



Tsleil-Waututh community members paddling Burrard Inlet, June 18, 2014.  
Copyright Tsleil-Waututh Nation, Photograph by Blake Evans, 2014.

# Indigenous History in Burnaby

## Resource Guide

**Burnaby Village Museum**

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**CITY OF BURNABY**  
**OFFICE OF THE MAYOR**  
**MIKE HURLEY**  
**MAYOR**

The City of Burnaby is on the ancestral and unceded homelands of the hə́ŋqəmiḥə́m and Sk̓wxwú7mesh speaking peoples, and we are grateful to be on this shared territory.

The *Indigenous History in Burnaby Resource Guide* was developed by staff at Burnaby Village Museum as part of an ongoing commitment to reconciliation with Indigenous communities. It marks a departure from the Museum's past practice of saying little in our exhibits and programs about Indigenous people in Burnaby. For the past several years, Museum staff have been building relationships with local hə́ŋqəmiḥə́m and Sk̓wxwú7mesh-speaking communities, with whom we are now working together to raise awareness of Burnaby's Indigenous history. Through these partnerships, the Museum has been able to deliver Indigenous programming to visitors and local students, and to collaborate on the research and development of this resource guide.

The *Indigenous History in Burnaby Resource Guide* will serve as a tool to educate City of Burnaby staff, Museum staff and volunteers and the public about the long and unbroken relationship that Indigenous peoples have had with the land known today as Burnaby. It also will serve as an important resource to develop curriculum-based materials for local teachers and students.

Developing the *Indigenous History in Burnaby Resource Guide* is one part of the City of Burnaby's response to the Calls to Action of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada. Working with the Burnaby School District to make this information accessible to teachers and students speaks specifically to Call to Action #62, which calls for the development of curriculum resources that recognize Indigenous peoples' historical and contemporary contributions to Canada. As well, creating a resource guide for City and Museum staff addresses Call to Action #57, which calls for municipal governments to provide education to public servants regarding the history and continued presence of Indigenous people.

This resource guide includes information that was generously provided by local First Nations communities. Indigenous people in Canada have been sharing their knowledge of the land and their culture with generations of newcomers. The City of Burnaby greatly appreciates the contributions of our First Nations partners who have shared their history and knowledge.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Mike Hurley".

Mike Hurley  
MAYOR



2019-06-03

The Burnaby School District is thankful to work, play and learn on the traditional territories of the hən̓qəmin̓əm̓ and Skwxwú7mesh speaking people.

As we inquire into learning more about the history of these lands, we are grateful to Burnaby Village Museum for working with our host First Nation communities. The knowledge being shared in this resource guide through our local communities supports the teaching and learning happening in our classrooms. It deepens our understanding of the history of our community and will increase our collective knowledge of our host First Nations communities' history in Burnaby.

In our schools, this guide will assist in creating place-based learning opportunities that will build pride for our Indigenous learners through the sharing of this local knowledge, but also increase understanding for our non-Indigenous learners. Through this guide, we can move closer to the Truth and Reconciliation's Call to Action 63 (i and iii):

63. We call upon the Council of Ministers of Education, Canada to maintain an annual commitment to Indigenous education issues, including:

i. Developing and implementing Kindergarten to Grade Twelve curriculum and learning resources on Indigenous peoples in Canadian history, and the history and legacy of residential schools.

iii. Building student capacity for intercultural understanding, empathy, and mutual respect.

We would like extend thanks to Burnaby Village Museum staff for their time and efforts in creating this resource guide. This work will help us move closer to Calls to Action 63 (i and iii) from the Truth and Reconciliation Commission will assist us in creating the future we hope for, one where our whole community has a deep understanding of our shared history and one where our Indigenous learners see themselves reflected within our schools.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Gary Wong".

Gary Wong  
Board Chair  
Burnaby Board of Education

# Acknowledgements

We recognize that Burnaby falls within the shared, ancestral and unceded territories of the hən̓q̓əmi̓nəm̓ and Sk̓wx̓wú7mesh-speaking people. We equally respect each of the Nations who share territory in Burnaby, and invite and welcome their ongoing participation in developing the contents of the *Indigenous History in Burnaby Resource Guide*.

The 2019 version of this working document was developed by Burnaby Village Museum in collaboration with a number of First Nations partners over the course of several years. We thank the Kwantlen, Sk̓wx̓wú7mesh, Tsleil-Waututh, and x̣m̓m̓əθḳẉəỵəm (Musqueam) First Nations for providing expertise and research assistance. We gratefully acknowledge Ashley Doyle and Marilyn Carpenter of the Seyem' Qwantlen Lands and Resources Department on behalf of the Kwantlen First Nation; Tracy Williams, Norman Guerrero Jr., Jessie Williams, and Paul Wick of the Sk̓wx̓wú7mesh Nation Education, Employment, and Training Department; Carleen Thomas, Michelle George and Amanda King of the Tsleil-Waututh Nation Treaty, Lands and Resources Department; and Larissa Grant and Jason Woolman of the Musqueam Nation Intergovernmental Affairs Department. Each of these individuals provided invaluable assistance with research and thoughtful comments on several drafts of this resource guide. We are extremely grateful to our First Nations partners for sharing their history, and for allowing us to make the knowledge in this resource guide available to the general public for educational purposes.

Thank you to the Burnaby School District for their ongoing support of this project. We acknowledge Brandon Curr, District Principal for Indigenous Education, and Meagan Innes, Indigenous Enhancement Teacher for reviewing this document and providing their feedback.

Finally, we would like to thank Dr. Sharon Fortney, who was primarily responsible for conducting the research and writing for this resource guide on behalf of Burnaby Village Museum, and who expertly instilled a Coast Salish perspective in the work. We also thank Kamala Todd, whose research into the history of the Oakalla Prison was an important addition to the guide.

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# The Coast Salish World before Burnaby

Before Burnaby existed, its lands were home to the ancestors of several local Central **Coast Salish** Nations. Today, their descendants continue to live in Burnaby and the adjacent municipalities that developed within their traditional territories. These are **hən̓q̓əmi̓nəm̓**–speaking people, with the exception of the Skwxwú7mesh who speak **Skwxwú7mesh sníchim**. Since time immemorial, each of these Nations has celebrated its own unique culture and history, while remaining connected to the others by family, social life, traditions, protocols, and language. Each has oral traditions to explain their origins and ongoing connections to local lands. In these accounts, geography is often more important than chronology for understanding the past. Indigenous history is, instead, invoked by features of the landscape such as Burnaby Mountain, Deer Lake and the Brunette River, and the resources belonging to those places.

Prior to contact, family, or lineage, was the most important aspect of hən̓q̓əmi̓nəm̓ and Skwxwú7mesh people's identity, as it determined where you could live, where you could hunt and fish, and what types of knowledge and special privileges you could inherit, like permission to perform a song or dance. The importance of family is reflected in all the Salish languages. Special words are used to identify family members going back six generations—that's three generations of grandparents. Extended families continue to be important today and often include members that live in other communities.

In the past, several families would share a winter village site. Each extended family had its own house, the members of which worked together to maintain family resources like salmon fishing stations and berry picking camps. Only family members could use these more productive sites, and they shared the goal of protecting them for future generations. Other nearby resources were shared collectively and protected by all the people who lived in a village. Traditional territories were expansive, encompassing multiple villages that shared the same language. It was not uncommon for village members to regularly harvest resources within several kilometres of their winter village sites, or to travel further abroad to visit family who had access to special resources like **cranberries** or **wapato** (wild potatoes). Ancestral villages ranged in size, from dozens to hundreds of occupants. Some larger villages were home to over 1,000 residents. Central Coast Salish travellers, who did not have family in an area, would always ask permission before hunting, fishing or gathering near someone else's territory. Visitors were usually welcomed, but they were told where they could go to fish, hunt and gather. Visitors were careful not to trespass on those places that were considered lineage property, and they knew that



## Lineage

Coast Salish families are sometimes referred to as lineages. People who are members of a lineage share a common ancestor. Coast Salish people can belong to more than one lineage, because they recognize both their mother's and father's families as relatives. This is called bilateral kinship.



This map helps us imagine what the lands now known as Burnaby would have looked like in the past. It shows known village sites, overland routes and cranberry harvesting areas. It also includes the locations of streams, lakes, rivers, inlets, and mountains today. *Burnaby Village Museum, 2017.*



in return for access they might themselves become hosts at a future time. In the past, hə́ńqəmińə́m and Sk̓w̓x̓wú7mesh men and women preferred to marry people who came from a different community than their own as this broadened their families' access to resources and knowledge. Inter-marriage between communities expanded family connections to hunt, fish and gather in many different areas, not just the ones closest to where they lived. The places each family visited as part of their **seasonal round** were dependent upon many factors—family connections being prime among them. This was advantageous in years when a community faced scarcity due to poor weather conditions or some other unforeseen circumstance.

Village members dispersed into smaller groups to gather, hunt and fish at different resource sites spread throughout a larger territory (determined by their individual family connections). hə́ńqəmińə́m and Sk̓w̓x̓wú7mesh ancestors travelled to resource sites all over the present-day municipalities of North and West Vancouver, Squamish, Vancouver, Burnaby, Port Moody, Coquitlam, Richmond, Delta, and Surrey. Family task groups criss-crossed these territories several times during the warmer months to take advantage of many different resources as they became available. Some items were unique to specific locales and were accessed through extended family ties or by following the protocols used with neighbours.

In the spring, families would travel to the Fraser River to fish for eulachon, and would return again in the late summer for the sockeye salmon runs. Many people travelled through Burnaby to reach the mouth of the Brunette River where it joined with the Fraser. Several winter villages, and many seasonal fishing camps, were located near this junction. Each year, the Fraser River brought together thousands of Central Coast Salish people at fishing sites along the length of the river.

During winter months, people travelled less frequently. Winter has always been a time of people gathering in larger groups at their winter village sites. Ceremonial activities took place all year round and intensified in the winter months. At that time of year, people relied upon stored food resources (salmon, smoked meats and dried fruits), only hunting and fishing occasionally to add variety to their diets. Sharing oral histories and family stories was a common activity on winter nights, as many generations gathered together around the fire. Some people were especially gifted in making **weavings, baskets and carvings**. Some items they made were considered wealth objects, and were often given away by important families at ceremonial events; others were utilitarian. Guests from near and distant villages witnessed important life events like the transfer of special ancestral names and the celebration of marriages. Spring, summer and fall were busy times for fishing, hunting and harvesting, while winter was for visiting, ceremonies and creating specialty items.



səlisəyə spinning with a traditional Coast Salish spindle in 1915. səlisəyə was a Sk̓w̓x̓wú7mesh and Musqueam ancestor. *Royal British Columbia Museum, #PN1165, Photograph by C. F. Newcombe, 1915.*

# hənqəmiñəm & Skwxwú7mesh People in Burnaby

Hundreds of years ago, there were more than 100,000 Coast Salish people living in British Columbia (BC), and adjacent Washington State.<sup>1</sup> Usually, this type of population density is found in places where agriculture is practiced as it connects to the ability to store surplus food for winter months. Here, on the Northwest Coast, Indigenous people developed the technology to preserve salmon and other seafood, which sustained communities all year round. Traditional diets were diverse and included a wide variety of local plants and animals, both marine and land based. Skwxwú7mesh ancestors, for example, used as many as 145 different species of plants for food, medicine and technology. Gathering, hunting and fishing occurred at different places at different times of the year—people were always moving about the land.

Burnaby was host to many Indigenous village and resource harvesting sites. hənqəmiñəm and Skwxwú7mesh oral history provides evidence of their long term occupation of the area. There are dozens of known archaeological and heritage sites across the municipality. Some midden sites have been found along the northeast shoreline below Burnaby Mountain and near Deer Lake. However, this number vastly under-represents past Indigenous presence here, reflecting only those sites that have been found. Many more remain intact and undisturbed, while others have been destroyed. In addition, knowledge about some places is intangible, found in names and oral history, rather than permanent or obvious changes to the landscape reflected in the archeological record.

In the years leading up to contact, smallpox, measles and other diseases carried from Europe along sea and overland trade routes, decimated First Nations villages up and down the coast. These diseases arrived well before the first newcomers sailed their ships into Burrard Inlet in 1791. There are many oral traditions about devastating diseases that offer insight into these past events. For example, a major outbreak of smallpox is known to have occurred here in 1782, which may have killed as much as 62% of the Indigenous population of BC. This was only one of many outbreaks, as measles and smallpox arrived in waves over the last four centuries. Some smaller communities affected by depopulation began to consolidate into larger villages with other survivors, while other communities were affected to a lesser degree. These demographic changes only served to reinforce the belief of newcomers that the Burnaby area was as a vast, empty wilderness available for "settlement."

## Indigenous Villages

Indigenous village and burial sites are often referred to by archeologists as middens. These sites contain the remnants of life—personal belongings or buried ancestors. Winter villages leave behind large middens that can span several city blocks. Smaller middens are found in places where hənqəmiñəm and Skwxwú7mesh ancestors had fishing, sea mammal and shellfish harvesting camps—places that family groups visited every year when certain resources were available. Objects of bone, stone and antler are commonly found in middens, and can help us understand the age of these sites.



This projectile point was unearthed in 1894 from a midden located where Burnaby Village Museum is today. It is 1,000 to 2,630 years old. Projectile points can be attached to a shaft and thrown (as a spear, dart, or arrow), or they can be used as a knife. *Burnaby Village Museum, BV002.57.5.*



Yet, newcomers' knowledge of local geography came directly from the deep knowledge of the land held by hən̓q̓əmi̓nəṁ and Skwxwú7mesh people. In 1859, Colonel Moody sent his personal secretary, Robert Burnaby, and several Royal Engineers up the Brunette River and into the forest to investigate a lake that had been described to him. They were led there by two local Indigenous guides. Colonel Moody later re-named the lake Burnaby after the man who supposedly "discovered" it. Many Indigenous overland routes eventually became the major thoroughfares used in Burnaby today. For example, in 1859, the Royal Engineers surveyed an Indigenous trail to become North Road, connecting New Westminster to Port Moody. The following year, the Royal Engineers established two more routes across Burnaby, the first connecting New Westminster to False Creek (now Kingsway), and the second connecting New Westminster to Second Narrows (now Canada Way). In the 1860s, the Royal Engineers contracted local settlers to establish a wagon road called the North Arm Road along an existing Indigenous trail through what is now the south of Burnaby. The route would have connected xʷməθkʷəy̓əm (Musqueam) village to the west with hən̓q̓əmi̓nəṁ village sites to the east. Today, we know this road as Southeast Marine Drive.

While Burnaby lands were slower to attract settler communities than other parts of what is now the Metro Vancouver area, interest in the area grew with the establishment of these roads in the 1860s. Since traditional Indigenous harvesting practices did not always lead to permanent alteration of the land, some newcomers argued that such lands were "available" for settlement and "improvement," which in their view equated to the clearing of land for agriculture. Soon after the colony of British Columbia was established in 1858, newcomers were encouraged to claim title to land through a process called **pre-emption**. In colonial and later provincial law, pre-emption allowed people to claim a piece of land, and become the "owners" of that land by clearing trees and building homes. Indigenous people could pre-empt land in BC up until 1866 when the government changed policy to explicitly exclude them from the process. Through pre-emption, land that had previously been used and shared by First Nations was turned into private property owned

Newcomers acquired land in Burnaby through pre-emption, which allowed settlers to clear forested areas and occupy Indigenous space. Labourers here pose in front of a newly constructed house on a cleared lot in Burnaby sometime between 1910-1914. *City of Burnaby Archives, 487-029, Photograph by J.W. Phillips, circa 1910-1914.*







by newcomers. The colonial and later provincial government also issued timber licenses, authorizing settlers and companies to harvest timber on traditional First Nations land. Again, Indigenous people were excluded from this system, while deforestation destroyed many of the natural resources local First Nations communities had long depended on.

Beginning in the 1800s, and intensifying with the Canadian government's Indian Act of 1876, title to Indigenous lands was transferred to the Crown through the reserve system. First Nations in BC went from having jurisdiction over vast territories of land to being confined to very small **reserves**, representing a fraction of their ancestral lands. While reserves were established in several of the municipalities surrounding Burnaby, none were located in the Burnaby area when lands were being set aside for this purpose in the mid-1800s. As a result, newcomers occupied huge tracts of Indigenous land in Burnaby.

Over a relatively short period of time, hən̓q̓əmiñəm and Skwxwú7mesh access to their traditional territories was restricted. Local Indigenous people resisted these changes in many ways. hən̓q̓əmiñəm and Skwxwú7mesh leaders created, or joined, Indigenous political organizations to protest encroachment on their lands and alienation from their resources. For example, in 1906 several Coast and Interior Salish Nations joined together to send a small delegation to England to petition King Edward about their shared concerns over lands and resources, and the lack of **treaties** in British Columbia. Delegates were chosen from the Cowichan, Secwepemc, Skwxwú7mesh, and xʷməθkʷəy̓əm (Musqueam) Nations to undertake this long journey. However, these efforts did little to stop the alienation of local Indigenous people from their lands in the end. In 1923, leaders from sixteen Skwxwú7mesh villages amalgamated to create the Skwxwú7mesh Nation to better serve the interests of community members and protect remaining lands and resources.

Coast Salish leaders travelled several times to visit government officials in both Canada and England in the early 1900s. Pictured here is a delegation of Interior and Coast Salish Chiefs. *North Vancouver Museum & Archives, #957. Photograph by Elliott and Baglow, 1908.*



## Indian Act

The Indian Act is a Canadian law that came into effect in 1876, combining several pre-existing laws aimed at assimilating Indigenous people into settler society. This law decides who is and who is not a "Status Indian," meaning who is legally recognized as an Indigenous person in Canada. All First Nations people in Canada became wards of the state, meaning they were placed under the "protection" of Canada. Treated like children, they were not allowed to make many decisions about their daily lives. They no longer had the freedom to live where they wanted, nor come and go as they wished.

Despite the encroachment of newcomers, hə́ńqəmińə́m and Skwxwú7mesh ancestors continued to maintain a regular presence at family-managed resource sites scattered throughout the region until the early 1900s. Newcomers to Burnaby reported seeing Indigenous families returning each year to campsites in Burnaby's Central Valley area where they gathered cranberries, hunted game birds, and fished for **trout** and salmon in local creeks and lakes. They would also see hə́ńqəmińə́m and Skwxwú7mesh travellers passing back and forth on their way to campsites and reserves located near New Westminster. At that time, interactions with settlers were cursory—local Indigenous people sometimes arriving on doorsteps to barter fresh game, smoked fish or **cedar** root baskets for freshly baked bread, used clothing, butter, flour, salt, and sugar.

During this same period, the Canadian government adopted countless measures to control the daily lives of Indigenous peoples through the Indian Act. Still in effect today, the Indian Act was responsible for the creation of Indian Bands to manage the affairs of Indigenous people, and for forcing them onto Indian reserves so they would be easier for Indian Agents to manage. These local government agents were charged with overseeing all aspects of Indigenous people's lives in Canada. They decided who was and who was not allowed to reside in reserve communities, monitored the comings and goings of people to and from reserves, managed the day-to-day minutia of band income and spending, and reported infractions to the Department of Indian Affairs.

From 1911 to 1921, the Indian Agent for the District of New Westminster lived in the south of Burnaby at his family's farm on what is now Byrne Road. Peter Byrne served as a Burnaby City Council member and Reeve before taking up his position with the Department of Indian Affairs. Stationed in New Westminster, the Indian Agent had to cover great distances to reach the many reserves under his jurisdiction—from Yale to Powell River. This would have included regular visits to the Indigenous communities surrounding Burnaby including Katzie, Kwantlen, Kwikwetlem, and xʷməθkʷəy̓əm (Musqueam). To get to xʷməθkʷəy̓əm (Musqueam), for example, Byrne would take the Interurban line from Byrne Road Station in Burnaby to McGee Station in Vancouver and then walked the four miles to the reserve. With the development of the tram system in this time period, it would have made it easier for the Indian Agent to closely manage the daily affairs of hə́ńqəmińə́m and Skwxwú7mesh communities close to Burnaby.

Amendments to the Indian Act created many restrictions on hə́ńqəmińə́m and Skwxwú7mesh people's access to Burnaby lands and resources. By 1888, laws limited Indigenous people's ability to fish, while the government encouraged the development of a commercial industry to the benefit of non-Indigenous people. Fishing licenses became a requirement, and many types of Indigenous fishing equipment were banned from use. Laws also began to limit activities like hunting and trapping. These new policies coincided with industrial pollution



A coiled cedar root basket donated to Burnaby Village Museum by descendants of the Hill family. Anne Hill traded blankets and clothing with Indigenous women in exchange for baskets. This basket likely dates from between 1895 and 1910. *Burnaby Village Museum, BV009.1.2.*



and deforestation in and around Burnaby. By the late 1800s, the local herring fishery had collapsed, and several key resources within Burnaby were on the decline, including trout, salmon and **deer**. **Elk**, once plentiful in what is now Metro Vancouver, had been eradicated. All of these changes contributed to dislocating local First Nations from their ancestral lands in Burnaby, and required them to travel elsewhere to access key resources. It made the sharing of traditional knowledge more difficult, especially when young people were being removed from their families to attend residential schools at this time.

Many local Indigenous leaders protested policies established during the colonial period to control Indigenous hunting, fishing and gathering. In 1892, xʷməθkʷəy̓əm (Musqueam) Chief Charlie qiyəplənəxʷ protested to the BC Fisheries Commission. And in 1913, xʷməθkʷəy̓əm (Musqueam) Chief Johnnie objected to the increasing role government played in land and resource management in his testimony to the Royal Commission on Indian Affairs for the Province of BC: “Just like as if I am between two persons, one person is on my right and one person is on my left saying ‘I have a share of your reserve’ and I want those two persons to let my hands go and give me the control of my own land...” Throughout the 1900s, hə́qəmińə́m and Sḵw̓xw̓ú7mesh people protested impacts to their territory and resources as well as their rights and title.

Despite these efforts, little changed and by the 1920s, hə́qəmińə́m and Sḵw̓xw̓ú7mesh people had been effectively isolated from their Burnaby resource and heritage sites, many of which were being overrun by expanding farmland, industry and urban development. As hə́qəmińə́m and Sḵw̓xw̓ú7mesh people were confined to Indian reserves, away from their ancestral lands in Burnaby, their presence was simultaneously erased from settler memory.

In 1884, the Indian Act was amended to ban ceremonial gatherings and make attending residential schools mandatory for Indigenous children. These assimilationist policies attempted to destroy Indigenous ways of life. The Potlatch Ban, which lasted until 1951, banned ceremonial events, including potlatching, which were considered un-Christian. The ban impeded the sharing of traditional foods, the wearing of ceremonial clothing, and the transmission of languages and dances. Incarceration and confiscation of regalia were the consequences of ignoring this prohibition, designed to undermine Indigenous cultures across Canada. While the Potlatch Ban did not achieve its assimilationist goals—it only drove these practices underground temporarily—it contributed to a cycle of segregation and traumatization that lasts to this day.

### Ceremonial Gatherings

On the Northwest Coast, there are a wide variety of cultural gatherings involving gift giving and feasting, held to acknowledge a special event such as a naming ceremony, marriage or funeral. Guests from neighboring communities are important witnesses to the transfer of goods and privileges, and receive gifts to reinforce responsibilities for the act of witnessing. Locally, they are held within the privacy of the longhouse or big house. Potlatches are a shared feature of many Northwest Coast cultures, but are guided by different protocols and traditions in different regions of the coast. Today, ceremonial gatherings remain a vibrant cultural tradition in hə́qəmińə́m and Sḵw̓xw̓ú7mesh communities; one that has persisted despite immense pressure to suppress it.





The Oakalla Prison Farm, which operated from 1912-1991, confined Indigenous men, women and even children for resisting threats to their land, their traditional governance systems, and their cultural practices. Thousands of Indigenous people from across BC were sent to the provincial prison, located on the shores of Deer Lake close to the current site of Burnaby Village Museum. In 1921, 'Namgis Chief Dan Cranmer held a large potlatch at Village Island for which he and other participants were arrested. At the court trial the following year, 45 people were charged with various crimes, such as giving speeches, dancing, and carrying and receiving gifts at the potlatch. Twenty Kwakwaka'wakw men and women were sent to Oakalla Prison to serve sentences. The others were given suspended sentences after agreeing to stop potlatching and relinquish their ceremonial regalia. The Potlatch Ban attempted to undermine the importance of ceremony to Indigenous people's governance, legal systems, economies, knowledge transmission, record-keeping, and cultural practices, and to force assimilation of Indigenous people into settler society.

The Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada states that the establishment and operation of residential schools for more than a century (1884-1996) was a central element of the government's assimilationist policy toward Indigenous people, which can best be described as **cultural genocide**.<sup>2</sup> Residential schools have left behind a legacy of trauma that has undermined the health and welfare of many Indigenous communities to this day. The goal of these schools was to assimilate First Nations children by eliminating all aspects of their Indigenous culture. Upon arrival at residential schools, First Nations children were not allowed to speak

Residential school students doing laundry at Coqualeetza Institute in Chilliwack, 1910. *United Church Archives, Toronto. 93.049P/418N.*



their Indigenous languages, they were separated from siblings, and their belongings were seized. Frequently, students lived, worked and went to class in these schools all year round, often far from their home communities. Many children routinely experienced isolation and abuse, and rarely had the opportunity to see their families. Residential schools had a devastating effect on the transfer of traditional knowledge, often destroying family relationships. Knowledge-holders were increasingly afraid to pass on knowledge and language to younger generations for fear of punishment and the stigma attached to being "Indian." One in twenty-five children died while attending residential school.<sup>3</sup>

In the Metro Vancouver area, hən̓q̓əmiñəḥ and Skwxwú7mesh children were sent to the following missionary-run schools: St. Paul's Residential School in North Vancouver (1898-1959); St. Mary's Residential School in Mission (1863-1985); the Methodist's Coqualeetza Institute in Chilliwack (1886-1937); the Presbyterian Coqualeetza Indian Residential School in Chilliwack (1861-1940); the Roman Catholic Coqualeetza Indian Residential School in Chilliwack (1890-1941); All Hallows Residential School for girls in Yale (1894-1917); St. George's Indian Residential School in Lytton (1901-1979); Kamloops Indian Residential (1893-1977); Sechelt Indian Residential School (1912-1975); and Kuper Island Residential School (1890-1978).

In 1951, the mandatory requirement for residential schools ended, but a new system of assimilation soon took its place. Beginning in the mid-1950s to the early 1970s, a large number of First Nations children were apprehended into the BC Child Welfare system. Sometimes referred to as the **Sixties Scoop**, children were removed from their homes and placed into foster homes or adopted to non-Indigenous families. First Nations children in care increased by as much as 157% over an 11-year period according to one study by the Union of BC Indian Chiefs. Many of the children who were scooped were adopted into non-Indigenous families in other parts of Canada and the United States. Between 1976 and 1979, Indigenous children made up approximately 27% of the children placed for adoption and 44% of the children in foster homes. The removal of children from communities broke families apart, and isolated children from their culture.<sup>4</sup>

First Nations communities asserted more control over child welfare decisions with the establishment of Aboriginal Child Welfare Services in 1981, and a BC government policy which gave First Nations Chiefs and Councils power to make decisions on behalf of children entering into care. Communities today are working to recover from the aftermath of child removal through initiatives like language immersion programs for preschoolers and the development of other opportunities for children and parents to re-establish their connections to traditional teachings and lifestyles. Many are also advocating against the continued removal of children, and unequal treatment of Indigenous families in the child welfare system.

Taken together, decades of assimilationist policies fundamentally disrupted the transmission of cultural knowledge, including knowledge about Burnaby lands and resources, for generations. This loss still profoundly affects communities today.



# The Central Valley Area

The Central Valley area includes Deer Lake, Burnaby Lake and the Brunette River. It was an intensively used resource area before the arrival of newcomers who cleared the land for logging and farming. hə́ŋqəmińə́m and S̓k̓w̓x̓wú7mesh ancestors lived in long-term settlements at the mouth of the Brunette River, in what is now New Westminster and Surrey, and near Deer Lake at the present site of Burnaby Village Museum. There were also many seasonal camps—places where specific hə́ŋqəmińə́m and S̓k̓w̓x̓wú7mesh families lived at different times of the year as they accessed important food resources.

In the Central Valley area, hə́ŋqəmińə́m and S̓k̓w̓x̓wú7mesh ancestors traditionally gathered crops like cranberries, crabapple, labrador tea, cattail, and wapato. They hunted **ducks**, elk, deer, and beaver. Salmon and trout were among the many fish species available in both lakes and in Deer Lake Brook, which connects the two lakes. After Burnaby was re-settled by newcomers, hə́ŋqəmińə́m and S̓k̓w̓x̓wú7mesh men sometimes traded game and berries to homesteaders for freshly baked bread, while women went door to door trading their cedar root baskets for work clothes and other needed supplies.

Dugout **canoes**, **projectile points** (arrow and spear tips), and **hand mauls** (tools used for splitting planks in woodworking) were found in abundance near the two lakes by early newcomers to Burnaby. The styles of the tools found by the Hill family on their strawberry farm near Deer Lake tell us that hə́ŋqəmińə́m and S̓k̓w̓x̓wú7mesh ancestors lived in this area for thousands of years before the arrival of settlers. Some of these ancestral belongings have made their way into the Burnaby Village Museum collection, or those of other local museums. The Museum works with local First Nations to provide community members with access to their ancestral belongings.

The western shores of both lakes supported extensive cranberry marshes. In the late 1800s, the Hill family frequently saw groups of hə́ŋqəmińə́m and S̓k̓w̓x̓wú7mesh people camping near the bridge across Deer Lake Brook, near present-day Canada Way. They arrived each fall when the bog cranberries were ripe, to gather the fruit and to smoke fish, and were seen in the area until around 1914. During the early 1900s, laws regulating access to fish and wildlife had a direct impact on the harvesting activities of hə́ŋqəmińə́m and S̓k̓w̓x̓wú7mesh people. By 1916, for example, a law was put in place to restrict the hunting of migratory birds—an activity that hə́ŋqəmińə́m and S̓k̓w̓x̓wú7mesh hunters once practiced near the two lakes.



hə́ŋqəmińə́m and S̓k̓w̓x̓wú7mesh ancestors used shallow dugout canoes, like the one pictured here at Deer Lake in 1900, to navigate riverways. *City of Burnaby Archives, 477-753. Photographer unknown, 1900.*

Crabapple was a common fruit available on the western edge of Burnaby Lake near Still Creek. It was preserved for winter months. hə́h̓qəmiḥə́m and Sk̓wx̓wú7mesh women frequently picked crabapples while they were still green and then hung them in woven bags until they ripened. They could be eaten raw or boiled until soft. Cooked crabapples were sometimes mashed together with berries, such as **salal**. Like cranberries, this fruit was traded extensively for items not available in the local area.

From the eastern end of Burnaby Lake, the Brunette River flows southeast to connect with the Fraser River. The junction of the Fraser and Brunette Rivers is a prime Indigenous fishing location used by hə́h̓qəmiḥə́m and Sk̓wx̓wú7mesh ancestors in the past, and by their descendants today. On its way to the Fraser, the Brunette passes through the neighboring municipalities of Coquitlam and New Westminster. This water route was used by many hə́h̓qəmiḥə́m and Sk̓wx̓wú7mesh families to travel by canoe to and from New Westminster. The Brunette River is also a major spawning route for salmon travelling from the Fraser River to Burnaby Lake. Some families would camp near the home of William Holmes, the first non-Indigenous resident in Burnaby, while procuring their winter supply of fish.

hə́h̓qəmiḥə́m and Sk̓wx̓wú7mesh ancestors travelled throughout the spring and summer to take advantage of different fish spawns. Ancestors travelled to the Fraser River when the eulachon were spawning, then departed for other resource sites, before returning in the late summer and fall to fish sockeye, chinook and coho salmon. The area at the mouth of the Brunette River was heavily used by ancestors from several local Nations. Many permanent and seasonal villages were located near the junction of the Brunette and Fraser Rivers, including the hə́h̓qəmiḥə́m fishing villages of t̓sičələs and qiqéyt. In the late 1800s, two reserves were established in the area – Musqueam Indian Reserve #1 and Langley (Kwantlen) Indian Reserve #8. Musqueam Reserve #1 was eventually bisected by rail lines, bridge footings, and its shoreline became a dumping ground for dredge materials, thereby rendering it largely unusable. It was eventually sold by government officials and is now occupied by industrial lands.

Hunting and **spirit questing** are other activities that drew people to the Brunette River area, near Burnaby Lake and the Cariboo Dam. Projectile points and rock art have been discovered at archaeological sites in this area. A **petroglyph**, carved into sandstone, is the only known example of rock art in the Burnaby area. It features a humanlike face. Rock art is often found near bodies of water and in higher elevations—places where hə́h̓qəmiḥə́m and Sk̓wx̓wú7mesh people go for cultural and spiritual purposes. Spiritual sites are deliberately kept hidden by hə́h̓qəmiḥə́m and Sk̓wx̓wú7mesh people. This is in keeping with the privacy associated with traditional beliefs. Today, some communities feel secrecy will protect these spiritual places from destruction and vandalism.



This ancestral knife may have been used to cut and prepare fish for the drying racks. Found near the current site of Burnaby Village Museum, this knife is thousands of years old. Belongings like this tell us that the Deer Lake area was once an important fishing site for hə́h̓qəmiḥə́m and Sk̓wx̓wú7mesh people. *Burnaby Village Museum BV002.57.26.*



# South Burnaby

The south of Burnaby with its marshes, creeks and proximity to the North Arm of the Fraser River was an important area for harvesting cranberries, trapping and fishing. First Nations belongings recovered from private properties along what is now Royal Oak Avenue south of Kingsway suggest a settlement may have once existed in this vicinity. In the past, this area was covered with cedar, hemlock and maple trees. Hand mauls—woodworking tools used with chisels for splitting wood planks—are among the tools that have been found in gardens and during basement excavations near Royal Oak Avenue.

Further south, in what is now the Big Bend neighborhood, the landscape was once almost completely covered by cranberry marsh, dissected by several trout-bearing creeks. Cattails, used for weaving mats, were harvested in these marshland areas, as were muskrats—animals commonly trapped by hə́qəmińə́m and S̄kw̄xwú7mesh people for their meat and fur.

Cranberries, as a source of vitamin C, were an especially important winter food. They were eaten by First Nations people up and down the coast. Picked green, bog cranberries were stored

for winter use. They were also traded to other Indigenous people who travelled downriver to the New Westminster area for this purpose each fall. Cranberry harvesting sites were considered family plots, which means specific families held the responsibility for stewardship of these prime resource areas in what is now the Metro Vancouver area. Cranberry harvesting sites were once located in the region near Burns Bog, Burnaby Lake, Deer Lake, and Pacific Spirit Park near the University of British Columbia (UBC). Families were responsible for caring for these resource sites to ensure they continued to be productive. Controlled burning was one way ancestors prevented forests from overtaking desired berry patches, fruit-bearing trees, and shrubs. The burns also cleared pasture lands for deer and elk.

After the arrival of newcomers, hə́qəmińə́m and S̄kw̄xwú7mesh families began harvesting cranberries later in the season when they discovered newcomers preferred to buy ripe berries that could be eaten right away. One of those important cranberry bogs was located in the south of Burnaby along an Indigenous trail, which later became the North Arm Road. xʷməθkʷəy̓əm (Musqueam) community member Ed Sparrow



Cranberries grow in bog-like habitats, which were once prevalent in Burnaby's marshland areas. Original uploader was Keith Weller at [commons.wikimedia.org](https://commons.wikimedia.org), Photography by Keith Weller, May 18, 2005.

remembered travelling through the area along the road by wagon with his grandparents to visit New Westminster in the early 1900s. Around that time, settlers constructed dykes along the Fraser River to reduce flooding, and dug ditches to drain the marshland, creating land for agriculture. This process led to the replacement of the Big Bend cranberry marsh with dairy and vegetable farms.

In the past, there were many temporary and permanent settlements along the north arm of the Fraser River. hə́h̓qəmiḥə́m and Sk̓w̓x̓wú7mesh ancestors relied upon the Fraser for salmon and eulachon fishing. In 1859, Robert Burnaby explored part of what is now South Burnaby by canoe. He described camping in an old village site where what he called a potato patch (likely a wapato garden) had been replaced by nettles, wild rose, berries, and vegetation.

Salmon were a form of wealth for hə́h̓qəmiḥə́m and Sk̓w̓x̓wú7mesh ancestors, and the tools created for this activity sometimes reflect this prestige. One such ancestral belonging, a fish club carved from antler, was found in the Fraser River sands to the west of where this campsite was located. The club was carved to resemble a bird, which is associated with skill at fishing. It is currently housed at UBC's Laboratory of Anthropology. Clubs of bone, antler and wood were used for fishing, as well as for hunting sea and small land mammals. They were used to kill fish trapped in weirs and animals caught in snares or nets. The Fraser River remains an important fishery for hə́h̓qəmiḥə́m and Sk̓w̓x̓wú7mesh people today.



xʷməθkʷəy̓əm (Musqueam) fishermen Ed Guerin, Henry Louie, Victor Guerin, and Sylvester Campbell unloading a boat-load of fish. Photograph courtesy of Mr. and Mrs. Vernon Dan.



# North Burnaby

hə́hə́míə́m and Sḵwə́wú7mesh oral history documents the long history of Indigenous people in North Burnaby. xʷməθkʷə́yəm (Musqueam) knowledge holders recount how, in the 1800s, xʷməθkʷə́yəm (Musqueam) leader qiyə́plenəxʷ gathered villages throughout the region together to defend against the Kwakwə́ka'wakw yəqʷə́teʔχ (Lekwiltok) at what is now known as Second Narrows of Burrard Inlet. Several important village sites existed along the shores of the Inlet in the precontact era, and the remains of ancestral villages, long-term campsites and other known heritage sites been found along the northern shoreline of Burnaby. Some of the sites in and around Burnaby would have been used seasonally for activities, like fishing, shellfish gathering and sea mammal hunting. These sites produced middens, demonstrating long-term use by hə́hə́míə́m and Sḵwə́wú7mesh ancestors.

In Port Moody, near the boundary of Burnaby, two defensive sites were found on the embankment above the Reed Point Marina. Defensive sites, or villages with fortifications, appeared in many Coast Salish communities several centuries prior to the arrival of newcomers to the coast. The Reed Point defensive sites once provided a place to retreat to when raiders approached; they also had the benefit of offering good vantage points for spotting spring herring runs. Located below the Reed Point defensive sites were a cluster of seasonal campsites, marked by middens. Middens can tell us a lot about traditional diets, as they contain the shells and bones of animals that were used as food. Knowing when each species is available tells us when people were active at specific sites. Taken together, the two defensive sites and the seasonal campsite middens tell the story of a major, year-round site at Reed Point.

Many types of berries are available on Burnaby Mountain, and the shores and waters of Burrard Inlet are home to important land and marine

resources used by hə́hə́míə́m and Sḵwə́wú7mesh in daily life, past and present. Along Burrard Inlet, hə́hə́míə́m and Sḵwə́wú7mesh ancestors gathered five species of clams, sea urchins, crabs, mussels, and oysters. Sea urchins were considered a special delicacy and were harvested by hə́hə́míə́m and Sḵwə́wú7mesh families on the eastern side of the Inlet into the last century. Small fish such as **surf smelt** and **herring** are just as important as salmon in the traditional diets of Indigenous people. Traditionally, herring were fished in spring and early summer months using a herring rake. hə́hə́míə́m and Sḵwə́wú7mesh ancestors collected herring roe by submerging evergreen boughs in inter-tidal areas so that herring would deposit their eggs upon them. These small fish attracted predator species that were also part of traditional diets—salmon, birds, seals, and sea lions were available when the herring were spawning.



Carleen Thomas and her grandmother Lillian C. George (Dolly) of the Tsleil-Waututh Nation digging for clams on the shores of Burrard Inlet in the 1970s. Travel across the Inlet was easily accomplished at the Narrows, and several early settlers remember crossing the Inlet from Burnaby to harvest shellfish with Carleen's great uncle Chief Dan George when he was a young man. *Courtesy of the Lillian C. George Collection.*

hə́ŋqəmínə́m and Sḵw̓xw̓7mesh people can no longer harvest many of these resources, due to pollution of waterways. In the late 1800s, herring were nearly eradicated with the establishment of Spratt's Oilery in Vancouver—a business venture that dumped its waste into the Inlet. The shores of Burrard Inlet have since been home to many factories, refineries and other large industrial developments. Freighters and other marine traffic have also contributed to pollution of the Inlet. By 1973, the Department of Fisheries and Oceans closed shellfish harvesting in Burrard Inlet. Harvesting on Howe Sound, Burrard Inlet and Indian Arm remains closed year-round due to contamination of the water. The inability to access intertidal resources, like shellfish and small fish species such as herring, has made it more difficult to share traditional ecological knowledge about these resources and their predator species. For this reason, habitat restoration work is an important activity within all First Nations communities.

Burnaby Mountain is located adjacent to the Indigenous trail that linked the Fraser River to Port Moody (now North Road), and was used by hə́ŋqəmínə́m and Sḵw̓xw̓7mesh ancestors from many communities. These trails connect to several archaeological sites in the lands surrounding the base of the mountain. Today, some community members still remember Burnaby Mountain as a preferred hunting area of their ancestors. Before intensive logging, settlers frequently observed bears and cougars living on Burnaby Mountain. Mountains are also important sites for spiritual activity, as they, like bodies of freshwater, are associated with cleansing and purification. Some hə́ŋqəmínə́m and Sḵw̓xw̓7mesh men frequently travel to high elevation sites for spirit questing.

Many types of plant resources were available in the Burnaby Mountain area including: **ferns**, **red elderberries**, **salmonberries**, Indian plum, and medicinal plants like **devil's club** and **cascara**. The bark and roots of cedar trees were harvested for many technological purposes, while various trees and plants were important as medicines and foods. Different resources were sought at different times

of the year, and it is said that fruit was ready on the south face of this mountain three weeks earlier than in other areas. Family groups would begin harvesting at the base of the mountain and then move higher to collect fruit that ripened later in the season. Bracken ferns, a valued staple, were found on the mountain, and some patches were actively managed by some hə́ŋqəmínə́m and Sḵw̓xw̓7mesh families. Bracken fern rhizomes (stems that grow underground) can be roasted as a vegetable, and in the spring the fiddleheads (new growth) can be eaten as a fresh vegetable. A type of flour was also once made by roasting fern roots and then pounding them into a powder.

Land alienation and industry resulted in a loss of traditional resource areas, and at times created economic incentives for overharvesting. Cascara bark, a prime ingredient for laxatives, is an example of a commercially sought-after resource that is still available on Burnaby Mountain. This medicinal plant was harvested commercially by many hə́ŋqəmínə́m and Sḵw̓xw̓7mesh families in the early 1900s. Gathered in the spring, the bark had to be processed and dried before sale. By 1904, hə́ŋqəmínə́m and Sḵw̓xw̓7mesh resource use in the Burnaby Mountain area was disrupted by logging, with the appearance of the logging road that later became Curtis Street. Within a decade, the mountain was cleared. It is now covered with second growth forests of maple, cedar, alder, hemlock, and Douglas fir.



Salmonberries and their fresh shoots were eaten in the spring. Original uploader was Apv at en.wikipedia, Photograph by Ashley Pond V, May 24, 2006.



# Indigenous People & Burnaby Lands Today

Burnaby is part of the **unceded territory** of the hə́ńqəmińə́m and Sḵw̓xw̓7mesh-speaking people, who remain invested in protecting their shared interests in the lands and resources of this municipality. Burnaby today is surrounded by several Indigenous communities, including the Katzie, Kwantlen, Kwikwetlem, Qayqayt, Semiahmoo, Sḵw̓xw̓7mesh, Tsawwassen, Tsleil-Waututh, and xʷməθkʷəy̓əm (Musqueam). In addition, a diverse and vibrant urban Indigenous community now resides in Burnaby with members originating from many different First Nations communities—often from outside of Metro Vancouver, and even the province.

hə́ńqəmińə́m and Sḵw̓xw̓7mesh community members remain connected to Burnaby lands and resources. Their traditional teachings encourage them to take responsibility for preserving a natural legacy for future generations. Burnaby is now a large, urban city. While urbanization largely prevents hə́ńqəmińə́m and Sḵw̓xw̓7mesh people from harvesting traditional resources from the land, ancestral ties to the land and its resources remain strong. Community members continue to demonstrate their ongoing stewardship over local lands and waters, while sharing their knowledge of traditional places and practices with younger generations.

In recent years, some First Nations, such as the Kwantlen, Sḵw̓xw̓7mesh, Tsleil-Waututh, and xʷməθkʷəy̓əm (Musqueam), have been able to resume hunting elk in the far reaches of their territories through efforts to re-introduce this species. As well, hə́ńqəmińə́m and Sḵw̓xw̓7mesh people are leading many projects that support habitat remediation and restoration around their territories, from Burrard Inlet to the Fraser River Delta, and from the Salish Sea to the mountains. Sḵw̓xw̓7mesh and Tsleil-Waututh community members, for example, are actively working to re-establish eelgrass and salt marsh environments along the Inlet to assist with the recovery of local salmon and herring fisheries.

Language revitalization and traditional skills also feature prominently in the educational mandates of each of these Nations, with language immersion programs targeting preschool-aged children and youth. Language is a cornerstone of culture, providing a framework for Indigenous knowledge. Reclaiming Indigenous language is central to the long-term health and wellbeing of each community. Efforts

## The Urban Indigenous Community in Burnaby

The 2016 census reported that self-identifying Indigenous people comprise 1.4% of the population of Burnaby—3,730 residents, with 800 of them being school children. This accounts for 6% of the urban Indigenous community of Metro Vancouver, where 58700 Indigenous people were recorded in the same census. The number of First Nations people living off reserve is growing as many families leave their rural communities for cities in the hopes of finding better living conditions, improving access to schools and education, and opportunities for employment.

SFU's First Nations Languages Program offers a community-based immersion program focused on Sḵw̓xw̓7mesh Sníchim, ancestral skills and traditions. Here, students learn how to harvest a deer. *Courtesy of Meagan Innes, 2018.*



to protect the endangered Salish languages of hə́ńqə́míńə́ń and Sḵwə́wú7mesh target many generations, and each community actively engages in providing language materials for students of all ages. Language programs in hə́ńqə́míńə́ń are offered in many Metro Vancouver area communities and through UBC, while an innovative Sḵwə́wú7mesh sníchim immersion program is now underway in North Vancouver through Simon Fraser University (SFU).

Ancestral skills, like weaving, basketry and carving, have also gathered strength since the 1970s. Political leaders, elders and cultural educators once again wear traditional garments publicly as they represent their Nations at ceremonial and public events. hə́ńqə́míńə́ń and Sḵwə́wú7mesh people value their numerous historical ties to the lands and waters of Burnaby, which continue to shape their culture and who they are today.



# Glossary

## Baskets

Barks, roots and grasses are used to make different styles of Coast Salish baskets. The most durable forms are coiled cedar root baskets. This type of basketry is family-owned knowledge, and there are fewer and fewer basket makers who practice this style of basketry today. Some coiled baskets are so water tight they can be used to boil water for cooking. Fern fronds or other plant materials would be placed inside as a liner, before hot stones from the fire were placed inside to boil the water. Cedar bark is also used for basketry, mats, ropes, and clothing. Cedar bark weaving, made by using a weaving method known as twining, is widely practiced today.

## Canoes

Coast Salish people make several styles of dugout canoe. Traditionally, the greatest diversity of styles existed in communities located closest to coastal waters. The two main styles were: the shovelnose—a low profile, river canoe with a squared off prow (front); and the split-prow, saltwater canoe. The saltwater canoe has a distinctive appearance with a split at the front that resembles an open mouth. The mouth is located above an area that is referred to as the canoe's neck. The stern end (back) turns up like a duck's tail. In the past, dugout canoes were made from a single log.

## Carving

Woodworking was an important aspect of daily life for local Indigenous people. Abundant forests provided wood for house building, canoes, furnishings, and implements. Massive carvings were made in the shape of house posts and welcome figures. Specialization in this technology is evident in the diverse tool kits used by wood workers, past and present. Traditional woodworking tools include beaver tooth chisels, antler wedges, D-adzes, and elbow adzes—the names of these last two referring to the shapes of their wooden handles. Blades for these tools have changed from nephrite (a green coloured jade) to metal, but the design of these tools has remained constant. Carving remains an important cultural practice today.

## Cascara

A small tree with greyish-black bark that flowers in spring, and then has purplish-black berries. The bark of the cascara tree has medicinal properties and was also used commercially to make laxatives. It must be dried properly before it is used as medicine. During the early 1900s, many hən̓q̓əmi̓n̓əm and Sk̓wx̓wú7mesh people harvested the bark of this tree, drying it in sacks, and then selling it to wholesalers in Vancouver.

## Cedar

The red cedar tree is sometimes referred to as the Tree of Life as it provides many of the things Coast Salish people used for daily living. The boughs had ceremonial purposes, the bark was used for weaving, clothing, hats, ropes, canoe bailers, and more, while the roots were used for coiled basketry. The wood was used for making house planks, house posts, canoes, and other structures.

## Clams

Clams were found all around the shores of Burrard Inlet. Clam beds were plentiful, especially in what is now known as Barnet Marine Park and the industrial lands of Burrard Inlet. On the beaches of Burrard Inlet, shellfish could be harvested all year round. Indigenous ancestors ate many species of clams, including butter, horse, littleneck, soft-shell clam, mud clam, and cockles. Digging sticks of ironwood were used for this activity. Clams could be barbecued on sticks over a fire, or were steam cooked in pits right on the beach. They were gathered in open-weave baskets that made it easier to wash them. Many winter village sites were located next to clam gardens—sandy areas where rock walls were built and maintained between sandy clam beds and the ocean. Many hən̓q̓əmi̓n̓əm and Sk̓wx̓wú7mesh people travelled south to Burrard Inlet for this activity in the spring, as there were good beds in the area that is now Ambleside Beach in West Vancouver.

## Coast Salish

A generic term used to describe more than 70 First Nations living in Southwestern BC and Washington State. The term was first used by anthropologists and linguists to describe people with similar cultural traits and a shared linguistic heritage that dates back more than thousands of years. There are also Interior Salish people. The term Salish was first associated with the Confederated Salish of the Flathead Indian Reservation who call themselves Séliš in the Kalispel—Pend d'oreille language.

## Crabs

A traditional food found along the shorelines of Burrard Inlet. Crabs are still considered safe to eat as they do not absorb toxins in the same manner as other shellfish, like clams and oysters.

## Cranberries

A flowering plant in the heath family that grows in bog-like habitats. An important fall crop, the bog cranberry was once prevalent in Burnaby. A source of vitamin C for winter months, cranberries were picked green by hə́ŋqəmińə́m and Sḵw̱xwú7mesh people and stored for later use. They were also traded extensively to neighbouring peoples for items that were not abundant locally.

## Cultural Genocide

Cultural genocide is the destruction of those practices that allow a cultural group to exist as such. Governments that engage in cultural genocide set out to abolish the political and social institutions of the targeted group. Land is seized, populations are forcibly transferred, their movement is restricted, and languages are banned. Spiritual leaders are persecuted, spiritual practices are forbidden, and objects of spiritual value are confiscated and destroyed. Most significantly, families are torn apart, preventing the transmission of cultural values and identity from one generation to the next.

## Deer

A common staple of Coast Salish diets, deer were hunted throughout Burnaby. There were several methods for hunting deer, including drives and hunting at night by canoe. All parts of the deer were used—the meat for food, the hide for garments, the antler and bones for tool making, and the hooves for rattles.

## Devils' Club

Many hə́ŋqəmińə́m and Sḵw̱xwú7mesh people use Devil's Club for spiritual and medicinal purposes. Found on Burnaby Mountain and in parts of the Central Valley area, the plant has prickly stems and broad green leaves. hə́ŋqəmińə́m and Sḵw̱xwú7mesh people make several medicines from the cambium and bark.

## Ducks

hə́ŋqəmińə́m and Sḵw̱xwú7mesh people hunted many kinds of ducks for food and used their feathers for ceremonies and textiles. Night hunting was one method used for duck hunting. Ducks were also hunted with bows and arrows, spears, pole nets, and slings. In preparation for night hunting, a small fire was built on a hearth in either the bow or stern of a canoe carrying two men. A mat shield was set up in such a way as to put the men in its shadow. One man maneuvered the canoe toward a settled flock of ducks while the other held a five-pronged spear. When quietly approached, the ducks sought to keep in the shadow, and therefore tended to cluster near the part of the canoe where the men waited. Some newcomers to Burnaby recall Indigenous people trading ducks for food and clothing in the late 1800s to early 1900s.

## Elk

This large, hooved animal was once prevalent throughout Metro Vancouver, including Burnaby. All parts of the elk were used—the meat, sinews, hides, antlers, and bones. Elk were often hunted with drives. xʷməθkʷəyəm (Musqueam) men would chase elk into vine maples, and then slit their throats, not needing to waste an arrow. The elk that lived in the Metro Vancouver area are referred to as Roosevelt or Olympic elk. Adult elk stand between 0.75-1.5 m tall at the shoulder. These elk are still present on parts of Vancouver Island and have been re-introduced to places like the Indian River Watershed, which extends north from Burrard Inlet, between the communities of Belcarra and the District of North Vancouver.

## Enfranchisement

In the past, Indigenous people were restricted from voting in provincial or federal elections; they were not considered citizens of Canada. To gain the rights associated with Canadian citizenship, the Indian Act required enfranchisement. Enfranchisement is a legal process that removed an individual's status as an Indigenous person, and made them a full citizen of Canada. First Nations men who served in the military and women who married non-Indigenous men are examples of people who were enfranchised during the 1900s. Once enfranchised, Indigenous people were not allowed to live on Indian reserves and were denied their Aboriginal rights to resources (and treaty rights if they belonged to a Nation that had signed one). The Act was later amended to repeal these initiatives. BC First Nations were granted the right to vote provincially in 1949, and federally in 1960.

## Eulachon (Oolachon)

Eulachon is a small, oily fish that was an important food source for hə́ŋqəmińə́m and Sḵw̱xwú7mesh ancestors. Families travelled to the Fraser River in April when the eulachon were spawning, then departed for other resource sites. xʷməθkʷəyəm (Musqueam) have a time of year named after the eulachon and their run. In recent years, eulachon have shown a declining trend in many rivers on the Northwest Coast. In 1994, there was a sudden drop in returns to several rivers, most notably in the Fraser and Columbia.

## Hand Mauls

A stone tool used for splitting planks in woodworking. Hand mauls were used with stone chisels and antler wedges. In archaeological sites, their presence is viewed as evidence of winter villages and canoe-making. Many of the planks used at winter village sites were removed during summer months and transported to other occupation sites, where they were used to build smaller shelters. In the fall, they were brought back to the winter village and combined with planks belonging to other family members, to recreate the walls of the longhouse or big house.

## **hə́ŋqəmińə́m**

Halkomelem is the linguistic term which refers to an endangered language comprised of three dialects: Halq'eméylem is the Upriver dialect; Hul'qumińurń is the Island dialect, and hə́ŋqəmińə́m is the Downriver dialect. hə́ŋqəmińə́m is spoken by the Katzie, Kwantlen, Kwikwetlem, Qayqayt, Tsawwassen, Tsleil-Waututh, and xʷməθkʷəy̓əm (Musqueam) people. Today, efforts are underway to preserve all three dialects.

## **Muskrats**

A semi-aquatic animal, about the size of a rabbit, that lives near marshes, lakes and ponds. Cattails are a preferred food of the muskrat. They are found throughout Burnaby and were trapped by hə́ŋqəmińə́m and Skwxwú7mesh people for their fur and meat. Muskrats are active between dusk and dawn.

## **Petroglyphs**

A type of rock art made by cutting or engraving an image into a flat, stone surface. This could be accomplished in several ways, including pecking and grinding. Petroglyphs are often found near bodies of water, or in higher elevations, and are associated with private, spiritual activities. Another form of rock art is made by painting an image onto stone. These images are referred to as pictographs.

## **Pre-emption**

Pre-emption was a method for settlers to acquire provincial Crown land by claiming it for settlement and agricultural purposes. The pre-emption process existed from as early as 1859 until 1970 when the Land Act was amended. Individuals, as well as companies and partnerships, could apply to settle and work ("improve") the land. After 1866, First Nations people were legally excluded from this process of land acquisition and were settled onto Indian reserves, lands which were held in trust by the Crown. Other groups were later also excluded from the pre-emption process through legislation, notably Chinese Canadians in 1884.

## **Projectile Points**

A term used by archaeologists to describe lithic (stone) tools that are hafted (bound) to wooden shafts and used as spear or arrow tips. The styles of these points changed over time, and the presence of certain styles can sometimes be used by archaeologists to identify periods of use.

## **Red Elderberries**

A shrub from the honeysuckle family with clusters of red berries. The fruits were steam cooked in pits and stored for later use. Reed Point and Burnaby Mountain were areas where this fruit was gathered and processed by hə́ŋqəmińə́m and Skwxwú7mesh people.

## **Reserves**

Lands belonging to the Crown, which are set aside for members of an Indian Band in accordance with the Indian Act or a Treaty Agreement. Historically, reserves were created for residence, fishing and hunting, and to protect cemeteries. There are approximately 316 Indian reserves in BC. Several reserves were reduced in size, or sold, at the discretion of colonial officials. Reserves in the Metro Vancouver area are significantly smaller than those found in other parts of the country, as it was rationalized that salmon provided for the people so they did not need as much land. Reductions were also made when reserves were viewed as "impeding" the progress of emerging towns and cities. In the past, First Nations people were not consulted when these decisions were made.

## **Salal**

Salal is an abundant plant with shiny green leaves and white flowers that turn into dark blue berries in late summer. The berries of this plant were dried for winter use, while the leaves were used to make medicines. Salal berries were often served during feasts. In the 1930s, salal became commercially sought after by florists and provided a source of income for some hə́ŋqəmińə́m and Skwxwú7mesh women, who would pick the greenery to be used in bouquets.

## **Salmon**

Salmon are an extremely important food source associated with wealth and prosperity. hə́ŋqəmińə́m and Skwxwú7mesh people worked together to maintain and use fish weirs as one way of harvesting salmon and sturgeon. A weir was a lattice-like structure that created a fence-like barrier across a stream, river or estuary. A harpoon, leister, dip net, or gaff hook would be used when the fish became bottlenecked at the weir. xʷməθkʷəy̓əm (Musqueam) people also practiced selective harvesting using weirs where sections would be removed to let fish pass to avoid hurting the stocks. Smaller, basketry fish traps were also used by individuals and their families. The return of salmon is welcomed each spring with a First Salmon Ceremony. Respect for nature and animals is a key belief, and part of protecting salmon and other resources.

## **Salmonberries**

Salmonberries are eaten fresh in the spring as they do not dry well. The new shoots are also eaten as a vegetable, while the leaves have medicinal properties. In hə́ŋqəmińə́m, the month of June is called the salmonberry time.



## Seasonal Round

A term used to describe patterns of movement, and economic activities, undertaken by communities as they collect food and other resources throughout the year. These patterns are often pre-determined by the availability of resources at specific sites. For example, hə́ŋqəmińə́m and Sk̓w̓x̓wú7mesh ancestors would have come to Burnaby in the early fall for cranberries after spending time at other sites harvesting earlier salmon runs and before moving south to the Fraser River for later salmon runs.

## Sea Urchins

Green sea urchins were harvested in Burrard Inlet from canoes, and were considered a delicacy by hə́ŋqəmińə́m and Sk̓w̓x̓wú7mesh people. They were eaten fresh from the shell. They have been impacted by pollution and are no longer considered safe to eat.

## Sixties Scoop

A term used to describe the removal of Indigenous children by child welfare authorities from their homes in the late 1900s. It has been noted that children were frequently taken from homes that did not reflect the expectations of middle-class Euro-Canadians. “For example, when social workers entered the homes of families subsisting on a traditional Aboriginal diet of dried game, fish and berries, and did not see fridges or cupboards stocked in typical Euro-Canadian fashion, they assumed that the adults in the home were not providing for their children.”<sup>5</sup>

## Sk̓w̓x̓wú7mesh Sníchim

The language spoken by Sk̓w̓x̓wú7mesh people. It is one of 14 Salish languages that derive from a common ancestral language. The language is considered endangered and is the focus of revitalization projects.

## Spirit Questing

A private, religious activity conducted in solitary places where spirits are known to reside. The practice involves cleansing through ritual bathing and fasting.

## Surf Smelt

A small fish that was once common in Burrard Inlet. Surf smelt were important to Coast Salish diets in the pre-contact period, before pollution impacted many traditional fisheries. They were caught in bays and estuaries during spawning season with dip nets, and were smoked and stored in air-tight baskets for later use.

## Treaties

Treaties are required by the Royal Proclamation of 1763 to extinguish Aboriginal title to land and resources in Canada. When they are not signed, the Crown recognizes the land as unceded territory. Treaties are agreements made between the Crown and First Nations that require some traditional lands to be relinquished in exchange for protecting other parcels as reserve land. Treaties also ensure ongoing access to traditional resources, such as fish and wildlife. Most of BC is without treaty, although many First Nations are currently engaged in modern treaty negotiations with the provincial and federal governments. The first modern treaty in British Columbia was negotiated by the Nisga’a in 2000.

## Trout

Trout were abundant in Burnaby lakes and streams, and were an important food for hə́ŋqəmińə́m and Sk̓w̓x̓wú7mesh people. In the fall, trout were smoked to preserve them for winter months. Trout were caught in sloughs and streams using small nets, and with hook and line fishing using a small barbless hook made of bent bone.

## Unceded Territory

Unceded territory is a term used to acknowledge the traditional lands of First Nations people who have not signed a treaty with the Crown to surrender their legal title to their lands. By recognising unceded territory, we recognise the ongoing interests of the First Nations people who consider such lands home.

## Wapato

The wapato, a tuber from the arrowroot plant, is the oldest known crop from the Pacific Northwest. Grown in wetland environments, hə́ŋqəmińə́m and Sk̓w̓x̓wú7mesh ancestors roasted the tubers or made them into a powdered meal that could be stored for winter. Wapato was also an important trade good. A wapato garden built by ancestors of the Katzie First Nation was discovered during road building in Pitt Meadows. The garden consists of a 450-foot square platform of stones with thousands of wapato tubers growing on the platform. Wooden harvesting tools found on the platform were made 3,800 years ago.

## Weaving

Salish women weave textiles from spun wool on a two-bar loom. These specialists make ceremonial blankets, and garments such as leggings and jackets, from precious mountain goat wool blended with other fibres. Traditionally, wool weavings for daily use were also made from plant fibres. Nettle fibres were used to create tumplines—straps used for carrying baskets and cradles, while cedar bark was used by many for creating capes, skirts and hats. During the economic depression of the 1930s, weavers sometimes took apart burlap sacks and used the fibres for weaving tumplines and other utilitarian objects.

# End Notes

<sup>1</sup> Cole Harris, "Voices of Disaster: Smallpox Around the Strait of Georgia in 1782," *Ethnohistory* 41 (1994): 591-626.

<sup>2</sup> Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada, "Honouring the Truth, Reconciling for the Future. Summary of the Final Report of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada," (2015), [http://www.trc.ca/assets/pdf/Honouring\\_the\\_Truth\\_Reconciling\\_for\\_the\\_Future\\_July\\_23\\_2015.pdf](http://www.trc.ca/assets/pdf/Honouring_the_Truth_Reconciling_for_the_Future_July_23_2015.pdf).

<sup>3</sup> CBC, "Truth and Reconciliation Commission: By the Numbers," June 2<sup>nd</sup> 2015, <http://www.cbc.ca/news/indigenous/truth-and-reconciliation-commission-by-the-numbers-1.3096185>.

<sup>4</sup> Christopher Walmsley, *Protecting Aboriginal Children*, Vancouver and Toronto: UBC Press, (2005): 22.