting as subjects for casting, photography, and measurement was both a gesture of accommodation to outsider requests and provided payment in cash in a largely trade-based economy. Furthermore, these “subjects” often took this opportunity to sell cultural objects, such as the baskets depicted in the photographs and sought-after by museum collectors.⁹³

Casting may have provided an immediate source of cash, but the Aboriginal people who consented to the reproduction of their images had other objectives as well. Significantly, Smith returned two plaster casts to Kamloops in the care of the Oblate missionary, Father J. M. Le Jeune, who had assisted Smith during his work in 1897. Le Jeune wrote, “The two busts, Chief and Fallerdeau were received today and opened at our house in presence of the two recipients. I wish you had been there to admire their wonderful good feelings. They took them home at once.”⁹⁴ It is not clear what the two Kamloops men did with the sculptural busts -- possibly they were incorporated into ceremonial practice or were put on display in their homes for more personal or family

⁹² “Photographs from the North Pacific Coast,” box 3, file 1, Harlan I. Smith Collection, Division of Anthropology Archives, AMNH.

⁹³ Ibid; and catalogue records, especially Catalogue 16, vol. II and III, Division of Anthropology Archives, AMNH

⁹⁴ J.M. Le Jeune, OMI, to [Harlan I. Smith], 4 March 1898, Jesup North Pacific Expedition Records, box 2, file 8, Division of Anthropology Archives, AMNH.

contemplation⁹⁵ -- but their delight in receiving them complicates the idea that casting was exclusively a racializing, colonizing process. In the institutional, metropolitan setting of the American Museum of Natural History, casts did not retain their local, individual identity, but serviced a larger anthropological project that organized tribal cultures and communities through geography and cultural, linguistic, and physical markers. Yet these personal objects did not necessarily transmit meaning the way Smith and his colleagues intended. When returned to their originating communities, “life masks” embarked on narratives and trajectories different from those exhibited in the museum. The meaning of casting negotiated in the local setting contrasts with the reading of these casts solely as examples of vanishing, racial types.

Smith also took numerous ethnographic portraits of individuals from multiple perspectives -- frontal, profile, and three-quarter -- with the aim of reproducing in two-dimensional form the three-dimensional figure.⁹⁶ In some cases these images accompanied the life masks and assisted in the production of sculptural busts back in the museum laboratories. Many of these photographs were published in the Jesup Expedition’s *Ethnological Album of the North Pacific Coasts of America and Asia*, in which individuals were depicted anonymously, as physical types, representatives of their particular tribal community.⁹⁷ Yet in his photographic scrapbooks and in the museum’s catalogue record, Boas and Smith recorded local information and in some cases carefully

⁹⁵ See Carol Williams, “Indigenous Uses of Photography,” in *Framing the West: Race, Gender, and the Photographic Frontier in the Pacific Northwest* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2003).

⁹⁶ Elizabeth Edwards, *Anthropology and Photography, 1860-1920* (New Haven, NJ: Yale University Press, 1992).

⁹⁷ Jesup North Pacific Expedition, *Ethnographical Album of the North Pacific Coasts of America and Asia* (New York: American Museum of Natural History, 1900).

transcribed the ancestral names of the individuals photographed and/or cast.⁹⁸ From the field to the museum, however, ethnographic portraits were transformed from individuals to representatives of a vanishing typology of race. As photographic reproductions moved away from the local site -- or "contact zone" of Aboriginal-ethnographer interaction, to use Mary Louise Pratt's framework⁹⁹ -- to the off-site institutional setting in which indigenous people are usually absent, local identity became increasingly abstracted and generalized. It is not until the late twentieth century, with the establishment of community-based research projects most often initiated in relation to land claims, that these histories are re-interpreted (as will be discussed later in this thesis).¹⁰⁰ However, in relation to Smith's work in physical anthropology, the emphasis was on the physical information captured by a photograph, measurement, or cast. The cultural context of the living Indian who contributed this information -- ancestral name, genealogy, material and expressive culture -- was less of a priority. These considerations were the responsibility of Franz Boas and his ethnographic assistants.

It is clear that those who agreed to be photographed expected that they would be financially compensated for their cooperation with the ethnographic project. Aboriginal people certainly saw the photographic encounter as an opportunity for economic

⁹⁸ Although Catherine Carlson found that many of Smith's portraits from the British Columbia Interior were of individuals photographed "shamefully without most of their names recorded," often the names, gender, tribal affiliations, and age of the individuals cast and photographed by Boas and Smith are recorded in the museum's catalogue records. See, for example, Catalogue 99, vol. II, pp. 34-37, Division of Anthropology Archives, AMNH; and Carlson, "Letters from the Field," 161.

⁹⁹ Mary Louise Pratt, *Imperial Eyes: Travel Writing and Transculturation* (London: Routledge, 1992).

¹⁰⁰ For recent re-interpretations, see Elizabeth Edwards, "Visualizing History: Diamond Jenness's Photographs of the D'Entrecasteaux Islands, Massim, 1911-1912," in *Raw Histories: Photographs, Anthropology, and Museums* (Oxford: Berg, 2001): 83-106; Williams, "Indigenous Uses of Photography;" Gloria Jean Frank, "That's My Dinner on Display: A First Nations Reflection on Museum Culture," *BC Studies* 125-126 (Spring-Summer 2000): 163-78; Bloch and Kendall, *Museum at the End of the World*; and Laura Peers and Alison K. Brown with members of the Kainai Nation, *'Pictures Bring us Messages': Sinaakssiiksi aohtsimaahpihkookiyaawa -- Photographs and Histories from the Kainai Nation* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2005).

advancement.¹⁰¹ Generally, Smith paid between one and three dollars for a cast and series of photographs, a significant amount of money in the late 1800s.¹⁰² In Coast Salish territory, at Duncan on Vancouver Island and at the mouth of the Fraser River, the Cowichan and Musqueam displayed an astute awareness of the escalating value of Indian images and wanted twenty dollars per photograph, an amount Smith found beyond his limited finances.¹⁰³ Smith found these prices too extravagant for his budget and was concerned that excessive spending on photography and ethnographic collecting left less money for what he considered more important: his shell-heap excavations at the Marpole Midden and elsewhere on the southern coast. Some of the people photographed also expected to receive copies of the prints. At Spence's Bridge, the local ethnographer James Teit informed Smith that "the three Indians photoed in costume want picture of full figure as well as bust photo which I sent." Teit, who also worked for the Jesup Expedition and assisted Smith with his work in the Interior, requested the photograph of Tcimtko, a woman whom Smith had measured, in order to give her a copy. Smith reassured Teit that he had forwarded the prints of all Spence's Bridge Indians, but conceded that he may have missed one.¹⁰⁴

Aboriginal people treated ethnographic photography as an early form of portraiture and possibly incorporated images into ceremonial and secular practice. By the late 1890s, Aboriginal people frequented commercial photography studios in Victoria,

¹⁰¹ Williams, *Framing the West*, 144.

¹⁰² Harlan I. Smith, "Expenses Harlan I. Smith, Nov. 1897," Accession 1897-27, Division of Anthropology, AMNH. By comparison, Smith paid approximately \$2 per day for general labour.

¹⁰³ Harlan I. Smith to Franz Boas, 7 September 1898, Accession 1898-41, Division of Anthropology Archives, AMNH.

¹⁰⁴ Harlan I. Smith to Dr. Boas, 27 April 1898, Accession 1898-41, Division of Anthropology Archives, AMNH. Regarding the contributions of James Teit, see Wendy Wickwire, "'We Shall Drink from the Stream and So Shall You': James A. Teit and Native Resistance in British Columbia, 1908-22," *Canadian Historical Review* 79 (1998): 199-236.

Vancouver, and other urban centres to have formal portraits produced. Many of these images were incorporated into ceremonial practice, replacing the sculptural effigies prominent in Coast Salish funerary memorials and displayed in domestic interiors.¹⁰⁵ Cooperating with the American Museum's ethnographic project gave Aboriginal people access to this new technology, within their own communities and for their own ends. In light of these requests by Aboriginal individuals for the return of their images, we may conclude that (in some contexts) plaster casts and photographs were not simply colonial or ethnographic objects, but retained local resonance and meaning. In their communities of origin, photographic and sculptural reproductions continued to represent individual people, not racial typologies. Certainly, we need to understand ethnographic processes in relation to western ideas about race and the close association of anthropology and colonialism, but we also need to acknowledge a conceptual and historical space that afforded Aboriginal people room to circumvent these colonialist practices and, as Carol Williams describes in *Framing the West: Race, Gender, and the Photographic Frontier in the Pacific Northwest*, to incorporate, appropriate, critique, and revise them to their own purposes. "In this way," explains Williams, "photographic (mis)representations serve as entry points to redress the shameful treatment of Native Americans throughout history."¹⁰⁶

Collecting Evidence from "Dead Indians"

While Harlan I. Smith and Aboriginal peoples of the British Columbia Interior, Lower Fraser, north coast, Vancouver Island, and Washington State negotiated the terms

¹⁰⁵ Williams, *Framing the West*, 147-163. The Brownie camera became more widely available in the 1920s and 1930s.

¹⁰⁶ Williams, *Framing the West*, 176.

of photographing, measuring, and casting, the museum simultaneously sought human skulls and skeletal remains for their physical anthropology research collection. In a 1908 summary of the expedition's results, Boas explained that along with analyzing the geographic distribution of ideas and cultural forms, "studying the connection between contemporary and prehistoric populations...are all necessary in order to obtain a clear picture of the development of culture and the distribution of peoples in all areas."¹⁰⁷

While the intent of Boas and the Jesup ethnographers was to unravel subtle evidences of cultural movement and relativism, the present study argues that the distinction between "prehistoric" and "contemporary" had a much larger and long-lasting political impact. Indians and places marked with Indianness, such as pictographs, fishing sites, and burial grounds were organized around the discursive binaries of dead/living, unoccupied/occupied, midden/burial ground, and traditional/modern.¹⁰⁸ As we will see, these dichotomies created distance between contemporary Aboriginal people and the human remains found at archaeological sites and, in turn, served to justify political policies that reflected this separation.

Just as photographic portraits and plaster casts were used as evidence of the physical characteristics of contemporary (though not necessarily "modern") living Aboriginal people, skulls were highly sought as the primary indicator of the racial characteristics of "prehistoric" peoples. In 1888 while conducting a general survey of British Columbia's tribes for the British Association for the Advancement of Science,

¹⁰⁷ Franz Boas, "The Results of the Jesup Expedition," 19.

¹⁰⁸ Paige Raibmon has recently argued that Indians were organized around the binaries of traditional/modern and that "authenticity" was closely affiliated with the notion of the "traditional" Indian. See Paige Raibmon, *Authentic Indians: Episodes of Encounter from the Late-Nineteenth-Century Northwest Coast* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2005); and Brian W. Dippé, *The Vanishing American: White Attitudes and U.S. Indians Policy* (Lawrence: University of Kansas Press, 1982).

Franz Boas made a substantial collection of human remains through both purchase and theft. As Boas complained in a frequently cited quote, “It is most unpleasant work to steal bones from a grave, but what is the use, someone has to do it.”¹⁰⁹ In the same year, Boas attempted to purchase a large collection of bones, the remains of at least 123 Cowichan individuals, from the Vancouver Island collectors William and James Sutton. The Cowichan Indians opposed the desecration of their graves, hired a lawyer, and obtained a warrant to search the Sutton’s sawmill for their missing ancestors. The police did not locate any human remains at the sawmill, however, and the Suttons managed to sell Boas the collection anyway, shipping it to the American Museum with falsified documentation.¹¹⁰ Much like other Northwest Coast peoples, the Cowichan were equally offended by the theft of their so-called “prehistoric” and “historic” ancestors. Osteological collecting was a key preoccupation of the Jesup Expedition researchers. Boas instructed his field team to secure “skulls and other human bones,” to build up the American Museum’s research collection. “The more the better,” he instructed Captain Miner Bruce, of Alaska, specifying that the bones “also must be carefully labeled in regard to the place where they come from.”¹¹¹

As would be expected, Boas and Smith had more difficulty negotiating with Aboriginal communities the appropriate protocol for bone collecting than they did negotiating with individuals to take casts and photographs. In 1897, members of the Kamloops Band prevented Smith from digging on their reserve, forcing the Department

¹⁰⁹ Franz Boas, 6 June 1888, letter in Rohner, ed., *The Ethnography of Franz Boas*, 88. Quoted in Thomas, *Skull Wars*, 59; and Cole, *Captured Heritage*, 119.

¹¹⁰ This incident is described in Cole, *Captured Heritage*, 119-120. In relation to the Sutton’s mill that occupied a portion of the Cowichan reserve, see Douglas C. Harris, *Fish, Law, and Colonialism: The Legal Capture of Salmon in British Columbia* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2001), 130, 137-8.

¹¹¹ [Boas] to Capt. Miner Bruce, 1 April 1899, Jesup Correspondence, Division of Anthropology Archives, AMNH.

of Indian Affairs to step in to mediate the dispute. As Smith reported to Boas, the “Indians here object to my taking bones away -- They are friendly and will allow me to dig graves and take all but the bones. I have seen [the Indian] agent, and Indians are on the fence. We hope they will change their minds and allow bones to go to N.Y. for study and not for joke as they fear.”¹¹² Again Smith explained to the museum’s secretary the difficulties faced while attempting to remove skeletal remains: “The Indians all treat me very well but refuse to let me carry bones away. They allow me to take all other specimens.”¹¹³ Similarly, in August 1898, Smith located extensive shell middens on the Cowichan Reserve at Duncan on Vancouver Island but could not excavate because they were located on the reserve.¹¹⁴ It had become clear, therefore, that archaeologists who were intent on removing human skeletal remains from burial sites had greater chances of success when they did so safely obscured from the view of uncooperative Indians.

Smith solicited the indigenous expertise of George Hunt, the son of a Tlingit mother and an English fur trader, who was raised in Fort Rupert and who worked closely with Boas acquiring cultural objects and information from Kwakwaka’wakw communities and the larger coastal region. Hunt was instrumental in collecting the objects for display at the 1893 Chicago World’s Fair, and became a key ethnographer for the Jesup Expedition.¹¹⁵ At Fort Rupert, Hunt visited old burial caves to retrieve cultural objects and skeletal remains, a technique that was certainly cheaper than purchasing

¹¹² Harlan I. Smith to Franz Boas, 18 June 1897, Accession 1897-27, Division of Anthropology Archives, AMNH.

¹¹³ Harlan I. Smith to Mr. Winser, 8 July 1897, Jesup North Pacific Expedition Records, box 2, file 7, Anthropological Archives, AMNH.

¹¹⁴ Harlan I. Smith to Franz Boas, 31 August 1898, Accession 1898-41; and Harlan I. Smith, “1898 Report of Operations,” file 1898-41, Division of Anthropology Records, AMNH.

¹¹⁵ Ira Jacknis, “George Hunt, Collector of Indian Specimens,” in *Chiefly Feasts: The Enduring Kwakiutl Potlatch*, ed. Aldona Jonaitis (New York: American Museum of Natural History, 1992).

objects from living people and facilitated the collection of human remains. In June 1898, Hunt helped Smith retrieve skeletons and skulls from numerous tree and box burial sites. Even though Hunt had received permission from the local community to take these remains, he felt obliged to do so with stealth. Smith explained: “We are doing it secretly, however, leaving no traces behind us and will use the permission to cover a possible detection.”¹¹⁶ Permission was held as an insurance policy against potential opposition. Again Smith reported that, “Although George Hunt told me I might have the skeletons I thought what the Indians did not know about it would not hurt them.”¹¹⁷ Over time, Smith was clearly bothered by this deception, but he justified his behaviour by citing his responsibilities to Boas and his employers in New York.¹¹⁸ Bone collecting was simply part of his work for the larger good of scientific knowledge.

At Lillooet, Smith decided to cease archaeological excavations once the St’at’imc returned from their fishing excursions in September. He claimed that he “would rather let the matter be digested by them before taking up more extensive archaeological studies which must of necessity to careful work and preservation of specimens be done more openly.”¹¹⁹ He strove to maintain friendly relations with communities to ease his moral misgivings, but also to facilitate the collecting work. At Nimpkish River near Alert Bay, Smith potlatched matches, securing “the friendship of all Fort Rupert and vicinity,” some

¹¹⁶ Harlan I. Smith to Dr. Boas, 13 June 1898, Accession 1898-41, Division of Anthropology Archives, AMNH.

¹¹⁷ Harlan I. Smith to Dr. Boas, 6 July 1898, Accession 1898-41, Division of Anthropology Archives, AMNH.

¹¹⁸ Ibid.

¹¹⁹ Harlan I. Smith to Franz Boas, 16 September 1899, Accession 1899-3, Division of Anthropology Archives, AMNH.

of whose residents he had meet during the 1893 Chicago's World Fair.¹²⁰ At times, Boas and Smith hired local Aboriginal guides to assist with the grim task of retrieving bones. Yet the idea that the graves were "prehistoric" and far removed in time from present-day indigenous people did not always mitigate the cultural connections or spiritual taboos for these guides as they did for Smith and Boas. In 1900 back at the museum, Smith wrote that he was glad that Boas had met one of these guides, Baptiste, in the Nicola Valley: "I trust he [Baptiste] is happy and has recovered from the shock of digging bones."¹²¹

The Jesup Expedition researchers side-stepped the fact that in some cases Aboriginal people forcefully opposed grave robbing. But how did anthropologists justify extensive grave robbing given the moral issues it must have raised? In some circumstances, Boas and Smith believed that local Aboriginal people were indifferent to the removal of human remains from gravesites because the identity of the individuals buried at these places was no longer known. From Lytton, Smith reported success in obtaining sixteen complete skeletons: "All of them are so old that the Indians said I might dig." Yet, when he found graves that contained evidence of contact with European society he resorted to his strategy of deception, explaining that "by taking skeletons out on backs we got them out without Indians realizing the bulk and so free from objections but when the Indians return from fishing it would not be pleasant to be here."¹²² The identity of skeletal remains from "prehistoric" graves was unknown (leaving it to science to determine) and, therefore, according to the anthropologists, these remains were up for

¹²⁰ Harlan I. Smith to Dr. Boas, 6 July 1898, Accession 1898-41, Division of Anthropology Archives, AMNH.

¹²¹ Harlan I. Smith to Dr. Boas, 5 July 1900, Department of Anthropology Correspondence, box 15, file 11, Division of Anthropology Archives, AMNH.

¹²² Harlan I. Smith to Franz Boas, 19 August 1899, Accession 1899-3, Division of Anthropology Archives, AMNH.

grabs. Skeletal remains from “historic” graves were more closely associated with contemporary peoples and, therefore, were subjected to the field techniques of deception and secrecy. The dichotomy of prehistoric and historic was also spatially configured as off- and on-reserve sites. The assumption was that off-reserve sites were no longer used and, therefore, unassociated with local Indians. Sometimes Smith found that graves did not always fit neatly into these categories. He was confused by the Nlaka’pamux’s unwillingness to approve his excavations of “old graves” on an island, despite their consent to the excavation of graves that contained “no positive evidence to point to great antiquity.”¹²³

From Burial Ground to Archaeological Site

Such looting raises an interesting question with direct reference to the Marpole Midden: How was looting allowed to happen when colonial land policies specifically set aside burial grounds and cemeteries, protecting them from desecration and settler encroachment? Some forty years earlier, in 1859, Governor James Douglas proclaimed that Indian Reserves “should in all cases include their cultivated fields and village sites, for which from habit and association, they invariably conceive a strong attachment, and prize more, for that reason, than for the extent or value of the land.”¹²⁴ Douglas later clarified for federal officials the general guidelines for setting apart Indian Reserves in the colony of British Columbia:

The principle followed in all cases was to leave the extent and selection of the land entirely optional with the Indians who were immediately interested in the reserve. The surveying Officers having instructions to

¹²³ Smith, “Archaeology of Lytton,” 412-3. Quoted in Carlson, “Letters from the Field,” 142.

¹²⁴ Governor James Douglas to Right Hon. Sir Lytton, 14 March 1859, in *British Columbia, Papers Relating to the Indian Land Question, 1850-1875* (Victoria: Government Printing House, 1875), 16-17.

meet their wishes in every particular, and to include in each Reserve, the permanent Village sites, the fishing stations, and Burial Grounds, cultivated land, and all the favorite resorts of the Tribes; and, in short, to include every piece of ground, to which they have acquired an equitable title through continuous occupation, tillage, or other investment of their labour.¹²⁵

According to policy statements, Aboriginal graveyards and burial grounds were immune from alienation. Similarly, Douglas' Preemption Law outlined the procedures by which British subjects (and for a very short period of time, Aboriginal people) could, on the mainland, obtain 160 acres of crown land and purchase additional acreage for twenty-five cents an acre. However, preempting land in any "Indian Reserve or settlement" was prohibited.¹²⁶ In fact, permanently occupied settlements, along with cultivated gardens, or "potato patches," and graveyards were among the only kinds of evidences of Aboriginal "occupation" that whites accepted. The state recognized indigenous entitlement to small plots of land that were "utilized."

Graveyards were protected, however, not so much because of recognized land-use, but out of fear that violating lands of such emotional importance to Aboriginal people would provoke a highly violent reaction. The colonial government recognized the importance of gravesites to Aboriginal communities and, as early as 1865, enacted the "Indian Grave Ordinance" to prevent their desecration. The frequent looting of Indian graves for cultural objects was becoming a potential source of violence in the new colony. Governor Seymour explained the need for the legislation:

¹²⁵ James Douglas to I.W. Powell, 14 October 1874, RG10, vol. 3611, file 3756-1, NAC. Reprinted in Harris, *Making Native Space*, 43-44.

¹²⁶ Paul Tennant, *Aboriginal Peoples and Politics: The Indian Land Question in British Columbia, 1849-1989* (Vancouver: University of British Columbia Press, 1990), 35.

The Natives of BC are in the habit of depositing upon the graves of their friends articles of considerable value such as muskets, blankets, carefully carved and well dressed effigies of the deceased. The poorest Indian respects the native Grave but white men have occasionally stolen things deposited thereon. Nothing is more exasperating to the Natives than this want of respect for the resting place of their dead, and with a view to the preservation of the public peace, I caused the enclosed Ordinance to be laid before Council.¹²⁷

The violation of Aboriginal burial grounds was a serious crime. The 1865 ordinance imposed a penalty of 100 pounds with a possible prison sentence of up to six months for stealing, destroying, or purchasing any “images, bones, articles, or things,” from an Indian grave. Repeat offenders were liable to twelve months imprisonment with hard labour.¹²⁸

As is well-known in indigenous communities, policy or law as expressed on paper was not always the same as what happened on the ground. First Nations in British Columbia have continually reminded us that not all villages, burial grounds, or “favourite resorts” were reserved from white encroachment. Certainly, in what is now Vancouver and the Lower Mainland, numerous places where people resided (and were interred) were not set aside as Indian Reserves. In 1876, the Indian Reserve commissioners did not reserve the ancient village $\chi^w a y \chi^w \text{ay}$, in Stanley Park even though people affiliated with the Musqueam and Squamish lived there and in 1865, colonial agents and settlers had recognized it as one of the oldest villages in the inlet because of its extensive shell

¹²⁷ F. Seymour to The Right Hon. Edward Cardwell, 24 August 1865, Dispatch No 66, Colonial Office Records 60/21, BCARS.

¹²⁸ While they agreed that the looting of Indian graves was a serious offence, some settlers felt this penalty too severe. They also felt the law gave local Magistrates too much discretionary power. See “The Indian Grave Ordinance,” *British Columbian*, 30 March 1865. In 1867, the ordinance was amended to a fine of \$100 and a maximum prison sentence of three months for the first offence and six months for the second offence.

midden.¹²⁹ Later, in the 1890s, a number of families closely affiliated with the Musqueam were relocated from the village q̣ẉeyaʔχ̣ẉ at Gary Point near present-day Steveston, where they had lived “in undisturbed and peaceable possession of it, for all time to the present.”¹³⁰ The Department of Indian Affairs orchestrated their move to the main Musqueam Reserve at the mouth of the Fraser River at the request of the entrepreneur H. Bell Irving, who wanted the land for his salmon cannery operations. What became “policy” and which pieces of land were demarcated as Indian Reserves was often at the discretionary power of the colonial government, which often responded to the demands of European settlement or industrial capital rather than Aboriginal peoples’ demands to have their lands and burial grounds secured.

As noted above, the colonial government policy prohibited preemption of land that was an Indian village site or burial ground. Yet, this policy did not protect the Marpole Midden. In 1865, settler George Garypie, who was married to a Musqueam woman named Catherine, applied to preempt 160 acres of land on the north bank of the Fraser River for farming purposes.¹³¹ This preemption was granted, without delay, even though it included the ancient village and burial site known as č̣sna:m.

¹²⁹ J.B. Launders to the Colonial Secretary, 3 June 1865, GR1372, file 969, British Columbia Archives and Records Service (BCARS). For an analysis of the census records taken at the time of the commissioner’s visit, see J.E. Michael Kew, “The Musqueam First Nation and Its Territorial Rights in Burrard Inlet,” expert report prepared for Blake, Cassels, and Graydon, on behalf of the Musqueam First Nation, and submitted in *Mathias et al. v. the Queen et al.*, Federal Court of Canada, Vancouver, British Columbia, 1996; and Dorothy I.D. Kennedy, “Rebuttal to ‘The Musqueam First Nation and Its Territorial Rights,’ by Dr. Michael Kew,” expert report prepared for Ratcliff and Co. on behalf of the Squamish Nation, and submitted in *Mathias et al. v. the Queen et al.*, Federal Court of Canada, Vancouver, British Columbia, 1996.

¹³⁰ Frank Devlin, Indian Agent to A.W. Vowell, Indian Superintendent, 26 September 1896, RG10, vol. 3961, file 147,194, NAC.

¹³¹ George Garypie to Hon. C. Brew, JP, 19 October 1865, New Westminster Preemption Records, GR1069, file 1/138, p. 13, BCARS. In relation to Garypie’s marriage, see J.S. Matthews, “Garypie’s Pond, North Arm, Fraser River, 1934,” photograph with notations, copy in file 205.7, Musqueam Indian Band Archives (MIBA).

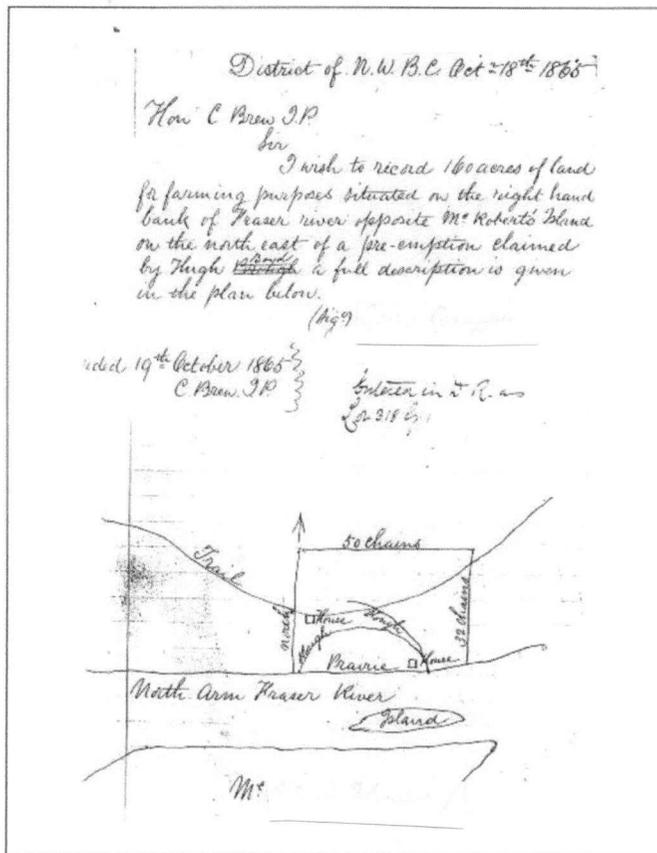


Figure 2.2: George Garypie's 1865 preemption application.¹³²

After investigating a conflict between a Penaklut man and a group of white settlers over residency on Salt Spring Island, Captain Richards of the H.M.S. Plumper reported in 1860 that the man “has also built a log hut similar to those of the settlers and acquainted me that he intended to reside there permanently, that his family had always frequented the Island for the purpose of hunting and fishing during summer and as a proof of his

¹³² Copy in Leonard C. Ham, *Archaeological Potential Model for the Marpole Midden* (Calgary: Canadian Heritage Parks, 2002), 19.

hereditary right he pointed out to me the grave of his father and other relatives.”¹³³

Aboriginal people moved, built western-style homes, and pointed to gravesites to counter colonial discourses that redefined seasonal residency as a form of abandonment.¹³⁴

Familiar with the colonial logic that recognized material “improvements” to the land as a sign of ownership, Aboriginal people expected that graves, along with physical structures such as log cabins, would provide visible, tangible evidence of their territorial rights. But colonial officials and settlers read such evidence selectively. They did not need to physically remove structures or ignore burial grounds and other evidences of occupation, but simply redefine them as “abandoned” or “disused” to erase them.

Colonial agents worked to fix only some graveyards as reserves. Most often these were burial grounds that were “in-use,” followed Christian burial practices, were located within or close to villages, and, as such, could be contained by small reserves. To be recognized by settler society, graves needed to be visible and, preferably, fenced. In 1914 at Lytton, a rancher wanted to farm his property next to the Papyum Indian Reserve on land the Indians said was a graveyard. “The old Indians tell me that in the early days there was an outbreak of smallpox which carried off a great number, and they were all buried in this cemetery, but it was never fenced on account of the scarcity of funds, so they just managed to fence in the more recent graves,” explained the Indian Agent.¹³⁵

¹³³ G.H. Richards, Rear Admiral and Commander in Chief to James Douglas, Governor, 10 April 1860, GR1372, file 1213, BCARS.

¹³⁴ For example, in the 1860s, the Musqueam leader *cəm̓lenəx̓* built a house “with a gable roof in imitation of the house of Colonel Moody,” the chief commissioner of Lands and Works for the colony. Roberta L. Bagshaw, ed. *No Better Land: The 1860 Diaries of the Anglican Colonial Bishop George Hills* (Victoria: SonoNis Press, 1996), 75-76.

¹³⁵ Pinhahan Indian Agent to Assistant Deputy and Secretary, 11 April 1914, RG10, vol. 8076, file 976/36-7-22-27C, pt. 1, NAC.

Lacking visible signs of burial, the rancher objected to the Indians fencing the remainder of the graveyard, unless they could prove that the ground was a cemetery.



Figure 2.3: Lillooet Indian Grave, 1959. Photograph I-29068, British Columbia Archives and Records Service.

In some cases, officials set apart graveyards to accommodate changing burial practices and residency patterns. In 1879, Indian Reserve Commissioner G.M. Sproat established a reserve a short distance from New Westminster so that it could be used as a “general graveyard” for the local indigenous communities and for those who came to New Westminster to work in the Fraser River canneries. Sproat explained that this reserve “is meant generally for Indians frequenting New Westminster: but it is included among the Langley reserves as they wish to move bodies to it and are the largest tribe

interested in it.”¹³⁶ In response to demand, the commissioner established a burial ground where possibly none had existed before. Ongoing use and perhaps, convenience -- that is, a location suitably distant from white settlement – were qualifications for reserve status. This was certainly the case in 1897 when the Katzie wanted a graveyard reserve set aside to bury their dead. They had interred their dead in cedar boxes and placed them on the side of the mountain at Pitt River, but due to a series of forest fires and “seeing now how insecure was their burying place [they wished] to bury their dead in the same manner as white people but have no ground on their Reserve suitable for a Grave Yard.” Their plan for a new cemetery met opposition from settlers who were unwilling to exchange a piece of land for a new graveyard. Most objected to having an Indian graveyard in the vicinity of white settlement.¹³⁷

Often, state officials ignored burial grounds that were overgrown, disused or “abandoned.” In some cases, this meant that traditional tree or box burials, which were often located on islands, went unrecognized. In 1913, Chief George and thirty Sechelt representatives petitioned to have the islands at Porpoise Bay and Skookumchuck secured, stating, “there are many graves” where “our forefathers put their dead.” They were concerned that the islands had been sold and they wished to prevent anyone from settling there or burning their graves. The Indian Agent reassured the Sechelt that the land had not been sold or preempted, but warned that the department would not be able to

¹³⁶ G.M. Sproat, “Langley and Whonock Indian from page 256,” 30 June 1879, Minutes of Decision, vol. 18, pp. 333-337, Lands Registry, Department of Indian and Northern Affairs, Vancouver.

¹³⁷ “Correspondence regarding a cemetery for the Katzie Band,” vol. 8095, file 987/36-7-15-5, pt. 1, NAC. John Hammond sold one acre to the Department of Indian Affairs for this purpose, but by 1914, Port Hammond’s Board of Trade requested that the cemetery be removed “to some more suitable location,” claiming that the cemetery was in the centre of town, close to a school, and on land that was not an Indian Reserve.

prevent this from happening in the future, especially “if it is still unoccupied.”¹³⁸ Again, the prerequisite for reserve status was that graveyards had to be “active” (Christian/in the earth) as opposed to “abandoned” (traditional/above ground). In their petitions and negotiations over land and resource rights, First Nations people frequently pointed to graves as an expression of ownership that demonstrated ancestral or genealogical connections to place. Chief Chephaim of the False Creek Reserve in Vancouver, who, according to Musqueam historian James Point, was of Musqueam and Squamish ancestry, urged I.W. Powell, the Indian Superintendent for British Columbia, to prevent further encroachments on reserve land: “We want you to write strongly about this land it is our home – our ancestors are buried here.”¹³⁹

In 1914, Tsawwassen leader George Swanaset petitioned the Royal Commission of Indian Affairs, stating that his father’s sickness, death, and burial at Poplar Island was evidence that the reserve belonged to his community.¹⁴⁰ These statements were made to support Tsawwassen claims to a reserve that was assigned to “Coastal Indians in common,” but they were also made to undermine the claims to the same land made by the Musqueam and other Lower Fraser communities. The roots of these territorial conflicts lie in the state’s reserve policy and the colonialist practice of categorizing and

¹³⁸ Chief George, Chief Policeman et al to Mr. F. Burns [Byrne], Indian Agent, 3 November 1913, RG10, vol. 10898, file 167/1913-1947, NAC; and Peter Byrne, Indian Agent, to Chief George, 8 November 1913, RG10, vol. 1478, p. 640, NAC. In 1876, reserve commissioner G.M. Sproat mapped burial grounds at Porpoise Bay but did not reserve them, 3138/76 B.C. Ministry of Lands (copied at Specific Claims Library).

¹³⁹ I.W. Powell, Indian Superintendent to Superintendent General of Indian Affairs, 18 June 1886, RG10, vol. 7674, file 22167-5, NAC. According to James Point, Chephaim was “half Musqueam/ half Squamish.” See James Point, Musqueam oral history collection, taped interview, MIBA.

¹⁴⁰ George Swanaset to Sir [Royal Commission of Indian Affairs], Exhibit B16, undated, RG10, vol. 11021, file 520C, NAC.

administering indigenous peoples.¹⁴¹ By assigning reserves to specific groups such as the “Musqueam Tribe” or the “Tsawwassen Tribe,” the federal government divided Aboriginal peoples into distinct administrative and legal categories. While these categories certainly drew on existing Aboriginal social organization and patterns of residency, by delineating band membership and its association to a single reserve or series of reserves, the state constructed over time rigid political and legal classifications of people in a place where less formal demarcations had existed before.¹⁴² In this political context, Aboriginal people were acutely aware of the uncertain status of their off-reserve graveyards (or reserve graveyards that were not assigned to them); as such, petitions regarding graveyards and burial sites were intertwined with the larger issues of territorial dispossession and reserve security. In 1914, Peter Bob, of the Fountain Band, asked the McKenna-McBride commissioners “about our old graveyards, where the old Indians have been buried – that is, outside of the Reserves.”¹⁴³ In the political environment of the late nineteenth and early twentieth century, Aboriginal people saw burial grounds as not only sacred but also as their anchors to land.

In this colonial landscape, how were officials to deal with land that was not transformed into an Indian Reserve but remained clearly marked with Indianness? Another way, apparently, to erase Aboriginal burial grounds as evidence of ownership was to transform them into archaeological sites. As we have seen, the state recognized

¹⁴¹ Larry Grant, personal communication, September 2006.

¹⁴² I do not mean to imply that reserve creation somehow invented a new kind of tribal identity. Certainly, reserve commissioner G.M. Sproat was interested in the tribal history of the area and echoed to some extent the public perception of competing territorial claims to Burrard Inlet between the Musqueam and Squamish. G.M. Sproat to Minister of the Interior, 27 November 1876, RG10, vol. 3611 file 3756-7, NAC.

¹⁴³ Royal Commission on Indian Affairs for the Province of British Columbia, “Meeting with the Fountain Band or Tribe of Indians,” 9 November 1914, Lytton Agency, transcript by the Union of British Columbia Indian Chiefs, 67.

for reasons of peace and order that gravesites were important to Aboriginal communities. But the law did not always protect graveyards. In some cases -- and especially with respect to off-reserve burial grounds -- they were considered archaeological sites and thereby became the focus of divergent Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal discourses. Just as Boas, Smith, and other late nineteenth-century anthropologists organized Indians into the categories "living" and "dead," gravesites were divided into the categories of "prehistoric" (pre-contact), "historic" (containing evidence of the early contact era), and "active" (highly acculturated/ assimilated, and usually Christian).

By the time Harlan I. Smith was in the field in the 1890s, the Department of Indian Affairs supported (or ignored) the archaeological excavation of burial grounds. While excavating at Port Hammond (Maple Ridge) on the Lower Fraser in 1897, Smith read in the local newspaper that George Dorsey and Edward Allen, collectors for Chicago's Field Museum of Natural History, had been arrested in Oregon for grave robbing. Smith reported to Boas that,

In conversation with the Indian Agent from Westminster today he said that every Indian Agent here had received notice that there was a liability of parties digging in Indian grave yards and to look out for them as it was against the law - Also he had received a second circular giving him direction to warn the Indians and tell them the law on the subject.¹⁴⁴

Indian Superintendent A.W. Vowell reassured Smith that the notices were not directed at his excavation work, but were to alert the local indigenous people to whites who were

¹⁴⁴ Harlan I. Smith to Franz Boas, 15 September 1897, Accession 1897-27, Division of Anthropology Archives, AMNH. Quoted in Carlson, "Letters from the Field," 151-2; and Thom, "Harlan I. Smith's Jesup Fieldwork," 146.

digging up their graveyards so that the land could be preempted for settlement.¹⁴⁵ In one especially disturbing case, Vowell brought the full force of the law against a businessman from Victoria for the desecration of the grave of a young boy at Alberni: “The head so removed had been treated with as little consideration as though it has been the head of a dog or of a cat and not a human being albeit an Indian!”¹⁴⁶ Vowell protested that in many cases throughout the area, both curio hunters and scientists transgressed the boundaries of legal and moral behaviour, but it was difficult to secure convictions. While Vowell and the media took great interest in the Alberni case (likely because the skull was initially thought to have belonged to a white boy), the businessman only received a small fine. One thing is clear. Had the department ever wanted to pursue legal charges against Smith or other collectors representing museums, they would not have been short of physical evidence.

The Department of Indian Affairs’ position on this matter presents a revealing set of contradictions: the perceived need for both the protection and the scientific excavation of graveyards. Vowell certainly recognized the importance of graveyards to Native people, noting that the Indians “are known to have the deepest veneration for the remains of their dead, [and are] most sensitive and easily excited by interferences with their places of internment.” He instructed the Indian Agents “as to the proper burial of Indian dead.”¹⁴⁷ Graves required protection from robbers who looted, not archaeologists who excavated. It seems that the activity was deemed either criminal or scientific depending on who was doing the digging. Redefining grave robbing as science removed

¹⁴⁵ Thom, “Harlan I. Smith’s Jesup Fieldwork,” 146.

¹⁴⁶ A.W. Vowell to Secretary of Indian Affairs, 14 October 1898, RG10, vol. 3990, file 176,734, NAC.

¹⁴⁷ Ibid.

archaeologists such as Smith from threat of prosecution and afforded them the assistance and support of local Indian Agents. For example, Indian Agent C.C. Perry informed the Geological Survey of the presence of tattooed “Indian mummies,” interred in rock crevices near Prince Rupert, prompting further questions from Smith, who was, by that time, head archaeologist at the National Museum of Canada:

First of all I would like to know the approximate age of antiquity of the remains; that is, were they placed there in prehistoric times or since the white man had been on the northwest coast, are they accompanied by any objects such as glass beads or manufactured iron which would indicate that the people had been in contact with white men.

Kindly let me know the exact location of the place and the approximate size of the cave, the number of burials or bodies which it contained, if these bodies have all been left where they were or not, how many have been taken away, by whom and where they are now. Were there any prehistoric objects found with them, and what they are, also where they are. Is the place worthy of exploration, and would it be possible for me to explore it and take away all the remains, or is it a recent burial place belonging to Indians who would object to its being disturbed...¹⁴⁸

He asked, “Is it a cemetery protected by law, or is it an archaeological place which should be explored?” By the 1920s, when Smith asked these questions, the Department of Indian Affairs viewed cemeteries and archaeological sites as distinct and separate entities. The very act of scientific excavation transformed burial grounds that were not within the boundaries of Indian Reserves into archaeological sites. In addition, by the late nineteenth century and early twentieth century, collecting human remains from burial grounds, caves, shell-middens, or other “archaeological sites” was accepted practice because of the notion that they held the remains of “prehistoric” peoples, and not the ancestors of present-day peoples. In this context, the Marpole Midden became a

¹⁴⁸ C.C. Perry, Indian Agent, Skeena River Agency to the Director of Geological Survey, 9 January 1920; and [Harlan I. Smith] to Charles E. Perry, 29 January 1920, Harlan I. Smith correspondence, box 217, file 7, Charles E. (sic) Perry, CMCA.

significant source of “prehistoric” skulls and skeletal remains for the American Museum of Natural History, even though it was not referred to as a gravesite.

Archaeology at the Great Fraser Midden

In the spring of 1898, Smith spent a month with his wife Helena excavating at Eburne (as Smith referred to the Great Fraser Midden before it became known as the Marpole Midden) and collecting cultural objects such as stone beads, tools, and sculpture, as well as human remains. Assisted by three non-Aboriginal men from Vancouver -- O.C. Hastings (who had worked with Boas in Fort Rupert), W.H. Hindshaw, and Roland B. Dixon -- the fieldworkers shoveled out the dirt and sifted for objects.¹⁴⁹ The men paid little attention to an artifact’s exact provenance within the shell-midden, although in some cases Smith recorded the depth of the objects found and noted relational information in the catalogues back at the museum. Following a very promising first day of digging and after viewing the substantial artifact collections of local farmers who unearthed material during the course of their plowing, Smith anticipated that the site would yield many “specimens.” He was not disappointed. By early June, Smith had shipped thirty-five boxes of material to the museum including many skulls, complete skeletons, and skeletal bones.¹⁵⁰

¹⁴⁹ Thom, “Harlan I. Smith’s Jesup Fieldwork,” 148.

¹⁵⁰ See Catalogue No. 99, pp. 67-84, Division of Anthropology Archives, AMNH, for a list of the human remains that were taken from Marpole and other sites on the Northwest Coast in 1897 and 1898. Smith reported that he secured 33 human skeletons from Port Hammond and 75 from Eburne during the two months of excavations. See Harlan I. Smith, “Shell Heaps of the Lower Fraser River, British Columbia,” in *Memoirs of the American Museum*, vol. II, part 4: 187.



Figure 2.4: The Great Fraser Midden, 1898. American Museum of Natural History, No. 42964.

Franz Boas and Harlan I. Smith expected that comparative archaeological research in the region would uncover a story of early migration, displacement, and population movement. They learned from the local ethnographer Charles Hill-Tout, who had dug earlier at this site and others on the Lower Fraser, that there were two distinct types of skulls to be found in the shell-middens of the area. Hill-Tout believed that the unusually long skulls that he retrieved from Marpole and other shell-middens on the Lower Fraser represented the remains of an earlier race of people. He first proposed, in

an 1895 publication of the *Transactions of the Royal Society of Canada*, the theory that a “hostile” broad-headed people had displaced the original residents of the Fraser Delta.¹⁵¹ This theory became a key research question for Boas and Smith. As Brian Thom has summarized: “If there were indeed two distinct “types” such evidence was what Boas needed to understand the long-term historical ‘intermixture, linguistic borrowing, and exchange of cultural forms’ between Coast and interior peoples – an important piece of the larger picture of the peopling of the North Pacific Rim.”¹⁵² But Smith reported to Boas that he did not locate clear evidence to support the two-race model: “Everything is going well. We find two distinct types of skulls and it seems also that we find every conceivable intermediate form. In fact...we get no two alike.”¹⁵³ As he excavated further, Smith confirmed that skulls came in many indiscriminate shapes:

I wrote you of the Hammond type of skull and the long type. By long type I meant the type represented by the Hill-Tout skull. I don’t know how many of them but at least 6 in good condition and some broken. There seem to be intermediate forms. I feel all are mixed up about them as they are so different. There may be 3 or 4 types so far as I can see hastily. We have about 15 skulls I think that are fine and about 45 broken skulls. The two types seem to be buried alike, i.e. with equal care and some of each are deep down, others high up.¹⁵⁴

Contradicting his accounts from the field, when it came time to formally report on the excavations, Smith stated that “two distinct types of men were found” -- one of which

¹⁵¹ Charles Hill-Tout, “Later Prehistoric Man in British Columbia,” in *The Salish People: The Local Contributions of Charles Hill-Tout*, vol. 3, *The Mainland Halkomelem*, ed. Ralph Maud (Vancouver: Talonbooks, 1978), 23.

¹⁵² Thom, “Harlan I. Smith’s Jesup Fieldwork,” 141.

¹⁵³ Harlan I. Smith to Dr. Boas, 16 May 1898, Accession 1898-41, Division of Anthropology Archives, AMNH.

¹⁵⁴ Harlan I. Smith to Franz Boas, 3 June 1898, Accession 1898-41, Division of Anthropology Archives, AMNH.

appeared to have been cranially deformed.¹⁵⁵ The presence of two types of skulls along with other evidence from the site such as the disappearance of stone-flaking technology, and the change of burial practices from in-the-earth burial cairns and mounds to above-ground box and tree burials, all indicated to Boas a migration of people into the region.¹⁵⁶ As Thom observes today, "Had Boas taken seriously Smith's field observation...he might have reconsidered his long-held, but misguided, interpretation that the Salish were relatively recent arrivals in the area."¹⁵⁷

With the physical evidence from the Marpole Midden and other sites in British Columbia, Washington, and northeastern Asia, as well as the photographs, measurements, and face casts, Boas concluded:

Everything leads me to believe that humans have inhabited America for a long time. It has not yet been decided whether the migration occurred before or after the last Ice Age, but all criticisms by geologists notwithstanding, an early migration may be supported in all probability. If we may assume such early migration in America, it does not seem impossible that the isolated peoples of Siberia represent a postglacial back-migration out of America.¹⁵⁸

Boas went on to propose a series of regional migrations for the Northwest Coast. Salish tribes swooped in over the Rocky Mountains from the Interior to the coast, splitting the close connection between the residents of northern Vancouver Island and the Columbia River. The Tsimshian, recent migrants to the coast, were more closely connected to the

¹⁵⁵ Harlan I. Smith, "1898 Report of Operations," Accession 1898-41, Division of Anthropology Archives, AMNH.

¹⁵⁶ Franz Boas, "Some Problems in North American Archaeology," in *American Journal of Archaeology*, 1902. Reprinted in Franz Boas, *Race, Language, and Culture* (New York: Macmillan, 1940).

¹⁵⁷ Thom, "Harlan I. Smith's Jesup Fieldwork," 148. For a review of Smith's and Boas' assessment of the two-race theory, see Owen B. Beattie, "A Note on Early Cranial Studies from the Gulf of Georgia Region: Long-Heads, Broad-Heads, and the Myth of Migration," *BC Studies* 66 (Summer 1985): 28-35; Ellen W. Robinson, "Harlan I. Smith, Boas, and the Salish: Unweaving Archaeological Hypotheses," *Northwest Anthropological Research Notes* 10 (1976): 185-196.

¹⁵⁸ Boas, "Results of the Jesup Expedition," 22-23.

West American Plateau. And the Eskimo had shifted westward.¹⁵⁹ In relation to this period more generally, Bruce Trigger explains that evidence of cultural change was “either ignored or explained in terms of shifts in population rather than as internal cultural transformation.”¹⁶⁰ The archaeological investigations by the Jesup Expedition contributed to these migration theories and to the ideas that separated the living from the dead, off-reserve from on-reserve sites, and unoccupied from occupied places.

Conclusion

In the spring of 1897, Harlan I. Smith carefully packed up the specimens from the off-reserve site Marpole in boxes marked “Skulls Eburne” and “Eburne Archaeology.” At the same time, he packed crates labeled “Eburne Ethnography” with materials that he and his wife Helena had collected from the Musqueam Indian Reserve. Again in June 1898, Smith shipped thirty-five boxes of cultural material to New York City, most of which came from “Eburne.”¹⁶¹ These cultural objects were physically organized by the distinctive disciplinary practices of archaeology and ethnography, and by the places from which they were collected -- archaeological specimens from the Great Fraser Midden and ethnographic materials from the Musqueam Indian Reserve. Smith did not feel obligated to negotiate the removal of the human skeletal remains from Marpole with the local Musqueam community, whose main village was just a few miles down the river. It was possible that the Musqueam were unaware of the excavation and therefore could not

¹⁵⁹ Boas, “Results of the Jesup Expedition,” 23.

¹⁶⁰ Bruce Trigger, “Archaeology and the Image of the American Indian,” in *Artifacts and Ideas: Essays in Archaeology* (New Brunswick, NJ: Transaction Publishers, 2003), 53.

¹⁶¹ Harlan I. Smith, [List of boxes’ contents], 1 June 1898, Accession 1898-41, Division of Anthropology Archives, AMNH.

directly voice opposition. Additionally, given the urban context, the Musqueam were less visible than Aboriginal people in remote sites elsewhere in the province and, therefore, demographically not much of a threat to Smith's work. Regardless of the reasons for the absence of indigenous protest (or evidence of protest in the documentary record), the Great Fraser Midden became well known as an archaeological site to museum collectors. Its "greatness" was attributed to its vast size and abundance of "specimens." The transformation of *čəsna:m*, from the village and burial ground that it clearly was to an archaeological site was swift and unobstructed.

The following chapter further examines the western distinction between ethnological and archaeological objects, looking at the materials collected from the Musqueam community over the late nineteenth and the twentieth century and the specific histories of those transactions. Many of these objects became part of American and Canadian museum collections that represented, and helped to create, the cultural category "Coast Salish." But on the local scene, indigenous communities used "ethnographic objects" to make politicized statements about family and community identity, cultural vitality, and territoriality.

CHAPTER THREE

The qeyəplenəx^w and cəmlenəx^w Houseposts and the Construction of the “Ethnographic” Object

Anthropological discourse and colonial power conspired to transform human remains into cultural artifacts and burial grounds or villages such as cəsna:m into sites of archaeology. In the late nineteenth century, Aboriginal communities were continually and increasingly dispossessed of lands that were not legally redefined as Indian Reserves. Moreover, Indian Reserves themselves were not protected sanctuaries of land and culture, but were subject to the ongoing threat of alienation and encroachment. This chapter investigates the political ramifications of the distinction between the archaeological and ethnographic object. The conceptual framework of the late nineteenth century anthropologist defined archaeology as the study of “prehistory” and ethnography as the study of “tradition.” First, we return to Harlan I. Smith’s work as a member of the Jesup Expedition, to review his collecting of cultural objects from Musqueam and the specific histories of those transactions. Even though anthropologists acknowledged a closer association between ethnographic objects and contemporary Indians than they did between archaeological finds and local peoples, I argue that the historical narration of indigenous culture as “ethnographic” also served to distance Aboriginal people from their past. Despite Boas’ concern for the cultural context of collected objects, their re-contextualization in anthropological exhibits and texts emphasized the category of the Coast Salish and de-emphasized local identity, history, and meaning.

But, importantly, Aboriginal people offered their own narration of such objects in the context of their land claims. Consequently, I provide a detailed examination of Musqueam's testimony before the 1913 Royal Commission on Indian Affairs (also known as the McKenna-McBride Commission), established to settle the old and ongoing debate between the provincial and federal governments about appropriate Indian Reserve acreage in British Columbia. This event is noteworthy, because in anticipation of the commissioners' visit to their reserve in 1913, Musqueam people decorated the Roman Catholic catechism house where the proceedings took place with two carved houseposts and other cultural objects, which expressed the close association of material (or expressive) culture, family history, and politics. Here, the Musqueam, in effect, narrated objects to reinforce their historic ties to territory and to close the distance created by anthropological discourse and state policy. In the performative context of providing formal evidence to the commission, their "display" was intended to testify visually to cultural persistence and constituted a form of historical evidence that reinforced spoken testimony regarding land and fishing rights.



Figure 3.1: The Catechism House at Musqueam adorned for the visit of the Royal Commission on Indian Affairs, June 1913. In addition to painting the signs “Capilano’s” and “Tesumlano’s” identifying each housepost’s owner or family affiliation, the *cəmleṇəx*^w housepost received a new coat of paint. Royal British Columbia Museum photograph PN12371.

The Jesup Expedition and the Collection of Ethnographic Objects

In addition to excavating shell-heaps and photographing and casting Aboriginal subjects, Harlan I. Smith was charged with collecting ethnographic objects from Aboriginal communities on the Northwest Coast. The research and displays of the

American Museum of Natural History organized indigenous culture and history around the distinct sub-disciplines of archaeology and ethnography. As we have seen, archaeology was closely tied to the notion of “prehistory,” a time pre-dating European influences and documentary accounts of indigenous societies. Markers such as stone and bone, small-scale, abandoned, and distant signified an ancient, prehistoric past. The intent of ethnographic research was to capture the languages, beliefs, and material cultures of indigenous groups at that moment in their “prehistory” just prior to contact with European society. Just as indigenous gravesites were classified in terms of a developmental sequence, with the arrival of European newcomers as the principal point of reference, Aboriginal peoples themselves were slotted into the chronological stages of “prehistoric” (pre-contact), “ethnographic” (traditional: the moment just prior to contact), “historic” (early contact), and “contemporary” (modern: degraded, assimilated or civilized). Boasian anthropology, which dominated North American ethnographic work from the late 1890s to the 1950s, was concerned with reconstructing Aboriginal life before major socio-economic and political shifts brought about cultural change, assimilation, or even, “inevitable” extinction. This reasoning required that “traditional” indigenous cultures be museumified, or frozen in an ethnographic present.¹⁶²

The conviction that indigenous people could not be simultaneously “ethnographic” and “contemporary,” or “traditional” and “modern,” had material and political consequences. Along with salvage anthropologists such as Franz Boas, state

¹⁶² See Wayne Suttles and Aldona Jonaitis, “History of Research in Ethnology,” in *Handbook of North American Indians*, vol. 7, *Northwest Coast*, ed. Wayne Suttles (Washington: Smithsonian Institution, 1990); and George W. Stocking Jr. *The Shaping of American Anthropology 1883-1911: A Franz Boas Reader* (New York: Basic Books, 1974). Regarding Boas’ intent for the displays of the Northwest Coast Hall, see Ira Jacknis, “Franz Boas and Exhibits: On the Limitations of the Museum Method of Anthropology,” in *Objects and Others: Essays on Museums and Material Culture*, ed. George W. Stocking Jr. (Madison, WI: University of Wisconsin Press, 1985).

assimilationists found the dichotomy between tradition and modernity particularly useful.¹⁶³ From the 1860s and well into the twentieth century, we are well supplied with examples of non-Aboriginal settlers demanding the removal of Aboriginal people from expanding regions of white settlement. Relocation was often facilitated through the deliberate arrangement of Indian Reserve lands according to the precept that “traditional” Native people did not belong in “modern” settings. In 1876, the Indian Reserve Commissioners, charged with establishing new reserves or re-confirming colonial reserves in the province, were instructed not to disturb the residency of Aboriginal in their villages “unless there is some special objections to doing so, as for example, where Indian settlement is in objectionable proximity to any city, town, or to a village of white people.”¹⁶⁴ These sentiments especially affected the Musqueam and other hənq̓əminəm-speaking communities of the Lower Fraser Delta, such as the Tsawwassen and the Tsleil-waututh of Indian Arm, because their territories became the site of a major urban metropolis. They also affected the Squamish resident in Burrard Inlet, who principally lived in Howe Sound but moved to Burrard Inlet to work in the area’s new sawmills in the 1860s.¹⁶⁵ In the early 1860s, the colonial government established small Indian Reserves for the Musqueam and Lower Fraser communities leaving much of their traditional territory available for acquisition by outsiders through pre-emption, crown-grants, or purchase.

¹⁶³ Paige Raibmon, *Authentic Indians: Episodes of Encounter from the Late-Nineteenth-Century Northwest Coast* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2005), 46.

¹⁶⁴ David Laird, “Memo of Instructions to Dominion Commissioner of the British Columbia Indian Land Question,” 25 August 1876, RG10, vol. 3633, file 6425-1, National Archives of Canada (NAC).

¹⁶⁵ G..M. Sproat to the Minister of the Interior, 27 November 1876, RG10, vol. 3611, file 3756-7, NAC.

The process of dispossession through the reconfiguration of Aboriginal residency began right from the arrival of colonial agents and settlers on the Fraser River. In the late 1850s, the Musqueam leader “Zimlannah” (cəm̓lənəx̓) and his relatives, who “owned the ground where the Government House is,” were “compelled” to relocate to the south side of the Fraser River to make room for the Royal Engineers’ camp and the new town of New Westminster.¹⁶⁶ Colonial officials established a small Indian Reserve for the Musqueam across the river from New Westminster. Throughout the 1860s, the New Westminster City Council led a determined campaign to clear the city of Indians residing within town limits. Efforts were directed towards the Musqueam, Langley, and Squamish peoples as well as visiting Indians from northern communities, who because of their mobility and large numbers were perceived of as more of a threat than the local hən’q’əmin’əm’-speaking peoples. Citing health, safety, and morality concerns, relocation was deemed necessary both to protect Aboriginal people from a “lesser class” of white men and to protect “respectable” white women and children from the sight of “dens of putrid filth and infamy,” that is, indigenous lodgings and campsites, within the city.¹⁶⁷ Aboriginal people, especially women, resident in urban settings were seen as sources of immorality and degradation to the new colony.¹⁶⁸ In the eyes of the colonists,

¹⁶⁶ C. Brew, Justice of the Peace to Colonial Secretary, 23 January 1865, GR 504, file 1, British Columbia Archives and Records Service (BCARS).

¹⁶⁷ See for example, “The Indian Question Again,” *British Columbian*, 3 May 1862. Regarding the efforts of the city’s council, see New Westminster City Council, “Council Minutes,” especially 15 February 1860, 18 March 1860, 25 March 1861, 17 June 1861, 16 July 1861, 16 September 1861, 7 April 1862, 28 April 1862, 5 May 1862, and 19 May 1862, New Westminster Public Library.

¹⁶⁸ Adele Perry reveals how colonial discourses surrounding prostitution were used as a convenient shorthand to signify that all Aboriginal women were “immoral.” See Adele Perry, *On the Edge of Empire: Gender, Race, and the Making of British Columbia, 1849-1871* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2001), 48. For a study of the 1911 removal of the Songhees from Victoria, see John Lutz, “Getting Indians Out of Town: Racialized Space in Victoria, 1850-1910” (paper presented to the Canadian Historical Association Meeting, York University, 2006); and Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples, “Getting the Songhees out of the Way, 1911,” in *Report of the Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples* vol. 1, part 2,

Indians were “tainted” and “corrupted” by the urban context of modernity and commercial capitalism. These racist and sexist sentiments were tempered by prominent industrialists and merchants, who valued Musqueam and Squamish business and labour and supported the establishment of a larger reserve close to the city where visiting Aboriginal families could reside while in the area working.¹⁶⁹ To appease non-Aboriginal interests, a small reserve of only five acres was set apart outside the city for the 3,000 or so Aboriginal people who traveled to the area to take advantage of new work opportunities provided by the industrial economy.¹⁷⁰

According to settlers and missionaries, the proximity of Aboriginal people to modernity brought degradation; for business-owners it provided a source of cheap labour; to anthropologists, it meant rapid acculturation and assimilation. What these groups agreed on, however, was that Native people would silently withdraw in the face of European immigration and settlement. Sometimes policy helped them along the road to invisibility and erasure. To be sure, the federal government subjected Aboriginal peoples to aggressive policies of assimilation such as the 1885 ban on traditional feasting and a system of church-run residential schools. The dichotomy between tradition and modernity justified policies that denied Aboriginal people access to specific pieces of land and disassociated them from their larger territories. It also influenced responses to indigenous forms of political action. Dramatic and subtle forms of indigenous resistance

1996, http://www.ainc-inac.gc.ca/ch/rcap/sg/sg39_e.html#116 (site accessed August 2006); and R. Cole Harris, *Making Native Space: Colonialism, Resistance, and Reserves in British Columbia* (Vancouver: University of British Columbia Press, 2002), 25-26, 28-29.

¹⁶⁹ Silas S. Crain et al to W.A.G. Young, Colonial Secretary, 14 July 1862, GR 1372, file 1346, BCARS.

¹⁷⁰ Capt. J. Grant, R.E. to Mr. Brew, 13 May 1862, in *British Columbia, Papers Relating to the Indian Land Question, 1850-1875* (Victoria: Government Printing House, 1875), 23.

could be viewed as a lingering remnant of past tradition.¹⁷¹ Indians that “vanished,” whether through assimilation, depopulation, or relocation, left behind for the taking both their land and their objects.

In the late nineteenth century, there was widespread agreement among anthropologists that the indigenous cultures across the Pacific North were rapidly disappearing. As Douglas Cole explains in *Captured Heritage*, the research of the Jesup Expedition was “all the more urgent now because of the danger that Siberian tribes, about which very little was known, were rapidly being affected by European culture carried along the lines of the new trans-Siberian railroad.”¹⁷² In Canada, the notion of the vanishing Indian became conventional wisdom. Decimated by imported disease and unhealthy living conditions, Aboriginal communities on the Northwest Coast were subject in the 1880s to fieldwork by the British Association for the Advancement of Science aimed at recording the cultures of the so-called vanishing tribes. In this period, museums such as the American Museum of Natural History were centers of academic and scientific research, but they also supported spectacular and impressive exhibits intended for public consumption. Consequently, the Jesup Expedition’s research into indigenous origins and the cultural and biological relationships between the indigenous communities of the Northwest Coast and those of northeastern Asia, doubled as “salvage” trips for the material culture of what were believed to be perishing communities.

¹⁷¹ Dorothee Schreiber and Dianne Newell reveal how the dichotomy between “traditional knowledge” and the “modern economy” persists in political negotiations and debates surrounding British Columbia’s salmon-farming industry. See “Negotiating TEK in BC Salmon Farming: Learning From Each Other or Managing Tradition and Eliminating Contention?” *BC Studies* 150 (Summer 2006): 79-102.

¹⁷² Douglas Cole, *Captured Heritage: The Scramble for the Northwest Coast Artifacts* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1985), 147. See also Alexia Bloch and Laurel Kendall, *The Museum at the End of the World: Encounters in the Russian Far East* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press), 2004.

Franz Boas hoped to assemble the most extensive museum collection representing Northwest Coast cultural groups and he expected Harlan I. Smith to join the enterprise. The American Museum had substantial collections of Haida and Tlinglit cultural objects, but were “missing” materials from the southern and central coast, including objects that represented the Kwakiutl (now known as the Kwakwaka’wakw), Bella Coola (Nuxalk First Nation) and the Coast Salish.¹⁷³ In the field, Smith collected assemblages of Coast Salish “ethnographic” objects. Always paying attention to budgetary constraints, he preferred objects that were not expensive or new (although new items also triggered discussions about authenticity, which we will turn to later) or, in the case of used baskets, dirty.¹⁷⁴ Smith was especially interested in larger, older, monumental pieces, such as houseposts, grave markers, and regalia that represented the ceremonial realm. Challenging the museum display practices of the day, which organized objects according to supposed evolutionary principals, Boas took a culture-area approach to his displays: groupings of cultural objects visually represented a bounded cultural group such as the “Coast Salish” and their specific “artistic styles.”¹⁷⁵ The theory was, as Nicholas Thomas has noted, “the whole array of artifacts and goods produced or used by a particular people could be construed as their ‘material culture’ -- a sort of physical counterpart to the totality of their manners and customs or social institutions.”¹⁷⁶ In short, objects stood in for culture. Recall that archaeological objects represented prehistoric peoples; ethnographic artifacts denoted the “traditional.” And even though

¹⁷³ Cole, *Captured Heritage*, 145-146.

¹⁷⁴ Harlan Smith Correspondence, Division of Anthropology Archives, American Museum of Natural History (AMNH).

¹⁷⁵ Jacknis, “Franz Boas and Exhibits.”

¹⁷⁶ Nicholas Thomas, *Entangled Objects: Exchange, Material Culture, and Colonialism in the Pacific* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1991), 131.

Harlan Smith collected both archaeological and ethnographic materials, the two sets managed not to overlap. “Prehistoric” and “ethnographic” peoples were contained within their specific time periods and display cases.

Western attitudes towards the collecting of ethnographic objects were animated by the conflation of age and authenticity. Museums were interested in “older” things, especially ones that appeared to have been used, as these represented cultural practices prior to contact with European societies. The American Museum’s first president, Albert Bickmore, described the museum’s preference for objects that were visibly old: “We seek objects that have been used and perhaps blackened with age but not chipped or broken,” adding that “the bright, new, clean carvings have too much a shop-like appearance as if not made for worship or other use but only for sale.”¹⁷⁷ Age, coupled with an appropriate history of usage made objects even more desirable for display. Smith was proud of his success in procuring from the Musqueam a “very finely carved house post. A very old one in the last stages of decay.”¹⁷⁸ While the house post was clearly “old,” the visible signs of decay further implied that it had been “abandoned” and was, therefore, salvaged at the most appropriate stage in its history. The housepost fit neatly into the chronology category of the ethnographic, representing something that was “traditional,” and “endangered.” Conversely, Smith rejected objects that were too far along in their “stages of decay” such as a “broken” housepost offered at Musqueam. Barely surviving their original contexts, “rescued” objects were seen as traces of a passing way of life.

¹⁷⁷ Quoted in Cole, *Captured Heritage*, 83.

¹⁷⁸ Harlan I. Smith to Prof. F.W. Putnam, Peabody Museum, Accession 1898-41, Division of Anthropology Archives, AMNH.

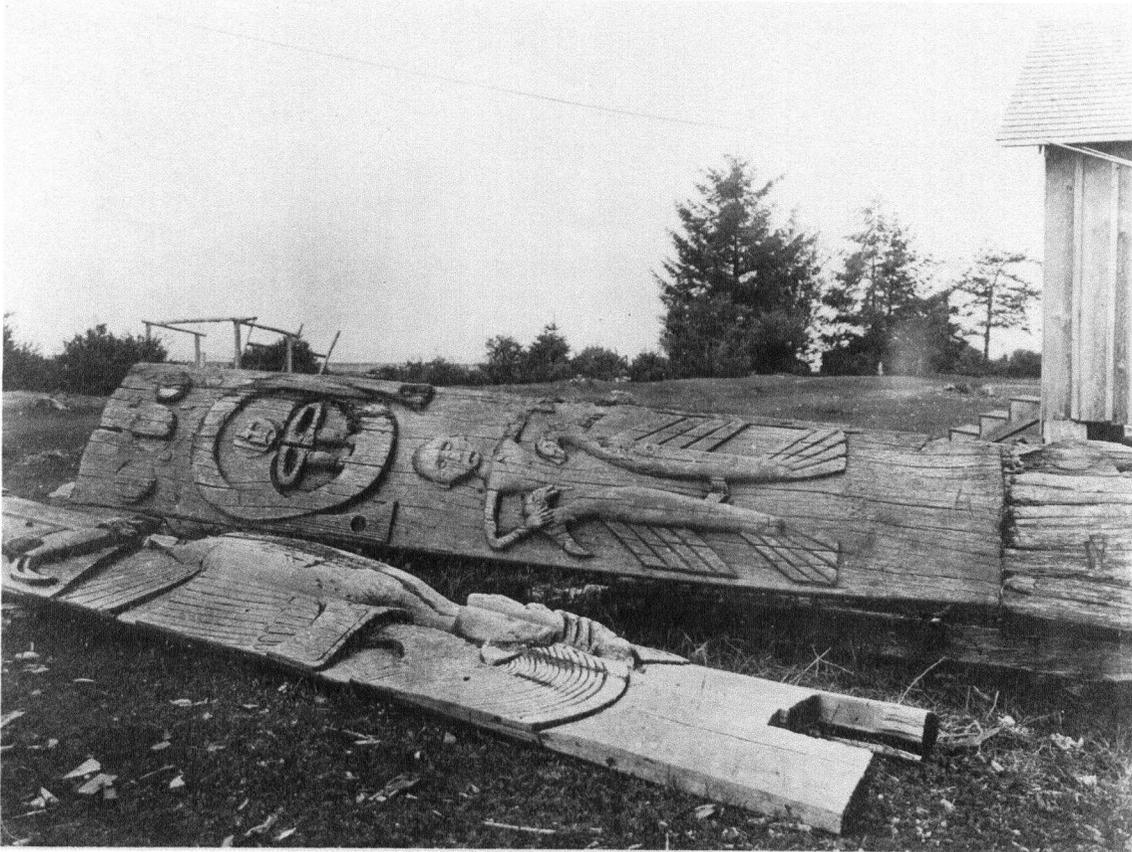


Figure 3.2: The top housepost (AMNH artifact 16/4652) was presented by Chief $x^w\acute{e}x^w\acute{a}y\acute{e}l\acute{o}q$ in return for \$10.00. Smith wrote that “these three 16/1947, 16/1948, and 16/4652 from one site and the Indians say one house; that of Kaplani/ Kaplänux the old chief. Top row of circles they say represent stars – then moon sun moon row then star row. Then sun with man in it. The carved woman below represents the ancestor who taught them of sun moon and stars.”¹⁷⁹ Photograph by Harlan I. Smith, 1898. AMNH photograph in the collection of the Musqueam Indian Band and reproduced with permission.

¹⁷⁹ “Catalogue 16,” volume 2, Division of Anthropology Archives, AMNH.

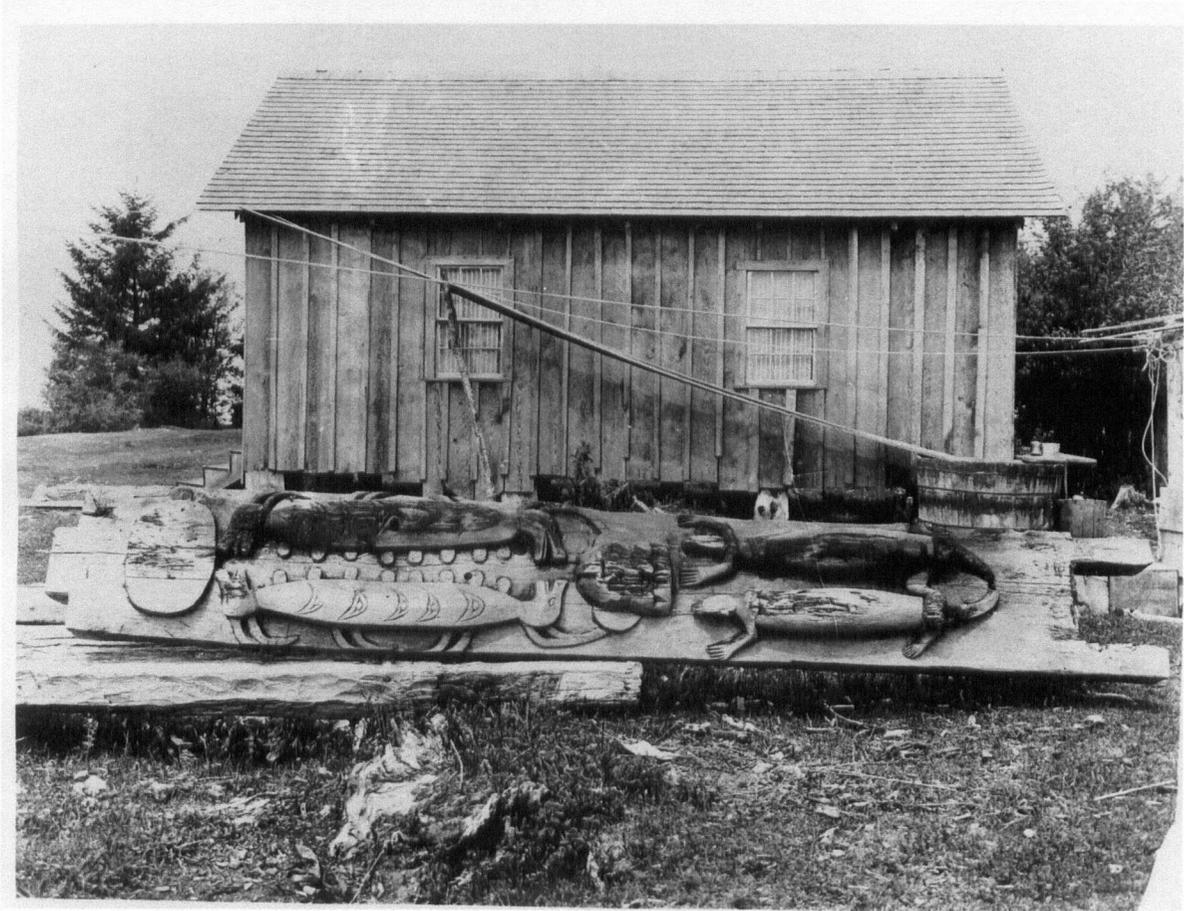


Figure 3.3: Photograph by Harlan I. Smith, 1898. AMNH photograph no. 42925. Reproduced with permission of the Musqueam Indian Band.



Figure 3.4: At Musqueam, Smith was offered the pick of four “downed” posts. It is possible that these posts were down because of the dismantling of traditional longhouses and construction of single-family dwellings. Wayne Suttles notes that this post “seems to represent a man being attacked by a giant salamander or lizard.”¹⁸⁰ Photograph by Harlan I. Smith, 1898. AMNH photograph no. 42942. Reproduced with permission of the Musqueam Indian Band.

Condition and age were not the only factors influencing Smith’s collecting decisions. Just as Boas and other ethnographers routinely used blankets to mask signs of contemporary life when taking photographs, museums preferred objects showing no reference to contact with Western society. In some cases, ethnographers stumbled upon (perceived) scenes of unmediated tradition. At the Fort Rupert village, on Vancouver Island, Smith photographed an elderly man clothed in a blanket and sharpening a stone adze. Smith insisted that the image was “not a made view, but the old man was caught in

¹⁸⁰ Wayne Suttles, *Coast Salish Essays* (Vancouver: Talonbooks, 1987), 122.

the act and persuaded to remain still until we secured his portrait of a stone age man.”¹⁸¹ Instead of viewing this activity as an integral part of modern cultural and economic life, Smith saw a surviving remnant of earlier “prehistoric” times. At Musqueam, Smith refused a drum that “showed white contact,” explaining that he “thought the museum would prefer the old style and would not care to see how white men’s pipes and hats are drawn by Indian artists.”¹⁸² Collectors at the time were relatively unconcerned with “historic” or “contemporary” pieces that referenced the history of Aboriginal-newcomer relations.

In their search for an authentic, unmediated indigenous past, ethnographers also considered objects inscribed with evidence of recent economic interaction with other Aboriginal cultural groups less appropriate for display. Smith was disappointed by the lack of cultural integrity the houseposts at Comox showed: “I have tried to get posts that were made by Comox people, but I fear northern artists were employed and that northern art shows in some of them.”¹⁸³ As noted, Boas arranged objects in “a kind of condensed culture” to demonstrate the main features of a cultural area as well as the effects of local environment and certain aspects of history.¹⁸⁴ The Jesup Expedition was concerned with cultural change and diffusion over large geographic areas and time periods. However, cross-cultural exchange taking place in the context of the modern industrial economy was interpreted as a form of transgression from pure forms. Concepts of age, tradition, and value mingled with ideas of authentic culture.

¹⁸¹ Harlan I. Smith, “Report of Operations of Harlan I. Smith on the Jesup North Pacific Coast Expedition, for the year 1898,” Accession 1898-48, Division of Anthropology Archives, AMNH.

¹⁸² Harlan I. Smith to Franz Boas, 3 June 1898, Accession 1898-41, Division of Anthropology Archives, AMNH.

¹⁸³ Harlan I. Smith to Franz Boas, 1 August 1898, Accession 1898-41, Division of Anthropology Archives, AMNH.

¹⁸⁴ Jacknis, “Franz Boas and Exhibits,” 93.

When appropriate cultural objects could not be located or were unavailable for purchase, Smith commissioned their reproduction in miniature. This technique kept down display and shipping costs and filled in perceived gaps in the museum's collections and display cases. From Alert Bay, Smith informed Boas, "I have engaged an old Indian to tell me of the old canoes no longer to be seen and to make models of the same. When these are done I hope to have him make models of an old house and fish weir both of which I have on my memorandum as desired by you from this region."¹⁸⁵ At Musqueam, Smith hoped to commission the production of miniaturized salmon fishing and war canoes but when no one accepted the work, he complained that the Indians were "lazy."¹⁸⁶ Whatever their practical value, miniature models allowed the museum to manufacture their desired ethnographic culture when it was unattainable in the field. Models also dehistoricized indigenous culture, and in the words of Susan Stewart, created "an 'other' time, a type of transcendent time which negates change and the flux of lived reality."¹⁸⁷ This was because the miniaturization of traditional objects and technologies reinforced a temporal distance between living people and older practices. In the museum setting, the diminutive size of models depicting objects and fixed scenes of Aboriginal culture, domesticity, or economic production denoted a nostalgic, yet unattainable past.

While working at the Great Fraser Midden in the spring of 1898, Harlan I. Smith and his wife Helena visited the Musqueam Indian Reserve on the north arm of the Fraser

¹⁸⁵ Smith to Boas, 1 August 1898, Accession 1898-41, Division of Anthropology Archives, AMNH.

¹⁸⁶ Harlan I. Smith to Franz Boas, 3 June 1898, Accession 1898-41, Division of Anthropology Archives, AMNH.

¹⁸⁷ Susan Stewart, *On Longing: Narratives of the Miniature, the Gigantic, the Souvenir, the Collection* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 1993), 65.

River, “a trip that spoiled the best part of the day.”¹⁸⁸ Smith preferred working on his shell-heap excavations to conducting ethnographic research of the kind that Boas desired. Together the Smiths negotiated the purchase of many cultural objects that represented the religious, fishing and hunting, and domestic technologies of the Coast Salish, and signified “a fairly complete collection of the native things which they still retain.”¹⁸⁹ These things included a river canoe, paddle and bailer, an adze, fish knife, feast dish and food, a drum, a drinking tube (that was later stolen from the museum’s Northwest Coast Hall), spoons, baskets, and a mat of cattails along with examples of the raw materials and the tools used to make it. On a second visit the couple obtained a swaixswe mask, mountain goat blanket, spindle whorl, and related weaving instruments.¹⁹⁰ Smith hoped to acquire a comprehensive set of ethnographic objects from the Musqueam and other Lower Fraser communities that would represent “a complete lot from the Fraser Delta”¹⁹¹ and help “towards filling the space to fill in the [museum’s] lower hall.”¹⁹² Smith, who considered “carvings from the Lower Fraser area very much to be desired,” was most excited by his success in securing two carved houseposts from the Musqueam leader Chief Johnny x^wəx^wəy^ələq. He provided Boas with a sketch of one of the posts and noted,

Bought for \$10.00 at Musquiam Reserve near Eburne B.C. May 18th 98 by Harlan I. Smith on condition to be labeled from house of Kaplānux grandfather of present Chief Nuxwhailak [x^wəx^wəy^ələq] from whom it was obtained. It was understood that he let us have it because we wanted it for

¹⁸⁸ Harlan I. Smith to Franz Boas, 3 June 1898, Accession 1898-41, Division of Anthropology Archives, AMNH.

¹⁸⁹ Harlan I. Smith, “Report of Operations.”

¹⁹⁰ Catalogue 16, vol. 2, pp. 121-123, and 166, Division of Anthropology Archives, AMNH.

¹⁹¹ Harlan I. Smith to Franz Boas, 3 June 1898, Accession 1898-41, Division of Anthropology Archives, AMNH.

¹⁹² [Harlan Smith] to Dr. Boas, 18 May 1898, Accession 1898-41, Division of Anthropology Archives, AMNH

educational purposes and the 10.00 was not payment. The pole was part gift to museum.¹⁹³

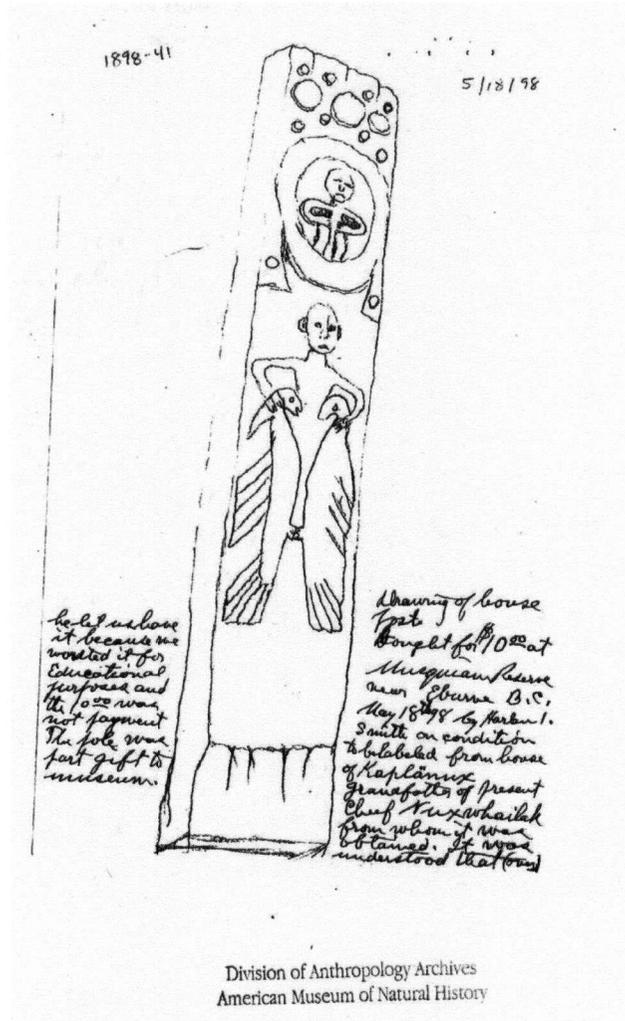


Figure 3.5: Harlan I. Smith's sketch of the house post from the house of qeyəplenəx^w.¹⁹⁴

A couple of weeks later Smith provided additional information regarding the negotiations surrounding the houseposts:

¹⁹³ [Harlan I. Smith] to Dr. Boas, 18 May 1898, Accession 1898-41, Division of Anthropology Archives, AMNH.

¹⁹⁴ Ibid.

I got all the poles I could buy at Musquiam [sic], photo of which I sent to you. They would not sell others at any price except one for which they wanted \$100.00 and it was some broken. I photographed it but have no prints made to send to you so here is a crude sketch. My former letter gave you the particulars of the best post I could secure. I paid \$10.00 for it. It is in one of the 35 boxes I sent to the museum June 1st. The other post was simply a human figure on a board, rather crude, no better than the Lytton grave posts. The Chief gave me my pick of the 4 down posts and I took the one of which I sent you sketch thinking it had best carving and was oldest etc.¹⁹⁵

In August 1899, Smith returned to Musqueam to purchase the housesposts that the Musqueam were unwilling to sell the previous year. Again they refused him, because, according to Smith, they had been instructed (possibly by the Indian Agent) “not to sell specimens to people who plan to take said specimens out of Canada.” It appears that this prohibition was circumvented when the Musqueam sold the houseposts to an Eburne friend for fifteen dollars each, who then turned them over to Smith at cost.¹⁹⁶

Houseposts held up beams in the traditional cedar-plank longhouses or they served as decorative boards for the longhouse interiors. Sometimes Coast Salish houseposts were carved or painted to depict ancestors and animal or spirit powers associated with family history. But they did not have the same significance as the self-supporting, and highly sought-after, “totem poles” of northern coastal communities, which described family or clan history, associated stories, crests, and other prerogatives.

¹⁹⁵ Harlan I. Smith to Franz Boas, 3 June 1898, Accession 1898-41, Division of Anthropology Archives, AMNH.

¹⁹⁶ Harlan I. Smith to Franz Boas, 25 August 1899, Accession 1899-3, Division of Anthropology Archives, AMNH. Brian Thom suggests that Smith deceived the Musqueam. This may be so, but it is also possible that the Musqueam orchestrated the sale to get around the stipulation that objects should not leave the country. See Brian Thom, “Harlan I. Smith’s Jesup Fieldwork on the Northwest Coast,” in *Gateways: Exploring the Legacy of the Jesup North Pacific Expedition, 1897-1902*, ed. Igor Krupnik and William W. Fitzhugh (Washington, DC: Arctic Studies Centre, National Museum of Natural History, Smithsonian Institute, 2001), 156.

“They showed what kind of person you were,” explains the Musqueam historian, the late James Point.¹⁹⁷ Coast Salish houseposts were, therefore, forceful visual reminders of social status and common history, “declaiming to occupants and guests alike the long history, wealth, and high status of the family.”¹⁹⁸

Smith struggled to record the meaning of the houseposts and other objects from Musqueam, but was frustrated by what he considered to be a lack (or loss) of relevant cultural knowledge:

I got the explanation of the house posts I bought as well as they could give them. The large one is interesting, the man figure they say is simply an ornament or a carving made to be a carving and has no meaning. They don't seem to know much of the old times as we wish they did. They could not explain the paintings on the drum. They said they bought it at Cape Mudge. One even called the bear figure a bird. I will try to get the legend belonging to the mask.¹⁹⁹

Smith's disappointment reveals his desire to record dramatic oral narratives explaining the posts' significance. Anthropologists expected indigenous people (and especially the oldest members of a community) to be deeply ritualistic, mystical, and historically knowledgeable. They assumed that detailed myths and legends were linked to the most “impressive” and monumental physical objects. In addition, Musqueam may have had many reasons for not speaking to Smith about the houseposts: Smith did not speak *hən'q'əmin'əm'*, was not known to the community, and had no cultural broker (such as

¹⁹⁷ James Point, recorded interview, 29 January 1976, Musqueam Indian Band Archives, MIBA.

¹⁹⁸ J.E. Michael Kew, *Sculpture and Engraving of the Central Coast Salish, Museum Note 9* (Vancouver: Museum of Anthropology, University of British Columbia), 1980), [7].

¹⁹⁹ Harlan I. Smith to Franz Boas, 3 June 1898, Accession 1898-41, Division of Anthropology Archives, AMNH.

George Hunt or James Teit who assisted Harlan Smith during his work with interior communities).²⁰⁰

In fact, Aboriginal people were not always willing to disclose the profound meanings of objects that made connections between the spiritual and material world. In this context, the Musqueam carvings can be understood as they relate to traditional cultural experiences and to the boundaries of public and private knowledge and cultural practice. Wayne Suttles theorized that the production of art was linked to the acquisition of power and prestige drawn from the ritual or ceremonial world. Suttles described a kind of power attained by the individual in the syewen or spirit dance initiation and the degree to which that power can be revealed to others:

In Native theory, everyone (or every male perhaps) ought to ‘train’ and have a vision. But it was dangerous to reveal too much about it. If you talked about it, you could ‘spoil’ it: it might leave you or even make you sick or it could be taken away from you by an enemy shaman. Yet eventually you wanted others to know that you ‘had something.’ Probably all of us who have worked in the area have heard hints and half-revelations about what people ‘have.’ Possession by a song at the winter dance is, of course, evidence that you ‘have something’ and the words of the song and movements of the dance may hint at what it is. But it must be tempting to hint in other ways, though dangerous to go too far.²⁰¹

Because of this restriction on explicitly revealing a vision quest or an individual’s connection to guardian spirits, it makes sense that Coast Salish carvers would make restrained images that contain vague or ambiguous references to “what people have.”

Other types of ritual power were derived from knowledge of secret family-owned incantations or spells such as that depicted on the housepost that were affiliated with the c̄mlen̄x^w family, which was offered to Smith for one hundred dollars and he rejected as

²⁰⁰ Thom, “Harlan I. Smith’s Jesup Fieldwork,” 149.

²⁰¹ Suttles, *Coast Salish Essays*, 131.

“broken.” Carvers were able to represent that kind of power in more explicit ways than if they were representing a vision. Suttles suggests that, since these images represent ritual power, they were kept elemental in design so as not to expose the source of this power.²⁰²

In 1993, Michael Kew described the cəm̓lənəx^w housepost’s representation of a hunter’s encounter with the bear:

This man had a power that enabled him to kill bears, or capture bears among other things...[the power] probably kept him well and it would do all sorts of things...this sculpture depicts that power. The man who is singing, the bears coming out and the bear will be killed by the man. The bear, if you like, is being called out by the song. It is the power of that song.²⁰³

As Kew aptly concludes, “What more do we know about it? Nothing.” The houseposts’ minimalism, which hinted at sources of power or family histories without explicitly stating them, and Johnny x^wəx^wayələq’s silence on the subject during his conversations with Smith, possibly reflected the balance (or tension) between what to expose and what not to expose, a reflection of the Coast Salish separation of public and private knowledge.

²⁰² Ibid; and Wayne Suttles, “The Recognition of Salish Art” (paper presented to the Northwest Coast Art Symposium, Otsego Institute for Native American Art History, Cooperstown, NY, August 1998; copy in possession of the author).

²⁰³ “Pole Walk Part 1: Tour of the Museum with Kew, Halpin, and Baird,” transcript of recorded tour, 13 April 1993, p. 9, Artifact file A15003, A15004, Museum of Anthropology Archives, University of British Columbia. This pole is now on display at the Museum of Anthropology. Regarding the transfer of this post from the Musqueam to the University in 1927, see Susan Roy, “Making History Visible: Culture and Politics in the Presentation of Musqueam History” (MA thesis, Simon Fraser University, 1999).

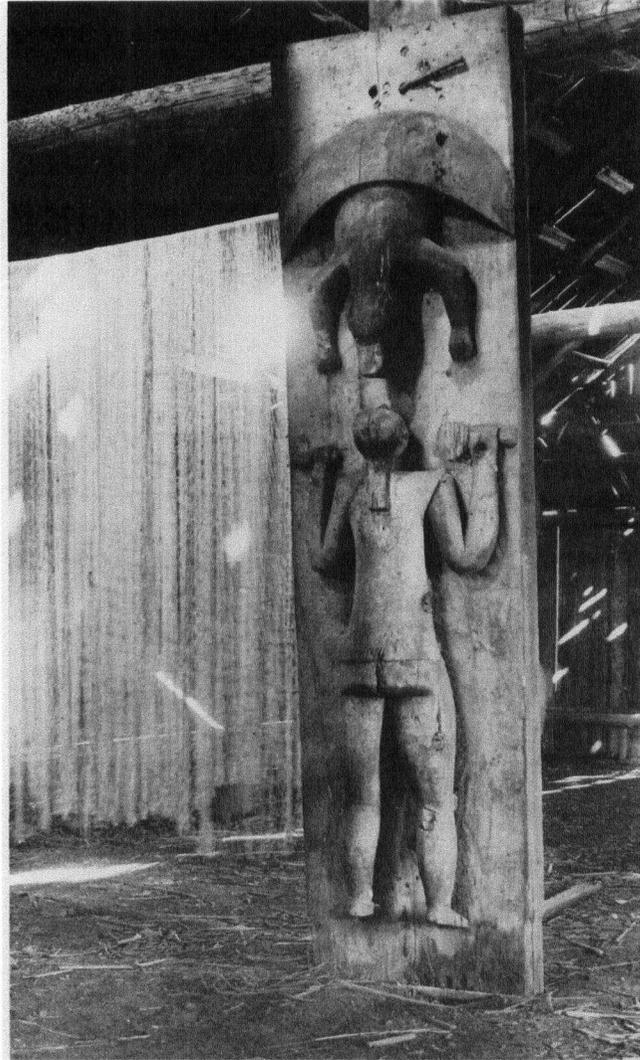


Figure 3.6: The housepost affiliated with the c̄mlen̄x^w family. The Musqueam offered this post to Smith for \$100, but Smith found the price excessive. In 1927, the post was transferred to the University of British Columbia and is now on display in the Museum of Anthropology. Today, its connections to the Stogan family are made explicit through museum labels. Photograph by Harlan I. Smith, 1898. AMNH photograph no. 42923. Reproduced with permission of the Musqueam Indian Band.

How was Harlan I. Smith able to persuade the Musqueam to part with such meaningful cultural objects? Smith showed photographs of the museum's exterior, as well as its lecture and exhibit halls in his attempts to secure houseposts. Such visual aids bolstered his argument that the houseposts, at present exposed to the elements, would be

protected inside the grand halls of the institution.²⁰⁴ Aboriginal people have often explained that objects were given to museums for “safe keeping” or for educational purposes.²⁰⁵ In the late nineteenth century, there is no indication that material preservation of the houseposts was a high priority for the Musqueam. In fact, since houseposts were often placed on the exterior of buildings, physical deterioration would have been expected. However selling or giving cultural objects to museum representatives may have circumvented the destructive pressures of missionaries, who sometimes advised Aboriginal people to destroy cultural objects such as masks and totem poles, or of Indian Agents, who could confiscate cultural regalia under the federal statute that outlawed the potlatch. As Smith later reflected in relation to his collecting work, “I believe that this unsympathetic treatment [the potlatch law] of the Indians by people who do not understand cause the Indians to feel that at any moment the works of art may be confiscated, so they had better sell them whenever anyone offers anything for them and get out of them what they can while the getting is good.”²⁰⁶ Furthermore, as Miriam Clavir, UBC Museum of Anthropology conservator, noted in relation to contemporary

²⁰⁴ Thom, “Harlan I. Smith’s Jesup Fieldwork,” 149. Showing photographs of the museum was one of Smith’s field techniques for soliciting materials from Aboriginal communities and local collectors alike. In the previous season, he requested that copies of the museum’s publications be sent to him at Lytton: “I am sure when these people see what a grand place we have to keep their specimens they will give me more.” Harlan I. Smith to Mr. Winsler, 29 June 1897, Jesup North Pacific Expedition Records, box 2, file 7, Division of Anthropology Archives, AMNH.

²⁰⁵ The Musqueam elder Vincent Stogan ttimele’nux^w explained that his late brother Walker Stogan, agreed to the transfer of two remaining Musqueam houseposts to the University of British Columbia in 1927 for “safe-keeping.” See Vincent Stogan in [Museum of Anthropology], *Objects and Expressions* (Vancouver: Museum of Anthropology, University of British Columbia, 1999), 52. Also for reasons of preservation, in the 1950s, Andrew Charles Sr. sent the large carved stone know as qeysca:m to the university’s museum to prevent its sale to an art dealer: “Mr. Charles wanted the museum to keep this stone, as a tribal preservation of it: He had reason to think some young men were going to try to sell it to a dealer, for cash. But it was a Band possession.” Audrey Hawthorn, “Andrew Charles, 1953,” Audrey Hawthorn Papers, file 19-28, Museum of Anthropology Archives, University of British Columbia. And in relation to the acquisition of a Sechelt mortuary stone by the Vancouver Museum in 1926, it was reported that Sechelt Chief Dan Paull “was anxious to keep this memento of his family in a safe place, where succeeding generations may come and see it.” See “Famous Coast Indian Stone Given to Vancouver Museum,” *Province*, 15 March 1926.

²⁰⁶ “Decorative Art of B.C. Indians of Economic Importance to Province” (newspaper clipping, 18 August 1923), in Denys Nelson Papers, Add Mss 1175, box 1, BCARS.

First Nations' views on preservation, "Objects are preserved mainly as embodiments of cultural knowledge; preserving the intangibles for most (not all) speakers came before preserving the objects."²⁰⁷ If these beliefs give us insight into late nineteenth-century thought, it was not the object that was valued, but what it represented.

The qeyəplenəx^w housepost, as Smith wrote on the note accompanying his sketch, was meant explicitly to be "part gift," and the ten dollars was not considered "payment." Howard E. Grant (qeyəplenəx^w) explains that sometimes people sold sacred or private things such as sɣ^wayɣ^wəy masks, "because they wanted to acquire monetary gain to purchase other things."²⁰⁸ Certainly objects moved in and out of "commodity candidacy" depending on many historical, economic, religious, and personal circumstances.²⁰⁹ But, as Grant reminds us, "these masks have a lot more meaning and a lot more value than money could really buy." This explanation may also point to the sentiment that to commodify culture is to demean it.²¹⁰ Money was important, but peoples' motives for parting with certain kinds of things were not based entirely on economics. How can we explain the wide range of prices between, for example, the "broken" housepost offered for one hundred dollars and the other, intact posts that Smith took away for ten and fifteen dollars each? Price did not necessarily reflect value. In fact, by pricing things too high First Nations people may have deliberately placed them out of the museum market, and thereby avoided having to say no outright, as appears to be the case when the Cowichan demanded twenty dollars for showing Smith how to weave, a lesson they

²⁰⁷ Miriam Clavir, *Preserving What is Valued: Museums, Conservation, and First Nations* (Vancouver: University of British Columbia Press, 2002), 213.

²⁰⁸ Howard E. Grant, quoted in Clavir, *Preserving What is Valued*, 179.

²⁰⁹ Arjun Appadurai, ed., *The Social Life of Things: Commodities in Cultural Perspective* (Cambridge, MA: Cambridge University Press, 1986).

²¹⁰ Crisca Bierwert, *Brushed by Cedar, Living by the River: Coast Salish Figures of Power* (Tucson: University of Arizona Press, 1999), 166-167.

thought would be too much work.²¹¹ Also, Aboriginal people's familiarity with and knowledge of the international market in Northwest Coast objects may have varied.²¹² The variability and inconsistency of prices across the region often confused and frustrated Smith: "Musqueam Indians doubled price on rattle making it \$20 so I left it." He also left behind a "shaman's outfit" offered for one hundred dollars and a ten-dollar swaixswaix mask, prices he found excessive and beyond the market norm.²¹³

The broad range of expressions in the *hənq̓əmínəm* language for economic transactions -- there are alternative terms for "buy" (*ʔəlq̓ls*), "sell" (*xʷayəm*), "pay" (*nəw̓nəc*), "exchange" (*ʔəyeq̓t*), gift (*sləʔels*) and so forth -- suggests that there were many intermediate modes of transfer between payment with cash and gifting.²¹⁴ Even within these range of activities there are many descriptive terms indicating that the language makes subtle distinctions regarding the exact nature of the transaction and the relationship between those participating. In Coast Salish society, the various modes of exchange served to maintain regional networks of social, political, and economic obligation and responsibility. Gifting/selling the *qeyəplenəx^w* housepost to the American Museum was possibly a way to draw the international institution into a relationship that went beyond the parameters of the initial exchange. To be sure, the Musqueam were commercially motivated, but they held complex and culturally determined concepts of value and meaning that cannot be easily measured.

²¹¹ Harlan I. Smith to Dr. Boas, 7 September 1898, Accession 1898-41, Division of Anthropology Archives, AMNH.

²¹² Thank-you to Leona Sparrow for pointing this out.

²¹³ Harlan I. Smith to Dr. Boas, 7 September 1898, Accession 1898-41, Division of Anthropology Archives, AMNH; and Harlan I. Smith to Franz Boas, 3 June 1898, Accession 1898-41, Division of Anthropology Archives, AMNH.

²¹⁴ Wayne Suttles, "Central Coast Salish Social and Economic Organization," expert report submitted to the hearing *R. v. Hope*, B.C. Provincial Court, 1992.

The nature of the housepost transaction to the Musqueam is partly revealed in Smith's correspondence with Boas. The Musqueam leader, Johnny x^wax^wayələq, agreed to the housepost's removal from the community on the condition that its point of origin -- the house of his "grandfather," qeyəplenəx^w -- be properly identified in the label text.²¹⁵ qeyəplenəx^w the first, a man who lived in the late 1700s and early 1800s, was a "great and powerful warrior" and a leader of the people from the villages located at x^wməθk^wəyəm (Musqueam,) ?əyalməx^w (Jericho), and x^wmələcəθən (Capilano River). He is celebrated for coordinating the defense against Lekwiltok raiders at the Fraser River and Burrard Inlet villages.²¹⁶ Musqueam and Squamish tradition relates how qeyəplenəx^w negotiated early encounters with British and Spanish explorers and economic and political relations with Hudson's Bay Company traders at Fort Langley.²¹⁷ qeyəplenəx^w is recorded on the 1839 Hudson's Bay Company's census as a Musqueam leader with three wives, a number of children, a canoe, four guns, and two "followers" (slaves).²¹⁸ In 1858, qeyəplenəx^w the second was called to the British admiralty ship, H.M.S. Plumper, while it surveyed Burrard Inlet as part of the investigation into the

²¹⁵ [Harlan I. Smith] to Dr. Boas, 18 May 1898, Accession 1898-41, Division of Anthropology Archives, AMNH.

²¹⁶ James Point, "Capilano is Nearly Killed by the Lekwiltok" (oral history text translated and transcribed by Wayne Suttles, April – May 1963), MIBA. The Lekwiltok or "Yucletaw" (a division of the Kwakwaka-speaking people living at Queen Charlotte Strait and by the 1840s, at Cape Mudge and Campbell River) are known to have raided along the lower Fraser in the early nineteenth century and before. See Wayne Suttles, "The Ethnographic Significance of the Fort Langley Journals," in Morag MacLachlan, ed., *The Fort Langley Journals: 1827-30* (Vancouver: University of British Columbia Press, 1998), 174-175; and William Elmendorf, *Twana Narratives: Native Historical Accounts of a Coast Salish Culture* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1993).

²¹⁷ Many Musqueam individuals consider qeyəplenəx^w to be an important ancestor. Numerous community members derive their Musqueam ancestry and identity from this lineage, and, over the years, the reference to qeyəplenəx^w has figured prominently in many public displays directed to non-Native audiences. See, for example, Susan Roy, "Performing Musqueam Culture and History at British Columbia's 1966 Centennial Celebrations," *BC Studies* 135 (Autumn 2002): 55-90.

²¹⁸ James Yale, "Census of Indian Population," B223/z/1, Hudson's Bay Company Archives. G.M. Sproat reported that in the 1830s, qeyəplenəx^w accompanied Fort Langley Chief Factor James A. Yale to heme'lchesen (Capilano River) to show him his potato patches. See G.M. Sproat to Minister of the Interior, 27 November 1876, RG10, vol. 3611, file 3756-7, NAC.

alleged kidnapping of a party of coal prospectors by the local Indians. During their exchange, naval officer Captain Richards attempted to impress upon the leader the benefits that British-style law and order would bring to the Native population.²¹⁹ qeyəplenəx^w, the first and second, were important figures and skilled warriors and diplomats in the colonial history of the region.

²¹⁹ “Extract of a letter from Captain Richards of the H.M.S. Plumper dated Port Moody, August 21, 1859,” GR1372, file 1212, BCARS.



Figure 3.7: Charlie qeyəplenəx^w with the housepost from the house of qeyəplenəx^w. Royal British Columbia Museum, photograph PN12774. Reproduced with permission of the Musqueam Indian Band.

Considering this significant genealogy and history, we could read x^wəx^wayələq's insistence that the post be properly identified as an attempt at cross-cultural translation, aimed at transferring local indigenous knowledge to the public space of the American Museum. It was a move to shift the "contact zone," to use Mary Louise Pratt's term,

from the periphery to the metropolis.²²⁰ Whether x^wəx^wa'yələq was driven by recognition that museum visitors on the other side of the continent would not comprehend the carving's profound meanings or by a desire to increase the Musqueam's visibility on the international stage as the Kwakwaka'wakw had done when they participated in the 1893 Chicago's world fair, the housepost's relocation to the museum took place within a larger colonial drama.²²¹ The larger colonial drama had by this time subjected the Musqueam and other Aboriginal communities on the Northwest Coast to a colonial policy that outlawed traditional ceremony, sent their children to be assimilated in residential schools, alienated much of their territories, and generally denied them economic self-sufficiency and political self-determination.

The Jesup Expedition collectors had understandably a different take on the acquisition of objects such as the houseposts. Franz Boas' anthropology was object-oriented. He believed that objects needed to be understood within their historical and cultural contexts. The meaning of a single specimen could not be deciphered "outside of its surroundings, outside of other inventions of a people to whom it belongs, and outside other phenomena affecting that people at its productions."²²² Thus, Smith recorded in his correspondence and catalogue ledgers whatever local knowledge he was able to obtain in the community. Curiously, it does not seem to have occurred to him to ask Musqueam

²²⁰ Mary Louise Pratt, *Imperial Eyes: Travel Writing and Transculturation* (London: Routledge, 1992).

²²¹ Raibmon, "Theatres of Contact: The Kwakwaka'wakw at the Fair," in *Authentic Indians*, 50-73. For Northwest Coast case studies emphasizing performance as a form of protest, see Susan Neylan with Melissa Meyer, "By the Noise They Made: Native Brass Bands on Canada's North Pacific Coast," *BC Studies* (forthcoming); Paige Raibmon, "Theatres of Contact: Cultural Intersection on the Northwest Coast and at the Chicago World's Fair, 1893," *Canadian Historical Review* 81 2 (June 2000): 157-90; and Roy, "Performing Musqueam Culture."

²²² Franz Boas, "The Principles of Ethnological Classification," in George W. Stocking Jr. *The Shaping of American Anthropology, 1883-1911: A Franz Boas Reader* (New York: Basic Books, 1974), 62. Cited in Jacknis, "Franz Boas and Exhibits," 79.

people about the “archaeological” objects or human skeletal remains found at Marpole, even though when working in the interior of the province, he asked Aboriginal peoples for such explanations.²²³ In fact, while details regarding an object’s originating communities can be found in the museum’s archives, the displays in the American Museum’s Northwest Coast Hall did not specify the community or geographical location -- Musqueam, Squamish, False Creek, Port Hammond, North Saanich and so forth - from which objects came. Instead, objects obtained through on-site negotiations, were subsumed into the regional category of “Coast Salish” and the even larger “Northwest Coast,” thereby reinforcing these culture area categories. Objects were (sometimes literally) deconstructed and then reconstituted with regional cultures highlighted and local connections erased. The Musqueam and other Aboriginal people did not bargain for such far-reaching transformation of meaning when they engaged in exchange with the anthropologists who were studying their cultures. While many of the items sold may have been domestic tools no longer valued or used, other objects relating to family identity, history, and prerogative retained powerful cultural significance.

²²³ Harlan I. Smith to Dr. Boas, 30 September 1899, Accession 1899-3, Anthropology Archives, AMNH.

The Musqueam's Visual Display for the McKenna-McBride Commission, 1913-1916.

What the interaction with Harlan I. Smith and the Jesup Expedition highlights is that the Musqueam recognized the power and authority of the museum as an institution representing Aboriginal history and culture to international audiences and they attempted to use this power to their benefit. In 1912, the federal and provincial governments jointly established the Royal Commission on Indian Affairs (remembered as the McKenna-McBride Commission) to resolve the British Columbia land question. For the commissioners, the aim was to legally identify and define Indian Reserve lands once and for all.²²⁴ But when the commissioners visited the Musqueam Reserve in June 1913, the Musqueam more explicitly utilized an adaptation of their *own* conventions of visual display to speak to provincial and national state representatives about their concerns regarding the ongoing dispossession of land and resources. In preparation for the event, the Musqueam positioned two remaining houseposts (one of which Smith had left behind in 1898 because he deemed it “too expensive” and “broken”) on either side of the entranceway to the church’s catechism house where the meetings were to take place. The carvings became the centerpiece of a display arranged around the doorway, which included qeysca:m, the large “prehistoric” boulder carved in the form of a woman that the Musqueam had won from the peoples of Indian Arm in an ancient ball game.²²⁵ Objects, which in the American Museum of Natural History and other such institutions would

²²⁴ For the commission’s mandate, see British Columbia, Royal Commission on Indian Affairs, *Report of the Royal Commission on Indian Affairs for the Province of British Columbia* (Victoria, BC: Acme Press, 1916).

²²⁵ James Point, “Kaystsam” (oral history text translated and transcribed by Wayne Suttles, April – May 1963) MIBA. For a more detailed biographical review of these two houseposts and their transfer to the Museum of Anthropology at the University of British Columbia in 1927, see Roy, “Making History Visible.”

have been separated into “archaeological” and “ethnographic” examples of art or culture, were, in their originating communities, grouped together to represent the corporate identity of the Musqueam community.

For many Aboriginal groups, resolving the land dispute satisfactorily implied much more than a quantitative delineation of reserve acreage. Since colonial times, Aboriginal leaders from across the province had protested for the security of their traditional lands, and they hoped that both levels of government would recognize their Aboriginal title. The commission’s primary concern was to draw up a schedule of Indian Reserves describing Band allocation and reserve acreage for final conveyance of the land from the province to the Dominion. Commissioners refused to consider questions of Aboriginal title and, in fact, sometimes cut their already brief meetings with indigenous peoples even shorter when communities insisted on discussing Aboriginal title.²²⁶

Between 1913 and 1916, Dominion commissioners J.A.J. McKenna and Nathaniel White, along with provincial commissioners J.P. Shaw and D.H. MacDowell, visited most Indian Reserves in British Columbia and formally interviewed hereditary chiefs and community leaders, or those of them who could and would speak English, regarding community grievances. The commission took population statistics and gathered testimony regarding the agricultural use of reserve lands, and those lands deemed excessive to the Band’s needs were “cut-off” and reverted to provincial ownership. Bands showing decreasing membership or communities near large settlements where non-Aboriginal people desired

²²⁶ In some cases, Aboriginal communities refused to meet with the commission because of its unwillingness to deal with Aboriginal title. See Brian Titley, *A Narrow Vision: Duncan Campbell Scott and the Administration of Indian Affairs in Canada* (Vancouver: University of British Columbia Press, 1986), 141; Paul Tennant, *Aboriginal People and Politics: The Indian Land Question in British Columbia, 1849-1989* (Vancouver: University of British Columbia Press, 1990), 97; and Harris, *Making Native Space*.

land, found their lands alienated. Furthermore, final reserve acreage did not take into account the possibility of population growth. Just as ethnographic collecting was guided by the salvage paradigm, Indian Reserve lands were susceptible to the predetermination that Aboriginal population numbers were and would continue to decrease. Here the anthropological and political conceptual landscape converged.

On June 24, 1913, the commissioners and their party visited the Musqueam Indian Reserve to take evidence from community leaders Johnny x^wəx^wayələq and Fred James x^welsi?m. The audience was comprised of Musqueam people as well as visiting leaders or chiefs from other hulqəmīnum-speaking communities on the Lower Fraser.²²⁷ These were formal proceedings: the witnesses were placed under oath, their testimony translated and transcribed. In the context of the land commission, the Musqueam “exhibit” presented the community to government officials in a way that challenged the dominant narrative of the vanishing Indian and promoted their claims to land and resources.

²²⁷ Chief Joe Isaacs and Simon Pierre, of Katzie, Harry Joe, of Tsawwassen and Pierre, of Hope, came to the Musqueam meeting. British Columbia, Royal Commission on Indian Affairs, “Minute Book of the Proceedings and Sitting of the Royal Commission on Indian Affairs in British Columbia, 1913-1916,” p. 47, Department of Indian and Northern Affairs, Specific Claims West Resource Library, Vancouver.



Figure 3.8: Leader (possibly Johnny x^wəx^waʔələq) points to the qeysca:m during the visit of the McKenna-McBride commissioners to the Musqueam Reserve, June 1913. RBCM PN 6112. Reproduced with permission of the Musqueam Indian Band.

Chief Johnny x^wəx^waʔələq presented a number of grievances related to the depletion of hunting and fishing resources, as well as concerns that restrictive fishing regulations were affecting Musqueam's ability of make a living. In relation to land, he reported that the Musqueam reserve had been reduced in size twice since it was first established in the colonial period. In the early 1860s, Governor Douglas had laid out an Indian Reserve at the mouth of the north arm of the Fraser River, at the site of the main Musqueam village. x^wəx^waʔələq described how, when invited to, a number of Musqueam individuals indicated the land they wished reserved and that Douglas had promised that

the British Crown would protect these lands from settler encroachment. Despite such assurances, the state did not keep its word: “Since these posts were put down by Sir James Douglas for the Indians, the land has been lessened twice. The Indians were not notified or consulted when it took place, and after that three persons [possibly G.M. Sproat, A.C. Anderson, and George McKinlay of the 1878 Indian Reserve Commission] came here to Musqueam and told some of the Indians that the posts that Sir James Douglas had planted meant nothing at all.”²²⁸

As a graphic illustration of this history, x^wəx^waʔələq presented a five-foot staff mounted with a silver replica of Queen Victoria’s crown. He said that Queen Victoria had given the staff to the family leader cəmlenəx^w in the nineteenth century because he had sent her his photograph.²²⁹ In 1864, Governor Seymour presented this staff and others like it to cəmlenəx^w and the chiefs of other “friendly tribes,” during one of the Queen’s birthday celebrations organized each year in New Westminster. Seymour had asked colonial agents to send from London “one hundred small cheap canes with silver guilt tops of an inexpensive kind, also one hundred small cheap English flags suitable to canoes 20 to 30 feet long.”²³⁰ Later, the Indian Agent explained that the staff was given to cəmlenəx^w in recognition of the service he provided to early surveyors and other colonialists.²³¹ Today, family tradition explains that the staff, along with a top hat and a

²²⁸ British Columbia, Royal Commission on Indian Affairs, *Evidence Submitted to the Royal Commission on Indian Affairs for the Province of British Columbia: New Westminster Agency Transcripts* (British Columbia, Royal Commission, 1913-1916), 62.

²²⁹ A list of the Royal Engineer’s photographs includes a reference to a photographic plate of “Chief Twelelamo,” taken at New Westminster. Royal Engineer’s Letterbook, 1859-1861, file C/AB, 6j5, BCARS.

²³⁰ Governor Seymour to Cardwell, 23 September 1864, CO.60.19; and Governor Seymour to Cardwell, 7 June 1865, CO.60/22. Cited in Robin Fisher, *Contact and Conflict: Indian-European Relations in British Columbia, 1774-1890*, 2nd ed. (Vancouver: University of British Columbia Press, 1990), 158.

²³¹ F.J.C. Ball, Indian Agent, to Secretary of Indian Affairs, 30 May 1942, MIBA.

bible, was a diplomatic gift presented to cəm̓lenəx^w by Queen Victoria herself, in recognition of his position as a paramount chief in Canada.²³² Traditionally, the Musqueam did not have the formal political position of “chief”; instead esteemed leaders were recognized as the head of extended families. cəm̓lenəx^w was the community’s first “government appointed” chief.²³³ During his testimony to the royal commission, x^wəx^wəy̓ələq also referred to a map that had accompanied the gift of the staff but was later destroyed in a house fire. He said the map depicted the lands of the Fraser River as they were first reserved for the Musqueam Indians.²³⁴ The territory Chief Johnny x^wəx^wəy̓ələq described was larger than the 362 acres that was ultimately reserved for the band as Musqueam Indian Reserve No. 2.

Chief Johnny x^wəx^wəy̓ələq presented the commissioners with objects of European imperial culture as evidence for his claims: the silver staff, the lost map, and his detailed knowledge of colonial Indian policy. He referred to the reserve map, posts and, boundaries as tangible pieces of evidence in support of the Musqueam position regarding their diminishing reserve and he offered the staff as a symbol of Musqueam’s political relationship with the colonial government. This staff that, in the hands of the English Queen’s representative, was a tool of European imperial policy was, in the hands of Chief Johnny x^wəx^wəy̓ələq, used as a reminder of the state’s obligation to protect Aboriginal

²³² The late Vincent Stogan (tsimele’nux^w), interview with author, Musqueam/Vancouver June 1998. Trudy Nicks describes the royal gifting of a coronation chair replica to Dr. Oronhyatekha. See Trudy Nicks, “Dr. Oronhyatekha’s History Lessons: Reading Museum Collections as Texts,” in *Reading Beyond Words: Contexts for Native History*, eds. Jennifer S.H. Brown and Elizabeth Vibert (Peterborough, ON: Broadview Press, 1998), 498.

²³³ James Point, “Reserve History,” Wayne Suttles’ unpublished fieldnotes, 11 February 1963, MIBA.

²³⁴ In some cases, reserve tracings were provided to representatives of the Band to which the reserve was laid out. British Columbia, *Papers Relating to the Indian Land Question*. According to August Jack Khahtsahlano, one leader was buried with a tube that contained a map given to him by colonial officials at New Westminster. However, it was never opened, “because the old people say it might have some disease.” See Major J.S. Matthews, *Conversations with Khahtsahlano, 1832-1954* (Vancouver: City Hall, 1955), 92.

peoples' lands and resources. For Aboriginal communities, such objects were (and still are) deeply political. In 1875, Indian Commissioner James Lenihan reported that the Indians of the Lower Fraser River refused his presents until their land matters were resolved.²³⁵ The objects Chief Johnny x^wəx^wayələq presented to the commissioners stood for the relationship between the Musqueam and the Crown, a relationship that was to be based on trust, goodwill, and honour. The Chief expected the commissioners to recognize the symbolism.

The significance of the display did not end there, however. The proceedings took place in the Roman Catholic catechism house, a building used to prepare candidates for communion and other church functions. In the early twentieth-century most buildings at Musqueam were new single-family residential homes or the cedar-plank longhouses in which extended families resided and conducted ceremonies. In fact, community tradition tells of religious division on the reserve between traditionalists and Catholic converts, a division that was manifested in the physical separation of each group's homes to different locations on the reserve. As Wayne Suttles noted, "for perhaps a generation the community was split between the families of dancers and the families who regarded dancing as 'the work of the devil.'"²³⁶ The catechism house, once it was suitably adorned, was one of the few buildings on the reserve that could be used as a community hall and that represented a coordinated community.²³⁷ The Musqueam transformed the hall into a space they considered appropriate for giving their testimony -- a place in

²³⁵ James Lenihan to Hon. D. Laird, Minister of the Interior, 2 July 1875, RG10, vol. 3632, file 5097, NAC.

²³⁶ Suttles, "Coast Salish Essays," 207. Also quoted in Crisca Bierwert, *Brushed by Cedar*, 165. Regarding syncretic religious practice, see Susan Neylan, *The Heavens are Changing: Nineteenth-Century Protestant Missions and Tshimshian Christianity* (Montreal: McGill-Queen's University Press, 2003).

²³⁷ J.E. Michael Kew, "Coast Salish Ceremonial Life: Status and Identity in a Modern Village" (PhD dissertation, University of Washington, 1970), 68.

which they could recite the history of their ownership of lands and resources. Along with the placement of the houseposts on either side of the doorway, the entranceway was decked with fresh cedar boughs for ritual purification. The Musqueam created a politicized, public space that evoked family history and was invested with culturally appropriate spiritual and religious meaning.



Figure 3.9: An unidentified man and Jack Stogan cəm̓lenəx̓w during the proceedings of the Royal Commission at Musqueam, June 1913. Royal British Columbia Museum photograph 12374. Reproduced with permission of the Musqueam Indian Band.

One of the posts presented to the commissioners was associated, again, with the important qeyəplenəx^w lineage, and belonged to the house of qeyəplenəx^w the second. It depicted an unadorned human figure, possibly representing qeyəplenəx^w the first, a man who had been a great warrior and had taken many heads.²³⁸ The second post was connected to the family heritage of cəmlenəx^w, a man who lived in the nineteenth century and became the government-appointed delegate called “chief” who negotiated relations with state officials.²³⁹ This was the post that x^wəx^wayələq had agreed in 1898 to sell to Harlan Smith for \$100 and that Smith devalued because it was broken.²⁴⁰ The carving represents an ancestor’s encounter with a bear, cəmlenəx^w’s grandson Chief Jack Stogan explained to anthropologist Homer Barnett in 1936: “It represents a man and a grizzly bear -- the man holding the c.lmuksis [a carved rattled called sxelməx^wcəs]. The story of this is that this man was able to kill grizzlies and such by shaking the rattle and singing (called imun [ʔimən]) -- this made the bear dizzy and he could kill him or any other thing.” Stogan explained that the secret song was not only for hunting purposes but also afforded protection against bear attacks. He stressed that his grandfather’s family owned this particular imun, or secret incantation, along with the “totem,” or representation.²⁴¹

Perhaps the Musqueam were responding in part to the non-Aboriginal fascination with “ethnographic” objects and their expectation to see Indian things when visiting a reserve. But decorating the hall also proclaimed a kind of cultural richness and vitality, a public declaration of ownership and longevity in the area. For museum collectors,

²³⁸ Wayne Suttles, “Capilano,” unpublished fieldnotes, 1952, MIBA.

²³⁹ Point, “Reserve History.”

²⁴⁰ Harlan I. Smith to Franz Boas, 3 June 1898, Accession 1898-41, Division of Anthropology Archives, AMNH.

²⁴¹ Homer Barnett, “Musqueam, Squamish,” notebook, 1936, Homer Barnett Papers, box 1, file 8, pp. 31-35, Special Collections, University of British Columbia.

ancient relics represented a passing tradition, but for Aboriginal people cultural objects continued to hold traditional meaning and spiritual relevance. With this display, the Musqueam constructed a message that said that the community maintained its connections to the ancestors, to traditional and spiritual life, and importantly, to the past. It proclaimed, “We know our history.”²⁴² Wayne Suttles has noted a relationship between assertions of traditional knowledge and social standing in the community: “High-class people preserved the knowledge of their own heritage and valued it, and possessed a knowledge of good conduct. Low-class people were those who, through their own or their forebears’ misfortune or foolishness, had lost their links with the past and their knowledge of good conduct.”²⁴³ Clearly heritage was important. And Musqueam heritage, as it was presented so deliberately and graphically to the commissioners in 1913, was based not on the notion of vanished history, but on an ongoing connection to the community, to history, and to family -- links that were crucial to a person’s identity.

But beyond showing that traditional culture was alive and well, it is likely that the Musqueam meant the houseposts and stone sculpture to signal a more explicit connection to territorial ownership. This was, after all, a “final” land commission. Reminiscent of x^wəx^wayələq’s earlier demand that the American Museum identify the qeyəplenəx^w housepost with appropriate exhibit labels, the Musqueam carefully painted two signs, which read “Capilano’s” and “Tesumlano’s,” respectively, and nailed, one to the front of each carving, clearly indicating each post’s owner and family connections. Resembling street signs or exhibit labels, such identification suggests that the Musqueam wanted the

²⁴² Kew, “Coast Salish Ceremonial Life.”

²⁴³ Wayne Suttles, *Coast Salish Essays*, 9.

commissioners to recognize the association of the carvings to these particular individuals and their respective family histories. In the late 1800s and early 1900s, people would have identified themselves through their association with a kin group having certain rights or privileges at resource sites and villages that reached beyond the Musqueam community to other hul'q'umin'um', hən'q'əmin'əm', and halkemelem-speaking in-laws. Here, these family connections were used to represent the larger community's connection to place. And, considering each leader's personal history of interaction with colonial authorities, it is possible that the Musqueam hoped these names would be recognized and honoured by the federal and provincial commissioners.



Figure 3.10: A post-McKenna-McBride Commission photograph of the Catechism House showing placement of the houseposts. Royal British Columbia Museum, photograph PN 12371. Reproduced with permission of the Musqueam Indian Band.

Musqueam people placed the signs on each housepost to signify connections to family ancestry, lineage, and history. But for those familiar with the genealogies (many Musqueam people, along with some of their hən'q'əmin'əm' and Squamish-speaking relatives, would claim ancestry from one of these two lineages) references to specific names such as cəmlenəx^w and qeyəplənəx^w indicated privileges of access to resource or village sites. In Coast Salish society, ancestral names are important markers of family identification and, therefore, tangible evidence of property rights.²⁴⁴ Ancestral names were (and continue to be) passed down through both the male and female bloodline. Individuals connected by ties of kinship had the opportunity to seek permission for the privilege to use specific resource sites and ceremonial prerogatives. Howard E. Grant of Musqueam explains that names are evidence of one's ancestry, but they can also be understood as evidence of one's privilege or opportunity to share in family property.²⁴⁵ Michael Kew, writing of the Musqueam and other Coast Salish groups, observes, "The core of each extended family occupied a winter house on a site which it owned and linked to ancestral figures of ancient times. Some families also owned resource sites such as fishing stations, deer-netting locations, or camas lily fields, and among their most valued possessions were names, magic rituals, songs, and private teachings."²⁴⁶ These privileges were recognized and reaffirmed at public gatherings such as naming or memorial ceremonies events that have come to be known collectively on the Northwest Coast as

²⁴⁴ Michael Kew, "The Musqueam First Nation and its Territorial Rights in Burrard Inlet," expert report submitted September 1996 to the hearing, *Mathias et al vs. the Queen et al*, Federal Court of Canada. Keith Thor Carlson, ed., *You are Asked to Witness: The Sto:lo in Canada's Pacific Coast History* (Chilliwack: Sto:lo Heritage Trust, 1997), 167.

²⁴⁵ Howard E. Grant, personal communication, December 2005.

²⁴⁶ Kew, *Sculpture and Engraving*, 2. See also Wayne Suttles, "Central Coast Salish," in *Handbook of North American Indians*, 464.

“potlatches.” Thus, the “naming” of the posts in the context of the land commission was perhaps intended to reaffirm such privileges in the presence of state officials, and could therefore be understood as evidence of rights to lands and resources.

This connectedness of names, genealogy, and land was clearly articulated in a 1927 petition to the federal government. Musqueam representatives Jack Stogan cəmlenəx^w, James Point, Casimier Johnny, and Aleck Peter cited qeyəplənəx^w's and cəmlenəx^w's family histories as evidence of Musqueam land rights at specific winter villages in English Bay and Burrard Inlet:

We the undersigned have the right to claim the Kitsilano, Capilano and Seymour Reserves. A Chief Capilano was the leader of the Musqueam Reserve for five generations back. In the second generation Chief Capilano and Chief Tsem-lano were cousins, Capilano the older of the two. In the third generation Chief Capilano moved to the River now called after him, (Capilno) till he died...²⁴⁷

Just as the colonial and federal governments were backed up by the British legal system (colonial land ordinances, the federal *Indian Act*, and other legislative enactments) in their rearrangement of land title, the Musqueam based the customary law that mediated and reinforced territorial ownership on these family genealogies. This customary law was by the 1870s threatened by policy that increasingly restricted Aboriginal people to residency on a single reserve and membership in only one Band, further disassociating them from larger territorial and ancestral connections to place and ties to larger networks of kin.

²⁴⁷ Chief Tsem-lano et al representing the Musquiam Tribe, to the Inspector of Indian Affairs, Victoria, 29 August 1927, RG10, Accession 74-75/59, box 21, file 33-14 pt. 3, NAC.

Aboriginal communities in British Columbia drew upon indigenous prescriptive rules, performative traditions, and western display conventions centered on objects and the visual, such as signage, to produce meaning for non-Aboriginal audiences. The display created for the Royal Commission's visit to Musqueam surely challenged the western designation of these objects as "ethnographical," as the material manifestation of beliefs and behaviour, or as representations of a Coast Salish artistic style. This "exhibit" referenced history and culture, not in anthropological or archaeological terms, but within an Aboriginal cultural and political framework. Indeed, the fresh coat of paint on the *cəm̓lenəx*^w housepost and the incorporation of the "prehistoric" stone carving could be read as the refutation of the ethnographic as a chronological category based on linear time. New paint on the *cəm̓lenəx*^w housepost implied continuing relevance. These were not "downed" posts in their final stages of decay; rather they resonated with continuing spiritual potency and cultural meaning. The display with nailed boards sporting hand-painted family names also points to the emergence of an increasingly localized, village-based, and coordinated identity for the Musqueam. Cultural objects that at one time represented family prerogative, status, and wealth across a regional network of kinship relations were pulled together to represent a cohesive Musqueam identity. With their display, the Musqueam presented a culture – and, therefore, a land claim -- that was not in danger of disappearing. At this moment in 1913, they tried to close the distance that anthropological, archaeological, and political discourse had created between themselves and their territories.

Conclusion

In 1976, James Point noted that most of his community's memorial posts and monuments "are now in New York or elsewhere."²⁴⁸ More recently and with great humour, Musqueam elder Dominic Point, now deceased, informed Federal Court Justice Madame Simpson that the missing stone sculpture, *qeysca:m*, "was probably in Ottawa."²⁴⁹ In the 1950s, the stone's keeper, Andrew Charles Sr., had transferred it from Musqueam to the University of British Columbia for "safe-keeping" following rumours that it was going to be sold to an art dealer.²⁵⁰ The stone was stored at the Museum of Anthropology in the basement of the Main Library, but when the new museum building opened in 1976, Director Audrey Hawthorn returned it to Musqueam. Some time later, the *qeysca:m* mysteriously disappeared from the reserve. In an effort to locate the stone, the Band administration placed a lost and found posting in the local newspaper. Whatever happened to the stone -- whether it was stolen, sold, or lost -- Point's comment that it was probably in Ottawa reflected a sense of loss more generally. With precision and irony, he pointed to First Nations' historic relationship to the federal state and a history of the government's attempted assimilation policies. In the context of late-twentieth-century cultural revitalization, the history of the loss of cultural objects to anthropological and nationalistic projects was part and parcel of colonialism.

²⁴⁸ James Point, recorded interview, 29 January 1976, MIBA.

²⁴⁹ Dominic Point, testimony provided to *Mathias et al v. the Queen et al*, in the Federal Court of Canada, December 1996.

²⁵⁰ Audrey Hawthorn, "Andrew Charles, 1953," Audrey Hawthorn Papers, file 19-28, Museum of Anthropology Archives, University of British Columbia.



Figure 3.11: qeysca:m at Musqueam, photograph in the collection of MIBA.
Reproduced with the permission of the Musqueam Indian Band.

CHAPTER FOUR

The National Colonial Culture and the Politics of Removal and Reburial

I have been wondering for a long time, if after the Indians came back from fishing they buried the bodies at Musquiam [sic] and destroyed that beautiful tomb. You know it is the only one I have ever seen made in the old style, and it is the only good example of Coast Salish art in the way of a large object that I know of that is not yet in some Museum. All the carved house posts and grave posts have been gone now for some time, the last two to the University of British Columbia...I suppose a hundred years from now Canada would pay a large sum for the tomb. I believe it would be unique, and its art is totally different just as all Coast Salish art is totally different from the art of the Wakahsans, Haidas, Tsimpshian etc. Do you know anything that can be done to save the tomb, or is there anything that I can do to help? I didn't offer to buy it, because I thought the Indians would be more likely to give it to the Museum, if I simply offered to pay for packing, hauling, freight, etc, than they would sell it to the Museum. Perhaps the best way would be after they buried the bodies, if they could be persuaded to leave the tomb as it is...I am sure you are just as anxious that such things should be saved as I am. It means nothing to us personally that is selfishly, but we certainly would be blamed by future generations, if we let all such objects of art go to the flames.²⁵¹

In 1928, Harlan I. Smith wrote to the New Westminster Indian Agent, C.C. Perry, hoping to secure a beautiful wooden tomb he had seen at Musqueam during an earlier collecting trip for the National Museum of Man of Canada.²⁵² According to the agent, the burial box was about fifty years old, was carved with four fishers "or whatever the animals are supposed to be," and contained two skeletons of persons with no known

²⁵¹ Harlan I. Smith to Charles C. Perry, Indian Agent, 30 October 1928, H.I Smith's Correspondence, folder Perry, Charles E., box 217, file 7, Canadian Museum of Civilization Archives (CMCA).

²⁵² In 1928, Harlan and Helena Smith visited the Musqueam Reserve where they purchased a number of "ethnographic" objects, including a reed mat, feast dish and spoon, and articles related to fishing. At the same time he filmed community members demonstrating the use of these objects. See Harlan I. Smith, "The Coast Salish Indians of British Columbia," black and white 16 mm film, 1928, CMCA.

descendents.²⁵³ According to community tradition, the grave box contained the remains of four brothers who were powerful medicine men. In 1963, Wayne Suttles recorded

Musqueam elder James Point's account of its contents:

This box was one of several that were north of the ridge at scelex^w ... this was the grave of four brothers who were Indian doctors. One wasn't so bad; he always carried a drum and sang to anyone who felt bad. But the other three were x^wqe qilwat "bad minds." They were dangerous. If you tried to joke with them they might get mad and take your head off. They lived long before [James Point's] time and he does not know (or does not wish to try to remember) their names.²⁵⁴

James Point explained that the four carved animals were šx^wəməcən, or fishers, a variety of marten. Fishers represented the family's prerogative to use a hereditary cleansing ritual and were said to bring good luck.²⁵⁵ The figures incised on the side of the pedestal on which the tomb rested possibly represented q^wex^weqs, the supernatural two-headed snake.²⁵⁶

²⁵³ M. Collins, Acting Director, National Museum of Canada, to D.C. Scott, Deputy Superintendent General of Indian Affairs, 24 October 1930; Fred J.C. Ball, Indian Agent, to Duncan C. Scott, 6 January 1931; and F.J.C. Ball to Duncan C. Scott, 13 January 1931, RG10, vol. 10349, file 987/36-7-4-2, National Archives of Canada (NAC).

²⁵⁴ Wayne Suttles, typed notes accompanying photograph, 8 July 1963, Musqueam Indian Band Archives (MIBA).

²⁵⁵ Musqueam Indian Band, *Musqueam: A Living Culture* (Vancouver: Musqueam Indian Band, 2006), 29. In relation to fishers, see Wayne Suttles, *Coast Salish Essays* (Vancouver: Talonbooks, 1987), 121; and Diamond Jenness, "Faith of a Coast Salish Indian," in Wayne Suttles, *Katzie Ethnographic Notes* (Victoria: British Columbia Provincial Museum, 1955), 72-73.

²⁵⁶ Wayne Suttles, typed notes accompanying photograph, 8 July 1963, MIBA.

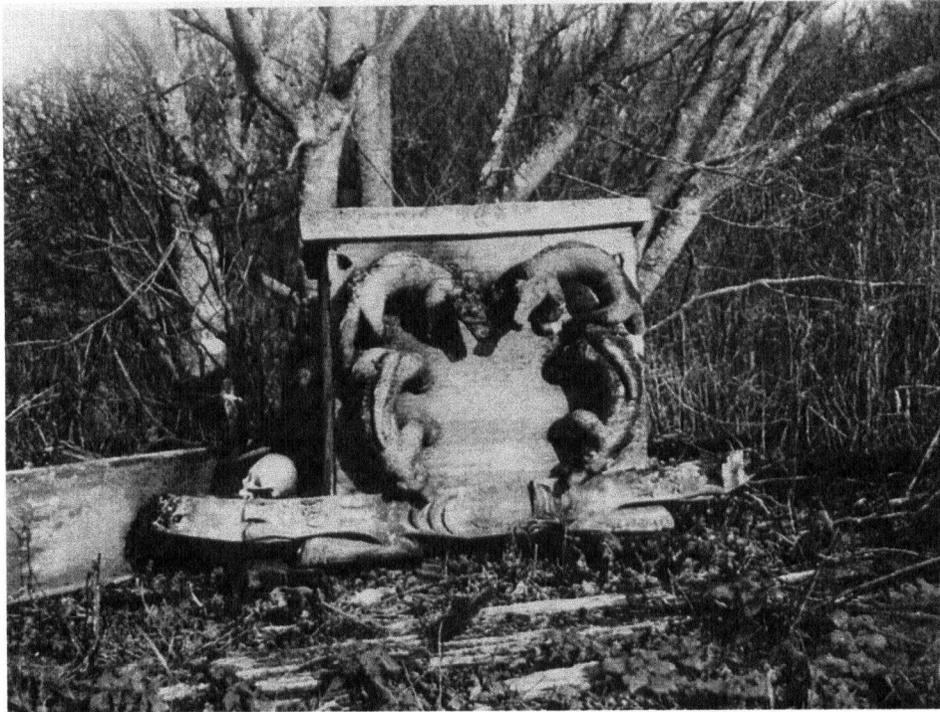


Figure 4.1: A notation on the photograph, presumably by Harlan I. Smith, reads: "Tomb, Musquiam [sic], B.C., near Vancouver. The four animals and the cover are all carved from one piece. Contains two bodies. The upper at least wrapped in a Hudson Bay blanket. The box was tied together, not nailed or pegged. Grave boxes fallen apart are at the left. Photo from the South."²⁵⁷ Copy of Royal British Columbia Museum photograph in the collection of the Musqueam Indian Band and reproduced with permission.

By 1930, Indian Agent F.J.C. Ball convinced the Musqueam to sell the box by suggesting that they use the \$100 offered in exchange to purchase a modern tombstone monument as a replacement. This idea appealed to the Musqueam, who had just recently moved the old burial tomb from its original location in the village to their main cemetery.²⁵⁸

Museum Director W.H. Collins also desired the skeletons for the museum but was told that the human remains had been buried in the reserve cemetery along with a large number of bodies and therefore could not be located. Possibly at the same time, the Musqueam buried in an unmarked grave, a great number of bones that according to

²⁵⁷ Harlan I. Smith, notes on photograph, n.d., copy at MIBA.

²⁵⁸ Today at Musqueam there are two fenced cemeteries: a larger Roman Catholic cemetery and a Protestant cemetery that is used almost exclusively by the Charles and Dan families.

James Point, “were so old that nobody would claim them.”²⁵⁹ When Ball was arranging for the tomb’s removal, he was also offered a nine-foot-long grave marker, which belonged to the Point family, in exchange for a small tombstone to be erected over the grave. The chief told the agent they had received offers for this marker, which was carved with a two-headed sturgeon, from “a man from a museum in New York” as well as from several people from the University of British Columbia. One of these people may have been Herman Leisk who while excavating at the Marpole Midden for the Vancouver Museum in 1929, visited Musqueam to search for potential midden deposits and was struck by the beauty of the carved board fastened to two stakes at the side of a new grave.²⁶⁰ In January 1931, Ball carefully packed the grave box and the Point family carving and shipped them to the National Museum in Ottawa, capitalizing on what he perceived to be a narrow window of opportunity: “The Indians are so changeable in their opinions, that I was afraid unless advantage was taken of their offer there would be some hitch in the arrangements and the opportunity would be lost.”²⁶¹ But, at Musqueam and elsewhere on the coast, interest in salvage anthropology, at least in terms of ethnographic objects, was on the wane.²⁶²

Harlan I. Smith’s letter that opens this chapter is cited at length because it contains many significant western ideas. Smith’s anxiety over the tomb’s preservation --

²⁵⁹ Wayne Suttles, typed notes accompanying photograph, 8 July 1963, MIBA.

²⁶⁰ Sharon Johnson, ed., “Herman Leisk’s Journal Notes, 1927-1933, of Excavations at the Marpole Site, DhRs1, and other Coastal Sites,” September 1986, Vancouver Museum, 27.

²⁶¹ Fred J.C. Ball, Indian Agent to Duncan C. Scott, Deputy Superintendent General of Indian Affairs, 20 January 1931, RG10, vol. 10349, file 987/36-7-4-2, NAC.

²⁶² By the early 1900s, the era of collecting was beginning to wind down. Academic attention turned away from collecting objects and towards ethnographic fieldwork within communities. See Douglas Cole, *Captured Heritage: The Scramble for Northwest Coast Artifacts* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1995 edition), 212.

“if we let all such objects of art go to the flames” -- reflects the western impulse to salvage material culture that was perceived to be in danger of disappearing due not only to the inevitable march of “progress,” but to traditional ceremonial practices themselves. Older burial practices involved wrapping the dead in cedar bark mats or blankets and placing the bodies in small cedar plank houses or boxes, such as the one sought by the National Museum. Mortuary houses contained the remains of a person’s extended family and were located at various places throughout the village. According to James Point, who, together with Alec Peter, reburied in the cemetery a number of bones retrieved from across the reserve, “this box was one of several that were north of the ridge at scelexw.”²⁶³ During the first half of the twentieth century, many Coast Salish communities in British Columbia were integrating older practices with Christian-style interments in consolidated and, increasingly, fenced reserve cemeteries. In 1913, Chief Johnny x^wəx^wayələq and most of the male membership at Musqueam requested that monies from the reserve’s logging stumpage fees be put towards the construction and fencing of a graveyard for their reserve.²⁶⁴ It appears that the first headstones were put up in the 1920s, including one for Chief Johnny x^wəx^wayələq (spelled Whywhialack on his tombstone), who had passed away by 1919.²⁶⁵ In 1929, the Musqueam re-fenced and weeded the overgrown graveyard as a “small honor to the memory of the dead” and, in relation to this work, held a ceremonial dance at the longhouse in which the late Johnny

²⁶³ Wayne Suttles, typed notes accompanying photograph, 8 July 1963, MIBA.

²⁶⁴ Johnny Chief et al to Peter Byrne, Indian Agent, 17 October 1913, RG10, vol. 10349, file 987/36-7-4-2, NAC. In this period, numerous Bands in the Agency requested that their cemeteries be fenced and agreed to pay for it from their Band accounts. See, for example, RG10, vol. 8095, file 987/36-7-41-9, pt. 1; and RG10, vol. 8095, file 987/36-7-17, NAC.

²⁶⁵ Larissa Grant, personal communication, May 2006.

Point had resided with his family.²⁶⁶ In 1951 the community's Roman Catholic cemetery was enlarged to accommodate further burials.²⁶⁷ Four years later in 1955, Michael Kew witnessed the disassembling of one of the last remaining mortuary houses at Musqueam while working on his PhD in anthropology:

Surviving members of the family hired “undertakers” from Vancouver Island to rewrap each corpse and inter them in a mammoth wooden coffin in the larger of the two cemeteries. The house contained the remains of about 100 individuals, the uppermost in coffins and the lower in what had been, judging from the fragments, woven cedar bark mats.²⁶⁸



Figure 4.2: Alec Peter stands next to a mortuary house at Musqueam, 1942. Vancouver City Archives photograph no. In P62.2. Reproduced with permission of the Musqueam Indian Band.

²⁶⁶ “Weird Dance Marks Rituals of Capilanos,” *Vancouver Star*, 23 March 1929. The reporter learned of this dance from Chief Matthias of the Capilano Reserve and reported that the Musqueam “felt that it was small honor to the memory of their dead that so sacred a spot should have been allowed to fall into a state of disorder and decay... It was to commemorate the completion of this work that about 300 Indians of the Musqueam, Squamish and Coqualeetze (Sardis) tribes foregathered the other night in the great building at Musqueam formerly occupied by the late Johnny Point and still occupied by his family.”

²⁶⁷ Superintendent Taylor to W.S. Arneil, Indian Commissioner for BC, 25 April 1951, RG10, vol. 10349, file 987/36-7-4-2, NAC.

²⁶⁸ J.E. Michael Kew, “Coast Salish Ceremonial Life: Status and Identity in a Modern Village” (PhD diss., University of Washington, 1970), 213.

The adoption of Christian burial practices in Northwest Coast British Columbia should not be characterized as the substitution of traditional forms, such as the placing of the deceased in mortuary houses above-ground or in trees, for western ones, such as burying the deceased in the ground. Instead, as many historians of religious syncretism point out, Aboriginal peoples have emerged from their interactions with colonialism with multiple and complex religious identities that incorporate traditional and western forms in creative and flexible ways.²⁶⁹

We can read Smith's concern that the Musqueam burial box would succumb to "the flames" literally. He may have been referring to the burning of personal possessions, which would have been (and still is) part of the ceremony surrounding death. Under the guidance of a ritualist with specialized knowledge, expertise, and power, some of the deceased's clothing, possessions, and favourite foods are burned and transmitted to the world of the ancestors. In this way, ancestors who longed for their living relatives and could cause harm such as spiritual sickness or, in extreme cases, death, were kept at bay.²⁷⁰ Smith was concerned that traditional culture was disappearing, but also that traditional practices such as funerary burnings would destroy precious and valuable "art" objects. From the museum's perspective, culture needed saving from itself.

Inherent in this perception of indigenous culture as both self-destructive and requiring protection, is the assumption that material culture was of greater value to the Canadian nation than to the local community. The view was that heritage objects, if left

²⁶⁹ See, for example, Michael Harkin, *The Heiltsuks: Dialogue of Culture and History on the Northwest Coast* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1997); and Susan Neylan, *The Heavens are Changing: Nineteenth Century Protestant Missions and Tsimshian Christianity* (Montreal: McGill-Queen's University Press, 2003).

²⁷⁰ Kew, "Coast Salish Ceremonial Life," 229-234; and Homer Barnett, *The Coast Salish of British Columbia* (Eugene: University of Oregon Press, 1955), 220.

in their originating communities, would be abandoned to decay. In this mindset, it followed that, because present-day Aboriginal people were the remnants of a glorious but irretrievable past, they had no use for ancient cultural objects (or their land, for that matter). Material culture should, however, be preserved for future generations of Canadians. As I have noted, in museum and anthropological taxonomy, such objects were categorized as examples of “Coast Salish” artistic production, contained by the parameters of “ethnographic” and “traditional” culture. And, as we have seen in Chapter Three, in relation to the Musqueam houseposts, the western interpretation of cultural objects as examples of indigenous artistic “styles” ignored indigenous political meaning as well as the histories of cross-cultural transactions and translation. Similarly, in museum and academic contexts, the Musqueam tomb was highlighted as a “unique” example of Coast Salish art, its indigenous meanings obscured.²⁷¹ Indian Agent C.C. Perry concurred with Smith that the Musqueam grave box would make an important addition to the national collection: “We may be able to induce these Indians to donate or otherwise dispose of the tomb to the National Museum where, I feel with you, the relic should be preserved.”²⁷²

How do we understand the Musqueam’s agreement to part with what was considered such a rare and beautiful example of Coast Salish artistry? Aboriginal people were not always concerned about the preservation of the physical object per se, but were more attentive to maintaining the history, rights, and prerogatives that such cultural

²⁷¹ Harlan I. Smith to Charles C. Perry, Indian Agent, 30 October 1928. Harlan I. Smith Correspondence, folder Perry, Charles E., box 217, file 7, CMCA. See also Suttles, *Coast Salish Essays*, 121; Homer Barnett, *The Coast Salish*, plate XX1; and Wayne Suttles, “Central Coast Salish,” in *Handbook of North American Indians*, vol. 7, *Northwest Coast*, ed. Wayne Suttles (Washington, DC: Smithsonian Institution, 1990), 463.

²⁷² C.C. Perry, Indian Agent to Harlan I. Smith, National Museum of Canada, 26 January 1929, Harlan I. Smith Correspondence, box 217, file 7, CMCA.

objects represented. Consequently, part of the answer lies in the two stone monuments erected in the village cemetery as “replacements” for the original grave box and the Point family’s grave marker. The Art Monumental Company of Vancouver agreed to put up the headstone for the tomb, “with [a] suitable inscription” and the four fishers carved in relief, for the sum of one hundred dollars, the same price that was to be paid for the original box. The deal, therefore, was not about monetary gain. In fact, the Indian Agent oversaw all financial aspects of the transaction for the Band; the monies paid by the National Museum went directly to the Department of Indian Affairs, who then paid for the new cemetery monument.²⁷³ A second headstone was commissioned at the cost of thirty-five dollars to replace the Point family grave marker. Neither replicas nor copies, these unusual markers are part memorial, part history, and, importantly, part contract.



Figure 4.3: The inscription reads: “This monument is erected to replace ancient carved grave box which contained the bones of 27 of our Musuqeam ancestors [sic]. The grave box is now in the National Museum at Ottawa, January 12, 1931.” Photograph in the collection of MIBA and reproduced with permission of the Musuqeam Indian Band.

²⁷³ F.J.C. Ball, Indian Agent to Duncan C. Scott, Deputy Superintendent General of Indian Affairs, 6 January 1931, RG10, vol. 10349, file 987/36-7-4-2, NAC.



Figure 4.4: The inscription reads: “This monument replaces a wood carving to the memory of the Teeowtset family ancestors of James Point. The original carving is in the National Museum at Ottawa, January 12, 1931.” Photograph in the collection of the MIBA and reproduced with permission of the Point family.

The first memorial stone commemorates the lives of twenty-seven unnamed individuals, four of whom were, presumably, the four powerful deceased medicine men referred to by James Point. While the exact family lineage seems to have been unknown (or didn't matter), the twenty-seven were not anonymous, but were referred to collectively as “Musqueam ancestors.” The second headstone specifically identified the family affiliation as “Teeowtset,” the ancestors of James Point. But what is most remarkable is that the headstones cited the location of the original objects in the National Museum of Canada, thus making the historic negotiations part of the gravesite's history. The headstones were simultaneously grave markers for Musqueam ancestors (both known and unknown) and a record of the transaction with the museum. They were not meant to be authentic reproductions -- they did not simply stand in for the original objects -- but referenced the dead, their family history and prerogative, as well as the

Musqueam's relationship with the off-site national institution. Much as Ruth Phillips has argued regarding indigenous touristic objects that reveal both material experimentation and links to conservative traditional practice, these tombstones were the result of cross-cultural exchange.²⁷⁴ They were the product of the relationship between the local community and the national state, represented jointly by the Department of Indian Affairs and the National Museum.

The historical or social biographies of the Musqueam burial box and grave marker are significant on a number of levels. They point to a shift in burial practices from entombing the dead in above-ground mortuary houses to burying them in caskets in cemetery plots, as encouraged by Christianity. Family gravesites were increasingly consolidated in western-style cemeteries established on reserves and were in some cases maintained as common Band property. Tracing the trajectories of the objects to the museum also highlights the relationship between the local indigenous culture and the construction of a national visual culture, and suggests that Aboriginal communities had their own reasons for turning items over to the national museum that were often at odds with the appropriation of indigenous history and culture for national identity purposes. During the first half of the twentieth century, the idea that the "anonymous" dead, that is, deceased who were beyond the memory of contemporary Aboriginal people, were of less relevance to the living than the "known" dead, continued to animate archaeological theory and served as a justification for plundering burial sites containing unidentified human remains. Reburial and re-commemoration reveals that the western classification into "identified" and "unidentified" deceased was not necessarily a distinction that was

²⁷⁴ Ruth B. Phillips, *Trading Identities: The Souvenir in Native American Art from the Northwest, 1700-1900* (Seattle: University of Washington Press and Montreal: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1998).

important to the Musqueam and other First Nations in British Columbia.²⁷⁵ In the words of the late Musqueam elder Vincent Stogan, “My elders taught us that all our people who have passed on are still around us.”²⁷⁶

Constructing and Archiving a National Archaeology

In 1911, Harlan I. Smith left the American Museum of Natural History to take up a position in Ottawa as head archaeologist for the Geological Survey of Canada, within its Division of Anthropology.²⁷⁷ The federal government was concerned that American collectors were continuing to remove totem poles and other “historic mementos” from Indian Reserves (especially those along the CN Railway line where it ran through Gitskan territory in the Skeena Valley), which, if left in their natural settings, could make profitable tourist destinations.²⁷⁸ In 1927, Parliament amended the 1906 *Indian Act* so that permission of the Department of Indian Affairs was required prior to the sale of totem poles, houseposts, carved rocks, and grave markers. The Act empowered the state to intervene in commercial cultural transactions. Minister of the Interior Charles Stewart, who presented the bill to the legislature, argued that “rich Americans have been coming into Canada and purchasing them, and if this goes on the whole coast will be denuded of these totem poles if we do not take some action to preserve them. They are of great

²⁷⁵ On the other hand, as we saw with the Jesup Expedition excavations, Aboriginal people sometimes consented to the removal of remains from graves to which they had no connection.

²⁷⁶ Peter Kulchyski, Don McCaskill, and David Newhouse, *In the Word of the Elders: Aboriginal Cultures in Transition* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press), 443.

²⁷⁷ By 1923, this institution became the Victoria Memorial Museum and, later, the National Museum of Canada.

²⁷⁸ Cole, *Captured Heritage*, 272-279. In 1924, the Totem Pole Preservation Committee, funded by the DIA, sponsored by the CN Railway and organized by the National Museum, was formed to preserve the poles in Gitskan territories deemed of heritage value for tourism.

historic value.”²⁷⁹ Later, reflecting on this legislation and his earlier collecting work for the American Museum of Natural History, Harlan I. Smith agreed that objects should remain in Canada; nonetheless he felt that their removal was the lesser of two evils: “It is better that [indigenous objects] should even leave Canada than that they should be allowed to decay.”²⁸⁰ For the state, indigenous artifacts required preservation, whether in village or museum settings, for heritage and commercial reasons. For some Aboriginal communities, however, preservation of cultural objects was closely associated with the perpetuation of traditional political systems. As Dominion ethnologist Marius Barbeau suggested to the Deputy Minister of Mines, the totem pole “is still to [the Gitskan people] a symbol of their right to the ancestor’s hunting grounds...conserving the totem pole to a certain extent mean safeguarding one’s right to the hunting-ground.”²⁸¹

An interesting counter-narrative to the notion that Indians “cling” to their cultural objects is that, in Coast Salish territory, some communities linked the donation of cultural objects to museums to their struggles for recognition of Aboriginal rights and title. In 1923, the Tsawwassen presented to the National Museum, “in return for a small gift of appreciation,” what *Saturday Night* magazine called “the largest unbroken sculpture of the human form ever found in Canada.”²⁸² Tsawwassen Chief Harry Joe explained to the local historian Denys Nelson that the stone was the work of “great men who had the

²⁷⁹ House of Commons, *Debates*, vol. 1, 1926-27, 322.

²⁸⁰ Harlan I. Smith to Rev. George Kinney, 27 January 1937, Harlan I. Smith Correspondence, box 216, file 99, CMCA. Smith was aware of the criticism surrounding his 1890s purchase of poles, grave markers, and houseposts for the American Museum of Natural History in New York City, so his comments are also likely in defense of this past work. See also “Decorative Art of B.C. Indians of Economic Importance to Province,” newspaper clipping, 18 August 1923, in Denys Nelson Papers, Add Mss 1175, box 1, British Columbia and Archives Records Service (BCARS), regarding his reflections on the Jesup Expedition purchases.

²⁸¹ Marius Barbeau to Deputy Minister of Mines, 20 January 1925, RG10, vol. 4085, file 507,787-7, NAC.

²⁸² “Ancient Bit of Indian Sculpture Discovered in British Columbia,” *Saturday Night*, 21 July 1923.

power of healing sickness [and] mending bones.” A long time ago, one such “magician” had turned some people into stone because they had tried to thwart his efforts.²⁸³ The Chief’s motives for donating this important carving to the National Museum was linked to his community’s concern regarding the dispossession of territorial lands. Between 1913 and 1926, the Tsawwassen had written numerous appeals to federal representatives regarding their loss of access to traditional fishing and village sites in the Fraser Delta.²⁸⁴ And, as the magazine reported with respect to the donation, “The Chief...commends his tribe to the Canadian Government and wishes the Government representatives, when they visit British Columbia, to give ear to the needs of his people and respect their rights.”²⁸⁵ Thus, just as the Musqueam houseposts were an implicit statement of family history and territorial ownership in the context of the McKenna-McBride Commission, the carved stone and the midden in which it was rediscovered were considered by the Tsawwassen Chief to be material evidence “that his people lived on this location for a long period.”²⁸⁶ Yet instead of viewing such objects in their political dimension (broadly defined, as in the case of the Tsawwassen) or as markers of customary law and land-tenure systems (more formally defined, as in the case of the Gitskan), it was widely assumed outside Native communities that these objects were of great national importance and even *belonged* to Canada, to be “given to the nation for preservation so that they may be

²⁸³ Denys Nelson, “To Woodward Landing...” typed notes, 25 March 1926, in Denys Nelson Papers, Add Mss 1175, box 1, BCARS. Regarding the Stó:lō history of the work of Xexá:ls, the transformers, see Albert (Sonny) McHalsie, David M. Schaepe, and Keith Thor Carlson, “Making the World Right through Transformations,” in *A Stó:lō - Coast Salish Historical Atlas*, ed. Keith Thor Carlson (Chilliwack: Stó:lō Heritage Trust, 2001), 6-7.

²⁸⁴ See, for example, Chief Harry Joe, William George, and Guss Williams to the Royal Commission on Indian Affairs, 28 April 1914, RG10, vol. 11021, file 520C, NAC; Chief Harry Joe and George Swanaset to the Royal Commission on Indian Affairs, 28 April 1914, RG10, vol. 11021, file 520C, NAC; Chief Harry Joe, Tsawwassen, to W.E. Ditchburn, 16 March 1925, regional file 987/34-0, Department of Indian and Northern Affairs, Vancouver; and Chief Harry Joe to Ditchburn, 3 April 1925, regional file 987/34-0, Department of Indian and Northern Affairs, Vancouver.

²⁸⁵ “Ancient Bit of Indian Sculpture,” *Saturday Night*.

²⁸⁶ *Ibid.*

available to all the people.”²⁸⁷ Trusting that prehistoric and indigenous art, such as the Tsawwassen stone and the Musqueam gravebox, could provide the basis for manufacturing a national visual (and commercially lucrative) identity, Smith proposed to *Saturday Night* that the carved stone “will be of great value in supplying Canada with motifs for designs and trademarks needed by our factories.”²⁸⁸

As backdrop to the national collecting of Aboriginal material culture, was Harlan I. Smith’s own extraordinary national archive project, which was not limited to material objects. During his tenure as national archaeologist, from 1911 to his retirement in 1937, Harlan I. Smith developed an extensive database of information about archaeological and burial sites to assist with the preservation of “the national heritage that was being destroyed by industrial development.”²⁸⁹ His goal was to create a national archive housing a comprehensive and permanent record of the location of found artifacts, ancient village sites, burial places, shell-heaps, and pictographs, along with information about how to access the sites, including contact names and map references. To do this, Smith solicited assistance from “representatives on the ground,” including Indian Agents, collectors, amateur and professional archaeologists and ethnologists, the Northwest Mounted Police, and the CN Railway, but very rarely Aboriginal people themselves. Lacking funds for extensive excavation projects across the country, especially during these post-war years and the 1930s Depression, Smith apparently hoped to encourage

²⁸⁷ Ibid.

²⁸⁸ Ibid. Smith compiled a series of indigenous designs in the hope that they could be used by manufacturers of Canadian products and as a source for the production of Indian arts and crafts. Harlan I. Smith, *An Album of Prehistoric Art, Bulletin* No. 37 (Ottawa: Department of Mines, Victoria Memorial Museum, 1923). See also “Decorative Art of B.C. Indians of Economic Importance to Province,” newspaper clipping, 18 August 1923, in Denys Nelson Papers, Add Mss 1175, box 1, BCARS.

²⁸⁹ “Ancient Human Remains Discovered in British Columbia,” undated typescript, W.J. Wintemberg Collection, box 120, file 11, CMCA.

people to send materials found during the course of other work, such as road and railway construction. The endless accumulation of knowledge about human remains and artifacts was presumed to benefit scientific research. "The humblest bone or fragment may help to increase human knowledge, which in turn may relieve suffering or be useful to mankind in some other way," argued Smith in his appeals for information.²⁹⁰ Thus, indigenous objects were turned towards larger humanist research questions, and not to better understanding the specific histories and geographies of Northwest Coast indigenous communities.

Smith was careful not to imply that people violate the "grave robbery law," a law meant to prevent the desecration of cemeteries in Canada.²⁹¹ When requesting information and artifact donations, Smith distinguished between ancient and contemporary gravesites: "I refer of course to very ancient objects. I would not wish anyone to understand this letter as referring to the cemeteries or other places held sacred by the living Indians, or any other living people."²⁹² The distinction between ancient and sacred implied that Aboriginal people were only interested in more recent western-style burial places located within their villages. Graves marked with crosses and enclosed by fences were clearly out of bounds to Smith's project. By the early 1920s, however, Smith found a new category of gravesite available to collectors:

The villages formerly in Indian reserves now no longer an Indian Reserve may yield human skeletons if graves are not indicated by crosses or shown by fences or cemeteries. That is bones on the ground, in trees, or rock shelters which have been abandoned when land was transferred to other

²⁹⁰ Harlan I. Smith, "The Archaeological Value of Prehistoric Human Bones," *The Ottawa Naturalist*, 32 (March 1919), 166.

²⁹¹ Harlan I. Smith, "Memo of Some Places Where Indian Bones May Possibly Still be Collected in British Columbia," August 1931, W.J. Wintemberg Collection, box 120, file 7, CMCA.

²⁹² Harlan I. Smith, Dominion Archaeologist, Geological Survey of Canada, to Sir, Department of Mines, 13 October 1912, Harlan I. Smith Correspondence, Royal Northwest Mounted Police, box 217, file 20, CMCA.

ownership may probably be collected legally if land owner does not object.²⁹³

Smith had found an important loophole: in their final report of 1916, the McKenna-McBride Commission recommended that reserve lands considered excessive to the needs of a Band be alienated or “cut-off” from the reserve. In keeping with those recommendations, in 1923 British Columbia passed Order-in-Council 911 and the federal government followed suit in 1924 with Order-in-Council 1265, authorizing the reduction in size of certain reserves. Sections of reserve lands were suddenly alienated without the consent of the affected Indian Bands.²⁹⁴ In other cases, reserves or sections of reserves were sold to private and industrial interests. In the national colonial culture, burial grounds that were at one time protected by their reserve status were now considered available to collectors, a consideration now sanctioned, in the depths of the Depression, by the dominion archaeologist.

Whether a site was classified by Harlan I. Smith and his collectors as “ancient” or “sacred” also had to do with whether or not Aboriginal people retained memory about the personal identity of the deceased. In a report reviewing potential sources for human remains in British Columbia, Smith suggested that bones could be procured from an island burial ground near Bella Coola, because “there are few if any surviving friends of the deceased deposited here.”²⁹⁵ He recommended revisiting the worksites of the Jesup

²⁹³ Harlan I. Smith, “Memo of Some Places Where Indian Bones May Possibly Still be Collected in British Columbia,” August 1931, W.J. Wintenberg Collection, box 120, file 7, CMCA.

²⁹⁴ Cole R. Harris, *Making Native Space: Colonialism, Resistance, and Reserves in British Columbia* (Vancouver: University of British Columbia Press, 2002); and Union of BC Indian Chiefs, *Stolen Lands, Broken Promises: Researching the Indian Land Question in British Columbia* (Vancouver: Union of BC Indian Chiefs, 2005), 27.

²⁹⁵ Harlan I. Smith, “Memo of Some Places Where Indian Bones May Possibly Still be Collected in British Columbia,” August 1931, W.J. Wintenberg Collection, box 120, file 7, CMCA.

Expedition, such as an island near Fort Rupert, because, with an interval of thirty-three years since the expedition was there in 1898, he assumed the Indians would “probably care less” about the human remains contained within the grave houses.²⁹⁶ Smith suggested specific ways to circumvent the grave robbing law where it applied, usually by obtaining the Department of Indian Affairs’ permission to excavate on reserves and hiring an “influential Indian of those most likely to be concerned,”²⁹⁷ two strategies that are reminiscent of the Jesup Expedition’s field techniques. In this period, many communities established cemeteries on their reserves. And even though these cemeteries were bounded with fences and contained graves marked with crosses, they also faced the threat of illegal dispossession and dislocation by collectors. Furthermore, in addition to formally sanctioned, organized archaeological excavations and collecting, transportation construction and industrial development posed new threats to indigenous burial grounds.

Industrial Development and Cemetery Relocations

Aboriginal people were acutely aware of the external pressures challenging their residency at numerous locations across the province and the fragility of their burial grounds. When the Canadian Pacific Railway cut through a reserve graveyard in the Fraser Canyon in 1880, the Yale Indians moved their ancestors to the opposite side of the river. The Department of Indian Affairs paid the community one hundred dollars in compensation -- an amount grossly insufficient to pay even for the blankets required to re-wrap the bodies, lumber for the coffins, as well as the labour of forty-eight men from

²⁹⁶ Ibid.

²⁹⁷ Ibid.

Ohamil, Scowlitz, and Spuzzum during the two and a half days it took to complete the reburial.²⁹⁸ When a roadway was first constructed around Stanley Park in Vancouver in the late 1880s, the Indian graves there were removed and re-buried at reserve cemeteries in North Vancouver and elsewhere.²⁹⁹ This construction destroyed the peninsula's extensive shell-middens, as the shell material provided a decorative white surface for the road circling the new park.³⁰⁰



Figure 4.5: Labourers clear through the eight-foot deep shell midden in Stanley Park for construction of the park's roadway in 1888. Photograph by Charles S. Bailey. Vancouver City Archives, photograph no. SGN 91.

²⁹⁸ "Correspondence regarding damage done to a church on the Spuzzum Reserve and to an Indian Burial Ground by the Canadian Pacific Railroad," RG10, vol. 3604, file 2325, NAC.

²⁹⁹ Major J.S. Matthews, *Conversations with Khahtsahlano, 1932-1954* (Vancouver: City Hall, 1955), 263.

³⁰⁰ Matthews, *Conversations*, 127.

These sorts of burial relocations were disturbing and disruptive to Aboriginal people. During testimony before the McKenna-McBride Commission in 1913, Penelakut leader Edward Hulburtson requested that his place at Tsussie on Kuper Island be secured as an Indian Reserve: “One thing I feel sorry about it is, that if I happen to die, it seems to me that I have no place that belongs to me, in which to be buried.” His misgivings regarding the vulnerability of reserves and burial places more generally led him to plead, “If anybody dies here, we don’t want to be moved after we are buried. We want to stay right in one place.”³⁰¹ The commission chairman reassured Hulburtson that human remains would only be removed from on-reserve cemeteries if the Indians consented. As we have seen, burial grounds were an integral part of Aboriginal peoples’ relationship to their culture, histories, and territories. In the colonial context, Aboriginal people saw burial sites as evidence of ancient and continuous occupation of the land. Despite this, when reserves were sold, leased, or cut through by transport routes, cemeteries were relocated.

The indigenous communities whose reserves were situated in the urban setting of Vancouver and North Vancouver, were inundated with requests to purchase or lease their valuable lands. In 1904, in response to the City of Vancouver’s application to purchase the False Creek Reserve, which was located in a prime industrial area, the False Creek Indians unanimously opposed selling “their home where they were born and brought up, and where their fathers and grandfathers had lived.” They refused to relocate because “their dead relatives for generations are buried there and they are unconditionally

³⁰¹ Royal Commission on Indian Affairs for the Province of British Columbia, “Meeting with the Penelakut Band,” 3 June 1913, Cowichan Agency, (Union of B.C. Indian Chiefs transcript), 135.

opposed to removing or disturbing these remains.”³⁰² As the False Creek resident, Cronin, made clear, “Graveyard cannot be moved.”³⁰³ By 1913, however, some of the reserve’s male residents yielded to external pressures, sold their reserve to the province, and relocated their families to Howe Sound, Musqueam, and Coquitlam.³⁰⁴ Part of the deal included payment of one thousand dollars to Chief Andrew for the exhumation of the graves and their reburial at the yekw’tz cemetery at Squamish River.³⁰⁵ In the case of the Musqueam Reserve on the north arm of the Fraser River, Indian Agent C.C. Perry claimed that the decision in the early 1930s to consolidate the reserve’s graves in the main cemetery formed part of a plan to sell the entire reserve for industrial and port development purposes and relocate the Musqueam to their much smaller reserve across the river on Sea Island. The company making the application for the reserve was prepared to “do everything to carry out the wishes of the Indians, so far as the two graveyards are concerned, by way of removing the bodies to such place as the Indians require.”³⁰⁶ While this relocation was never realized, it underscores the unrelenting pressure on urban reserve lands -- pressures that the presence of recognized, western-style cemeteries did not deter. Just as the Department of Indian Affairs supported the National Museum’s collection of human remains, departmental officials were usually willing to approve expenses to relocate reserve cemeteries.

³⁰² R.C. McDonald, Indian Agent to A.W. Vowell, Indian Superintendent, 6 January 1904, Indian and Northern Affairs, Ottawa, regional file 987/1-1-c.

³⁰³ R.C. McDonald, Indian Agent, “Meeting at False Creek on Jan 4th 1904,” Indian and Northern Affairs, Ottawa, file 987/30-7-6, vol. 1.

³⁰⁴ This sale was conducted between provincial representatives and some of the male residents of the reserve. In 1913, the province paid \$11,500 directly to each male, in disregard of the surrender provisions of the *Indian Act*. Later, the Department of Indian Affairs reimbursed the province and reserve status was reinstated.

³⁰⁵ Matthews, *Conversations*, 14.

³⁰⁶ C.C. Perry, Indian Agent to Harlan I. Smith, National Museum of Canada, 26 January 1929, Harlan I. Smith Correspondence, box 217, file 7, CMCA; and James Beck to Department of Indian Affairs, 28 November 1928, RG10, vol. 7787, file 27153-22, NAC.

In March 1924, local historian Bruce McKelvie writing for the *Vancouver Province*, reported on the exhumation of bodies, including those of the late Chief George and members of his family, from a small cemetery on the Seymour Creek Indian Reserve in Burrard Inlet and their reinterment in the cemetery at Stawamus, Howe Sound: "It was a strange and solemn scene – one not to be forgotten – and one not likely to be repeated as the Indians, following closely the custom of centuries, clustered about the little plot enclosed by decayed and falling fences."³⁰⁷ In McKelvie's eyes, the Squamish, Tseleiwatuth, and Musqueam participants were remnants of an indigenous past who performed their roles in keeping with the concept of the vanishing Indian. The solemn and spiritual "old men" who "talked softly to the departed as the boxes were lowered" were marked for the newspaper's readers as "authentic" Indians; the deceased, "sacred relics," resting in the coffins and further removed in time and space from the industrial present, were even more so.³⁰⁸ Accompanying the Aboriginal ritualists, family, and community members were representatives of white society, including Department of Indian Affairs officials and the "chief factor" (possibly McKelvie himself) of the Native Sons of British Columbia, an organization whose membership was restricted to direct descendents of first generation of British Columbia's European settlers.³⁰⁹

³⁰⁷ B.A. McKelvie, "Seymour Indians Exhume Remains of Honoured Dead: Reburial at Squamish with Fitting Ceremony Today," newspaper clipping in Denys Nelson Papers, Add Mss 1175, file 3, BCARS.

³⁰⁸ B.A. McKelvie, "Remains Carried Up Steep Hill by Torchlight," *Province*, 26 March 1924, newspaper clipping in Denys Nelson Papers, Add Mss 1175, file 3, BCARS.

³⁰⁹ Regarding the Native Sons of British Columbia and the construction of a celebratory provincial history, see Chad Reimer, "The Making of British Columbia History: Historical Writing and Institutions, 1784-1958," (PhD diss., York University, 1995). On the Native Daughters of British Columbia and the relationship between settler and Aboriginal objects on display in their museum and the construction of domestic and civic history, see Rose Ellis and Susan Roy, "The Hastings Mill Museum: Curious Narratives of Journey and Settlement in Twentieth-Century British Columbia," paper presented to the Qualicum History Conference, Qualicum, B.C., February 2001.

The press rendered the exhumation at Seymour Creek as simultaneously “pre-contact” in quality and ensuing from the exigencies of modern urban life, claiming that the Seymour Creek Indians wanted “to seek more restful surroundings for their dead” in the face of encroaching civilization. Yet this reburial was anything but a retreat from modernism; it was an effort to embrace it. The family relocated the bodies to make room for industrial development on their reserve, development they themselves had sanctioned. In the early 1920s, Seymour Creek families leased portions of the reserve to lumber and construction companies and sold gravel. By 1926, the Department of Indian Affairs, intent on ensuring bureaucratic order and control, imposed a more coordinated approach to economic development and subdivided the reserve for leasing. To take better advantage of the expanding industrial economy in the port of Burrard Inlet, the Squamish Band Council in collaboration with the Department of Indian Affairs transformed the Seymour Creek Reserve from a small village community to an industrial park.³¹⁰

The industrial development of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries presented the Musqueam, Tslei-waututh, and Squamish peoples resident in coastal Vancouver with economic hardship and limited economic opportunity. Urban and agricultural expansion and the transformation of Burrard Inlet into a major international port led to the depletion of hunting, fishing, shellfish, and timber resources, thereby undermining the traditional indigenous economy. Resource depletion, coupled with state legislation that restricted indigenous traditional livelihoods that were based on fishery and forestry resources, characterized the period as one of rupture and displacement. In the context of the industrial economy, urban Aboriginal people appear to have developed

³¹⁰ Chris Roine, “The Squamish Aboriginal Economy, 1860-1940” (MA thesis, Simon Fraser University, 1996), 78-80.

increasingly diversified economies that combined traditional economic practices with new kinds of wage labour and barter opportunities including salmon-cannery work, longshoring, milling, hop picking, as well as door-to-door selling and trading of foodstuffs and baskets.³¹¹ However, this wage work was relatively limited and small-scale; it provided no collateral to pursue significant community economic development. Similarly, Indian Reserve acreage surrendered for lease or sale to industrial interests alienated residential lands and rarely resulted in long-term economic benefit. Yet, given the economic duress Aboriginal people generally faced, Band Councils in some instances supported leasing reserve lands as a source of community revenue and much needed cash for essential shelter and infrastructure projects such as the installation of water supply systems to replace septic fields and contaminated water wells.³¹²

A November 1923 Squamish Band Council Resolution approved payment for the exhumation of six bodies and their reinterment at Waiwakun Indian Reserve No. 14 in the Cheakamus Valley.³¹³ Earlier that year, with the support of the Department of Indian Affairs, the Squamish reserves at Howe Sound and in Burrard Inlet amalgamated their funds into a single administrative entity. The Tslei-waututh, whose reserve was located at the mouth of Indian Arm and just east of the Seymour Creek Reserve, did not amalgamate with the Squamish. Tslei-waututh Chief George with other representatives

³¹¹ Leona M. Sparrow, "Work Histories of a Coast Salish Couple" (MA thesis, University of British Columbia, 1976). See also Rolf Knight, *Indians at Work: An Informal History of Native Indian Labour in British Columbia, 1858-1930* (Vancouver: New Star Books, 1978); and, in relation to women trading door-to-door, see Andrea Laforret and Annie York, *Spuzzum: Fraser Canyon Histories, 1808-1939* (Vancouver: University of British Columbia Press, 1998). With respect to the Squamish's participation in the lumbering industry, see Andrew Parnaby, "The Best Men That Ever Worked the Lumber': Aboriginal Longshoremen on Burrard Inlet, B.C., 1863-1939," *The Canadian Historical Review* vol. 87, no. 1 (March 2006): 53-78; and Roine, "The Squamish Aboriginal Economy."

³¹² Howard E. Grant, personal communication, February 2007.

³¹³ Squamish Council Resolution, 7 November 1923, RG10, vol. 8095, file 987/36-7-7-2 pt. 1, NAC. The newspaper reported that five bodies were re-interred. See McKelvie, "Seymour Indians."

from the community explained in a letter to Deputy Superintendent General Duncan C. Scott that “years and years ago our forefathers settled and from generation to generation have lived on Burrard Inlet,” and that the Squamish had only recently settled in the area. Old Tom Tse-la-wal-tun and others from Musqueam supported the Burrard’s petition, noting, “Before the white man came to B.C. the Musquiam tribe of (Point Grey) were the only real settlers around False Creek, Capilano all over Burrard Inlet as far up as the Tselawata River (Indian Arm).” According to the Tslei-waututh and Musqueam petitioners, the village and resource sites on the north shore of Burrard Inlet were a part of a larger hənqəmihəm - territory.³¹⁴

The individuals who were buried at Seymour Creek were not “sacred relics” of ancient times, as they were described in newspaper reports, but the recently deceased who endured in the memories of their family, friends, and larger extended network of Squamish and hənqəmihəm kin and community. They belonged to the late Chief George, his first and second wives (who are unnamed in departmental reports), Mrs. Felix (possibly Tenash, his aunt), Little George, and Tom.³¹⁵ Tragically, in 1891, it was reported that Chief George and his wife Millie drowned in Seymour Creek in a canoeing accident.³¹⁶ While the exhumation was precipitated by the need to relocate the bodies to make room for industrial expansion, exhumation and reburial was not unprecedented in Coast Salish culture. In some cases, several years after a death, wealthy families hired ritualists to re-wrap the bones of the deceased in new blankets. These ceremonies

³¹⁴ Chief George et al to the Honorable Duncan Scott, 16 July 1923; and Old Tom Tse-la-wal-tun et al to Indian Agent C.C. Perry, 5 March 1923, copies in MIBA.

³¹⁵ The newspaper reported that five bodies were re-interred. See McKelvie, “Seymour Indians.”

³¹⁶ Matthews, *Conversations*, 29. McKelvie reported that the Squamish believed that the Chief and his wife had been murdered in front of their home on the reserve. See McKelvie, “Seymour Indians.”

sometimes included feasting, the performative display of hereditary privileges, and payment of witnesses and workers.³¹⁷

The Seymour Creek exhumation is, therefore, particularly interesting because it reveals the degree to which Department of Indian Affairs officials and other white dignitaries, such as McKelvie, were drawn into indigenous cultural practice. As the \$390.50 for the reburial came from Squamish's trust fund accounts, Indian Agent Perry oversaw all funeral expenditures according to "modern" accounting and bureaucratic procedures. The payments appear, however, to have been dictated by indigenous protocol. Perry paid Squamish Chief Jimmy and Old Tommy seven dollars each "for handling the bodies." He paid four Squamish men five dollars each for digging graves. Other Squamish individuals were compensated for the use of their horses and boats to transport the ceremonial "workers" and bodies to Howe Sound. Perry paid five Musqueam women for providing food and refreshments at the feasts at Seymour Creek and Howe Sound. Additional costs included blankets, food, and payment for the use of the homes in which the food was cooked.³¹⁸ Seventy dollars was paid "during the progress of a feast" to Musqueam Chief Jack Stogan for the services of seven men who participated in the exhumation of the bodies.³¹⁹ These Musqueam men oversaw the reburial because they were ritual specialists: šx^wne:m, wəʔθiθə, and siwinmət, who held

³¹⁷ Suttles, "Central Coast Salish," 465.

³¹⁸ "Correspondence regarding a cemetery site on the Seymour Creek Reserve 2 for the Squamish Band," vol. 8095, file 987/36-7-7-2 pt. 1, NAC.

³¹⁹ Charles C. Perry, Indian Agent to Secretary Department of Indian Affairs, 12 June 1924, RG10, vol. 8095, file 987/36-7-7-2 pt. 1, NAC. The newspaper reported with respect to Jack Stogan and Tom Pete's participation, "their hands alone were permitted to touch the bones," further explaining that "only certain men in each tribe were permitted to perform this sacred office, and their right comes by birth." See McKelvie, "Seymour Indians." For a similar list of funeral payments, see also Kew, "Coast Salish Ceremonial Life," 227.

the private skill and knowledge that allowed them “not only to see and sometimes talk to the dead, but to remain relatively invulnerable to the dangers of such contacts.”³²⁰

The exhumation at Seymour Creek and subsequent reburial in Howe Sound was the product of a cross-cultural and bureaucratic negotiation that contained elements of traditional practice such as feasting and payment to participants, as well as westernized innovations, such as the Agent’s book-keeping and a tribute of flower wreaths presented by the Native Sons of British Columbia. The ceremony reveals the determination of Coast Salish society to continue to be organized around networks of kin and community in the midst of Vancouver’s economic and political transformation into a major metropolis. Indian Agents who, in other contexts, mediated and controlled Band relations with white society were, in this specific instance in the year 1923, governed by indigenous cultural protocol.³²¹ Removal and reburial was linked to the dispossession of lands, but it was also part of a flexible and creative indigenous resistance to colonization.

³²⁰ Kew, “Coast Salish Ceremonial Life,” 212.

³²¹ See, for example, Sarah Carter, *Lost Harvests: Prairie Indian Reserve Farmers and Government Policy* (Montreal: McGill-Queen’s University Press, 1998); and Robin Jarvis Brownlie, *A Fatherly Eye: Indian Agents, Government Power, and Aboriginal Resistance in Ontario, 1918-1939* (Don Mills, ON: Oxford University Press, 2003).



Figure 4.6: Bruce McKelvie, Native Sons of British Columbia presents a representative of the Seymour Creek Indian Reserve with a flower tribute. Photograph in the collection of MIBA.

Vancouver's non-Aboriginal public took great interest when Aboriginal people from local reserves passed away. Newspapers frequently reported on the death and funerals of prominent Aboriginal men and women outside of the obituary pages. But popular interest was not only reserved for prominent individuals, politicians, and chiefs. Aboriginal people who were appropriately "aged" captured the public's imagination. Elders were portrayed in the press as timeless individuals, the surviving "link" to the "ethnographic" or "traditional" period just prior to contact with European society. For example, Chief Cassimier, of the Langley Band, who passed away in the 1920s, was described in the paper as the "last of the rulers of the once powerful Quo-antles," who had negotiated a peace and friendship treaty with the Hudson's Bay Company to defend

Fort Langley against attack from hostile northern tribes.³²² A 1923 newspaper story written by Squamish Band Secretary Andrew Paull, announced with the title “Aged Indian Was Last Link with Capt. Vancouver” the death of Josephine Tom, a descendent of “the great Chief Capilano,” who, according to Paull, escorted the British explorer into Burrard Inlet in 1792 and facilitated peaceful relations between coastal indigenous peoples and the European explorers.³²³ Similarly, in May 1924, Paull reported on the passing of Musqueam Chief Jack Stogan cəmlenəxʷ, noting that he was a descendent of the Indian Chief cəmlenəxʷ who had made a “peaceful pact” with Northwest Company explorer Simon Fraser when he arrived at Yale in 1808. Paull also noted that cəmlenəxʷ assisted in the establishment of British authority during the colonial days of the province and in recognition of this service, Queen Victoria gave him a five-foot staff with a replica of her crown mounted on the tip.³²⁴

Whether Andrew Paull’s history and genealogy was accurate or not is not the point here.³²⁵ In some cases, Aboriginal people themselves invoked romanticized views of traditional times, drawing upon, but inverting the long-standing anthropological convention.³²⁶ Such public writing, while directed at white audiences and mainstream

³²² “Beloved B.C. Indian Chief Laid to Rest,” undated newspaper clipping, in Denys Nelson Papers, Add Mss 1175, file 12, BCARS.

³²³ Andrew Paull, “Aged Indian Was Last Link with Cpt. Vancouver: Death of Chief Tom’s Wife Recalls City’s Early Days,” undated newspaper clipping [circa 1923] in Denys Nelson Papers, Add Mss 1175, file 3, BCARS. While there are varying understandings of the qeyepelenuxʷ genealogy and history among Aboriginal families, there was also a difference of opinion on the subject between city archivist Major Matthews and Andrew Paull. See Matthews, *Conversations*.

³²⁴ Andy Paull, “Funeral Service Wednesday for Chief of Musqueam Band,” 12 May 1942, newspaper clipping, MIBA.

³²⁵ For a more detailed history of cəmlenəxʷ’s relationship with the colonial government and the Queen’s staff, see Chapter Three. And for critique of Paull’s description of the Capilano genealogy, see Matthews, *Conversations*, 144.

³²⁶ For example, Ruth Phillips notes that the commodification of souvenir arts was a strategy for economic well-being and cultural survival. But as Phillips notes, “To succeed in this task, Aboriginal makers had to reimagine themselves in terms of the conventions of Indianness current among the consumer group, an exercise that profoundly destabilized indigenous concepts of identity.” See Ruth B. Phillips, *Trading*

conventions of Indianness, was also possibly a strategy to assert a view of the past in a way that raised status in the eyes of both Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal spectators. In these media representations, indigenous communities emphasized genealogical connections that reached back to the point of contact with European society.

Commemorations of European explorer history seem strange today, especially considering the forceful protests surrounding the 1992 quincentennial celebrations of Columbus' voyages.³²⁷ While these representations rearticulate colonial narratives of progress that stress a peaceful acquisition of Aboriginal lands, at the same time, they emphasize the diplomatic history of colonial encounters and, therefore, reference the larger political relationship between the local community and the colonial state.

To colonial society, however, the popularized depictions of the death of Native peoples in the early decades of the twentieth-century represented the point of transition from "ethnographic" to "historic," and from the supposed "anonymous" to the named Indian. In the narration of colonial history, the death of the "last" Indian went hand in hand with the arrival of the "first" white baby.³²⁸ In 1931, the Native Daughters of British Columbia, whose membership was open to women directly descended from the

Identities: The Souvenir in Native American Art from the Northeast, 1700-1900 (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1992), 9. See also Ruth B. Phillips and Sherry Brydon, "Arrow of Truth: The Indians of Canada Pavillion at Expo '67," research paper; and Julie Cruikshank, "Negotiating with Narrative: Establishing Cultural Identity at the Yukon International Storytelling Festival," *American Anthropologist* vol. 99, no. 1 (1997): 56-69.

³²⁷ James Axtell, *Beyond 1492: Encounters in Colonial North America*, (New York: Oxford University Press, 1992). For the 1992 quincentennial of Columbus' "discovery," Aboriginal protesters across the Americas overtly challenged commemorative events and were largely successful in deconstructing the notion of discovery for many non-Aboriginal people. See Wendy Wickwire, "To See Ourselves as the Other's Other: Nlaka'pamux Contact Narratives," *Canadian Historical Review*, vol. 75, no. 1 (1994).

³²⁸ Regarding the cult of the white baby, see Carol J. Williams, "'Of Moral Qualities That Would Render Them an Ornament to Their Sex': Euro-Women Rise to Prominence, 1870-1890," in *Framing the West: Race, Gender, and the Photographic Frontier in the Pacific Northwest* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2003), 108-137. Regarding the exhibits at the Hastings Mill Museum and the "first white baby" display, see Rose Ellis and Susan Roy, "The Hastings Mill Museum: Curious Narratives of Journey and Settlement," paper presented to the Graduate Student History Conference, Qualicum B.C., 2001.

province's first generation of European pioneers, opened the Hastings Mill Museum in Vancouver, which included a display celebrating the birth of Vancouver's first white baby. By the interwar decades, however, the myth of the vanishing Indian was in its last throes; the 1941 federal census revealed that Aboriginal people in Canada were not disappearing, but growing in numbers. However, these publicized deaths afforded a second generation of white colonialists the opportunity to reaffirm the presumed alignment of Aboriginal people with the ancient past, while reinvigorating their own histories of European expansion and settlement. Thus, it was no coincidence that a representative of the Native Sons of British Columbia, an organization that celebrated "pioneer" history, was present at the Seymour Creek exhumation described above.

Conclusion

In 1927, at the same time the *Indian Act* was amended to prevent the sale of cultural objects to foreign parties, Minister of the Interior Charles Stewart introduced a second amendment for the legislature's consideration, which stipulated that anyone who, without written consent from the Superintendent General of Indian Affairs, "receives, obtains, solicits or requests from any Indians any payment...for the persecution of any claim...shall be guilty of an offence."³²⁹ Section 141 of the *Indian Act* was passed with little debate and no opposition. While directed at non-Aboriginal "meddlers" who, it was believed, exploited Aboriginal people by generating expectations for the resolution of unrealistic land claims, the legislation severely hampered Aboriginal groups' ability to

³²⁹ Quoted in Paul Tennant, *Aboriginal People and Politics: The Indian Land Question in British Columbia, 1849-1989* (Vancouver: University of British Columbia Press, 1990), 112.

pursue resolution of their land claims through formal avenues. The legislation was especially aimed at quashing the claims to Aboriginal title launched by British Columbia's indigenous organizations in the 1920s and was the "hammer blow" that prevented the Allied Tribes of British Columbia's opposition to the McKenna-McBride Commission's final report from reaching the Judicial Committee of the Privy Council. In 1927, formal indigenous protest was effectively silenced and closeted from judicial review. For white bureaucrats, "the Indian land question in British Columbia had been resolved."³³⁰ For Aboriginal peoples, however, the land dispute did not disappear.

Contrary to the beliefs of archaeologists, state officials, newspaper reporters, and much of the public, and despite the appropriation of cultural objects and relocated burial grounds, Aboriginal people did have memory of the past, especially as it concerned sacred places such as graveyards and burial sites. Accordingly, when they engaged in the modern political discourse of land claims, these sites and the human remains buried within them were real and symbolic expressions of ancestral ties to their lands.

Furthermore, while willing to participate in modern development, Aboriginal people wanted to do so in ways that were compatible with their traditions and did not desecrate their ancestors. It is noteworthy that in 1938, the stone quarry on the Seymour Creek Indian Reserve in North Vancouver, whose construction precipitated the removal of Chief George's remains and those of his family in 1924, provided the materials to

³³⁰ Tennant, *Aboriginal People and Politics*, 113. See also Brian E Titley, *A Narrow Vision: Duncan Campbell Scott and the Administration of Indian Affairs in Canada* (Vancouver: University of British Columbia Press, 1990), 157; Sidney L. Haring, "Can We Be Free under the Law of Queen Victoria on Top of Our Land?": Indians and the Law in British Columbia," in *White Mans' Law: Native People in Nineteenth Century Canadian Jurisprudence* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1998), 186-216; and Harris, *Making Native Space*.

construct a national commemorative cairn for the Marpole Midden.³³¹ In the following chapter we return to this midden to examine its role in the construction of Vancouver's civic history and how the question of the anonymous or "mysterious" Indian further contributed to distancing local indigenous peoples from the ancient past as well as depriving them of their histories and territories.

³³¹ T.S. Mills to F.H.H. Williamson, 8 October 1937, RG 84, vol. 1303, file HS10-68, pt. 1, NAC.

CHAPTER FIVE

The Great Fraser Midden and the Civic Colonial Culture

Great Fraser Midden

This memorial marks the site of one of the largest prehistoric middens on the Pacific Coast of Canada. It originally covered an area of about 4 1/2 acres, with an average depth of 5 feet and a maximum depth of 15 feet. Its lowest layers were formed many centuries ago when the islands opposite were tidal flats. The bone and stone implements and utensils found in it have thrown much light upon the culture status of prehistoric man in this vicinity.³³²

In May 1938, local ethnographer Charles Hill-Tout, who has been credited with “discovering” the Great Fraser Midden, addressed a large crowd gathered for the Historic Sites and Monuments Board of Canada dedication of a cairn commemorating the midden. Hill-Tout emphasized the tremendous size of the site, aligned it in importance to world treasures such as King Tutankhamun’s tomb, and theorized about its great antiquity. The site offered “valuable and interesting evidence of the culture and prehistoric conditions of the aborigines of this section of the country, and of the antiquity of man in this region,” he explained, placing the midden in the larger context of anthropological inquiry and propelling Vancouver into the scientific spotlight.³³³ For the audience of civic boosters, the midden spoke to the basic, essentialist question of the origin of humankind in North America. The cairn did not commemorate a monumental or dramatic history, nor did it celebrate a history of events, heroic people or social memory. Instead, it commemorated a history of measurements, geological sequence, a shifting river, and ancient stone

³³² The original plaque is in the collection of the Musqueam Indian Band, on loan from Parks Canada.

³³³ Charles Hill-Tout, “Presentation of the Cairn Commemorating The Great Fraser Midden,” typescript, 7 May 1938, Vancouver Museum.

artifacts. “This is a scientific memorial,” the local public historian Judge F.W. Howay further clarified, “and not in the line that I follow (history).”³³⁴ His comment was based on the western distinction between science and culture: scientific knowledge, founded as it was on “objective truth,” was not subject to the influences of human perception, bias, and subjective interpretation.



Figure 5.1 Alderman H.L. Corey unveils the National Historic Sites and Monuments of Canada’s cairn commemorating the Great Fraser Midden, May 1938. Standing beside Corey is Judge Howay, and seated is Charles Hill-Tout. This cairn was not located on the midden site, but in a city park so that it could be more accessible to tourists. Vancouver City Archives, photograph, no. MoN P13.

³³⁴ F.W. Howay to T.P.O. Menzies, 1 November 1937, Hill-Tout Papers, file D-V, Vancouver Museum.

The Art, Historical, and Scientific Association of Vancouver organized the unveiling, which along with Hill-Tout's presentation, included speeches by Judge Howay, Vancouver's mayor and other civic officials, as well as a musical performance and garden reception at the home of an association member. The occasion provided the 300 or so spectators the opportunity to display and reaffirm their membership in Vancouver's "respectable" elite class.³³⁵ Guests included members of the British Columbia Historical Society, the Native Sons and Daughters of British Columbia, as well as prominent civic and museum officials. Indian Agents F.J.C. Ball and A. O'Daunt, of the Fraser River and New Westminster Indian Agencies, respectively, also attended with their secretarial staff.³³⁶ Curiously absent from the ceremony were representatives of the Musqueam community who could have offered indigenous interpretations of the site. During this period, Aboriginal people often participated in public events designed to celebrate settler history, such as the Vancouver Folk Festivals of the 1930s, Victoria Day celebrations, and royal visits. They did so to celebrate their own histories and cultures and to further their own political goals.³³⁷ But this commemoration was not about making connections between contemporary Aboriginal peoples and Vancouver's history. Instead, for the white participants, the event commemorated lengthy human occupation and, in doing so, reaffirmed the supposed legitimacy of settler society.

At the unveiling and in press reports, the Marpole Midden, referred to as the site of "the birth of Vancouver," was described as the link between "prehistoric" and

³³⁵ On the formation of "respectability" in Vancouver as a specifically civic-minded, class-based, gendered, and white identity, see Robert A.J. McDonald, *Making Vancouver: Status, Class, and Social Boundaries, 1863-1913* (Vancouver: University of British Columbia Press, 1996).

³³⁶ "Invitation list," Hill-Tout Papers, file D-V, Vancouver Museum

³³⁷ See, for example, Susan Roy, "Performing Musqueam Culture and History at British Columbia's 1966 Centennial Celebrations," *BC Studies* 135 (Autumn 2002), 59-60.

“modern” times. Pre-contact indigenous history was simply the preamble to “inevitable” white settlement. As Vancouver Alderman Corey claimed in one *Vancouver Sun* account of the unveiling, “A civilization is being built in Vancouver on the ruins of dumps and refuse heaps formed by natives in prehistoric times.” “But,” he reminded his civic-minded audience, “[civilization] has not yet been built.”³³⁸ The project of city-building – resulting in industrialization and urbanization for some; destruction, dispossession, and marginalization for others -- was rendered a natural part of western “progress.” Settler society appropriated an older indigenous history as its own.³³⁹ Thus, Vancouver’s “respectable” citizens and their descendants succumbed to the illusion of lengthy heritage that rivaled those of their ancestors’ homelands in Europe. The Association also hoped to capitalize on the midden, trusting that the cairn would become an important reminder of the area’s “prehistory,” and the site, a popular tourist destination. T.P.O. Menzies, who later became the City Museum’s first curator, noted on the eve of the unveiling, “We are not interested in digging in the Midden any more... We have got sufficient material now for the Museum and we might just as well preserve what is left and cash in on it as a tourist attraction.”³⁴⁰

With its admittance into the national heritage canon, the Marpole Midden was, at least symbolically, drawn into the national psyche. “Perhaps this was the home of the

³³⁸ *British Columbian*, 9 May 1938, newspaper clipping in RG84, vol. 1303, file HS10-68, pt. 1, National Archives of Canada (NAC).

³³⁹ Regarding the construction of an imagined British Columbian heritage, see Daniel W. Clayton, *Islands of Truth: The Imperial Fashioning of Vancouver Island* (Vancouver: University of British Columbia Press, 200), 50-55; and Chad Reimer, “The Making of British Columbia History: Historical Writing and Institutions, 1784-1958,” (PhD diss., York University, 1995).

³⁴⁰ “Tourist Attraction of Untold Possibilities,” *Vancouver Sun*, 30 April 1938. Regarding the city’s plans for tourism, see T.P.O. Menzies to Chairman and Members of the Finance Committee, Vancouver, 19 April 1938, Hill-Tout Papers, file D-V, Vancouver Museum.

first Canadian,” suggested the *Toronto Star* in “Canada’s Past in a Dump Heap.”³⁴¹ As we have seen, cultural objects such as the Musqueam mortuary box and the Tsawwassen stone were relocated to the National Museum and were, therefore, more readily appropriated to the construction of a national heritage. There was one problem, however. Archaeological sites were not visually dynamic. As the *Vancouver Sun* noted in 1938, “Scarcely a tourist has ever visited the spot, however, and Vancouverites who have heard of it for years and who will probably see it for the first time then, will be disappointed. For there is nothing to see – yet.”³⁴² In fact, the memorial cairn was not even located on the site itself, but had been placed in a small city park a few blocks to the north so that tourists could more easily visit. Representatives of the National Sites and Monuments Board did not think placing the cairn on the actual site was necessary, especially because the site was not to be preserved.³⁴³ National archaeologist Harlan I. Smith had recommended to the board that, because the Great Fraser Midden had undergone much destruction, it was not a good candidate for preservation. In 1932, he wrote that the midden had been “so graded away, dug into and covered with streets, asphalt pavement, sidewalks, a hospital, drug store, garage, residences, double track street car line, double track suburban electric line, etc. that it is very valuable land; no doubt too valuable in its entirety to be purchased for preservation as an historic site or monument.”³⁴⁴ Instead,

³⁴¹ “Canada’s Past in a Dump Heap,” *Toronto Star*, 7 January 1939.

³⁴² “Tourist Attraction of Untold Possibilities,” *Vancouver Sun*, 30 April 1938, news clipping in RG84, vol. 1303, file HS10-68, pt. 1, NAC.

³⁴³ Royal Commission on National Development in the Arts, Letters, and Sciences, testimony given on 25 October 1949 at the Hotel Vancouver, RG23, vol. 5, item 53: 237-240. Dr. Sage of the Historic Sites and Monuments Board explained to the commission, “We do not definitely put markers at the site...In the same way we did not ask people to go to the Flats at Musqueam to find where Simon Fraser had his brief and fleeting adventure with the Musqueam Indians. We put it right on Marine Drove where all the tourists can see it.”

³⁴⁴ Harlan I. Smith to Dr. W.H. Collins, Acting Director Geological Survey, 29 April 1932, RG84, vol. 1303, file HS10-68, pt. 1, NAC.

Smith advocated having the midden “marked with a tablet” and reserving expensive preservation efforts for other archaeological sites, such as the one at Boundary Bay, which better supported scenic picnicking. Thus, even though the Marpole Midden was recognized as a site of national importance, its new status did not entail preservation.

The bureaucratic and media discourses emphasized the midden’s archaeological, geological, and scientific significance as well as its tourist potential, but these failed to recognize the place as an Aboriginal village, well known to the Musqueam as *čəsna:m*. Indigenous peoples of the Fraser Delta knew these lands as part of a larger integrated territory that connected people, resources, history, and place. This was a rich coastal forest and river geography, an integrated physical, temporal, and spiritual landscape, full of natural and supernatural creatures, and punctuated with named places and significant sites. People lived in a spiritually animated and sometimes dangerous world -- a place in which networks of kin with economic and ceremonial obligations extended throughout the region.

These same lands and waters, which had supported the Musqueam and their ancestors for millennia, became one of the Lower Mainland’s first farming communities.³⁴⁵ “The good land is along the North Arm,” declared Colonel R.C. Moody of the Royal Engineers.³⁴⁶ During the 1860s, European settlers such as George Garypie, who in 1865 preempted 160 acres of land encompassing the Marpole Midden, were quick to acquire the rich alluvial lands that ran along the north arm of the Fraser River between

³⁴⁵ The following description of European settlement and road-building activities is largely drawn from archaeologist Leonard Ham’s detailed historic reconstruction of the land alienation and urbanization that impacted the Marpole Midden. See Leonard C. Ham, *Archaeological Potential Model for the Marpole Midden* (Calgary: Canadian Heritage Parks, 2002).

³⁴⁶ R.C. Moody R.E. to Colonial Secretary, 4 August 1862, GR1372, file 932, letter 26, British Columbia Archive and Records Service (BCARS). Quoted in Ham, *Archaeological Potential Model*, 16.

Musqueam and New Westminster without regard for the history of the area and First Nations' occupation.³⁴⁷ As noted in the Musqueam's comprehensive land claim of 1984, "On the North Arm, at the villages of Mali and Musqueam, a line was established correlating to the present east boundary of the reserve; from this point eastward, the land was surveyed and divided into lots despite the fact that the Musqueam were still utilizing traditional resource locations and living on these same tracts of land."³⁴⁸ By the late 1860s, over twenty preemptions along this stretch of land encroached on Musqueam territory and impeded access to specific places.³⁴⁹ Thus continued the "unmaking" of Native space.³⁵⁰

In the late nineteenth century, the midden was already severely damaged by farming, industrialization, urbanization, and illegal pothunting. Over the years numerous roads were constructed to link the farming community centered on Garypie's land to False Creek, New Westminster, and a landing dock at the Fraser River leading to Richmond. By the 1880s, prior to Harlan I. Smith's Jesup Expedition work, settlers, farmers, and cannery workers began collecting cultural objects and human remains from the site as curios.³⁵¹ The 1902 construction of the Canadian Pacific Railway line along

³⁴⁷ Between the midden and the river was a strip of wetlands and alluvial deposits. According to Harlan I. Smith's description, the shell-heap "is located along the edge of the gravel terrace which here drops abruptly to the alluvial bottom-land, that is perhaps an eighth of a mile wide and subject to occasional inundation." See Harlan I. Smith, "Shell-Heaps of the Lower Fraser River, British Columbia," in *Memoirs of the American Museum of Natural History*, vol. 2, part IV (New York: American Museum of Natural History, 1903), 139.

³⁴⁸ Musqueam Indian Band, "Musqueam Comprehensive Land Claim: Preliminary Report on Musqueam Land Use and Occupancy," (Vancouver: Musqueam Indian Band, 1984), 39.

³⁴⁹ *Ibid.*; and F.W. Laing, *Colonial Farm Settlers on the Mainland of British Columbia 1858-1871* (Victoria, BC, n.p.1939).

³⁵⁰ Cole Harris, *Making Native Space: Colonialism, Resistance, and Reserves in British Columbia* (Vancouver: University of British Columbia Press, 2002).

³⁵¹ Oliver made a collection of objects in 1885, which he gave to Harlan I. Smith during the Jesup Expedition. In 1884, Reverend H.H. Gowan, of Seattle and James Johnson, of New Westminster inspected the site and collected a skull embedded with a spear point, which they donated to the New Westminster

the North Arm to Steveston in Richmond caused considerable damage to the southern length of the midden. At this time, Frances Garypie sold his father's estate to William Oliver, who subdivided the area, making it available for more intensive residential and commercial development. Also causing tremendous destruction to the Marpole Midden and other shell middens in the area was the intensive mining of the rich shell material for garden landscaping and fertilizer.³⁵²

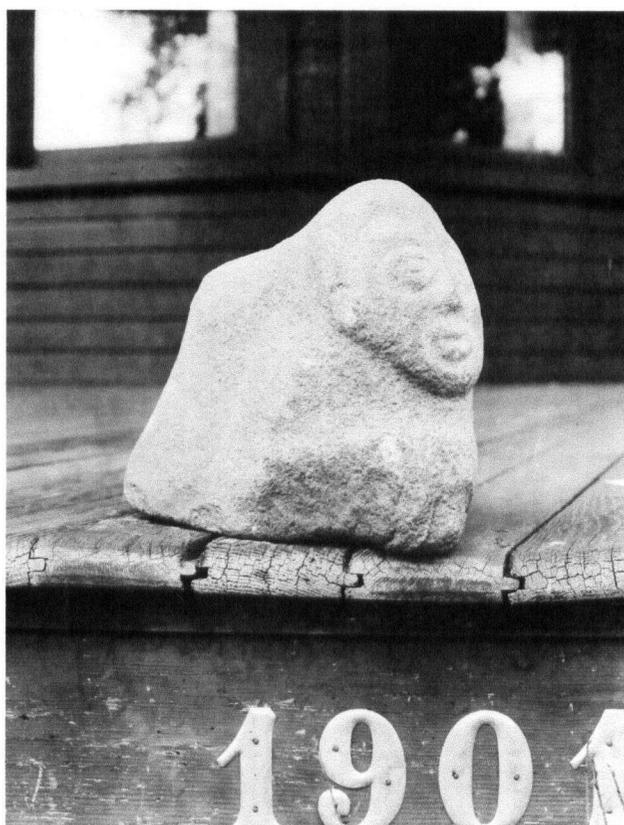


Figure 5.2: Object from the Marpole Midden sitting on a porch, 1929. Vancouver City Archives photograph no. P132.1.

Museum of Natural History. This museum was later destroyed in the New Westminster fire of September 11, 1898. Smith, "Shell-Heaps of the Lower Fraser River," 135.

³⁵² Leonard Ham estimates that the railway disturbed twenty-five percent of the midden. See Ham, *Archaeological Potential Model*, 4. Regarding mining the site for fertilizer, see Ham, *Archaeological Potential Model*, 16.

The very degradation that prompted the appeal to the Historic Sites and Monument Board of Canada in 1932 had previously led the Art, Historical, and Scientific Association to undertake extensive excavation of the Marpole Midden in the late 1920s.³⁵³ Established in 1894, the association's mandate was to build a fine arts gallery and a museum of antiquities and natural history, highlighting "the remains of Indian life in British Columbia and America."³⁵⁴ Thus, the excavations were largely mining operations aimed at obtaining artifacts and human remains for the City Museum's displays on Vancouver's "prehistory."

Between 1927 and 1933, the Association engaged the self-taught "archeologist" Herman Leisk to retrieve, regardless of technique, skeletal remains and other artifacts from the midden.³⁵⁵ One method appears to have been to scrape away the sides of a trench with a kitchen knife and metal rod and "watch the stream of dirt" for falling objects.³⁵⁶ Leisk worked tirelessly, rain or shine, uncovering bits of carved bones, stone implements, beads, ceremonial copper, skeletal fragments, and fragile skulls from the muddy entanglements of dirt, stone, and tree roots. Skulls were fragile and often

³⁵³ For these excavations, the City of Vancouver donated lots whose owners were in arrears on their taxes.

³⁵⁴ Ronald W. Hawker, *Tales of Ghosts: First Nations Art in British Columbia, 1922-61* (Vancouver: University of British Columbia Press, 2003), 37. The Vancouver City Museum was the forerunner to today's Vancouver Museum. In line with larger cultural institutions of the time, the AHSAV made the theoretical and spatial distinction between art (defined as European cultural production) and artifact (indigenous cultural production). This separation of "art" and "artifact" further contributed to the distancing between Aboriginal people and modernity.

³⁵⁵ The Art, Historical, and Scientific Association employed Leisk for only two years (1930 and 1931). He worked as a volunteer for the remainder of the time. See Sharon Johnson, ed. "Herman Leisk's Journal Notes, 1927-1933 of Excavations at the Marpole Site, DhRs1, and other Coastal Sites," September 1986, The Vancouver Museum, copy in the possession of the Musqueam Indian Band, 1-2. Leisk identified himself as an unskilled labourer. See Herman V. Leisk to Ainsworth, 16 October 1955, Charles Hill-Tout Papers, file D-IV, Vancouver Museum.

³⁵⁶ H. Leisk, "Hints on Excavation at Marpole," undated notes, Charles Hill-Tout Papers, file D-IV, Vancouver Museum; see also Johnson, "Herman Leisk's Journal Notes," 6-7. Leisk gave the museum many unique objects and threw the more common objects such as abraders and ground slate fragments back into his trenches.

disintegrated in Leisk's hands: "When a skeleton is found, the first thing is to dig very carefully over where the skull is judged to be, in order to relieve pressure of the soil.

Roots may run right through the skull, and must be disconnected with great care."³⁵⁷

Leisk attempted to excavate in relative secrecy, camouflaging his work site so that neighbourhood children and local relic hunters would not disturb the diggings or steal his finds. Leisk was not only retrieving objects for the sake of public display, however. He considered himself deeply involved in systematic archaeological work and, although not requested to do so by the museum, described his daily activities in journals and provided progress reports.³⁵⁸ In his notebooks, Leisk described his excavation progress:

Today I did not at first try to find the feet, but followed the upper arm bone, whose lower joint showed next to the knee in sight, I came upon one detached vertebra and a shoulder blade – the left one, it seems so far. At its upper end was a single detached finger (or toe) bone (proved to be one of the long bones of an infant). An inch or two in the general direction of the head uncovered the right side of the jaw bone, which lay uppermost. The joint was not in the socket but ahead of it two inches and below it...³⁵⁹

Such disjointed representations of shell-midden burials seemed to be informed by and contributed to the notion that burials were haphazard and disorderly. For Leisk, however, his notes were key to interpreting the site. He was troubled by the museum's lack of curatorial attention and faulty record keeping and so did not turn over his field notes to Hill-Tout, whom he considered a "blundering publicity scientist." Leisk explained, "I meant to hand in my day-books until I saw what use Hill-Tout made of the collections

³⁵⁷ Leisk, "Hints on Excavation."

³⁵⁸ Herman V. Leisk to Thomas H. Ainsworth, Curator, Vancouver City Museum, 16 October 1955, Charles Hill-Tout Papers, file D-IV, Vancouver Museum.

³⁵⁹ "Field notes of Hermann [sic] Leisk: Marpole Midden and other B.C. Locations, 1927-1932, as translated and copied from original notes by Golden Stanley, 1945-1973," Ms 2811, British Columbia Archives and Records Service (BCARS), 42.

themselves.”³⁶⁰ To Leisk’s mind, careful record keeping, coupled with his institutional connections, marked his work as archaeology and distinguished it from the non-scientific and casual activities of “pothunters” and tourists looking for ancient curios to add to their private collections. “I think I have learned the excavation trade pretty thoroughly...” he confided to Harlan I. Smith, who at this time was the head archaeologist at the National Museum of Canada.³⁶¹ For Smith, however, the dig failed to meet the emerging profession’s expectations regarding historic chronology: “It looks to me like mostly a treasure hunt; could learn nothing of any stratigraphy.”³⁶² Leisk took a phenomenal amount of material from the midden, over one thousand human skeletons, according to his own report, many of which were subsequently discarded due to insufficient museum storage space.³⁶³ Two hundred or so human skulls became the basis of the Vancouver Museum’s collections on “prehistory” and the focus of craniometrical investigations to determine the race of Vancouver’s “mysterious” first inhabitants.

³⁶⁰ Harlan I. Smith, “British Columbia – Marpole,” Harlan I. Smith Collection, box 9, file 4, Canadian Museum of Civilization Archives (CMCA). During a 1986 interview by Sharon Johnson of the Vancouver Museum, Leisk referred to Hill-Tout as a “bit of a pirate,” because Hill-Tout is often credited with the Vancouver Museum’s work at the Marpole Midden. Apparently Hill-Tout never worked at the site, nor visited the excavation, and “in fact never even met Leisk.” See Johnson, “Herman Leisk’s Journal Notes,” 11.

³⁶¹ Harlan I. Smith, “British Columbia – Marpole,” transcribed letter, received 1935, Harlan I. Smith Collection, box 9, file 4, CMCA.

³⁶² Harlan I. Smith, “Archaeological Records: Archaeological Sites: Vancouver Area, Part II, Fraser River District to New Westminster (includes Marpole Midden), 1936,” Harlan I. Smith Collection, box 9, file 7, CMCA.

³⁶³ Herman Leisk, letter to the editor, *Vancouver Sun*, 4 February 1937, Hill-Tout Papers, file D-VII, Vancouver Museum. In a 1974 interview with Sharon Johnson of the Vancouver Museum, Leisk claimed to have located 750 burials at Marpole. Over a period of one month, Leisk uncovered 90 skeletons at Boundary Bay. See Johnson, “Herman Leisk’s Journal Notes,” 8, 11.

Charles Hill-Tout and the Vancouver Museum: Visualizing Race

With their substantial collection of skulls in hand, Charles Hill-Tout and Dr. George Kidd, former professor of anatomy at Queen's University, began the serious business of cataloguing and measuring the series. In the late nineteenth century, anthropologists and archaeologists viewed variations in skeletal remains, especially skulls, as evidence of racial distinctiveness. And even though Boas' ground-breaking research of New York City's immigrant communities in the early 1900s revealed greater biological differences within the supposed racial groups than between them, "race" as a hierarchical category continued to permeate scientific, legal, and popular thinking well into the twentieth century. In the 1930s, the Vancouver City Museum's study of skeletal remains was influenced by the phrenological methods of the National Museum of Washington's physical anthropologist, Ales Hrdlička.³⁶⁴ For Hill-Tout and the museum, skull research provided what he presumed to be important evidence as to who first lived in British Columbia. "Who?" in this case, was synonymous with "what race?"

In 1933, Kidd conducted detailed anthropomorphic research on eighty-one of the human skulls that had been removed from the Marpole Midden and other sites in the area. Using comparative measurements of skull cubic capacity and other cranial indices, Kidd posited two distinct types (and therefore, in his view, races): the older, "long-headed" (dolichocephalic) and the historic "broad-headed" (brachycephalic). Kidd concluded that the two types roughly corresponded to distinct chronological periods of time because

³⁶⁴ David Hurst Thomas, *Skull Wars: Kennewick Man, Archaeology, and the Battle for Native American Identity* (New York: Basic Books, 2000), 102-110. See also Constance Backhouse, "Race Definition Run Amuck," in *Colour-Coded: A Legal History of Racism in Canada, 1900-1950* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1999).

long-headed skulls were most often found in deeper ground and the broad-headed skulls generally closer to the surface.³⁶⁵ There had been a rough chronology recorded on the principle that the deeper the burial, the older. In Kidd's report, Charles Hill-Tout found further confirmation of his theory, first proposed in an 1895 publication of the *Transactions of the Royal Society of Canada*, that a "hostile people" had displaced an earlier race of people.³⁶⁶ The osteological research revealed a keel-like ridge running from front to back along the long-headed cranium, a characteristic believed exclusive to Inuit skulls.³⁶⁷ Consequently, Hill-Tout speculated that the first Marpole residents were "members of the Eskimo stock," who were "driven out or exterminated by a later broad-headed people such as the present tribes of this region." He surmised that some two or three thousand years ago on the Lower Mainland, an aggressive people migrated to the area and displaced the previous residents, who were ancestors of the Inuit.³⁶⁸ Hill-Tout's erroneous two-race model (Franz Boas and others have attributed skull differentiation to cultural deformation), together with his lack of formal training in archaeology, kept him on the margins of the developing field of North American anthropology. However, it is important not to minimize his influence in popular circles on the local civic scene. He was the president of the Art, Historical, and Scientific Association of Vancouver, the

³⁶⁵ George E. Kidd, "Report on Collection of BC Skulls in the Vancouver City Museum, 1933, copy in Harlan I. Smith Collection, box 9, file 4, CMCA.

³⁶⁶ Charles Hill-Tout, "Later Prehistoric Man in British Columbia," in *The Salish People: The Local Contributions of Charles Hill-Tout*, vol. 3, *The Mainland Halkomelem*, ed. Ralph Maud (Vancouver: Talonbooks, 1978), 23. Hill-Tout based his 1895 conclusions about the area's first inhabitants on his perception that there were two distinct types of skulls in the middens of the Lower Fraser River.

³⁶⁷ See also Backhouse, "Race Definition Run Amuck," for a study of the 1939 Supreme Court of Canada's *Re Eskimo* decision, which ruled that "Eskimos" belonged to the same race as "Indians" and, therefore, came under Canada's *Indian Act*.

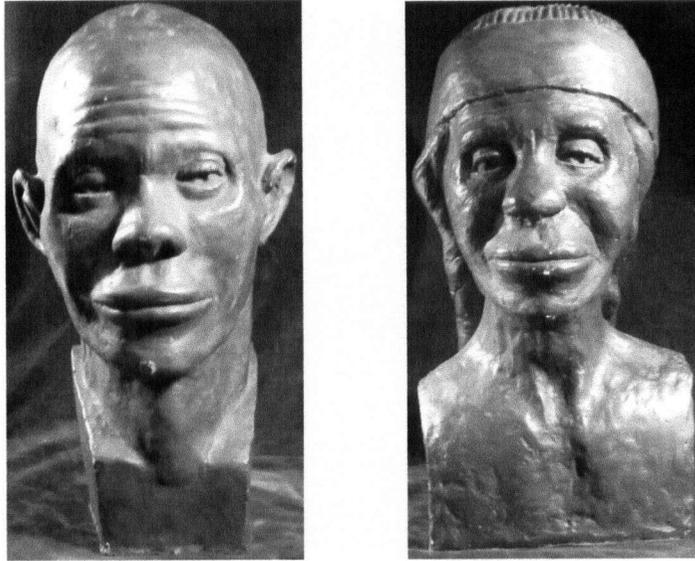
³⁶⁸ Charles Hill-Tout, "An Address given at Marpole on the formal presentation of the Midden Cairn to the City by His Honour Judge Howay," in The Art, Historical, and Scientific Association, *The Great Fraser Midden*, (Vancouver: Vancouver Art, Historical and Scientific Association, 1938); and "Ancestors of Eskimo Roamed This District before Indians, Hill-Tout Informs Local Club," *Wenatchee Daily World*, 8 June 1934, in Charles Hill-Tout Papers, file A-XXV, part c, Vancouver Museum.

anthropological division of the Royal Society of Canada, and was a fellow of the Royal Anthropological Institute of Britain. Certainly, the theory that the Aboriginal people of the Lower Fraser who were buried in the midden were relatively recent immigrants who displaced an earlier people became the meta-narrative for Marpole.³⁶⁹

The Vancouver City Museum's enduring preoccupation with skull research did not stop at taking measurements. In the 1930s, European natural history museums developed the techniques of facial reconstructions, claiming they created accurate resemblances of people who lived in the past. By deriving probable facial features from the contours of the bone and building up clay directly over the surface of well-preserved skulls or their reproductions, artist-anthropologists molded sculptural busts so lifelike it was said "they would instantly be recognized if met face to face, giving a far more vivid impression to laymen than an unadorned collection of skulls."³⁷⁰ By this method, the Marpole skulls were transformed into visual representations of "race," which, in turn, reified racial categories.

³⁶⁹ Hill-Tout also received substantial press coverage in the *London Illustrated News*. See Robert Gerard West, "Saving and Naming the Garbage: Charles E. Borden and the Making of B.C. Prehistory, 1945-1960" (MA thesis, Department of History, University of British Columbia, 1995), 9-10. Dismissing Hill-Tout's speculations, Franz Boas argued that the long-headed skull was an example of cultural modification. For a review of the enduring influence on subsequent analysis of Hill-Tout's theory that a hostile people migrated into the Fraser Delta and displaced the original habitants, see Owen B. Beattie, "A Note on Early Cranial Studies from the Gulf of Georgia Region: Long-Heads, Broad-Heads, and the Myth of Migration," *BC Studies* 66 (Summer 1985): 28-35; Ellen W. Robinson, "Harlan I. Smith, Boas, and the Salish: Unweaving Archaeological Hypothesis," *Northwest Anthropological Research Notes* 10 (1976): 185-196; and Brian Thom, "Harlan I. Smith's Jesup Fieldwork on the Northwest Coast," in *Gateways: Exploring the Legacy of the Jesup North Pacific Expedition 1897-1900*, eds. Igor Krupnik and William W. Fitzhugh (Washington, DC: Arctic Studies Center, National Museum of Natural History, Smithsonian Institution, 2001), 139-179. In relation to the theory of migration more generally, see Wayne Suttles, "The Recent Emergence of the Coast Salish – the Function of an Anthropological Myth," in *Coast Salish Essays*, ed. Wayne Suttles (Vancouver: Talonbooks, 1987), 256-64.

³⁷⁰ "Sculptors Restore Face of Early Man," undated news clipping in Charles Hill-Tout Papers, file E-X111, part c, Vancouver Museum.



Figures 5.3 and 5.4: Carl Robinson's reconstruction of a "long-headed" (left) and a "broad-headed" (right) man's skull. Robinson noted that both reproductions were "decidedly un-Indian" and suggested "primitive Asiatic characters."³⁷¹ Reconstructions in the collection of the Vancouver Museum. Photographs by Alastair Maxwell.

In 1933, the sculptor-anthropologist, Carl Robinson, produced a number of Marpole reconstructions for the Vancouver City Museum. In some cases, the reconstructions were placed on display alongside the original skulls from which they were derived. Museum curator T.P.O. Menzies reported that Robinson's renderings became "a popular feature of the Museum" and "attracted a very large number of visitors."³⁷² Robinson described his methods as follows:

The contours of the face are determined by the bones, they may be altered slightly through the slackening of the muscles or by muscular habits developed by frowning or smiling, or by fat or emaciation following disease, but such changes are adventitious, and it is therefore safe to assume that the face consists of a bony scaffolding, over which is drawn a

³⁷¹ Carl Robinson, "The Reconstruction of the Prehistoric Skulls of the Lower Mainland of B.C.," in *The Great Fraser Midden* (Vancouver: Vancouver Art, Historical, and Scientific Association, 1938), 27.

³⁷² Vancouver City Museum and Art Gallery, Curator's Report for October 1933 and November 1933, Harlan I. Smith Collection, box 9, file 4, CMCA. Robinson also produced reconstructions of Marpole skulls for collector G.G. Heye of the Museum of American Indians in New York City.

covering of flesh. In this work, the fleshy cover has been at all times kept to a minimum, in order that none of the true contours should be hidden.³⁷³

Recognizing that reconstructions straddled scientific and artistic practice and in view of critiques suggesting the risk of artistic license at the expense of scientific truth, Robinson emphasized material exactitude in his work, explaining that “no attempt has been made to give expression or individual characteristics to the face, the idea being merely to show as nearly as possible, the appearance of the subject in life.” He confirmed, “The general principle followed has been to follow the bones where possible and to arrange the other features in harmonic relation to the whole.”³⁷⁴

The reconstructions became visual evidence of the theory that Vancouver was occupied by an earlier “race” of people. In a further response to potential challenges to the accuracy of his 1930s reconstructive sculpture, Robinson compared the reconstruction of a Marpole skull with work done on a 150-year-old skull from another indigenous cultural group of British Columbia, the Kwakwaka’wakw, a skull considered “modern enough to be Indian, yet old enough to preclude the possibility of European blood.” Both sculptures produced a “harmonic balance” of facial features, which according to race theories of the day, signaled race purity. As association director R. Munro St. John explained, “In mixed races...[symmetry] is not so dependable, as the intermingling of widely divergent types always produced disharmonious features in the first few generations.”³⁷⁵ Robinson’s comparative experiment surpassed his own expectations

³⁷³ Charles Hill-Tout Papers, file E-IV, Vancouver Museum.

³⁷⁴ [Carl Robinson], “Reconstructions of Skulls from Eburne and Point Roberts,” Charles Hill-Tout Papers, file E-IV, Vancouver Museum.

³⁷⁵ Munro St. John, “Whence came the North American Indian?” *The Illustrated London News*, 29 December 1934.

when reconstruction performed on the 150-year-old skull not only revealed a recognizable Indian type, but one to which “experts [could] assign a tribe and habitat.”³⁷⁶

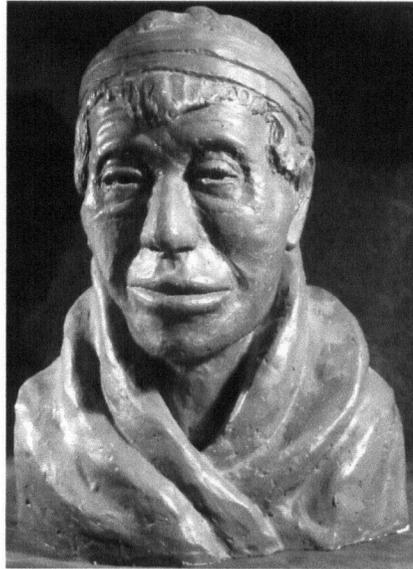


Figure 5.5: Robinson’s reconstruction of a “historic” Kwakwaka’wakw Man. Note that this individual is draped with a blanket, whereas the Marpole residents are not clothed. Reconstruction in the collection of the Vancouver Museum. Photograph by Alastair Maxwell.

Additionally, the 1930s reconstructions offered renewed evidence supporting the thesis that North American was peopled through an Asiatic migration across the Bering Strait land bridge. St. John claimed in the *Illustrated London News* that “both long heads and short heads portrayed North Asiatic faces, high cheeks, prominent eyes, shovel-like protruding mouths, and squat dished-in noses. No Indian race now existing has such protruding mouths or flat noses.”³⁷⁷ Such theories reinforced the idea that the people buried in the midden were unrelated to the Musqueam and, at the same time, considering

³⁷⁶ St. John, “Whence Came the North American Indian?”

³⁷⁷ Ibid.

the anti-Asian racism of the day, associated indigenous people with Vancouver's Chinese community. As one newspaper put it, the midden was, in its beginnings, "a species of China Town."³⁷⁸ In contrast, a 1957 report by archaeologist Robert Heglar on the museum reconstructions claimed that the series of busts of the Marpole Indians would give the museum visitor "a rather confused impression as to the appearance of this particular Indian group." He observed that one of the busts "appears as a generally Mongoloid head but with Negroid nose and lips;" a second "presents a combination of Mongoloid eye form accompanied by a Caucasian nose and lips." Furthermore, a third reconstruction "appears as a full-face and profile of the typical Plains Indian of North America," and another could be characterized as an "elderly Chinese man."³⁷⁹ Heglar recommended the displays be relabeled as artistic interpretations, rather than scientific reconstructions.

Reconstructions for museum display were meant to offer, according to Carl Ledoux, writing in 1941 for the *Vancouver Sun*, a "more faithful portrayal of prehistoric man," allowing museum visitors a greater connection to the past, beyond the "screen of scientific seclusion" and without reference to academic writing "dry as the sands of the Sahara."³⁸⁰ Reconstructions turned skulls into portraits -- individuals who were visible, in some cases personable, and always more accessible to the average museum visitor. In this public-display context, skulls were transformed into living people, not races or cultures. Ironically, the museum staff even named one skull, which supposedly had the

³⁷⁸ "Canada's Past in a Dump Heap," *Star Weekly*, undated news clipping in Charles Hill Tout Papers, Section A-XXV, file B, Vancouver Museum.

³⁷⁹ Roger Heglar, "General Remarks concerning the Reconstructions of Facial Features of the Marpole Midden Indian Population displayed in the Vancouver City Museum," February 1957, Laboratory of Archaeology, Department of Anthropology and Sociology, University of British Columbia.

³⁸⁰ Carl Ledoux, "Looking at Yesterday," *Vancouver Sun*, 27 September 1941.

same cranial measurements as that of museum curator T.P.O. Menzies, "Horace."³⁸¹ Because reconstructions fabricated potentially real people and were placed on public display, they were left open to narration and storytelling that diverged from the pseudo-scientific discourses of skull measuring.

Despite the conceptual distance created with the publicity surrounding the Great Fraser Midden and its commemoration, it appears that assigning individual identities to the skulls made it possible for the museum-going public to link the human remains on display to living Aboriginal people. Nevertheless, such connections were mediated by dominant, racist ideas about the indigenous, as reflected in Ledoux's newspaper stories. Ledoux presents dual portraits, corresponding to the romanticized stereotypes of the noble savage and the ruthless warrior, respectively:

One, in our opinion, seems to indicate a tired old chief, gazing with anguished eyes and sorrow in his heart at the remnants of his tribe, ravaged possibly by pillaging Haida warriors, who from the North have swept down on his village. The artist captured the weariness and hopelessness, together with majestic calm, portrayed in the expressive line of his face.

The second figure, on the other hand, depicts a shrewd war-like mien; the piercing eyes look into far spaces as if spying out the land for a foray. The mouth and chin show determination of unusual strength and it seems quite evident that this was a ruthless and dominant leader of men. Who knows the stern warrior may have been the one responsible for the grief so graphically portrayed in the countenance of the old chieftan.³⁸²

Despite museum labels citing the scientific relevance, the skulls and their reconstructions reproduced local popular meanings that emphasized a violent indigenous history prior to

³⁸¹ "'Horace' Feared no Dentist's Drill," *Vancouver Sun*, 20 October 1933.

³⁸² Ledoux, "Looking at Yesterday."

contact with European society. The reporter conflated the white narrative of the vanishing Indian with a thrilling, regional drama of intertribal warfare. This history describing aggressive Haida raids on Lower Fraser River villages offered a familiar narrative context for the reconstructions, a narrative that Ledoux's reference to the sculptor as an "artist" only served to reinforce.³⁸³ Ledoux went on to romanticize an Aboriginal museum visitor's response to the exhibit:

We observe an old Indian in one of our museums, stooped with the weight of years, eyes glazed with age, coming in to look at a few relics as a reminder of his youth. Suddenly he sees one of the reproductions and asks what it is. Upon being told that the skull from which the reproduction was made originated but a short distance from his native village, the old man said, 'Maybe him my long time grandfather,' after which he stalked out of the museum, his eyes a little brighter, his step a little brisker, his back a little straighter, pride of ancestry restored.³⁸⁴

As we have seen, in representing the early inhabitants as a different race of people, the museum's anthropological research created, in the minds of non-Aboriginal society, a conceptual distance between local Aboriginal people and ancient historical sites; it challenged indigenous knowledge of their own residency in the province for millenia. But in this case, Ledoux surmised direct ancestral connections and, musing on the presence of an "old Indian" museum visitor, linked the reconstructions to a local indigenous community. If we (very briefly) set aside the reporter's racist portrayal of this visitor, we will see that the genealogical history Ledoux imagines runs counter to the museum's theorizing about racial typologies, and is, perhaps, more in line with Coast

³⁸³ There is little oral history or documentary evidence that the Haida made raiding excursions to the Lower Fraser. However, the Lekwiltok or "Yucletaw" (a division of the Kwakwaka-speaking people living at Queen Charlotte Strait and, by the 1840s, at Cape Mudge and Campbell River) are known to have raided along the Lower Fraser in the early nineteenth century and before. See Wayne Suttles, "The Ethnographic Significance of the Fort Langley Journals," in *The Fort Langley Journals: 1827-30*, ed. Morag MacLachlan (Vancouver: University of British Columbia Press, 1998), 174-175.

³⁸⁴ Ledoux, "Looking at Yesterday."

Salish historiography and its emphasis on a continuous genealogical past and uninterrupted residency within the territory. Yet, both discourses -- the scientific and the popular -- worked in the end to distance and dispossess contemporary Aboriginal people from a lengthy history of occupation. The museum's research assigned a more recent (and therefore presumably less legitimate) human occupation of land. The newspapers' romantic individualizing proposed an affinity between the (reconstructed) skeletal remains found at Marpole and contemporary peoples, but limited the latter to the concept of the vanishing Indian. Consequently, the reconstructed identities only reinstated an imagined alignment with an untainted and inaccessible past, absent of the corrupting influences of modernity and civilization. Because the facial reconstructions were produced by an authority -- the museum -- and under the auspices of science, such romantic stereotypes gained a patina of legitimacy and reaffirmation.

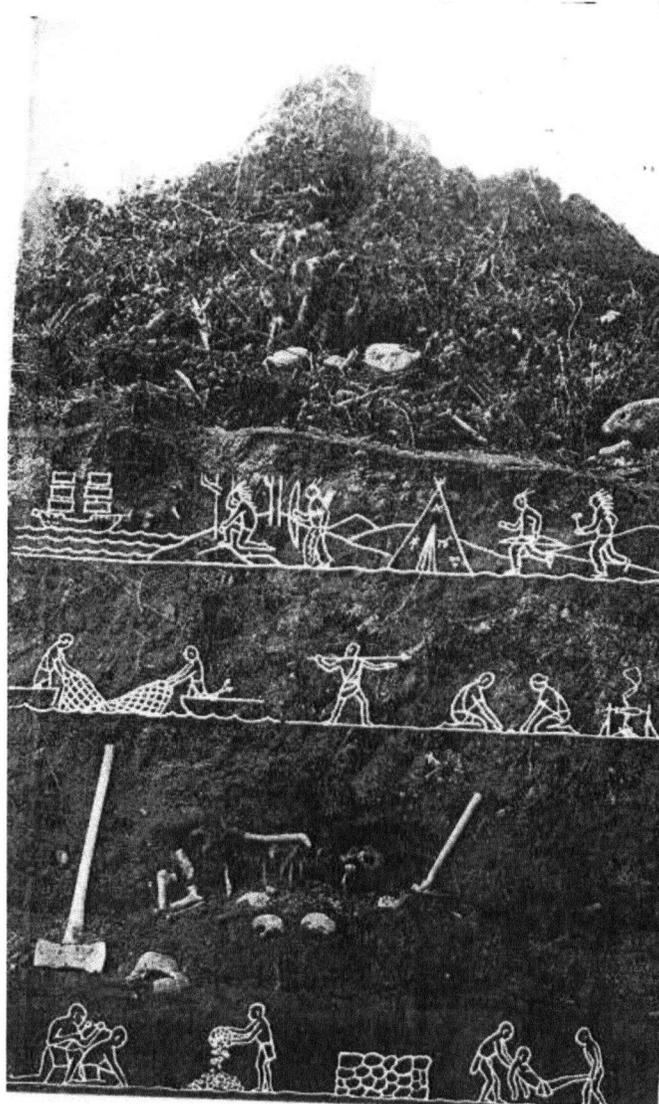


Figure 5.6: Diagram accompanying the *Star Weekly* newspaper article “Canada’s Past in a Dump Heap.” The caption noted: “There are different remains on three distinct levels, indicating three phases of ancient civilization.”³⁸⁵

Despite the attention paid by Leisk to stratification proper, a diagram (produced by Charles Hill-Tout) illustrating a newspaper report on the Marpole Midden chronicled the occupation of three distinct “phases of ancient civilization”: the ancient long-headed

³⁸⁵ “Canada’s Past in a Dump Heap,” *Star Weekly*, undated news clipping in Charles Hill-Tout Papers, Section A-xxv, file b, Vancouver Museum.

peoples, the less-ancient broad-headed peoples, and the Indians who were present at first contact with European society -- the moment heralding the end of "prehistory." It is not surprising that the diagram depicted contemporary Indians, spying an explorer's ship, as Aboriginal people from the prairies of western Canada, with feathered war bonnets, tepees, and tomahawks. "Whites prefer their Indians in feathers and warpaint," writes Daniel Francis.³⁸⁶ In the layer directly below, people hunt, fish, and cook; and below them, people are occupied with trepanning (skull surgery), discarding shells, and burial -- activities that resulted in the midden. The drawing visually described the theory that change was dramatic: one group replaced another possibly through sudden migration and displacement. Through visual representations, such as the reconstructed heads and the diagrams produced for the popular press, Charles Hill-Tout and the Vancouver City Museum reinforced the idea that the present-day peoples were a different group than those who preceded them.

In numerous media reports, the Marpole Midden was variously described as an "ancient, prehistoric campsite," "neolithic," and a "dump heap" of the first people who lived within the limits of Vancouver's civic boundaries. The *Vancouver Sun* asked in 1938, "And what's a midden anyway but a garbage heap? A garbage heap where a thousand years before Christ, prehistoric Indians tossed their clam shells and the bodies of their dead."³⁸⁷ Such representations erroneously suggested that ancient people disregarded their dead -- these were not legitimate or sacred burials, but ones that were carried out with the same detachment and indifference as throwing out the trash. As we

³⁸⁶ Daniel Francis, *The Imaginary Indian: The Image of the Indian in Canadian Culture* (Vancouver: Arsenal, 1992), 102.

³⁸⁷ "Tourist Attraction of Untold Possibilities," *Vancouver Sun*, 30 April 1938.

have seen in previous chapters, burial practices would have been varied, “as might be expected in a society with marked social differentiation,” and included both midden and cairn burials. Scattered skeletal remains may have been the result of tree or box burials that, over the course of many years, had fallen to the ground or they were from a type of surface burial in which the body was placed in the midden and covered with stones.³⁸⁸ Newspaper stories about the Marpole Midden, however, often depicted the daily life of its residents as violent. Herman Leisk wrote in the *Province* that the early residents of what came to be Vancouver “possessed some unlikable habits,” including scattering human bones around their villages, perpetual grave robbing, and even baby killing.³⁸⁹ Similarly, terms employed in colonial documents to describe various types of seasonal or permanent housing, such as “shack,” “hut,” and “rancherie,” are not neutral descriptions of residency and domesticity, but are imbued with political resonance and legal implication. They suggest a kind of impermanence of occupation. Similar to the distinction between “ancient” burials and “active” cemeteries, the western dichotomy between “seasonal” campsite and “permanent” village underscored the colonial view that uninterrupted land use was the most valued form of evidence of Aboriginal claims to territory. In other words, colonial society was less able to accept seasonal use and the use of multiple sites as evidence of Aboriginal ownership.

Speculations by Charles Hill-Tout and members of the Art, Historical, and Scientific Association that human skeletal remains and cultural objects found at Marpole belonged to displaced or exterminated peoples was a theme echoed in popular discourses

³⁸⁸ Leonard C. Ham, “Gulf of Georgia Culture Type,” in *Archaeology of Prehistoric Native America: An Encyclopedia*, ed. Guy Gibbon (New York: Garland, 1998), 340.

³⁸⁹ Herman Leisk, “Who Lived 2000 Years Ago in B.C?,” *Vancouver Province*, 27 March 1932.

about human skulls found at other sites in the region. Also prevalent was the notion that such physical remains had been left by geographically distant peoples who traveled to the area during the summer fishing season and lived in “camps.” Indigenous seasonal occupation predominated in local colonial lore at the summer resort area of Boundary Bay, near Tsawwassen and Point Roberts. In 1924, when a number of human skeletons were unearthed during stump-pulling operations at Boundary Bay, the *Daily Province* reported, “It is offered as an explanation by those who are familiar with the place that Point Roberts has been a vantage point from which to fish the salmon run in Boundary Bay. That the Indians long made it a camping place when they came to the Coast for fish is shown by the huge ground at the beach resort. The particular spot where the skeletons were found was in all likelihood an Indian burial ground two or three centuries old.”³⁹⁰ Colonial society interpreted the presence of large middens and burial grounds as material evidence of occupation, but it was not an occupation by local peoples whose presence could challenge the legitimacy of European settlement. Instead settlers described unknown visitors who came only for the short term. Such representations failed to recognize the larger Coast Salish networks of people and kin, and their connections to place. They certainly did not recognize customary legal, social, and political relationships between indigenous visitors who came to the territory as guests.

Clearly this seasonal/permanent dichotomy did not apply to white upper class cottagers who staked out legal titles for their summer homes. With respect to Aboriginal peoples, mainstream society viewed seasonal occupation as a less legitimate form of

³⁹⁰ *The Daily Province*, 20 August 1924, copy in W.J. Wintenberg Collection, box 124, file 2, CMCA. Herman Leisk reported that he unearthed ninety individuals on the American side at Point Roberts, during a months digging operation for the Vancouver Museum. Herman V. Leisk to Harlan I. Smith, received July 1935, Harlan I. Smith’s Correspondence, box 207, file 107, CMCA.

residency than permanent occupation. Paradoxically, this dichotomy was sometimes employed by Aboriginal people themselves both to articulate their own expressions of territorial ownership and to undermine other community's territorial traditions. In 1932, in reference to the long-standing dispute between the Musqueam and Squamish about territorial ownership of Burrard Inlet, August Jack Khatsalanough declared during a conversation with Vancouver city archivist Major Matthews: "Musqueam has no right to False Creek, they just went there seasonally -- it was the Squamish who built the house."³⁹¹ His description of the alleged absence of a winter longhouse failed to acknowledge that English Bay and Burrard Inlet were an important part of Musqueam territory, nor that Musqueam's ancestors did, in fact, have dwellings at False Creek. It is interesting, however, because it reveals the way that Aboriginal people have drawn on western understandings of ownership in making their claims. Possibly August Jack was responding in terms that would make sense to Matthews, to the logic that a permanent physical structure held more currency than a temporary campsite as evidence of ownership or possibly he misunderstood the larger indigenous history of the site.

Although he made many observations regarding the history and culture of Fraser River Coast Salish communities, Charles Hill-Tout did not consider involving contemporary Aboriginal people in his formulation of knowledge about ancient archaeological sites.³⁹² He held that contemporary Aboriginal residents were relatively

³⁹¹ Major J.S. Matthews, *Conversations with Khahtsahlano, 1932-1954* (Vancouver: City Hall, 1955).

³⁹² See Ralph Maud, ed. *The Salish People: The Local Contributions of Charles Hill-Tout*, vol. III, *The Mainland Halkomelem* (Vancouver: Talonbooks, 1978); and *The Sechelt and the South-Eastern Tribes of Vancouver Island*, vol. 4 (Vancouver: Talonbooks, 1978). Nor did it occur to Herman Leisk to ask Musqueam people about the history of the Marpole site or other places in the Lower Mainland where he excavated for artifacts. In January 1928, Leisk visited the Musqueam village to look for potential archaeological deposits and shell middens, but there is no indication that he talked to Musqueam people about his work at Marpole and it is likely that the Musqueam individuals with whom he spoke were

recent newcomers to the area and presumed that old places were beyond the memory of individual people. The racialization of skeletal remains through facial reconstructions would have only reinforced this theory. The transformation of the skulls into recognizable faces, coupled with his erroneous perception of linguistic conformity among the hul'qəmin'əm - hən'qəmin'əm - halkemeylem speakers of the Fraser River and Vancouver Island Coast Salish, convinced Hill-Tout that "it is impossible to believe that these tribes [from Yale to the Musqueam at the mouth of the Fraser River] have occupied the delta for any very considerable period."³⁹³ Hill-Tout theorized that if a population was resident in a location for a millennium it should display a greater degree of linguistic diversity than mainland speakers showed. Furthermore, the differing burial customs between ancient residents who interred their dead in the shell middens or in stone cairns, and contemporary Indians, who interred their dead in trees and above ground mortuary boxes or houses, reinforced his recent-settlement theory. In reference to the burial mounds located on a settler's ranch at Hatzic on the Fraser River, Hill-Tout claimed,

These sepulchers, with their ancient mode of burial, belong to a comparatively distant past. The Indians now dwelling in the neighbourhood appear to know nothing of them, disclaim all knowledge of the people who built them, and are quite unconcerned at their being opened or disturbed. This indifference in the face of the zealous vigilance they exercise over their own old burial grounds or depositories of the dead is more striking.³⁹⁴

unaware of his excavations. See [Leisk], "Field Notes of Hermann [sic] Leisk."

³⁹³ Charles Hill-Tout, "Ethnological Studies of the Mainland Halkomelem, A Division of the Salish of British Columbia," in Maud, *The Salish People*, 86. In relation to the complexity of the hul'qūmin'um' - hən'q'əmin'əm' - halkemeylem-dialect continuum, spoken by people living on the east coast of Vancouver Island from Victoria to Comox, in Burrard Inlet, along the Fraser River to Yale, and in parts of northern Washington State, see Patricia A. Shaw, "Language and Identity: Language and the Land," *BC Studies* 131 (2001): 39-55; and Wayne Suttles, *Musqueam Reference Grammar* (Vancouver, University of British Columbia Press, 2004).

³⁹⁴ Hill-Tout, "Later Prehistoric Man," 31.

Hill-Tout's commitment to disconnectedness was also born of the notion that Aboriginal cultures did not change. Because "primitive peoples such as our Indians are deeply conservative and cling to the customs of their forefathers with great tenacity," he argued, present day indigenous people could not be the descendants of people with different cultural practices.³⁹⁵ With cultural transformation rendered impossible for the ancient inhabitants of the Marpole Midden, the evident differences between these people and the contemporary population at Musqueam and other villages in the Fraser Delta were resolved by positing the presence of another race of people altogether. Archaeology reinforced the idea that Aboriginal people were not only situated in the past, but were stuck somewhere in between the ancient and the modern.

Conclusion

As we have seen, for the Art, Historical, and Scientific Association and the Vancouver City Museum, human remains and, especially, intact skulls became subjects of scientific research and public display. Skeletal remains and cultural objects from the Marpole Midden and other sites in the area were rallied in support of colonialist narratives contrasting the city's "prehistoric" past with its emergence as a modern industrial metropolis. While some human skulls were meticulously measured, preserved, and carefully stored on backroom shelves, used as a framework for sculptured busts for public display, or were placed on display themselves, others -- considered damaged or superfluous to scientific investigation -- were simply tossed in the garbage. Herman Leisk amassed a significant collection of human remains at his home where he sometimes

³⁹⁵ Hill-Tout, "Buried Treasures of British Columbia," unpublished paper, Charles Hill-Tout Papers, Vancouver Museum.

worked repairing skulls and re-assembling skeletons for the museum. When the museum did not use all of these specimens, he disposed of them by throwing them, a few at a time, into his trash.³⁹⁶ With their excavation and institutionalization, human skeletal remains were transformed into scientific specimens and cultural artifacts (and even garbage). In other words, they were valued only in terms of their utility to the non-Aboriginal society's needs or curiosity. Reburial does not appear to have been a consideration.

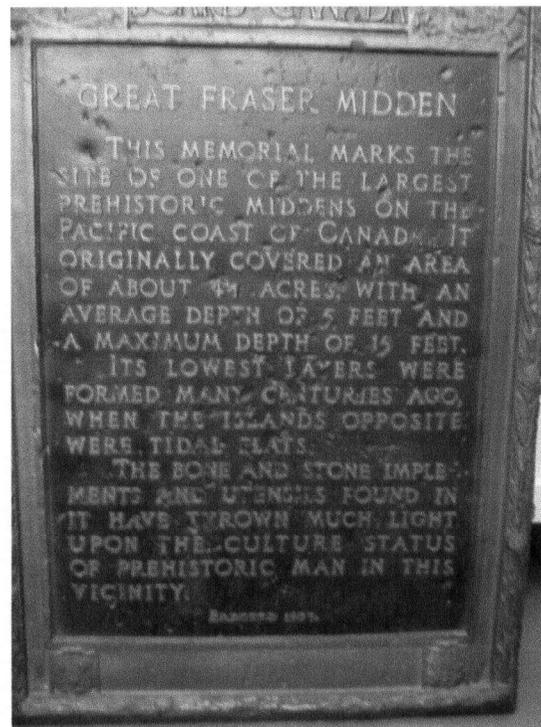


Figure 5.7: National Historic Sites and Monuments Board plaque leaning against a wall in the Musqueam Indian Band's Archives. Photograph by Tracy Point.

³⁹⁶ Some of the skulls Leisk threw out were subject to police investigation. See "Skull Mystery Explained," *Vancouver Sun*, 4 January 1932; and "Origin of Skulls Traced by Police," *Province*, 4 January 1932.

Celebrating the Marpole Midden as an archaeological site and commemorating it -- off-site -- as a national historic site erased its history as a village and burial ground known to the Musqueam as *čəsna:m*. Also not commemorated by the plaque was the fact that since the late 1800s, the Marpole Midden had been a source of skulls and skeletal remains for local relic hunters, the American Museum of Natural History, the Vancouver City Museum, the Royal College of Surgeons in London England, as well as other international natural history museums.³⁹⁷ Today, the original 1937 National Historic Sites and Monuments Board commemorative plaque leans against a wall in the administrative building of the Musqueam Indian Band, formally on loan from Parks Canada. In 1994, when museum staff found the old plaque in the basement of the Irving House Historic Centre in New Westminster, presumably there since the board replaced it with a bilingual version, they contacted the Musqueam administration, anticipating community interest in the object. By the 1990s, associating the midden with the Musqueam, the First Nation in closest geographical proximity to Marpole, was assumed and unquestioned. The plaque that initially linked the midden site to the collection projects of the Vancouver Museum, Vancouver's settler history, the national historic canon, and theoretical inquiry into the origins of humankind in North America was now more closely aligned with the history and interests of a specific First Nations community. Even though many Musqueam individuals did not consider the commemorative plaque -- which could be viewed, in light of the discussions presented above, as part of the colonial apparatus of power -- something worth collecting, preserving, and displaying, this incident points to the prominent public Aboriginal mapping of the area and a shift

³⁹⁷ The Vancouver City Museum sent three skeletons to the Royal College of Surgeon's museum, which were destroyed when the RCS building was bombed during WWII. Sharon Johnson, "Herman Leisk's Journal Notes," 9.

towards mainstream recognition of First Nations' culture, history, case law, and geography. In the final chapter we turn to the post-World War II period and the political context in which Charles E. Borden, of the University of British Columbia, conducted salvage operations at the Marpole Midden in anticipation of further destruction from commercial development. During this period, First Nations increasingly intervened in colonial discourses that worked to create distance between themselves, their ancient ancestors, and their territories.

CHAPTER SIX

From Colonial Culture to Reclamation Culture: The Musqueam, Charles E. Borden and Salvage Archaeology in British Columbia

In September 1947, University of British Columbia professor of German, Charles E. Borden received written authorization from Indian Agent H.E. Taylor to carry out archaeological investigations on the Musqueam Indian Reserve No. 2 at the mouth of the Fraser River. As it turned out, Borden later recalled, this was “a task which was not so readily done because in those days the Indians were rather suspicious of strangers and hostile to people coming onto their reserve.”³⁹⁸ Borden, who taught the first archaeology course at UBC, was looking for an appropriate site in close proximity to the university for students to excavate over the course of the academic year.³⁹⁹ When he took the permission letter to the reserve, band secretary Willard Sparrow, “almost hit the roof.” Borden’s plans to excavate were postponed until Chief James Point and other influential members of the community including Edward Sparrow Sr., granted permission.⁴⁰⁰ It appears that by 1947 Indian Agents could no longer mediate relationships between archaeologists and originating communities as they had done earlier in the century. Borden’s affiliation with the Musqueam began on a shaky foundation, but, over time, he was able to secure permission for his excavations:

³⁹⁸ Anne Williams, “Interviews with Dr. Charles E. Borden, late Professor Emeritus of Archaeology at the University of British Columbia, recorded [in 1978], transcribed, and edited by Anne Williams, Department of Anthropology, UBC,” November 1979, 37-38, Museum of Anthropology Archives, UBC; H.E. Taylor to Doctor Charles E. Borden, 4 September 1947, Charles E. Borden Papers, box 12, file 8, University of British Columbia Archives (UBCA).

³⁹⁹ While Borden was a German professor, in 1948, he conducted a field class at the Marpole site with University of British Columbia anthropology students that led to a permanent course on the archaeology of British Columbia. See Williams, “Interviews with Dr. Charles E. Borden.”

⁴⁰⁰ [Charles E. Borden], “Musqueam, 1950,” field book, Charles E. Borden Papers, box 50, file 13, UBCA.

I did manage to convince James Point, who was the chief of the band at that time, that it was desirable to rescue these remains before they were destroyed. In order to pacify Mr. Sparrow, I invited him to come to our lab and to view what we had excavated already in sites such as the Point Grey site and the Locarno Beach site. So one day I packed them all into my car and drove them out to the lab. Mr. Sparrow came, and his wife, his children, and grandchildren. We all landed in the lab, and I explained in detail the various items that we had. They obviously did not know what they were and how they functioned, and they were very, very much interested, in particular Mr. Sparrow. And after a while when one of the children tried to handle some of these rather fragile objects, he told him, "Don't touch, don't touch, be careful." And so this established a good basis for further cooperation. Mr. Sparrow himself permitted me to conduct excavations on land which belonged to his family on the reserve.⁴⁰¹

Borden often reported that prior to his work on Indian Reserves, Aboriginal peoples in British Columbia were not interested in their own "prehistory." His is a questionable assumption, I would argue, based on the idea of a strict divide between oral and written history, and on the expectation that the indigenous view of the past is expressed exclusively through oral or spoken form. While oral tradition and spoken narrative is crucial to indigenous cultures, Coast Salish historical tradition encompasses much more than that, including forms of expressive culture such as religious performance, genealogy, material culture, art, and writing (by the second half of the nineteenth century). Borden's daytrip with Edward Sparrow Sr. and his family to the university's new archaeology lab appears to have reflected the common assumption among many archaeologists and other academic researchers that, if Aboriginal people could only see how institutional researchers treat and preserve cultural objects (or collect information), they would support their research. Just as Harlan I. Smith trusted Aboriginal people would agree to his excavations if they were made aware of the

⁴⁰¹ Williams, "Interviews with Dr. Charles E. Borden," 37-38.

educational purposes to which skeletal remains were being put back at the American Museum of Natural History, Borden believed that awareness of custodial and public-education concerns closer to home would engender community endorsement. The visit seemed to confirm his assumption. From the time of the university visit on, “we have had nothing but good relations with them [the Musqueam],” Borden reported.⁴⁰² For Borden, this meeting represented a complete shift in the way Aboriginal people viewed non-Native researchers, archaeological methods, and material culture.

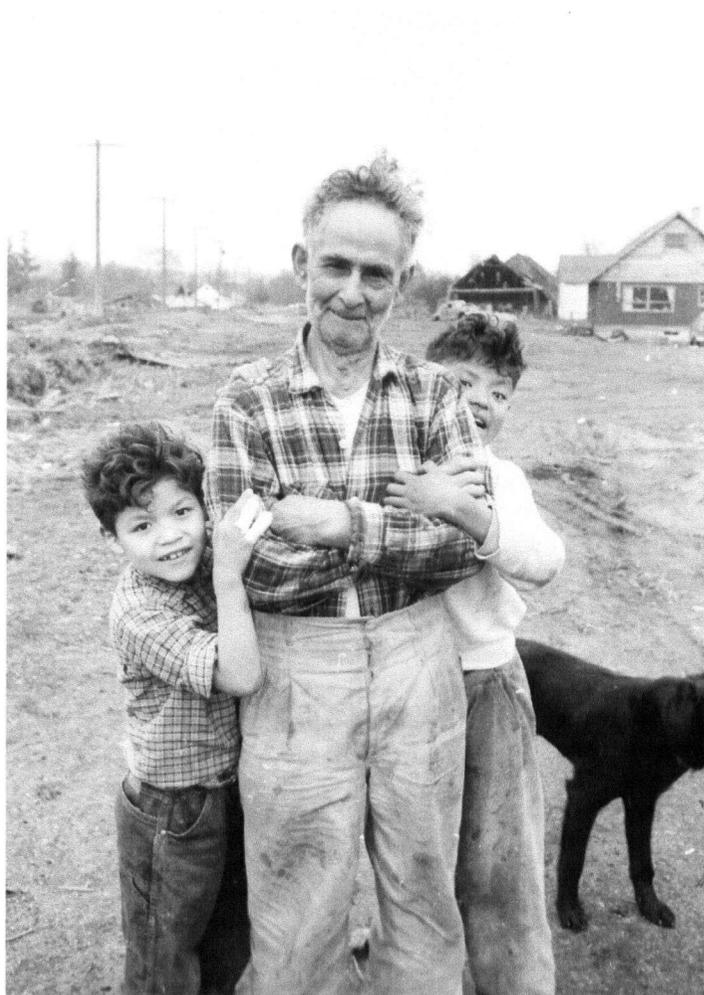


Figure 6.1: James Point and children Harvey and Johnny Louis at Musqueam. Charles E. Borden photograph collection, Laboratory of Archaeology, UBC. Reproduced with permission of the Point and Louis families.

⁴⁰² “Enough Artifacts, in Fact, to Fill a Powerhouse,” *Vancouver Sun*, 6 July 1972.

From the Musqueam perspective, however, interaction with the university professor did not initiate an awakening to the relevance of “prehistory,” nor was it their first experience with “archaeological artifacts.” Rather, we could just as reasonably consider the Musqueam’s decision to permit excavations on their reserve to be a form of intervention in the colonial narratives that disassociated their community from the ancient past. Charles E. Borden’s emphasis on custodial and community education corresponded to Musqueam interests and expectations for archaeology. While initially hesitant, Chief James Point allowed the excavations only after Borden agreed to show the Musqueam children what they had found.⁴⁰³ When curious children rallied around the digs, Borden provided them with the tools of the trade to assist with surface collecting.⁴⁰⁴ Today in the community, a story circulates about how young people planted arrowheads and other stone objects for Borden to find during his many walks in the village, collecting artifacts from the surface soil. We could read this as a sign of resistance to Borden’s control over the production of archaeological knowledge -- a form of resistance James C. Scott calls a “hidden transcript,” a subtle mixture of protest and deference to colonial authority.⁴⁰⁵ It is more likely, however, an example of youthful playfulness and Coast Salish humour and therefore speaks to the opposite of protest -- the community’s acceptance of Borden.⁴⁰⁶

Between the 1950s and 1970s, the Musqueam permitted Borden to excavate a number of sites on the reserve: the basement of a house being built for Johnny Louis; part

⁴⁰³ Charles E. Borden, “Musqueam 1950,” field book, Charles E. Borden Papers, box 50, file 13, UBCA.

⁴⁰⁴ Andrew C. Charles, interview conducted by author, Musqueam/Vancouver, 20 March 2005.

⁴⁰⁵ James C. Scott, *Domination and the Arts of Resistance: Hidden Transcripts* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1990).

⁴⁰⁶ Andrew C. Charles, personal communication, October 2006.

of a piece of land belonging to James Point; the interior of a traditional cedar-plank longhouse; a site at the old village of s̓cəł'ex^w (along 51st Avenue); “Old Musqueam,” the site in the 1960s of a new residential development; and a section of the bluff over looking Mali. The participation and collaboration of community members, including children, sets Borden’s Musqueam excavations very much apart from his off-reserve work.



Figure 6.2: Ginger Louis with trowel. Charles E. Borden photograph collection, Laboratory of Archaeology, UBC. Reproduced with permission of Ginger Louis.

While the change in Edwards Sparrow Sr., Willard Sparrow, and James Point’s attitude following their visit to the university may not have been as drastic as Borden claimed, he did discern a significant shift in the relationship between Native people and

Canadian society during this period. Following WWII, the Canadian public was becoming increasingly aware of what Aboriginal politicians Harold Cardinal called “The Tragedy of Canada’s Indians,” and what George Manuel called Canada’s “Fourth World.”⁴⁰⁷ When Aboriginal veterans returned from overseas to find that Canadian society remained racist and intolerant towards First Nations, they pushed for *Indian Act* reforms that recognized indigenous peoples as Canadian citizens and repealed overtly discriminatory sections (such as the legislation outlawing the potlatch and other indigenous ceremonial activity, and the legislation that prohibited Aboriginal communities from hiring a lawyer for the purpose of filing grievances in relation to their land claims).⁴⁰⁸ Growing public awareness of the horrors of the Holocaust, as well as the gains against institutional racism made by the civil rights movement in the United States of the 1960s, fostered widespread concern for minority groups and their right to cultural autonomy and social equality. At the local level, non-Aboriginal publics were encouraged to become familiar with conditions on the Indian Reserves in their areas. For example, in 1960, a *Vancouver Sun* reporter urged his readers to visit the Musqueam Indian Reserve to witness for themselves the poverty of its residents, many of who lacked

⁴⁰⁷ Harold Cardinal, *The Unjust Society: The Tragedy of Canada’s Indians* (Edmonton: M.G Hurtig, 1969); George Manuel and Michael Posluns, *The Fourth World: An Indian Reality* (Don Mills, ON: Collier-Macmillan Canada, 1974); and also Howard Adams, *Prison of Grass: Canada from a Native Point of View* (Saskatoon, SK: Fifth House, 1975). Studies such as UBC anthropologist Harry B. Hawthorn, C.S. Belshaw, and S.M. Jamieson, *The Indians of British Columbia: A Study of Contemporary Social Adjustment* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1958); and Harry B. Hawthorn, Kenneth Lysysk, and Alan Cairns, *A Survey of the Contemporary Indians of Canada: A Report on Economic, Political, Educational Needs and Policies* (Ottawa: Indian Affairs Branch, 1966) also contributed to this growing public awareness. In relation to the federal government’s 1969 white paper, which proposed the dismantling of the *Indian Act*, see Sally Weaver, *The Making of Canadian Indian Policy: The Hidden Agenda, 1968-70* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1981).

⁴⁰⁸ Veterans enfranchised to enlist, but when they returned from the war, they were not treated as “citizens” and were no longer “Indians.” Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples, “Veterans,” in *Report of the Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples*, vol. 1, chap. 12, http://www.ainc-inac.gc.ca/ch/rcap/sg/sg45_e.html#130 (accessed September 2006); and Keith Thor Carlson, “Stó:lō Soldiers, Stó:lō Veterans,” in *You are Asked to Witness: The Stó:lō in Canada’s Pacific Coast History*, ed. Keith Thor Carlson (Chilliwack, BC: Stó:lō Heritage Trust, 1997).

basic utilities in their homes, such as running water and electricity. The reporter went on to suggest that the local non-Native community take on some kind of philanthropic social action to alleviate Musqueam poverty: "Ask yourself how conditions like this should be cleared up. Should Kerrisdale community clubs become interested, study the problems, and do something about them?"⁴⁰⁹

This is not to suggest that there was a rigid divide in the 1950s between a colonialist and a revisionist public mindset. Certainly, state policy continued to be animated by ideologies of the authentic Indian as static and unchanging, and Aboriginal peoples were denied complete access to modern economic life. As historian Dianne Newell has convincingly argued, the second half of the twentieth century did not always bring improved economic well-being to indigenous communities in British Columbia. Aboriginal fishers, whose ongoing participation in the industrial fishery was both culturally and economically motivated, saw their commercial access to the resource significantly reduced.⁴¹⁰ Yet, this early postwar period was also marked by a shift from colonial culture to anti-colonial or reclamation culture (from the point of view of Aboriginal people) as Aboriginal communities intervened more forcefully in colonialist narratives and struggled, on both the local and the national scene, for self-determination and the legal recognition of Aboriginal rights. Growing public interest in the social and economic circumstances of Aboriginal peoples in Canada, ongoing discrimination and dispossession, and more forceful Aboriginal intervention and formal protest formed the backdrop to Charles E. Borden's archaeological salvaging of the 1950s and 1960s.

⁴⁰⁹ Chuck Bayley, "Have You Heard?: Indian Shame," *Vancouver Sun*, 23 June 1960, in Musqueam clippings file, Musqueam Indian Band Archives (MIBA).

⁴¹⁰ Dianne Newell, *Tangled Webs of History: Indians and the Law in Canada's Pacific Coast Fisheries* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1993).

Salvage ethnography and archaeology responded to a sense of moral obligation that recognized the demoralizing effects of colonialism on indigenous cultures. This sense of responsibility shows up in Borden's description of the period: "We had an obligation to at least salvage the pre-history of these Indians, [which] then could be used in...recovering some of the later ethnographic culture," explained Borden.⁴¹¹

But Borden's archaeology was not about trying to preserve objects or burial sites as part of an integrated indigenous landscape, nor about connecting burial grounds, recovered cultural objects, and territorial rights (as we have seen in Chapter Two, a connection Aboriginal people often made in their petitions in the early twentieth century). Borden acknowledged that indigenous "prehistory" belonged to the corresponding contemporary communities, but he thought it was acceptable to preserve material culture in a university laboratory that, much like a public archive or library, remained accessible (if even remotely) to Aboriginal people as a resource on traditional culture. Early on, Coast Salish people found this archive useful. For example, in 1963, Willard Sparrow borrowed numerous "artifacts" from the university's archaeology lab to display at the "Indian Days" celebrations at Humiltschen Park on the Capilano Indian Reserve in North Vancouver.⁴¹² Sparrow used both "archaeological" and "ethnographic" objects to present local indigenous heritage to Coast Salish, non-Coast Salish, and non-Native audiences.

The Musqueam engage, as do other indigenous communities, in ongoing cultural

⁴¹¹ Williams, "Interviews with Dr. Charles E. Borden," 64.

⁴¹² "Borrower's Agreement," 15 June 1963, Charles E. Borden Papers, box 24, file 15, UBCA. The popular "Indian Days" celebrations were organized by the Northwest Indian Cultural Society, an Aboriginal group established in 1963 by Edward Sparrow of Musqueam; Simon Baker, of Squamish; Guy Williams, President of the Native Brotherhood of BC; and George Manuel, President of the North American Indian Brotherhood. The Society was dedicated to "bringing about greater unity between the tribes of our Province, and with promoting better understanding and appreciation of the ability, skills and traditional culture of our people." See Chief Simon Baker, "North West Indian Cultural Society," [June 1963], Charles E. Borden Papers, box 24, file 15, UBCA.

selection and culturally mediated performance to meet the expectations of outsiders and to further internal goals. Indigenous groups in British Columbia use their heritage resources to further the larger aims of community improvement, cultural revitalization, and, especially by the 1970s, settling Aboriginal rights and title claims.

Salvage Archaeology in British Columbia

In 1943, the Californian anthropologist, Phillip Drucker, in his *Archaeological Survey on the Northern Northwest Coast*, pushed for systematic, scientific archaeological work on the origins of precontact coastal peoples and the development of a regional chronology of culture for the Northwest Coast area.⁴¹³ Horizontal and vertical context had become a corner stone of a more “scientific approach” to archaeology: vertical context provided a temporal chronology, whereas the horizontal context offered spatial perspectives on cultural activities. The “cultural phases” derived from this analysis, as Bruce Trigger points out, formed the basis of “spatio-temporal mosaics, which replaced evolutionary stages as the basic framework of archaeology.”⁴¹⁴ Drucker’s publication inspired Charles E. Borden, who is remembered today for his development of a standardized designation system for archaeological sites, a system of locational coordinates adopted across the country.⁴¹⁵ Like Drucker, Borden trusted that archaeology would provide scientific answers about the dating, cultural sequence, and

⁴¹³ Philip Drucker, “Archaeological Survey on the Northern Northwest Coast,” *Bureau of American Ethnology Bulletin No. 133*; *Anthropological Papers*, No. 20 (Washington, DC, 1943).

⁴¹⁴ Bruce G. Trigger, *Artifacts and Ideas: Essays in Archaeology* (New Brunswick, NJ: Transaction, 2003), 53.

⁴¹⁵ Charles E. Borden, “A Uniform Site Designation Scheme for Canada,” *Anthropology in British Columbia*, No. 3 (Victoria, British Columbia Provincial Museum, 1952), 44-48; and “The Borden System of Site Identification,” *Oracle 8* (Ottawa: National Museum of Man, 1978). In relation to Borden’s career and his influence on archaeology in British Columbia and Canada, see Roy L. Carlson, “C.E. Borden’s Archaeological Legacy,” *BC Studies 42* (Summer 1979): 3-12.

migrations of the Indians whom he, following conventional wisdom, believed had more recently settled in the region.⁴¹⁶

And while the concept of the vanishing Indian that prevailed during the first half of the twentieth century no longer explicitly inspired state policy or anthropological practice when Borden began his work in the late 1940s, the notion of loss did not disappear entirely. Just as expectations of cultural loss influenced Boasian anthropologists working in the 1940s, the salvage paradigm dominated Borden's archaeology.⁴¹⁷ For example, Borden described the master carver Mungo Martin as "one of the last Kwakiutl carvers," when in 1949 he photographed Martin alongside his young grandniece, Ellen Neel, while she was carving a totem pole at the University of British Columbia -- an image that, in retrospect, so clearly suggests cultural revitalization or continuity instead of loss.⁴¹⁸ Similarly, in 1952, Borden referred to Mr. Alex Peters at Musqueam as "one of the last Coast Salish women who still knows how to weave a mountain goat wool blanket. She also does excellent basketry work and knows how to make thule rush mats."⁴¹⁹ Also in need of collecting were, according to Borden, "irreplaceable prehistoric records."⁴²⁰ Anthropologists, concerned with "gathering information from the dwindling ethnological sources of the Northwest," collaborated

⁴¹⁶ See for example, Charles E. Borden, "The Middens of British Columbia," transcript of a talk presented over CBR radio, 8 March 1948, Charles E. Borden Papers, UBCA.

⁴¹⁷ Rosalind Morris argues that the salvage paradigm persists into the 1950s as the "new salvage ethnography," in her study of ethnographic film-making of the twentieth-century, including an analysis of the 1959 film *Totem*, which chronicles the efforts of Harry Hawthorne, Wayne Suttles, Michael Kew, John Smiley and Bill Reid to rescue totem poles from Anthony Island of the Queen Charlottes. Rosalind Morris, *New Worlds from Old Fragments: Film, Ethnography, and the Representation of Northwest Coast Cultures* (Boulder: Westview Press, 1994).

⁴¹⁸ Charles E. Borden, "Archaeological Notes, Marpole, 1949," unpublished fieldbook N-37, Laboratory of Archaeology, UBC.

⁴¹⁹ Charles E. Borden, "Musqueam East, Field Notes," unpublished fieldnotes, dated October 1951 – April 1955, Laboratory of Archaeology, UBC.

⁴²⁰ Charles E. Borden, "Scope and Significance of the Archaeological Investigations at Point Roberts, Washington," unpublished and undated paper, Charles E. Borden Papers, box 50, file 19, UBCA.

with the last, they believed, generation of elders who held traditional cultural knowledge. But it is also important to note that at mid-century anthropologists such as Wayne Suttles, who worked with Musqueam and other Coast Salish communities, shifted their attention from doing “reconstructive ethnography” to questions of cultural adaptation and change.⁴²¹ It was in this intellectual context and larger community of researchers that Borden conducted his archaeological excavations.

Borden, who, being deeply passionate about the archaeological potential of the Vancouver area, initiated a series of salvage projects at endangered sites within the city’s limits. Urban, industrial, and agricultural expansion coupled with the destructive activities of amateur collectors and curio-hunters threatened archaeological sites throughout the Lower Mainland. From 1946 to 1949, Borden and G.P.V. Akrigg, a University of British Columbia English professor, excavated sites at Point Grey and Locarno Beach. In 1949, the University of British Columbia and the University of Washington established a cross-border, collaborative project at the Whalen Farm site in Point Roberts, Washington, “to secure from key sites the perishable data vital to the reconstruction of Northwest Coast prehistory.”⁴²² It is this emphasis on salvaging

⁴²¹ Michael Kew, “Foreword,” in Wayne Suttles, *Coast Salish Essays* (Vancouver: Talonbooks, 1987), ix-x; and Wayne Suttles, interview with author, St. Juan Islands, January 2004. The community of anthropologists working in this area, some of whom often visited Borden on his digs in Vancouver and at the Whalen Farm Site at Point Roberts, included Wilson Duff, Wayne Suttles, Robert and Barbara Lane, Harry Hawthorn, and Erna Gunther. See also, British Columbia Provincial Museum, *Anthropology in British Columbia*, No. 1-5 (Victoria: British Columbia Provincial Museum, 1950-1954).

⁴²² Charles E. Borden, “Scope and Significance of the Archaeological Investigations at Point Roberts, Washington,” unpublished research paper, box 50, file 8, Charles E. Borden’s Papers, UBCA.

archaeological remains while they were still accessible that characterizes Borden's lengthy career.⁴²³

Charles E. Borden's methods differed from the earlier collecting work by the American Museum of Natural History and the Vancouver City Museum, which emphasized procuring artifacts for both museum display and research into the racial or cultural origins of ancient indigenous peoples. Borden, in the new manner of the day, systematically collected *all* data related to a site, including cultural objects, human remains, soil and plant samples, and recorded in his voluminous notebooks detailed descriptions, diagrams, and photographs. He also described the process of carrying out the dig, noted relational data for each artifact, and even included a list of daily visitors and, on some days, what the crew had for supper. Because of his enthusiasm for systematizing the work of excavation, Borden was much more interested in how burials were situated within the larger context of the site than he was in the human skeletal remains *per se*.⁴²⁴ Even though the very act of conducting a dig meant the site's inevitable destruction, meticulous note taking and sample collecting permitted, in effect, the transposition of archaeological sites to the laboratory. As Borden explained to his students, the reward for such attentiveness in the field came later in the laboratory, where the finds began "to tell the story of the interesting chapters in the prehistory of this area."⁴²⁵

⁴²³ Williams, "Interviews with Dr. Charles E. Borden," 30. See also Robert Gerard West, "Saving and Naming the Garbage: Charles E. Borden and the Making of B.C. Prehistory, 1945-1960" (MA thesis, Department of History, University of British Columbia, 1995).

⁴²⁴ See, for example, the report on burials at the Whalen Farm site, author, name, Charles E. Borden Papers, box 50, file 19, UBCA. The interest in burials involved comparing burials in the region to contribute to the development of regional culture phases.

⁴²⁵ Charles Borden, "Notes on the Prehistory," unpublished manuscript, Charles E. Borden Papers, UBCA.



Figure 6.3: Excavations at the Marpole Midden, 1955. Charles E. Borden photograph collection, Laboratory of Archaeology, UBC.

Philip Drucker and Charles E. Borden were troubled by the neglect that the archaeology of the Lower Fraser Delta and the Vancouver Mainland had suffered for four decades following the early work of Harlan I. Smith. And although Smith sometimes noted relational information for objects or skeletal remains, he did not record the depth at which things were found. “It is to be regretted,” wrote Drucker, “that neither [Smith’s] published accounts nor his catalogues give vertical distributions consistently enough to make it possible to re-examine his results.”⁴²⁶ Borden concurred, adding that, “Smith was dependent for assistance on unskilled local labourers who dug fast, but paid little attention to where the various objects they found came from...the science of archaeology has grown more exacting since those early days, and modern investigators regret that Smith was not able to pay more attention to stratigraphy, that is to the chronological

⁴²⁶ Philip Drucker quoted in Charles E. Borden, “Scope and Significance of the Archaeological Investigations at Point Roberts, Washington,” unpublished paper, Charles E. Borden Papers, box 50, file 19, UBCA.

sequence of his finds.”⁴²⁷ Archaeologists saw themselves as part of a continuum of academic research, their basic tenant being that the collection of more and more materials, improved scientific techniques, and comparative methodologies, ensured more complete academic knowledge about the past. As non-interventionist practices were promoted in the 1970s, Borden would attempt to reserve a site at Musqueam so that it could be excavated in the future by archaeologists with improved methods and technologies.⁴²⁸

In the late 1940s, when renewed urban development in Vancouver threatened one of the last portions of the Marpole Midden containing intact archaeological deposits, Borden organized his anthropology students and volunteers to conduct salvage excavations in the garden of a private residence on the western edge of the midden.⁴²⁹ They began an initial exploratory trench, but, on learning that the Aluminum Company of Canada (Alcan) planned to flood the Nechako Canyon in British Columbia’s interior to supply power for their smelter at Kitimat (known as the Kemano I project), Borden’s attention shifted away from his Vancouver-based work to more urgent salvaging there. Borden, along with his protégé Wilson Duff (who at this time was an anthropology student at UBC), received a small grant from the Provincial government to conduct an archaeological survey in the canyon in the summer of 1951, during which time they located over 130 sites of importance to Cheslatta T’en history. The province and the

⁴²⁷ Charles E. Borden, “An Ancient Coast Indian Village in Southern British Columbia,” unpublished paper, box 52, file 14, p. 12-13, Charles E. Borden Papers, UBCA.

⁴²⁸ John H. Schroeder, Arch. Consultant, Musqueam Indian Band to Dr. Charles E. Borden, 20 May 1976, Charles E. Borden Papers, box 12, file 8, UBCA. Borden hoped to reserve the Musqueam Northeast site (MuNE) for “future excavation 50 or perhaps 100 years from now! Meanwhile it was to be turned into a monument to the cultural heritage of the Musqueam people!”

⁴²⁹ Borden estimated that 200 or so feet of undisturbed materials remained. By 1955, 150 feet of midden remained intact. Great Fraser Midden Foundation, Minutes of Meeting, 30 November 1955, box 34, file 13, Charles E. Borden Papers, UBCA.

aluminum company provided additional funds to continue with more intensive investigations the following summer prior to flooding the area.⁴³⁰

Borden and Duff received funds to carry out their archaeological survey, but neither they, nor their colleagues, opposed the actual construction of dams that threatened to (and did) trigger devastating changes for First Nations communities whose traditional territories lay in their path: including the destruction of indigenous gravesites, territories, livelihoods, and archaeological sites. Nor did they challenge the expansion of urban environments and agricultural lands closer to home. Before the landmark case initiated by the Nisga'a (Calder v. Regina 1973) when the Supreme Court of Canada acknowledged the existence of Aboriginal title, Borden and his colleagues did not view the flooding in terms of the loss of lands and resources it signified for indigenous peoples. Instead, in retrospect, he mourned the passing of an Edenic landscape in the face of inevitable development:

Instead of having a beautiful ring of lakes connected by rushing streams, there is just one long sheet of water from the dam-site to the head of Tahtsa Lake. It is a pity because the area was very, very beautiful. The beaches rivaled those of Honolulu, Hawaii and California and I don't think that the public nowadays would stand for this kind of loss.⁴³¹

From the 1950s onwards, archaeological excavation responded primarily to the pressures of industrial development. In fact, Borden conceded that it was impossible to prevent

⁴³⁰ Williams, "Interviews with Dr. Charles E. Borden." Regarding the Alcan project's affect of the Cheslatta T'en, see Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples, "The Cheslatta T'en and the Keman Hydro Project," in *Report of the Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples*, vol. 3, part 4, [www.ainc-inac.gc.ca/ch/rcap/sg/sg40\)e.html](http://www.ainc-inac.gc.ca/ch/rcap/sg/sg40)e.html) (accessed 10 March 2006). In relation to larger resource development taken up by W.A.C. Bennett and the Social Credit party after 1952, see Tina Loo, "People in the Way: Modernity, Environment, and Society on the Arrow Lakes," *BC Studies* 142/143 (Summer/ Autumn), 161-196.

⁴³¹ Williams, "Interviews with Dr. Charles E. Borden," 63.

industrial development and urban expansion but hoped that with legislation and controls, these processes “could be turned from a bane to a boon to archaeology.”⁴³² Borden and his colleagues were satisfied that archaeological evidence be salvaged and relocated to research institutions prior to destruction by industrial development. “The public and government had this obligation to see that these unrenewable resources were not wasted,” Borden recalled, implicitly comparing archaeological materials to nonrenewable resources to be mined such as geological, mineral, gas or oil deposits.⁴³³ Thus, archaeological excavation was presented as a necessary step in industrial development, and salvaged artifacts were appropriated for the construction of a provincial heritage.

Expanding industrial development, dam building, and road construction threatened Indian Reserves and burial grounds alike. In 1957, following the flooding of Cheslatta territory, the Chelsatta Reserve No. 9, thought to be out of harms way, was inundated by the water surges produced when Alcan first opened the gate of the spillway to Skin’s Lake. Broken coffins, grave houses, and the bodies of deceased individuals, including the body of the revered Chief Louie, disappeared in the waters of Cheslatta Lake. As Chief Marvin Charlie told the Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples in 1993, “Some of our Elders walked along the river banks, hoping to find the bodies of their loved ones. There were coffins floating around, grave houses floating around.”⁴³⁴ At the time of the 1957 desecration, two Cheslatta men petitioned the Department of Indian Affairs: “Just these few lines to say that we have seen for ourselves the graveyard

⁴³² Charles E. Borden to Dr. Harry B. Hawthorn, 10 November 1950, Charles Borden Papers, box 11, file 1, UBCA.

⁴³³ Williams, “Interviews with Dr. Charles E. Borden,” 64.

⁴³⁴ Chief Marvin Charlie, Cheslatta Carrier Nation, Vancouver, 15 November 1993, cited in Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples, “The Cheslatta T’en,” 5.

that used to be at Cheslatta no. 9 reserve. It is all gone and we do not know where the dead have gone...All the dead have floated away and have gone ashore anywhere. Bill Clark of Cheslatta seen a coffin floating in the middle of the lake on May 1.”⁴³⁵

Understandably, such devastating scenes of loss and destruction drew public sympathy and outcry. It is noteworthy, however, that public expressions of moral outrage did not extend to the less dramatic disinterment of ancient remains. As we have seen, during the first half of the twentieth century, archaeological practice was animated by the distinction between the remains of the deceased who could not be individually identified and those who were remembered by name in their communities. It appears that this distinction between the “known” and the “anonymous” dead continued to inform state and public responses to the desecration of burial grounds well into the twentieth century.

Salvage work such as that conducted in Cheslatta T'en territory, the Marpole Midden, and at various sites on the Lower Mainland impressed upon Charles Borden and Wilson Duff the need for provincial legislation to preserve British Columbia's archaeological heritage. These projects set into motion decades of time-consuming public relations work, including frequent press reports, public talks, and government lobbying to establish protective legislation.⁴³⁶ Part of this public relations strategy involved presenting the dig as a type of public performance. In contrast to the earlier excavations by Herman Leisk and the Vancouver City Museum at the Marpole Midden, which were conducted in relative secrecy and away from the prying eyes of curio hunters,

⁴³⁵ Robert Skin and Keome Morris to Department of Indian Affairs, 6 June 1957, cited in Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples, “The Cheslatta T'en,” 5. See also Stephen Hume, “Some Words about Sacred Ground,” *Vancouver Sun*, 31 May 2006.

⁴³⁶ See West, “Saving and Naming the Garbage,” regarding Borden's skillful use of the media to publicize the need for protective legislation.

the public was encouraged to visit Borden's excavations and see for themselves the scientific methods employed. Non-Aboriginal publics consumed archaeology through local museum exhibits, press reports, and site-visits. Certainly Borden needed public support for his proposed legislation, but these media strategies allowed him to retain control over the representation of archaeological practice as scientific and professional and legitimized his methods. Through these repeated enactments or performances, Borden set up a clear dichotomy of practitioners and spectators, further generated public support for his projects, and marked his work as professional and scientific in contrast to the previous generation of amateur archaeologists and curio hunters.

Charles Borden and Wilson Duff's lobbying and public relations efforts culminated in 1960 in the establishment of British Columbia's Archaeological and Historic Sites Protection Act and the Archaeological Sites Advisory Board. The board mandated that sufficient time be given prior to industrial development to plan regional site surveys and investigations at key sites in the province. The policy also obligated the provincial government, private companies, and landholders together to finance site surveys and salvage operations. From its outset, the board included Aboriginal people on its executive, and, in some cases, Aboriginal communities petitioned to the board to have their grievances regarding museum or archaeological practices addressed. For example, when the Kamloops Indian Band opposed the display of an ancestor in a local museum, they solicited the board's assistance. The display was dismantled and, in an early case of repatriation, the skeletal remains returned, Borden later explained, to the "Indian band who had control over the territory."⁴³⁷ In addition to monitoring the activities of

⁴³⁷ Williams, "Interviews with Dr. Charles E. Borden," 152.

developers, the legislation aimed to prevent vandals and curio hunters from excavating sites, especially burial sites, to retrieve souvenirs and mementos. In relation to the Marpole dig, one newspaper reporter noted: "One of the hazards of research work...is the Sunday afternoon archaeologists who come down to 'pot hunt.' When these enthusiasts find [Borden] at a digging, they swarm over the area with shovels, ignorance, and strong backs. Their 'help' destroys scientific findings."⁴³⁸ Borden compared the destruction to site integrity caused by amateurs to an atom bomb's interference with carbon dating technologies.⁴³⁹ Borden, however, viewed the gentleman farmer/landowner who donated objects found during the course of tilling or gardening in higher esteem. This more cooperative class of archaeological assistant was often praised in press reports detailing the discovery and donation of ancient stone objects to the provincial or university collection.

⁴³⁸ "Indian Midden Probe in Race Against Time," *Vancouver Province*, 1 June 1955, newspaper clipping in Charles E. Borden Papers, box 31, file 19, UBCA.

⁴³⁹ "A-Bomb Fallout Snarling History," *Vancouver Province*, 17 August 1955, newspaper clipping in Charles E. Borden Papers, box 31, file 19, UBCA.



Figure 6.4: Great Blue Heron carving retrieved from the Marpole Midden in 1957: “Mr. Sidney Baron returned today and brought his daughter Valery, VIIth grade, who donated the remarkable antler carving, a great blue heron...Mr. Barton was able to point out the exact spot and depth in the wall of the pit from which they had obtained the carving.”⁴⁴⁰ Photograph reproduced with permission of the Musqueam Indian Band.

Excavations at the Marpole Midden and on the Musqueam Indian Reserve

With the news that the Fraser Arms Hotel had received a permit to renovate in the summer of 1955, Charles Borden returned to the Marpole Midden. In 1955 and again in 1957, Borden organized a series of excavations on lots with undisturbed deposits. Due to increased public awareness about the potential loss of an important heritage resource, a group of sympathetic citizens and businessmen formed “The Great Fraser Midden Foundation” to ensure that the property was retained as a National Historic Sites Board site and preserved. The foundation’s objective was to complete the excavations, obtain everything from the site that was deemed of historical value, and either purchase the

⁴⁴⁰ Don Abbott, “Marpole, DhRs: 1, 1957,” fieldbook, Laboratory of Archaeology, UBC.

property to build a museum or lobby the Vancouver Parks Board to preserve the site as a city park.

In making a presentation to the new foundation, Borden described the Marpole Midden as the link between past and present: "So rich is the new area that virtually each carefully sifted bucket of apparent dirt discloses some feature linking present to past. A chipped arrowhead is often found in the same scoop as a rusty nail or broken bottle."⁴⁴¹ While Borden's words renewed the foundation's conviction that the site was of national importance, members also saw its appeal as a source for the construction of provincial history. Just as Charles Hill-Tout and the Vancouver City Museum appropriated the site for their story of civic progress, in this imagined provincial history, colonial society adopted this older "alien" history as its own. In this way, British Columbia's first European settlers and their descendants acquired a deeper history, for the place they now lived had a history to rival those of their ancestor's homelands in Europe.⁴⁴² Borden's lobbying efforts were especially timely, considering these were the years leading up to 1958, the first of a succession of centennials for the province, and would have fired up local historical societies to celebrate attractions such as the Marpole Midden.⁴⁴³ Re-invigorating the discourses of the 1920s and 1930s, A.M. Ellis of the Marpole Chamber of Commerce, reinforced the idea that British Columbia history began at Marpole, long before the arrival of Europeans:

⁴⁴¹ "Indian Midden Probe in Race Against Time," *Vancouver Province*, 1 June 1955, newspaper clipping in Charles E. Borden Papers, box 31, file 19, UBCA.

⁴⁴² This is similar to the popularizing of European prehistory by V. Gordon Childe in books such as *Prehistoric Communities of the British Isles* (London: R. and W. Chambers, 1949).

⁴⁴³ In the 1950s, the province and local historical societies began to plan for the upcoming centennials celebrating the establishment of the Colony of British Columbia in 1858, the union of the colonies of Vancouver Island and British Columbia in 1866, Canadian Confederation in 1867, and the entry of British Columbia into Confederation in 1871.

Let's not forget, though, from whence we came. We have every right to be proud of our historic background as the older parts of the world are proud of theirs. Some of these older places would be "unthinkable" without their wealth of historic, artistic, background. Archaeologists have for years been meticulously uncovering and tabulating the amazing story of our own beginnings and many thoughtful and interested people are recommending that the midden at Marpole be retained by the City for the purpose of a small memorial Museum, wherein can be artistically and dramatically displayed the first pages of the British Columbia Story.⁴⁴⁴

In this paradigm, archaeological evidence could be read like a book, the assumption being that one could turn the pages backwards to the "prehistoric" period, for which there existed no written records. Borden, like other archaeologists of his generation, often employed the storybook metaphor:

Each shell-heap may be linked to a chronicle and its separate layers to individual pages. These pages, however, must be read in reverse order, the last page first and the first page last, since the most recent happenings naturally are recorded in the uppermost strata, which were laid down last, while the underlying layers tell of every earlier event, the lowest and oldest forming the beginning of the story.⁴⁴⁵

Meticulous chronology was important. Borden's regional chronology for the Lower Fraser Delta was organized around the larger distinction between prehistory and history, the boundary separating them coinciding with the arrival of Northwest Company explorer Simon Fraser to the Fraser River in 1808. Aboriginal people also use the period of first European exploration -- "the coming of the whiteman" -- as an organizing principal in their histories. But this is less to cite by date a specific turning point, than to refer to the larger and ongoing processes of colonization. Importantly, Borden also acknowledged that archaeological research and midden sites were significant to

⁴⁴⁴ A.M. Ellis to Sir, 17 September 1955, Charles E. Borden Papers, box 9, file 1, UBCA.

⁴⁴⁵ Charles E. Borden, "The Middens of British Columbia," transcript of a talk presented over CBR radio, 8 March 1948, Charles E. Borden Papers, UBCA.

indigenous communities' own histories. For example, during a public presentation about "the Indians of the Pacific Northwest," Borden emphasized that his research findings would be of "particular interest to those whose ancestors had lived in this area for thousands of years before the arrival of the first Europeans." The association of contemporary peoples with ancient material culture was less an acknowledgement of a specific community's interest in land, however, than a representation that emphasized a generalized or pan-Indian identity. The *New York Times* reported, "Dr. Borden believes it may eventually be possible to trace a line from these tribes to the present day Salish Indians of this coast."⁴⁴⁶ This method of reading backwards from the documentary record into the archaeological, now known as the "direct historical approach," linked specific contemporary communities to ancient populations.

The chief task Borden set for himself at Marpole and other sites in the area was to reconstruct a spatial-temporal cultural history and an "area synthesis" of the Lower Fraser Delta region. Through systematic excavation, recording, and artifact classification, Borden sought to establish vertical temporal, and horizontal spatial "maps or lattice works of Aboriginal cultures."⁴⁴⁷ Artifact assemblages (i.e. compilations of objects according to affinities in material type, modes of manufacture, and original function) revealed to Borden a series of distinctive "cultures" that were potentially associated with geographic and temporal phases. Borden's series of regional cultural phases for the Lower Fraser River reached back two thousand years, but this observation, he warned in 1968, "does not necessarily imply that ancestors of the Stalo have occupied the entire or

⁴⁴⁶ "Antiquities Law Urged in Canada," *New York Times*, 3 July 1955, in Charles E. Borden Papers, box 31, file 19, UBCA.

⁴⁴⁷ West, "Saving and Naming the Garbage," 13.

even part of the lower mainland region for the past two millennium. Population shifts may have occurred within this period, which perhaps will become evident when the archaeological record is more complete.”⁴⁴⁸

Whereas Charles Hill-Tout used human skulls to define “races” of people, Borden organized artifacts around the category of “culture.” And just as, earlier in the century, Berkeley anthropologist Alfred Kroeber famously popularized the culture-area classification scheme, whereby Aboriginal cultures were categorized spatially based on linguistic evidence and a series of “elements” (e.g. fishing and hunting technologies), Borden used artifact assemblages to distinguish distinctive chronological and geographical cultural phases. However, as Bruce G. Trigger has noted in relation to the period more generally, because archaeologists focused on the surviving stone or bone objects, objects which represented perhaps the least dynamic aspect of pre-contact society (and the only ones mentioned in the 1938 National Historic Sites and Monuments Board plaque for the Marpole Midden) their methods contributed to the widespread notion that, before Europeans arrived, Aboriginal cultures changed very slowly.⁴⁴⁹ In other words,

⁴⁴⁸ Charles E. Borden, “Prehistory of the Lower Mainland,” in *Lower Fraser Valley: Evolution of a Cultural Landscape*, B.C. Geographical Series No. 9, ed. Alfred H. Siemens (Vancouver: Tantalus Research, 1968), 24. For earlier expressions of this theory of population shifts, see Charles E. Borden, “Preliminary Report on the Archaeology of Point Grey, British Columbia, 1947,” Charles E. Borden Papers, UBCA; and Borden, “Some Aspects of Prehistoric Coastal-Interior Relations in the Pacific Northwest,” in *Anthropology in British Columbia* No. 4 (Victoria: British Columbia Provincial Museum, 1953-54): 26-32.

⁴⁴⁹ Bruce G. Trigger, “Archaeology and the Image of the American Indian,” in *Artifacts and Ideas: Essays in Archaeology* (New Brunswick, NJ: Transaction, 2003), 45-66; and Trigger, *A History of Archaeological Thought* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1989). Archaeologists have acknowledged the limitations of their approach to cultural phases, recognizing that cultural periods did not necessarily represent complete cultures or bounded groups of people, but instead have used it as an organizing principal. See for example, Knut R. Fladmark, *British Columbia Prehistory* (Ottawa: Archaeological Survey of Canada, National Museum of Man, 1986), 5; and David V. Burley, *Marpole: Anthropological Reconstructions of a Prehistoric Northwest Coast Culture Type* (Burnaby, BC: Department of Archaeology, Simon Fraser University, 1980). The culture history model that Borden started with was popular in the 1940s, but over the next few decades this model was challenged within the discipline for

Borden's archaeology at the Marpole Midden focused on a culture without people and without politics.

With ongoing urban development threatening the Marpole Midden, Charles E. Borden returned to his excavations throughout the 1950s. During this period there was a discernable shift in the relationship between archaeological researchers and Aboriginal communities, characterized by more intensive fieldwork, longer-term working relationships, and the hiring of Native people on digs. Along with UBC archaeology students, Borden hired a young Musqueam man, Andrew C. Charles, for the highly publicized Marpole dig. The press marvelled at Charles' presence in 1955 among the crew, identifying him as the first Aboriginal archaeologist in British Columbia: "Andy 'Smitty' Charles, a handsome 22-year-old Indian of the Musqueam Reserve, is unique among his people. To all known records he is the first B.C. Indian to scientifically explore and excavate into the pre-history remains of his ancestors."⁴⁵⁰ While working with his family at a cannery near New Westminster, Andrew Charles independently discovered and conducted the first test excavations of the St. Mungo Cannery site using the procedures learned while working with Borden at Marpole. The results of Charles' preliminary work prompted subsequent investigations at both the St. Mungo Cannery and the nearby Glenrose site. Borden named the "regional phase" characterized by the site the "Charles phase," in recognition of Andrew Charles' initiative.⁴⁵¹

being unscientific and a culture change model advocated in its place. See Sally R. Binford and Lewis Binford, eds., *New Perspectives in Archaeology* (Chicago: Aldine, 1968).

⁴⁵⁰ *Vancouver Province*, 22 June 1955. Also cited in West, "Saving and Naming the Garbage," 37.

⁴⁵¹ Charles E. Borden, *Origins and Development of Early Northwest Coast Culture to about 3000 B.C.: Archaeology Survey of Canada*, Paper No. 45 (Ottawa: National Museum of Canada, 1975), 96-97.

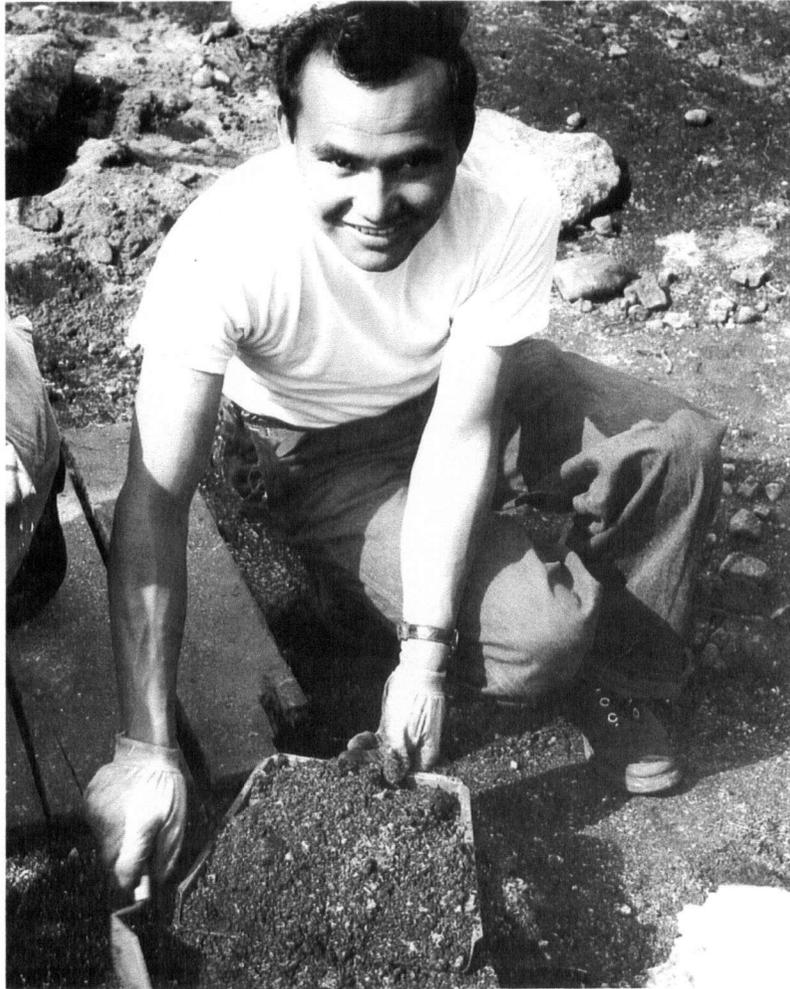


Figure 6.5: Andrew C. Charles at the Marpole dig. This photograph accompanied the 1955 article in the *Vancouver Province*. Photograph in the collection of Andrew C. Charles and reproduced with his permission.

Today, Andrew C. Charles recalls that his involvement was a source of pride and accomplishment for his family and that the oral teachings he had received from his parents Andrew and Christine Charles -- that Musqueam's ancestors had lived in the area since before memory -- corresponded to the archaeological findings:

I believe that is the only physical evidence that we have of pre-contact existence. There is some theory that some of the artifacts predate the occupation of the Coast Salish people on the coast. I don't know if they can substantiate that or not, but from what Dr. Borden used to say is that Musqueam people along with the people on the Fraser River and Vancouver Island all migrated from the interior. Now it's hard for me to

believe that as I am led to believe otherwise. We were here from time immemorial.⁴⁵²

“Culture is always in transition,” adds Charles. For many Aboriginal people such as Charles, there were no “racial” or “cultural” interruptions of residency as proposed by Charles Hill-Tout and Charles E. Borden respectively. The important thing was that the archaeological record showed their people lived here thousands of years ago. “And it is only natural to assume that because we were the Aboriginal people of the day when Europeans came to North America, that the artifacts in those middens were from our ancestors.”⁴⁵³ Working backwards from the present to the past Charles used genealogy to link present day community members to past generations. But instead of seeing change, Charles emphasized continuity. Cultural objects and a far-reaching network of genealogical ties connect contemporary Musqueam people with people from the past.

No doubt, Charles Borden had difficulty reconciling Aboriginal historical tradition and contemporary residency with his archaeological classification of cultural phases for the Lower Fraser Valley. As a leading Coast Salish ethnographer, the late Wayne Suttles recalled in relation to the Marpole excavation,

I remember when Carl Borden was digging there...I was told [by the Musqueam] the Musqueam name for the place, was told it was a Musqueam village, and got a couple of stories about the Marpole people. I mentioned this to Carl, and he bristled and said in effect that this was impossible -- "that site hasn't been occupied for hundreds -- or some big number -- of years". I don't know whether Carl ever changed his mind or when his successors began to consider the possibility that it was occupied by people related to the Musqueams.⁴⁵⁴

⁴⁵² Andrew C. Charles, interview conducted by author, Musqueam/Vancouver, 20 March 2005.

⁴⁵³ Ibid.

⁴⁵⁴ Wayne Suttles, interview conducted by author, St. Juan Island, January 2004.

In a number of publications, Borden suggested that the Marpole Phase for the Fraser Delta, occurring between approximately 450 BC and 500 AD, was replaced by an immigrant culture, identified as the Whalen II Phase. This suggests, as did Charles Hill-Tout's theory on the subject, that Borden's emphasis on population migration downplayed a longer association of the Musqueam with the Marpole Midden.

The "recent settlement theory" for the Lower Fraser was, for Borden, complicated by his own work on the Musqueam Indian Reserve, a village site of continuous occupation for some 3,000 years.⁴⁵⁵ Borden, in his 1940s to 1970s excavations of a number of village and burial sites at Musqueam, established the most recent pre-contact phase for the Fraser Delta region -- the Stselax Phase -- as A.D. 1250 to 1808, the latter being the year Simon Fraser traveled down the Fraser River, reached the Musqueam village on the north arm, was confronted by village warriors, and was turned back. Borden hoped to find a relationship between the more recent pre-contact culture and its predecessor: "It will be interesting to see whether other elements of the old culture also occur in the lower Stelax levels. The important question: Did the recent Mu[squeam] culture evolve from old culture or are the Mu[squeam] Indians an intrusive people?"⁴⁵⁶

Charles E. Borden's cultural history model was further complicated when archaeological history was linked to a specific family. During one of his early visits to the reserve in September 1950, Borden met the elder Frank Charlie, who lived in a modern single-family home, next to his family's old longhouse:

⁴⁵⁵ Musqueam Indian Band "Musqueam Comprehensive Land Claim: Preliminary Report on Musqueam Land Use and Occupancy," presented to the Office of Native Claims by the Musqueam Indian Band Council, June 1984, MIBA.

⁴⁵⁶ Charles E. Borden, "Musqueam East, field book, Oct. 1951 – April 1955," Laboratory of Archaeology, University of British Columbia.

We were fortunate in finding Frank Charlie at home. He seemed pleased to meet us. He is 96 ½ years old and lives alone except when a “young” boy (40? or perhaps 14) who works at a cannery, is with him. F. Ch. gave me permission to photograph Ka’stchum [the large stone sculpture highlighted in the Royal Commission display]...Also took photos of F. Ch. himself. He asked for a picture. The large gabled building w. the big old cedar planks on 3 sides belongs to F. Ch. He said the Indians used to gather there and hold their dances. According to him, the roof of the building originally slanted only one way (shed house) and that he put the gabled roof on only after white men came. The building also used to be longer. The door used to be on the side facing the Fraser (now it is on the E. side).⁴⁵⁷



Figure 6.6: Frank Charlie and Celina August with her children. Charles E. Borden photograph collection, Laboratory of Archaeology, UBC.

⁴⁵⁷ Charles E. Borden, “Musqueam,” field book, Charles E. Borden Papers, box 50, file 14, UBCA.



Figure 6.7: The Charlie family longhouse, where Frank Charlie may have been one of the last occupants, 1957. Charles E. Borden photograph collection, Laboratory of Archaeology, UBC. Figures 6.6 and 6.7 reproduced with permission of the Charles family.

Following Frank Charlie's death in April 1953, his family permitted Borden and his students to excavate the floor of the old longhouse.⁴⁵⁸ The Charlie house, along with a longhouse last occupied by Basil Point and his family were the last two remaining traditional cedar-plank houses on the reserve (they had been two in a long row of longhouses built parallel to the river in the Musqueam village of *s̓cəłexʷ*). The other longhouses on the reserve were dismantled in the 1930s because they were deemed a fire hazard by the Vancouver City Health Department.⁴⁵⁹ Around 1900, Frank Charlie had renovated the house, converting the original sleeping platforms to seating more

⁴⁵⁸ Frank Charlie passed away on April 12, 1953, at ninety-nine years of age. Borden conducted the excavations in 1956 and 1957. Charles E. Borden, "Musqueam East," field book, Laboratory of Archeology, UBC.

⁴⁵⁹ Dominic Point, personal communication in December 1996.

conducive to large winter ceremonial gatherings, and, as noted by Borden in the quote above, reoriented the entranceway from the river to the road. In more recent years, the house was used as storage for old farming, fishing, and domestic equipment.⁴⁶⁰ Early in the 1950s, Borden excavated in the area (known by the Borden designation as DhRt 2, Musqueam East) but found the midden deposits too heavily disturbed, the result of plowing and cultivation by Chinese tenant farmers who, since the early 1900s, leased land from Musqueam families. Borden saw in Frank Charlie's longhouse a sanctuary of land and time, safeguarded from the destructive effects of farming, housing construction, and modern life: "It was a dirt floor and over the centuries the occupational debris accumulated, and you had a long history of the occupation of that house."⁴⁶¹ Excavations conducted in the interior of the house provided Borden's students with undisturbed evidence of chronological time.

Over the years Charles Borden and his students continued their work at Musqueam, both collecting artifacts from the surface of the cultivated lands of the Chinese market gardens and conducting more systematic excavations on undisturbed sites, such as the Charlie house. In October 1967, when Borden learned of a new housing development planned for the reserve, he received permission from the chief to excavate a midden that would be destroyed by the construction.⁴⁶² The proposed development

⁴⁶⁰ Michelle Dianne Poulsen, "Making Choices: Examining Musqueam Agency at Stselax Village During the Post-Contact Period (MA thesis, University of British Columbia, 2005), 4. Poulsen analyzed the objects collected from the Charles' house, which had remained packed in boxes at UBC's Laboratory of Archaeology since Borden's work in the 1950s. See also the 1957 unpublished student reports on file at the lab, including: Richard Little, "Archaeological Investigations at Tselax Village, Musqueam Indian Reserve, Vancouver BC, 1956-57"; Mary M. Leeson, "Archaeological Investigations at Tselax Village, Musqueam Reserve, Vancouver, BC"; and Norman Gilles, "Archaeological Investigations at Stselax Village, Musqueam East."

⁴⁶¹ Williams, "Interviews with Dr. Charles E. Borden," 40.

⁴⁶² This site was classified under the Borden system as DhRt 3, Old Musqueam.

would reconfigure the reserve landscape -- the homes and family lots that were dispersed over the approximately 420 acres of lands, were to be consolidated in a new subdivision of two-story homes, grass yards, and paved and named streets. Part of the incentive for creating a new residential subdivision for Musqueam families was to present a progressive and modern public face to non-Native guests who were increasingly visiting the reserve.⁴⁶³ In addition to the material benefits of refurbished housing such as improved plumbing and electricity, larger domestic spaces, and proximity to others, the development, it was hoped, would present a forward-looking, affluent community to outsiders. It is also important to note the reserve re-development included the construction of high-end housing to be made available to non-Aboriginal residents through long-term lease. The consolidation of community housing to the eastern half of the reserve, opened up reserve land for residential leases to outsiders, providing a much-needed source of income for community programs.

Borden discovered that, just as industrial development elsewhere in the province threatened archaeological resources, within Indian Reserves, Band-initiated projects sometimes put archaeological resources at risk. Reserve lands leased to Chinese farmers from 1913 to the 1980s provided a necessary monthly source of income for Musqueam families.⁴⁶⁴ However, as indicated, the work of the lease-holders, who cleared, plowed, and farmed plots of fertile land for their market gardens, disturbed vast shell middens. On the morning of February 3, 1953, Borden returned to his excavation to find his trench “seriously disturbed.” The farmer Sam Lee had paid Johnny Grant three dollars for a

⁴⁶³ Musqueam Band Council Minutes, 1967, MIBA.

⁴⁶⁴ “Correspondence regarding the Leasing of Lands on the Musqueam Indian Reserve 2 to some Chinese People, 1911-1925,” RG10 vol. 8089 file 987/32-4-2-2 pt. 1, National Archives of Canada.

truckload of midden material, to use as fertilizer. Borden reprimanded Tony Point, who assisted with the removal of the soil: "On being informed...that they had severely interfered with our work, he expressed regret, and promised that...he would see to it that our work was not interfered with any further."⁴⁶⁵ In relation to a housing project of the 1970s, John H. Schroeder, the Band's archaeological consultant, explained to Borden, "Due to our future expansion of the residential area, I am sorry to have to inform you that Chief and Council have decided that we can only put aside [for archaeological excavations] this site until August 1977. At that time we have to build a single family home on that site." Schroeder added, "We are running out of space to build any future Band housing."⁴⁶⁶ While the Musqueam supported Borden's work, in some cases, it was difficult to reconcile reserving lots for archaeological excavation with the serious shortage of land for housing and other much-needed economic projects.

Also, even though Charles E. Borden was convinced of the scientific value of archaeological research, he sometimes believed that Aboriginal peoples did not always have the same appreciation of its worth. As Andrew C. Charles recalled, Musqueam people expressed "very little interest" in formal archaeology at the time of the first Borden excavations at Marpole.⁴⁶⁷ The late Dominic Point often spoke about not realizing, as a child, the archaeological value of such objects, including human skulls, which were thought to belong to northern raiders.⁴⁶⁸ In relation to evidence of these raids, the late Vincent Stogan noted in 1994, "No matter where we dig around here in our

⁴⁶⁵ Charles E. Borden, "Musqueam East, Field Notes," unpublished field book dated October 1951 – April 1955, entry for 3 February 1953, Archaeology Lab, UBC.

⁴⁶⁶ John H. Schroeder, Arch. Consultant, Musqueam Indian Band to Dr. Charles E. Borden, 20 May 1976, Charles E. Borden Papers, box 12, file 8, UBCA.

⁴⁶⁷ Andrew C. Charles, interview conducted by author, Musqueam/Vancouver, 20 March 2005.

⁴⁶⁸ The late Dominic Point, personal communication, 1996.

territory, even around UBC, artifacts and bones are always found. I kind of believe that wherever they were killed is where they were buried. There are bones found around the city of Vancouver, it may have been a battleground.”⁴⁶⁹ When Borden found a human skull among rubbish in a bush, Alex Peters explained that the burial area for people from mali and sc̓əlex^w (two villages at Musqueam) were in the Musqueam Northeast area and that this skull likely belonged to northern raiders, who in the last century raided Musqueam every couple of weeks. He explained to Borden that the river’s edge was lined with posts displaying their enemy’s skulls to deter these raiders.⁴⁷⁰ Borden perceived that differences in appreciation also applied to “ethnographic” objects. During a discussion with the elder Frank Charlie in 1952, Borden spied an old coiled basket in front of Charlie’s home, dug it out, dusted it off, and gave it to Charlie saying “it was nice and he should take care of it.” Frank Charlie, however, did not want the basket made by his wife a long time ago and returned it to Borden.⁴⁷¹ While Borden saw an “ethnographic” object to be preserved and treasured on principle, Charlie, in this instance, saw something that was no longer useful. The degree to which western intrusions and stereotypes influenced indigenous interpretations of archaeological sites and objects is difficult to untangle. What is clear, however, is that material culture, including human skulls from northern raiders, ancient objects, and old baskets, was part of daily life and not every object was of equal importance or value.

⁴⁶⁹ Peter Kulchyski, Don McCaskill, and David Newhouse, *In the Word of the Elders: Aboriginal Cultures in Transition* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press), 453.

⁴⁷⁰ Charles E. Borden, “Musqueam East, Field Notes,” field book dated October 1951 – April 1955, entry for 19 March 1952, Laboratory of Archaeology, UBC.

⁴⁷¹ Charles E. Borden, “Musqueam East, Field Notes,” field book dated October 1951 – April 1955, Archaeology Lab, UBC.

This does not mean that Aboriginal people did not value so-called “archaeological” or “ethnographic” objects. Furthermore, appreciation for archaeological research and interest in cultural objects are two different things. Many families selectively treasured ancient cultural objects in their own private collections. In addition, Aboriginal people from across British Columbia were attuned to the accelerating value of such objects in the museum and collector’s economy -- to their “orbits of value,” of which Douglas Cole spoke. For example, when a burial mound rich with cultural objects and human skeletal remains was uncovered by Sushwap community members during routine road maintenance on their reserve in 1960, the *Vancouver Sun* reported, “Whatever it was they found, the Indians were soon taking it home, giving it away -- or in some cases -- selling it to souvenir hunters who flocked to the diggings.”⁴⁷² In the Sushwap’s alleged mistreatment of “artifacts” and their willingness to sell “provincial” heritage, the press saw a community who had “forgotten” (or did not care to remember) their past. The popular assumption was that when Aboriginal people sold cultural heritage they demeaned it, an attitude that ignored that objects were commodified in western museum and collecting contexts.

The Musqueam and other First Nations have adopted archaeological methods and museum practices for their own purposes. As early as 1936, while he was archaeologist at the National Museum of Canada, Harlan I. Smith wrote that the Musqueam were not interested in selling their “prized possession,” the stone sculpture qeysca:m, as they

⁴⁷² The alleged pillaging was stopped only when the Kamloops Indian Agent, assisted by a police officer, warned the Sushwap that the artifacts were the property of the province. “Burial Mound a Mystery: Shuswap Indians Unearth Relics of Forgotten Past,” *Vancouver Sun*, 10 June 1960, Charles Hill-Tout Papers, file BXV, part b, Vancouver Museum. This incident is also cited in West, “Saving and Naming the Garbage,” 37.

planned to build a museum of their own on the site of the old longhouse.⁴⁷³ The community goal of having their own museum to exhibit “Musqueam treasures” continued to animate Musqueam interest in archaeology and, in the 1970s, the community asked Borden to conduct further excavations on the reserve with the retrieved objects to be held in trust by the University of British Columbia’s Laboratory of Archaeology until their museum could be realized.⁴⁷⁴ Nearly forty year later, in 1972, the Musqueam Band Council asked Borden to organize a salvage project prior to a new housing development on the northeast section of the reserve. Borden reported that the Musqueam project “was highly successful [and] has aroused great interest among the Musqueam Band members, as well as among Indians on other reserves. What is especially important, I think, is the demonstration that we are doing this not for our own gain, but as the result of a request which has come *from them* and as part of the Museum Project *conceived by them*.”⁴⁷⁵ The Musqueam, however, were responding to the possibility that ancient cultural objects be incorporated into their larger goals, especially the construction of a community museum.

Historian Benedict Anderson has argued that the census, the map, and the museum are important visible articulations of imperial power and cultural authority: “They profoundly shaped the way in which the colonial state imagined its dominion -- the nature of the human beings it ruled, the geography of its domain, and the legitimacy of its

⁴⁷³“The Musqueam Stone,” n.d. Harlan I Smith Collection, box 9, file 7, p. 15, Canadian Museum of Civilization Archives (CMCA).

⁴⁷⁴ [Charles E. Borden], “Display of Perishables from MuNE for Official Opening of UBC Anthropology Museum,” undated notes, Charles E. Borden Papers, box 24, file 15, UBCA.

⁴⁷⁵ Charles E. Borden to Roscoe Wilmeth, Archaeological Survey Canada, 27 December 1972, Charles E. Borden Papers, box 12, file 9, UBCA. See also Charles E. Borden and David Archer, “Archaeological Salvage at Musqueam Northeast (DhRt 4), 1973,” March 1974, unpublished report in Charles E. Borden and David Archer, 1973, MS 959, CMCA; and “Enough Artifacts, in Fact, to Fill a Powerhouse,” *Vancouver Sun*, 6 July 1972.

ancestry.”⁴⁷⁶ Certainly, we could theorize that the western practices of census taking, map making, and museum building have assisted in the formulation of legal, anthropological, and pseudo-scientific knowledges about Aboriginal peoples. In the early twentieth century, Indian Agents made detailed Band membership lists that restricted peoples’ residency to a single reserve, identified chiefs, and organized villages into nuclear families with a single male head. Since the late nineteenth century, as we have seen, archaeologists and anthropologists have mapped out North America into distinct cultural areas and chronological cultural phases. Museums, too, have contributed to the circulation of knowledge about Aboriginal people and present the nation-state as ancient and legitimate. The dominant museum story regarding Aboriginal people, supported (at least in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries) by pseudo-scientific anthropological discourse, has been an evolutionary narrative that constructed colonized people with inferior cultural traditions to those of their western colonizers.

Anderson also notes that post-colonial states inherit from their former colonial rulers these forms of political museumizing. Similarly, we can trace how Aboriginal peoples in Canada have drawn upon western cultural forms in their own nation-building projects. The more recent appropriation of the western institution of the museum by First Nations has shown very clearly that Aboriginal people have other ways of organizing the world, that they have other priorities, and that there are other ways of presenting a corporate identity. The museum is the usual place for a nation to display its material culture, and today it is where we look for identity as defined by culture. As James Clifford notes, “In a global context where collective identity is increasingly represented

⁴⁷⁶ Benedict Anderson, *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism* (London: Verso, 1991), 163-164.

by having a culture (a distinctive way of life, tradition, form of art or craft), museums make sense.”⁴⁷⁷ Attuned to the value that western society placed on archaeological materials in developing their narratives of dispossession, the Musqueam hoped to put these same objects to use in their own stories of identity, cultural continuity, and territorial occupation.

Reclamation Culture to Nationalism

Charles E. Borden described a series of distinctive archaeological cultural phases for the Lower Fraser River and Lower Mainland region. He conceptualized discrete and bounded (temporally and spatially) regional “cultures.” For archaeologists today, the “Marpole Culture” (which is identified as existing between 450 B.C. and 500 A.D.) continues to describe the oldest “cultural phase” that exhibits similar material characteristics associated with Coast Salish peoples, including large villages, multi-family dwellings, and evidence of art.⁴⁷⁸ However, Borden often attributed transformations from one cultural phase to the next to the migration of peoples into the area and the diffusion of ideas from other places, not to a process of internal development. Seen in this light, Borden was part of an academic culture that oversaw the production of archaeological knowledge and ascribed meanings to archaeological finds that were often at odds with indigenous histories. At the same time, Borden’s work on the Musqueam Indian Reserve signified an important move towards an anti-colonial or

⁴⁷⁷ James Clifford, “Museums as Contact Zones,” in *Routes: Travel and Translation in the Late Twentieth Century* (Cambridge MA: Harvard University Press, 1997); and James Clifford, “Four Northwest Coast Museums: Travel Reflections,” in *Exhibiting Cultures: The Poetics and Politics of Museum Display*, ed. Ivan Karp and Stephen D. Lavine (Washington, DC: Smithsonian Institution Press, 1991): 212-254.

⁴⁷⁸ Donald H. Mitchell, “Archaeology of the Gulf of Georgia Area, and Natural Region and its Cultural Types,” *Syesis* vol. 4, no. 1 (1971); and Burley, *Marpole*.

reclamation culture. Eventually, Borden modified his initial position and acknowledged that cultural change could be the result of local innovation.⁴⁷⁹

But indigenous re-appropriation of archaeological discourses was not just part of a reclamation culture; it was closely linked to creating a cohesive community identity to present to outsiders. In other words, when under the control of First Nations communities, archaeology, also went hand-in-hand with nation building. In relation to the Shuswap burial mound referred to above, George Manuel, president of the North American Indian Brotherhood, outlined in 1962 his plans to turn the burial mound into “a memorial to the Shuswap people, with some landscaping and some kind of monument, possibly a huge rock with a suitable inscription.”⁴⁸⁰ Similarly, the Musqueam Council agreed to mark a lot on the reserve, “to the memory of our ancestors of long ago.” A proposed plaque was to read:

Indian youths from Musqueam excavating in co-operation with archaeologists from the University of British Columbia found on this spot hunting and fishing gear, basketry, cordage and other evidence of Indian arts, crafts and the like 3,000 years ago. For this reason the Indians of Musqueam resolved to set aside this lot in perpetuity as a monument to their ancient cultural heritage. Musqueam May 17, 1976.⁴⁸¹

Just as the National Historic Sites and Monuments Board installed commemorative plaques at sites deemed of importance in the construction of nationalist history (including intentionally situating plaques away from actual sites, as in the case of the

⁴⁷⁹ Ann Steveston, *Changing Tides: The Development of Archaeology in B.C.'s Fraser Delta*, Museum Notes No. 13 (Vancouver: UBC Museum of Anthropology, 1985), 8.

⁴⁸⁰ George Manuel, President to Dr. Charles E. Borden, 24 May 1962, Charles E. Borden Papers, UBCA.

⁴⁸¹ “To the Memory of Our Ancestors of Long Ago,” typewritten notes, 17 May 1976, Charles E. Borden Papers, box 24, file 15, UBCA.

Great Fraser Midden plaque), First Nations adopted (or planned to adopt) the strategy of marking specific places to re-inscribe an indigenous and sacred history on the landscape.

The Musqueam also put archaeological imagery to use in the construction of nationalistic and corporate identity. As any nation, the Musqueam and other indigenous communities consist of a diverse group of individuals holding multiple opinions, family connections, and histories who, nonetheless, are engaged in the ongoing articulation of a cohesive public identity. In the 1970s, the Band administration developed their first “logo” to represent the community in formal correspondence. Andrew C. Charles, who at the time was Band secretary, recalls, “There were a number of suggestions made about what should appear as our letterhead -- salmon, or a spear, or whatever. I felt that the arrowhead would display more strength than the others so I had made a decision to take that on. I did the rough drawing and Susan Point did the final drawing.”⁴⁸²



Figure 6.8: Musqueam Letterhead was used until the early 1990s, when it was replaced with a new Susan Point design incorporating a projectile point, but highlighting Musqueam fisheries.

⁴⁸² Andrew C. Charles, interview conducted by author, Musqueam/Vancouver, 20 March 2005.

The letterhead incorporated an arrowhead, a symbol intimately familiar to non-Native audiences as representing the long vanished indigenous past. Musqueam artist Susan Point rendered the arrowhead in a realistic, documentary style reminiscent of archaeological drawings. The juxtaposition of this drawing with the word "Musqueam" presented a visual narrative of strength and survival in response to the previous decades' emphasis on cultural disintegration and decline. Thus, the image inverted the archaeological discourses of the last century that worked to disassociate Musqueam from their land and contributed to a version of community history that, it was hoped, would propel recognition of territorial ownership and help redefine state policy.⁴⁸³ It was no coincidence that the development of emblematic symbols, reserve excavations, cultural revitalization, and renewed community-based research into Aboriginal rights and title issues occurred in the same period. By June 1976, the Musqueam formally presented a declaration of Aboriginal rights to Canada's Minister of Indian Affairs, which delineated a traditional territory occupied by Musqueam ancestors since "time immemorial." (See Appendix III).

The archaeological practices of preserving, cataloguing, dating, and analyzing objects -- practices which could be viewed as a part of the colonialist modes of power -- were turned to the important task of settling long-standing grievances regarding the public and legal recognition of Aboriginal rights and title. Archaeological excavation on the reserve was closely related to these struggles. The Musqueam's comprehensive land claim, submitted to the federal government in 1984, includes an academic archaeological

⁴⁸³ Art historian Rosalind Morris finds that the Aboriginal-produced films of the 1960s to 1980s were "unabashed attempts to promulgate a different version of aboriginal cultures and histories, a version that might then form a basis for redefined state policy." See Morris, *New Worlds*, 199.

history of the Lower Mainland, but emphasizes an eight-thousand-year history of cultural evolution and continuity. The land claim notes that instead of cultural disruption, Charles E. Borden's archaeological work documented "the uninterrupted development of the Central Coast Salish 'cultures' found in the Strait of Georgia area at contact."⁴⁸⁴

Over time, the Musqueam have increasingly appropriated archaeological methods and museum practices for their own community, land claims, and public education goals. And, it is important to keep in mind that children figured prominently in Musqueam's history of archaeology. Archaeology was not solely about the past, but much like Coast Salish genealogical history, was about situating contemporary youth in a continuum of past, present, and future. Borden's own photographs of Musqueam children participating in the digs challenge the representation of archaeology as exclusively the domain of scientists and professionals, and points to the increasing influence of First Nations on archaeological practice and policy. It is quite possible that because Borden was not formally educated as an archaeologist, and therefore was not constrained by professional training that generally frowned upon collaboration with ancestral communities, he was free to develop the approach that he did in the province.⁴⁸⁵ There is a stark contrast between archaeological scientific discourses produced in formal academic reports and the way indigenous communities utilized cultural objects for educational and land claims purposes. This alignment of archaeological research and community education continues to forge a resilient partnership as Terry Point explains in relation to the Marpole Midden: "It is one of the largest village sites Musqueam have occupied, and it is the most studied by archeologists. For me as a Musqueam person, it is significant to teach our youth about

⁴⁸⁴ Musqueam Indian Band, "Musqueam Comprehensive Land Claim," 13.

⁴⁸⁵ Thanks to Michael Blake for pointing this out.

a physical history of our people through the material found at the Marpole site.”⁴⁸⁶ In this way, for the Musqueam, archaeology is linked to the reinforcement of community pride, cultural tenacity, and the ongoing battle to regain political autonomy.



Figure 6.9: An archaeologist explains the finds from a 1972 excavation on the Musqueam Reserve (DhRt4) to Musqueam children.⁴⁸⁷ Laboratory of Archaeology, UBC.

⁴⁸⁶ Terry Point, quoted in “Site to Sight: Imagining the Sacred,” exhibit at The Museum of Anthropology, University of British Columbia, 2004 - 2005.

⁴⁸⁷ Charles E. Borden and David Archer, “Archaeological Rescue at Musueam Northeast (Dhrt4),” research paper, 1973, MS 888, CMCA.

CHAPTER SEVEN

Conclusion

In October 2004, the Musqueam First Nation argued in the British Columbia Court of Appeal that the provincial government arranged to sell the University Golf Course adjacent to the University of British Columbia at the very time the government was sitting with the Band at the treaty table -- an act of bad faith. The Musqueam claimed that archaeological evidence, including old village sites, hunting trails, and shell middens, showed that their ancestors traditionally occupied the area where the golf course was situated. In the courtroom, archaeological evidence was used to highlight the unified identity of the Musqueam First Nation. The evidence linked a contemporary bounded group of indigenous people -- Musqueam Indian Band members -- with people from the past who likely would not have considered themselves in all times and places as exclusively "Musqueam," nor exclusive residents of a single village. Instead, these people may have framed their identity in terms of social and cultural relationships among peoples, as members of webs of interconnected families and alliances that reached beyond village boundaries to a much larger geographical, cultural, and spiritual space. During the case, Madam Justice Southin noted that the Marpole Midden was buried beneath the Fraser Arms Hotel, and added, "There seems to be little doubt...that the Musqueam had village sites all over this place...There is plenty of evidence on the ground. After all, they weren't going to the Safeway to get their groceries."⁴⁸⁸ At the

⁴⁸⁸ "B.C. Golf Course Constructed on Band Land, Court Hears," *Globe and Mail*, circa October 2004, newspaper clipping in the collection of Musqueam Indian Band Archives. *Musqueam Indian Band v. British Columbia* (Minister of Sustainable Resource Management) [2005] 2 C.N.L.R. 212 (B.C.C.A.).

outset of the twenty-first century, the claim that middens, gravesites, and ancient cultural objects were evidence of long occupation and ownership found an attentive audience.

The court acknowledged Musqueam's connections to *čəsna:m*.

Despite the court's acceptance of archaeological evidence in this particular instance, the association of British Columbia First Nations with ancient sites or burial grounds is not automatic. In some cases, members of non-Aboriginal society continue to disregard (or fail to recognize) burial sites found outside demarcated Indian Reserve cemeteries. For example, while working for the Sechelt First Nation in the summer of 2003, archaeologist Peter Merchant found human skeletal remains taken from a burial cave near the old village site of Hunaechin, located at the head of Jervis Inlet. The remains had been burned and left scattered, with beer bottles, in an extinguished campfire near the rock crevice. When it was discovered that tree-planters working in the area were responsible for the desecration, the Sechelt community threatened to sue the forestry company that held the timber license for the area. Instead, the company "compensated" the Sechelt by paying for reburial and providing further financial support for community programming. Importantly, the Sechelt organized what they called a "reconciliation ceremony," involving elders, community members, representatives from other First Nations communities, the tree-planters, logging company bureaucrats, and other invited guests. The ceremony simultaneously reasserted Sechelt ownership of the area, redefined cultural protocol regarding reburial, and reconstituted economic relations with the company.

Today, many First Nations in British Columbia face the unrelenting pressures of urbanization and resource extraction within their territories. British Columbia's non-Aboriginal society, however, still tends to view the landscape in terms of land to be developed and natural resources, including timber, mining, oil and gas, and fish, to be extracted. The inability to resolve longstanding disputes with First Nations in the province represents "opportunities lost," as Premier Gordon Campbell told the provincial legislature in May 2006.⁴⁸⁹ Certainly, in contemporary treaty negotiations under the B.C. Treaty Process, the government's desire that land claims (whether pursued through injunctions, litigation, or blockades) no longer interfere with the economy (a sentiment that government representatives usually refer to as "certainty") reflects this emphasis on paving the way for economic development and presumed prosperity. And while many First Nations certainly want to participate in the modern industrial and resource economy, they understand the relationship between land, people, culture, and history differently. Aboriginal territory represents a cultural landscape that comprises much more than resources to be exploited. Territories include the histories, stories, memories, sacred and spiritual places, trails, and burial grounds that link people to deceased ancestors and to the unborn generations of the future. Thus, in the courtroom and beyond, the Musqueam and other indigenous communities believe that cultural objects and human skeletal remains removed from archaeological sites throughout the province offer indisputable physical evidence that people have lived in their territories for thousands of years.

⁴⁸⁹ Stephen Hume, "Some Words about Sacred Grounds," *Vancouver Sun*, 31 May 2006.

Cultural objects, then, are more than material evidence of use and occupation at a specific location. They embody rights and responsibilities linking kin across generations.⁴⁹⁰

In British Columbia today, these disparate views of the landscape often come into conflict. As we have seen, historical archaeological excavations of indigenous gravesites, such as those conducted in the late nineteenth century by Harlan I. Smith and the American Museum of Natural History and in the early twentieth century by Charles Hill-Tout and the Vancouver City Museum, reveal conflicting western and indigenous views about place. Yet, we should not assume that these attitudes or conflicts are restricted to the past. Resource extraction, urbanization, and development continue to “bump up against First Nations heritage.”⁴⁹¹ In May 2006, the expansion of Port Hardy’s sewage treatment plant, realized without consulting the Queackar-Komoyue First Nation, disturbed an ancient gravesite and midden. In the spring of 2006, the Tseycum First Nation of Saanich vehemently protested the development of Poet’s Cove Resort on Pender Island and the desecration of a village site. A newspaper reporter described the anger Band counselor Vern Jacks Jr. felt on discovering that the development had proceeded despite the developer’s assurances that no digging would occur without Band supervision: “When Vern Jr. walked around back of the project, he found huge mounds of unearthed midden, around 400 truck loads of material. He could see bone fragments in the pile. He could feel his ancestors.”⁴⁹²

⁴⁹⁰ See for example, David M. Schaepe, “Ancestral Relations with the Material Past,” in *A Stó:lō - Coast Salish Historical Atlas*, ed. Keith Thor Carlson (Vancouver: Douglas and McIntyre, Seattle: University of Washington Press, and Chilliwack: Stó:lō Heritage Trust, 2001), 34.

⁴⁹¹ Karen Gram, “Urban Growth Bumps Native Heritage,” *Vancouver Sun*, 19 May 2006.

⁴⁹² Gram, “Urban Growth.” In relation to the Jack’s efforts to repatriate ancestors who were collected by Harlan I Smith and the American Museum of Natural History in the late 1800s, see “Tseycum First Nation Searches for Lost Ancestors,” *Martlett*, 22 March 2006.

Such blatant disregard for the sacredness of human remains seems also to have been informed by the kinds of dichotomies I have discussed throughout this thesis.

Through the processes of excavation, collection, cataloguing, and display, ancestors were discursively transformed into “skeletal remains” or “specimens,” ancient cultural objects into “artifacts” and “assemblages,” houseposts into “ethnographic objects,” and ancient villages or burial grounds into “archaeological sites.” This supposedly neutral scientific terminology was, in turn, picked up in the popular discourse of settler society and used to reinforce the view that artifacts, skeletal remains, and archaeological sites were just another “natural resource” and, although associated with indigenous peoples, available for extraction and appropriation. These processes served to sever or distance Aboriginal people not only from their territorial lands, but also from their cultural and historical heritage. This study suggests that the meanings produced by museum, anthropological, and archaeological practices of the late nineteenth and the twentieth centuries are not limited to those respective disciplines or time periods, but have taken on lives of their own.

Tasal Asad argues that the role of archaeology and anthropology in colonialism was relatively unimportant in maintaining structures of colonial or imperial domination. Instead, colonialism provided the context for anthropological research.⁴⁹³ To be sure, it is more difficult to describe archaeology as a mode of dispossession in the same manner as land alienation through European settlement, resource extraction, and the establishment of Indian Reserves, which is the usual argument. Also, archaeological and ethnographic

⁴⁹³ Talal Asad, “From the History of Colonial Anthropology to the Anthropology of Western Hegemony,” in *Colonial Situations: Essays on the Contextualization of Ethnographic Knowledge*, vol. 7, *History of Anthropology*, ed. George W. Stocking Jr. (Wisconsin: University of Wisconsin Press, 1991), 314-324.

research just does not seem as oppressive as, for example, the *Indian Act*'s inherent gender discrimination, which, as Bonita Lawrence has forcefully argued, fractured indigenous communities and identities.⁴⁹⁴ However, I have suggested that, just as western settlement and legal processes dispossessed Aboriginal peoples of their territories, so too did the processes of archaeological and anthropological research. At the same time, settler discourses were not always hegemonic or consistent, as we saw from the analysis of divergent museum and media interpretations of the Vancouver City Museum's skull reconstructions in the 1930s. Today, alongside non-Aboriginal celebrations of indigenous culture and heritage in art galleries, museums, and even airports (as well as through film, theatre, sports events, and cultural festivals) stands ongoing discrimination, racism, inequality, and dispossession.⁴⁹⁵ As Nicholas Thomas writes, "Sovereignty and dispossession, inclusion and exclusion, affirmation and denigration: the realities of cultural and political life in these settler societies are always somewhere in the muddy and uncertain no-man's-land between these contradictory terms."⁴⁹⁶ It is clear that these kinds of tensions -- between the celebration and oppression of indigenous culture -- persist in Canada.

This dissertation has only touched on the subject of how Aboriginal peoples of the Pacific Northwest, and the Musqueam in particular, have navigated the colonialist

⁴⁹⁴ Bonita Lawrence, *"Real" Indians and Others: Mixed-Blood Urban Native Peoples and Indigenous Nationhood* (Vancouver: University of British Columbia Press, 2004).

⁴⁹⁵ Four large weavings by Gina Grant, Helen Calbreath, Krista Point, Robyn Sparrow, and Debra Sparrow, along with monumental carvings of a spindle whorl and two welcome figures by Susan Point, greet people at the international arrivals terminal of Vancouver's airport as travelers simultaneously enter Musqueam territory, British Columbia, the Northwest Coast, and Canada. In relation to these tensions, see Barbara Kirshenblatt-Gimblett, *Destination Culture: Tourisms, Museums, and Heritage* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1998).

⁴⁹⁶ Nicholas Thomas, *Possessions: Indigenous Art/Colonial Culture* (New York: Thames and Hudson, 1999), 279.

practices of archaeological and anthropological classification and engaged in collaborations that are helpful to them. The research of Harlan I. Smith, Charles Hill-Tout, and Charles E. Borden led to varied theories regarding the racial and cultural identity of the people who lived in the Lower Fraser Delta long ago. Certainly, for Charles Hill-Tout and his colleagues in the 1920s and 1930s at the Vancouver City Museum, skeletal remains and cultural objects revealed “indisputable evidence of the existence of a primitive people here in ages long gone by.”⁴⁹⁷ At a time when elite white Vancouverites grappled with the physical presence of Aboriginal peoples, reserves, and relics within the city’s boundaries, the research by Hill-Tout and the museum contributed to the notion that the indigenous people of the Fraser Delta were not the area’s first residents. I have described the effect of this theory as a kind of distancing (in both time and space) of Aboriginal people from their past -- a discourse that acknowledged a more recent connection to place, but did not credit a lengthy uninterrupted history of residency or ownership. Such distance was significant, for among other injustices, it essentially ensured, intentionally or not, that Aboriginal claims to land and belonging would not overwrite the Euro-Canadian position. Local settler culture was an extension of a colonial culture that simultaneously distanced contemporary indigenous people from the past and situated authentic Aboriginal people in the past. To be sure, Aboriginal people were denied access to modernity, but they were also denied the history and ownership of village and burial sites that had not been established as Indian Reserves.

What happened to these civic narratives of dispossession when, in the second half of the twentieth century, Aboriginal people intervened and archaeological research took

⁴⁹⁷ Munro St. John, “Whence Came the North American Indian?” *Illustrated London News*, 29 December 1934.

place on Indian Reserves? In relation to the Marpole Midden and other sites of the Fraser Delta, Charles E. Borden posited a chronology of cultural phases and proposed that changes in culture were sometimes the result of disruption through population migration rather than indigenous innovation.⁴⁹⁸ As such, he formed part of an institutionalized academic culture that controlled the production of archaeological knowledge and ascribed to archaeological finds meanings that were often at odds with indigenous histories.⁴⁹⁹ However, when viewed in the context of his lengthy relationship with the Musqueam community, Borden's work marks an important shift towards an anti-colonial or reclamation culture. While Borden's main concern was to increase public awareness of the importance of archaeological sites to provincial heritage, he also recognized that First Nations had an interest in formal archaeological research. Thus, his excavations on the Musqueam Indian Reserve mark an important turning point in the colonial culture of archaeology, for it recognized connections between contemporary peoples and those who came before.

I have focused on the Musqueam, who, being an urban community, have been especially subjected to the colonial forces of dispossession. By the late 1800s, the Aboriginal communities of Vancouver's Lower Mainland "had been allocated small reserves where, their numbers much reduced and their voices unheard, they lived at the margins of a non-Native world."⁵⁰⁰ The Musqueam responded creatively to this imposed invisibility and marginalization, and maintained their identity in spite of being

⁴⁹⁸ Davis V. Burley, *Marpole: Anthropological Reconstructions of a Prehistoric Northwest Coast Culture Type* (Burnaby, BC: Department of Archaeology, Simon Fraser University, 1980), 8-10.

⁴⁹⁹ For an articulation of this view, see Robert Gerard West, "Saving and Naming the Garbage: Charles E. Borden and the Making of B.C. Prehistory, 1945-1960" (MA thesis, Department of History, University of British Columbia, 1995).

⁵⁰⁰ Cole R. Harris, "The Lower Mainland, 1820-81," in *Vancouver and Its Region*, ed. Graeme Wynn and Timothy Oke (Vancouver: University of British Columbia Press, 1992), 38.

“swallowed,” as Chief Delbert Guerin describes it, by the major metropolis of Vancouver.⁵⁰¹ The association, now accepted, of the Marpole Midden with the Musqueam is due to recent Musqueam intervention, their assertions that the place is an ancestral village, increasing non-Native recognition that oral history provides legitimate evidence about the past, and by the Band’s purchase of the site in the early 1990s. This association also grew from the larger cultural and political context in British Columbia, and from the current policy of the province’s Archaeological Sites Board which requires consultation with those First Nations who express interest in a particular site. Thus, First Nation affiliation is reaffirmed through various political processes so that today, Aboriginal claims in themselves (such as submissions to the BC Treaty Process) have become a leading indicator, in the eyes of non-Natives, of affiliation to a particular place.

Many scholars have pointed out that attempts to track through millennia bounded, enduring groups, whether these are defined by race, culture, ethnicity, or nation, are bound to fail.⁵⁰² Even over shorter periods of time, cultural theorists are increasingly challenging the notion that identity is bounded in nation or culture, something possessed by a people; instead they theorize that identity is flexible, shifting, and relational. For example, Nicholas Thomas suggests, in relation to Maori history, “We need to imagine ourselves through relations rather than identities, not because this is the way things might or should be, but because this is the way they are and have been.”⁵⁰³ Furthermore, in

⁵⁰¹ Chief Delbert Guerin, “Preliminary Statement of a General Claim, Respecting and Arising from the Aboriginal Rights of the Musqueam Indians,” 22 September 1977, Musqueam Indian Band Archives.

⁵⁰² David Hurst Thomas, *Skull Wars: Kennewick Man, Archaeology, and the Battle for Native American Identity* (New York: Basic Books, 2000), 232; and James Clifford, “Identity in Mashpee,” in *The Predicament of Culture: Twentieth Century Ethnography, Literature, and Art* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1988).

⁵⁰³ Thomas, *Possessions*, 280. Similarly, Alexandra Harmon explains that instead of tracing a distinct, enduring identity, “a history of Indians like the Suquamish could and should be a chronicle of change over

contemporary legal struggles, the requirement that a group must prove “exclusive occupation” in 1846 of a given territory (the legally identified date of the assertion of effective British sovereignty in British Columbia) and establish the “cultural affiliation” of this bounded group with a modern-day Indian Band or First Nation, places an unrealistic burden on contemporary communities.

Today, many First Nations in British Columbia are negotiating control over the care of cultural objects and human remains in museum collections, and some have secured repatriation of human skeletal remains for reburial.⁵⁰⁴ Recently, in a highly publicized repatriation, the Haida First Nation reclaimed from the Canadian Museum of Civilization, the American Museum of Natural History, and Chicago’s Field Museum the remains of over 350 Haida ancestors for reburial in their cemeteries at Skidegate and Old Masset.⁵⁰⁵ The efforts of the Haida’s repatriation committee are part of a spiritual, cultural, and political process. Recognition of a contemporary Indian Band’s or First Nation’s affiliation with ancient human remains constitutes forceful public statements about belonging and territorial ownership. This is an especially contentious issue for the Musqueam, given the political geography of British Columbia’s Lower Mainland, where at least seven First Nations communities formally claim traditional territory through the current B.C. Treaty Process. There remains for some institutions a question as to which First Nations community should be the recipient of returned skeletal remains. Just as

time.” Alexandra Harmon, *Indians in the Making: Ethnic Relations and Indian Identities around Puget Sound* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1998), 2-3.

⁵⁰⁴ Miriam Clavir, *Preserving What is Valued: Museums, Conservation, and First Nations* (Vancouver: University of British Columbia Press, 2002).

⁵⁰⁵ Ken Macqueen, “West Coast Renaissance: The People of Haida Gwaii are Reclaiming Their Past and Fighting to Control Their Future,” *Macleans*, 20 October 2003, www.macleans.ca/topstories/canada/article.jsp?content=20031020_67420_67420, site accessed 15 October 2006.

Indian Reserves are not a complete representation of a First Nation's interest in land, however, objects and human remains taken from specific sites are not solely evidence of site-specific land use and occupancy. According to Howard E. Grant of Musqueam, ancient objects and human skeletal remains removed from places such as *čəsna:m* represent a much larger "living landscape."⁵⁰⁶ For the Musqueam and other First Nations communities, such objects speak to an enduring web of genealogical connections to the ancestors and provide a physical and spiritual connection to an integrated territory where their people have lived for thousands of years. The Marpole Midden itself can be viewed as a kind of cultural object or artifact -- with its own history of shifting meaning and representation. And as First Nations increasingly intervene in colonial narratives and appropriate western archaeological and museum practices for their own purposes, the archaeological history of places such as *čəsna:m* becomes an important component in redefining First Nations' own cultural traditions, protocols, and identities.

⁵⁰⁶ Howard E. Grant, personal communication, February 2006.

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American Museum of Natural History (New York City)	AMNH
British Columbia Archives and Records Service	BCARS
Canadian Museum of Civilization Archives	CMCA
National Archives of Canada	NAC
Musqueam Indian Band Archives	MIBA

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Wickwire, Wendy. "To See Ourselves as the Other's Other: Nlaka'pamux Contact Narratives." *Canadian Historical Review* 75, No. 1 (1994).

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Williams, Carol J. *Framing the West: Race, Gender, and the Photographic Frontier in the Pacific Northwest*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2003.

Thesis and Dissertations

Carlson, Keith Thor. "The Power of Place, The Problem of Time: A Study of History and Aboriginal Collective Identity." PhD diss., University of British Columbia, 2003.

Kew, J.E. Michael. "Coast Salish Ceremonial Life: Status and Identity in a Modern Village." PhD diss., University of Washington, 1970.

Roine, Chris. "The Squamish Aboriginal Economy, 1860-1940." MA thesis, Simon Fraser University, 1996.

Roy, Susan. "Making History Visible: Culture and Politics in the Presentation of Musqueam History." MA thesis, Simon Fraser University, 1999.

Sparrow, Leona M. "Work Histories of a Coast Salish Couple." MA thesis, University of British Columbia, 1976.

West, Robert Gerard. "Saving and Naming the Garbage: Charles E. Borden and the Making of B.C. Prehistory, 1945-1960." MA thesis, Department of History, University of British Columbia, 1995.

Time Frame and Other Terms:

Under the term of this permit the Research will be conducted from September 1, 2003 until December 31, 2004.

This permit is subject to review, revision, or cancellation at the discretion of the Musqueam Band Manager, Leona M Sparrow or other person designated by the Band.

The Permit Holder will:

- report periodically to the Band Manager or Leona Sparrow on the status and nature of research to date.
- adhere to all policies of the Musqueam Indian Band relating to research and heritage resources.
- provide the Band with a copy of the thesis proposal and related consent forms from the supervising professor and the University of British Columbia prior to commencing research.
- provide evidence of approval from an ethics review at the outset of research, and approval to conduct research with human subjects before commencing any field work with band members.
- contact Leona Sparrow if or when it is determined appropriate to interview Musqueam band members, and Leona will provide appropriate contacts and introductions.
- provide to each person interviewed or represented in the Research copies for review and comment of all data, documents, reports, summaries, and tapes resulting from the research conducted relating to the person interviewed., photographed, or represented as they will appear in the final thesis.
- provide the Band representative a copy of the draft thesis text for review and comment prior to final submission of the thesis to the University of BC.
- present research data and results in a culturally appropriate and positive or constructive manner in the thesis.
- maintain confidentiality of individuals and their information unless the individual give an express written release.

Activities Permitted:

Interviews with Musqueam Band members who may be willing to discuss their experiences in and perspectives on the topics.

Archival research on Musqueam at public archives and the Musqueam archives and land claim files.

The Permit Holder will maintain respect for the community, any individuals approached and involved, and the privacy of their responses and information.

All individuals interviewed will receive copies of their information for review and comment prior to finalization of the thesis. Any direct information or quotation of information obtained from a Musqueam person requires the express written consent of the individual concerned prior to any information gathering from that person and prior to inclusion of that information in any report, paper, or thesis.



Time Frame and Other Terms:

Under the term of this renewal permit the Research will be conducted from January 1, 2006 until April 30, 2007.

This permit is subject to review, revision, or cancellation at the discretion of the Musqueam Band Manager, Leona M Sparrow or other person designated by the Band.

The Permit Holder will:

- report periodically to the Band Manager or Leona Sparrow on the status and nature of research to date.
- adhere to all policies of the Musqueam Indian Band relating to research and heritage resources.
- provide the Band with a copy of the thesis proposal and related consent forms from the supervising professor and the University of British Columbia prior to commencing research.
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- contact Leona Sparrow if or when it is determined appropriate to interview Musqueam band members, and Leona will provide appropriate contacts and introductions.
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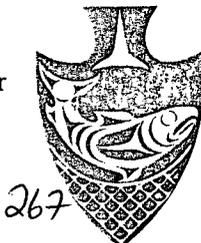
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Time Frame and Other Terms:

Under the term of this renewal permit the Research will be conducted from January 1, 2005 until December 31, 2005.

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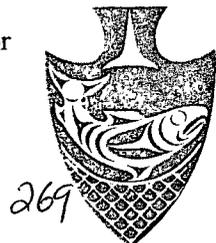
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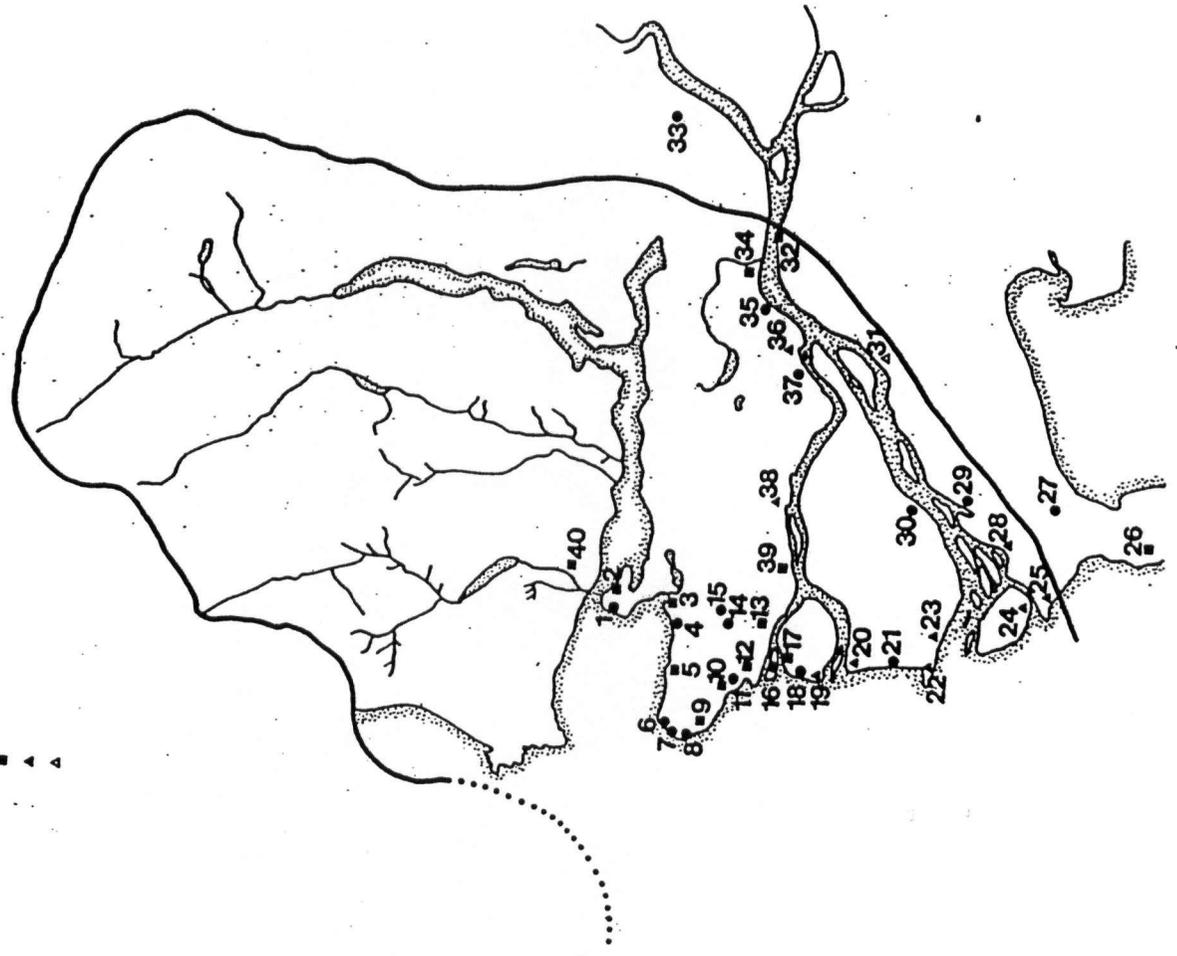
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- 1. s'z'liix
- 2. z'zy'z'
- 3. sun'iq'
- 4. zungāmūis
- 5. uyu'l'mux'
- 6. z'z'guzum'
- 7. Q'wum'
- 8. zucu'l'q'
- 9. Q'diugun
- 10. Hūm'lusum'
- 11. sq'muḡ's'zcu
- 12. mšii'
- 13. x'mūzk'l'um
- 14. z'eculék'
- 15. Muq'e-m
- 16. x'iyé'yul
- 17. sq'azun'
- 18. x'yusum'al'sum
- 19. w'gy'quzun
- 20. sq'diug'ūqs
- 21. unx'icun'

- Siwash Rock
- Lumberman's Arch
- Kitlilano
- Spanish Banks
- Musqueam
- Iona Island
- Sea Island
- Terra Nova



- 22. Q'ya'z'
- 23. Q'z'g'yum
- 24. ul'qun
- 25. x'igum
- 26. sco'azun
- 27. spu'zgun
- 28. sq'diux'qun
- 29. pu'zgun'w'mux'
- 30. zuqilinus
- 31. suw'q'qun'
- 32. Olq'yt
- 33. x'mim'ucsum'
- 34. Te'igul'us
- 35. ax'e'yumu'
- 36. strux'qun'
- 37. ye-l'uk'ku
- 38. suqul'emu'
- 39. gusana'um
- 40. x'mul'g'un
- 41. cuw'co'qun'

- Gary Point
- Westham
- Canoe Pass
- Tsawwassen
- Ladner
- George Massey Tunnel
- Woodwards Landing
- Pallulo Bridge
- New Westminster
- Marpole
- Capilano Creek
- Bone Island