

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

THIS PROJECT WAS CREATED BY THE ESQUIMALT AND SONGHEES NATIONS, THE CITY OF VICTORIA, THE PROVINCIAL CAPITAL COMMISSION AND GREATER VICTORIA HARBOUR AUTHORITY WITH SUPPORT FROM THE GOVERNMENT OF CANADA, DEPARTMENT OF CANADIAN HERITAGE, CULTURAL CAPITALS OF CANADA PROGRAM.

PAINTINGS

- VICTORIA IN THE PRESENT DAY AND VICTORIA IN 1849
© BETTY MEYERS 2005
- WHU-SEI-KUM WITH ST. ANN'S ACADEMY AND THE CANOE PORTAGE BEHIND.
ELISABETH MARGARET EARLY TWENTIETH CENTURY. BCARS PDP00207
- FORT CAMOSUN (VICTORIA). JOHN TURNSTALL 1848.
BCARS PDP04464
- ROSS BAY SEEN FROM MEE-QAN (BEACON HILL).
GEORGINA M. DE LAUBINIÈRE 1887. BCARS PDP02148
- LOOKING TOWARD PAH-LU-TSUSS FROM THE GORGE.
WILLIAM GEORGE RICHARDSON 1860S. BCARS PDP02611
- WHU-SEI-KUM (JAMES BAY) IN THE 1890S.
EDMUND THOMAS COLEMAN 1892. BCARS PDP05420
- INDIAN VILLAGE, VICTORIA HARBOUR. ELEANOR CAROLINE FELLOWS 1860S.
BCARS PDP00010

PHOTOGRAPHS

- CARVED HOUSE POSTS ON THE OLD SONGHEES RESERVE
BCARS G-06931
- INDIAN BURIAL GROUND NEAR VICTORIA
BCARS PDP03722
- BUTCH DICK CARVING SPINDLE WHORL, CARVING TOOLS,
AND CARVING. GRIFFIN CHEN, CITY OF VICTORIA

PROJECT PARTNERS

With the participation of:

 Canadian Heritage

 Patrimoine canadien



www.victoria.ca/signsoflekwungen

SIGNS OF LEKWUNGEN



The Lekwungen People have hunted and gathered here for thousands of years. This area, with its temperate climate, natural harbours and rich resources, was a trading centre for a diversity of First Peoples. When Captain James Douglas anchored off Clover Point in 1842, he saw the result of the Lekwungen People's careful land management, such as controlled burning and food cultivation. These practices were part of the land and part of Lekwungen culture.

The development of a modern city here makes it more difficult to experience the landscape that was home to the Lekwungen. However, footprints of traditional land use are all around us, and this land is inseparable from the lives, customs, art and culture of those who have lived here since the beginning.

The hills, creeks and marshlands shaped the growth of the City of Victoria. There are messages in the landscape here; oral histories, surviving traditional place names, and the soil itself are all ancient stories waiting to be told.

TO FOLLOW THE MARKERS AND VISIT THESE TRADITIONAL PLACES IS TO LEARN ABOUT THE LAND, ITS ORIGINAL CULTURE AND THE SPIRIT OF ITS PEOPLE.

This view is an artist's impression of *Cah-mah-sing*, an area that is now the inner harbour of the city of Victoria. The year is 1849, and the landscape is changing rapidly. Turn this page over to view the modern city from the same angle.



The First Nations people here are the Lekwungen. Today, the descendents of the Lekwungen consist of two groups: the **Esquimalt** and the **Songhees Nations**. All of these groups belong to the broader language group called **Coast Salish**.

This is the land of the Lekwungen People, known today as the Esquimalt and Songhees Nations. As you travel through the city, you will find seven carvings that mark places of cultural significance. To seek out these markers is to learn about the land, its original culture, and the spirit of its people.



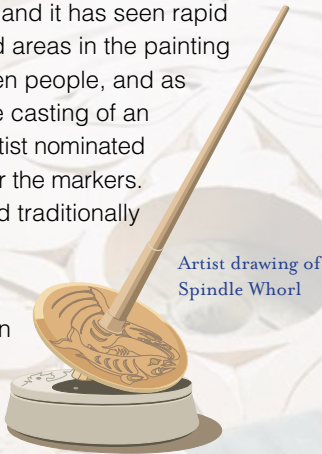
THE SIGNS OF LEKWUNGEN is a new interpretive walkway along the Inner Harbour and surrounding areas that honours the artistic, historical and cultural contributions of the Coast Salish people who have resided in the Victoria area for hundreds of years.

Victoria's inner harbour is in the heart of Lekwungen territory, and it has seen rapid change in the last 150 years (see over). The seven numbered areas in the painting to the right are special places of importance to the Lekwungen people, and as you visit these sites, you will find each site marker is a bronze casting of an original cedar carving by Songhees artist Butch Dick – the artist nominated by the Esquimalt and Songhees Nations to carve the whorls for the markers. The carvings are of enlarged spindle whorls, small discs used traditionally for spinning wool.

These spindle whorls are enlargements of a traditional tool. Enlargements and depictions of traditional objects can be seen in the work of many local Coast Salish artists.

To follow the markers and visit these traditional places is to learn about the land, its original culture, and the spirit of its people. The traditions that were born here carry on today.

The Lekwungen people's art is traditionally used on internal house poles and for the decoration of household objects and clothing. This artwork became much more scarce when western living supplies became available after 1842. Historically, the outward expressions of Lekwungen culture were more modest than some of the other coastal nations such as the Haida or Kwakwak'wakw. In fact, European travellers interested in native art would sometimes leave from Victoria unaware of the tradition in their midst.



Artist drawing of Spindle Whorl

BUTCH DICK WITH SPINDLE WHORL

"I remember my grandma using a spindle whorl. She didn't speak much English, and I didn't speak much Coast Salish, but I understood that the spindle whorl is the foundation of any family – it can weave a tapestry of information."

"Mythology is important to us especially when we are young. It is important for capturing the spirit of different animals to enhance our own spirits. The highest order of mythical animal is the Thunderbird."

BUTCH DICK, SONGHEES ARTIST



SONGHEES POINT



THE NUMBERS ON THIS PAINTING INDICATE THE LOCATIONS OF CARVINGS BY SONGHEES ARTIST BUTCH DICK. THESE CARVINGS OFFER A WINDOW TO THE TRADITIONAL LANDSCAPE.



Turn the page over to compare this modern view of the inner harbour with how it looked in 1849.

When the traditional name is no longer known, the markers are engraved with q'emáseŋ. *Ca-MAH-sing* is the Lekwungen name for the Victoria area.

1. SONGHEES POINT
p'áləc'əs

PAH-lu-tsuss means "cradle-board." Traditionally, once infants had learned to walk, their cradles were placed at this sacred headland because of the spiritual power of the water here. More recently, there was a settlement here, and subsequently an Indian reserve, that traded with the fort on the opposite shore. This place is also known as Songhees Point.

2. THE SITE OF THE
SOUTH WEST
BASTION OF THE
HUDSON'S BAY
COMPANY FORT

An imposing wooden fort, called Fort Camosun (and later known as Fort Victoria), was built here by the Lekwungen men and women in exchange for trade goods. This marked a drastic change in traditional ways and traditional sustainable land use. A large forested area was destroyed to raise the fort.

3. OUTSIDE
CITY HALL
skwc'əŋjɪč

Skwu-tsu-KNEE-lth-ch, literally "bitter cherry tree." Here, willow-lined berry-rich creeks and meadows meandered down to the ocean, and paths made by bark harvesters bordered the waterways. The imprints of these creeks can still be seen in the uneven ground of the Market Square area. This was a creek bed that led back to the food gathering areas now contained by Fort, View, Vancouver and Quadra streets. Bark from the bitter cherry was used to make a variety of household objects.

4. LOWER CAUSEWAY
xwsáyq'əm

(Interpretive Panel Location)
whu-SEI-kum, "place of mud", marked wide tidal mudflats and some of the best clam beds on the coast. These flats were buried when the area was filled in to construct the Empress Hotel. This place was also one end of a canoe portage. The portage could be used to avoid the harbour entrance during heavy seas by cutting through from the eastern side of what is now Ross Bay Cemetery. Along the route, arrowheads and other stone tools are still found, reminding us that the lowlands were rich for hunting. When

housing development began, the lower elevations were left for market gardens and nurseries until after the Second World War.

5. BESIDE THE
"LOOKOUT"
ON BEACON HILL
míqən

The hill here is called MEE-qan which means "warmed by the sun". This seaward slope was a popular place for rest and play – a game similar to field hockey, called Coqwalls, was played here. At the bottom of the hill was a small, palisaded village that was occupied intermittently from 1,000 until

approximately 300 years ago. The settlement was here for defence during times of war, and it was also important for reef net fishing. The starchy bulbs of the wildflower, Camas, were an important food source gathered in this area. The hill here is also known as Beacon Hill.

6. ROYAL BRITISH
COLUMBIA
MUSEUM
q'emásəŋ

Corner of Government and Belleville Streets
The objects, carvings and art of the Lekwungen people are unique. The Lekwungen have

loaned many cultural objects from this area to the museum so that the traditions can be shared as we share the land. Some of these objects are on display inside.

7. LAUREL POINT

The carving here marks a nineteenth-century First Nations burial ground. Small burial shelters with different carved mortuary figures, including human figures, were placed in front of the graves and stood here until the 1850s. No traditional name is known for this area.