BUILDING CULTURAL BRIDGES
Exploring aspects of reconciliation with Vancouver Island First Nations

AVICC Presentation

In order to understand where we are today...

And where we would like to be...

We must understand where we have been.

A worldview through an Indigenous lens...

Nuu-chah-nulth Spirituality

Traditional Doctor
Berry Picking & Food Harvesting

Cedar Berry Picking Basket
Cedar Shawl

Whaling Prayer

Preparing for the Whale Hunt

Harpoon
Sea Lion Skin Floats
Cedar rope

Whaling Prayer

Whaling Canoe
Gray Whale
Float
Harpoon

Building Our Nations

pinwal, hapaksam, hitaqlas, ʕučít

Introductions:
Who are you? Where do you come from?
What is your role within your Nation?

Establishing Resources

Interactive Scenario

makwink
Trade

Each Nation establishes their available resources
Nations require at least one (1) resource for domestic use
Any extra resources are available for trade
Each nation also has one (1) unique resource
λiimut tumaqιt
An extended time of darkness

The Process of Colonization

1200
Pre-colonial

1774
Colonization

Today

First Contact

Painting of a Nuu-chah-nulth Village

Early Contact

3 G’s  GOD GLORY GOLD
4 B’s Bible Bullets Booze Blankets

Estimated First Nations Population of North America at the time of Contact:
12-15 million

1492
Christopher Columbus is discovered by the Tainos People in the Caribbean

1774
Spanish ships spotted off the Nuu-chah-nulth coast

1778
Captain James Cook is discovered by the Nuu-chah-nulth People
1778 Captain James Cook stays nearly a month refitting at Nootka Sound on his third voyage to the Pacific, becoming the first European known to actually set foot in British Columbia. He discovers that the aboriginal people are familiar with iron (probably because of earlier trade with the Spanish) and trades for various items, including sea otter pelts. The pelts later command a fantastic price in China.

1784 The account of Cook’s voyage is published, including the price fetched for sea otter pelts, inspiring a rush for furs.

1785-1825 The maritime fur trade is conducted off the western coast. During this period, roughly 170 ships from Europe (“King George Men”) and the United States (“Boston Men”) participate in the trade. The aboriginal people of west coast (the Nuuchanulth) are willing partners in the trade, which is generally amicable and mutually beneficial. Most ships stay only for a season, but encourage friendly relations with the natives because they might be encountered the next season. The Nuuchanulth skilfully play ships off each other, negotiating the highest possible price for their furs and thereby heavily influencing the trade. The fur trade declines when the sea otter population is hunted almost to extinction.

1792 Captain George Vancouver charts most of Georgia Strait, including English Bay, the future site of the city bearing his name.

1793 Alexander Mackenzie is the first European to reach the Pacific by land. His traverse is possible only because he follows the “grease trails” through the northern part of British Columbia, a network of well-established routes used by natives for the traditional trade in oolichan oil (or “grease”) and other commodities.

1803 Chief Maquinna of Nootka Sound attacks the Boston, an American sealing vessel, after enduring taunts and insults from the captain. The ship’s blacksmith, John Jewitt, is ... journal during his captivity that remains one of the earliest insights into the daily lives of Maquinna and his people.

1827 The Hudson's Bay Company establishes Fort Langley near the mouth of the Fraser River. In addition to furs, the HBC conducts a thriving trade for salmon and other foodstuffs with the resident natives.

1840 Salmon purchased from Native Traders became the principal HBC export from Fort Langley.

1843 The Hudson's Bay Company establishes Fort Victoria on the southeast tip of Vancouver Island. The fort becomes a center of ... groups relocate to the vicinity of Victoria as the resident “homeguard,” i.e., trading and working directly for the HBC.
1847-50
Measles outbreak in Nuu-chah-nulth territory

1849
Vancouver Island becomes a British Colony

1858
British Columbia becomes a British Colony & the Fraser River Gold Rush begins

1861
First Residential School is opened - Coqualeetza ( Chilliwack, BC )

1862
Smallpox outbreak in Nuu-chah-nulth territory (up to 50% of First Nations People do not survive these two outbreaks)

1864-71 Joseph Trutch, British Columbia’s Chief Commissioner of Lands and Works, is responsible for establishing aboriginal precedent to the goal of white settlement. Trutch’s policies inspire vigorous protest from First Nations, to no avail.

1866 Vancouver Island and British Columbia are united to become the Colony of British Columbia.

1867 Canada is confederated under the terms of the British North America Act.

1868 Department of Fisheries (federal) is formed under the authority of the Fisheries Act - all fishing privileges would flow from the Crown to whites and Indians alike.

1867 – First Salmon cannery operating in BC. Within a decade become large salmon canneries employing 100’s of people each year, and this would attract thousands of children and Chinese immigrants. The canneries are built adjacent to First Nations villages for easy access to fishers and workers.

1867
Canada is confederated under the terms of the British North America Act.

1868
Indian Act is passed
1871 - British Columbia joins Canada under the Terms of Union. The aboriginal people, who comprise the majority of the population, face significant changes.

1872 - The right of aboriginal people to vote in provincial and federal elections is rescinded. This left First Nations people, who comprised 73% of the population at the legislative mercy of the white minority.

1874 - The Indian Act is restructured and codified from pre-confederation laws. It influences all aspects of a native's life from ownership of land to marriage. Provincial appointees, who disagree on policy for reserving lands. By 1878, the JIRC is reduced to a single commissioner.

1875 - Even with all these barriers, Nuu-chah-nulth people still continued to adapt and flourish using their traditional skills and knowledge. In 1875 the “Indian Superintendent declared the Nuu-chah-nulth, “the richest Indians” he ever met.

1877 - The federal Fisheries Act (1868) is adopted by BC. Native fisheries was initially exempt from this Act.

1879 - Department of Fisheries began to keep track of the “Home Consumption of Fish by Indians: British Columbia, exclusive of European supply.”
- Estimated 17,000,000 salmon, 3,000,000 pounds of halibut, as well as sturgeon, trout, herring, oolichan and other fish at $4,885,000.00 (this is roughly 108 billion dollars in current CAD)
- The Dominion of Canada (Fisheries) adopted a nation-wide regulation that prohibited fishing for salmon, except under the authority of a lease or license from the Department of Marine and Fisheries.

1884 - A law is enacted against the potlatch, a traditional gift-giving ceremony central to aboriginal social organization, status, and life-cycle events. The federal government approves the formation of church-run industrial and residential schools in certain areas to educate aboriginal children. The federal government also introduces laws limiting aboriginal people in fishing, hunting, and other food-gathering activities.
- 90% of those involved in the commercial salmon fishery in BC were the First Nations. A move was launched to deny Natives commercial access to the fisheries resource.

1885 - Fisheries Guardians are established in an effort to expand fisheries surveillance in large part to control and restrict Native freshwater fisheries.
- From this time to the 1920’s FN fishers still dominate the fishing and cannery industries.

1887 - Canadian Railway is completed in 1887, providing transport for frozen and canned fish to eastern Canada and the US.

1888 - Additions were made to the Fisheries Act and Regulations:
- Fishers were required to register their equipment and intended fishing locations.
- Fishers could limit the number of boats in a region.
- Under certain circumstances, Indians were not required to hold a license. This exemption was for fishery permits for food fisheries came from the Inspector of Fisheries and any fishing by Natives for sale must be under license (1894 Fisheries amendment).
- Fishers regulations restricted what Natives might do with their catch, they could fish for food but not for ‘barter, sale or commerce.’ The licensing system created a native labor pool for the fish canneries, which were owned by non-natives.
1900
First Nations population in North America is reduced from 15 million to 300,000.

1909-10 A delegation of First Nations apply to King Edward VII to have the Privy Council determine aboriginal title. The request is denied on the grounds that it is a Canadian issue.

1910 Prime Minister Wilfrid Laurier visits British Columbia. He supports recognition of aboriginal land rights, in contrast to the province which resolutely refuses to acknowledge aboriginal rights. The stark opposition of federal and provincial positions hamstrings negotiations for an aboriginal land policy for decades.

1912-16 The Royal Commission on Indian Affairs is established in response to increasing pressure from new settlers seeking lands in British Columbia. The commission, known as the McKenna-McBride Commission after the federal and provincial officials that founded it, reviews the size of reserves throughout the province and, while it introduced many new reserves (mainly fishing stations and poor quality lands), it cuts off 47,085 acres worth twice as much from existing reserves.

1913 Duncan Campbell Scott becomes Deputy Superintendent General of the Department of Indian Affairs, the chief bureaucrat responsible for aboriginal policy. His stated objective is assimilation. He oversees virtually all aspects of the department until his retirement in 1937.

1922 RCMP seize over 600 objects in a potlatch raid on Vancouver Island... Objects are given to museums and chiefs and elders are arrested.

1931 Potlatch Law is dropped - it is now legal to practice culture.

1947 First Nations are allowed to vote in British Columbia.

1951 First Nations are allowed to vote in Canada.

1960 First Nations are allowed to vote in Canada.
1918 – Asian Flu hits Nuu-chah-nulth communities after the measles had already ravaged communities. This declining population continued into the 1920’s, ironically the same time that they became the minority in BC. In 1881 First Nations comprised 55% of the population of BC, in 1901 12% and by 1961 a mere 2.3%.

1922 Chief Dan Cranmer and his guests are arrested for potlatching in Alert Bay. Fifty-one people, including young children, are arrested for violation of the Indian Act for participating in a potlatch.

1927 The Indian Act is amended to make it illegal for natives peoples to raise money or retain a lawyer to advance land claims, thereby blocking effective legal action toward establishing aboriginal land title.

1926 In 1926 the Province of BC establishes a games branch establishing wardens to enforce fishing, hunting and trapping legislation.

1949 The right of aboriginal people in British Columbia to vote in provincial elections is reinstated.
In a restructuring of the Indian Act, the federal government quietly drops the regulations against potlatching and land claim – the constitutional vs. major prohibitions against Indians. Canada recognizes that Indians desired greater control over their communities. However, Canada’s control over Indian lands and property, money, local government and Indian status remained.

Aboriginal people in Canada are permitted to vote in federal elections.

The Davis Plan is implemented greatly reducing Nuu-chah-nulth fleet participation. The goal of this policy was to drive the Nuu-chah-nulth out of the fishery. The goal of this policy was to drive the Nuu-chah-nulth out of the fishery. This policy that gave preference to less sustainable fisheries also had a huge impact on fish stocks.

The Nisga’a go to court over the Calder case. The Supreme Court rules that the Nisga’a hold title to their traditional lands. As a result of the Calder case in 1969, the federal government adopts a comprehensive land claims policy to address treaty claims and federal fiduciary obligations. Indian Chiefs is formed to act as a unified voice to advance the political interests of its member First Nations.

1972 Indian Control of Indian Education policy document is written by National Indian Brotherhood advocating parental responsibility and local control over First Nations education. This policy is accepted by federal government a year later.

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1982 Canada’s Constitutional Act, Section 35, recognizes and affirms existing aboriginal and treaty rights. Established constitutional right to harvest fish.

1985 The BC Native Women’s and national women’s organizations long hard fight has resulted in Bill C-31 which sees women and children who have lost their status, as well as those who were enfranchised get their status back. Some are going through the lengthy process of regaining status even today.

1987 – Salmon Farming starts along the western coast of BC

1990 The Oka Crisis in Quebec receives national attention when Mohawk warriors meet in an armed stand-off with the provincial police and Canadian army over the land at Oka. Native people across the country rally to support the Mohawks and to emphasize their demands for recognition of inherent aboriginal title and rights.

- The British Columbia government is to join the First Nations and Canada in treaty negotiations. 1970s-1980s Increased First Nations protests and evolution of political structures, such as tribal councils representing traditional historical associations. British Columbia still refuses to recognize aboriginal title or negotiate treaties.

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The last Residential school is closed (Gordon Residential School, Saskatchewan)

1996

NTC Smokehouse Case
- NTC Smokehouse was charged with selling fish that were not caught by persons with a commercial fishing licence; in defence, it was argued that the fishermen had an aboriginal right to sell their fish commercially
- applying the "integral to distinctive culture" test, the court noted that the determination is primarily based on factual evidence and findings of fact
- the court also noted that for aboriginal claimants, proving a commercial aboriginal custom or practice is a right will face a more onerous burden of proof than merely claiming a subsistence or ceremonial custom or practice is a right
- in this case, the court held that the claimants did not establish a right, as per the Vanderpeet test

1997 The Supreme Court of Canada hands down its unanimous decision on the Delgamu’ukw case. The court rules that aboriginal title to the land was never extinguished. Furthermore, the court states that the previous trial judge erred by not accepting oral history as evidence in the case. The claim was sent back to trial with the suggestion that negotiations are the best way to resolve outstanding claims.

1998 The Nisga’a conclude a treaty with Canada and British Columbia. Stemming from the Calder case in 1973, the treaty is the first "modern treaty" negotiated between a First Nation and the British Columbia government. The treaty sets out the Nisga’a’s right to self-government, and the authority to manage lands and resources.

2001 The Office of Indian Residential Schools Resolution Canada is formed by the federal government to address roughly 13,000 claims of physical, emotional, and sexual abuse suffered by aboriginal students that attended residential schools.

2008 The Canadian federal government issues a formal apology to the survivors of the Indian residential school system, not only for the excesses suffered in the system but also for the creation of the system itself. Aboriginal leaders across Canada cite the apology as an important step to the healing process.

Reflection

ʔuʔacup qałhmisʔi
Bringing Back the Light
The Ripple Effect of Change

Symbolic Reconciliation

- Raising awareness of non-indigenous peoples regarding the impacts of colonialism, displacement, loss of cultural identity, etc.
- Immersing in deeper understandings of traditional nuxalk practices and way of life
- Sharing a more accurate depiction of the shared history in indigenous territories
- Respect and acknowledgement of loss of culture, language and spirituality

Action Oriented Reconciliation

- Commitment toward improving well being of indigenous peoples and lands (social, environmental, economic, spiritual, cultural, linguistic, etc.)
- Formal acknowledgement of wrongful acts that were politically and socially accepted in recent history
- Meaningful engagement and participation with indigenous Nations to restore, re-strengthen and revitalize cultural identity and practices
- Collective development and implementation of a reciprocal healing initiative (internal and external)
What do healthy cross-cultural relationships and engagement look like?

On a personal level?

As a family-based initiative?

At a community-wide level?

At a regional level?

What could or should reconciliation look like across the Alberni-Clayoquot Regional District?

What is already being done?

What are some common-ground areas that can be built upon?

What is not happening yet?

Establishing meaningful and sustainable relationships across cultures requires patience, commitment, nurturing and compassion.

Growing from a seedling to a majestic tree.

maamut
Harvesting and Preparing Our Food To Take Home

naas'uluk (John Rampanen)
rampanen@yahoo.ca