

A Human History of Tl'chés, 1860-1973

By

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Bachelor of Arts, University of Victoria, 2015

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We acknowledge with respect the Lekwungen peoples on whose traditional territory the university stands and the Songhees, Esquimalt, and WSÁNEĆ peoples whose historical relationships with the land continue to this day.

# Supervisory Committee

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## **Abstract**

This thesis represents a human history of Tl'chés (Discovery and Chatham Islands) roughly between the mid-19<sup>th</sup> and mid-20<sup>th</sup> centuries. It presents Songhees and Settler life on the archipelago, as well as the dispossession of Songhees lands. Detailing processes of colonialism, as well as Songhees resistance to it, this thesis represents a microcosm of colonialism as it unfolded in the lands now called British Columbia.

## **Keywords**

Tl'chés; Discovery and Chatham Islands; Songhees; Lekwungen; Straits Salish; Colonialism; Reserves; Smallpox; anthropology; ethnohistory; history; oral traditions

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*To Elders Súhlíma, Gabriel ‘Skip’ Sam, and May Sam*

*To Glumps, for speaking about the islands, and stirring wonder*

## Introduction

Off the southeastern tip of Vancouver Island, British Columbia, and situated at the intersection of the Haro and Juan de Fuca Straits, lies the archipelago of Tl'chés.<sup>1</sup> Its five small islands lie just off Sitchanalth - now commonly referred to as Willows Beach - in what is currently called Oak Bay, a municipality within greater Victoria, British Columbia. This thesis represents an account of the past 200 years of human history on these islands - a biography, if you will, of what many perceive as fragments of wilderness, lying only a stone's throw from the city. As this area of British Columbia was the first colonized by settlers, a close look at human activity during this period serves as a microhistory of that colonization.

Situated within the traditional territory of the Songhees people, Tl'chés is 'Island' in Lekwungen, a dialect of Straits Salish, the traditional language of the Songhees, Saanich, Sooke, Klallam, Samish, Lummi, and Semiahmoo.<sup>2</sup> The term 'Lekwungen' is

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<sup>1</sup> Songhees Elder Súlhlíma (Joan) Morris and her relatives have used the name *Tl'chés*; through conversations with Sophie Misheal and Ned Williams, anthropologist Wilson Duff learned that the Songhees have referred to Discovery Island as *Tl'chess*. For more information, see Wilson Duff, "Fort Victoria Treaties", *BC Studies*, no. 3, 1969, p. 47. Although Duff appeared to believe that *Tl'chess* was used in reference to Discovery Island, Elder Súlhlíma (Joan) Morris has used the name in reference to the whole archipelago. Conversations with Elder Súlhlíma spring 2016, summer 2017.

<sup>2</sup> Elder Súlhlíma (Joan) Morris explained that Tl'chés means 'island' in Lekwungen. Island singular is used because Stsnaang and Skingeenis are separated only by shallow water, and, at low tide, appear to be one single island.; Wilson Duff refers to these place names in his unpublished "Field Notes", Notebook #12, available at the British Columbia Archives, B6044 51, STR-W 002, Wilson Duff Field Notebook #12, 1960, Victoria, Place Names. Courtesy of Darcy Mathews; Duff also uses these place names in his article, "The Fort Victoria Treaties", *BC Studies*, no. 3 Autumn 1969, pp. 47-48; On page 4 of the "The Fort Victoria Treaties", Duff explains that "different dialects of the same Coast Salish language were spoken" by the Songhees, Saanich, Spoke, Klallam, Samish, Lummi, and Semiahmoo; for more general information, please refer to Julie K. Stein, *Exploring Coast Salish Prehistory: The Archaeology of San Juan Island*, Seattle: University of Washington Press, 2000, pp. 4-6.

sometimes used interchangeably with the name Songhees, to denote a particular group of Straits Salish people that continue to live on southern Vancouver Island.<sup>3</sup> For the purpose of clarity, I use the term Songhees when referring to the people, and Lekwungen when speaking of their language.

Indigenous ways of knowing and being are passed down through the generations by way of oral traditions inextricable from the particular lands and waters that anchor their peoples in these vital teachings.<sup>4</sup> Shaping every aspect of life, place itself teaches how best to live within it, while its unique characteristics - for example, its physical forms - provide mnemonic cues to the contextually rich, allegorical understandings that remind people how to live well.<sup>5</sup>

Thus, for peoples deeply rooted in their belonging to the earth, place matters; it compasses their lives with situated ethical meaning derived from the unique wealth of knowledge acquired over generations in *this* place; Straits Salish peoples' sustained presence, throughout their homelands, grounds them in their peoples' traditional ways of knowing and being, including the forms of respect, reciprocity, and care they must enact in relationship with each of their place's distinct beings and communities. This living relationship between people and place composes and re-collects Straits Salish identities,

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<sup>3</sup> The Songhees have an historic relationship with the American San Juan and Henry Islands east of Tl'ché's. Tsartlip Elder Gabriel 'Skip' Sam has described he and his family spending extended periods of time on Henry and Stuart Islands. He has spoken of his relatives living in Roche Harbour, on San Juan Island, and of his parents' reef-net fishing off of Henry Island. Gabriel 'Skip' Sam "Interview". Wayne Suttles provides a map of traditional Songhees reef-net sites, located off San Juan and Henry Islands. It is clear from the map, and from the testimony of his informants, that the Songhees people have a longstanding, culturally rich, historical connection to these islands. For details, please refer to Wayne Suttles, *The Economic Life of the Coast Salish of Haro and Rosario Straits*, New York: Garland, 1974.

<sup>4</sup> Keith H. Basso, *Wisdom Sits in Places: Landscape and Language Among the Western Apache* Albuquerque, N.M.: University of New Mexico Press, 1996.

<sup>5</sup> Ibid.

including their understandings of how to live within, and work with, the interconnectedness of all things.

Ethnobotanist Nancy Turner refers to Tl'chés as a cultural keystone place, "...represent[ing] a source of cultural identity, sustenance, spirituality, and associated traditional ecological knowledge."<sup>6</sup> Tl'chés is enormously significant to Straits Salish peoples. From "time immemorial", it has been integral to their subsistence and cultural practices; for "countless generations"<sup>7</sup> they have evolved in relationship with this place and its diverse living communities. Today, this place is still considered home by members of the Songhees community, and is vital[ly] significant to Straits Salish groups more generally.<sup>8</sup> Through geographically situated oral tradition and continued engagement in traditional livelihoods and practices, the Songhees acquire the wisdom of their ancestors. Being on Tl'chés – their home - is essential for this process, which involves learning to live in accordance with the values and ethics of their community. Cultivating and harvesting traditional foods on Tl'chés, such as kwetlal [camas], clams, urchin, and herring, is integral to Songhees culture, identity, and well-being, teaching respect for the

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<sup>6</sup> Raincoast Conservation Organization, "6. Time Before Memory", in *Our Threatened Coast: Nature and Shared Benefits in the Salish Sea* October 1, 2016, p. 78 accessible online: [https://www.raincoast.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/01/Raincoast\\_Our\\_threatened\\_coast\\_Jan28\\_web.pdf](https://www.raincoast.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/01/Raincoast_Our_threatened_coast_Jan28_web.pdf) For similar discussions, please refer to Cuerrier, A., Turner, N.J., Gomes, T.C., Garibaldi, A. and Downing, A. "Cultural Keystone Places: Conservation and Restoration in Cultural Landscapes", *Journal of Ethnobiology*, 35, 3, 2015, pp. 434-436.

<sup>7</sup> Cuerrier, A., Turner, N.J., Gomes, T.C., Garibaldi, A. and Downing, A. "Cultural Keystone Places: Conservation and Restoration in Cultural Landscapes", *Journal of Ethnobiology*, 35, 3, 2015, p. 434; "Origin of Salmon" story demonstrates the centrality of Tl'chés in the culture and livelihood of the Songhees people. For details, please refer to Claxton, Johnny and Diamond Jenness ed., "Origin of Salmon", in *Saanich and Other Coast Salish Notes: Vancouver Island, British Columbia (1934-36)*, Canadian Museum of History Archives, Ethnology Documents, Box: 39, f.1.

<sup>8</sup> Turner (Cuerrier ed.) p. 434; Tl'chés remains home to Songhees Elder Súhlhima (Joan) Morris and Tsartlip Elders Gabriel 'Skip' and May Sam. Franz Boas, Charles Hill-Tout, Wayne Suttles, and Wilson Duff have stated that the archipelago is part of Lekwungen territory. This assertion is based on the testimony of their informants.

diverse living communities of lands and waters along with important skills for living sustainably in your home.<sup>9</sup> Furthermore, engaging in these traditional practices on Tl'chés nurtures on-going connection to kin, ancestors, and spirit-beings. Thus, Tl'chés represents one example of a cultural keystone place.<sup>10</sup>

Traditionally, Songhees kinship affiliations allowed other Straits Salish peoples to visit Tl'chés. Over time, however, many non-Indigenous people also began visiting the islands without permission. Only a half-hour paddle - or a ten minute power-boat ride - from what is now commonly referred to as the greater Victoria region, Tl'chés has attracted non-Indigenous visitors and residents, many of whom have little or no understanding of the people and culture that remain most deeply rooted in this place. From the mid—19th century to the present, the islands have been a site for unwelcome settlement, resource extraction, and harmful recreational activities.

Of course, non-Indigenous encroachment on Indigenous territory, in the lands now commonly referred to as Canada, began long ago, and was quickly legitimized with representations of “Terra Nullius” and the “Doctrine of Discovery”, allowing Britain to, “...subsume[] Native title within the territorial sovereignty of the Crown.”<sup>11</sup> Colonialism gained steam, and as Cole Harris eloquently argues in *Making Native Space: Colonialism, Reserves, and Resistance in British Columbia*, the period between the mid-19th century

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<sup>9</sup> For “Kwetlal”, see Jeff Corntassel and Cheryl Bryce, “Practicing Sustainable Self-Determination: Indigenous Approaches to Cultural Restoration and Revitalization”, *The Brown Journal of World Affairs*, vol. XVIII, iss. II, spring/summer 2012, pp. 157-161, see also Nancy J. Turner, “Blue Camas”, *Food Plants of Coastal First Peoples*, Vancouver: UBC Press, published originally 1995, (3<sup>rd</sup> ed. 2003), pp. 42-44.

<sup>10</sup> Cuerrier, N.J. Turner, T.C. Gomes, A. Garibaldi, and A. Downing, “Cultural Keystone Places: Conservation and Restoration in Cultural Landscapes”, *Journal of Ethnobiology*, 35 (3) 2015, pp. 427; 431-432; 434-437.

<sup>11</sup> Jennifer Reid, “Doctrine of Discovery and Canadian Law”, *The Canadian Journal of Native Studies*, 30, 2, 2010, p. 342.

and the first decades of the 20th was characterized by rapidly “changing geographies”, as Indigenous peoples were displaced by settler-colonial society.<sup>12</sup>

According to Jennifer Reid, once established, “a state need not settle an entire territory... to maintain its title; rather, it need only prevent all other states from challenging claims to sovereignty.”<sup>13</sup> To protect itself, settler-colonialism has continually asserted fictions involving spurious assumptions, elisions, and erasures of Indigenous people, lands, and cultures. Examples include maps that erased Indigenous presence in their own territories, and misrepresentations of Indigenous lives and cultures, enacted in settler-colonial sites of cultural or historical exhibition, education, and entertainment, as well as in settler conversation, humour, and behaviour.<sup>14</sup> These have been deployed in tandem with enabling myths of settler superiority, prerogative, and merit sanctioning associated entitlements. Altogether, this evolving production of social and spatial imaginaries has persistently re-authorized an outdated conception of sovereignty that has provided legal justification for the dispossession of Indigenous lands.<sup>15</sup>

What transpired on Tl'ché's and in surrounding areas transpired elsewhere in the region. It represents one instance of Indigenous peoples' broader displacement from their lands, and on-going settler-colonial refusal to recognize Indigenous sovereignty and rights. As in so many other Indigenous territories, the colonial erasure of the Songhees culture involved an elision of its place-names. In 1846, without permission from, or consultation with the Songhees, the two largest islands of Tl'ches - Skingeenis and

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<sup>12</sup> Cole Harris, *Making Native Space: Colonialism, Reserves, and Resistance in British Columbia*, Vancouver: UBC Press, 2002, pp. xvii-xviii.

<sup>13</sup> Reid, “Doctrine of Discovery”, p. 38.

<sup>14</sup> Elizabeth Furniss, *The Burden of History: Colonialism and the Frontier Myth in a Rural Canadian Community*, Vancouver: UBC Press, 1999, pp. 16 -22.

<sup>15</sup> Reid, “Doctrine of Discovery”, p. 342.

Stsnaang - were re-named 'Discovery' and 'Chatham' in honour of Captain George Vancouver's ships which coasted offshore in 1792.<sup>16</sup> On navigation charts and maps, they are still referred to as 'Discovery and Chatham'.<sup>17</sup> Skingeenis is the largest, comprising roughly 320 acres. Stsnaang refers to two islands, currently referred to as 'Chatham East' and 'Chatham West' ("Big" and "Little" Chatham). The archipelago also includes Tlappas, and Shkwakaykalth, - respectively renamed 'Vantreight' and 'Strongtide' on marine charts- as well as Kwakwaylachets, "... the small island with the radio towers between [Skingeenis] and [Stsnaang]."<sup>18</sup> This attempt to erase Songhees presence and meanings from physical and cultural landscapes confirmed the colonial myth regarding Indigenous demise while simultaneously playing into settlers perceived sense of intellectual and cultural superiority, justifying newcomer entitlements to Indigenous lands and resources.<sup>19</sup> This settler-colonial world-making eased the passage, over time, of increasingly restrictive laws, and customary practices, injurious to the Songhees people and to their unique ways of knowing, being, and doing.

My goal for this project is to craft a history of Tl'chés that highlights the Songhees experience of the island from the early 19th century into the latter decades of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. Recognizing the limits of the sources for this period, I shall demonstrate that, since time immemorial, Tl'chés has been an integral part of Songhees territory - essential

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<sup>16</sup> *Daily Colonist*, "George Nicholson's West Coast Story: Ships and Sailors Left their Names... And Some their Bones", June 28, 1959, p. 12. This article also refers to the re-naming of places on Skingeenis to "Rudlin Bay" and "Seabird Point".

<sup>17</sup> See "In Praise of Victoria's Charms", p. 3, *Daily Colonist*, Sunday, November 15, 1908; J.T. Walbran, *British Columbia Coast Names, 1592-1906*. Vancouver: J.J. Douglas, 1977.

<sup>18</sup> For Songhees names of the islands, please refer to Duff, "Fort Victoria Treaties," pp. 46-48. Accessed online:

<https://ojs.library.ubc.ca/index.php/bcstudies/article/view/607/651>, January 4, 2020. Kwakaylachets is likely Alpha Islet.

<sup>19</sup> For a fuller exploration of the power of renaming see Paul Carter, *The Road to Botany Bay: An Exploration of Landscape and History*, Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2010 (3rd ed.).

to Songhees culture, identity, and well-being. An integral part of this history is the ongoing settler-colonial refusal to recognize Songhees title and rights, in order to keep Tl'chés as a settler domain, i.e. open to settlement, the extraction of resources, and recreation. Trespass, damage to culturally significant sites, settler purchase and sale of land on Tl'chés, and failure to repatriate Songhees lands, all demonstrate ongoing disregard of Songhees title. As only home can, Tl'chés has provided refuge and sanctuary from the colonial onslaught of the past one-hundred and seventy years. It has been a haven for families living on Skingeenis and Stsnaang during this period, including the Williamses, the Jameses, the Georges, the Sams, the Rices, and others, such as Samuel Qullamulk and "Jimmy Chickens".<sup>20</sup> Despite a substantial imbalance of power, the Songhees resisted encroachment and usurpation on Tl'chés, as they did in Victoria during the latter decades of the 19th century and the first decade of the 20<sup>th</sup> century.<sup>21</sup> Today, the Songhees continue to care for Tl'chés as she supports them in return. In what follows, I will attempt to evince something of this mutually sustaining relationship. Furthermore, I will establish that Tl'chés is both constitutive of, and inseparable from, Songhees culture and identity.

To produce this work, I adopted a multi-faceted approach that included interviews with Indigenous and non-Indigenous people, discussions with fellow researchers, and extensive library and archival research. I am indebted to the work of archaeologists Donald Mitchell and Darcy Mathews, ethnobotanist, Nancy Turner, and environmental

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<sup>20</sup> Please Note: this is not a complete list of people living on Tl'chés. While I have not been able to trace all of those who lived on Tl'chés during the 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> centuries, this is a start and others may conduct further research to fill this gap.

<sup>21</sup> For details, please see Jeannie L. Kanakos, "The Negotiations to Relocate the Songhees Indians, 1843-1911", M.A. Thesis, Department of History, Simon Fraser University, 1983.

scientist Thiago C. Gomes on the history and culture of Tl'chés. The pioneering work of Franz Boas and Charles Hill-Tout in the late 19<sup>th</sup> century has been especially helpful on Songhees culture. Both ethnographers studied the beliefs and practices related to births, marriages, deaths, social stratification within Coast Salish societies, along with protocols reinforcing political and social hierarchy within the group. Boas also provided information regarding dwellings, tools, and fishing practices.<sup>22</sup> For a more recent picture of Coast Salish culture/history, I drew on Wilson Duff's research on the Songhees. Duff documented Songhees dwelling sites and place names on southern Vancouver Island.<sup>23</sup> Duff's colleague, Wayne Suttles who worked with Coast Salish communities in Washington State, the Fraser Valley, and other parts of southern Vancouver Island, provided a valuable overview of Coast Salish traditional economic practices.<sup>24</sup> Suttles worked with both the WSANEC and the Songhees, to produce work that is relevant to Tl'chés. Diamond Jenness, who undertook research with the WSANEC people, neighbours to the Songhees, in the 1930s, provided a useful discussion of the Potlatch and its role in maintaining the social hierarchy of WSANEC society. As the WSANEC are close relatives of the Songhees, information on the practices of the latter sheds light on those of the former, and in this way it was helpful.<sup>25</sup> The more recent work of Brian Thom

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<sup>22</sup> Franz Boas, "1890 Report"; Some of the work of Charles Hill-Tout can be found in Ralph Maud (ed.) *The Salish People: The Local Contribution of Charles Hill-Tout*, Vancouver: Talonbooks, 1978. "1907 Report".

<sup>23</sup> Wilson Duff, *The Indian History of British Columbia: The Impact of the White Man*, Victoria: British Columbia Provincial Museum, 1964 and "Fort Victoria Treaties"; "Field Notes", courtesy of Darcy Mathews. Please refer to the bibliography for details,

<sup>24</sup> Suttles, *The Economic Life of the Coast Salish of the Haro and Rosario Straits; Coast Salish Essays*; "The Subsistence of the Potato", please refer to the bibliography for details.

<sup>25</sup> Diamond Jenness (Barnett Richling ed.), *The WASANC and their Neighbours: Diamond Jenness on the Coast Salish of Vancouver Island, 1935*, Oakville, ON: Rock's Mill Press, 2016; Jenness, "Origin of Salmon", Museum of History Archives.

provides useful information regarding Coast Salish ways of knowing and being.<sup>26</sup> The work of all of these scholars directly or indirectly refers to Tl'chés and therefore sheds significant light on the human history on the archipelago.

For a general history of the region, I consulted Robin Fisher's *Contact and Conflict: Indian-European Relations in British Columbia, 1774-1890*. Fisher's work chronicles the shifting colonial objectives and policies that illuminate the complex relationships between Indigenous and settler societies.<sup>27</sup> The work of historical geographer Cole Harris takes this a step further by focusing on the dispossession of Indigenous peoples and non-Indigenous settlement in the region. In *Making Native Space: Colonialism, Resistance, and Reserves in British Columbia* and "How Did Colonialism Dispospossess?: Comments From an Edge of Empire", Harris examines philosophical underpinnings of the British colonial worldview and the political and social objectives of colonial authorities in British Columbia. Harris covers significant events affecting both movements of populations and interactions between Indigenous and non-Indigenous peoples.<sup>28</sup> The work of historians John Lutz, Tina Loo, Kieran Van Rijn, and Ken Drushka has deepened my understanding of settler ideology, and/or the objectives, policies, and practices that emerged from it.<sup>29</sup> I have relied on these scholars' to craft the broader historical context for Tl'chés.

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<sup>26</sup> Brian Thom, "Reframing Indigenous Territories: Private Property, Human Rights and Overlapping Claims", *American Indian Culture and Research Journal*, 38, 4, 2014, pp. 3-28; see also "The Paradox of Boundaries in Coast Salish Territories", *Cultural Geographies*, 16, 2009, pp. 179-205.

<sup>27</sup> Robin Fisher, *Contact and Conflict: Indian-European Relations in British Columbia, 1774-1890*, (2nd ed) UBC Press: 1992.

<sup>28</sup> Cole Harris, *Making Native Space: Colonialism, Resistance, and Reserves in British Columbia*, UBC Press: 2003; "How Did Colonialism Dispospossess?: Comments from an Edge of Empire", *Annals of the Association of American Geographers*, Vol. 94, no. 1 (March 2004) pp: 165-182.

<sup>29</sup> John S. Lutz, *Makúk: A New History of Aboriginal-White Relations*, UBC Press: 2009; Tina Loo, "Of Moose and Men: Hunting For Masculinities In British Columbia, 1880-1939", *Western Historical Quarterly*, Vol. 32, Iss. 3 (August 2001) pp: 296-319; Kieran Van Rijn, "'Lo! The Poor Indian!' Colonial Responses to the 1862-63 Smallpox Epidemic in British Columbia and Vancouver Island", *Canadian Bulletin of Medical*

Natalie Zemon Davis's work on Martin Guerre helped me to address the gaps in my case-study.<sup>30</sup> To compensate for a lack of archival information directly related to her topic, Davis drew on broader cultural and historical contexts to construct likely scenarios.<sup>31</sup> I have done the same for TI'chés.

The work of political philosopher James Tully, anthropologist Michael Asch, and legal scholar John Borrows offers a way to reimagine policies and practices of law and governance in an Indigenous context.<sup>32</sup> Their work creates the conceptual space to envision the legal and political approaches required for decolonization of language and thought. It also allows for the revitalization of partnerships between Indigenous Nations and settler governments. According to these scholars, such partnerships would nurture respect and reciprocity, with both parties recognizing the need to integrate Indigenous and western legal traditions in the development of law and policy pertaining to Indigenous rights. Initiating these changes requires first familiarizing ourselves with the histories and current practices of Indigenous peoples and settlers, as well as with the sometimes subtle differences between policies that enact decolonization and those that emerge from within ever-shifting forms of colonialism. Looking carefully at the lives of ordinary people allows us to recognize colonialism in its quotidian forms. A study of human activity on TI'chés, and in neighbouring places, offers a unique opportunity to engage in this process.

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*History*, vol. 23, iss. 2, 2006, p. 541.; Ken Drushka, *Working in the Woods: A History of Logging on the West Coast*, Harbour Publishing: 1992.

<sup>30</sup> Natalie Zemon Davis, "Introduction", *The Return of Martin Guerre*, Harvard University Press, 1983.

<sup>31</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>32</sup> James Tully, Part 3 – "Indigenous Peoples", in *Public Philosophy in a New Key*, vol. 1, Democracy and Civic Freedom, Cambridge, U.K.: Cambridge University Press, 2008, pp. 223-288; Michael Asch, *On Being Here to Stay: Treaties and Aboriginal Rights in Canada*, Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2014; John Borrows, *Freedom and Indigenous Constitutionalism*, Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2016.

Throughout this study, I have relied, directly and indirectly on Straits Salish oral history. An Indigenous oral history may be seen as one strand of knowledge - a record of the past - within Indigenous oral tradition. Indigenous oral traditions are rich repositories of the historical as well as the social, environmental, and ethical understandings of a given community. The legitimacy of narratives within the western historical tradition is derived from documentary evidence. Indigenous oral history, while concerned with establishing the facticity of specific events, occurring at particular moments in time, does not require documentary evidence, as the protocols for ensuring accuracy are enacted and re-enacted in repeated tellings over time. Since western tradition privileges documentary evidence as a superior way of establishing facticity, Europeans have seen Indigenous oral histories as suspect. Nevertheless, many cultures continue to recognize equally robust systems of documentation.<sup>33</sup>

Another constraint on western recognition of Indigenous histories has been a lack of familiarity and understanding of Indigenous forms of representation. Indigenous oral history figures as one thread in an open-ended weaving of traditional elements that can be variously and intricately woven to illuminate the complexity of a particular context, present or past. These are not meant to be picked apart for scrutiny by those unfamiliar with the relevant rules of composition. Thus, Indigenous oral history might be spliced into various types of narrative and performative medium that Westerners do not recognize as 'history'.<sup>34</sup> Ongoing engagement with oral tradition involves not only remembering, but also re-remembering the relationships and understandings that shape community and

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<sup>33</sup> Bruce Granville Miller, *Oral History on Trial: Recognizing Aboriginal Narratives in the Courts*, Vancouver: UBC Press, 2011, pp. 16-17; 4.

<sup>34</sup> Bruce Granville Miller, *Oral History on Trial: Recognizing Aboriginal Narratives in the Courts*, Vancouver: UBC Press, 2011, pp. 2-3; 20-22; 24-26; 46-65; 71-73.

identity. Certainly, this involves the recollection and ratification of personal and communal stories, genealogies, and historical accounts, but it also requires astutely configuring elements of the past and present into whatever performative shape best articulates their particular relevance to the community in the present.<sup>35</sup>

Oral history may be spoken, sung, or danced. Whether it is historically accurate and authoritative is ascertained with reference to two things: the audience's own collective memory, in which significance is inextricably bound by form, content, and reiteration over generations; and the prodigious learning and recollection of Elders and Knowledge Keepers, who must observe strict protocols ensuring the accuracy and pertinence of what is conveyed.<sup>36</sup> Whether to teach, affirm, entertain, or all of these, an Elder or Knowledge Keeper chooses a form, combines traditional elements pertinent to the occasion, and highlights those most relevant to audience and circumstance. Individuals may question, add commentary, and interpret layered meanings in uniquely useful ways. A western audience seeing and hearing a performance of Indigenous narrative may miss the 'historiographic' significance of this process of corroboration and sanction. However, this is one of the ways that threads of Indigenous oral tradition - including oral histories - variously woven and performed in narratives central to the life and well-being of the community, are preserved and re-confirmed over time.<sup>37</sup>

Capacious and dynamic, Indigenous oral tradition is able to faithfully transmit historical knowledge, while meaningfully engaging current needs within the community and reflecting the subjectivities of Elders, Knowledge Keepers, other narrators, and

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<sup>35</sup> For example, please refer to Granville Miller, 2011, p. 49.

<sup>36</sup> Ibid, for example, some Indigenous communities, such as the Stó:lō, oral footnoting is observed. See Granville Miller, 2011, pp. 73; 74.

<sup>37</sup> Granville Miller, *Oral History on Trial*, 2011.

audience. Nimble serving as reminder, teaching, validation, guidance, and/or entertainment, Indigenous oral narratives, including histories and genealogies, emerge from, express, and affirm Indigenous ways of knowing and being, and therefore represent the world differently from what Western historical tradition would do. For this reason, the accuracy of Indigenous oral history can only be adequately assessed on its own terms, in accordance with Indigenous protocols.<sup>38</sup>

Along with Indigenous oral history, this study relies on oral testimony, which simply refers to a person's statement, transmitted in speech rather than writing. Oral testimony may, or may not, include elements of Indigenous history or tradition. This is an important distinction because the accuracy of orally transmitted Indigenous histories or traditions ought not to be assessed according to the criteria used to determine the accuracy of statements given in oral testimony. As stated above, Indigenous oral history is embedded in the oral tradition of a particular people, which contains rigorous protocols to ensure the accuracy of information conveyed. These protocols also serve to continually re-affirm the historical knowledge bound up within a community's collective memory.<sup>39</sup> Oral testimony, on the other hand, is more simply the representation of an individual's or group's experience.

It is important to note issues of translation inherent in this project. The English language I rely on in my discussion of Straits Salish cultures cannot possibly express the full meanings of the Lekwungen language. The elements and constructions of language that are available to us in English emerge from western ways of knowing and being, and

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<sup>38</sup> For a better sense of the subject, please refer to Granville Miller, 2011, pp. 71-73.

<sup>39</sup> Granville Miller has described "oral footnoting". For details, please refer to *Oral History on Trial: Recognizing Aboriginal Narratives in the Courts*, Vancouver: UBC Press, 2011, p. 17.

as every culture constrains meaning within its particular paradigms and imaginaries, my discussion of Straits Salish ways will necessarily reflect these limitations.

Another issue of translation involves humour, which plays a significant role in the cultures of Indigenous peoples in the Pacific Northwest. Appearing in the oral performances of Indigenous narrators, humour was often used to chastise those who had broken codes of social conduct.<sup>40</sup> However, as Indigenous groups refrained from sharing elements of their cultures with outsiders, humour may also have been used to deflect the intrusiveness and appropriations of researchers.<sup>41</sup> The combination of colonial dynamics, and Indigenous cultural protocols for the protection of certain types of knowledge, throw into question settler understandings of Indigenous cultures.

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<sup>40</sup> As Wayne Suttles has pointed out, gossip may have served a similar purpose.

<sup>41</sup> Madronna Holden, "Making All the Crooked Ways Straight: Satirical Portraits of Whites in Coast Salish Folklore", *The Journal of American Folklore*, vol. 89. no. 353, July-September 1976, pp. 271-293.

## Chapter One - Early History of Tl'chés and Surrounding Areas

For thousands of years, Tl'chés has been integral to the lives, cultures, and identities of Straits Salish peoples. The significance of Skingeenis for the subsistence and spiritual practices of these peoples is highlighted in the “Origin of Salmon” story, passed down through generations of Salish communities.<sup>42</sup> Anthropologist Diamond Jenness recorded this story as told by Johnny Claxton at East Reserve, Saanich Peninsula sometime between 1934 and 1935.<sup>43</sup> According to this version, salmon first arrived at Skingeenis through a reciprocal relationship with Salish youths living there.<sup>44</sup> It is rich with meaning, recalling the long and abiding connection of the Straits Salish people to Tl'chés, while highlighting the importance of respect and reciprocity to that relationship.

As ethnobotanist Nancy Turner affirms, “[f]or countless generations these islands have been vital to the livelihoods and cultural expression of Straits Salish peoples in the region, especially the [Songhees].”<sup>45</sup> Traditionally, the Straits Salish kept the remains of their loved ones close to them, thus burial grounds dating back 2,000-3,000 years mark, Tl'chés as not only an important site for the harvest of resources, but also as home.<sup>46</sup>

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<sup>42</sup> Relayed by Johnny Claxton to Diamond Jenness “Origin of Salmon” story, in *Coast Salish Mythology*. Stories in this collection gathered by Diamond Jenness from 1934-1935. Canadian Museum of History Archives, in Diamond Jenness (VII-G9M), *Saanich and other Coast Salish Notes, Vancouver Island, British Columbia (1934-36)*, Box: 39, f. 1.; Please note, there are issues inherent processes of translation and transcription. As such, meaning conveyed in in the transcription may not reflect the intended meaning of the narrator; Grant Keddie has provided part of the “Origin of Salmon” story in the “Supplement to the 2003 book: “A Songhees Pictorial: A History of the Songhees People as Seen by Outsiders, 1790-1912””, p. 82 accessed online: [http://staff.royalbcmuseum.bc.ca/wp-content/uploads/2013/08/Songhees\\_supplement-Grant-Keddie.pdf](http://staff.royalbcmuseum.bc.ca/wp-content/uploads/2013/08/Songhees_supplement-Grant-Keddie.pdf)

<sup>43</sup> Claxton and Jenness, “Origin of Salmon”, 1934-1935.

<sup>44</sup> Conversation with Darcy Mathews, Stsnaang (west), British Columbia, July 13, 2016. “Little Chatham Island [Stsnaang]” is another name for Chatham Island West, home of Tom and Alice James, and Elder Súlhiima (Joan) Morris. “Origin of Salmon”, told by Johnny Claxton to Diamond Jenness, National Archives of Canada.

<sup>45</sup> Cuerrier et. al., “Cultural Keystone Places”, p. 434.

<sup>46</sup> Mathews has stated that there are burial grounds on Stsnaang (west). Conversation with D. Mathews one July 13, 2016.

Though archaeological evidence supports early groups living on Tl'chés, it is unclear today whether they occupied year round dwellings, seasonal homes, or a combination of both.<sup>47</sup>

Until now, systematic archaeological research has not been undertaken on Tl'chés, and excavations are just beginning.<sup>48</sup> Along the beaches of Stsnaang (Chatham West), archaeologist Darcy Mathews has uncovered “house middens”, dating back 2,000 - 3,000 years.<sup>49</sup> Middens contain the remains of household refuse: fish and bird bones, tools or their parts, as well as other items, such as fire-altered rocks, which can be radio-carbon dated, and/or otherwise analyzed for important information regarding inhabitants.<sup>50</sup> Many middens on Stsnaang are partially or completely covered by grass, shrubs and sand; some are known but none have been excavated.<sup>51</sup> In some cases, the midden size suggests that, at some point, large numbers of Indigenous people lived on Stsnaang (west), and, according to Mathews, remnants of these societies might be found all over the island.<sup>52</sup> Mathews has suggested that there were likely two, possibly three, villages on Stsnaang (west), two of which may overlap.<sup>53</sup> This island has the most dense middens. There may also be a village on the north end of Skingeenis, and at least one on Stsnaang (East).<sup>54</sup>

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<sup>47</sup> Ibid.

<sup>48</sup> Personal communication with Darcy Mathews, April 16, 2020.

<sup>49</sup> Ibid. Mathews has explained that middens are likely located in other places on Stsnaang (west)

<sup>50</sup> Ibid.; for more information on middens, please refer to Stein, *Exploring Coast Salish Prehistory*, p. 10.

<sup>51</sup> Ibid.

<sup>52</sup> Mathews, conversations on Stsnaang (west), British Columbia, July 13, 2016. According to Mathews, Tl'chés has been populated by large numbers of Straits Salish people over the centuries and has perhaps been densely populated by them at different times. Although there is much research still to be done, Mathews believes that remnants of past communities can almost certainly be found all over Stsnaang (west).

<sup>53</sup> Personal communication with Darcy Mathews, April 16, 2020.

<sup>54</sup> Ibid.

Middens are valuable archaeological sites, their artifacts shedding light on various aspects of early human presence, including the physical layout of communities - the siting of dwellings and other structures, relative to one another and to non-human features. According to Mathews, middens located at the top of “Joan [Súlhlíma]’s Beach”, on Stsnaang (west), were likely located at the back of people’s homes.<sup>55</sup> Rising sea levels have left only the most recent house sites on the headland. “The seaward edge of older midden has likely eroded[,] [while] more recent midden [has] accumulate[d] on top of the remnant and move[d] inland.”<sup>56</sup> According to Mathews, “basal remnants of the oldest middens may extend into the intertidal zone, and an intertidal excavation of sand beds may suggest additional information about early inhabitants.”<sup>57</sup> He also observes that centuries of build-up from house/village middens may have altered the physical features of Stsnaang (west) in interesting ways. For example, inhabitants may have strategically disposed of household material to “create flat, well-drained house platforms”, more amenable to the construction of structures or garden beds.<sup>58</sup>

Recently-located village sites above the beach bluffs at the southwestern tip of Stsnaang (west) provide further evidence of early habitation on Tl’chés. A possible pit-house site – which today appears as a circular depression in the ground - may date back a thousand years or more.<sup>59</sup> Prior to and during the colonial period, Salish peoples

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<sup>55</sup> Ibid. Mathews has referred to the long beach on the west side of Stsnaang (west) as “Joan’s Beach”, in honour of Songhees Elder Súlhlíma (Joan) Morris who lived on the island as a child.

<sup>56</sup> Ibid.; Mathews has referred to the long beach on the west side of Stsnaang (west) as “Joan’s Beach”, in honour of Songhees Elder Súlhlíma (Joan) Morris who lived on the island as a child.

<sup>57</sup> Conversation with Mathews on Stsnaang (west), British Columbia, July 13, 2016.

<sup>58</sup> Ibid.

<sup>59</sup> Mathews, “Interview”, Stsnaang (west), British Columbia, August 10, 2017. Mathews has suggested that these dwelling sites may be as old as 5,000 years, but that more research must be conducted before he can establish an exact date.

constructed and occupied pit houses.<sup>60</sup> These circular, or “subrectangular”, dwellings were dug into the earth, leaving only the roof visible above ground.<sup>61</sup> People would have entered these dwellings by a ladder in the opening of the roof.<sup>62</sup> Sitting low in the ground, pit houses were protected from the elements, and retained their warmth. Built simply, and easy to take down, they allowed for efficient movement between seasonal village sites.<sup>63</sup> It is significant to note that “internal features and articles” contained in the pithouses may vary from dwelling to dwelling, depending on a variety of factors, such as the date of construction, time of year the dwelling was inhabited, and the “social roles” of occupants.<sup>64</sup> Archaeological excavations on Tl’chés will be useful for confirming if this was a pithouse and, if so, when it was occupied and by whom.

More recently, Straits Salish peoples began to build larger wooden post and beam shed-roof dwellings.<sup>65</sup> These homes were typically shared by extended families. Some could house over one hundred people.<sup>66</sup> Large rectangular depressions in the ground

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<sup>60</sup> Dana Lepofsky, David M. Schaepe, Anthony P. Graesch, Michael Lenert, Patricia Ormerod, Keith Thor Carlson, Jeanne E. Arnold, Michael Blake, Patrick Moore and John J. Clague, “Exploring Stó:lō-Coast Salish Interaction and Identity in Ancient Houses and Settlements in the Fraser Valley, British Columbia”, *American Antiquity*, Vol. 74, No. 4 (October 2009), for dwellings occupied by the Stó:lō “at the time of contact”, please refer to p. 599; pp. 611-613. According to the authors, “at least five of the 10 pithouses at Welqámex were occupied in the Contact/Colonial period.” See p. 612. Welqámex is near what is now called Hope, B.C.; Suttles on Coast Salish dwellings, *Economic*; Jenness, *The Coast Salish of Vancouver Island*. Jenness describes the shed houses used by 19th century WSANEC people; these were akin to those of the Lekwungen.

<sup>61</sup> Lepofsky, et al. “Exploring Stó:lō-Coast Salish Interaction and Identity in Ancient Houses and Settlements in the Fraser Valley, British Columbia”, p. 599; for “subrectangular” see p. 610.

<sup>62</sup> Lepofsky, et al. “Exploring Stó:lō-Coast Salish Interaction and Identity in Ancient Houses and Settlements in the Fraser Valley, British Columbia”, pp. 599-601; Mathews, conversations; pit-houses.

<sup>63</sup> Weather conditions on Tl’chés may have made it difficult to inhabit pithouses all year round. The combination of heavy rainfall and temperatures above zero – conditions common to fall, winter, and spring - would have softened the ground which may have caused pithouses to collapse.

<sup>64</sup> For “internal features and articles” please refer to Lepofsky et al. Exploring Stó:lō-Coast Salish Interaction and Identity in Ancient Houses and Settlements in the Fraser Valley, British Columbia”, p. 617.

<sup>65</sup> Wayne Suttles describes different kinds of dwellings built by Straits Salish peoples during the 19th century. Please refer to Suttles, *Economic Life*.

<sup>66</sup> Darcy Mathews has described Salish “Big Houses”, stating that they were capable of housing large numbers of people. During a conversation on July 13, 2016 (0:11-0:16), he mentioned that “there may have been four or five houses” in one of these communities. Wayne Suttles has explained that they were

near the pit house site, on the southwest corner of Stsnaang (west), have been identified by Mathews as comprising a village site. The bluff would have been aesthetically and strategically ideal: lovely views in three directions from high ground, offering protection from surprise attacks.<sup>67</sup> Mathews has located other village sites on the islands, and has speculated that, at one time, Tl'chés was home to as many as 500-1000 people.<sup>68</sup>

Climatic conditions over the past 150 years are not what they were 3,000-5,000 years ago, and subsistence practices, at any time, would reflect the availability of water.<sup>69</sup> As extensive archaeological research on Tl'chés has yet to be undertaken, the details of early subsistence practices on the archipelago cannot yet be ascertained.<sup>70</sup> The islands' geographical proximity to other sites along the Juan de Fuca and Georgia Straits, and in the Puget Sound, as well as their climactic and topographical similarities to these, suggest that the people of Stsnaang and Skingeenis would likely have lived a life similar to their contemporaries in this area. This would have included those at English Camp, on San Juan Island, WA, and Tse-whit-zen, at present day Port Angeles, WA.<sup>71</sup>

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designed to accommodate ever-growing families because the walls on the ends could be removed and the houses could be extended.

<sup>67</sup> Mathews, personal communication, in August 2017 and April 16, 2020.

<sup>68</sup> Ibid. To be tested with ongoing excavations.

<sup>69</sup> Mathews has discussed the present lack of water on Tl'chés and whether this was an issue in the past.

<sup>70</sup> "Early" refers to the period between 1200 B.C.E. TO 1800 C.E.

<sup>71</sup> I am grateful to Darcy Mathews for this information. Personal communication April 16, 2020.

## Chapter Two - 19th Century Life on Tl'chéš

Anthropological sources shed light on the history of 19<sup>th</sup> century life on Tl'chéš. Since this work involved Indigenous informants raised within the traditions of their parents and grandparents, it also casts light on an earlier period.<sup>72</sup> Nevertheless, the usefulness of the research from this period is limited. Because anthropologists saw European settlement as leading to the extinction of Indigenous peoples, their primary objective was to record elements of Indigenous culture they assumed were disappearing. Thus, these “salvage ethnographers” privileged ‘authentic’ practices and beliefs - those they perceived to be free of European influence.<sup>73</sup> They failed to recognize that Indigenous peoples and their cultures, like those of Europeans, had been shifting in response to internal and external influences for thousands of years, thus there was no static, unchanging culture on which they could report. For this reason, among others, intercultural misinterpretation was inevitable, and significant practices or beliefs often overlooked. Furthermore, the introduction of European goods and disease, prior to the arrival of settlers, altered ‘traditional’ practices.<sup>74</sup> Novel goods influenced the old ways of Indigenous cultures, as did introduced disease, famine, or war. For example, the smallpox epidemic of 1782, prior to non-Indigenous settlement in what is now called British Columbia, resulted in significant social and cultural changes for Indigenous peoples. As Cole Harris explains, Indigenous peoples’ lack of immunity to the disease resulted in a high mortality rate.<sup>75</sup> Once densely

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<sup>72</sup> These anthropologists may or may not have accurately captured the meaning conveyed by their informants. Misinterpretation is an inevitable part of this research. Furthermore, there has been a tendency among non-Indigenous people to dismiss oral testimony as unreliable.

<sup>73</sup> Please refer to the “Report on the Ethnology of the South-eastern Tribes of Vancouver Island, British Columbia (1907), in Ralph Maud ed. *The Salish People* Vancouver: Talonbooks, pp. 127-162.

<sup>74</sup> Cole Harris, “Voices of Disaster: Smallpox around the Strait of Georgia in 1782”, *Ethnohistory*, Vol. 41, No. 4 (Autumn, 1994), pp. 591-626.

<sup>75</sup> *Ibid.* p. 609.

populated villages along the coast were all but abandoned after the epidemic. Survivors had to join other groups, moving from their homes, learning new languages, and adopting new practices. Political, economic, and social relations within and between communities would have changed as a result of the loss of population and communities. Emotional and psychological effects would have significant in all communities for generations to come.<sup>76</sup> Evolution of intercultural exchange, as well as benign and catastrophic events led to both gradual and sudden change, including cultural hybridization. Many outside researchers, however, did not understand Indigenous culture as fluid and syncretic.

Also problematic were the terms used by ethnographers of this period. For example, from the mid-19<sup>th</sup> century onwards, colonial authorities, scholars, and Canadian government officials not only imposed new labels on Indigenous peoples, for example, terms- such as 'band' or 'tribe' - but also they assigned new tribal names. For example, they assigned the name 'Songhees', and the term 'Coast Salish' to the peoples of southern Vancouver Island and imposed territorial and social boundaries that did not reflect the kinship affiliations and social networks of the groups whom they were supposedly intended to represent.<sup>77</sup> This served to destabilize, in settler-colonial perception, the interconnectedness of lands, waters, and people that ground Indigenous sovereignty. These terms are still commonly used by both Indigenous and non-Indigenous people, and will therefore be used in this paper. Noting their origins simply underlines the limitations of our understanding regarding peoples who may have understood their affiliations very differently from what we might imagine them to have

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<sup>76</sup> Ibid. pp. 591-626.

<sup>77</sup> Alexandra Harmon, "Lines in the Sand: Shifting Boundaries Between Indians and Non-Indians in the Puget Sound Region". *Western Historical Quarterly* Vol. 26. Iss. 4 pp. 429-453.

been. Thus, early ethnographers' quest for the 'authentic' presumes an original, static culture, while their use of inappropriate terms of description confuses settler-colonial understanding of Indigenous people and cultures. Despite these limitations, ethnographies are necessary for piecing together the lives of early 19th century people living on Tl'chés, and, at this time, piecing together is as much as we can do. Colonial disruption of Indigenous cultures has severed some of the many threads that ensure continuity in oral historical transmission. However, detailed descriptions of cultural practices, contained in these writings, do shed some light on the culture and economy of island residents - the subject of the following section.

As noted, anthropologists Franz Boas, Charles Hill-Tout, and Wilson Duff conducted research during the latter decades of the 19<sup>th</sup> century and the early to mid-20th century on Vancouver Island. The problem was that all three were primarily interested in pre-contact culture and social organization, and thus relied on the testimony of elderly Coast Salish informants for information regarding earlier times. Although not ideal, this did provide some understanding on Songhees social structure. Boas, Hill-Tout, and Duff, used the term "Lekwungen" to refer to several related family groups living in separate big houses at different locations along the coast of southern Vancouver Island and on Tl'chés.<sup>78</sup>

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<sup>78</sup> Boas referred to the Lekwungen as Lku'ñgen, and Hill-Tout, as Lekúñen. In "The Fort Victoria Treaties", pp. 4-5 Duff stated that "Their collective name for themselves, when they used one, seems most often to have been Lekwungen...; other tribes both to the north and to the south seem to have called them by variants of a name which was originally that of one of their subgroups, the Stanges... of Parry Bay, the name has come to be written "Songhees."

Franz Boas, "Report on The Lku'ñgen" (1890); Hill-Tout, "Report" (1907); Diamond Jenness, *The WSANEC and Their Neighbours*; Suttles, *Economic; Coast Salish Essays*; "Private Knowledge, Morality, and Social Classes among the Coast Salish"; Wilson Duff, *The Indians of British Columbia*; "The Fort Victoria Treaties"; "Field Notes", courtesy of Dr. Darcy Mathews.

Establishing a precise date for the first use and occupation of Tl'chés by Songhees people is difficult. During the early 1860s, newspaper articles reported "Songhees" families moving out to Discovery Island to escape the smallpox epidemic of 1862-63.<sup>79</sup> Tom James, a Songhees interviewed by anthropologist Wayne Suttles, claimed that members of the Songhees had been living on the archipelago prior to the epidemic.<sup>80</sup> Boas who interviewed people in Victoria during the 1880s, asserts that the residents of Tl'chés were members of the Lekwungen. In his 1890 report, he wrote that the "Lku'ñgen" were "divided" into "gentes", one of which was the "Sk iñgē' nes" on Discovery Island.<sup>81</sup> In the Indian Act of 1876, the Dominion Government implicitly recognized Songhees presence on Tl'chés. The long term effect of the act was to divide the Songhees people into "...the Songhees, Esquimalt, and Discovery Island bands...". By at least 1896, the Dominion Government considered residents of Discovery Island to be members of the larger Songhees community.<sup>82</sup> The Department of Indian Affairs (DIA) Annual Report of that year states that, "The members of [the] [Discovery] [Island] band..." were a "...branch of the Songhees..." The 1901 report asserts that the "...Discovery Island Indians" were a "sub-family" of the "Songhees Band".<sup>83</sup> Ethnographer Charles Hill-Tout agreed with Boas. He made note of the "Lekwungen" "village" of "[Skunines]" on Discovery Island

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<sup>79</sup> There are numerous articles and notes in the *British Colonist* between the years of 1862-63. Please refer to the bibliography section for details.

<sup>80</sup> Wayne Suttles, *Economic*, p. 20.

<sup>81</sup> Boas, "Report (1890)".

<sup>82</sup> John Lutz states that the "...Indian Act of 1876 divid[ed] the Songhees into the Songhees, Esquimalt, and Discovery Island bands..." please refer to Lutz, *Makúk: A New History of Aboriginal-White Relations*, Vancouver: UBC Press, 2009, p. 50.

The Department of Indian Affairs appears to have used the name "Discovery Island" for the whole archipelago, at least, until the "Annual Report" of 1900 (p. 73), when the islands are referred to separately as Discovery and Chatham.

<sup>83</sup> Department of Indian Affairs "Annual Report (1896)", p. 85, accessed online; Department of Indian Affairs "Annual Report (1901)", p. 224 (statement was repeated in 1902), accessed online; see bibliography for details.

[Skingeenis].<sup>84</sup> Strong evidence supporting the Songhees claim to the archipelago comes from Skingeenis resident Henry Williams' testimony, recorded during the McKenna-McBride Royal Commission in 1913. When asked "[what] tribe of Indians does this Reserve [Discovery Island] belong?" Williams responded, "the Songhees Band of Indians."<sup>85</sup> Wilson Duff corroborated this in his article "The Fort Victoria Treaties":

"The native people of the Victoria area, who came to be known collectively as the "Songhish" or "Songhees", were never in any political sense a single tribe. They were comprised of a large number of more or less autonomous household groups, whose sprawling plank houses were clustered in a number of winter villages, and who moved regularly from place to place in the course of their annual round of activities. Specific resource areas and house sites were owned and used by specific households; other places within what was regarded by themselves and outsiders as Songhees territory were utilized more or less in common... During the terrible smallpox epidemic of 1862 the Songhees took refuge on Discovery Island, where some of them had formerly lived. A number of families chose to stay and formed what was for a time considered a third band... For official purposes, however, the Discovery Island people have always been considered as part of the Songhees Band..."<sup>86</sup>

Anthropologist Wayne Suttles also confirms that Discovery Island residents were members of the Songhees rather than a distinct people. He states:

"...Apparently there were a few people who made their winter village on Discovery Island before the coming of the whites. After the founding of Victoria and the subsequent concentration of Songhish around the Hudson's Bay Company fort, an epidemic of smallpox drove several families to resettle Discovery Island. This may have been the smallpox epidemic of 1863. According to [Tom] [James], who is perhaps in his seventies, six families, including his own, came out to Discovery Island before he was born and built a large plank house..."<sup>87</sup>

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<sup>84</sup> Hill-Tout, "Report (1907)", in Maud ed. p. 128.

<sup>85</sup> McKenna-McBride Royal Commission Report (1913). In the report, Henry Williams was listed as "Harry", p. 199. Report was accessed online through Library and Archives Canada. Please refer to the bibliography for details.

<sup>86</sup> Duff, "The Fort Victoria Treaties", p. 4. It was likely during the 1870s and 1880s that Discovery Island Songhees were considered a separate band. However, as demonstrated above, by the 1890s, they were perceived by the Dominion government as a branch of the Songhees.

<sup>87</sup> Suttles, *Economic*, p. 20. Suttles has stated that Tom James is Songhees, but that he was "raised on Discovery Island", p. vii. This is important because it confirms the connection between Discovery Island residents and the Songhees on southern Vancouver Island.

Wilson Duff has suggested that the people who lived on Tl'chés during the 19th century may have had familial connections to Cadboro Bay, living in the latter seasonally.<sup>88</sup> In “The Fort Victoria Treaties”, Duff stated that different household groups lived on the shores of present-day Victoria, Oak Bay, and Saanich. Considering that an original group of Songhees gradually dispersed elsewhere as numbers grew, living in adjacent bays would have allowed relatives to remain close to one another, and maintain “closely-similar” dialects.<sup>89</sup>

According to Suttles, Coast Salish villages consisted of “one or more plank houses which usually stood near the shore, parallel to the beach.”<sup>90</sup> These dwellings could be detached or “built in a solid row and joined as a single building”.<sup>91</sup> During the winter, a small family group, consisting perhaps of a husband, wife, their offspring, and “unmarried or widowed relatives”, lived in a “section” of a large “plank house” which they shared with their extended family.<sup>92</sup> In the summer, the same small family might move to a “fishing location”, again, sharing dwelling space.<sup>93</sup> However, families who lived together during the winter might not share living space with the same people “during the rest of the year”.

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<sup>88</sup> In “The Fort Victoria Treaties” p. 48, Duff stated that “King Freezy 'the chief of the Cadboro Bay people'...” had given one of Duff's informants the “names of six [ ] [Lekwungen] groups who had houses at what [King Freezy] called 'Capital Bay'”. The “Skingeenis” were one of the groups with a big house at “Capital Bay”, which Duff believed to be Cadboro Bay. In his 1907 report, Hill-Tout referred to the people on Discovery Island as the “Skingeenis”.

<sup>89</sup> Duff, “The Fort Victoria Treaties”, p. 4.; According to Darcy Mathews this likely explains the reason for “largest village sites at Tl'chés... face[ing] towards Oak [Bay] and Cadboro Bay.” Mathews also commented that the location of these village sites would have sheltered them from the wind. Personal communication with Darcy Mathews, April 16, 2020.

<sup>90</sup> Suttles, *Economic*, p. 276.

<sup>91</sup> *Ibid.* pp. 276; 272-273.

<sup>92</sup> Suttles, *Economic*, pp. 271-272.

<sup>93</sup> *Ibid.* p. 272.

Also, during the summer months, a single family might live by itself in “a temporary mat house”.<sup>94</sup>

Archaeologist Donald Mitchell has suggested that the social “arrangements” of groups living in the region 1200 years B.C.E. may have been “more egalitarian” than those of peoples living in the area after 400 C.E..<sup>95</sup> According to Mitchell, archaeological material recovered from the period between 1200 B.C.E. and 400 C.E. reveals no “sign[] of wealth accumulation.”<sup>96</sup> However, Mitchell’s evidence suggested social stratification by 400 C.E..<sup>97</sup> His hypothesis is based on the discovery of human remains buried between 400 B.C.E - 400 C.E. with “enduring inclusions”, such as “dentalia and shale and shell beads”, while others of the same groups and time period were buried without such luxuries.<sup>98</sup> Further, Mitchell suggested that cranial deformation, found on only some of these human remains, may also reflect a difference in social status.<sup>99</sup>

Whatever the case, it is clear that 19th century Songhees communities were socially stratified. Anthropologists Franz Boas, Charles Hill-Tout, and Wayne Suttles each had their own interpretations for the social hierarchy they observed in Coast Salish communities. Boas asserted that there were “three classes of people” within Songhees society. “[T]he nobility”, or “*st/Etē’ tlik atl’*”; “the middle class”, or “*tlā’ m’a’l*”, and “the

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<sup>94</sup> Ibid. p. 272.

<sup>95</sup> Mitchell, “Prehistory of the Coasts of Southern British Columbia and Northern Washington”, in Wayne Suttles (ed.), *Handbook of North American Indians*, vol. 7, *Northwest Coast*, Washington, D.C.: Smithsonian Institution, 1990, p. 344.

<sup>96</sup> Mitchell, “Prehistory”, p. 344.

<sup>97</sup> Ibid. p. 346.

<sup>98</sup> Ibid. p. 346.

<sup>99</sup> Ibid. p. 346. Mitchell states “...there are persons with deformed skulls and others lacking this feature, possibly indicating a difference in ascribed status from infancy...” He cites Beattie’s 1980 “study of cranial deformation”.

common people”, or “*tl'ai'tciti'*”.<sup>100</sup> According to Boas, name denoted class.<sup>101</sup> He asserted that all middle class Songhees children were born “common”, though members of their family could “raise their rank” by “giv[ing] a feast, and distribut[ing] a certain amount of property [o]n their behalf.”<sup>102</sup> He believed that it was possible for “common people” to join the “middle class”, but that members of the middle class could not become members of the nobility.<sup>103</sup> On the other hand, chiefs were members of the nobility and the position of chief was passed from father to son, or from an older brother to a younger brother.<sup>104</sup> “[S]laves were held by all classes.”<sup>105</sup>

In 1907, Charles Hill-Tout argued that there were for four “distinct classes” in Songhees society: “the chieftains”, “the hereditary nobility”, the “base-folk”, and “the slaves.”<sup>106</sup> While Boas asserted the existence of a single class of nobles, Hill-Tout claimed that there was a class of people who were hereditary ‘chiefs’ as well as a separate class of hereditary nobles.<sup>107</sup> Boas affirmed the existence of a “middle class”, while Hill-Tout identified a “sub-class”, not unlike the European “bourgeoisie”, which was made up of:

“... men, who, by their ability or good luck, had acquired wealth, by means of which in giving feasts and potlatches they had gained a certain social standing in their tribe; but as they had no “grandfathers,” no pedigree of honourable descent, and no family or kin-

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<sup>100</sup> Boas, “Report (1890)”, p. 569.

<sup>101</sup> Ibid. pp. 569-570.

<sup>102</sup> Ibid. p. 570.

<sup>103</sup> Ibid. p. 570.

<sup>104</sup> Boas, “Report (1890)”, p. 570.

<sup>105</sup> Ibid. p. 570.

<sup>106</sup> Hill-Tout, “Report (1907)”.

In Wayne Suttles, *Coast Salish Essays*, Vancouver: Talonbooks, 1987, p. 6. Wayne Suttles states that “[a] person of high status was called [siem] This term is often translated as “chief,” but it is clear that the whole institution of chieftainship as it now exists developed after European contact.” Also, “...the title [siem] did not imply a political office...”

<sup>107</sup> Hill-Tout, “Report (1907)”, p. 130.

crests, they could not be admitted among the hereditary nobles, and so had to form a sub-class intermediate between those and the common folk.”<sup>108</sup>

Wayne Suttles argued that there were three classes of people within Straits Salish society, with the largest number of people belonging to the class of “good people” or, more specifically, people who knew their family history, knew how to behave properly, and were born into families who were considered well off.<sup>109</sup>

According to Suttles, wealth was important because it was seen as “the product of and the proof of possession of more important things.”<sup>110</sup> For example, an upper class family possessing “hereditary rights” to a particular site, such as a reef-net location, could accrue significant wealth as a result of unimpeded access to the site. The Straits Salish believed that “special practical and ritual knowledge” were required to successfully harvest resources and that lower class people lacked such knowledge.<sup>111</sup> Thus, the status that accrued to those with such knowledge was acquired through material wealth, which in turn confirmed that status. However, in some cases, people from the lower class could acquire “spirit power” by undertaking a spirit quest.<sup>112</sup> People in the lower class did not possess wealth, but even the possession of wealth would not permit their entry into the

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<sup>108</sup> Ibid. p. 130.

<sup>109</sup> Suttles, *Coast Salish Essays*, p. 7, 12.

<sup>110</sup> Suttles, *Coast Salish Essays*, p. 8.

<sup>111</sup> Ibid. p.8. “In theory, spirits could be obtained by anyone - anyone, that is, who had the courage and endurance to fast and bathe and seek a spirit vision. Of course, some families knew better than others how to train their children spirit questing, and the location of the best places for encountering spirits. But poor-boy-meets-spirit-and-makes-good stories are numerous and some of them are told of actual people, so we may assume that a man without inherited fishing sites and ritual knowledge could also become wealthy and attain high status.”

<sup>112</sup> For a discussion of “spirit power”, please refer to Suttles, “Morality”, p. 504; see also Lutz, *Makúk*, p. 54.

upper class.<sup>113</sup> Though it was possible for people of the lower class to become “second-class” persons, they would never be considered “upper class”.<sup>114</sup>

According to Suttles, the most important factor in maintaining the social hierarchy was the “myth that morality [was] the private property of the upper class”.<sup>115</sup> It was believed that members of the lower class lacked the appropriate morals because they had never had the proper historical training about “genealogies and family traditions revealing family greatness, gossip about other families and how inferior they [were], instruction in practical matters such as how to quest for the right guardian spirit, secret signals for indicating that someone is of lower-class descent, and a good deal of solid moral training.”<sup>116</sup> Differences between Boas, Hill-Tout, and Suttles’ respective descriptions of class structure may be attributed to individual interpretation, or may reflect changes in social structure over the years.<sup>117</sup> Furthermore, none of these men spent enough time in these communities to gain a full understanding of community beliefs and protocols.<sup>118</sup>

The prestige economy served a dual purpose - to increase wealth and status, and to redistribute resources, which would have been particularly important during ‘leaner’ times. Based upon the exchange of food items, such as fish and meat, for items denoting wealth, such as dentalia, blankets, or songs - all of which increased social status - the prestige economy allowed people to access necessary resources. Suttles argued that the

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<sup>113</sup> Suttles, *Coast Salish Essays*, pp. 8-12.

<sup>114</sup> Suttles, *Economic*, p. 302.

<sup>115</sup> Suttles, “Morality”, p. 503.

<sup>116</sup> Suttles, *Coast Salish Essays*, p. 8.

<sup>117</sup> I am grateful to John S. Lutz for drawing my attention to this question.

<sup>118</sup> Discussion during “Anthropologists and the Indian Question”, seminar course, Dr. Wendy Wickwire, University of Victoria, 2015.

prestige economy did not emerge as a result of the subsistence economy – a common argument made based on the assumption that there was a tremendous abundance of resources in the Pacific Northwest and the abundance gave rise to the practice of giving items away. Instead, he argued that the prestige and subsistence economies may have formed one successful economic system.<sup>119</sup> Given Coast Salish subsistence practices, and the challenges of living in the Pacific Northwest, such as periods of scarcity, it would make sense that coastal societies developed economic systems to address those issues.<sup>120</sup> At the same time, Suttles has stated that there is no evidence to support the theory that potlatches or gifts were most especially given when kin were experiencing hardship.<sup>121</sup> It is reasonable to assume, however, that some of these gifts would have come during periods of hardship. Thus, unless the entire region and all kin were affected by famine, environmental catastrophe, or warfare, people could expect assistance in the form of gifts.

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<sup>119</sup> Suttles, *Coast Salish Essays*, “Affinal Ties, Subsistence, and Prestige among the Coast Salish”, pp. 15-16.

<sup>120</sup> Suttles, *Coast Salish Essays*, “Coping with Abundance: Subsistence on the Northwest Coast”, p. 46. Suttles stated: “In general, my thesis is that while the habitat was undeniably rich, abundance did not exist the year round but only here and there and now and then, and that such temporary abundances - though they may well be a necessary condition for population density and cultural development of the sort seen on the Northwest Coast -are not sufficient to create them. Equally necessary conditions were the presence of good though limited food-getting techniques, food storing techniques, a social system providing the organization for subsistence activities and permitting exchanges, and a value system that provided the motivation for getting food, storing food, and participating fully in the social system.”

<sup>121</sup> The potlatch ceremony, while used to display status or assert authority, may also be interpreted as a form of ‘social security’ since guests were ‘gifted’ blankets, money, and other useful items during the event. Suttles, *Economic*, pp. 308-309; and “Affinal Ties”, in *Coast Salish Essays*.

### Chapter Three — 19th Century Subsistence Practices on Tl'chés

In what follows, I will draw on scholarship pertaining more generally to Straits Salish peoples, in order to sketch the subsistence practices of people living on Tl'chés during the 19th century. The technologies and practices used by the Straits Salish, for the establishment, modification, maintenance, harvest and preparation of the wide variety of resources they relied on, evolved over thousands of years. Successfully adapting to the continuous change involved the on-going practice of imaginative, inventive, intelligence.<sup>122</sup> The complex knowledge and regulation necessary for sustainable management of diverse resources required understanding all components of the earth's systems, as well as the myriad complex interactions among them.<sup>123</sup> Effective technologies and practices for protection, modification, enhancement, harvest, and production, sufficient for the sustenance of these populations, could only have been acquired by trial and error, over a very long period with these lands and waters.<sup>124</sup> Furthermore, these technologies and practices could only be ensured through protocols, laws, and punishments established and reconfirmed over generations of effective cultural transmission.<sup>125</sup> Settler-colonial peoples might have taken it upon themselves to learn - to begin understanding - this complexity; they might have made the effort to engage difference, so as to recognize the flourishing, interdependent, and integrated living communities they were trespassing upon; they might have chosen to override prejudice and practice respect; they might even have learned to let go of fantasy, and to actually

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<sup>122</sup> Nancy J. Turner, *Earth's Blanket*, p. 14.

<sup>123</sup> Turner, *Earth's Blanket*, p. 14.

<sup>124</sup> In his thesis, Graham R. Nicholas references, Wayne Suttles 2005, p.6, and Carlson 1996; He also references Turner, Berkes, Lepofsky, 2009. Please refer to the bibliography for details.

<sup>125</sup> Turner, *Earth's Blanket*, p. 14.

see the knowledgeable and “sophisticated caretakers” who belonged to these places.<sup>126</sup> Generally speaking, they did not.

Archaeologist Donald Mitchell’s discussion of sources of the food sources, tools, and cultural practices of early coastal peoples (between 1200 B.C.E. and 1800 C.E.) is helpful for understanding life on Tl’chés during the 19th century.<sup>127</sup> According to Mitchell, early Straits Salish peoples hunted land and sea mammals such as the “wapiti” (elk), coast deer, sea lion, harbour sea, and porpoise. Birds, molluscs, crustaceans, and many varieties of fish, such as salmon, herring, sole, flounder, dogfish, and rockfish were important to the Straits Salish.<sup>128</sup> Darcy Mathews’s work on Stsnaang (west) corresponds with these findings, revealing the tremendous importance to coastal peoples of mammals, fish, and seafood, especially herring and urchin; these creatures provided protein and fat, and other nutrients, as well as pelts and bones, which could be used to produce clothes and tools.<sup>129</sup>

Although there was continuity as regards the types of technologies and practices used for hunting and fishing, there was also evolution. For example, material “form” changed over time.<sup>130</sup> Over the centuries, variations in “harpoon”, “slate kni[fe]”, and “pointed bone” technologies emerged.<sup>131</sup> Between 1200-400 B.C.E. coastal groups

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<sup>126</sup> Turner, *Earth’s Blanket*, p. 150.

<sup>127</sup> Donald Mitchell, “Prehistory of the Coasts of Southern British Columbia and Northern Washington”, in Wayne Suttles ed., *Handbook of North American Indians*, Volume 7, Northwest Coast, Smithsonian Institution, Washington D.C. pp. 340-358.

<sup>128</sup> Mitchell, “Prehistory”, pp. 341, 345, 347. As Wayne Suttles demonstrates, many of these food sources were used by 19th and 20th century residents.

<sup>129</sup> Mathews, archaeological research on Stsnaang (west). The excavation of middens has revealed an abundance of salmon and other types of fish bones, as well as urchin spines, mussel, clam, and other types of shells.

<sup>130</sup> For more details please refer to Mitchell, “Prehistory”, p. 345.

<sup>131</sup> *Ibid.* pp. 345, 346.

fashioned “flaked slate” and “sandstone” tools, while “bones” were used to produce “points” and “wedges”. According to Mitchell, “[F]oreshafts”, for “harpoons” and other tools, were made of animal antlers.<sup>132</sup> Basalt, typically used for sharpening knives, was also used over the past 1000 years.<sup>133</sup> Both Mitchell and Mathews noted fire-altered rocks in the excavation of old sites. Such alteration would have been caused by using these rocks to line fire pits, boil water, and cook food.<sup>134</sup>

Early groups also developed woodworking skills and technologies. The significance of woodworking to these societies can be seen in the types of tools produced, for example “adzes”, “hand mauls”, and “chisel blades”.<sup>135</sup> The “dugout” canoe was an early, and very efficient, means of transportation.<sup>136</sup> Other important wooden items include the “yew wedge”, and wooden beams used to support structures, as well as carvings and other artistic and/or culturally significant items.<sup>137</sup>

Early peoples developed and adapted technologies and cultural practices as needed within their particular environments. Although the date at which coastal groups began to manage ecosystems with regular burning is unknown, we know that by the late 18th century land was cleared in this way for the harvest of roots and berry crops, which

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<sup>132</sup> Ibid. p. 341.

<sup>133</sup> Ibid. p. 341.

<sup>134</sup> Mathews describes this process; Mitchell, on the “Locarno Beach Culture Type” p. 344; “Marpole Culture Type”, p. 345.

<sup>135</sup> Mitchell, “Prehistory”, pp. 341-345.

<sup>136</sup> Canoes were invaluable to Coastal groups. Lawyer, judge, reporter, and ethnographer James Swan describes canoes used by Indigenous peoples in 19th century Washington Territory is a useful resource for anyone interested in learning more on the subject. Please refer to Swan, *The Northwest Coast; or Three Years Residence in Washington Territory*, New York: Harper and Brothers, 1857. pp. 78-82.

<sup>137</sup> Clearly some of these practices continued into the 19th and 20th centuries. According to Nancy De Bertrand Lugin, “Chief David’s Saga”, *Daily Colonist*, p. 6, May 17, 1936, Chief David Latasse spoke about his people’s wood-working practices. Latasse’s descriptions shed light on practices of Coast Salish groups during the second half of the 19th century, which may have differed from those of the period discussed by Donald Mitchell.

were valuable sources of carbohydrates.<sup>138</sup> Ritual and controlled burning of woodlands required intimate knowledge of the needs, preferences, and possible behaviours of particular tree species and crops. Long acquaintance with, and understanding of, a variety of place-specific environmental factors as well as their influence and possible behaviours within given conditions, was also necessary. This rich understanding could only have been learned through close observation and experience over many generations.<sup>139</sup> Nevertheless, long ago, this practice enabled and supported the flourishing of diverse ecosystems, creating the unique conditions required by various living beings that Straits Salish communities relied on.<sup>140</sup> Intense management of ecosystems with its careful observation, protection, nurturing, cultivation, and harvest, was used in the cultivation of berries and camas, as well as wetland and other crops, contradicting the settler belief that 19th century Straits Salish peoples did not engage in ‘agricultural’ practices.<sup>141</sup>

A diverse range of animal and plant life on Tl’ché’s and in surrounding areas provided materials and wherewithal for food, clothing, medicine, transportation, and other needs during early times.<sup>142</sup> The practice of reef-net fishing, used to catch salmon in

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<sup>138</sup> In his introduction, Robert Boyd describes forest/land management practices around the Puget Sound area. Please refer to Boyd ed., *Indians, Fire, and the Land in the Pacific Northwest*, Corvallis: Oregon State University Press, 1999. This book includes an essay by Nancy J. Turner. Please refer to “Time to Burn: Traditional Use of Fire to Enhance Resource Production By Aboriginal Peoples in British Columbia”, pp. 185-218, (specifically 194-195).

Both Nancy Turner and Cheryl Bryce have discussed Songhees management of forest ecosystems. See also, Briony Penn, “Restoring Camas and Culture to Lekwungen and Victoria: An Interview with Songhees member Cheryl Bryce”. Please refer to bibliography for details.

See also Richard White, “Indian Land Use and Environmental Change, Island County, Washington: A Case Study”, pp. 36-49, in Boyd, *Indians, Fire, and the Land in the Pacific Northwest*.

<sup>139</sup> Cheryl Bryce; Nancy Turner.

<sup>140</sup> According to Songhees Lands Manager, Cheryl Bryce, the meadow-like landscape that was created, through forest management practices, created conditions necessary for berry patches and grazing.

<sup>141</sup> Richard White, *Land Use, Environment, and Social Change: The Shaping of Island County, Washington*, University of Washington Press, 2015. See bibliography for details. See also, Graham; Turner; and White.

<sup>142</sup> Turner, “Time to Burn: Traditional Use of Fire to Enhance Resource Production by Aboriginal Peoples in British Columbia”, in Boyd, *Indians, Fire, and the Land in the Pacific Northwest*, pp. 194-196. Although

regions with no major salmon spawning rivers, was central to Straits Salish life, and constitutive of Straits Salish identity. This fishery reflects Straits Salish peoples' profound intimacy with their environment, allowing for the development of ingenious technological innovations brilliantly suited to place. It was undertaken by extended family groupings, and was thoroughly integrated with the social, legal, spiritual, and economic life of the Songhees peoples. In his *Ecologies of the Heart*, Eugene N. Anderson suggests that coastal peoples had the potential to eliminate the salmon fishery- but chose, instead, to protect salmon with careful attention to the earth and to the development of sustaining practices.<sup>143</sup> Furthermore, ritual, regulation, and disciplinary measures, passed down through oral tradition, served to ensure protection across generations.<sup>144</sup>

A few traditional Songhees reef-net sites were located along the shores of Henry and San Juan Islands.<sup>145</sup> According to a Songhees origin story, San Juan Island was "...the place where one of the first Songhees fell to the earth from the sky." In a recording by Wayne Suttles, Tom James, an earlier resident of Discovery Island, confirmed that part of San Juan Island was the "original home of the Songish".<sup>146</sup> According to Suttles, James did not specifically refer to the southwest-northwest coast of San Juan Island, along which numbers of Songhees reef-net sites were located, but simply says, "this end of San Juan Island was the original home of the Songish".<sup>147</sup> Suttles provided a map and

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Turner relies on sources that pertain specifically to the 19th and 20th centuries, the information contained in these sources offers some idea of practices used by earlier coastal groups .

<sup>143</sup> Turner, *Earth's Blanket*, p. 149.

<sup>144</sup> Turner, *Earth's Blanket*, p. 149, quoting Eugene N. Anderson, *Ecologies of the Heart*, pp. 54-72. For affiliated ceremonies, please refer to Turner, *Earth's Blanket*, pp. 97; 115-116.

<sup>145</sup> Suttles. *Economic*, pp. 193-195; 193-194; for additional information, see Stein "Introduction", *Exploring Coast Salish Prehistory*, pp. 5-7.

<sup>146</sup> Suttles, *Economic*, p. 195.

<sup>147</sup> *Ibid.* p. 195.

accompanying commentary regarding reef-net locations in the Haro and lower Georgia Straits.<sup>148</sup> These show Songhees reef-net sites running from the southwest end of San Juan Island up along that coastline and into Open Bay at the south end of Henry Island, which lies to the northwest of San Juan Island.<sup>149</sup> Suttles's research demonstrates that the most northerly of these Songhees sites was located near "the west shore of [Open Bay]", on Henry Island, which lies along the northwest coast of San Juan Island.<sup>150</sup> The number of reef-net sites along this coast suggests a particularly productive coastline, and in light of traditional knowledge regarding "the original home of the Songish people", one can only imagine the profound relationship the Songhees have with this place, and the socially constitutive work reef net fishing would have accomplished in these age-old fishing grounds.<sup>151</sup>

Some of Suttles' informants had "first-hand experience" in the fishery, and could provide their own "accounts of reef-netting dating from the 1880's and 90's".<sup>152</sup> According to Suttles, Henry Williams, of Discovery Island, owned a reef-net site on the western side of San Juan Island, near Kanaka Bay, during the late 19th and early 20th centuries.<sup>153</sup> This meant that his family held ancestral rights to fish there, and that, as an esteemed leader, Williams was expected to enact his extended family's traditional understandings regarding the site, including appropriate cultural practices for its care and for harvest. Furthermore, Williams had to be responsible to the needs of those who were dependent

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<sup>148</sup> Ibid. pp. 154; 195.

<sup>149</sup> Ibid. pp. 154; 195.

<sup>150</sup> Suttles, *Economic*, pp. 154; 195.

<sup>151</sup> Ibid. p. 154.

<sup>152</sup> Suttles, *Economic*, p. 152.

<sup>153</sup> Suttles, *Economic*, p. 194.

on the fishing ground's bounty, and, as "captain", during the reef-net fishery, he would have coordinated group fishing there.<sup>154</sup> Suttles' believed that Williams came by this position through marriage to another member of the "Discovery Island group".<sup>155</sup> The report of the Royal Commission of 1913, confirms that Henry Williams was a "leading man" on Discovery Island.<sup>156</sup> Williams' responsibilities reflect the transmission of rank and resources along hereditary and familial lines within Songhees society during this time.<sup>157</sup>

It seems likely that the residents of Tl'chés would have fished together at Henry Williams' site at least between the 1880s and 1890s, and again after 1934.<sup>158</sup> In an interview with Gabriel 'Skip' Sam, a relative of Williams and a Discovery Island resident, Sam revealed that his family went reef-net fishing on San Juan and Stuart Islands during the 1940s and 1950s.<sup>159</sup> He recalled that his family spent extended periods of time there, because of the significant amount of time necessary to organize and prepare for the fishery.<sup>160</sup> Thus, summer villages were typically located near reef-net sites, and communities generally moved to their respective villages in June in order to prepare for the summer fishery.<sup>161</sup> Relocating to reef-net sites, during the spring and summer seasons, provided families with an opportunity to spend time with relatives living on San

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<sup>154</sup> Ibid.

<sup>155</sup> Ibid. p. 194.

<sup>156</sup> Duff, "Fort Victoria Treaties", p. 47.

<sup>157</sup> Suttles. *Economic*, pp. 193-195; 193-194.

<sup>158</sup> According to Suttles, the Songhees reef-net locations were on the "the west shore of San Juan Island." Suttles, *Economic*, p. 193.

<sup>159</sup> Gabriel 'Skip' and May Sam "Interview", October 6, 2017, (11:30-12:10) conducted by Elise Forest-Hammond.

<sup>160</sup> Ibid.; For information on the reef-net fishery please refer to Suttles, *Economic*, pp. 161-162.

<sup>161</sup> Suttles, *Economic*, pp. 163-164.

Juan and Henry Islands.<sup>162</sup> Skip Sam himself referred to his many relatives on these islands.

During the spring, female relatives of the crew would harvest bark from willow saplings to make “Willow-bast” “twine”.<sup>163</sup> Nicholas Claxton, a member of the WSÁNEC community – explains that technologies would have been very similar to those of the Songhees - describes, “...a ring of willow [] woven into the net, [allowing] some salmon to escape.”<sup>164</sup> This was a way to honour and support the continuity of salmon run “lineages”.<sup>165</sup> The men would then construct “their own sections” of net with the twine, before giving them to the captain who would combine them into one large net.<sup>166</sup> The “Cedar-withe rope”, used in nets and lines, was made by “heat[ing] cedar limbs over a fire, peel[ing] []... and twist[ing] them...”<sup>167</sup> Each year “[t]he net had to be made anew” and lines made from “cedar-withe rope” had to be repaired or replaced.<sup>168</sup>

Reef-net fishing was an extremely efficient, sustainable way to harvest salmon. Although complicated and, in some respects, very finicky, during “...the height of a [salmon] run”, reef-net apparatus could yield a daily catch of “several thousand” fish.<sup>169</sup>

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<sup>162</sup> Gabriel ‘Skip’ and May Sam “Interview”.

<sup>163</sup> Suttles, *Economic*, p. 235.

<sup>164</sup> Nicholas Xemtoltw Claxton, “To Fish As Formerly: A Resurgent Journey Back to the Saanich Reef Net Fishery”, PhD Dissertation, 2015, p. 161.

<sup>165</sup> Ibid. pp. 96-97.

<sup>166</sup> Suttles, *Economic*, p. 162.

<sup>167</sup> Ibid. p. 234.

<sup>168</sup> Ibid. 162; 163.

<sup>169</sup> Ibid. pp. 161; 133-151; For a general description of reef-net fishing please refer to pp. 152-161. According to Walter Colquhoun Grant, salmon was abundant on Vancouver Island. See James E. Hendrickson, “Two Letters from Walter Colquhoun Grant”, *BC Studies*, no. 26, summer 1975, p. 12. In his 1857 “Description of Vancouver Island”, Grant refers to the importance of salmon (fresh and dried) in the diet of Indigenous peoples.

Furthermore, the practice appears to have allowed for the harmless return to water of any unsuitable catch.

According to Suttles, prior to the 1880s, Straits Salish peoples used “a variant of [the] [shovel-nose] [canoe]”, which his informants described as having “...a wide bow and a flat stern.”<sup>170</sup> Craftsmen built these boats especially for increased “visibility”, stability, and “space”.<sup>171</sup> Suttles speculated that the shovel-nose canoe may have been replaced by the more versatile “Nootkan type”.<sup>172</sup> By the 1930s and 1940s, however, numbers of Straits Salish would have replaced their canoes with motor boats.

While reef-net sites were owned by individuals, reef-net fishing required a large group of skilled people, or an entire community, working with a highly competent respected leader.<sup>173</sup> It involved producing and laying purpose-designed and plant-camouflaged netting between two boats to simulate a “kelp-covered reef”, “... in the path of the migrating sockeye.”<sup>174</sup> Working under the authority of the “captain”, the “crew” would anchor two boats, set up the intricate system of netting, lines, and stone anchors, with precision and careful consideration of tide and currents. Keen observation by look-outs signaled the appropriate moment to lift and empty nets.

Preparing and preserving the catch also required specialized knowledge and skills. At the opening of the fishing season, the “First Salmon Rite”, was held in honour of, and

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<sup>170</sup> Suttles, *Economic*, p. 249.

<sup>171</sup> Ibid. pp. 250-251.

<sup>172</sup> Suttles, *Economic*, p. 251.

<sup>173</sup> Suttles, *Economic*, pp. 161-162; 20-21; According to Suttles, “[t]he reef-net locations of the Straits tribes (Lummi, Saanich, Songish) were owned by individuals. However, access was often shared, both within the community and among communities.” Also, Suttles *Coast Salish Essays* p. 21. Boas argued that each ‘gens’ had its own fishing-ground (Boas “Report”, 1890)

<sup>174</sup> Suttles, *Economic*, p. 155; for more information on the salmon fishery in the area, please refer to Daniel L. Boxberger, *To Fish In Common: The Ethnohistory of Lummi Indian Salmon Fishing*, Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1989.

to show respect for, the salmon who were giving their lives for the community. The salmon would continue to be abundant if people paid them due respect.<sup>175</sup> Drying racks had to be built. Following the catch, fish had to be properly prepared, by the women, who were tasked with slicing the fish “so as to leave the flesh a single without bones”, and then “spread[ing] the fish with splints”, before hanging them to dry on racks that were carefully sited and set up so that the fish “could be dried in the sun and wind”.<sup>176</sup>

Reef-netting was extremely labour-intensive, and success depended on a variety of well-honed skill-sets: building and maintaining suitable boats, preparing materials for net, line, and anchor systems, fabricating and mending these systems, setting them with precision and care, applying knowledgeable observation and timely action, and, of course, coordinating the whole enterprise.<sup>177</sup> This expertise could only have evolved over generations of intimacy with, and practice in, home lands and waters.

The reef-net fishery thus required, and held, a central position in Straits Salish life. It evolved out of deep understanding of place with its complex interactions among the living communities to which the Straits Salish peoples belong. All of this was learned over generations of being *here*. The culturally constitutive significance, to the Songhees people, of these particular interconnected places, practices, and relationships rests in this belonging. It finds expression in the transmission of oral tradition, including knowledge of ethical understandings enacted through the subsistence, ceremonial, and ritual practices that also belong to these places, and that continue to cultivate and nurture Songhees identity.

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<sup>175</sup> Suttles, *Economic*, pp. 172-174.

<sup>176</sup> Suttles, *Economic*, p. 180.

<sup>177</sup> *Ibid.* pp. 160, 161-162; 155-161; 160-161. Please note: I am referring to the page numbers at the top of the page, rather than the side.

The Straits Salish peoples' management of resources and harvest were governed by strict laws and protocols, however settler-colonial governments, in the service of sports fishermen, the commercial fishery, and the cannery industry, refused to acknowledge Indigenous systems of governance, and imposed increasingly restrictive regulations on Indigenous fisheries. In his book, *Landing Native Fisheries: Indian Reserves and Native Fishing Rights in British Columbia, 1849-1925*, Douglas C. Harris chronicles settler-colonial governments' legal maneuvering of reserves and fisheries that restricted Indigenous peoples in B.C. to land bases that were impossibly inadequate, with less and less access to their traditional fishing grounds.<sup>178</sup>

The cumulative harm to Straits Salish communities was severe, though the 1916 ban on reef-net fishing dealt them a particularly damaging blow - apart from its imposition of significant material losses, the ban interrupted a vital, age-old enactment of Songhees principles and identity. Furthermore, it disrupted the intergenerational transmission of unique and complex knowledge, compromising the integrity of Straits Salish cultural practice. Today, Straits Salish people are working to revitalize the reef-net fishery.

In addition to its use of the reef-net, the Songhees would have engaged other technologies to harvest a variety of fish and seafood. During the 19<sup>th</sup> century, Straits Salish people used "herring rakes, fish gorges, leisters", "river weirs", and "gill nets".<sup>179</sup> Songhees Elder Súlhlíma (Joan) Morris speaks of halibut, lingcod, trout, herring, mussels, oysters, and sea urchin, that her family caught and ate on Tl'chés. Other seafood, such as herring, smelt and flounder, as well as a variety of different "mollusks, crustaceans,

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<sup>178</sup> Douglas C. Harris, *Landing Native Fisheries Indian Reserves and Native Fishing Rights in British Columbia, 1849-1925*, Vancouver: UBC Press, 2008, pp. 5-6.

<sup>179</sup> Mitchell, p. 347; See Suttles, *Economic Life of the Coast Salish of Haro and Rosario Straits*.

and echinoderms”, including crabs, cockles, and clams, would have been eaten on a regular basis.<sup>180</sup> “Chitons... purple snails, barnacles, and sea urchins... were picked off exposed rocks”, while mussels were “roasted” and “steamed”.<sup>181</sup> Clams, such as “rock clams, butter clams, and horse clams” were harvested and “steamed”, “roasted”, or dried.<sup>182</sup> Clam beds were owned and carefully tended by Indigenous families.<sup>183</sup>

Another, albeit less significant, subsistence activity of the Songhees people living on Tl’ché’s was hunting. Porpoise and seal would have been harvested for their meat and oil, waterfowl, such as ducks, geese, and cormorants for their meat, fat, and feathers.<sup>184</sup> Devices used for hunting would have included, for example, submerged nets, spears, and bow and arrow.<sup>185</sup> The “raised net”, “used by Straits groups”, involved its being “...suspended between two poles along a spit or across a narrow channel or stream mouth, [] where ducks often flew.”<sup>186</sup> By the mid-19th century, muskets were likely used

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<sup>180</sup> Elder Súlhlíma (Joan) Morris, personal communication spring 2016. Although Morris spoke about fish and seafood harvested by residents of Tl’ché’s during the 20th century, research conducted by Boas, Hill-Tout, and Suttles indicates that 19th century residents would have harvested many of the same species. During the mid-19th century, Walter Colquhoun Grant alluded to the abundance of seafood. Please see bibliography for details.

<sup>181</sup> Suttles, *Economic*, pp. 65-66.

<sup>182</sup> On p. 69 of *Economic*, Suttles explained how the “Samish traded strings of dried horse clams to up-river people...” Elder May Sam described how she and her family would dry clams and sell them at the Ellensberg Rodeo in Washington State.

On p. 68, Suttles asserted that “most shellfish beds were open to [everyone], but a few beds, at least among mainland groups, were private property.” On p. 20 of *Coast Salish Essays*, Suttles stated that “not all, but the best clam beds...were owned by extended families with control exercised by individuals.”

<sup>183</sup> Nancy J. Turner and Douglas Deur (eds.), “Chapter 1 – Introduction: Reconstructing Indigenous Resource Management, Reconstructing the History of an Idea”, *Keeping It Living: Traditions of Plant Use and Cultivation on the Northwest Coast of North America*, Vancouver: UBC Press, 2005, p. 19; see also Wayne Suttles, *Coast Salish Essays*, Vancouver: Talonbooks, 1987, p. 147.

<sup>184</sup> Suttles, *Economic*, pp. 106-109.

<sup>185</sup> *Ibid.* pp. 73-79. Walter Colquhoun Grant, “Report”, (1857).

<sup>186</sup> *Ibid.* pp. 70-71.

regularly for hunting. Walter Colquhoun Grant noted in the 1840s that this was the case for Indigenous peoples on Vancouver Island at this time.<sup>187</sup>

Songhees people living on Tl'chés may have also hunted large game from time-to-time. According to Suttles, devices included, bows and arrows, nets and drives, and traps.<sup>188</sup> Elk meat was consumed by the Songhees, although it would have been less readily available than deer, as it was likely found on Vancouver Island and some of the larger gulf islands. Families living on Tl'chés would have had access to this meat through trade with other groups, or while hunting on southern Vancouver Island. If, as Wilson Duff suggested, the group on Tl'chés also had a big house in Cadboro Bay, then it is probable that they had more frequent access to large game.<sup>189</sup> Beginning in the late 1850's, however, colonial governments' game-laws increasingly restricted Indigenous peoples' hunting on Vancouver Island, creating hardship for Songhees people.<sup>190</sup>

Trees and plants were harvested for a variety of purposes.<sup>191</sup> For example, "cedar-twigs" were made into ropes and nettles were used for both "ropes and nets."<sup>192</sup> Cedar bark was used for many purposes, including making baskets for storage and the transportation of goods.<sup>193</sup> Grasses and reeds were used to make mats and garments, and softwood trees furnished material for the construction of various structures, including

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<sup>187</sup> Hendrickson, "Letters" p. 13; Grant, "Report" (1857). Grant claims that fish comprised the majority of the local Indigenous diet and that hunting for land mammals, such as deer, occurred during the winter. In 1848, he wrote that there was limited game available on Vancouver Island. It is likely that there was a lack of game on many of the smaller islands as well.

<sup>188</sup> Suttles, *Economic*, pp. 82-91.

<sup>189</sup> For a discussion of hunting, please refer to Suttles, *Economic*, pp. 82-105.

<sup>190</sup> John Sutton Lutz, *Makuk: A New History of Aboriginal-White Relations*, Vancouver: UBC Press, 2008.

<sup>191</sup> Turner and Deur (eds.), *Keeping It Living*, pp. 13-14.

<sup>192</sup> Boas, "Report (1890)", pp. 568; 567.

<sup>193</sup> Mitchell, "Prehistory", p. 341; Mathews speaks about the use of cedar bark.; Suttles, *Economic*, p. 232.

dwellings and boats.<sup>194</sup> The abundance of Douglas Fir on Tl'chés would have served residents well, as copious amounts of wood were needed for fires, the construction of fish drying scaffolds, boats, dwellings, and carvings.<sup>195</sup>

The Songhees managed the environment on Tl'chés with “low-intensity fires” on grasslands, minimizing the growth of coniferous trees and certain types of understory bush, to provide the nutrients and light that allowed Garry Oak ecosystems to flourish.<sup>196</sup> As Katherine Procter explains, “Garry Oak ecosystems are home to more plant species than any other terrestrial ecosystem in Coastal British Columbia making them biologically critical habitat.”<sup>197</sup> This landscape allowed for the growth of plants, such as camas, chocolate lily, and berry bushes.<sup>198</sup> The deer, meanwhile, drawn to the berries, made it easier for the Songhees to hunt them. All of these species were essential to Songhees physical and spiritual well-being.

As plant foods were an important part of the Songhees diet, Tl'chés *peoples* would have harvested different types of seaweed, fungi, wild onion, Kinnikinnick, Horsetail, Thimbleberry shoots, Crabapples, Soap Berries, Saskatoon Berries, Blackberries, Salal

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<sup>194</sup> Mitchell, “Prehistory”, and Suttles, *Economic Life of the Coast Salish of Haro and Rosario Straits*.

<sup>195</sup> Ibid. p. 568; for a description of house and boat construction see pages 563-566.

Please refer to Ronald L. Olson, *Adze, Canoe, and House Types of the Northwest Coast*, Seattle, W.A.: University of Washington Press, 1927 and 1967 (p. 19). Olson provides a description of the “shovel-nose” canoe used by the Lekwungen. For a discussion of different types of dwellings see Wayne Suttles.

<sup>196</sup> For “low-intensity fires” see Cuerrier, A., Turner, N.J., Gomes, T.C., Garibaldi, A. and Downing, A. “Cultural Keystone Places: Conservation and Restoration in Cultural Landscapes”, *Journal of Ethnobiology* Vol. 35, No. 3, 2015, p. 435; see also Turner and Deur (eds.), *Keeping It Living*, p. 19; and Thiago C. Gomes, “Novel Ecosystems in the Restoration of Cultural Landscapes of Tl'ches, West Chatham Island, British Columbia, Canada”, *Ecological Processes*, 2:15, 2013, p. 2.

<sup>197</sup> Katherine Yvonne Procter, “Renewing Central Coast Salish Camas (*Camassia leichtlinii* (Baker) Wats., *C. quamash* (Pursh) Greene; Liliaceae) Traditions Through Access to Protected Areas: An Ethnoecological Inquiry” MA Thesis, University of Victoria, 2013 pp. 10-11.

<sup>198</sup> For Camas and Chocolate Lily, see “Renewing Central Coast Salish Camas”, pp. 12-13; see also Jeff Corntassel and Cheryl Bryce, “Practicing Sustainable Self-Determination: Indigenous Approaches to Cultural Restoration and Revitalization”, *Brown Journal of World Affairs*, vol. XVII, iss. II, Spring/Summer 2012, p. 157.

Berries, Salmonberry sprouts, and Wild Carrot, among others.<sup>199</sup> People also cultivated and harvested “the bulbs of several [types] of lillies”, including “Tiger-lilly and Fritillaria” and the blue-flowered, Starchy, *Camassia* (Camas root) that provided them with valuable sources of carbohydrates.<sup>200</sup> The importance of Tl’chés as a site for growing camas would have only increased as growing numbers of immigrants settled the traditional camas grounds of the Songhees people on southern Vancouver Island.<sup>201</sup> Camas, or kwetlal, was a cultivated crop that thrived in “meadows” managed by fire and on “grassy bluffs in soil pockets on rock outcrops”.<sup>202</sup> Planting, weeding, harvesting, and preparing kwetlal was undertaken by Songhees women, who passed along these skills to their daughters and granddaughters as they worked along side one another. Kwetlal was traded among various Coastal Indigenous groups, including the Nuu-chah-nulth, and “the Kwakwaka’wakw”, and “Comox.”<sup>203</sup> Places of Songhees harvest include present day “...Oak Bay, the Uplands, and Ten Mile Point.”<sup>204</sup>

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<sup>199</sup> Kim-Ly Thompson, “conversations” regarding Tl’chés; Nancy Turner pp. 335-336; Suttles, *Economic*, pp. 58, 63;

<sup>200</sup> Don Manuel Quimper notes the significance of camas root to Straits peoples in 1790. See Keddie pp. 16-17. Nancy Turner, Cheryl Bryce, Elder Sellemah (Joan) Morris, Thiago C. Gomes, and Darcy Mathews all speak to the importance of camas to the Songhees people. On pages 58-59 of *Economic*, Suttles states “[c]amas blooms in May and withers soon after seeding. It must be dug in the latter part of May while the stalk is still visible. It grows on prairies and on ledges of rocky slopes. Most of the smaller islands have bare southern faces which are blooming in spring with camas and other lilies and are bare and brown by mid-summer... the Songish [Lekwungen] had prairies behind their winter villages where they could get camas and other bulbs. But they also went to the islands as the other groups did almost exclusively. After white settlers began encroaching on the mainland prairies, and these were usually the first places to be settled, the islands became the only source of bulbs.”

<sup>201</sup> Suttles, *Economic*, pp. 58-59.

<sup>202</sup> Nancy J. Turner, *Food Plants of Coastal First Peoples*, Vancouver: UBC Press, (3<sup>rd</sup> ed.) 2003, p. 42; For more information on the cultivation of camas see Turner and Deur (eds.), *Keeping It Living*, pp. 14; 17

<sup>203</sup> Ibid. pp. 42-44; see also Jeff Corntassel and Cheryl Bryce, “Practicing Sustainable Self-Determination: Indigenous Approaches to Cultural Restoration and Revitalization”, *Brown Journal of World Affairs*, Spring/Summer 2012, vol. XVIII, Iss. II, pp. 157-158.

<sup>204</sup> Nancy J. Turner, “Cedar Hill Park as Home Territory for Straits Salish People”, September 24, 2017, sourced online: <https://friendsofcedarhillpark.com/nancy-turner>

Songhees people used trees and other plants for therapeutic and medicinal purposes. It is probable that the people living on Tl'chés harvested many of the following species. Oregon Grape, would have been used to heal skin diseases, Siberian Miner's Lettuce, for curing headaches, and Willow Dock, for swellings. Fern plants could be ground into a "fine powder" to "put on sores and boils to dry up the flowing pus."<sup>205</sup> Other plants, such as Yarrow, Red Alder, Madrona, and Sedge grasses, may have also been used for medicinal purposes.<sup>206</sup>

It is important to note that, within "kincentric" cultures, such as that of the Songhees, all plant and animal beings have spirit; when these beings share themselves, they must be honoured with ritual acknowledgement and appreciation. Their "generosity" is to be met with ritual thanks or celebrated in ceremony - their gifts respected with careful use of what was accepted. Humans participate in the cycle of life by reciprocating with offerings, nourishment, nurture, and protection of the lands, waters, and creatures therein. Maintaining right-relationship with the spirit world, was thus accomplished through place and event specific practices, rituals, and ceremonies.<sup>207</sup>

That there was constant abundance available to peoples of the coastal northwest is a myth discredited by Suttles. In fact, there were periods of scarcity during which peoples were limited to certain types of food or experienced a lack of food altogether.<sup>208</sup> On any given day, there was no guarantee that people would find sufficient roots, berries,

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<sup>205</sup> Boas, "Report (1890)", pp. 576-577.

<sup>206</sup> Nancy Turner and Marcus A. Bell, "Appendix" in "The Ethnobotany of the Coast Salish Indians of Vancouver Island", *Economic Botany*, vol. 25, no. 3, July-September 1971, pp. 335-336. According to Suttles, "Alder sap" was "said to be good for the stomach." *Economic*, p. 65.

<sup>207</sup> Turner, *Earth's Blanket*, pp. 69 -101.

<sup>208</sup> Suttles, "Coping With Abundance", in *Coast Salish Essays*. See bibliography for details.

meat, or fish.<sup>209</sup> On the other hand, communities might experience over-abundance at certain times.<sup>210</sup> Thus, methods of preserving food were developed over generations to cope with intermittent scarcity.

Drying fish yielded high calorie, nutrient-dense food.<sup>211</sup> In order to dry it properly, it was essential to understand the unique climatic conditions of the region. A specific amount of heat and wind were necessary to ensure that the fish did not spoil.<sup>212</sup> The use of outdoor drying racks was often limited to the summer months and would only occur at specific locations. Understanding the physical composition of the type of fish being dried was also necessary to determine the length of time required for drying, as well as the length of time the dried fish would last. Salish peoples were able to determine this by assessing the fish's percentage of fat. Suttles describes how "leaner" salmon types, such as chum, were believed to last longer than the oilier sockeye.<sup>213</sup> The fat content of a fish also depended on factors, such as whether or not it had been migrating to its spawning grounds and at what point on its journey it had been caught.<sup>214</sup> Smoking was another common way of preserving food and could be used even during the wetter seasons of the year, so groups used this technique especially when there was "the danger of rain".<sup>215</sup> Mixing animal protein with animal fat was another way of preserving food. This method

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<sup>209</sup> Ibid.

<sup>210</sup> Ibid.

<sup>211</sup> Suttles, *Coast Salish Essays*, p. 54.

<sup>212</sup> Stó:lō historian Dr. Sonny McHalsie explains fish drying on the Fraser River. According to McHalsie, too much heat may lead to the growth of harmful bacteria and cause the fish to spoil. McHalsie "conversation", May 2017. McHalsie spoke about Stó:lō practices, however in order to dry fish properly, all Straits Salish peoples would have also had to possess an intimate knowledge of their environment and the fish they caught. This kind of knowledge would have been passed down through the generations.

<sup>213</sup> Suttles, *Coast Salish Essays*, p. 55.

<sup>214</sup> McHalsie, "conversations", May 2017. Please see bibliography for details.

<sup>215</sup> Suttles, *Coast Salish Essays*, p. 54.

was used by many different groups, although the ingredients varied depending on the people.<sup>216</sup>

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<sup>216</sup> *Ibid.*

## Chapter Four — Settlers on Tl'chés 1860s -1870s

In 1843, the Hudson's Bay Company (HBC) established Fort Victoria in Songhees territory on what is now commonly referred to as southern Vancouver Island. In 1849, the British Colonial Office granted the "...lands of Vancouver Island..." to the HBC "...on the condition that they be opened for settlement as a Crown colony".<sup>217</sup> To make way for non-Indigenous settlement, over the course of four years (1850-54), Governor James Douglas created land surrender treaties with Indigenous peoples on Vancouver Island.<sup>218</sup> Significant settlement and economic development, however, did not occur for another nine years. In 1858, the gold rush in the mainland colony of British Columbia drew prospectors from California, and elsewhere in the United States. Many of these men travelled from San Francisco to Victoria where they stocked up on provisions before catching ships to Vancouver. The increased demand for goods and services led to the creation of new businesses in the town. Economic growth was further fuelled by competition between retailers in Victoria, Seattle, and Vancouver who vied for the business of prospectors. The population soared not only with temporary inhabitants, but with those who chose to remain in the city, or to return once they had tried their luck searching for gold.

From the early 1860s on, non-Indigenous people began settling on Stsnaang and Skingeenis. During this period, land preemptions were a common means of acquiring settler-colonial title to land. This process involved staking a claim, applying for a pre-

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<sup>217</sup> Wilson Duff, "The Fort Victoria Treaties", *BC Studies*, no. 3, fall 1969, pp. 5-6.

<sup>218</sup> *Ibid.* pp. 1-8.

emption, and making ‘improvements’ such as clearing the land and erecting fences. On April 11, 1861, James Smith and Captain George Rudlin applied to the Colony of Vancouver Island to preempt “300 acres” on Skingeenis - essentially the entire island.<sup>219</sup> In August 1862, Charles Deake preempted land on Stsnaang and “at various times resided with George Rudlin on Discovery Island [Skingeenis]”.<sup>220</sup>

Land preemptions did not necessarily result in ownership and permanent residency. In order to complete the process, claimants could not absent themselves for a significant period of time. Furthermore, surveys and improvements had to be completed within a specified time frame. Long, dry seasons, infertile soil, financial difficulties, as well as isolation and despair, meant that some abandoned their claims along with their dreams.<sup>221</sup> Others might then assume the claims. For example, on January 28, 1863, Charles Deake wrote to the Colonial Land Office, reporting that James Smith, “the person who had pre-empted land on Discovery Island [Skingeenis]” had “quitted possession” of his land “for the period of three months and upwards...”<sup>222</sup> On the same day, George Rudlin wrote to confirm his pre-emption, stating that James Smith had “quitted possession” of his pre-emption on Skingeenis, and “abandoned the same for the period of three months and upwards”.<sup>223</sup> These applications demonstrate that Rudlin and Deake were required to provide the authorities with evidence of Smith’s prolonged absence

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<sup>219</sup> “Pre-emption” Applications, BC Department of Lands and Works -GR766 Box No. 1, housed in the British Columbia Archives.

<sup>220</sup> “Pre-emption” Applications, BC Department of Lands and Works - GR766 Box 3, File 84, No. 506. RBCM description of land preemption process. See also, Phyllis Mikkelsen, “Land Settlement Policy on the Mainland of British Columbia, 1858-1874”, MA Thesis, University of British Columbia, 1950.

<sup>221</sup> An article from the *Daily Colonist* on November 15, 1908 describes the environment on *Tl’chés* as one not favourable to agriculture. In particular, the author refers to the “poverty of soil” and the “southeasterly gales of winter”, both of which would make it difficult to raise crops on the islands.

<sup>222</sup> Ibid.

<sup>223</sup> Ibid.

before they were allowed to assume his claim. On the same day these applications were written, George Jay applied to obtain Smith's land on Skingeenis.<sup>224</sup>

From 1861-1862, Rudlin and Jay ran a logging operation on Skingeenis. This was a period of growth in the region, driving demand and the expansion of the timber industry.<sup>225</sup> In 1828, the Hudson's Bay Company established the first mill in the region at Fort Vancouver and by mid-century there "were over two dozen sawmills in the Puget Sound" region, such as the Puget Mill Company.<sup>226</sup> Skingeenis was conveniently located near mills along the coastlines of the Puget Sound, Georgia Strait, and Vancouver Island.<sup>227</sup>

Early loggers possessed particular sets of skills. Since Rudlin and Jay arrived before the advent of the "steam-donkey" and other mechanized tools, they had to rely on axes, hand-held saws, and wooden wedges to fell trees.<sup>228</sup> This was time-consuming, labour-intensive, and dangerous.<sup>229</sup> A logger had to assess which trees could be felled safely and hauled out of the forest with the least amount of effort. This involved

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<sup>224</sup> During the mid-19th century, settlers could acquire Crown land through purchase or pre-emption. Pre-empting land involved staking a claim and submitting a written application. The stake-holder was required to make "improvements" to the land - such as clearing trees and erecting fences. According to the Royal British Columbia Museum, "after improvements, residency qualification, and land surveying, a Certificate of Improvement was issued and the land purchased at a discount rate or at no further charge". In order to take-over another person's pre-emption, an applicant had to submit a letter to the authorities declaring an absence of greater than three months on the part of the former occupant.

<sup>225</sup> Ken Drushka, *Working in the Woods* Douglas Fir, which grew in the region, was used for a variety of purposes, including ship spars. A booming ship-building industry meant that Douglas Fir was in high demand during this period.

<sup>226</sup> "Seeing The Forest For The Trees: Placing Washington's Forest's Within a Historical Context", *Centre For The Study Of The Pacific Northwest*. Accessed online from [washington.edu](http://www.washington.edu) July 1, 2018. Overview and "The Rise of the Lumber Industry, 1848-1883".

<sup>227</sup> Growth and development began to take off during this period, as settlers moved into the region and settlements sprang up on both sides of the 49th parallel. The gold rush of 1958 prompted increasing concern, in the colonial government, about American expansion northwards. In order to maintain British control of mainland British Columbia and the colony of Vancouver Island, British settlement of both colonies was encouraged.

<sup>228</sup> Ibid.

<sup>229</sup> Richard Rajala; Ken Drushka, *Working in the Woods*.

considering a tree's location and direction of lean.<sup>230</sup> Furthermore, it was crucial to know how, and where, to make cuts, so as to compel the tree to fall safely to a place from which it could be hauled away.<sup>231</sup> At times loggers used a wedge to help the tree to fall in one direction rather than another. When working with a particularly large tree, loggers often made a cut several feet above ground, and inserted planks at that height. This gave them a level platform above the large root system for easier felling. During the mid-19th century, commercial logging operations were sited close to waterways in order to transport the logs more easily. Typically, logs were hauled to the edge of a lake, river, or ocean, collected into booms and transported to a mill.<sup>232</sup> Logging on an island was ideal because one could fell trees directly into the water.<sup>233</sup> In many cases, the logging of a particular site ended once the trees closest to the water had been felled. It was simply too difficult to access trees located deeper in the woods. Manoeuvring logs over uneven ground, through underbrush and deadwood, over roots, and round stumps was time-consuming, exhausting, and dangerous. A logger would have to locate clearings with sufficient space for horses and oxen to drag the timber out of the forest.<sup>234</sup>

That Rudlin and Jay's logging operation lasted for only a year suggests that they logged the trees closest to the water, or may have felled all of the valuable trees on the island, before turning their attention to other endeavours.<sup>235</sup> In 1864, George Jay received

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<sup>230</sup> Richard Rajala, "Lecture" on 19th century logging in BC History. University of Victoria, 2015.

<sup>231</sup> Ibid.

See also Drushka, *Working in the Woods*.

<sup>232</sup> Ibid.

<sup>233</sup> Drushka, *Working in the Woods*; "Seeing The Forest For The Trees: Placing Washington's Forest's Within a Historical Context", *Centre For The Study Of The Pacific Northwest*. Accessed online from [washington.edu](http://www.washington.edu) July 1, 2018. Overview and "The Rise of the Lumber Industry, 1848-1883".

<sup>234</sup> Ibid.

<sup>235</sup> Of course, these are only suggestions; other explanations for discontinuing their logging operation include growing tired of such labour-intensive work and/or of living in relative isolation.

a “certificate of improvement” for land on Skingeenis, which meant that his ‘improvements’ to the land made him eligible for a grant for a colonial land grant.<sup>236</sup> Jay planted a nursery and opened a store, which was frequented by Songhees people living on the islands; adjacent Indigenous people also used the store. The 1862 smallpox epidemic, discussed in detail in the following chapter, brought large numbers of Songhees people to the archipelago, providing a larger market for the store’s goods. While these events would seemingly create the conditions for a comfortable existence, it may be that Jay and Rudlin were unable to create the island life to which they aspired. It is not clear from the archival record whether Rudlin was working for Jay’s company on Skingeenis, or if he had left the island by this point.<sup>237</sup>

In 1865 and 1866, Jay penned letters to Governor Kennedy, expressing his frustration over the actions of Indigenous people on the islands, and requesting that he be compensated for losses. According to Jay, members of the local Indigenous population ‘trespassed’ on his land, and removed the survey spikes demarcating his property, thus confounding the boundary between their land and his.<sup>238</sup> With this action, the Songhees expressed their antipathy toward Jay’s intrusion on their territory.<sup>239</sup> In 1865, the *Victoria Daily Evening Express* warned that “the Indians threaten to give some trouble to Messrs Jay & Co...” and relayed that Jay’s house had burned down and indicated that the

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<sup>236</sup> Pearse, “Letter”, February 2, 1865. BCARS. See also, “British Columbia Archives and Research Guide Quick Guide to Pre-emption and Homestead Records. Accessed online: [https://royalbcmuseum.bc.ca/assets/Pre-emptions\\_homesteads\\_quick\\_guide.pdf](https://royalbcmuseum.bc.ca/assets/Pre-emptions_homesteads_quick_guide.pdf), December 25, 2019.

<sup>237</sup> The Absolute Fees, 1868 pp. 327-328. Entry on James Chesney Bales. Land Title Registry. Courtesy of Wendy Smith and John Lutz, February 2020.

<sup>238</sup> For details, please see Colonial Correspondence, Letters from Jay & Co. to Governor Kennedy, December 11, 1865 and January 30, 1866. BCARS

<sup>239</sup> Please refer to Letter to Governor from Jay & Co., February 30, 1866, Colonial Correspondence, File F838, Microfilm B0133

Songhees may have had something to do with it.<sup>240</sup> To the editors' credit, he recognized that frustration on the part of the Songhees was due to their not having been paid for the "possession" of their lands. Unlike adjacent areas, such as those covered by the Douglas Treaties, the colonial government had not even attempted to extinguish Indigenous title to the islands. Yet these newcomers established homesteads, and harvested resources vital to Songhees livelihoods and culture, without receiving permission from the Songhees. Rudlin and Jay's logging operations represented not simply the appropriation of Songhees land and the removal of trees vital to Songhees life in the archipelago, but the broader destruction of ecosystems, on land and in the waters, which supported myriad living communities that the Songhees belonged to, and relied on for cultural, spiritual, and physical sustenance in these small islands. The construction of a store and nursery on Skingeenis would have further interfered with their ability to engage in livelihoods and practices.

The limited land base on Tl'chés may have led to overcrowding. The smallpox epidemic of 1862 would have dramatically increased the number of Songhees people living on Tl'chés, both before and after the epidemic. In 1864, after the smallpox had subsided in Victoria and many Songhees returned to the city, Governor Kennedy pushed to have the Songhees moved from the inner harbour in Victoria to Skingeenis. In 1865, he commissioned a survey of Skingeenis and tasked the surveyor with identifying a favourable location for "Indian Village".<sup>241</sup> All of these records indicate that there were increasing numbers of Songhees on these small islands. It would have been impossible

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<sup>240</sup> "Discovery Island", *Victoria Daily Evening Express*, January 20, 1865, p.3. Courtesy of John S. Lutz.

<sup>241</sup> "Vancouver Island Executive Council Minutes", *Journals of the Colonial Legislature*, James Hendrickson, ed (Victoria: PABC, 1981) September 9<sup>th</sup>, 1864.

for settlers on Skingeenis and Stsnaang to avoid their Songhees neighbours. The willful and self-serving behavior of Rudlin and Jay undoubtedly angered Songhees residents.

Jay & Co. registered their complaints with the colonial administration, however, the latter expressed some doubt as to whether the amount of compensation proposed by Jay & Co was an accurate reflection of the cost of improvements. They felt that the actual figures were lower. In the end, Governor Kennedy decided that “pending the final adjustment of the Crown Lands question”, he was unable to “accede” to Jay & Co. a request for new lands and/or financial compensation for damages incurred on Skingeenis.<sup>242 243</sup> The men eventually moved off the island. Rudlin worked as a captain on merchant ships, while Jay would later become a school superintendent in Victoria.<sup>244</sup>

According to Oak Bay Reeve George Murdoch, John Sylvester Bowker also had a farm on Stsnaang until 1864.<sup>245</sup> Apparently, Bowker, who was born in Phillipston, Massachusetts, had moved west after the death of his wife and settled on Stsnaang. From his home on the little island, Bowker made trips to Victoria where he met and eventually married Mary Tod, the younger daughter of HBC Chief Factor John Tod.<sup>246</sup> I have not

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<sup>242</sup> For details about Jay & Co. requests for compensation and the response of the colonial administration, please refer to a letter to Governor Kennedy, penned by Jay & Co., December 11, 1865; see also, Pearse’s, letter to Jay & Co., February 2, 1865, BCARs Colonial Correspondence, File F838, Microfilm B0133. Courtesy of Dr. John S. Lutz.

<sup>243</sup> Entry no. 3849 on March 27, 1868 in Charge Book pp. 327-328, Register of Absolute Fees, Land Title Registry, Victoria BC, courtesy of Wendy Smith and John Lutz.

<sup>244</sup> For more information on Rudlin, please refer to “Sudden Death of Captain Rudlin” *British Colonist*, September 24, 1903. Accessed online from Early Victoria Newspapers: <https://web.uvic.ca/vv/newspaper/index.php>, December 25, 2019; John S. Lutz has spoken to the contemporary “controversy over the renaming of George Jay school because of his racism towards the Chinese.”

<sup>245</sup> George Murdoch, *A History of the Municipality of Oak Bay*, pp. 11-12, accessed online: <https://www.oakbay.ca/sites/default/files/History/murdoch.pdf> Unfortunately, Murdoch does not cite his sources, so it is difficult to verify the accuracy of his claim. Nonetheless, it is worth noting as it may support further research on this subject. See also: [findagrave.com](http://findagrave.com) John Sylvester Bowker.

<sup>246</sup> Murdoch, *A History of the Municipality of Oak Bay*, pp. 11-12.

found any evidence to support Reeve George Murdoch's claim that Bowker lived on Stsnaang.<sup>247</sup>

Challenging environmental conditions may have been a factor contributing to the short sojourns on the island by Deake, Bowker, Smith, Rudlin, and Jay. As elsewhere in this British colony, settlers learned the hard way that life in the region could be harsh. This led many to disappointment and even despair.<sup>248</sup> Dry summers, and long, dark, wet winters; limited arable land and thin, sandy soil, and lack of water during summer and early fall made farming difficult. Loneliness and homesickness also made life difficult on isolated islands.<sup>249</sup> In a letter to his cousin in 1848, early settler Walter Colquhoun Grant revealed that he had contemplated suicide - something that numbers of settlers may have considered given the challenging conditions of their lives.<sup>250</sup>

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<sup>247</sup> Murdoch, *A History of Oak Bay*. Unfortunately, Murdoch does not include footnotes, which makes it difficult to verify his sources.

<sup>248</sup> Walter Colquhoun Grant "Report 1857".

<sup>249</sup> The loneliness and despair experienced by settlers finds expression in the writings of Walter Colquhoun Grant. Please refer to his "Report" 1857.

<sup>250</sup> Ibid.

## Chapter Five — Smallpox 1862-1863

In March 1862, smallpox arrived in Victoria via a ship from San Francisco.<sup>251</sup> The deadly disease spread quickly among Indigenous people camped around Victoria.<sup>252</sup> Unlike previous epidemics, the virus enveloped the entire region, abating only once it had exhausted its supply of human hosts.<sup>253</sup> By 1864, 20,000 Indigenous people - one third of the Indigenous population - had succumbed to the disease.<sup>254</sup> The outbreak was particularly hard on Northern Coastal Indigenous peoples - the Kwakwakaèwakw from Fort Rupert, Haida from the Queen Charlottes, Tsimshian and Tlingit, Nuxalk from Bella Coola, and Heiltsuk from Bella Bella - because they had not previously been exposed to the virus and most were not inoculated. The 1858 gold rush had led to increasing economic activity in Victoria, which attracted Indigenous and non-Indigenous people to the city. Many Indigenous people from northern communities caught the disease while working in Victoria and living in cramped quarters in the inner harbour.<sup>255</sup> This concentration of people lacking immunity to smallpox created an environment in which the Variola virus could flourish.<sup>256</sup> The local authorities eventually banished Indigenous

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<sup>251</sup> For a discussion of this please refer to an article on pg. 2, in the *British Colonist* (March 26, 1862).; For information on the epidemic in British Columbia see Duff, *The Indian History of British Columbia*, p. 59.; For information on the effects of the disease on local Indigenous peoples please refer to Kieran Van Rijn's article, "Lo! The Poor Indian", see bibliography for details. It is clear that smallpox arrived in Victoria at the end of March 1862, however it was wreaking havoc in other places in the Pacific Northwest.

<sup>252</sup> Numerous articles and notices in the *British Colonist* from March to June 1862 articulate the deadly impact the virus had on Indigenous peoples. For example, a page-three article on March 28, 1862 explains the deadly impact on Indigenous people, and an article on page 3, April 26, 1862 reveals that Indigenous people were desperate to be inoculated.

<sup>253</sup> Wilson Duff and Cole Harris both refer to outbreaks of other diseases.

<sup>254</sup> Duff, *The Indian History of British Columbia*, p. 60.

<sup>255</sup> Duff explains that there were large numbers of "northern coastal tribes" in Victoria on the eve of the smallpox epidemic. Please refer to *The Indian History of British Columbia*, p. 59. According to Kieran Van Rijn, the disease spread to Indigenous people living up the coast as Indigenous peoples who had been living in Victoria left the city and went back to their communities up the coast, pp. 542-543.

<sup>256</sup> Robin Fisher, *Contact and Conflict*, p. 115.

people from the city.<sup>257</sup> Northern Indigenous people returned to their homes, unknowingly spreading the disease to members of their communities. Numerous people from the Songhees and Esquimalt communities, on the other hand, were inoculated in Victoria in 1862. Combined with immunity developed through repeated exposure to non-Indigenous people in Victoria helped to minimize the death rate within these communities.

Kieran Van Rijn argues that the failure of settler authorities to intervene on behalf of Indigenous peoples promoted the spread of the disease.<sup>258</sup><sup>259</sup> On April 28, 1862, a *British Colonist* reporter wrote an article stating that “[w]e predicted that if proper precautions were not taken at once to prevent that loathsome disease from spreading, the Indians on the Reserve would become infected and through them spread itself throughout the colony.”<sup>260</sup> He continued:

“We regret to say, that so far as the Indians are concerned our prediction has been verified. It now remains to be seen whether prompt steps will be taken to confine the smallpox to the Chimseans [Tsimshians]. Some twenty deaths have already occurred in their village; and so far as we have learned every case has been fatal. In a few days more we shall probably hear still more gloomy accounts of the continued ravages of the disease. The other fragments of tribes on the Reserve will doubtless become infected, and thus the Reserve will be made one huge lazar-house, in which its savage occupants will rot and die with the most revolting disease that ever afflicted the human race.”<sup>261</sup>

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<sup>257</sup> John Lutz, “Victoria, 1862” in *Victorian Review* Vol. 36, No. 1, p. 37.

<sup>258</sup> For authorities’ failure to take action that would limit the spread of the disease, please see page two of the *British Colonist* on April 28, 1862.

<sup>259</sup> Requests to contain the illness were generally made out of a concern for settlers. Numerous articles in the *British Colonist*, affirm that by and large settlers were primarily concerned with protecting themselves from Indigenous people suffering from the illness. Kieran Van Rijn confirms this in his article on the smallpox outbreak. Northern Indigenous peoples suffered the greatest losses. Scholars such as Wilson Duff and Grant Keddie state that this is because fewer northern Indigenous peoples had been vaccinated, whereas some Songhees living in close proximity to settlers had been vaccinated. An article on page-three of the *British Colonist* of June 2, 1862 states “... wonderful to relate, not a single flathead [settler term for Salish peoples] has, as yet, fallen a victim - a fact that seems all the more strange when it is borne in mind that many of them have not been inoculated with the [?] pox.”

<sup>260</sup> Ibid.

<sup>261</sup> In reference to “lazar-house”. According to google online dictionary, ‘lazar’ refers to “a poor and diseased person, especially one afflicted by a feared, contagious disease such as leprosy.”

This was not the only coverage of the "...fearful ravages at the Chimsean [Tsimshian] village."<sup>262</sup> On the morning of May 12, 1862, a reporter for the *British Colonist* announced that "[t]he small pox is creating fearful ravages among all the northern tribes. Two of the Hydahs [Haidas] died yesterday morning of that [?] disease and many others are on the point of dissolution."<sup>263</sup> On May 19, the *British Colonist* reports "[t]he small pox has made its appearance at Port Ludlow, among an encampment of Chimsean [Tsimshian] Indians, many of whom have died and nearly all are down with the disease."<sup>264</sup> On June 2, the paper announced, "Seven deaths of Northern Indians occurred on Saturday at the encampment, and an equal number were at their last gasp yesterday."<sup>265</sup> This notice went on to state, "[t]he ravages committed by the... disease among the poor Northerners are frightful to contemplate..."<sup>266</sup> A subsequent report states, "[t]he Euculets – [t]his powerful and warlike tribe, residing for centuries near Cape Mudge, on the west coast of this island, are dying from smallpox in scores..."<sup>267</sup>

Settlers were far less concerned with the well-being of Indigenous peoples than they were with preventing the spread of smallpox among themselves.<sup>268</sup> An article appearing in the March 26 edition of the *British Colonist* asserts:

"The cases may be few. But few as they are, they are dangerous; and as the harbouring of such a disease is to injure this place, stop people from coming here, and endanger the lives of our citizens, we hope prompt measures will be taken to prevent it from spreading. The most stringent regulations ought to be enforced, and enforced without a moment's delay. If a case occurs the parties ought to be placed beyond the reach of communicating the infection to others. Imagine for a moment what a fearful

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<sup>262</sup> *British Colonist*, April 26, 1862, p. 3.

<sup>263</sup> *British Colonist*, May 12, 1862, p. 3.

<sup>264</sup> *British Colonist*, May 19, 1862, p. 3.

<sup>265</sup> *British Colonist*, June 2, 1862, p. 3.

<sup>266</sup> Ibid.

<sup>267</sup> *British Colonist*, July 1, 1862, p. 3.

<sup>268</sup> *British Colonist*, May 8, 1862, p. 2.; Wilson Duff, *The Indian History of British Columbia*, p. 59.; Kieran Van Rijn, pp. 547-548.

calamity it would be, were the horde of Indians on the out-skirts of the town to take the disease. Their filthy habits would only perpetuate the evil, keep it alive in the community, sacrificing the lives of all classes..."<sup>269</sup>

A subsequent column relayed the anxiety of settlers advocating for "the establishment of a smallpox hospital... [because] [of] ... the near proximity to Victoria of many of the tribes."<sup>270</sup> An article on April 28 chastised the authorities for failing to intervene: "Were it likely that the disease would only spread among the Indians, there might be those among us like our authorities who would rest undisturbed, content that the small-pox is a fit successor to the moral ulcer that has festered at our doors throughout the last four years."<sup>271</sup> The article then asserted: "[t]he chances are that the pestilence will spread among our white population, a fit judgement for their intolerable wickedness in allowing such a nest of filth and crime to accumulate within sight of their houses, and within the hearing of our church bells."<sup>272</sup> The same columnist stated that the "Indians have free access to the town day and night" and suggests that Indigenous people be sent away in order to halt the progression of the disease and avoid 'scaring off' potential immigrants to the colony.<sup>273</sup> On May 8, 1862, the *British Colonist* insists upon "the prompt removal of every Indian, whether male or female, from the town and vicinity. They should be sent to some place remote from the whites, and that without a moment's delay. Else we shall in all probability have to record among our white population many serious losses from the infection." It went on to state "[w]e hope that before this paper is dry in the hands

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<sup>269</sup> *British Colonist*, March 26, 1862, p. 2.

<sup>270</sup> *British Colonist*, March 28, 1862, p. 3.

<sup>271</sup> *British Colonist*, April 28, 1862, p. 2.

<sup>272</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>273</sup> *Ibid.*

of our readers this morning, steps will be taken by the clergy and fathers of families to protect the town by banishing the Indians.”<sup>274</sup>

Settler contempt and indifference towards Indigenous peoples is clear. On May 27, 1862 a reporter wrote that “[a]t the present rate of mortality, a Northern Indian will be the object of curiosity in two years from now.”<sup>275</sup> In June, the *British Colonist* declared that “the Indians at Forts Simpson and Rupert are dying from the smallpox like rotten sheep.”<sup>276</sup> It is hardly surprising that on April 26, “several Nittinett Indians”, approached Governor Douglas “to ascertain... whether there was any truth in a story told them... that Douglas was about to send the small pox among them for the purpose of killing off the tribe and getting their land.”<sup>277</sup>

Actions taken by the colonial authorities reflected widespread settler racism. On April 29, 1862, the Commissioner of Police ordered his officers to “prevent” Indigenous people from entering Victoria.<sup>278</sup> Two days later, all Indigenous peoples “living within the limits of the town” and “not living with whites”, were ordered to move onto the reserve across from downtown Victoria “or the huts occupied by them would be pulled down about their ears.”<sup>279</sup> On May 1, 1862 a columnist reported that local authorities had demolished the homes of Indigenous peoples living “in the ravine and on Humboldt street”. He went on to state that the “Songhees [Lekwungen] and Chimseans [Tsimshians]” left the city

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<sup>274</sup> Ibid.

<sup>275</sup> *British Colonist*, p. 3, May 27, 1862.

<sup>276</sup> *British Colonist*, p. 3, June 13, 1862.

<sup>277</sup> *British Colonist*, p. 3, April 26, 1862.

<sup>278</sup> *British Colonist*, April 29, 1862, p. 3. Instead of improving medical care for the victims of smallpox and examining the conditions that gave rise to its spread, authorities blamed Indigenous peoples, and were primarily concerned with their removal as the best way to prevent its spread among the settler population.

<sup>279</sup> *British Colonist*, April 30, 1862, p. 3. Grant Keddie, Kieran Van Rijn, Robin Fisher, and Wilson Duff have also spoken about this in their respective works. Please refer to the bibliography for details.

“for one of the islands.”<sup>280</sup> Indigenous people who failed to comply with orders, were forced to witness the destruction of their homes and belongings. On May 14, 1862, the *British Colonist* reported that “[t]he Indians were notified to leave on Saturday last, and three days having elapsed and no notice being taken of the warning, fire was resorted to for the purpose of compelling them to evacuate, which they prepared to do yesterday afternoon after their houses had been levelled with the ground.”<sup>281</sup>

That some Indigenous people were reluctant, or refused, to abandon their dwellings in Victoria is understandable. Indeed, in many cases, it would have been the only decent, humane response. Numbers of people living there were from northern communities and leaving the city meant travelling vast distances to reach their traditional territories. This might also involve spreading the disease to their home communities. Furthermore, while it was possible to quarantine the sick in Victoria, travelling placed them in boats paddled by the healthy, or by those well enough to paddle, exacerbating the spread of disease. Imposing the rigours of ocean travel in small craft on those suffering the horrific symptoms smallpox underscores the contempt for Indigenous peoples bred within the Christian worldview in that time.<sup>282</sup>

Shortly after the outbreak of smallpox in Victoria, Tsimshian and “Stickeen” people began leaving the city and taking refuge on islands in the Haro Strait. On April 29, 1862, the *British Colonist* reported that “[t]he Songish Indians, greatly alarmed at the near

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<sup>280</sup> *British Colonist*, May 1, 1862. The authorities burned the Tsimshian village shortly after the group departed. Another *British Colonist* article written on May 10, 1862 reported that “Indians” from northern communities were told by the authorities that they had to leave the city.

<sup>281</sup> *British Colonist*, May 14, 1862.

<sup>282</sup> For an understanding of the progression of the illness and symptoms please refer to the Mayo Clinic website [www.mayoclinic.org](http://www.mayoclinic.org) “smallpox” and the World Health Organization website under “Frequently Asked Questions and Answers on Smallpox” [who.int](http://who.int).

approach of the disease, have loaded their canoes with *iktas*, and will leave for their fishing grounds on San Juan Island early this morning.”<sup>283</sup> The following day “[t]he Chimseans [Tsimshians] and the Songhees [left] for one of the islands in the Straits.”<sup>284</sup> On May 12, the newspaper reported that “[t]he Chimseans [Tsimshians] and Stickeens with their sick are encamped on small islands in the Canal de Haro...”<sup>285</sup>

Although many of the Songhees had been vaccinated, most sought refuge from the epidemic on TI'chés. Other Indigenous people also sought refuge on TI'chés. On June 14, “a number of Northern Indians in a canoe attempted a landing at Discovery Island.” According to the article, King Freezy, the leader of the Songhees, turned them away out of concern they might be carrying smallpox. The article reported that “[t]he Northerners persisted in attempting to land, when they were fired into by the Songish, and one of their number killed. The canoe then put off, when several more shots were fired and another Indian and a squaw killed and several wounded.”<sup>286</sup>

As Cole Harris has documented, there are many ways nations may be dispossessed of their lands.<sup>287</sup> Devastating losses of life, suffered by Indigenous communities, as a result of repeated outbreaks of smallpox and other diseases, eased settlement of Indigenous lands, by non-Indigenous people and colonial administrators.

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<sup>283</sup> *British Colonist* April 29, 1862, p. 3. Songhees people had fishing sites on San Juan Island, and could retreat there. For the location of their traditional fishing sites please refer to Wayne Suttles map of these sites in the Strait.

<sup>284</sup> *British Colonist*, April 30, 1862, p. 3. Because of the Songhees' ties to both San Juan and Henry Islands the author may have been referring to either or both islands

<sup>285</sup> *British Colonist*, May 12, 1862, p. 3. These groups would have chosen to make camp relatively close to Victoria, as transporting the ill would have worsened their condition and exacerbated others' exposure to smallpox, they may have made camp on Piers, Portland, Moresby, Stuart, or Henry Islands. As the following paragraph suggests, it is unlikely they would have established camps on TI'chés as this was Songhees territory.

<sup>286</sup> *British Colonist*, June 16, 1862, p. 3.

<sup>287</sup> Harris, “How Does Colonialism Dispossess?”, pp. 165-182.

Between 1862-1864, the Songhees relied on Tl'chés as their primary home base and avoided the city of Victoria. Prior to 1862, it is probable that Tl'chés was a seasonal home, rather than a place of year-round residence. During the smallpox epidemic, however, the Songhees hoping to avoid the outbreak of smallpox, would have likely shifted their seasonal rounds to avoid contact with Victorians. Living on the archipelago for extended periods of time, rather than travelling to and living in Victoria for parts of the year, would have minimized their exposure to the illness, however it would have required them to adjust subsistence patterns. Under these circumstances, people would have become accustomed to alternative subsistence patterns allowing them to live on Tl'chés year round. While many Songhees people returned to Victoria after the smallpox epidemic had died down on southern Vancouver Island, at least six families chose to stay on Tl'chés.<sup>288</sup>

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<sup>288</sup> "The Songish Rancherie." *British Colonist*, October 20, 1862, p. 3.

## Chapter Six — Creation of Reserves in the Archipelago

Most Songhees families returned to Victoria following the smallpox epidemic in 1862.<sup>289</sup> Six families, of different sizes, chose to remain and build a big-house on Skingeenis. In 1863, the colonial administration established reserves on both Stsnaang and Skingeenis Islands.<sup>290</sup> During this period, Governor Douglas was interested in promoting settlement, and the interests of entrepreneurs, in the colonies of Vancouver Island and British Columbia. However increasing numbers of settlers, entrepreneurs, and prospectors were coming into conflict with Indigenous communities over lands, resources, and livelihoods. Newcomers, such as George Jay, George Rudlin, and James Chesney Bales, were appropriating and/or harming lands, waters, and their various non-human life-forms that were interwoven with the identities, cultures, and physical survival of Indigenous people.<sup>291</sup> The Douglas administration's decision to create reserves on the islands may have been motivated, in part, by a desire to circumvent unrest and violence.<sup>292</sup> It is important to note that, during this period, failure to seek permission for

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<sup>289</sup> Keddie, *Songhees Pictorial*, p. 76; Suttles, *The Economic Life of the Coast Salish of the Haro and Rosario Straits*, p. 20.

<sup>290</sup> Harris, 2002. Attached as appendix LXII. (in Keddie? Duff?); regarding reserves on Discovery Island [Skingeenis] Chatham Island [Stsnaang], see "Schedule of Indian Reserves in the Dominion: Supplement to the Annual Report of the Department of Indian Affairs, 1913", Ottawa: Government Printing Bureau. Accessed from Union of BC Indian Chiefs (UBCIC) online:

<http://gsdl.ubcic.bc.ca/collect/firstna1/index/assoc/HASH01a1.dir/doc.pdf>

Colonial Correspondence, Pearse, "Memo: Survey of Discovery Island", January 18, 1865 (V.I. 2E; Colonial Correspondence 910-5); "Minute of Decision", (V.I. 2-G and V.I. 2-F; Fed Coll. M.O.D, volume 3, p. 256)

John S. Lutz has collected this information from the work of Cole Harris (2002), appendix LXII, as well as other scholars, such as Grant Keddie; According to A.W. Vowel, reserves on the archipelago were created in 1863.

<sup>291</sup> Cole Harris, *Making Native Space: Colonialism, Reserves, and Resistance in British Columbia*, Vancouver: UBC Press, 2002.

<sup>292</sup> Fisher, *Contact and Conflict*, pp. 60-61. Douglas disapproved of the American approach to the Indigenous land question because of the chaos that ensued. Ibid. pp. 60-61.

For a better understanding of context, please refer to Fisher, *Contact and Conflict*, pp. 60-61. For a discussion of the gold rush in New Caledonia, pp. 70; 96-98. For discussion of Douglas's fear over the possibility of an "Indian war", please refer to p. 99.

access was considered trespass in both western European and Indigenous cultures of the Pacific Northwest.<sup>293</sup> During this period, however, most Euro-North Americans did not perceive Indigenous peoples as having title or rights to the lands. The creation of reserves in the archipelago may also have reflected Douglas's interest in preventing settler encroachment on Indigenous lands.<sup>294</sup> However, as John Lutz has explained, it is probable that the Douglas administration was thinking of inducing the Songhees to move from the inner harbour of Victoria to land on Skingeenis and Stsnaang. According to Dick Kay, member of the Songhees Nation, prior to the establishment of the reserves in the archipelago, Douglas visited the islands, reassuring the Songhees that settlers would not be coming to the islands.<sup>295</sup> Unbeknownst to Kay, however, existing settler land preemptions were generally respected in the creation of reserves, thus a large section of Skingeenis used by Jay and Rudlin was excluded from the reserves established on the islands in 1863. Lutz has emphasized that in the creation of reserves, the colonial government did not typically "disturb" "existing alienations" and this was likely the case with respect to Rudlin and Jays preemption on Skingeenis. Kay, however, believed the land may have been excluded from the reserve as payment for a debt acquired by "American Indians" on Tl'chés. According to Kay, during the mid-nineteenth century, a settler had opened a store on Skingeenis, selling groceries on credit to "many American Indians", who were unable to pay their debt. Thus, "when the surveyors came over to lay

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For Douglas's "concern" over settler encroachment on Indigenous lands please refer to Fisher, *Contact and Conflict*, p. 68.

<sup>293</sup> This is implied in "Discovery Island," *Victoria Daily Evening Express*, January 20, 1865 p. 3.

<sup>294</sup> In an interview with the McKenna-McBride Commissioners in 1913, Discovery Island Songhees member Dick Kay implied that Douglas was aware of settler encroachment on Indigenous lands.

<sup>295</sup> McKenna-McBride Commission Report (1913) accessed from Library and Archives Canada online.

the reservation out” the owner of the store “took the biggest and best part of the land” on Skingeenis as payment for the groceries.<sup>296</sup>

The creation of reserves did not eliminate tension between settlers and Indigenous people living on the archipelago. In 1893, the Songhees living on Skingeenis accused island resident James Chesney Bales of encroaching on their reserve.<sup>297</sup> In 1866, Bales purchased 164 acres the island with George Jay. In 1869, Bales, his fiancée Jane, and Jay entered into an agreement by which Jay would receive ‘rights in fee’ to the land on Skingeenis. Bales and his fiancée, however, would retain the right to use and live on the land for the rest of their lives.<sup>298</sup> This agreement appears to have been short-lived. Land title records reveal that the Crown transferred the 164 acres to Bales on December 7, 1871.<sup>299</sup> Jay does continue to appear in the land title register into the 1880s, so he may have continued to live on Skingeenis until that time, or later. On April 20, 1886, Bales transferred 2.02 acres of his property to the Crown for the construction of a lighthouse and on April 29, 1890, transferred an additional 2.3 acres for the construction of a foghorn.<sup>300</sup> This prompted a complaint by the Songhees to Indian Agent Lomas, who forwarded their grievance against Bales to the Department of Indian Affairs (DIA) in Ottawa. On March 4, 1893, Indian Superintendent A. W. Vowell wrote, “Mr. Bales appears to have sold in all – first two acres for [the] lighthouse, and last year two acres more for

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<sup>296</sup> Dick Kay, Testimony in the McKenna-McBride Commission Report (1913).

<sup>297</sup> “Cowichan Agency - Complaints from the Indians of Discovery Island that Mr. Bales is Encroaching on their reserve. Agent W.H. Lomas is Reporting on the Subject”, 1893 (1893), RG10. Vol/box no. 3900, file no.: 99800. Copied Container no.: C-10158. Library and Archives Canada.

<sup>298</sup> Registered in charge book vol. 5; fol. 45 no. 2536; Register of Absolute Fees, Sept. 7, 1880, Land Title Registry, Victoria, BC, courtesy of Wendy Smith and John Lutz.

<sup>299</sup> Register of Absolute Fees, entry December 7, 1871, pp. 125-127, Land Title Registry Victoria, BC, courtesy of Wendy Smith and John Lutz.

<sup>300</sup> Entry, April 20, 1886, pp. 277-278, Register of Absolute Fees, Land Title Registry Victoria, BC, courtesy of Wendy Smith and John Lutz;

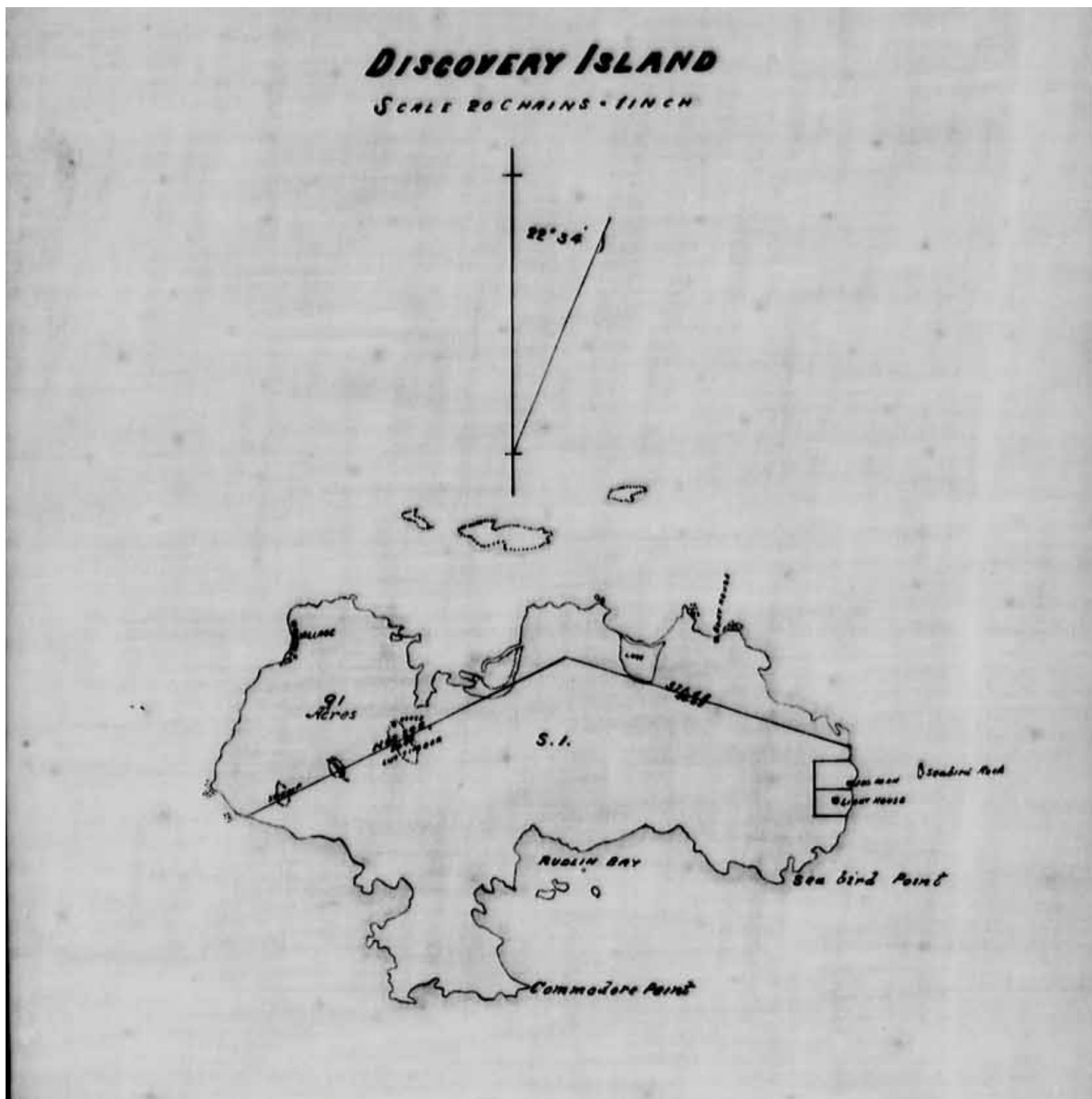
[the] foghorn. The Indians naturally think that they should have the money paid to Mr. Bales. Nothing will satisfy them but that I should at once write to you on the subject...”<sup>301</sup>

At this point, Vowell suggested that a surveyor inspect the boundary to determine whether a breach had occurred. It was determined that no breach had been committed by Mr. Bales, but rather, that the Songhees had trespassed on Bales’s property.<sup>302</sup>

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<sup>301</sup> See letter from A. W. Vowell on March 4, 1893. “Cowichan Agency - Complaints from the Indians of Discovery Island that Mr. Bales is Encroaching On Their Reserve. Agent W.H. Lomas is Reporting On The Subject”, 1893 (1893), RG10. Vol/box no. 3900, file no.: 99800. Copied Container no.: C-10158. Library and Archives Canada; For the sale of the lands to the Crown for a lighthouse and foghorn, please refer to the Register of Absolute Fees, vol. 11, no. 9982, Land Title Registry and Register of Absolute Fees, vol. 9, no. 6779, Land Title Registry, courtesy of Wendy Smith and John Lutz, February 2020.

<sup>302</sup> See letter from A. W. Vowell on March 4, 1893. “Cowichan Agency - Complaints From The Indians of Discovery Island That Mr. Bales is Encroaching On Their Reserve. Agent W.H. Lomas is Reporting On The Subject”, 1893 (1893), RG10. Vol/box no. 3900, file no.: 99800. Copied Container no.: C-10158. Library and Archives Canada.



303 Map of Skingeenis [Discovery] from the collection of documents pertaining to the Bales incident.

<sup>303</sup> The "Indian Village" is marked on the top left-hand side of the island. Commodore Point is at the southern tip of the island, at the mouth of Rudlin Bay. Sea Bird Point is at the other side of Rudlin Bay. On the east side of the island, above Sea Bird Point, are the lighthouse and foghorn. Section One (S. 1) refers to all of the land south of the border with the Songhees Reserve Discovery Island No. 3. Map of Discovery Island [Skingeenis], Scale: 20 chains = 1 inch, Department of Indian Affairs, RG-10, Vol. 3900, File 99,000; "Cowichan Agency – Complaints from the Indians of Discovery Island that Mr. Bales is encroaching on their reserve Agent W.H. Lomas is reporting on the subject", Library and Archives

## Chapter Seven - Songhees on TI'chés: Mid-19<sup>th</sup> to Mid-20<sup>th</sup> Centuries

The following account draws on oral testimony, archival documents, and secondary sources to piece together the story of the Songhees on TI'chés. Because the colonial archive is weak on documentation for the pre-1862 period, the account necessarily relies on mid-nineteenth to mid-twentieth centuries.

Henry and Annie Williams lived on the archipelago from at least the 1860s until their deaths in 1937 and 1928.<sup>304</sup> Both were born on Skingeenis Island in 1860, and likely belonged to the families who chose to remain on the island after the epidemic.<sup>305</sup> Their son Ned was born on San Juan Island in 1879, but spent much of his life with his wife, Cecilia, and children on TI'chés.<sup>306</sup> According to Wilson Duff, “four of Ned’s uncles lived on Discovery [Skingeenis]” and were “buried” on the island.<sup>307</sup> Their livelihood included fishing, raising sheep, chickens, hunting seals, and gardening as was the case for others living on TI'chés, such as his father and Tom James.<sup>308</sup> Travelling between the archipelago and the Victoria area, where Ned and his father traded their fish and sheep

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Canada online MIKAN no. 2061624 (9 items). This map is included with permission from Library and Archives Canada.

<sup>304</sup> Henry Williams passed away in 1937 on the Tsawout Reserve (information courtesy of John S. Lutz). Annie Williams passed away in 1928, see Grant Keddie *A Songhees Pictorial: A History of Songhees People as Seen By Outsiders*, “Supplement to the 2003 book” under notes for “Chapter 7”. Accessed online: [http://staff.royalbcmuseum.bc.ca/wp-content/uploads/2013/08/Songhees\\_supplement-Grant-Keddie.pdf](http://staff.royalbcmuseum.bc.ca/wp-content/uploads/2013/08/Songhees_supplement-Grant-Keddie.pdf).

Ned Williams also worked with anthropologist Wayne Suttles.

<sup>305</sup> Information provided by John S. Lutz. The names provided by these sources may or may not have been the actual names of the people described.

<sup>306</sup> Information courtesy of John S. Lutz, February 18, 2020. Many of the Songhees have kinship affiliations with people living on what is now called the United States, thus some Songhees visited and lived on the San Juan Islands for periods of time.

<sup>307</sup> Wilson Duff’s unpublished “Field Notes”, Notebook #12, available at the British Columbia Archives, B6044 51, STR-W 002, Wilson Duff Field Notebook #12, 1960, Victoria, Place Names.; See also Wilson Duff, “The Fort Victoria Treaties”, pp. 47-48.

<sup>308</sup> Courtesy of John S. Lutz. I obtained Ned Williams birth date from Suttles, *The Economic Life of the Coast Salish on the Haro and Rosario Straits*.

for other goods, the Williamses remained closely connected to the Songhees community on southern Vancouver Island.<sup>309</sup> Along with his wife, Rose, Ned Williams lived on both the Esquimalt Reserve as well as on Discovery Island until his death in 1970.<sup>310</sup>

The George family remained on the archipelago after the smallpox epidemic. Harry George, also known by other names such as “George Solcwosit” and “Qunteenica”, was born on Discovery Island and died in 1895. George's father “was of the Katzie people on the lower Fraser”.<sup>311</sup> George married Mary Swawsten of Sooke, who gave birth to their son Louis on Skingeenis in July, 1881. The family lived in a “large”, “gable-roofed, plank house with a round door and a painting of a whale on the front...” In an interview given to anthropologist Wayne Suttles the George's explained that “...the use of the round door and the painting were the inherited privileges of Mary's family.”<sup>312</sup> In 1901, Louis married Agnes George, who was “born on the old Songhees reserve” in 1878, and later worked as an informant for “linguists and anthropologists”, providing information on Songhees “language and history.”<sup>313</sup> Tom James, also known as “Hebins Louie” and great-grandfather of Elder Súlhlíma (Joan) Morris, lived on the archipelago for most of his life.

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<sup>309</sup> In the 1913 McKenna-McBride Report, Henry Williams describes fishing and keeping sheep, and selling them off-island. According to Gabriel ‘Skip’ Sam, Ned Williams had a smokehouse on *Sitchanalth* (Willows Beach); for fishing and raising sheep see Wayne Suttles, 1954, vii and Wilson Duff, 1969, p. 47.

<sup>310</sup> Information courtesy of John S. Lutz, February 18, 2020.

<sup>311</sup> Grant Keddle, “The Dugout Freight Canoe in the Royal British Columbia Museum Indigenous Collection”, November 19, 2019, online: <http://staff.royalbcmuseum.bc.ca/2019/11/19/the-dugout-freight-canoe-in-the-royal-b-c-museum-indigenous-collection/>

<sup>312</sup> Ibid. taken from Wayne Suttles, *The Economic Life of the Coast Salish of Haro and Rosario Straits*, New York: Garland, 1974, p. 20.

<sup>313</sup> Grant Keddle, *Songhees Pictorial: A History of the Songhees As Seen by Outsiders, 1790-1912*.

“Supplement to the 2003 book”. Accessed online: [http://staff.royalbcmuseum.bc.ca/wp-content/uploads/2013/08/Songhees\\_supplement-Grant-Keddle.pdf](http://staff.royalbcmuseum.bc.ca/wp-content/uploads/2013/08/Songhees_supplement-Grant-Keddle.pdf)

Information also obtained in correspondence with John S. Lutz, February 18, 2020; see also Grant Keddle, “The Dugout Freight Canoe in the Royal British Columbia Museum Indigenous Collection”, November 19, 2019, online: <http://staff.royalbcmuseum.bc.ca/2019/11/19/the-dugout-freight-canoe-in-the-royal-b-c-museum-indigenous-collection/>

His third wife, Alice Sam, lived with him on the island. James' death certificate states that he was 104 years old at the time of death, on April 4, 1961, which suggests a birth year of 1862.<sup>314</sup> In a conversation with Graham Nicholas, Songhees Elder Súlhlíma (Joan Morris) mentioned her family lineage of honoured healers or shamans on Tl'chés. It includes "...both Tom James and Henry Williams".<sup>315</sup> According to Grant Keddie, Tom James "son Andrew owned a house on Chatham Island Reserve #2".<sup>316</sup> He also explains that Tom and Alice's daughter, Hilda, "married Joseph Thomas of the Esquimalt Band".<sup>317</sup> "Jimmy Chickens" - known for stealing chickens from residents of Oak Bay - may have lived on Tl'chés at different times over the course of his life.<sup>318</sup> He also lived on Mary Tod Island (Jimmy Chickens Island), located just off Oak Bay. His death record states that he died on Skingeenis.<sup>319</sup> His granddaughter, Sophie Misheal, one of Wayne Suttles informants, was born on Discovery Island on March 25, 1890.<sup>320</sup> According to the *Daily*

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<sup>314</sup> Death Certificate of Tom James, accessed from "Genealogy - General Search", British Columbia Archives online: <http://search-collections.royalbcmuseum.bc.ca/Image/Genealogy/b85920db-b224-4a3a-9ae3-abd4d1739eae>; I also received some of this information through correspondence with John S. Lutz. See also Grant Keddie, *A Songhees Pictorial: A History of Songhees People as Seen By Outsiders*, "Supplement to the 2003 book" under "Contents (page 5)"; It is worth noting that birth and death certificates pertaining to Indigenous people were often inaccurate.

<sup>315</sup> Graham Nicholas, "Eco-Cultural Restoration of Wetlands", p. 25; Elder Súlhlíma also shares this information in the documentary "Joan Morris – Heart of Chatham Island" (13:40), produced by the Pacific Peoples Partnership with the Songhees Nation, Media Net, and Indigenous Youth Arts Program, [pacificpeoplespartnership.org/videos/joan-morris-of-chatham-island](http://pacificpeoplespartnership.org/videos/joan-morris-of-chatham-island) or [songheesnation.ca/news/joan-morris-heart-of-chatham-island](http://songheesnation.ca/news/joan-morris-heart-of-chatham-island)

<sup>316</sup> Grant Keddie, *A Songhees Pictorial: A History of Songhees People as Seen By Outsiders*, "Supplement to the 2003 book" under "Contents (page 5)", accessed online:

[http://staff.royalbcmuseum.bc.ca/wp-content/uploads/2013/08/Songhees\\_supplement-Grant-Keddie.pdf](http://staff.royalbcmuseum.bc.ca/wp-content/uploads/2013/08/Songhees_supplement-Grant-Keddie.pdf)

<sup>317</sup> Keddie, *A Songhees Pictorial: A History of Songhees People as Seen By Outsiders*, "Supplement to the 2003 book" p. 2. under "Contents (page 5)", accessed online: [http://staff.royalbcmuseum.bc.ca/wp-content/uploads/2013/08/Songhees\\_supplement-Grant-Keddie.pdf](http://staff.royalbcmuseum.bc.ca/wp-content/uploads/2013/08/Songhees_supplement-Grant-Keddie.pdf)

<sup>318</sup> I acquired this information through correspondence with John S. Lutz, February 18, 2020; see also, Betty Funk, "What Was The Name of that old charming Inn" *The Daily Colonist*, November 13, 1977, p. 16. and, "The Last of the Cadboro Tribe" *The Daily Colonist*, February 1, 1901, p. 5. accessed from Early Victoria Newspapers online: <https://web.uvic.ca/vv/newspaper/index.php>

<sup>319</sup> Ibid.

<sup>320</sup> I acquired this information through correspondence with John S. Lutz, February 20, 2020; Misheal also worked with anthropologist Wayne Suttles.

*Colonist*, Sam Tullamult, a fisherman, “born on the old Songhees reserve” lived on Skingeenis for most of his life. The newspaper noted he was ninety when he passed away on May 1, 1925, thus he may have been born in 1835.<sup>321</sup> According to Grant Keddie, Songhees Chief John Albany explained to him that Alice Sam, third wife of Tom James, was the daughter of Sam Qullamulk.<sup>322</sup> It is possible that Sam Tullamult and Sam Qullamulk are the same person.<sup>323</sup>

After Confederation, in 1871, the Dominion Government issued Annual Reports on Indigenous peoples. These confirmed the presence of Songhees people on the archipelago throughout the latter decades of the 19th and first half of the 20th century.<sup>324</sup> An examination of these reports over a twenty one year period showed that the numbers of residents varied from year-to-year. According to the Department of Indian Affairs annual report for 1885, nine Songhees people were living on Skingeenis. By 1897, however, this number had climbed to thirty-six, and in 1906 it went down to thirty people.<sup>325</sup> These reports listed the Songhees residents as Roman Catholics.<sup>326</sup> It should

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<sup>321</sup> *Daily Colonist*, “Obituaries” “Tullamult”, May 2, 1925, p. 5. Settler documentation regarding Indigenous people was notoriously inaccurate, thus this may not have been his actual age.

<sup>322</sup> Grant Keddie, “Notes for Page 5”, *Songhees Pictorial: A History of the Songhees As Seen by Outsiders, 1790-1912*. “Supplement to the 2003 book”. Accessed online: [http://staff.royalbcmuseum.bc.ca/wp-content/uploads/2013/08/Songhees\\_supplement-Grant-Keddie.pdf](http://staff.royalbcmuseum.bc.ca/wp-content/uploads/2013/08/Songhees_supplement-Grant-Keddie.pdf)

<sup>323</sup> Grant Keddie, “Notes for Page 5”, *Songhees Pictorial: A History of the Songhees As Seen by Outsiders, 1790-1912*. “Supplement to the 2003 book”. Accessed online: [http://staff.royalbcmuseum.bc.ca/wp-content/uploads/2013/08/Songhees\\_supplement-Grant-Keddie.pdf](http://staff.royalbcmuseum.bc.ca/wp-content/uploads/2013/08/Songhees_supplement-Grant-Keddie.pdf)

If this is the same person, there appears to have been some confusion over his name. A page 2 article in the *Daily Colonist* from April 5, 1911 provides the name of a “Samuel Qullamulk” as a member of the Songhees Band. Tullamult and Qullamulk are likely the same person.

<sup>324</sup> Until the turn of the century, the population was relatively small, averaging between twelve and fifteen people.

<sup>325</sup> Department of Indian Affairs Annual Reports, accessed from Library and Archives Canada online: <http://www.bac-lac.gc.ca/eng/discover/aboriginal-heritage/first-nations/indian-affairs-annual-reports/Pages/search.aspx> ; Census information from the reports also provided by John S. Lutz, February 19, 2020.

<sup>326</sup> This is highlighted in the Department of Indian Affairs Annual Reports.

be noted, however, Henry Williams was reportedly a Methodist, and others may have also belonged to the latter denomination.<sup>327</sup>

The location of historic Songhees homesteads on the archipelago can be determined by maps and aerial photographs. An early map, showing a solitary “Indian Village”, close to “Orchard Beach” on the northwest side of Skingeenis shows several of the Songhees residents here during this period.<sup>328</sup> During the nineteenth century, many Songhees lived communally, and it seems likely that the one large rectangular structure, depicted on the map, was a communal big house built on the archipelago after 1862.<sup>329</sup>

During the twentieth century, Songhees residents began to build single family dwellings on the island. Aerial photos, produced over the course of the 20th century, reveal homesteads on the west sides of both islands of Stsnaang. They also reveal an “Indian Village” on the northwest side of Skingeenis.<sup>330</sup> These homesteads may have been established as far back as the early 20<sup>th</sup> century.<sup>331</sup> The *Daily Colonist* reports that on November 16, 1904 the “Indian Rancherie on Discovery Island [Skingeenis] was completely destroyed by fire”.<sup>332</sup> While the exact location is not provided, the term “rancherie” indicates more than one family that more than one family were residing

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<sup>327</sup> Information sourced from John S. Lutz.

<sup>328</sup> For the location of the “Indian Village”, please refer to an 1888 British Navy Navigation chart “Vancouver Island, British Columbia”, B7181(6) sourced from the UK Hydrographic Office: <https://www.gov.uk/the-ukho-archive> Orchard Beach was given its name for the orchards nearby. The beach is located on the northwest side of Skingeenis, near the former home of Ned and Cecilia Williams.

<sup>329</sup> Map courtesy of John S. Lutz. Anthropologists have established that Songhees families constructed a big house on Skingeenis at some point after the smallpox epidemic.

<sup>330</sup> For the location of the “Indian Village”, please refer to an 1888 British Navy Navigation chart “Vancouver Island, British Columbia”, B7181(6) sourced from the UK Hydrographic Office: <https://www.gov.uk/the-ukho-archive>; Hard copies of aerial photos of Chatham and Discovery Islands were accessed from the University of Victoria Library. These include photos taken during different decades of the 20th century.

<sup>331</sup> For a better understanding please refer to the aerial photos, taken in 1954 (BC1671; 92B), 1957 (BC 2086; 92B), and 1971 accessed from the University of Victoria Maps and GIS

<sup>332</sup> *Daily Colonist*, “Rancherie Burned”, November 17, 1904, p. 5.

there.<sup>333</sup> The favourable location of these dwelling sites would have made them popular with twentieth century residents.<sup>334</sup> Tom and Alice James had a homestead on the west side of Stsnaang (west), while Ned and Cecilia Williams established a home on the northwestern side of Skingeenis, in the vicinity of the "Indian Village".<sup>335</sup> Songhees Elder Súlhlíma (Joan) Morris is related to both couples. Tom and Alice James were her great-grandparents. During the 1940's and 1950's, Tom and Alice – along with Súlhlíma's grandparents, Elizabeth and Andrew James - raised Súlhlíma on Stsnaang.<sup>336</sup> Morris recalls other relatives living on Stsnaang (west), including her grandmother Cecilia Jack. According to Súlhlíma, Francis Johnny and Hazel Henry, as well as Lillian and John Rice, lived on Skingeenis.<sup>337</sup> Also living on Skingeenis were Johnny Sam and his family, including his son Skip and daughter-in-law May, both of whom are Tsartlip Elders, and their grandchildren.<sup>338</sup>

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<sup>333</sup> According to Collins English Dictionary online, a "Racherie (in British Columbia, Canada)" is "a settlement of indigenous people, esp on a reserve". For details, please refer to [collinsdictionary.com](http://collinsdictionary.com)

<sup>334</sup> All three dwelling sites provide protection from the southeasterly winds, which would have made it difficult for cultivation, not to mention launching and landing boats.

<sup>335</sup> The Williamses lived close to "Orchard Beach" on Skingeenis.

<sup>336</sup> See *Times Colonist*, "Book Excerpt: The Dark Past of Native Health", February 12, 2017; "Joan Morris – Heart of Chatham Island", (03:08-03:13; 03:40-03:54) produced by the Pacific Peoples Partnership with the Songhees Nation, Media Net, and Indigenous Youth Arts Program, [pacificpeoplespartnership.org/videos/joan-morris-of-chatham-island](http://pacificpeoplespartnership.org/videos/joan-morris-of-chatham-island) or [songheesnation.ca/news/joan-morris-heart-of-chatham-island](http://songheesnation.ca/news/joan-morris-heart-of-chatham-island)

<sup>337</sup> "Joan Morris – Heart of Chatham Island", produced by the Pacific Peoples Partnership with the Songhees Nation, Media Net, and Indigenous Youth Arts Program, [pacificpeoplespartnership.org/videos/joan-morris-of-chatham-island](http://pacificpeoplespartnership.org/videos/joan-morris-of-chatham-island) or [songheesnation.ca/news/joan-morris-heart-of-chatham-island](http://songheesnation.ca/news/joan-morris-heart-of-chatham-island); Information from the transcript of an interview conducted by Nancy J. Turner with Elder Súlhlíma (Joan) Morris on July 1, 2013.;

<sup>338</sup> Nancy Turner interview with Elder Súlhlíma (Joan) Morris on July 1, 2013.; Gabriel 'Skip' Sam's father, Johnny Sam, and his mother and his siblings lived on Skingeenis during the 1940s. Henry Williams was Skip's Grandfather and Ned Williams was Skip's uncle. Skip and May lived with their two children on Skingeenis with Skip's parents (likely 1950s and 1960s). Skip has extended family in Roche Harbor and Friday Harbor. Skip grew up spending periods of time on San Juan and Stuart Island. Interview with Gabriel 'Skip' Sam and May Sam, October 6, 2017.

For an elaboration of one issue arising from the imposition of band structure on Straits Salish peoples, please see the last paragraph on page 77 of this thesis.

According to the sources, the islanders subsisted mainly on farming (sheep, chickens, and geese) along with duck hunting on the side.<sup>339</sup> Chickens, geese, and ducks provided ongoing sources of protein and fat, as well as feathers for pillows.<sup>340</sup> Sheep contributed significantly to islanders' income.<sup>341</sup> Sheep provided an alternative to cattle as the latter could not survive on the islands due to poor groundwater.<sup>342</sup> According to Henry Williams, there were "100 sheep" on Discovery Island in 1913; "60" on one of the Chatham Islands; and "18" on the other.<sup>343</sup> The sheep roamed freely on the island, before being slaughtered. Gabriel 'Skip' Sam, nephew to Ned Williams (son of Henry Williams), often helped Ned gather sheep, and has described the challenges of 'rounding [them] up' on unfenced land.<sup>344</sup> Tom James also kept sheep on an ongoing basis.<sup>345</sup> Sheep smugglers often targeted islands in the Haro and Rosario Straits. In 1897, Henry Williams lost 60 sheep to smugglers who stole and killed them before sinking their entrails. It was a major loss for Williams.<sup>346</sup>

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<sup>339</sup> Please refer to the testimonies of Henry Williams and Tom James, given to the Royal Commission on Indian Affairs Report (1913), accessed through Library and Archives Canada (LAC) online. For duck hunting, please refer to Gabriel 'Skip' Sam "interview", 17:05.; non-Indigenous people were also aware of ducks on Stsnaang. Please refer to the *Daily Colonist*, "A Straits Tragedy", November 15, 1896, p. 5.

For the hunting of waterfowl, please refer to the *Daily Colonist*, November 15, 1908.

<sup>340</sup> For "geese", please refer to Henry Williams "testimony", Royal Commission on Indian Affairs, accessed through LAC online, image 341. Henry Williams had "60 chickens" and "21 geese" on his homestead, and his daughter raised her own chickens on the island.

<sup>341</sup> Tom James "testimony", Royal Commission on Indian Affairs Report (1913). Accessed at LAC online, image 342.

<sup>342</sup> Royal Commission on Indian Affairs Report (1913), accessed from LAC online, image 341.

<sup>343</sup> Henry Williams "testimony", Royal Commission on Indian Affairs Report (1913) Accessed at LAC online, image 341.

<sup>344</sup> Gabriel 'Skip' Sam "interview", 15:55. May Sam "interview", 17:59.

<sup>345</sup> Tom James "testimony", Royal Commission on Indian Affairs Report (1913).

Joan Morris "conversations", 2016.

<sup>346</sup> *Daily Colonist*, June 9, 1897.

Residents on the islands supplemented farming with fishing – for herring, “salmon, halibut, and cod”, as well as other types of fish and seafood, such as sea urchin and crabs.<sup>347</sup> An annual run of salmon would pass by the “east end of [Skingeenis]” on route to Fraser River spawning grounds.<sup>348</sup> During a conversation with Gabriel ‘Skip’ Sam on Sitchanalth (Willows Beach), overlooking Tl’chés to the east, Skip pointed to an area south of Skingeenis, declaring it to be one of the best spots for catching halibut.<sup>349</sup> Sam also stated that his uncle Ned Williams used homemade hooks for catching halibut, and that Songhees families fished and harvested clams, urchins, mussels, and Dungeness crab off Ten Mile Point.<sup>350</sup> The Williams family had a smokehouse on Sitchanalth. They dried or smoked seafood to preserve it for winter or for leaner times.<sup>351</sup>

The Songhees gathered seaweed on Tl’chés and elsewhere, for personal consumption and for sale to merchants in Victoria's Chinatown.<sup>352</sup> They knew the types

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<sup>347</sup> Royal Commission on Indian Affairs Report (1913), accessed from LAC online; Gabriel ‘Skip’ Sam “interview” (27:00, 24:25); “Joan Morris – Heart of Chatham Island”, (10:28-10:32) produced by the Pacific Peoples Partnership with the Songhees Nation, Media Net, and Indigenous Youth Arts Program, [pacificpeoplespartnership.org/videos/joan-morris-of-chatham-island](http://pacificpeoplespartnership.org/videos/joan-morris-of-chatham-island) or [songheesnation.ca/news/joan-morris-heart-of-chatham-island](http://songheesnation.ca/news/joan-morris-heart-of-chatham-island)

<sup>348</sup> Please refer to “In Praise of Victoria’s Charms” p. 3, *British Colonist*, Sunday, November 15, 1908.

<sup>349</sup> Certainly, the Songhees were not the only people fishing in the area around Tl’chés. As is evidenced by the volume of notices in the *British Colonist* of foreshore leases, non-Indigenous people were also fishing in the area. See the *British Colonist* on August 2 and 15, 1902 for examples of notices of foreshore licenses. See also issues from July 30, 1902 (p. 3); August 9, 1902 (p. 10); July 23 and 24, 1902 (p. 3) (as well as others in July and August that year); and July 28, 1906 (p. 7); and August 31, 1906 (p. 7).

<sup>350</sup> Gabriel ‘Skip’ Sam “interview”, 24:25. Sam, “interview”, 27:00.

<sup>351</sup> Suttles, *The Economic Life of the Coast Salish of the Haro and Rosario Straits*. May Sam “interview”, 24:05. Gabriel ‘Skip’ Sam, “interview”, 9:24. There is a plaque commemorating Ned Williams on Sitchanalth.

<sup>352</sup> Ibid. 3:24; 1:16.; Gabriel ‘Skip’ Sam and May Sam “interview”, 2:42; 3:24; *Daily Colonist*, “Landing Cargo of Seaweed at Oak Bay”, July 5, 1938; Grant Keddie has also describe the harvest and sale of seaweed in “The Dugout Freight Canoe and the Royal BC Museum Indigenous Collection”, November 19, 2019, accessed online: <http://staff.royalbcmuseum.bc.ca/2019/11/19/the-dugout-freight-canoe-in-the-royal-b-c-museum-indigenous-collection/>; referred to this in his book *Songhees Pictorial: A History of the Songhees as Seen by Outsiders* “Supplement to the 2003 book” under “People Camped Along the Shores West of James Bay”; <http://staff.royalbcmuseum.bc.ca/wp-content/uploads/2013/08/Songhees-supplement-Grant-Keddie.pdf>

of seaweed that were edible, and the appropriate time to harvest each variety. Residents gathered seaweed off rocks and beaches during the low tides of spring and summer.<sup>353</sup> Once collected, they would lay the seaweed out on a wooden platform to dry until white, thus preventing spoilage.<sup>354</sup>

Clams were a staple in the Coast Salish diet and were sold to other communities on southern Vancouver Island, the Gulf Islands, and Washington State.<sup>355</sup> Residents of Tl'chés harvested clams within the archipelago, as well as from other locations in Songhees territory and in the territories of communities with whom they had kinship ties. One common way to cook clams was to dig a hole in the ground, place rocks in the bottom, and light a fire in the hole. After the fire died, placing the clams in the hole, they would cover it and then pour water inside to steam the clams.<sup>356</sup> Clams were also dried, strung, and stored for extended periods of time.<sup>357</sup> To harvest cedar root, one had to walk ten feet away from the trunk of a Cedar tree, then dig in that spot to pull out the roots. String made from these roots was excellent for stringing clams.<sup>358</sup> Residents of Tl'chés grew extensive vegetable gardens and cultivated fruit trees, including apples, pears, and blackberries.<sup>359</sup> Amidst the overgrown tangle of branches and vines, fruit trees and berry bushes continue to produce fruit today. On Chatham West, apple, plum, and pear trees

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<sup>353</sup> Gabriel 'Skip' Sam and May Sam "interview".

<sup>354</sup> Ibid. 3:24; Ibid. 23:39.

<sup>355</sup> Skip and May Sam described selling their clams at the Ellensberg Rodeo in Washington State. Ibid. 06:19; 07:00. Clams would likely have been sold and traded for other necessities in Victoria and Oak Bay.

<sup>356</sup> Skip and May explained this process. Interview with Skip and May Sam, 06:19.

<sup>357</sup> For example, Skip Sam's family harvested clams from Stuart Island. Interview with Skip and May Sam, 06:19.

<sup>358</sup> Skip Sam's mother taught his wife, May, how to harvest cedar root. Skip and May Sam, "interview", 6:19.

<sup>359</sup> Royal Commission on Indian Affairs (1913), accessed from Library and Archives Canada online. Skip and May Sam explained that Henry and Ned Williams grew extensive gardens and cultivated fruit trees on Discovery Island. The fruit trees and berry bushes remain on the islands. "interview", 9:09.

grow over the area where the home of Tom and Alice James and Súlhlíma (Joan) Morris' once stood.<sup>360</sup>

Generally, the Songhees on Tl'chés engaged in a 'mixed' economy, combining seasonal and/or temporary wage-labour with traditional subsistence practices.<sup>361</sup> In this way, they were able to purchase goods and equipment, while still having time to engage in traditional livelihoods.<sup>362</sup> Henry Williams harvested seafood and waterfowl and raised sheep, while working at Todd's Cannery in Esquimalt.<sup>363</sup> Coastal peoples also worked in canneries, thus adding to their livelihoods at this time. Tom James and his family supplemented their traditional livelihoods by selling fish in "the local market" and by picking fruit at Shaw's Fruit Farm in Washington State.<sup>364</sup>

Throughout the 19<sup>th</sup> and the first half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, the Songhees on Tl'chés continued to spend time living their traditional ways, throughout their home territory, often

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<sup>360</sup> I was fortunate enough to explore the area on a number of visits to Stsnaang (west).

<sup>361</sup> Royal Commission on Indian Affairs Report (1913) Please refer to the testimonies of Henry Williams and Tom James. Accessed from Library and Archives Canada online, images 341-342; John S. Lutz, *Makúk*, p. 305.

<sup>362</sup> Ibid. pp. 305-306. It is important to note, however, that reliance on the settler-Canadian economic model would have increased with the growth of the settler population and the subsequent decline of resources traditionally relied upon by Indigenous communities.

<sup>363</sup> Salmon canneries were generally located in coves, harbours, and along the banks of rivers, where obtaining fish was relatively cheap and easy. During the latter decades of the 19th century, seasonal work in the canneries was common for single Indigenous men, but also for entire families. Cannery owners recognized that Indigenous people were skilled fishers and experts at cleaning and preparing fish. In many cases, it worked in the interests of cannery owners to employ an entire Indigenous family to work in different positions at the cannery and live on-site. A husband and wife might fish together, or a husband might fish, a wife might clean and prepare the fish, while their children performed simple tasks around the outfit. Working families lived in small huts on-site, while single men often shared accommodation. However, as the cannery was within a relatively short distance from his home on Skingeenis it is possible that Williams worked there without his family.

<sup>364</sup> Royal Commission on Indian Affairs Report (1913), Tom James Testimony, accessed from LAC online; For examples of ways Indigenous people supplemented their traditional livelihoods, please refer to Elsie Paul and Paige Raibmon, *Written As I Remember It*; Royal Commission on Indian Affairs Report (1913), Discovery Island Meeting, image 342, accessed through LAC online.; Joan Morris, "interview", conducted by Nancy J. Turner. Royal Commission on Indian Affairs Report (1913), Discovery Island Meeting, Henry Williams testimony, accessed from LAC online.

interacting with kin and others in the Haro and Rosario Straits areas, as well as on southern Vancouver Island. Kinship affiliations meant spending extended periods of time in territories belonging to neighbouring communities or nations. For example, Elder Súlhlíma (Joan) Morris lived on Stsnaang, as well as on the Songhees reserve in Victoria, while remaining closely connected to people and places throughout Songhees territory and the broader region. The Sams remained closely connected to relatives and places on San Juan and Stuart Islands as well as on southern Vancouver Island.<sup>365</sup>

It is significant to note that the arbitrary social boundaries, created by the Canadian government and enacted through the Indian Act, fail to honour the historic relationships of Indigenous peoples to lands, waters, and kin. This has created the conditions for competing claims to lands incommensurate with historic patterns of land use and occupancy. Over time, many families have lived on and/or had ties to Tl'chés. Their descendants may, or may not, be members of the present-day Songhees Nation. Although this a complex subject, beyond the scope of this thesis, my purpose in acknowledging it is to demonstrate that historic social affiliations of Straits Salish peoples and their ties to lands may not be conveyed by current social groupings and territorial/reserve boundaries. My statements are in no way intended to question the Songhees Nation's rights to Tl'chés, but, rather, to highlight the predicament in which Indigenous communities and their leadership find themselves as they struggle to maintain rights over some few acres of their once vast territories.

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<sup>365</sup> Interview with Skip and May Sam, October 6, 2017, (05:00); (11:39); (22:19).; For contextual information on the Lummi and Songhees on what is now called San Juan Island, please refer to Richard Walker, *Images of America: Roche Harbor*, Charleston, Chicago, Portsmouth and San Francisco: Arcadia, 2009. I am grateful to Skip and May Sam for recommending this book.

## Chapter Eight - Settlement on Tl'ché's 1880s - 1970s

Strong winds and ocean currents posed challenges to ships on the waters around Tl'ché's. In the fall of 1863, the *British Colonist* reported that: "One of the strongest southwesterly winds which has visited the neighbourhood for some time prevailed during Saturday night and yesterday morning. Fears were at one time entertained for the schooner *Mink* which had been seen off Discovery Island trying to head round..."<sup>366</sup> Luckily the *Mink* and her crew survived the storm.<sup>367</sup> Other ships were less fortunate. On March 19, 1868 the *Fanny* and the *Rosalie*, while being towed by the *Isabel*, crashed on Skingeenis after their "hawser[s] parted" during a storm.<sup>368</sup> On March 14, 1886 the steamer *Maude* ran aground on Stsnaang.<sup>369</sup> To prevent further disasters, the Federal government hired a contractor to build a lighthouse on Seabird Point, the eastern side of Skingeenis.<sup>370</sup> Bales transferred two acres of his property to the Crown for a lighthouse and dwelling for the light-keeper. On March 16, 1886 a notice in the *British Colonist* announced: "The building has been completed and the light will shortly be put in operation."<sup>371</sup>

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<sup>366</sup> *Daily British Colonist*, "Gale", October 19, 1863, p. 3.

<sup>367</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>368</sup> *Daily British Colonist*, "The Gale-Wreck of Two Ships on Discovery Island", March 21, 1866, p. 3; *Daily British Colonist*, "Supreme Court" June 22, 1869, p. 3; *Daily British Colonist*, "Supreme Court" June 21, 1869, p. 3; *Daily Colonist*, T.W. Paterson, "Stormy Career of a Lovely Lady", May 11, 1869, pp. 4-5.

<sup>369</sup> *British Colonist*, under "Naval" note, "Ashore", March 14, 1886, p. 3.

<sup>370</sup> *British Colonist*, "The Canadian Marine: Some Interesting Facts for British Columbians", March 16, 1886, p. 2. Alex Mennie of Port Moody was paid \$2,300 to build the lighthouse; See page 3 of the same newspaper for notes on the *Maude*.

<sup>371</sup> *British Colonist*, "The Canadian Marine: Some Interesting Facts for British Columbians", March 16, 1886, p. 2.

A Welshman, Richard Brinn was the first light keeper. He and his wife Sarah lived on the island from 1886 until their deaths in the early 20th century. There is no record of any interaction between the Brinns and the Songhees people living on the islands. The Brinns faced the challenges of being isolated. In December 1897, they were forced to wait for supplies due to a fierce storm. The *British Colonist* reported their situation as follows: “The Dominion government steamer *Quadra* made an unsuccessful attempt to deliver winter provisions at the Discovery Island lighthouse. The southeast gale prevailing rendered it impossible to effect a landing, and the light keeper will accordingly have to wait.”<sup>372</sup> Frequent storms during the winter months made this a regular occurrence. Brinn’s heart condition likely intensified the challenges of the job. On April 10, 1901 his wife Sarah died of a cerebral hemorrhage.<sup>373</sup> Brinn passed away six months later on September 22, 1901.<sup>374</sup> His widowed daughter, Mary Ann Croft, replaced him as light-keeper in 1902. Croft was the first female to hold this position in Canada. She raised her two daughters on Discovery Island - one became a painter; the other married and moved to Victoria.<sup>375</sup>

Bales died in 1892, and in 1906, William James Palmer purchased all of section 1, excepting the 4.32 acres transferred to the Crown for a lighthouse and foghorn.<sup>376</sup> In

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<sup>372</sup> *British Colonist*, “Rough Weather Prevailed”, December 11, 1897, p. 8.

<sup>373</sup> A cerebral hemorrhage can be caused by a stroke, trauma to the head, or hypertension. It is possible that Sarah Brinn’s death occurred suddenly, and may have come as a shock to Brinn, which might account for his death relatively soon after hers.

<sup>374</sup> This information on Richard and Sarah Brinn can be accessed through “Registration of Births, Deaths, And Marriages”, accessible online at the British Columbia Archives.

<sup>375</sup> *Ibid.* A number of *British Colonist* articles provided information on the life of Mary Ann Croft.

<sup>376</sup> Register of the Absolute Fees, vol. 23, p. 99, 1906. Accessed from Land Title Registry, Victoria, British Columbia, courtesy of Wendy Smith and John Lutz, February 21, 2020.

1911, Warburton Pike purchased the property from Palmer.<sup>377</sup> At that time, he was the only non-Indigenous person living on the archipelago, other than the Croft family.<sup>378</sup>

Pike was a wilderness enthusiast, explorer, and entrepreneur whose interest in the outdoors may have emerged from the “Anti-modernist ideology”, a response to the industrialization and modernization occurring during the 19th and 20th centuries. He wrote several books about his hunting experiences in British Columbia, the Yukon and Alaska. At the core of this ideology was the belief in the “restorative powers of wilderness” and the reification of the ‘explorer-outdoorsman’. British men of means took the ‘wilds’ of western Canada to assert their masculinity and virility both to themselves and to society.<sup>379</sup>

Pike may have also purchased the 160 acres on Skingeenis, to replace a Saturna Island property. In 1913, he experienced financial difficulties and so sold most of his investments.<sup>380</sup> Pike’s financial circumstances, however, did not improve. In 1915, with an empty bank account, mortgage, significant debt, health problems, he committed suicide.<sup>381</sup>

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<sup>377</sup> Register of the Absolute Fees, vol. 30, p. 155, 1912. Accessed from Land Title Registry, Victoria, British Columbia, courtesy of Wendy Smith and John Lutz, February 21, 2020.

<sup>378</sup> Please refer to Royal Commission on Indian Affairs Report on Discovery Island (1913), accessed from Library and Archives Canada online. “Harry” (Henry) Williams reported digging a well for Pike in 1913, Pike clearly owned the property at that point (he may have purchased it earlier and decided to hold off making improvements until a later date. “Harry” (Henry) Williams made this statement in the Royal Commission on Indian Affairs Report (1913), obtained from Library and Archives Canada website. E.G. Beaumont purchased his entire property from Pike.

<sup>379</sup> Tina Loo discusses this class of men and some of their ideas regarding nature and humanity. pp. 303; 305. For information on Pike the explorer and entrepreneur, please refer to Peter Murray, *Home From the Hill*, pp. 22; 43. Loo, pp. 301; 302. Loo pp. 300; 301. Richard Rajala, “lecture” (2015), University of Victoria.

<sup>380</sup> Murray, *Home on the Hill* p. 58; Pike died without a penny to his name. On p. 67, Murray states that upon Pike’s death, his “safety deposit box” housed at his bank “was forced open” to reveal “three boxes of photographs and negatives.”

<sup>381</sup> Pike committed suicide in Bournemouth, England. For details, please refer to Peter Murray, *Home From the Hill: Three Gentlemen Adventurers*. I am grateful to Peter Grant for alerting me to Warburton Pike’s presence on Skingeenis.



'Captain' Ernest Godfrey Beaumont, an Englishman and former friend of Pike, purchased the property on Skingenis, and in 1918 moved to the island with his wife, Constance Ida Hay Beaumont.<sup>383</sup> Shortly after their move, the Beaumonts commissioned local architect, Samuel Maclure, to make additions to the cottage built by Pike.<sup>384</sup> Over the decades the Beaumonts employed caretakers and assistants, all of whom lived on the island. These residents included a "Chinese cook" and various others, such as Arthur John, Dorothea Douglas, and their son; George Leslie and Mollie Eileen Tayler; Nicholas and Violet Hleck and their child; John Andrew and Margaret Davidson; and Maynard Morrow.<sup>385</sup>

A sports injury at age thirteen prevented Beaumont from joining the Royal Navy. Nevertheless, his friends called him "captain."<sup>386</sup> He certainly earned the title, as he spent nearly every day, on the water.<sup>387</sup> His well-known boat, the fifty-foot *Discovery Isle*, built

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British Columbia (SG101827). Images from SG101827 are included with permission from the Surveyor General Land Title Registry, Victoria, British Columbia.

<sup>383</sup> Royal Victoria Yacht Club member Ian Sherwin has written an essay on E.G. Beaumont. Sherwin's essay is housed at the Royal Victoria Yacht Club Archives (RVYC). I am grateful to Don Reksten at the RVYC Archives for assistance with my research.; It is worth noting that Beaumont's property was reduced by 8.4 acres on August 14, 1940, when the Federal Government expropriated these lands for the Pandora Hill Signal Station. For documents pertaining to this transfer, please refer to the "Victoria District Index, Discovery Island", Land Title Registry, Victoria, BC.

<sup>384</sup> Please consult the University of Victoria Library Archives to view the "Samuel Maclure Architectural Drawings"; copy of Maclure's plans for "Beaumont's Discovery Island Cottage". See bibliography for details.

<sup>385</sup> For information on the "Chinese cook", please refer to Paterson, "Capital Characters". Discovery Island Marine Park file, GR-1991.526, file 2-6-1-439 SEC 1, reel B01827, accessed from the British Columbia Archives, 2016.

<sup>386</sup> Ian Sherwin, "essay"; *British Colonist*, "king of the Islanders Dead", 1967; Paterson, "Capital Characters", 1967.

<sup>387</sup> Beaumont kept logbooks of his excursions on the water. An examination of these logbooks reveals that he spent time on the ocean nearly every day. For details, please consult The Maritime Museum of British Columbia archives (MMBC) and Royal Victoria Yacht Club archives (RVYC).

in Hong Kong during the 1920s, was eventually "...wrecked in the Strait of Georgia on December 5, 1950."<sup>388</sup> Captain Beaumont quickly replaced it with another yacht.

Beaumont spent his days motoring by boat around TI'chés, making trips to the Royal Victoria Yacht Club, the inner harbour, and ferrying visitors to and from the island. A roster of guests included members of "church organizations", school groups, "Boy Scouts and Cubs, the air force, the yacht club, the Cadets corps, and Christ Church Cathedral Choir Boys". By the end of their lives, the Beaumonts had hosted over two hundred thousand visitors.<sup>389</sup> Students at University School (now St. Michael's University School) began visiting the island in 1918, after Beaumont offered to host students over the summer holidays.<sup>390</sup> Visitors enjoyed boating excursions, picnics, and hikes around the island.<sup>391</sup> Songhees inhabitants of TI'chés were rarely included in these outings. In fact, they are conspicuously absent from Beaumont's logbooks, newspaper articles, and the testimonies of non-Indigenous visitors to the islands.

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<sup>388</sup> Royal Victoria Yacht Club file on E.G. Beaumont, *British Colonist*, "King of the Islanders Dead", 1967; Paterson, "Capital Characters", 1967; *British Colonist*, "Man Presumed Drowned As Yacht Sinks Off Of City", p. 1, December 6, 1960; accessed from the RVYC archives, courtesy of Don Reksten.

<sup>389</sup> Royal Victoria Yacht Club file on E.G. Beaumont, containing *British Colonist*, "King of the Islanders Dead", 1967; Ian Sherwin, "essay"; "Capital Characters", 1967. Logbooks of the *Discovery Isle*, housed at MMBC archives. Beaumont kept a meticulous record of all his boating excursions.

<sup>390</sup> "King of the Islanders Dead", in Royal Victoria Yacht Club File; *The Black and Red*, University School yearbooks, accessed from the St. Michael's University College.

<sup>391</sup> *The Black and Red*, yearbooks, University School, available from St. Michael's University College online.

Numerous articles the *British Colonist* and *Daily Colonist* attest to the number of picnics and boating excursions. For details, please refer to: "Yachts Have Good Racing", August 25, 1931, p. 13; "Yachting Party", September 22, 1931, p. 8; "Fine Program of Sailing Events at Yacht Club", August 23, 1938, p. 3; "Yacht Club Stages Big Yachting Meet", September 4, 1935, p. 12; "R.V.Y. C. Power Boats in Action on Sunday", May 13, 1945, p. 6; "Royal Yacht Club Plan Picnic Sunday", July 18, 1947, p. 19; "Winners of Season's Yacht Club Trophies", October 12, 1941, p. 16; "Yacht Club Ends Fine Season As Winners Receive Trophies", October, 1946; "Fine Programme of Sailing Events At Yacht Club Sunday", August 23, 1938, p. 3; "Yachts Have Good Racing", August 25, 1931, p. 13; There are too many titles to list, however please note the dates and page numbers of other articles that pertain to this subject: September 22, 1931, p. 8; August 6, 1946, p. 12; July 18, 1941, p. 19; May 13, 1949, p. 6; May 27, 1942, p. 15; August 10, 1938, p. 4; September 10, 1946, p. 9; November 2, 1920, p. 16; June 21, 1942, p. 22; October 7, 1945, p. 16; May 20, 1913; June 29, 1945, p. 9.

In addition to the settlers and their visitors, others sought out the islands to hunt, fish, or for pleasure. The volume of foreshore licenses, documented in the *British Colonist*, speak to the number of fishermen taking advantage of local abundance. Columnists also make frequent mention of non-Indigenous hunting trips to the islands.<sup>392</sup> During this period, the Natural History Society also organized at least one excursion to the archipelago for exploration of the islands and “Indian village”.<sup>393</sup> The excavation of ancient sites and recovery and preservation of artefacts was a matter of great importance to European settlers and researchers. As Darcy Mathews explains in “Ancient Cities of the Dead Revisited Early Burial Cairn Investigations in Victoria”, during the mid-19<sup>th</sup> century, burial cairns were of particular interest to Europeans and Euro-North Americans, some of whom believed these cairns were the legacy ‘of a “race of moundbuilders”’, who were ‘superior’ to the current Straits Salish peoples.<sup>394</sup> This theory was later refuted, however the Euro-North American belief that Indigenous peoples were intellectually and culturally inferior to people of Northwestern European descent, continued to influence the thinking behind the unsolicited excavation of Indigenous burial sites and villages. The notion of European superiority was accompanied by a belief that Indigenous peoples would die out as Europeans spread ‘civilized’ culture across the globe. These notions gave rise to a

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<sup>392</sup> Certainly, the Songhees were not the only people fishing in the area around Tl'ché's. As is evidenced by the volume of notices in the *British Colonist* of foreshore leases, non-Indigenous people were also fishing in the area. See the *British Colonist* on August 2 and 15, 1902 for examples of notices of foreshore licenses. See also issues from July 30, 1902 (p. 3); August 9, 1902 (p. 10); July 23 and 24, 1902 (p. 3) (as well as others in July and August that year); and July 28, 1906 (p. 7); and August 31, 1906 (p. 7). For example, of hunting excursion, see the *British Colonist* “A Straits Tragedy”, November 15, 1896. Another article on November 15, 1908 in the *British Colonist* attests to the abundance of wildlife on the islands. Sources acquired from Early Victoria Newspapers online and through correspondence with John S. Lutz. Early Victoria Newspapers: <http://web.uvic.ca/~hist66/vicvic/newspaper/index.php>

<sup>393</sup> *British Colonist*, July 9, 1905.

<sup>394</sup> Darcy Mathews, “Ancient Cities of the Dead Revisited Early Burial Cairn Investigations in Victoria”, *The Midden*, vol. 38, iss.1, 2006, pp. 17-18.

perceived entitlement to Indigenous lands and belongings, allowing researchers to justify their incursions on Indigenous burial grounds and village sites.<sup>395</sup> The belief that Indigenous peoples would ‘die out’ also fueled a sense of urgency amongst researchers who felt the need to locate ‘ancient’ sites and excavate them for valuable cultural artefacts that could be preserved in museums for posterity.<sup>396</sup> It was within this context that the Natural History Society travelled to Skingeenis and Stsnaang to explore and obtain “curios”.<sup>397</sup> There is no indication that members interacted with Songhees people who were living there. An excerpt from an article about the society’s visit on July 9, 1905 illustrates their ignorance of Indigenous presence:

“The Natural History Society had a very pleasant outing at Discovery and Chatham Islands yesterday... Only a few botanical specimens and one or two Indian curios were secured... The Indian village was inspected also various kinds of graves. There are cairns of the prehistoric people in abundance, also the old Indian burial places, where the body is placed huddled up in a small box on a raised foundation, with a roof over them or planks weighed down with large stones; and there is a little cemetery with modern earth graves, neatly fenced in...”<sup>398</sup>

The report depicted the Songhees village as an abandoned historic site, formerly inhabited by “prehistoric people” when in fact it was likely a seasonal village.<sup>399</sup> The observer scrutinized it much the way one would examine a museum exhibit. At this time, settlers would have known that Indigenous people inhabited these islands.<sup>400</sup> On this occasion, the actions of members of the “Natural History Society” were more than

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<sup>395</sup> Ibid. p. 17.

<sup>396</sup> Ibid, pp. 18-19.

<sup>397</sup> Ibid. Mathews refers to for cairns excavated “around Victoria”, please refer to Mathews, p. 19.; *Daily Colonist*, “A Pleasant Outing: Discovery and Chatham Islands Visited by Natural History Society”, July 9, 1905, p. 6.

<sup>398</sup> *Daily Colonist*, “A Pleasant Outing: Discovery and Chatham Islands Visited by Natural History Society”, July 9, 1905, p. 6; For an example of settler beliefs regarding the so called ‘disappearing’ ‘Indian’, please refer to *Daily Colonist*, “Vanishing Races”, May 5, 1910, p. 4.

<sup>399</sup> Ibid.

<sup>400</sup> Department of Indian Affairs Annual Reports indicate that there were Songhees people living on the islands at the time of the Natural History Society visits. The reports can be accessed online through Library and Archives Canada.

disrespectful. The group trespassed on to Indigenous property and then stole items from that property, actions that would have been considered unlawful in their own communities.

Such behaviour was common at the time. The treatment of Songhees people as “prehistoric” legitimized the raiding of burial sites and collecting Indigenous artifacts. Exhibiting the ‘archaic’ artifacts in their museums and homes confirmed the settler-colonial society’s sense of the fitness of all things progressive, including its own ‘inevitable’ displacement of Indigenous peoples and cultures. Just as the common reference to Indigenous peoples as ‘nomadic’ had served to obscure the question of title to Indigenous territories, qualifying the existence of Indigenous people as provisional rendered less problematic the pervasive colonial instinct to dismantle Indigenous lives and cultures. In this light, a seemingly innocuous educational outing becomes essential colonial work.

During the Prohibition years of 1920 to 1933, the Discovery Island archipelago found a new use as a hideaway for American rum runners. The transportation of alcohol between Canada and the United States via the Haro, Rosario, and Juan de Fuca Straits was a lucrative industry. Small islands provided the ideal hiding spots for boats picking up ‘cargo’ as well as for rumrunners hiding from customs officials. “Smugglers Cove” on Stsnaang was used as a place to collect and transfer liquor bound for the United States. In 1923, Alfred Fuehr, a “naturalized German resident of Chatham Island,” was “fined in the sum of \$100 on a conviction of having liquor unsealed in his possession.” An article dated June 6, reports, “The Canadian gas boat ‘Cicerone,’ captured in the combined customs and police raid upon Smugglers Cove, Chatham Islands, off Oak Bay, on Saturday, June 2, last, was not engaged in bona fide export of liquor; and it and its cargo

of 700 bottles of whiskey must be confiscated...”<sup>401</sup> Illegal activity was reported again in 1924 when rum-running operations in Smuggler’s Cove were interrupted by a police raid.<sup>402</sup>

The size of Tl’chés suggests that, unless Indigenous people or settlers in the archipelago were intentionally avoiding each other, they would have encountered one another. Articles in the *Daily Colonist* and in settler sources often fail to mention issues of trespass or encounters with Indigenous residents. On the contrary, it would seem settlers were generally curious about the local ‘Indians’, and relished opportunities to indulge that curiosity. Former Songhees residents of Tl’chés, on the other hand, indicated that they kept their distance from settlers. Tl’chés provided a refuge from the racism that their kin on Vancouver Island and elsewhere endured. In my conversations with Súlhlíma (Joan)

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<sup>401</sup> *Daily Colonist*, “Board Wins Case Against German”, June 15, 1923, p. 6; *Daily Colonist* “Fuehr Fined Again”, June 16, 1923, p. 6; *Daily Colonist* “Captives of Raid Appear in Court: Alleged Rumrunners Before Magistrate”, June 6, 1923, p. 5.

<sup>402</sup> *Daily Colonist*, “Big Whiskey Cargo Seized by Police”, July 5, 1924, p. 4.

The issue of liquor being transported across the Strait was not easily resolved. The Federal Government’s ongoing struggle with this issue is highlighted by the 1926 Royal Commission that “investigat[ed] the affairs of the Federal Department of customs and excise and inquir[ed] into liquor smuggling operations on the Pacific Coast”. Hearings were held and evidence, including witness testimony, was taken. Rules had been established for the transport of liquor. For example, as the Honourable A. M. Manson, Attorney-General for British Columbia, stated - “no liquor could be transported by vessel from one point to another in the province without a shipping permit being obtained from the liquor board”. According to the Attorney-General, the Provincial Government was primarily concerned with the “backwash” of Canadian liquor into the British Columbia once it had been exported. He went on to explain that, given the volume of “shipments” it was “impossible to regulate” liquor. The government was determined “...to cut off the private importation and exportation of liquor into the province...” in order to gain better control over the trade. For details please refer to *Daily Colonist*, “Customs Inquiry Concludes Here”, December 3, 1926, p.1.

Skingeenis light-keeper Mary Ann Croft was asked to testify during a hearing. Supposedly the *Elgo*, one of the boats in question, was operated by a relative, yet Croft denied knowing anything about boats transporting alcohol through the archipelago. Despite the fact that she “...could scan the sea for a distance of eighteen miles that she could see about half the five mile coast line, the southern end, towards the American boundary” ... “[s]he could give no detailed information on the loading of cargoes or unloading of cargoes on the islands.” Given the size of the area, there is every possibility she did encounter the rum-runners, and highly unlikely she would have been able to avoid them. There has been speculation that Croft passed messages between the rum-runners. It is reasonable that she would take on this extra work given her relatively small earnings as a female light-keeper. For details, please refer to Peter Johnson and John Walls, *To The Lighthouse: An Explorer’s Guide to Island Lighthouses of Southwestern BC*, Heritage House Publishing, 2015, and the *Daily Colonist*, “Customs Inquiry Concludes Here”, December 3, 1926, p.1.

Morris, she described growing up on Chatham Island as a positive experience - one in which people acted with “love, compassion, and respect”, everything was shared, and the teachings of how to live well were passed on with patience and care.<sup>403</sup> While on Tl’chés, Morris was able to avoid both residential school and the Indian hospital.<sup>404</sup> Eventually, Morris’s family had to leave the island because of the lack of water. Súlhlíma’s Grandmother passed away and Morris attended residential school.<sup>405</sup> In an interview with the Pacific Peoples Partnership, Morris explains that living on Tl’chés, and growing up with the love and teachings of grandmothers and great-grandmother, provided her with the “resilience” to survive Indian hospital and Kuper Island Residential School.<sup>406</sup>

Similarly, Tsartlip Elders Skip and May Sam characterized their lives on Tl’chés as peaceful and joyful, revolving around their traditional livelihoods and time with family.<sup>407</sup> For the Songhees people, Tl’chés provided protection from the daily insult and aggression of racial discrimination prevalent in Victoria as elsewhere.<sup>408</sup>

The situation for the Songhees and other local Indigenous groups on southern Vancouver Island was quite different. There were regular interactions between the two groups. On May 16, 1893, for instance, members of the Songhees participated in canoe races and other festivities to celebrate the King’s Birthday. The Songhees residents of

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<sup>403</sup> Morris, “Conversations”, 2016; for the quote see “Joan Morris – Heart of Chatham Island”, (04:38) produced by the Pacific Peoples Partnership with the Songhees Nation, Media Net, and Indigenous Youth Arts Program, [pacificpeoplespartnership.org/videos/joan-morris-of-chatham-island](http://pacificpeoplespartnership.org/videos/joan-morris-of-chatham-island) or [songheesnation.ca/news/joan-morris-heart-of-chatham-island](http://songheesnation.ca/news/joan-morris-heart-of-chatham-island)

<sup>404</sup> Morris, “Conversations”, 2016.

<sup>405</sup> Ibid.

<sup>406</sup> “Joan Morris – Heart of Chatham Island”,(03:50-04:38) produced by the Pacific Peoples Partnership with the Songhees Nation, Media Net, and Indigenous Youth Arts Program, [pacificpeoplespartnership.org/videos/joan-morris-of-chatham-island](http://pacificpeoplespartnership.org/videos/joan-morris-of-chatham-island) or [songheesnation.ca/news/joan-morris-heart-of-chatham-island](http://songheesnation.ca/news/joan-morris-heart-of-chatham-island)

<sup>407</sup> Gabriel ‘Skip’ Sam and May Sam “interview”.

<sup>408</sup> Gabriel ‘Skip’ Sam and May Sam, “interview”, 28:00; 28:41.

Tl'chés and Vancouver Island interacted daily with non-Indigenous peoples through the sale of baskets, carvings, etc.

Members of the Songhees continued to live on the islands until 1967 when a water shortage forced residents to move to southern Vancouver Island.<sup>409</sup> Most relocated to reserve communities on southern Vancouver Island. Their orchards and gardens gradually gave way to invasive species.<sup>410</sup>

On the death of Captain Beaumont in 1967, the federal government struggled with the provincial government over access to the lighthouse. Beaumont willed his property to the Provincial Government, to be enjoyed by all British Columbians. Conflict continued through the late 1960s as Chief John Albany of the Songhees Band questioned whether Beaumont had held title to the 160 acres on Skingeenis, and whether Beaumont had the authority to will the land to the British Columbia Government.<sup>411</sup> Albany wanted to conduct a "...thorough investigation and survey of reserve lands on Discovery Island [Skingeenis] and Chatham Island [Stsnaang]."<sup>412</sup> His assertion was met with resistance from the B.C. Parks Branch. According to *Daily Colonist* reporter Ian Street, "Chief Albany said all of Discovery Island [Skingeenis] was once part of the Songhees reserve, and a

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<sup>409</sup> Lack of water had been a longstanding issue for islanders. The Sams described how they had to bring water with them from Oak Bay marina. Súlhlíma (Joan Morris) states that lack of water was the reason why her family left Tl'chés.

<sup>410</sup> For a description of plant life on Tl'chés, please refer to Thiago C. Gomes, "Restoring Tl'ches: an Ethnoecological Restoration Study in Chatham Islands, British Columbia, Canada", MA Thesis, University of Victoria, 2012.

<sup>411</sup> Please refer to the "Discovery Island Marine Park" file, housed at the British Columbia Archives. Chief Albany's request and the provincial government's response are described in an article in the *Daily Colonist*: "Islets Off-Limits to Whites", *Daily Colonist*, December 18, 1974, p. 48; "Indian Isles Tribe Bars Public", *Daily Colonist*, September 29, 1960, p. 1; "Chief Seeks Title Probe on Discovery", *Daily Colonist*, May 11, 1969, p. 15; "Indians Insist Land Theirs", *Daily Colonist*, May 27, 1969, p. 21; "Songhees Claim Doubted by B.C. Parks Branch", *Daily Colonist*, May 14, 1969, p. 31; "No Trespassers Say Songhees", *Daily Colonist*, May 10, 1964, p. 10; For a better understanding of the Indigenous land question in British Columbia, please refer to Cole Harris, *Making Native Space*.

<sup>412</sup> Nancy Brown, "Chief Seeks Title Probe on Discovery Island", *Daily Colonist*, May 11, 1969, p. 15.

search through all the band's documents recently had not shown 'any place where this had changed.'" In response, Thomas Ahrens, director of the Parks Branch, stated that he "...was sure that with the Royal Trust handling the estate that (the donor) Captain E. G. Beaumont would have had legal title." He went on to say that Beaumont "...paid taxes on his Discovery Island [*Skingeenis*] property for many years...", and "...with a tax notice there goes a certificate of title." Ahrens added, "So I guess what the chief is referring to is really a lapse in the band's own bookkeeping."<sup>413</sup> Ultimately, the 160 acres would become the Discovery Island Marine Park.

Members of the Songhees community have persevered in their efforts to reclaim this integral part of their territory, and have sought compensation for the loss of these and other lands. During the 1990s, the community filed a specific claim against the Federal Government based on the grounds that the Douglas administration failed to include certain small islands located between the two islands of Stsnaang.<sup>414</sup> In 1996, the Songhees Nation received a settlement of \$95,402.22 as compensation for these lands.<sup>415</sup> In 2009, the Songhees Nation filed a suit against the Government of British Columbia and Federal Government, for the failure of the Douglas administration to survey and set aside village sites and agricultural lands at six locations in the Victoria area and on Tl'chés. In asserting rights to these lands, the Songhees tried to obtain both financial compensation for this misappropriation of their lands by settler governments, and an official declaration that the lands are part of Songhees traditional territory.<sup>416</sup> Counter-

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<sup>413</sup> Ian Street, "Songhees Claim Doubted by B.C. Parks Branch", *Daily Colonist*, May 14, 1969, p. 31.

<sup>414</sup> See claim profile on the Aboriginal and Treaty Rights Information System (ATRIS) online database.

<sup>415</sup> Reporting Centre on Specific Claims: [http://services.aadnc-aandc.gc.ca/SCBRI\\_E/Main/ReportingCentre/External/externalreporting.aspx](http://services.aadnc-aandc.gc.ca/SCBRI_E/Main/ReportingCentre/External/externalreporting.aspx).

<sup>416</sup> "Songhees Claim to Cadboro Bay", *Northwest Coast Archaeology*, November 18, 2009: <https://qmackie.com/2009/11/18/songhees-claim-to-cadboro-bay/>.

arguments put forward by both levels of government reflected Euro-centric approaches to assessing the strength of the claim - approaches that are, in several respects, incommensurate with Straits Salish ways of understanding their rights to lands. In any event, the case was closed in the discovery stage of proceedings.<sup>417</sup>



<sup>418</sup> Skingeenis [Discovery Island].

<sup>417</sup> Aboriginal and Treaty Rights Information System: [http://sidait-atris.aadnc-aandc.gc.ca/atris\\_online/Content/LitigationView.aspx](http://sidait-atris.aadnc-aandc.gc.ca/atris_online/Content/LitigationView.aspx).

<sup>418</sup> Skingeenis [Discovery Island], Land Parcel Map (not to scale), sourced from Land Title Survey Authority. Courtesy of Wendy Smith.

## Conclusion

From time immemorial, Tl'chés has been home to the Songhees. For the past one-hundred and fifty years, it has played a special role in their lives by providing them with refuge from the colonial onslaught. Since the mid-nineteenth century, settler-colonial society has ignored Indigenous title and rights in order to secure access to lands for the extraction of resources, settlement, agriculture, and recreation, ignoring the relationship of care that the Songhees have had with the island. As Graham Nicholas details in his thesis, *Eco-Cultural Restoration of Wetlands at Tl'chés*, the knowledge required for the fulfillment of Songhees responsibilities to the diverse life-forms on the island attests to countless generations of experience and learning.<sup>419</sup> Cultural protocols that have ensured this exercise of reciprocity, discipline, and care, are embedded in Songhees oral traditions. Nicholas has documented in detail the “ecological and cultural resilience and diversity of these lands and waters” despite heavy settler-colonial disruption.<sup>420</sup>

Meanwhile, the colonial production of normative tools that disrupt, de-center, or dematerialize Indigenous peoples' lives, sovereign title, and rights, has taken its toll. Alongside institutional productions, such as Canadian histories and laws, the use of pervasive social commentary in which Indigenous people recede, or are extirpated, from the landscape, has been particularly useful to the colonial project from its inception.<sup>421</sup> Thus, the notable absence of Songhees people and concerns, in numerous 19th and 20th century settler-colonial sources is hardly surprising. The news of the day generally

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<sup>419</sup> Nicholas, *Eco-Cultural Restoration of Wetlands at Tl'chés*, pp. 6; 7; 9; 25.

<sup>420</sup> Ibid. p. xii.

<sup>421</sup> For example, Elizabeth Furniss, *The Burden of History: Colonialism and the Frontier Myth in a Rural Canadian Community*, Vancouver: UBC Press, 1999 and Jennifer Reid, “The Doctrine of Discovery and Canadian Law”, *The Canadian Journal of Native Studies*, 30, 2, 2010, pp. 335-359.

maintained a tight focus on non-Indigenous diversions and concerns, such as sailing regattas and weather that might threaten the passage of resource-bearing ships.<sup>422</sup> With the foregrounding of settler interests, matters of significance to the Songhees, and indeed the Songhees people themselves - their on-going presence in the landscape - recedes in the settler imagination. Regular ingestion of such disregard would have fed an impression that Songhees people and lives were peripheral to the 'real' action and life of the region. Thus, over many years, quotidian reports detailing mundane settler-colonial subject matter, while eliding Songhees presence within their own territory, delivered incremental narrative assertion of settler belonging and centrality. The ubiquity of such representations appears to have served as a steady inoculant against potentially disruptive misgivings regarding the alienation of Songhees lands and waters.

Government policy, relationships, and events related to Tl'chés, during the period covered by this thesis, may together be regarded as a microcosm of colonialism in what is now called British Columbia. They yield a snapshot of prevalent notions within mainstream settler society, that gave rise to legislation supporting settler control over lands, waters, and Indigenous bodies. While interactions between the colonial authorities, members of settler society, and Indigenous people varied depending on the circumstances, there were actions and events that had widespread impacts for settlers and Indigenous peoples alike. Some of these include racialized discourse supporting

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<sup>422</sup> *Daily Colonist*, Anne Smellie, "Ropes Creak, Sails Flash: RVCY Officially Opens 64<sup>th</sup> Yachting Season", May 10, 1959, p. 23; *Daily Colonist*, "Big Marinas: Inside Waters Cruising Paradise", May 2, 1967, p. 15; *Daily Colonist*, "Close Finishes in Yacht Races", July 11, 1944, p. 15; *Daily Colonist*, "Discovery Island", June 28, 1959, p.13; *Daily Colonist*, Archie H. Wills, "Sou'westers Can Be Nasty", October 4, 1970, p. 4; *Daily Colonist*, "Boat Marooned: Weather Key to Salvage", November 30, 1965, p. 6; *Daily Colonist* "Return of Bubble", November 26, 1978, pp. 10-11. The latter article focuses on the construction of a fiberglass sailboat and its harrowing first journey. During a storm, the crew and boat are saved from being smashed on a reef off Chatham Island by an unnamed 'Indian'. The focus of the story is on the boat, the crew, and *Bubble's* later victory in race.

settler cruelty and indifference towards Indigenous peoples, as well as legislation allowing for the claiming, renaming, and partitioning of Indigenous lands, as well as the exploitation of these lands, waters, and non-human life forms. Passive and active resistance to settler incursions on the part of Indigenous peoples were often dismissed or criminalized.

Despite contemporary discourse on Indigenous rights, and related commentary on the process of reconciliation, recognition of Songhees title to Tl'chés, along with associated Songhees rights, has yet to be enacted. Trespass continues on reserve lands in Tl'chés, while local authorities fail to enforce penalties for damaging culturally significant, and ecologically sensitive, sites in the archipelago. 'Discovery Island Marine Park', representing some few acres of Songhees traditional territory that are not overrun by Settler-Canadian development, has not yet been repatriated to the Songhees Nation. Additionally, ongoing development of the coastal mainland and Vancouver Island, as well as increasing marine traffic, further stress already strained ecosystems within and surrounding Tl'chés. Higher levels of pollution, and a greater potential for tanker leaks and spills, combined with intensifying wave action and water turbulence, would further compromise these living relationships, as well as archaeological remains which are the cultural property of the Songhees Nation.

The Songhees community continues its efforts to protect Tl'chés from careless or willful harm. Raising awareness of both the centrality of Tl'chés to Songhees identity and culture, and the significance of its rare and endangered ecosystems within "the more-than-human world", members of the Songhees have initiated projects of restoration in this place that they consider both home and a locus of traditional practice.<sup>423</sup> Initiatives on

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<sup>423</sup> For example, the work of Elder Súlhlíma (Joan) Morris; Cheryl Bryce; Dr. Nancy Turner; Dr. Darcy Mathews; Thiago C. Gomes; Graham R. Nicholas; and Kim-Ly Thompson.

TI'chés involve Elders, Knowledge Keepers, community members, youth, and researchers. Their work models respectful care, and also involves teaching the public about problems of trespassing, dumping and careless damage and vandalism that they consider to be unacceptable on TI'chés.

Roughly 160 acres of Discovery Island is designated a provincial park, which creates problems because it invites visitor encroachment which often leads to deliberate harm. As argued in this thesis, this problem cannot be solved until the park is repatriated to the Songhees. From time immemorial, this place and the Songhees have fostered a relationship of mutual care and respect. The Songhees have been the most faithful stewards of their beloved lands and waters. The strength of the Songhees claim for recognition of title and rights to TI'chés depends, in part, on many things but especially continuing ethnographic, historical archaeological research. With this thesis, I hope to have initiated this process.

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