

Reframing *The Water We Call Home* and the *Iron Chink* at the Gulf of Georgia Cannery National Historic Site

**by
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B.A (Psychology), University of British Columbia, 2021

Thesis Submitted in Partial Fulfillment of the
Requirements for the Degree of
Master of Arts

in the
School of Interactive Arts and Technology
Faculty of Communication, Art and Technology

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SIMON FRASER UNIVERSITY
Fall 2024

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Abstract

The Water We Call Home is the first Indigenous-led exhibition on display at the Gulf of Georgia Cannery National Historic Site, and this thesis explores the collaboration with Rosemary Georgeson to introduce female-centred counter-narratives into the Gulf of Georgia Cannery National Historic Site and the reframing of the exhibition as it migrates from Galiano Island to Steveston. I ask how the concept of re-presencing and reframing impact the Cannery's direction to move toward decolonial museum practices, and what it looks like to introduce counter-narratives into a settler-colonial museum institution through an analysis of *The Water We Call Home* and a speculative digital exhibition that reframes the "Iron Chink" within the context of the Cannery. Through reframing as the main lens of the creation of my exhibition and the Scrapbook of *The Water We Call Home*, I argue that pulling away from objects to focus more deeply on stories and creating space for Indigenous collaboration are two ways to introduce decolonial practices into Canadian museums.

Keywords: decolonial, anthropology, co-creation, Indigenous methodology, museums, research-creation

Dedication

I dedicate this to my parents.

Acknowledgements

I would like to acknowledge the Cayuse, Umatilla and Walla Walla, səliłwətaʔt (Tseil-Waututh), Skwxwú7mesh Úxwumixw (Squamish), sqəciyaʔt təməxw (Katzie), xʷməθkʷəyəm (Musqueam), kwikwəłəm (Kwikwetlem), and various S'ólh Téméxw (Stó:lō) Nations, on whose unceded, traditional and stolen lands I have been able to study and work since emigrating to Canada at the start of the millennium. I recognise that I am an uninvited visitor on these lands, and it is this that reminds me to live and work with gratitude, guided by truth, and grounded in kindness. It is also because of this that I focus my efforts on the continual fight for the education and reconstitution of these colonial places.

This thesis is a culmination of the efforts of a very special group of individuals, and I will try my best to capture all my heartfelt thanks here. First, I must thank Kate Hennessy, Rosemary Georgeson, and Jessica Hallenbeck for allowing me to join the team on what is such an important and monumental project. I respectfully acknowledge their patience, guidance, and trust in me to create the exhibition scrapbook. I also acknowledge Dr. Hannah Turner's guidance and teachings; thank you for all the help on my counter-tour and allowing me to explore a topic close to my heart.

I extend my deep appreciation to Elizabeth Bautista, Heidi Rampfl, and Kit Grauer at the Gulf of Georgia Cannery National Historic Site for being so open to sharing their experiences of collaboration on *The Water We Call Home* with me.

To my partner, Daniel, thank you for standing by me and supporting me. I appreciate you listening attentively as I described the topic of my thesis to you (more for myself than for you), for being patient with me while I read papers in the car, and for waiting for me to finish writing down my train of thought before we could watch an episode of our TV show. Your continued belief in me is what pushed me past the finish line. I cannot thank you enough, and I hope to give you the same degree of support throughout our life together. I love you so, so much.

To my parents, without your upbringing and teachings of kindness, hard work, and overachieving, I wouldn't have been able to be where I am today. Thank you for everything, and I hope I've made you proud.

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List of Acronyms

GoGCNHS	Gulf of Georgia Cannery National Historic Site
TWWCH	<i>The Water We Call Home</i>
CMA	Canadian Museum Association
TRC	Truth and Reconciliation Commission
CHSA	Chinese Historical Society of America

Chapter 1.

Introduction

1.1. The Origins of my Thesis

On February 7th, 2023, I visited the Gulf of Georgia Cannery National Historic Site (GoGCNHS) in Steveston, British Columbia, for the first time. I was working on a team alongside Coast Salish - Sahtu Dene artist and storyteller Rosemary Georgeson, critical feminist geographer, filmmaker, and postdoctoral fellow Jessica Hallenbeck, and Kate Hennessy, my supervisor and Associate Professor at Simon Fraser University's School of Interactive Arts and Technology. On this day, this curatorial team of Georgeson, Hallenbeck, and Hennessy were meeting with Director Elizabeth Bautista and Collections Manager Heidi Rampfl to discuss the possibility of bringing an exhibition project they had curated called *The Water We Call Home* (TWWCH) to the GoGCNHS. This would be the second installation of the exhibit, following its first public exhibition and programming at Galiano Island's Yellowhouse Art Centre in the Summer of 2022. As I was learning at that time, *The Water We Call Home* is based on more than a decade of collaboration between Rosemary Georgeson and Jessica Hallenbeck, and then a two-year curatorial process in collaboration with Kate Hennessy and an extended circle of family and witnesses. Rosemary has spent her life to reconnecting with her Coast Salish ancestry and family ('Biographies', n.d.). Along with Jessica, they have been engaging in and developing decolonial methodologies to "re-presence connections to and with the water" ('Biographies', n.d.; Hallenbeck 2019).

Their concept of re-presencing, as I will go on to discuss in more detail, is a response to violent colonial policies that resulted in the fragmentation of Indigenous families and their connection to water, fishing, and family (Georgeson and Hallenbeck 2018). I learned from *The Water We Call Home* that this was Rosemary and her family's experience of growing up on Galiano Island and across the Salish Sea region. The exhibit details how Rosemary reconnected with her family and "re-presenced" places on Galiano Island after their years of separation ('*The Water We Call Home*', n.d.). The exhibition was a culmination of this work and through participatory video, photography, and curation, aimed to represent these significant acts of re-presencing and the stories of Indigenous women's connection and disconnection to water, fish, and family.

The GoGCNHS currently lives in the building of the former cannery located in Steveston, which was first constructed in 1894 (Rampfl 2024a). At the time, it was the largest cannery in BC, operating three canning lines. From the time of its opening to 1926, it was passed between the hands of many owners until it landed in the hands of the Canadian Fishing Company—otherwise known as Canfisco—in 1926. For the next four years, they continued to operate it as a salmon cannery until they changed it from a cannery to a net loft and fresh fish depot (Rampfl 2024a). Over the few decades that followed, the cannery worked with herring until it eventually closed in 1979, and ownership was transferred to the Federal Government. In 1994, it re-opened as the historic site that stands there today.

The GoGCNHS' archives come mainly from people's personal collections, such as old fishing equipment and photos. The Steveston Historical Society had started to save pieces from the cannery before it closed because they had seen many other sites be torn down over the years (Rampfl 2024b); this prompted them to begin the archiving even while the cannery was still operational. This situation shows the importance of community involvement in keeping histories alive. The cannery also stores the Parks Canada collection, and Heidi mentioned in our interview that many of the pieces they have were collected after the site closed in 1979 such as the herring reduction plant and the *Iron Chink*, a machine that was developed to clean and butcher fish at the same standard as Chinese butchers (O'Bannon 1982). From the time of the site's closure to the 90s, Parks Canada continued to collect old machinery for their collection.

I was given the opportunity to join the project after I had taken a class with Kate Hennessy and expressed how my own interests in decolonial methodologies aligned with the projects that her lab was doing. As my MA supervisor, Dr. Hennessy hired me as a Research Assistant for TWWCH; I was responsible for the production of the Scrapbook—a physical artefact for the exhibit that outlines the colonial fishing policies that Indigenous peoples experienced—and aiding in the process of installing the exhibit at the Cannery.

On that first day at the Cannery, I joined the curatorial team (Rosemary, Jessica, and Kate) on their visit the collections space at the Cannery to begin brainstorming with Collections Manager Heidi Rampfl what sorts of artefacts from the Cannery collections might be included in the exhibit, to more directly connect the original Galiano Island-focused exhibition to its new potential context. While walking in the aisles, I was in awe

of the amount of history, such as old canoes, fishing nets, and tobacco boxes, that were sitting on shelves. My awe multiplied after hearing Rosemary share story after story about her own experiences working with similar belongings in her lifetime on the water fishing. As a settler and uninvited visitor, I had never learned about my people's impact in British Columbia as many exhibitions about early Chinese labourers refer to the building of the Pacific Railway or their involvement in the Gold Rush. Talking with Rosemary helped me realize that, in addition to the untold stories of Indigenous labourers, there was an entire history of Chinese labourers in canneries that was not being told. That realization was a large motivating factor for my future engagement with an object in the Cannery's collection. This initial visit was an important moment for me to witness the beginning of a collaborative curatorial project at the Cannery that was led by Rosemary Georgeson and the curatorial team and advised by a council of Indigenous women connected to Rosemary as family from around the Salish Sea: Eva Wilson, Christie Lee Charles, Fay Blaney, Karen Charlie, Rosemary Georgeson, and Kimi Haxton.

Over the next several months, I worked with the core curatorial team (Rosemary, Kate, and Jessica) to explore the re-curation of the exhibition at the Cannery, which would move the exhibition across the Georgia Strait from Galiano to a new historical, political, and social context in Steveston. This would mean a shift from an exhibition story focused on the representation of the process of re-presencing and broader witnessing of Indigenous women and extended family on Galiano Island, to the representation of these crucial acts in the context of the Cannery and the impacts of colonial fishing policies that coalesced around the Cannery up until its closure in 1979.

My work as a research assistant on the team allowed me to spend extended periods of time at the GoGCNHS walking through the other exhibitions during my breaks. On one of these explorations, I came across the *Iron Chink* (see figure 1), a machine created by Edmund A. Smith in the early 1900s to replace Chinese butchers and allowed cannery owners to employ less-skilled workers for a fraction of the wages they paid the butchers (O'Bannon 1982). The nickname "Iron Chink" came out of the negative feelings of Smith towards Chinese workers, who advertised it as their replacement ('The Iron Chink', n.d.). The presence of Chinese workers in canneries was usually met with protests and sometimes, threats of violence (O'Bannon 1982). The machine also reflected the discrimination that Chinese immigrants faced. This information was unknown to me at the time and affected me and my research trajectory

in a significant way. It prompted me to expand my work at the Cannery and to take on the development of a speculative digital counter tour that would help to reconnect the racist history to the machine itself in the Cannery's collections and help me reflect on my own history as a Chinese settler in Canada. According to the Canadian Centre for Architecture (Architecture (CCA), n.d.), counter tours propose critical and alternative visions of an exhibition, and I aim to do this through the website, where I provide a more holistic background to the *Iron Chink* compared to the exhibition that is currently on display at the Cannery. I will discuss this counter tour in more detail in Chapter Five.



Figure 1. The "Iron Chink" machine at the GoGCNHS.



Figure 2. The label for the "Iron Chink".

Being part of the team of TWWCH and being given the responsibility to document the process of re-curation as the exhibition was brought over from Galiano Island to Steveston has granted me the unexpected opportunity to learn about Chinese-Indigenous relationalities, as well as the history of Chinese people in Canada, which includes my own family. In the course of this work, I heard many stories from Rosemary about how Chinese and Japanese Canadian labourers, as well as Indigenous women, had to work the worst tables on the canning lines, and most of these stories were unknown to me and omitted from exhibitions at the cannery. The biggest motivation behind the development of my counter-tour and documentation of my participation in *The Water We Call Home* exhibition in this thesis was the realization that there is so much untold history about the solidarity between Indigenous and Chinese labourers and fishers in canneries, which I dive more deeply into in Chapter 2.

As a conduit and narrative of my experience, my thesis is largely a documentation and reflection on these two projects: 1) the re-installation and “reframing” (Porto 2007) of TWWCH at the GoGCNHS and its effects on the practices of core staff

at the museum; and 2) my own personal grappling with the occlusion of Chinese history at the cannery which led to the creation of a digital counter-tour that used my archival research about the rich histories of Chinese presence in Steveston, British Columbia to reframe the “Iron Chink” in its institutional context (see Chapter Five).

Through these two projects, my thesis engages with two important concepts that are central to the exhibitions and the team’s process of re-curating *The Water We Call Home* at the Cannery. The first is the concept of “reframing” (Porto 2007), brought forth by Portuguese anthropologist Nuno Porto. Porto writes that: “...exhibition projects...tend to be site- (and time-)-specific, thus calling for ‘reframing’ when remounted elsewhere not only on account of physical constraints but also because of the nature of the venue...” (Porto 2007, 182–83). Porto is arguing that exhibitions cannot exist independent of the location they are being displayed at, which means that certain aspects must be changed to reflect the venue. In bringing TWWCH across the water from Galiano to Steveston, the curatorial team needed to more directly connect the context and politics of the cannery’s history to the Galiano-based content of the exhibition, because canneries were sites where Indigenous people were excluded from employment and many Indigenous fishing communities lost their fishing rights and licenses (Georgeson 2019).

For example, during my research, Jessica shared with me a collection of fishermen’s letters from the UBC Archives, titled “Native Discrimination”. What followed were a series of rejection letters from various canneries to Indigenous fishermen as well as a document stating that canneries did not agree to produce a list of those being laid off for the Union and Native Brotherhood’s examination because they would show that 9 out of ever 10 fishermen that were being laid off were Indigenous (‘United Fishermen and Allied Workers’ Union Fonds’ 1934). This context required us to re-frame the exhibit to reflect a location where many Indigenous peoples traveled across the water to work and experienced discrimination (Georgeson, Hallenbeck, and Hennessy 2024). There is much more to the history of the Cannery—the largest in British Columbia—which will be detailed in Chapter 5.

A second key concept I wish to highlight in the thesis emerges from the work of Rosemary Georgeson and Jessica Hallenbeck (2018) and the broader exhibition project TWWCH: *re-presencing*. For example, re-presencing in Georgeson’s lifework is understood and defined as the reconnection of Indigenous family members to each other

and to the land that colonial policies displaced them from, resulting in the fragmentation of family connections and their relationships to those places. Re-presencing manifested when three of Rosemary's relatives were standing together in Georgeson Bay on Galiano Island, together in that place named after the Georgeson family for the first time in 120 years (Georgeson and Hallenbeck 2018). In the first iteration of TWWCH, where the Advisory Council of Indigenous women and extended family and witnesses gathered on significant locations on Galiano to share and record their stories of connection, re-presencing was a deliberate act of resistance and reconnection to family and place. For Rosemary's relatives to be reconnected again after a century of separation from each and from their lands is an active stance against the colonization and oppression that they faced.

Taken together, acts of re-presencing in TWWCH and the reframing (Porto 2007) that was undertaken to reinstall the exhibit in Steveston informed my own reconnection of racist and colonial history to the "Iron Chink" technology at the Cannery. As I will show, my understanding of re-presencing and Porto's "reframing", and the creation of my "Iron Chink" counter tour allowed me to contribute the idea of "*reframing-in-context*"—using archival research and interpretation with digital research-creation methodologies to reframe the representation of an object in its given institutional context. As my interviews with Cannery staff will show, these concepts of re-presencing that are represented in *The Water We Call Home*, which has also functioned to reframe objects in the cannery collections in their institutional context, has contributed to ongoing shifts at the GoGCNHS towards future decolonial work and the reconnection of story to their collections: reframing-in-context.

1.2. Background of *The Water We Call Home*

The origins of *The Water We Call Home* (TWWCH) project can be attributed to the first meeting between Rosemary Georgeson and Jessica Hallenbeck in Williams Lake in 2009 when Rosemary was with an Indigenous and intercultural theatre company called Urban Ink, and Jessica as a consultant facilitating conversations with youth about racism and discrimination (Hallenbeck 2019). They later collaborated on a documentary film titled *We have Stories: Women in Fish*, which shared the interviews Rosemary conducted with women that she had fished with (Hallenbeck 2019). The film grew out of a play called *We have Stories: Hours of Water* that was co-written by Rosemary and

Dene playwright Marie Clements; in her conversations with the audience members, Rosemary learned that there was a much larger story that wasn't being told: Indigenous women's connection and disconnection to water (Hallenbeck 2019). This untold history is what motivated Rosemary and Jessica to produce the film, and in turn, motivated Rosemary to search archival records for the names and experiences of her great grandmother Tlahoholt and her great great grandmother Sar-Augh-Ta-Naogh (Hallenbeck 2019). *We Have Stories: Women in Fish* was set to be presented at the Native American and Indigenous Studies Association conference in 2020, which marked the beginning of bringing these stories into academia. Unfortunately, the conference was canceled due to the COVID-19 pandemic. During the search for her grandmothers, Rosemary also found many members of her extended family, people she had been separated from for over a century.

Rosemary's story begins with Sar-Augh-Ta-Naogh, her great great-grandmother and Tlahoholt, her great-grandmother. They were given names by the church because it was believed that Indigenous peoples needed to have Anglo-European names, and their ancestral names were not recognized (Georgeson and Hallenbeck 2018), but I will only be referring to them by their real names for the remainder of my thesis. Sar-Augh-Ta-Naogh was married to Scotty Georgeson, a settler from the Shetland Islands (Georgeson and Hallenbeck 2018). Despite Sar-Augh-Ta-Naogh's crucial role in Scotty's survival and his claim to land, she was largely erased from the history records written about his life (Georgeson and Hallenbeck 2018). By erasing her from the records, it also erases her claims and knowledge of the territory and water; the difficulty in finding records about Sar-Augh-Ta-Naogh is an effort by the settler colonial state to omit the centrality of Indigenous women in family, land, labour, and water (Georgeson and Hallenbeck 2018). Separating Rosemary's grandmothers and other Indigenous women from the water by disallowing Indigenous peoples to own their own boats or licences (detailed in Section 1.4) has impacted their relationship with something that was so integral to their lives for thousands of years (Georgeson and Hallenbeck 2018). This dispossession of Indigenous peoples is "the structuring force of domination of greatest effect and concern to Indigenous peoples" (Hu Pegues 2020, 96).

In addition to being separated from the water, Rosemary was separated from the rest of her family when Scotty kidnapped Tlahoholt's youngest child, who was Rosemary's grandfather (Georgeson and Hallenbeck 2018; Hallenbeck 2019). She never knew her origins or what happened to the rest of her family, but Rosemary always

felt connected to them through the water and fish because they all knew how to clean, cut, preserve, and celebrate it (Hallenbeck 2019). It was important for Rosemary to look for her family and learn her history because she never knew if she was Coast Salish or how that status could have been lost in her ancestry. Rosemary needed to bring her family into the work that her and Jessica were doing on *We Have Stories: Women in Fish*.

The process of finding, reconnecting to her family and knowing that she is related to these women has increased Rosemary's confidence in her identity because she now knows who and what Nation she comes from (Georgeson and Hallenbeck 2018). TWWCH is an amalgamation of these collaborative efforts of reconnection and how Rosemary's family's act of finding each other has also been an act of decolonization: by giving her ancestors "a voice and [bringing] them back, [t]hey are not lost in history anymore" (Georgeson and Hallenbeck 2018, 34). Rosemary and Jessica, and later in collaboration with Hennessy and the WWCH Indigenous Women's Advisory Circle have created a space where the occluded histories of Rosemary's family can be represented. TWWCH is a representation of re-presencing family on land that they were displaced from and refusing to allow colonial fishing policies, such as disallowing Indigenous peoples to fish, separate them any longer.

1.3. Participatory Media Production as a Method for Curating *The Water We Call Home*

Between 2020 and 2022, Jessica Hallenbeck was a SSHRC Postdoctoral Fellow based in the Making Culture Lab at Simon Fraser University's School of Interactive Arts and Technology, working with Kate Hennessy. Hennessy had previously collaborated with Hallenbeck as a member of her doctoral supervisory committee and grew up on Galiano Island along with Rosemary Georgeson. Hennessy joined Hallenbeck and Georgeson to fundraise and develop a new exhibition focused project that would build on Hallenbeck's doctoral collaboration with Georgeson to re-presence locations on Galiano Island and tell the story in an exhibition there.

Funded by the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council, the Canada Council for the Arts, the BC Arts Council First People's Cultural Council, the SFU Community Engaged Research Initiative (CERI), the Access to Media Education Society, and a number of other grants, Hallenbeck, Georgeson and Hennessy began an intensive

project of bringing together members of Rosemary's extended family and supporters as an Advisory Circle ("The Circle") of Indigenous women from around the Salish Sea. The Circle was comprised of:

- Rosemary Georgeson (Coast Salish / Sahtu Dene) Storyteller, writer, filmmaker, and the 2014 Vancouver Public Library's Storyteller in Residence.
- Fay Blaney (Xwe'malhkwa) is a long-time activist and advocate for the rights of Indigenous women.
- Christie Lee Charles (xʷməθkʷəy̓əm) is a Hip hop artist, curator, MC, and Vancouver's 2018-2020 Poet Laureate. As a poet, artist, curator, and filmmaker Christie also holds language.
- Karen Charlie (Spune'luxutth) Karen Charlie is a knowledge holder from Penelakut. She is a language speaker and knowledge holder who shares many teachings through the exhibition. She is deeply concerned with the changes that are happening to the waters that her and her family continue to live off.
- Eva Wilson (Lamalchi) Eva Wilson has been a longtime political leader who has tirelessly advocated for Hwlitsum recognition and for the protection of the Salish Sea.
- Kim Haxton (Potowatomi from the Wasauksing First Nation) Kim is the co-founder of IndigenEYEZ and has worked extensively in trauma counselling training. Kim has played an important role as the facilitator of the gatherings. ('Biographies', n.d.)

The Circle, with the curatorial team of Georgeson, Hallenbeck, and Hennessy, advised how and where a series of re-presencing events would take place. I acknowledge that I was not a part of this earlier curatorial and production process, a rich and complex time for the project which the team curatorial team at this time is currently writing about. I therefore will briefly summarize the participatory media production methodology and timeline that they implemented to both produce and curate content for the first exhibition of *The Water We Call Home*. This summary was provided to me in a conversation with Kate Hennessy and in a presentation she shared from the Meetings of American Anthropological Association's Visual Research Conference in Toronto, 2023 (Georgeson, Hennessy, and Hallenbeck 2023).

Working within the constraints of the COVID-19 pandemic, the team organized a first gathering to take place in October 2020 on Galiano Island. The Circle, with extended family, friends, and invited witnesses from the Indigenous and settler community on Galiano, traveled to Galiano and gathered on a property owned by long-time islander Diane Cragg. The property sits overlooking Georgeson Bay in Active Pass

between Galiano and Mayne Islands, and the former home of the Georgeson family. The production team video recorded members of the Circle sharing stories of their enduring connection to one another through their shared experience of life on the water, resistance to colonial violence and oppression, and the power of this reconnection on Galiano. This gathering was documented in the video *Introduction* (Georgeson 2023).

Over the next year, the Circle and curators planned a second gathering. This took place in November 2021 at the Gulf Islands Film and Television School, in a home that was rented for participants, and at Bluff Park, overlooking Georgeson Bay. Participants spent time together cooking meals, sharing family photographs and stories about them, recording personal narratives and reflecting on the impact of the reconnection through the project. The Circle directed a ceremonial action at Bluff Park in which a massive fir tree was wrapped in cedar bark and wool, and copies of selected family photographs were hung in the tree's branches. This action, along with video interviews recorded at the Film School, were shown in the video documentary *Rooted* (Wilson 2022). Interviews with participants and witnesses by the Access to Media Education Society, led by Deblekha Guin and Nova Weipert, were transformed into the documentary *Witnessing the Flow* (Weipert and Guin 2023).

In the November 2021 gathering, in interviews and conversations among the participants, it was noted that the focus on video documentation was increasingly distracting. The Circle and curators, in planning the next gathering, decided that there would be an intergenerational food harvest and feast at the north end of Galiano at Dionisio Point, now a Provincial Park. However rather than video tape the gathering with the goal of creating a short film, they would only document with photography and sound recording. Kali Spitzer, a Dene and Jewish photographer and artist, was invited to photograph the event, and Richard Wilson worked with the curators and the Circle to document sound. That gathering, which took place in the Spring of 2022, was the first time in over 100 years that the Circle's extended family members gathered, representing Dionisio Point. The photographs of that gathering, sounds works, the films created during the last two gatherings, and photographs by the team of the full participatory production process would be the co-curated content for the first exhibition of *The Water We Call Home*, in Summer 2022.

1.4. The Yellowhouse Art Centre: Exhibition 1

The Yellowhouse Art Centre saw the first installation of TWWCH in July and August of 2022 with three different rooms: room one hosted sound, images and tea; room two hosted the video screenings, and room three hosted photographs taken by Kali Spitzer ('General 2', n.d.). In addition to the installation of these rooms, there was a one day Symposium at the South Galiano Island Community Hall where the Advisory Circle gathered with academics, policy makers, and extended family to reflect and discuss their process of re-presencing over the two years prior to the installation ('The Symposium', n.d.). These sessions were documented on video as important moments of dialogue and witnessing, and archived on *The Water We Call Home* website (see <https://www.thewaterwecallhome.com/the-symposium> for the video recordings). In the following sections, I provide a brief description of the contents of each room as well as a summary of the symposium.

Room One: Sound, Images, and Tea

The primary components in this room were 1) a photo album assembled by the Advisory Circle of Indigenous women and project participants and 2) soundscapes of the voices of the Advisory Circle, collaborators, laughter, and inaudible talking and language. There is one soundscape titled "Flow: Poem" that is about the Circle's connections to the water, Georgeson Bay, and their grandmothers. It is a poem simultaneously about the pain of being separated from each other and the importance of reconnecting on their land and being able to be proud of where they come from. The second soundscape, "Skoden", is about life on the water and the young generation's enduring to water, and the persistence of Indigenous knowledge in relation to western paradigms of science and technology.



Figure 3. Room One at the Yellowhouse Art Centre. Photograph by Kate Hennessy.

Room Two: Video Screenings

There were five films in the original Yellowhouse Art Centre exhibit: *In Defiance of All That*, *Introduction*, *Rooted*, *Witnessing the Flow*, and *Searching for the One Last Indian*. The first four films document different events of re-presencing the women of the Circle on land that they were separated from. *Searching for the One Last Indian* is a film specific to Galiano Island: it was included in the Yellowhouse Art Centre exhibit because the same issues that were being addressed in the film were also being addressed in TWWCH. The curatorial team chose not to include it in the exhibit at the Cannery because of the location-specific issues in the film. These are all available on the exhibition website for public viewing, but I will provide brief descriptions of each of these here as I understand them.

In Defiance of All That is the first film that is shown to visitors, and it outlines the history of the project in addition to Rosemary's reconnection with her cousin Fay Blaney and Fay's family of the Xwe'malxwu First Nation (Georgeson 2019) around Campbell

River, B.C. *In Defiance of All That* shares how much fishing was a part of their lives: Rosemary's family was never without food, because if they needed to eat, they would go to the wharf and fish for it. Fishing was also gender-neutral; it required the efforts of the entire family (Georgeson 2019). However, the community on Galiano Island suffered a lot of harm and pain when the Department of Fisheries and Oceans started selling licenses to corporations instead of families. The families on Galiano Island were never compensated for the loss of twenty-four of twenty-six licenses when a new fishing plant was introduced in 1969, despite the fact that it almost destroyed their community because families were unable to fish for a food source that was so staple to their lives (Georgeson 2019). *In Defiance of All That* is an act of resistance against settler colonial attempts at separating Indigenous peoples from their way of life on the water; Rosemary has reconnected with her family, and TWWCH tells the stories of their reconnection and disconnection from such an integral part of their lives.

The second film, *Introduction* does what its name suggests: it introduces the members of the Advisory Circle of Indigenous women, most of whom have family connections to each other (Georgeson 2023). The meeting of the Circle aims to be a place where these women could weave together different parts of their territories and family connections via story. For the Circle, another important aspect of their meetings is to bring back their traditional ways of life. Their matriarchal society was challenged by the patriarchal one of the settler-colonial state, and this upended their families and communities (Georgeson 2023) because it went against their culture. With the women of the Circle reconnecting and being strong against Canada, they are creating possibilities for their resistance. This film was very emotional, seeing all the women, who were cousins but had in some cases only recently come to know it, connect with each other on their land, surrounded by extended family members, and members of the Galiano community as witnesses.

The next film in the sequence, *Rooted*, documents the next meeting of the advisory circle at the Gulf Islands Film and Television School, the wrapping of an old growth fir tree at Bluff Park ('Room 2', n.d.) and reflections from the witnesses. The wrapping of the tree is symbolic because it represents the growth of the family as they discover how far their roots have stretched across the land (Wilson 2022). The participants attached archival photographs of their families to the tree and wrapped the tree in cedar bark and wool yarn. It was a literal act of re-presenting the family in a place on the land that they were displaced from. The main takeaway of this film for me was

that knowing where you are from is an integral part for these women, because passing on these stories and this generational history is paramount to keeping their resistance against settler-colonialism alive (Wilson 2022).

In *Witnessing the Flow*, witnesses that had been invited to the acts of re-presenting reflect on their experiences, such as the tree wrapping ceremony that was documented in the previous film, *Rooted*. According to the individuals in the film, witnessing is a deep listening from the heart with less of an emphasis on recording the stories and knowledge (Weipert and Guin 2023). Many of the witnesses expressed an incredible gratitude to be able to see these women find their families, and being part of this will allow the witnesses to pass on the knowledge to younger generations. As Indigenous peoples lost fishing licenses, they became disconnected and experienced a collective loss of culture (Weipert and Guin 2023). The reconnection of their family after centuries of being separated from each other and the water is truly a monumental experience for everyone involved. Part of the responsibility of a witness is to disseminate this knowledge and these stories so they are not removed from history again (Weipert and Guin 2023).

The final film in the series is *Searching for the One Indian (2011)*, which documents the presence and absence of Indigenous peoples in history and how we can build a road toward recognition and justice ('Room 2', n.d.). The short 6 minute film begins with interviews conducted with non-Indigenous peoples on Galiano Island, many of whom did not know about the families who originally lived on Galiano Island (Wallace et al. 2011). There has been Indigenous presence on Galiano Island for at least 3000 years. Coast Salish Galiano resident and member of the Advisory Circle Eva Wilson talks about how her family used to own Cook's Cove and her father could hunt and fish there for their food, but now there are "no trespassing" and "no hunting" signs posted everywhere (Wallace et al. 2011). She also says that non-Indigenous people on Galiano Island do not like to acknowledge that Indigenous people have a claim to the land; they would rather continue to ignore that part of history. I connect this to Eve Tuck and Wayne Yang's argument that such disregard relieves the settler of guilt or responsibility to give up land (Tuck and Yang 2012). The film was curated into the exhibition TWWCH because of its resonance with the theme of re-presenting in the exhibit and its importance in actively acknowledging Indigenous connection to the land and water through the telling of Indigenous women's disconnection from each other and the land.

Room Three: Photographs by Kali Spitzer

Kali Spitzer was invited by the Advisory Circle and curatorial team to document the historic and traditional food gathering, harvest, preparation, and sharing convened by the Advisory Circle ('General 5', n.d.) at Dionisio Point on Galiano Island in the Spring of 2022. This is an example of re-presencing because Rosemary's family, separated for over a hundred years, were able to gather in a place where many of them were separated from and practice their traditions of food gathering. It is a resistance against colonial oppression; despite efforts to keep the family apart, they have managed to find each other and practice their culture on their land. A curated selection of photographs was printed for the Yellowhouse, but all of them were display digitally throughout the day on a screen. Some of the photographs have been shown below:



Figure 4. Penelakut Elders Richard and Karen Charlie opening oysters harvested and steamed at Dionisio Point, March 2022. Photograph by Kali Spitzer.



Figure 5. Daughters of project Advisory Circle member Christie Lee Charles, Kimora Charles and Hoya Charles, sit by the pit cooking fire at Dionisio Point, March 2022. Photograph by Kali Spitzer.

The Symposium

Held on July 24th, 2022, the Symposium was an opportunity for the Advisory Circle to join policy makers, academics, and community members to reflect on how the work they had done to re-present their connections to fish, water, and family will influence their collective work into the future.

The Symposium opens with a welcome by invited Hereditary Chief Bill Williams telàsemkin-siyam from S̄kw̄xwú7mesh, and introductions by Kate Hennessy and Jessica Hallenbeck. Chief Bill Williams sings a song that recounts Chiefs' talks with the British about the Doctrine of Discovery, a set of laws that made Indigenous peoples feel invisible. As a viewer of the symposium recordings, opening with such a story is powerful because TWWCH is re-presencing and making visible the connections that Indigenous women have to fish, water, and their families, including this connection to S̄kw̄xwú7mesh Chief Bill Williams. Not only is the act of re-presencing and acknowledgement important, but also the act of passing these stories and knowledges to their children. He concludes his welcome speech with a statement that resonated with me:

“Everybody has their truth, and you’re going to bring your truth forward.”
(*The Water We Call Home: The Symposium 2022*)

To me, this is what TWWCH is about: the Advisory Circle telling their truths to witness re-connecting with family through water. Through the telling of their truths, they have also been able to re-presence themselves in locations where they were displaced from.

Following the welcome, there were three panel discussions: in the first one, the Advisory Circle¹ reflected on their two years of work and what they foresee for the future. In the second circle, invited scholars² with familial or research connections to Galiano Island were invited to discuss the exhibition as it related to their work, with topics ranging from art history to Indigenous law and archaeology. In the final circle, Galiano policy makers³ reflect on how the exhibition relates to their work, in the present and the future. Wrapping up the symposium were the closing remarks, shared by members of the Advisory Circle and invited witnesses.

1.5. The Gulf of Georgia Cannery National Historic Site: Exhibition 2

In a shift from to the exhibit at the Yellowhouse Art Centre, which was curated to represent acts of re-presencing primarily for the Galiano Island community, the GoGCNHS exhibition aimed to tell the stories of TWWCH within the politics and history of the Cannery. This led the curatorial team to include new elements into the exhibition that would reframe it for this new space. The biggest changes at the exhibition at the GoGCNHS were the addition of a “Scrapbook”, which will be detailed further in Chapter Four, boxes with SPAM labels and cans of SPAM, a larger photograph of the M.V. Georgeson Bay, and three photographs of women in Rosemary’s family: Rosemary Georgeson, Robin Mina Buss, and Teresa (Tracy) Georgeson. The photographs of the women were included in the display at the Cannery because the team wanted to showcase how the water and fish are deeply embedded in the lives of the Indigenous women. To me, seeing the three women with their catch across generations also drives

¹ Eva Wilson, Christie Lee Charles, Fay Blaney, Karen Charlie, Rosemary Georgeson, and Kimi Haxton.

² Dory Nason, Johnny Mack, Catriona Sandilands, Colin Grier, Camille Georgeson-Usher.

³ Jane Wolverton, Reverend Sarah Tweedale, Paul Brent, Rachel Blaney, Sarah Murdoch.

home the point that the water is an important actor across generations, connecting family members and their experiences.

The exhibit is located off the main permanent Cannery exhibition, which is primarily the preserved machinery and assembly line of the original cannery. When a visitor first walks into *The Water We Call Home* space, they are greeted by a range of media: the films, images of project production process and team members, artefacts from the Cannery collection, and a table and chairs, inviting visitors to sit, read, and listen. On the table there is a “Scrapbook” and a tea pot and mugs, with audio playing about the impact of licensing and how the state imposed strict regulations. Visitors sit at the table or walk around and look at Kali Spitzer’s photos on the digital slideshow, images of the re-presencing production process in the nets or watch the films on the large screen.

The Scrapbook, which I describe in detail later in the thesis, was curated with articles from *The Native Voice* and the *Native Alliance for Red Power* and details the struggles of Indigenous peoples at large, but also their resistance against colonial oppression. The Scrapbook includes written text from Rosemary about how the document is meant to represent a long history of Indigenous resistance against settler-colonial fishing policies. This “Scrapbook” – a designed document to be read on a table at the center of the exhibit – was an important addition in the Steveston installation to make the colonial politics of fishing and canning work central to the stories being told there.

The SPAM boxes are presented as a disruptive installation to introduce their significance in local Indigenous history: as Penelakut Elder Augie Sylvester told Rosemary, because coastal Indigenous communities were being alienated from the water, fish, and fishing, he recalls as a child that priests were distributing cases of canned SPAM meat to houses in place of salmon. Priests believed that if they offered an alternative food source, it would further disconnect Indigenous peoples from fish and fishing as a way of life. The inclusion of the SPAM boxes was inspired by Augie Sylvester’s story, which Rosemary recalls in an audio performance “Seasons of the Sea”, and which visitors listen to using headphones adjacent to the stack of SPAM boxes and cans. This is a story that is not widely known outside of Indigenous communities, but as Cannery Board Chair Kit Grauer later told me in an interview, it depicts such a stark episode in “[colonial] history where... [we gave them] this thing that

nobody will eat for the things that you used that were part of [their] culture" (Grauer 2024). The curatorial team decided to include this element in the GoGCNHS exhibition because they felt it was an important piece of history to share with non-Indigenous communities to allow them to understand how deeply the oppression and alienation affected the lives of Indigenous peoples, going so far as to impacting their diets and taking away from them one of their staple food sources. SPAM cans were also seen at the Yellowhouse Art Centre, but their story and symbolism became more powerful in the cannery because the cans prompted visitors to wonder why SPAM would be a part of a story about fishing on the coast.



Figure 6. SPAM boxes at the Gulf of Georgia Cannery National Historic Site. Photograph by Kate Hennessy, 2022.



Figure 7. TWWCH at the GoGCNHS. Photos of Tracy, Rosemary, and Robin are seen on the walls. Above them are fishing hooks, nets, tobacco boxes, and a photograph of Sar-Augh-Ta-Naogh in the top corner. 2022. Photograph by Kate Hennessy.

Displaying a photograph of Sar-Augh-Ta-Naogh looking down over the TWWCH exhibit at the Cannery is a significant moment, as she symbolically looks down over the work of her descendants.



Figure 8. Images of re-presencing in fishing nets from the collections of the Cannery. Kali Spitzer's photos are shown on the screen. 2022. Photograph by Kate Hennessy.

1.6. Situating the Self

American anthropologist Frederica de Laguna argues that the definition of culture is two-fold; it is simultaneously an object of research and writing to be produced by the ethnographer and a mental object that is carried through time by thinking beings (Mauzé, Harkin, and Kan 2004). Based on the former definition, de Laguna warned her students to be aware of how their own experiences and *a priori* categories can affect the shaping of culture (Mauzé, Harkin, and Kan 2004). It is because of this that I deem it important to provide background on myself before proceeding with the rest of the thesis. My upbringing, my own cultural background, and my education can all affect my perceptions of TWWCH and my discussions around it. It is necessary to know my background to understand my stance on and motivations for exploring this research space.

Because of my family's emigration to Canada in the early 2000s, I am what Iyko Day would consider an alien settler, a category that comes from her retheorization of

settler-Indigenous relations in the Americas; an argument is made for a triangulation of settler colonial theory that includes the Indigenous, the settler, and the alien (Day 2016). My peoples' status as "alien" is a combination of characteristics like excludability and deportability that made it possible to label early Chinese labour as a free (or cheap) and easily mistreated workforce (Day 2016). The status and relationality of Chinese Canadians as alien settlers is multifaceted; while Chinese peoples are entangled with Indigenous peoples and communities of colour in common racialized and colonized struggles, Asian diaspora at large have unknowingly become part of the settler colonial regimes of the United States and Canada because of the material and social benefits the state provides (Fujikane and Okamura 2008; Veracini 2010). Despite the assimilation into the settler colonial regime, I recognize the intricacies of being an alien settler: during the height of the pandemic, distraught over the amount of hate directed towards Asians from people in the USA and Canada, I published a piece outlining the assimilation of Asian diaspora into the West and how hatred towards their own peoples was fueling the American imperialist agenda (Cui 2021). As an alien settler on Indigenous lands in Canada, I am acutely aware of this historical and ongoing impacts of colonialism. While my immigration experience differs from that of European settlers, I recognize that my presence contributes to the ongoing colonization of these lands. By acknowledging this reality, I strive to learn from Indigenous histories and perspectives, and to work towards decolonization and reconciliation.

Understanding my life experiences as an alien settler and an activist for educating the public about Canada's settler past is crucial to see how my position has motivated me to document TWWCH and create my digital counter-tour for my master's degree. My work on the Scrapbook and the installation builds on the initial work completed during the first exhibit on Galiano Island, but I was limited in the collaboration that I could conduct: much of the guidance and support I received came directly from the curatorial team rather than the Advisory Circle. I will continue to actively work towards sharing narratives that directly oppose the colonial portrayal of marginalised peoples. Nandita Sharma and Cynthia Wright argue that the colonial state is constantly attempting to strengthen the idea that there are incommensurable differences between the cultures of migrants, refugees, and freed slaves (Sharma and Wright 2008) to ensure that marginalized peoples do not stand in solidarity. Sharma & Wright emphasise that we as researchers and academics must fight for spaces where radical critique and resistance can flourish and where colonial modernity is disallowed to grow (Sharma and

Wright 2008). These are the motivations for my research and writing, and in the next section I will detail the questions that I will be exploring in the body of my thesis.

1.7. My Research Questions

In the introduction to this thesis so far, I have provided a description of my work collaborating with the curatorial team of TWWCH to reframe the exhibit for a new audience in Steveston BC. I also provided a brief background and motivations for the creation of my counter tour that focuses on reconnecting the GoGCNHS's "Iron Chink" butchering machine to the history of Chinese Canadian labour and discrimination within settler-colonial BC history. These two research-creation case studies raise several questions that I focus on in this thesis:

1. How do the acts of re-presenting that are central to *The Water We Call Home* inform my personal engagement with Chinese Canadian history through an object in the collection of the GoGCNHS? How has the concept of re-presenting in TWWCH influenced the practices of the GoGCNHS going forward?
2. How can reframing—both of exhibitions that are traveling between locations, and of objects already within the collection (what I will call "reframing-in-context")—support decolonial transformations in the practices of the GoGCNHS into the future?

1.8. Organization of Thesis

In this chapter, I have located myself and my motivations in relation to my research topic and questions that guide my exploration and analysis of TWWCH and my digital counter-tour. I have also provided a background of TWWCH and the experiences that led me to my research area.

In Chapter Two I build on the foundation built here by putting scholars in conversation with each other as I discuss Chinese and Indigenous labour in canneries along Canada's West Coast, current literature about decolonizing museums, what Indigenous participation in museums can look like, and the Canadian Museum Association's response to the Truth and Reconciliation Commission.

Chapter Three explores the methodologies I employ: collaborative research; literary methodologies; participant observation; and research creation. Following this, I provide a summary of my interview process, questions, and how I selected my interviewees. I also briefly introduce the themes that arose from the interviews.

Chapter Four documents my collaborative process of exhibition reframing through the research for and creation of the exhibition “Scrapbook” and the GoGCNHS educational outline. I provide a history of *The Native Voice* and the *Native Alliance for Red Power*, two publications that were crucial in the Indigenous resistance movement. They make an appearance in the scrapbook because the curatorial team felt it was important to include them as part of the re-framing of the exhibit. The GoGCNHS exhibition was located at a place where many Indigenous women were employed, so it was necessary for us to share not just the struggles of Rosemary’s family, but of Indigenous peoples in the fishing industry at large.

In Chapter Five, I present and contextualize my digital and multimodal counter-tour *The Iron Chink: Re-framing a Piece of Cannery History*: the history, motivations, importance, and process of creating it. Inspired by the re-presencing and reframing of TWWCH, my counter-tour is an act of reframing an important artefact in the cannery’s history. The research-creation website that I created is an example of reframing-in-context.

The Conclusion, Chapter Six, connects the themes of my interviews with members of the curatorial team and GoGCNHS team to TWWCH and my digital counter-tour by reflecting on my research questions and the possibilities for reframing in-context to support the Cannery’s—and museums more generally—decolonial work into the future. I wrap up my thesis with future directions for my research.

Chapter 2. Related Literature

The previous chapter outlines the background of *The Water We Call Home*, the initial exhibit at the Yellowhouse Art Centre, and the current one at the Cannery. It also describes how I arrived at the topic of my thesis, my personal positionality as a Chinese settler and activist, and the research questions I aim to address. To reflect on the questions of how re-presencing is influencing the practices of the GoGCNHS and how reframing supports decolonial transformations in the practices of the GoGCNHS, I will first build a foundation of research conducted by academics in various disciplines, starting with a brief history of Chinese and Indigenous labour in canneries. After this, I start a conversation around decolonizing museums and what Indigenous participation can look like through an analysis of two different case studies. I wrap up this chapter with a section about the Canadian Museum Association (CMA)'s response to the Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC)'s Calls to Action 67 to 70.

2.1. Chinese and Indigenous Labour in Canneries on the Coast

I start with a history between these two communities because an understanding of the history between these cultures, who have similar yet starkly different experiences within the Canadian society, is important when visualizing the braided connections between them; my experience on TWWCH has impacted my work to reframe the Iron Chink in context by connecting story to it. On one hand, TWWCH has reconnected family to each other and to places where they were displaced from due to colonial violence; on the other hand, my reframing of the Iron Chink in its institutional context has further reconnected the history of Chinese labourers to canneries.

Historically, the relationship between Indigenous and Chinese communities started out as one of trade and barter, but as America experienced rapid immigration during a national economic struggle in the 1870s, Chinese and Indigenous peoples competed with each other for the limited opportunities available to them (Liestman 1999). It is outside the scope of this thesis to have a deep discussion of Chinese-Indigenous relationality and the differences of their experiences, so I will be focusing my efforts on their relationships within the fishing industry and canneries.

Settler-colonial records of Chinese and Indigenous labour histories are fragmented because of the construal of “Asian masculinity and Native femininity...as improper labour, or [the erasure] from histories of labour altogether” (Hu Pegues 2020, 84). As discussed in Rosemary and Jessica’s article, Rosemary’s grandmothers were left out of settler colonial archives, contributing to a larger picture of the disappearance of Indigenous women from the “narrative of settler colonialism, salmon, and urbanization” (Georgeson and Hallenbeck 2018, 24). Chinese labourers were also largely excluded from the history in canneries, making it a large motivating factor in the creation of my counter-tour. Hu Pegues argues that Asian and Indigenous workers both functioned as isolated populations: the former as “outsiders within” and the latter as “insiders without” (Hu Pegues 2020, 104). These logics worked in combination to construe the white male as the natural and proper subject of labour, making the labour of Asian and Indigenous peoples invisible. Through this, the settler-colonial state was able to restrict labour’s archive within normative race, gender, and sexuality boundaries (Hu Pegues 2020). TWWCH and my counter-tour are both countering this history by telling the stories of people who were occluded.

In canneries, Indigenous women and men were often working in close proximity to Chinese, Japanese, and other South Asian migrants, creating a source of concern for cannery owners; these exploited populations could collectively protest against the rigid race and labour hierarchies (Mawani 2010), which only existed to perpetuate the idea that these communities were incommensurable. In a talk given by UBC Postdoctoral Fellow Jane Komori about labour and race in Vancouver Island’s mining industry, she outlined that the reason for the failed labour strikes on the Island was due to the lack of solidarity that resulted from the aforementioned hierarchies and racial divisions (Komori 2024). Despite these ideas of incommensurability, canneries—specifically those in Steveston—saw many friendships and sexual relations that resulted from the groups’ close proximities in the canneries (Mawani 2010). This made salmon canneries spaces of immorality and contamination, even though it was because colonial authorities valued the economic and capitalist expansion more than they feared the Asian proximity to Indigenous peoples (Hu Pegues 2020). Chinese men and Indigenous women worked closely with each other because cleaning and butchering fish was seen as an extension of domestic work, labeling it as “women’s work”, which further discriminated Asian male labourers by labeling them as effeminate (Mawani 2010) within a patriarchal society that devalued domestic work. By labeling cannery work as “women’s work”, Indigenous

women were transformed into wage labourers and removed from their traditional roles within their communities, thus creating a white supremacist patriarchal hierarchy that turned families and communities upside down (Georgeson and Hallenbeck 2018; Georgeson 2023). While this is another layer that I wished to research, it was outside the scope of my thesis to dive deeper into the intricacies and nuances of gender dynamics within canneries, but I felt it necessary to provide a brief background on the topic to reflect the complicated relationships of Chinese and Indigenous communities.

2.2. Decolonizing Museums

In this section, I will write about three different exhibits in Canadian history and how they have opened conversations about what decolonization looks like in the museum space. *The Spirit Sings*, the first of three exhibits to be discussed, is widely known as the first real starting point of decolonial museum projects after the 1990s (Phillips 2011). However, “Arrows of Truth” was arguably Canada’s initial effort at decolonial exhibition preparation when it was being prepared for Expo 67 to represent Canada’s Indigenous peoples for an international audience. Despite this effort, there were still clear issues with it, as will be detailed in this section. Following these conversations, I discuss “Arrows of Truth” alongside a project conducted by the Making Culture Lab in collaboration with UBC and Stó:lō Nation academics. It is important to set the stage with other exhibitions so connections (or contrasts) can be drawn between previous exhibits and TWWCH.

The Spirit Sings was the centerpiece of the 1988 Calgary Winter Olympics and it presented over 650 pieces of Indigenous art from museums across the world (Phillips 2011). These pieces were collected during the early years of European contact with Indigenous groups and because of it, many of them have not even been seen by Indigenous curators or scholars. This particular exhibit is fraught with issues: inappropriate display of ceremonial items and human remains and the choice to have Shell Oil as the exhibition’s major sponsor (Phillips 2011). Glenbow Museum's choice to elect Shell Oil for an exhibition meant to celebrate the early-contact years during a period when the Lubicon Lake Cree First Nation were displaced out of their lands because of oil drilling felt like a very hypocritical move. Despite support for a boycott from many academics, activists and Indigenous organizations, *The Spirit Sings* was still approved for exhibition. This is a clear example of an exhibition that did not work or

confer with the affected Indigenous nations during the planning of the exhibit. Many critiques of *The Spirit Sings* recognize the many shortcomings of the exhibit as the starting point for the development of new social museology actions (Phillips 2011).

As I will show in more detail below, since *The Spirit Sings* and the discussion around it, scholars have learned from the exhibit and begun to understand that decolonization is simultaneously about the process in research and performance of the reorientation of Indigenous voices and epistemologies into the foreground when collaborating with Indigenous peoples (Blue Swadener and Mutua 2008; Lyons et al. 2016; Victor et al. 2016).

2.3. Indigenous Participation in Museums

I will now dive into Expo 67's "Arrows of Truth" (AoT) and expand into the ways in which Indigenous peoples have been increasingly driving changes in museum practice in Canada, in which there has been a move towards postcolonial reform of Canadian museums (Phillips 2011). As Phillips writes in the preface to her novel *Museum Pieces*, an increase in "effective Aboriginal activism and the growth of diasporic communities" (Phillips 2011, 5) is what provided the backdrop and conditions to enable a movement of museum change in Canada. One of the most well-known of these exhibits is AoT, an example of a poor effort by the government to create an exhibit meant to represent Canada's Indigenous peoples. In contrast, the creation of a virtual exhibition of Qithyil belongings, belonging to the Sq'ewlets people, is an example of what Indigenous participation and collaboration should look like (Lyons et al. 2016).

2.3.1. Expo 67's "Arrows of Truth"

Expo 67 was Canada's celebration of the one-hundredth anniversary of Confederation, and part of this huge birthday part was the Indians of Canada Pavilion, otherwise known as "Arrows of Truth" (Phillips 2011). The general message that visitors were greeted with through the exhibit is one that tells the repression and loss that Indigenous nations have faced since the Confederation (Phillips 2011), a message aligning closely with Tuck's concept of "damage-centered research", a method of research that aims to document a group of peoples' pain and brokenness to reinforce the idea that the group is ruined and hopeless (Tuck 2009). Long-term consequences of

this negative framing can lead researchers to assume they are fixing a community, creating a hierarchy with researchers on the top and the community on the bottom.

According to museum scholar Ruth Phillips, during the development of AoT, there was a lack of Indigenous participation: any Indigenous committee or council that existed was only there to help in a discrete manner. Initially, the chair and members of the Indian Advisory Council (IAC) were appointed without consulting Indigenous people, leading to a protest and eventual victory won by the Indigenous community that allowed them to appoint their own vice-chair and decide on their own agendas (Phillips 2011). Albeit an early prototype, I think this protest is a good example of the power of community when it comes to making space for themselves in society. Despite their victory, the IAC were kept out of rooms where big decisions were being made, such as the choice of the architect for the building or the designs themselves. J.W. Francis, the chosen architect for the exhibit, wanted to create something that would instantly remind visitors of Canada's Indigenous peoples; to achieve this, he decided to build a tall tower that looked like a teepee (Phillips 2011). This architectural choice aestheticized Indigeneity, assimilated all of Canada's Indigenous people into a romanticised nineteenth-century image of the "noble savage" of the Indigenous Nations of the Canadian Prairies; to further strengthen the Indigenous aesthetic, Francis also designed six hexagonal buildings, each signifying a different nation, around the central teepee (Phillips 2011).

The lack of Indigenous participation on the design on the building extends into the content of AoT. Despite the travel of a team across Canada to meet with focus groups of Indigenous leaders, craftsmen, and artists, the feedback from the latter individuals came reluctantly, as many of them feared the repercussions of criticizing the government (Phillips 2011). The lack of a safe space for the focus groups is ultimately what led to their reluctance in participating. To be discussed in Chapter 6, I dive into how the TWWCH team was able to create a safe and welcoming environment for collaborating with the Circle and the curatorial team and how the GoGCNHS is working towards building safe spaces for Indigenous collaborators in future exhibitions.

Government officials soon realised that the tone of the Pavilion focused too much on the past and wanted to change the narrative to one of the "progress [that] has taken place and the increasing assistance being provided by the Government" (Phillips 2011, 48). Part of this restructuring takes the attention away from the past and ongoing

experiences of oppression and colonisation faced by Indigenous people. The change in narrative was successful: visitors displayed signs of appreciation that Indigenous peoples were given the chance to tell their own stories (Phillips 2011). With the focus groups, the narrative that Indigenous communities were allowed to tell must have been limited to ones that the government were agreeable with. This is an example where using narrative as methodology does not support the decolonization of research because there is still a hierarchy between the government and the focus groups. While AoT was a first attempt at planning and designing with Indigenous stakeholders, there were clear issues with the exhibit that have been outlined above.

2.3.2. The Digital Exhibition of Sq'ewlets Culture and Belongings

In contrast, the following case study is an example of working with an Indigenous community to produce a product that is reflective of their holistic cultural values and ways of knowing. I chose to include this project in my thesis as part of the discussion on Indigenous participation in museums because the participatory media and co-curatorial approach that is used in TWWCH extends from the experience of creating the Sq'ewlets website and because it reflects a development in how institutions collaborate with Indigenous partners.

The digital product of excavating, understanding, and protecting the Sq'ewlets' ancestral site, Qithyil, is an example of how ontologies can act as sites on which different Indigenous philosophies are explored (Lyons et al. 2016). The project grew out of a 25-year-old collaborative relationship between "Chief Clarence Pennier of Sq'ewlets, Archaeology Professor Michael Blake of the University of British Columbia, and researchers at Stó:lō Nation" (Lyons et al. 2016, 3). The product of this deep relationship, a virtual exhibit, is a critical representation of Qithyil belongings and what it means to be Sq'ewlets.

This project is part of a larger movement to transition to community-based research, and it is reflective of this process. As discussed by Victor et al. (2016), simply working together does not suffice as community-based research, the involved parties should be partners with each other, which the authors connect to the Cree concept of

*weechiyauguneetowin*⁴: the equitable and horizontal structure of research. This concept is reflected here in this current case study. Lyons et al. lay out their process of community-based research in an easy-to-understand structure, beginning with how the Elders determined the direction and tone they wanted to see on the website. The Elders wanted to evoke a picture of the healing that had been happening in their community and wanted to instill a sense of responsibility to understand Stó:lō principles. These are reflected in the design choices of the website, such as using the first-person plural and keeping the reading level to "an early high school reading level" (Lyons et al. 2016, 8) for more universal access for youth to the website content. There was mutual trust, interaction, and co-reliance between Stó:lō Nation researchers and the academics of the University of British Columbia which made the partnership flourish.

While in conversation with the community, three core tenants of Stó:lō philosophy were raised, and the community wanted to see the website reflect and embody these core values. The first tenant is about the role and position of humans within nature (Lyons et al. 2016). In Western thought, the distance between immaterial and material categories is distinct, with humans sitting at the top of a hierarchy. However, Lyons et al. discover that, in Stó:lō culture, the relations with non-humans and the metaphysical world are seamless: plants and animals are seen as extended relatives who continue to provide the Stó:lō as long as they receive respect (Lyons et al. 2016). The Sq'ewlets believe that treating the non-human population with respect can continue to provide for the Sq'ewlets. The second tenant is the holistic view of the world, reflected in their origin stories (Sxwoxwiya'm) and the oral history of their ancestors and all the places they touched (*Sqwelqwel*). *Sqwelqwel* roughly translates to "true news" and is introduced as a link to the "recent past" (Lyons et al. 2016, 9). Once this is known to us, it is our responsibility to take care of these locations for future generations. The third tenant is the "about" section of the website (Stámés), where the cultural and project contexts are shared.

How the Sq'ewlets identity framed the website is two-fold: it influenced the structure of the website and the site content. Because the main goal of this project is to

⁴ This is one of four Cree concepts outlined to enhance our understanding of Indigenous community-based research. To learn more about these concepts, please see Victor, Janice M., Linda M. Goulet, Karen Schmidt, Warren Linds, Jo-Ann Episkenew, and Keith Goulet. "Like Braiding Sweetgrass: Nurturing Relationships and Alliances in Indigenous Community-Based Research." *International Review of Qualitative Research* 9, no. 4 (February 2016): 423–45.

discuss what it means to be Sq'ewlets and represent Qithyil belongings, the research and design team chose to "[name] and [frame] cultural constructs in the *Hənqəminəm* language" (Lyons et al. 2016, 9). One central feature is the virtual exhibit, which was organized around traditional activities and written from an Stó:lō perspective. Through this project, Lyons et al. conducted a deep exploration of how "Sq'ewlets and Stó:lō philosophies of the world informed [their] project" (Lyons et al. 2016, 16). University researchers worked alongside Sq'ewlets partners in an equal relationship and allowed their cultural heritage to shape the creation of the website.

The difference between AoT and the digital Sq'ewlets project is stark: the former represents an exhibit where Indigenous peoples were not at the centre of its production and did not feel comfortable in their collaborations, resulting in an inaccurate depiction of their history in Canada. The latter exhibit was led by a team that was 1) based on a lifelong relationship with Sq'ewlets Chiefs and the Stó:lō Nation and 2) aiming to create a space where their Indigenous collaborators felt safe to co-design a product that was reflective of their culture. The team spent time to understand Stó:lō culture through visits to Qithyil and holding cultural workshops (Lyons et al. 2016). By putting these two starkly different approaches in discussion with each other, I provide a foundation to understand the history of museum practices as existing in two different phases: before and after the Truth and Reconciliation Committee's Calls to Action and the CMA's response.

Through these, and various other practices mentioned in the project descriptions, the team was able to produce a digital exhibit that not only reflected Stó:lō culture but were also structured on their ways of knowing. Lyons et al. (2016) set aside traditional Western epistemology and ontologies and openly collaboratively promoted a more holistic Indigenous ontology for their projects. Because Lyons et al. was creating a product that would directly impact the Stó:lō Nation, they chose to engage in co-design to create an appropriate product. The action of engaging in a holistic co-design method is also reflective of providing a space for Indigenous voices to be at the forefront of the research process, which is not seen in discussions around post-humanism and the Ontological Turn, which is a way of organizing ourselves as humans within our complex worlds (Todd 2016).

As will be discussed in Chapter 6, many of the characteristics seen in the digital Sq'ewlets exhibit can be seen in TWWCH, such as prioritizing Indigenous voices and creating a safe environment for the co-creation of exhibits. TWWCH also adopts a more

holistic Indigenous ontology and has aspects of post-humanism with its focus on water as an important agent in the reconnection of Rosemary's family.

2.4. Moved to Action

In more recent years, there has been greater action towards decolonizing Canadian museums at a larger scale. The Government of Canada released a response to the Truth and Reconciliation Commission's (TRC) Calls to Action 67 to 70 in March of 2023 (Government of Canada 2018). In this section, I will elaborate on Action 67 more closely and how both the Government of Canada and the CMA responded to it. The following comes directly from Government of Canada Museums and archives page:

"We call upon the federal government to provide funding to the Canadian Museums Association to undertake, in collaboration with Aboriginal peoples, a national review of museum policies and best practices to determine the level of compliance with the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples and to make recommendations." (Government of Canada 2018)

According to the Museums and archives page, the CMA was provided over \$680,000 in 2019 to produce a review of museum policies and best practices, published in "Moved to Action: Report and Standards on Activating UNDRIP in Canadian Museums" on September 27, 2022 (Government of Canada 2018). UNDRIP refers to the United Nations Declaration of Indigenous Peoples and is the framework on which the TRC's Calls to Action are based. Some examples from UNDRIP are: affirming that Indigenous peoples are equal to others and article 13, which states that Indigenous peoples have the right to revitalize and transmit their histories, languages, and oral traditions to future generations, as well as retain their own names for communities, places, and people (Government of Canada 2021).

The introduction to the report states that it is not Indigenous peoples' responsibility to reconcile but to speak the truth (Danyluk and MacKenzie 2022). Canadians, as settlers, must listen to the Indigenous professionals and community members to understand how we can help in dismantling aspects of the museum that perpetuates colonial harm. One of such areas will be mentioned in Chapter Six: the lack of funding for and prioritization of Indigenous languages in exhibit texts.

The rest of the report is structured first with a background on Canadian museology and moves into outlining a list of standards for museums that reflects

UNDRIP and supports Indigenous self-determination in museums. To provide the full list of thirty standards would be overwhelming, so I provide three examples instead:

“6. It must be left to Indigenous rights holders on how to best care for or lay to rest the items that have been repatriated. Recognize that this varies according to context and Nation-specific cultural protocols.

15. Engagement and partnerships with Indigenous Nations must centre and support the needs and interests of Indigenous communities as identified by communities, while at the same time take the onus off Indigenous partners and communities.

22. Ensure the proper use of terminology including names for Nations, communities, clans, families, and place names, throughout museum spaces, as well as archives and collections, as discussed in the Repatriation and Collections section. Use appropriate orthography or syllabics.” (Danyluk and MacKenzie 2022, 33–35)

With these three examples, a conscious effort to give Indigenous communities more power within the museum institution to handle their stolen artefacts, as well as have more authority when partnering with museums can be seen. The rest of the standards touch on topics such as Indigenous governance and advisory boards, proper credit of knowledge and intellectual property, and how to enable museum staff to actively participate in repatriation (Danyluk and MacKenzie 2022).

From standards, the report moves into a list of ten recommendations provided by the CMA that would support the report. These recommendations include: providing funding for the repatriation effort, Indigenous-led heritage organizations and commemorative activities; revising museum policies and programs; and developing a collections strategy that would improve access at both a national and international level. This calls into question the ownership of the artefacts and whether they should belong to the museum or the rightful Indigenous Nation. According to UNDRIP, Indigenous peoples have the right to access and control their ceremonial objects, and religious and cultural sites; states would work together with the affected Indigenous peoples to enable the aforementioned access and control (Government of Canada 2018). Additionally, there was no discussion as to whether the funding would be able to cover Indigenous language translation, despite language being a large facet of Standard 22 (see above).

Chapter 3. Methodology

In this chapter, I discuss the various methodologies employed during my work on TWWCH, starting with an overview of how I practiced collaborative research through a constructivist methodological framework. I then discuss literature as a methodology, drawing from Critical Race Theory to explore how literature can be used by oppressed populations to tell their histories. Following this, I provide an overview on my main methods: Participant Observation, Research Creation, and user interviews. To engage effectively with my research questions about the impact of re-presencing and reframing on museum practices at the Cannery, I chose the previously mentioned methodologies and methods because they granted me the space to collaborate with the curatorial team on the creation of the Scrapbook and the educational guide; through this collaboration, I was able to gather valuable insights via interview into how the Cannery staff and the curatorial team felt about their experiences.

3.1. Collaborative Research

This section discusses the methods I used during the creation of the Scrapbook and installation of TWWCH and how they reflect a collaborative methodology. I engaged in a variety of different archival and historical research methods; some examples of these are: laminating and preparing photos for the installation of the exhibit, collaborating on the layout of the exhibit, and creating the Scrapbook. These reflect the qualitative approach of my TWWCH case study because the aim of this thesis is the reframing and re-presencing of familial relationships and labour histories that are connected to BC's waters. The analysis of the interviews and observations made during the exhibition installation is very much a bottom-up approach, building inductively from the details to the larger themes (Creswell and Creswell 2023).

Within these activities, I was able to create relationships with a wide network of people that allowed me to learn from them, namely Rosemary Georgeson, Heidi Rampfl, Kit Grauer, Elizabeth Batista, Jessica Hallenbeck, and Kate Hennessy. By working collaboratively to create opportunities for them to share their own views of history, I am helping to build a more multi-faceted understanding of Western BC's fishing history. This reflects a constructivist worldview (Creswell and Creswell 2023), which is present throughout my methodology. Also present throughout my research is a transformative

worldview. According to Creswell & Creswell (2023), researchers whom are guided by a transformative worldview feel that other paradigms, such as post-positivism, do not make space for marginalised communities or discussions around issues like power and oppression (Creswell and Creswell 2023): this resulted in a worldview that is influenced by critical theory, feminism, and Marxist theory. The exhibit on Galiano Island used a decolonial approach through the deep collaboration that occurred between the Advisory Circle, participants, and the curatorial team. As mentioned in section 1.6, I was brought into the collaborative work of TWWCH and further contributed to the project through the co-creation of the Scrapbook.

In collaborative research, it is very important to pay attention to the power dynamics that arise over the course of creating knowledge. For example, depending on whether research is done hierarchically or horizontally, it can either be used to suppress or empower and liberate ideas and people (Brown and Strega 2015). The knowledge created through the relationships between the members of the curatorial team and the Cannery staff has allowed the curatorial team to reframe the stories of living under oppressive colonial fishing policies and how they were disconnected from their families and ways of life because of it within the context of the Cannery. I believe that the research team has been able to create a space for this storytelling and reframing because there has never been an environment where the boundaries of "researcher" and "participant" felt very defined. Instead, I embodied the role of a listener and facilitator of conversation; this has provided opportunities for natural conversations and flow of knowledge between people. I extended this role into the later stages of my thesis when I shared my thesis with the curatorial team and Heidi Rampfl, Elizabeth Batista, and Kit Grauer from the GoGCNHS for their approval before my defence. I listened to their comments about areas that needed refinement and as a result, became aware of loose ends that I needed to tighten.

3.2. Narrative as a Methodology

Within the Western research space, a lot of traditional research is structured in the form of a hierarchy, in which participants, labelled as "subjects", are located at the bottom, with little to no input into the research that was being conducted about/on them (Victor et al. 2016). This is especially relevant in research concerning Indigenous communities, which is characteristic of damage-centered research, a concept first

brought forth by Eve Tuck in her “Open Letter” (Tuck 2009). I view damage-centred research as having roots in the historical structures of academic research, which is why an understanding of critical race theory (CRT) is paramount. As an extension of critical legal studies, CRT focuses on marginalized communities and the use of alternative methodology—such as narrative—to express theoretical work because scholarship about race in America (and Canada) cannot be written from an objective space outside of the social dynamics of racial power (Dunbar 2008). This is what leads CRT to be an important factor in arguing for research’s immediate need from Indigenous scholars and scholars of colour to provide alternative research methods that subvert feelings of “objectivity” and “neutrality” and, as a result, are reflective of their life experiences. To decolonize research and produce an environment in which individuals—both researcher and researched—can exist in an equal power dynamic, researchers of colour should use critical methodologies to liberate the oppressed peoples (Dunbar 2008). One such methodology is narration. I will explore in this section how narrative gets explored and utilized as a methodology. Literary methodologies offer a way in which marginalized communities of colour can share their life experiences through narrative and not be obstructed by traditionally appropriate research methodologies. There is weight to be found in lived experiences that cannot be replicated in traditional scientific research (Dunbar 2008), and the former also provides a different perspective on an otherwise misunderstood or insignificant situation. For example, the films presented at both the Yellowhouse Art Centre and the GoGCNHS would not have the same impact if the researchers had conducted traditional research. Instead, the curatorial team worked alongside the Advisory Circle in collaborative media production and research creation as a method for curating the exhibition. Research creation largely informs my own work with the Scrapbook, and how I approached research creation will be detailed in section 3.3.2. The women determined what went into the films and were given total freedom to share their stories. The films act as a vehicle for museum visitors and witnesses, to learn and pass on their knowledge.

Tuck urges communities, researchers, and educators to make a shift from damage-centred research to desire-based research. To be able to make such an ideological shift requires researchers to distance themselves from using “historical exploitation, domination, and colonization to explain contemporary brokenness” (Tuck 2009, 413). In TWWCH, it is important to touch on the historical exploitation and colonization the women faced because by ignoring or omitting it from the exhibition, it

removes a large part of the story of their resistance. Most of research done for TWWCH can be seen as reflective of desire-based research, a framework that emphasizes understanding communities' ability to create spaces of growth, even in the face of cultural genocide. It focuses on "understanding [the] complexity, contradictions, and the self-determination of lived lives" (Tuck 2009, 416). Who partakes in the research and poses the questions, and how the data is collected and analyzed dictates the impact of research in improving a community. In the case of TWWCH, an Advisory Circle of Indigenous women with Rosemary Georgeson and collaborating curators and media producers worked together to determine what would be included in the exhibition and how it would be installed.

Another form of narration as a methodology is Indigenous storywork, a term first coined by Professor Jo-Ann Archibald (Archibald 2008). Archibald develops and discusses a framework of ideology, methodology, and pedagogy that consists of seven different principles: "respect, responsibility, reverence, reciprocity, holism, inter-relatedness, and synergy" that serves as the foundation for storywork (Archibald 2008, 9). Storywork, in the numerous Indigenous traditions across the world, was a way for them to holistically understand the world, relationships, and experiences around them without the binary of colonized and colonizer (Archibald 2008). To be able to engage successfully in storywork, one must listen to and treat the community's stories and story knowledge with respect and reverence (Archibald 2008), much like the responsibilities of a witness. For myself, this materialized in the act of active listening. Instead of taking space as a researcher, I was encouraged to listen and to learn from those involved in the project, and form relationships with the stories and knowledge they were imparting.

3.3. Methods: Participant Observation, Research Creation, and Interviews

Within the methodologies of collaborative research and narrative, I used participant observation, research creation, and interviews as my main methods for data collection and analysis. The following sections will define each of these and connect them to my work on TWWCH and my counter-tour.

3.3.1. Participant Observation

By embodying the role of an active listener and facilitator, I supported the curatorial team across a variety of activities, such as attending meetings, listening to discussions, and traveling to the cannery to visit the collections, co-writing exhibition panels, and producing French translations. In this section, I describe how participation observation has been described and how I have embodied it in my role on TWWCH.

Participant observation is an aspect of ethnography, which has been defined by Atkinson and Hammersley (1994) as consisting of forms of research that emphasize the exploration of social phenomena, the tendency to work with unstructured data and analyze it in a way that involves the explicit interpretation of human actions, and the investigation of a small number of cases (Atkinson and Hammersley 1994). My thesis takes an ethnographic approach to the analysis of the exhibition scrapbook and my digital counter-tour in the topics that the two artefacts explore and how the analysis of the interviews is done. To build on Atkinson and Hammersley, Lassiter summarizes Malinowski's foundations of ethnography: the documentation of culture: its structure, the behaviours that articulate it, and cultural knowledge from the natives' point of view (Lassiter 2009). In the era of Malinowski, Western anthropologists were interested in studying exotic non-Western societies and peoples which is why terms like "tribe" and "native" were used; anthropology since then has moved away from exclusively studying non-Western populations and as a result, the terms' usage has diminished (Lassiter 2009).

However, the focus of this section is not on ethnography in its historical sense but on participant observation as a method for ethnographic inquiry, which Lassiter defines as "the systematic approach [that involves] long-term participation, observation, taking field notes, and interviewing [people] of a particular society, community, or group" (Lassiter 2009, 77). In my time as an RA over more than one year for the installation of TWWCH at the cannery, I have engaged in all the mentioned activities: the culture I am working with and observing is that of a team of curators working to re-install a decolonial museum exhibition. To understand the project's history and importance, Kate and Rosemary and Jessica acted as key consultants, informing me of the culture and explaining the work that had taken place on Galiano Island for the project before I joined (such as the gathering documented in the exhibition videos). Lassiter also states that while building relationships is important for ethnographers to become an insider, they will

always be on the margins. As an RA who joined TWWCH after the exhibit on Galiano Island, I experienced this feeling despite building good rapport with the curatorial team. I recognize that part of the reason was because I joined the project after the initial exhibit had been held.

After the observations have been complete, it is the responsibility of the ethnographer to translate these experiences into a written ethnography that consists of interviews and observations. My thesis is an example of such a written text. A written ethnography should include interviews because they are a valuable way for ethnographers to ensure that their observations are valid and to gain a deeper understanding of the culture through the points of view of the group that was being observed (Lassiter 2009). My observations tell an incomplete story; the perspectives of the cannery staff and curatorial team were required to expand on it.

Rather than writing the ethnography in isolation, I engaged in collaborative ethnography (Lassiter 2009), collaborating with key consultants Kate and Rosemary and Jessica on the Scrapbook and providing opportunities for the interviewees to read my thesis and provide feedback in areas where they are quoted to ensure that I am representing their ideas accurately.

In the following two sections, I discuss research creation as a method and how it led to interviews as the third main method of my thesis.

3.3.2. Research Creation

Research creation is a broad term that encompasses the increasing recognition of artistic and creative practices as valid forms of academic knowledge (Aceves Sepúlveda 2023). In this section, I will further define research creation as a valid form of academic knowledge production and why this is so important. I will then discuss how research creation as a method influenced my work and contextualizes the Scrapbook and my counter-tour as pieces of research creation. As discussed by Natalie Loveless in her manifesto for research creation, the term is used in tandem with others such as practice-based research, creative-praxis, and artistic research (Loveless 2019). Regardless of its name, theses or projects in this field typically integrate some form of a creative process and/or an experimental or artistic component (Chapman and Sawchuk 2012). The creation of the Scrapbook, an aspect of the exhibition that reframes TWWCH

within the politics and history of the Cannery, is one of the main artistic components that I created during my thesis (see Chapter 4). The second of the components is my counter-tour (see Chapter 5).

In Canada, research creation is an interdisciplinary methodology within the social sciences, humanities, and fine arts (Chapman and Sawchuk 2012). Funded by three public agencies—Fonds Québécois de la Recherche sur la Société de la Culture (FQRSC), Social Science and Humanities Research Council (SSHRC), and the Canada Council—the term is defined in slightly different ways. FQRSC and SSHRC have similar definitions, with both agencies focusing on the creative production of literary or artistic works; the Canada Council, because of its focus on the Fine Arts, supports creative initiatives conducted by artists that will result in a public exhibition (Chapman and Sawchuk 2012). Thus there are four different modalities of research creation: “research-for-creation”, “research-from-creation”, “creative presentations of research”, and “creation-as-research” (Chapman and Sawchuk 2015). Within the methodologies of my thesis, I focus on creation-as-research and research-from-creation⁵, the former which draws from the three categories before it to engage in the ontological question of “what is research?” to make space for creative products and process-focused materials as valid research outcomes (Chapman and Sawchuk 2015). In creation-as-research, the creative product is the culmination of the research process. Within the boundaries of my thesis, reframing acts as the lens through which I conducted my research creation: on one hand, the Scrapbook’s main goal was to reframe TWWCH within the wider politics of fishing policies and oppression by including articles from publications like *The Native Voice* and the *Native Alliance for Red Power*. On the other hand, I was motivated to create a counter-tour and reframe the *Iron Chink* as an extension and result of anti-Chinese sentiments because I recognized a lack of representation of Chinese labour within the Cannery. My counter-tour, discussed in Chapter 5, is an instance of research creation that is practiced in my thesis, with the development of the website providing me with rich research insights and learnings, the main one being that the amount of untold history on Chinese labourers runs deep, motivating me to continue this work into the future.

⁵ Full definitions of the remaining two modalities can be found in Chapman, Owen, and Kim Sawchuk. 2015. ‘Creation-as-Research: Critical Making in Complex Environments’. *RACAR : Revue d’art canadienne* 40 (1): 49. <https://doi.org/10.7202/1032753ar>.

Collaborative methods are powerful components of research creation and can be seen in the creation of the Scrapbook, where I collaborated with the curatorial team to decide on the articles and photographs to include. The creation of the Scrapbook also forms a way of generating research data that I use to understand the influence of reframing on the transformation of museum practices to take a decolonial approach. In research-from-creation, the creative products of research help to provide insights into different dynamics that are being explored (Chapman and Sawchuk 2012). To explore the impact of reframing on how the Cannery is adopting decolonial museum practices, I interviewed the involved members of the Cannery staff and the curatorial team: more on this is detailed in section 3.6. Chapman and Sawchuk state that the product—the Scrapbook in this case—can be used to “generate information on user-responses to help build the project in question” (Chapman and Sawchuk 2012, 16). The Scrapbook acted as the launching pad from which interviews were introduced into my thesis as a core method to address my research questions.

3.3.3. Interview Process

I conducted a total of four interviews for TWWCH: with Kit Grauer, Elizabeth Batista, Heidi Rampfl, and the core curatorial team (Rosemary Georgeson, Kate Hennessy, and Jessica Hallenbeck). Kit and Elizabeth sit on the Board of Directors at the Gulf of Georgia Cannery Society as the Chair and the Executive Director, respectively. As the elected chair, Kit is largely responsible for overseeing the governance side of the cannery, which entails helping staff organize events and exhibits. She was elected into her position because she had previously held some of her own exhibits at the cannery and was convinced to join the board because she was the only individual with museum experience (Grauer 2024). Much like Kit, Elizabeth oversees all the exhibits and content being developed at the cannery: she is responsible for “enable[ing] relationships between people, like community members that play a large role in that” (Batista 2024). Elizabeth was motivated to dedicate her time to the cannery because she is passionate about giving back to her community; she stayed on for longer than her projected one-year period because she saw “that there’s a lot of work to do [at the cannery]” (Batista 2024). Heidi Rampfl is the collections and exhibits manager at the cannery, which means that she is responsible for the care and management of the artefact, archival and library collections, as well as the installation and management of new and permanent exhibits (Rampfl 2024b).

The curatorial team consists of three members: Rosemary Georgeson, Kate Hennessy, and Jessica Hallenbeck. As mentioned in the Introduction, Rosemary is a Coast Salish and Sahtu Dene storyteller, writer, and filmmaker who has spent her life to reconnecting with her Coast Salish ancestry and family and Jessica is a critical intersectional feminist geographer and filmmaker engaging in decolonial methodologies to “re-presence connections to and with the water” (‘Biographies’, n.d.). Kate Hennessy, my supervisor, is director of the Making Culture Lab in SFU’s School of Interactive Arts and Technology and a curator of Irish and German descent who grew up on Galiano Island (‘Biographies’, n.d.).

To address the main questions of my thesis, I chose these six individuals for my interviews because they all had an active role in the installation of the exhibition at the Cannery. However, I recognize the shortcomings of my exclusion of the public audience from these interviews; conducting visitor interviews was outside the scope of my thesis, but I recognize that there would be meaningful and unique insights from museum visitors on what it means to them to learn about an untold history of BC’s fishing industry and relations to water.

The interviews were all conducted over Zoom and ranged between forty-five to sixty minutes. Before going into the interviews, I had collaborated on brainstorming a list of questions with Kate Hennessy for each interview to ensure I discussed all the topics I wanted to touch on: the experience of collaborating with the curatorial team, feedback from visitors, if this exhibition has created new opportunities for the cannery, and what the future of museums looks like. A snapshot of the questions is below:

- What is your role at the cannery and how long have you been working here?
- What kinds of conversations have you had because of this exhibit?
- Has this project created opportunities to do work in your role that is different from other exhibition projects? Can you say more about your experiences?
- As director, what is your vision of the future for the cannery?
- What would you say stood out to you the most when going through the collections with Rosemary to select artefacts for the exhibition?
- Can you tell me the story of how you came to invite the exhibition to the cannery from Galiano? What was the experience like, working with the cannery to prepare this exhibit? Any significant moments?
- How did the project begin? What are the origins of the project?

- What are your hopes for the future of the exhibition?

3.4. Conducting the Interviews

Going into the interviews, I wanted to minimise the presence of a power imbalance between me and my interviewees, a commonly occurring risk if researchers are not careful (Creswell and Creswell 2023). To minimise the risk, I framed the interviews as more of a conversation, with my questions acting as a guide to keep the interviewees from steering too far off-topic: this maintained a semi-structured shape to my interviews (Creswell and Creswell 2023). I asked my participants to speak freely about the topics that I wanted to explore, only occasionally referencing my questions or asking a follow-up question. Instead of taking notes during the interviews, I recorded the interviews using Zoom's record function and save the files directly to my local file storage. This would allow me to completely focus on the conversation and provide me with the ability to do a full analysis of the transcripts later.

To prepare for my analysis of the data, I had the video files transcribed using a service called RevAI, which offers transcriptions done by real humans, often in the same day that I request them. I decided on using RevAI for transcriptions because they are vetted for having very accurate transcriptions and securely encrypted customer data that is not accessible by any third-party vendors. I used RevAI for the first round of transcriptions before listening to the interviews and making edits where needed: this made my process more streamlined. It was important for me to provide the transcripts to my interviewees sooner than later so that they could accurately revise any of their quotes while the conversations were still fresh in their memory.

The themes that arose from the interviews will be discussed throughout the entirety of this thesis; across the interviewees, there was an understanding that museums need to focus their energy on meaningful partnership (engagement and partnership), creating space for community collaboration on exhibitions (collaborative curation between community and institution), and sharing stories through objects (sharing the intangible via the tangible).

In the following chapter, I reflect on the process of creating the exhibit scrapbook and how its contents help to tell difficult and more complicated stories about the histories of place such as the Cannery.

Chapter 4. Reframing *The Water We Call Home*

When the curatorial team was working to redevelop TWWCH for the Cannery, it became clear that a broader scope of colonial fishing politics should be included. We needed to connect the context and history of the Cannery to what had originally been a Galiano Island-focused exhibit. As museum scholar Nuno Porto has articulated, exhibitions cannot exist independent of the location they are being displayed at, which means that certain aspects must be included or altered to reflect the venue at which it is being shown (Porto 2007). For TWWCH, one of the additions to the exhibit was a scrapbook, alongside other elements such as the SPAM boxes and the photos of Georgeson women.

A large portion of my participation in the installation of the exhibit at the GoGCNHS was the creation of the previously mentioned scrapbook. This artefact would hold photographs and scans from two main historical publications that the curatorial team asked me to research and collect excerpts from: *The Native Voice* and the *Native Alliance for Red Power* (NARP). *The Native Voice* was first started by Maisie Hurley, who was originally from a rich family in Europe who found satisfaction in organising for the International Workers of the World (Jamieson and Joseph 2016). She had a strong relationship with the Native Brotherhood, which was modeled off the Alaska Native Brotherhood and created by Alfred Adams, a Haida elder (Jamieson and Joseph 2016). NARP, a similar publication, was rooted in wanting to address the issues surrounding Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls. NARP grew out of Native American activism at the time, more commonly known as Red Power (Coulthard 2020). Over time, their scope grew wider, eventually becoming a platform to educate on and oppose racism, sexism, and colonialism experienced by the Indigenous population.

In the following sections, I provide a brief history on the publications to justify my inclusion of them in the scrapbook. I then transition into process of creating the scrapbook and the educational document for the cannery exhibition volunteers. I reflect on my experience collaborating with Rosemary, the curatorial team, and the staff at the cannery.

4.1. The Native Voice

Maisie Hurley's close ties with the Native Brotherhood provided her with a valuable link to Indigenous communities across British Columbia. The Native Brotherhood was initially created based on the understanding that Indigenous peoples needed to provide a united front if they wished to have conversations with the government (Coulthard 2020).

In its early years, *The Native Voice* published pieces that exposed the abuse and discrimination faced by Indigenous peoples (Coulthard 2020). For example, in a March publication from 1949, there is an article detailing a letter from the Department of Fisheries in Ottawa and the possibility of a loss of Indigenous fishing rights due to blame placed on "bears, seals, ducks, and Indians" for a depletion of salmon along the Skeena River despite the establishment of industrial plants at the mouth of the Skeena River in years prior.

4.2. Native Alliance for Red Power

NARP was founded during a time when North America saw a rise of a form of Marxism that was inspired by what was happening in the Third World nations (Coulthard 2020). Third World-ism borrowed many pillars of thought from Marxism, with a main focus on anti-colonial nationalism (Claudio 2015). However, the source of admiration was less of Third World-ism and more of the efforts of self-determination by these nations that were previously colonized by the West. The reason why "New Left Radicals" were inspired by the self-determination and less by the Marxism was because many approaches to Marxism have a modern view of what progress looks like, meaning that different social, cultural, and economic formations are ranked on how closely they align to an ideal of human development (Coulthard 2020). Because of this, Indigenous ways of life are often seen as necessary impediments to let go of for the sake of their liberation (Coulthard 2020), which negates the mission for self-determination entirely. However, as we saw in the CMA's "Moved to Action" report in Chapter 2, it is not the responsibility of Indigenous peoples to reconcile the wrongs of the settler-colonial state and liberate themselves from its oppression: that responsibility falls on the settlers.

Red Power drew a lot of influence and inspiration from the decolonisation efforts of the Third World to fight the struggles of "capitalism, patriarchy, and internal

colonialism" (Coulthard 2020). at home. The event that motivated Henry Jack and Gerry Ambers to found NARP was a controversial trial that involved Rose Marie Roper and her horrific rape and murder by three white men, which Ambers believes to be linked to the colonial violence they were fighting against and is understood to be a metaphor for the mistreatment of Indigenous people's lands and sovereignty (Coulthard 2020). NARP had a very Marxist approach to their platform, even creating an "Eight Point Program" that took a "Marxist approach to the liberation of their people", which was printed in the February 1970 issue of the publication, seen in Figure 4.

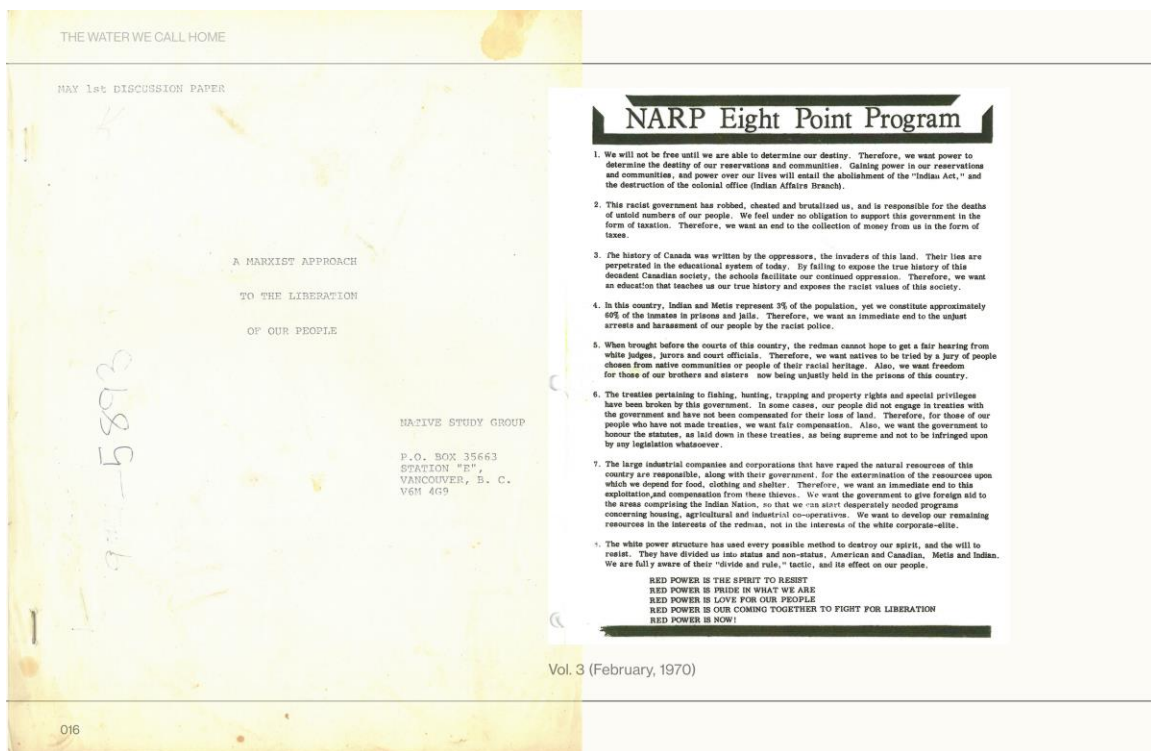


Figure 9. NARP's Eight Point Program. Image credit to Gerry Ambers.

4.3. The Creation of the Scrapbook

The team and I decided to include snippets from these two publications because Rosemary put forth the suggestion that they would provide an accurate depiction of the unfair treatment experienced by various Indigenous communities, especially those that worked in the fishing industry. I agreed with Rosemary and felt very passionately about providing this perspective on Indigenous people's history in Canada because it is something that should be shared more often and widely.

In the time I was preparing the scrapbook, I had the profound honour and opportunity to connect with Gerry Ambers, one of the first co-founders of NARP. To be able to be speaking to such an influential person in Indigenous people's fight against colonialism was such a surreal moment for me and will be one that I remember for years to come. During our first Zoom meeting, she expressed her gratitude for the work we were doing and excitement to see TWWCH tell the stories of female fishermen and the resistance against colonial fishing policies. She graciously offered us access to her collection of NARP materials, which included the covers of various editions published over the years to a selection of articles and poems.

While I was going through the archive, I learned a lot about the (still present) issues that Indigenous groups were fighting against. There were also articles explaining important documents that affected Indigenous fishermen. For example, in the September 1949 print, there is a two-page spread that details the cannery workers' agreement between the Salmon Cannery Workers' Operating Committee and the Native Brotherhood of British Columbia. And this battle is far from over. In 2021, the Homalco and Tla'amin Nations, known as the Sister Nations, were fighting for their right to be included as a party or even intervene in a judicial decision to phase out open-net salmon farms located in the Discovery Islands (RAVEN 2021). At the end of the scrapbook, I included recent articles such as a testament to the fact that this battle is not over and continues to the present day.

Dept. of Fisheries Blames Indians For Salmon Depletion

The Stahlo Tribe held a meeting at Katz, March 13, in protest against taking the blame for depletion of salmon; also emphatically protesting any change in their fishing rights on the grounds that fish is the mainstay of Indian livelihood.

The amount of fish caught by each family entering fish along the Fraser Canyon can not be assumed as the average fish caught by all Indian families or per capita, because most families that were action usually supply several of their families.

"The Native Indian will have to be given every opportunity to voice their opinion in the event of a move to change Indian regulations by permit, for the salmon is our natural food from time beyond history."

There was no such thing as a sisterhood of salmon till industry was established and now we Native Indians are blamed. Why did the Indian not deplete the salmon when there were five to six times the present Indian population? Chief Harry Joseph asked.

The following is a letter dated March 13, addressed to the Native Brotherhood of B.C. and the Department of Fisheries, Vancouver, in protest:

"Representing District from Lorne to against the Stahlo Tribe, I hereby stress that there be no further change to our fishing regulations for catching fish for our own consumption. It would be difficult to prevent or believe that the same regulation of fish was issued by the Native Indians, because the facts still remain that whatever the conservation of salmon of all species, also of all other resources which our ancestors enjoyed without restraint prior to the migration of the white man into our country."

The tags turned in for small reward from legal fish caught by the Native Indians, because the most of these tagged fish were gaffed out of streams and brooks that empty into the Fraser River and along the Thompson River and from all clear water by some white men, Indians and Indians, but for obtaining the small rewards on regulations of the law.

Sisterhood Annual Meeting Massett Elects New Officers

The local branch of the Native Brotherhood had their Annual Meeting in the residence of Mrs. Grace Wilson for the purpose of electing new officers for the year 1949.

With Mrs. Amy Abraham in the chair the meeting opened with our battle song, "Cheerful Christian Soldiers". Mrs. Lucy Frank offered up a prayer.

New officers are as follows: President, Mrs. Marie Collison; Vice-President, Mrs. Olive Brown; Secretary, Mrs. Olive Brown; Recording Secretary, Mrs. Hazel Marks; Social Committee, Mrs. Charlotte Marks, Mrs. Hannah Marks, Mrs. Sylvia Isidore, Mrs. Ella Brown, Mrs. Madeline Jones; Treasurer, Mrs. Larry Francis; Messengers, Mrs. Min. Mary Williams, Mrs. Ida Smith, Mrs. Rose Swanson, Mrs. Rose Davidson.

Refreshment was served by our hostess, Mrs. Grace Wilson, who, we are very glad, is now a very active member of the club. The meeting adjourned with a prayer.

Fishing Rights May Be Taken Away

A letter to the Native Brotherhood of B.C. dated January 24th and from the Department of Fisheries, Ottawa takes on the question of Indian fishing rights. An investigation is about to be made into the depletion of salmon during the winter.

The full letter is attached to this page and is being distributed to all members. There are the reasons here and there are the reasons there and there are the reasons there.

Another thing I believe you are all aware of is that the Indian people are being treated as if they were a conquered people. They are being treated as if they were a conquered people.

It is not just the Indian people who are being treated as if they were a conquered people. It is not just the Indian people who are being treated as if they were a conquered people.

Don't let us be taken away from our fishing rights. Don't let us be taken away from our fishing rights.

Years For Unity



Chief Paul White, dressed in a suit and tie, stands in front of a building.

Chief Paul White, dressed in a suit and tie, stands in front of a building. He is looking towards the camera.

Your Old Friend... PROPELLER Repair Shop



QUALITY LEADS THE WAY! FISHMEN make more money by getting back to work with fish in prime condition. At all times freshly caught fish must be kept on ice or in cold water and the handling and packing of the fish must be done in a sanitary manner. Our facilities for ice manufacturing and storage are so extensive that we are able to meet not only our own needs but in supply Canada for a large number of the needs of the salmon and halibut fleets. In safeguarding the world-famous quality of CANADIAN products, we increase their demand and make fishing a more profitable undertaking for you.

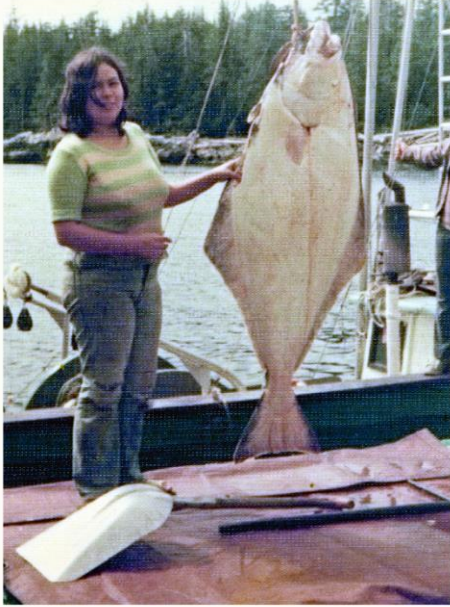
Figure 10. Page from the scrapbook

After my initial look through of the collection, I scheduled a call with Rosemary and the curatorial team to show her the collection and flagged the ones that I thought were appropriate. I flagged articles that directly discussed Indigenous experiences in the fishing industry and some more general articles about the discrimination of Indigenous peoples. For example, one article that I flagged that was included discussed is seen in Figure 11 above, writing about the Department of Fisheries blaming Indigenous communities for the depletion of salmon. On another instance, Rosemary decided against the inclusion of a poem I flagged that described the terrible violence that occurred against Indigenous women because, while it does provide an accurate look into the hardships that Indigenous women lived through, Rosemary felt as though it did not have direct connection to the topic of the fishing industry and would only bring unnecessary distress to our Indigenous visitors. My conversations with the curatorial team around what should be included in the Scrapbook is an example of our practice of collaborative research. Creating the Scrapbook isolated from community feedback would have resulted in an artefact that would have been less accurate (and diluted with content that is not related to the topic of the exhibit). By collaborating the curatorial team on the decision of what content to include from NARP, we were able to curate an accurate collection of articles and covers for the Scrapbook.



Figure 11. A page from the NARP section of the scrapbook.

The same series of events was repeated for the *The Native Voice* archives, with me going through the archives and providing a broad range of options for the collection, and Rosemary and the curatorial team providing feedback on what should be added or removed from the collection. Because *The Native Voice* was primarily published to share news of events happening in the fishing industry, it was easier for us to curate an accurate group of articles for the scrapbook. It had many articles discussing political issues around fishing such as the one outlined in section 4.1, as well as the fishermen's act, pricing laws, and many more. The team and I felt like it would be useful to showcase these in the Scrapbook because they would provide a realistic perspective on the fights against oppressive colonial laws. The full Scrapbook can be found in Appendix A. It sits on the table with teacups and a tea pot at the centre of the exhibition, inviting visitors to sit together, spend time, and read though it while experiencing the images, sound, and objects around them. It is also digitally embedded in *The Water We Call Home* Website, on the Gulf of Georgia Cannery and National Historic Site exhibition page (<https://www.thewaterwecallhome.com/gulf-of-georgia-cannery-museum>).



Rosemary Georgeson, halibut caught on a handline.
Milbanke Sound, August 1978.
Photograph by Stuart Georgeson.

Rosemary Georgeson, flétan pêché à la palangrotte.
Déroit de Milbanke, août 1978.
Photo : Stuart Georgeson.

009

Figure 12. A photograph of Rosemary Georgeson in the scrapbook.

4.4. The Cannery Educational Document

In addition to the Scrapbook, a document was created for the cannery staff to learn more about the project. This document outlined what the different elements of the exhibit are and provided more information about them so that the cannery attendants could better answer visitors' questions. The curatorial team collaborated on the outline with cannery staff, receiving feedback from Rosemary throughout the process. This was a very important experience for Elizabeth because she told me during our interview that it was the staff "who were proactive and ask[ed] for an in-depth outline...[t]here was a sense of caution that they wouldn't say something inappropriate or insulting or culturally incorrect" (Batista 2024). There was a strong motivation from cannery staff to ensure that TWWCH would be talked about with respect.

The outline is the first of a collection of school programs that the cannery wishes to develop around TWWCH. They had received approval from Rosemary first and are

now in the process of developing these programs to teach school-age children the importance of salmon in Indigenous cultures.

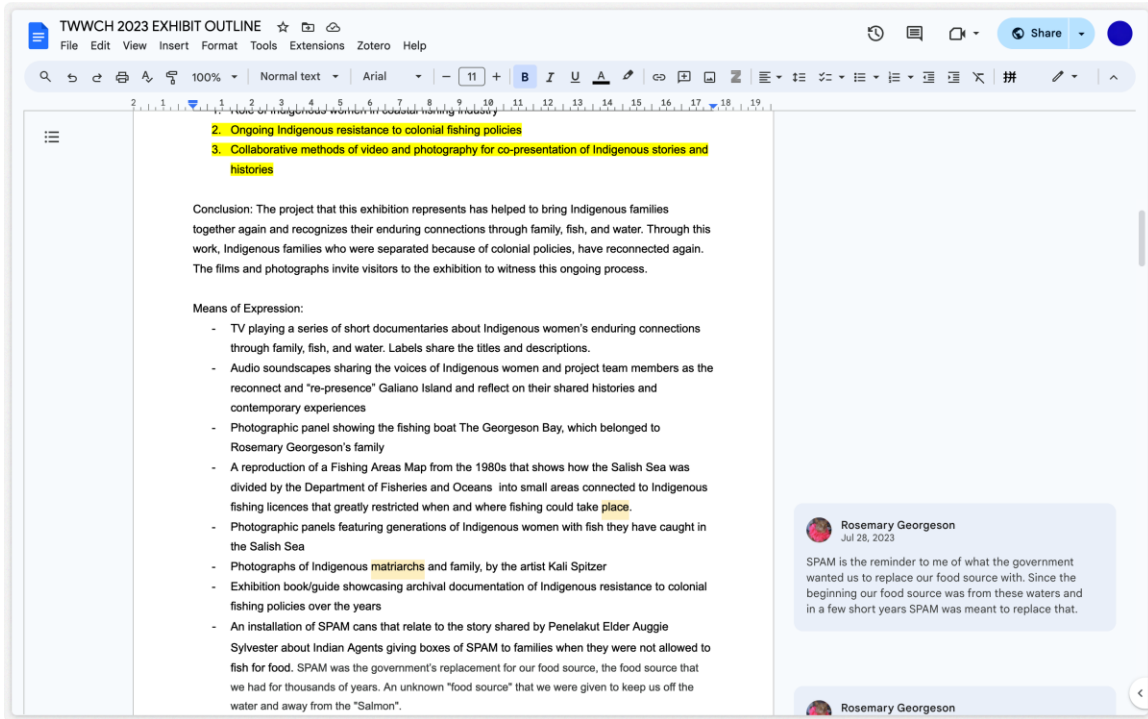


Figure 13. Partial screenshot of the document. Full document can be found in Appendix B.

Chapter 5. The Iron Chink: Re-framing a Piece of Cannery History

In this chapter, I reflect on the archival research and website development that went into the creation of my digital counter-tour. The counter-tour builds on Porto's (2007) idea of reframing to present the idea of reframing-in-context by reconnecting the "Iron Chink" in its institutional home to stories that have been largely occluded from its history. By reframing the "Iron Chink" within its institutional context and the broader context of the histories and politics of the Cannery, my counter-tour provides a complementary history to the Cannery and Steveston that makes the knowledge of the area more inclusive. I open with a summary about Chinese labour in canneries and anti-Chinese sentiments in Canada, the former which has been largely excluded from museums. As I discuss later in this chapter, the only knowledge of Chinese presence in the canneries are in the memories of the few individuals who remain in Steveston (Lam 1988). I end this chapter with reflections about my experience conducting archival research and developing the website. The website can be accessed at <https://info301.cargo.site/>⁶ or in Appendix C.

5.1. Chinese History in Canada

Early Chinese emigrants had relations with Indigenous nations in the American and Canadian West as early as 1788, when an English captain John Meares' *Felice Adventurer* brought fifty Chinese workers—carpenters and blacksmiths—to Nootka Sound (Liestman 1999). However, in British Columbia, Chinese first arrived to work the Gold Rush in the Fraser River in 1858 (Chan 2011). In the years following, Chinese workers were employed for a wide range of jobs, such as building the Canadian Pacific Railway. Despite their work and participation in building the early infrastructure and economy of British Columbia (Mawani 2010), they faced many acts of discrimination: the government passed the Chinese Immigration Act of 1885 (Chan 2011), which forced all Chinese except tourists, students, diplomats, and businessmen to pay a head tax of fifty dollars. This was later raised to one hundred dollars in 1900, and five hundred dollars in 1903 (Chan 2011; McKervill 1967).

⁶ The site is currently invite-only due to the pricing model of Cargo. If you would like access to it, please reach out by emailing me: cynthia_cui@sfu.ca.

5.1.1. Chinese Participation in the Fishing Industry

Chinese men started working in canneries around the 1870s and were hired under the *China Contract*, a commonly used hiring method by contractors and salmon canneries (Stacey 1981). This contract was used by a Chinese contractor working in agreement with a canning company to produce cases of fish for a certain amount of money per case. The contractor would then hire Chinese labourers for varying rates depending on their role (e.g. butchering, filling, soldering) (Stacey 1981). Sixty percent of cannery workers along the Fraser River and the West Coast were Chinese (Mawani 2010). These cannery workers were more accepting of lower wages and sub-optimal working conditions (Lam 1988) than their white counterparts, allowing them to take over the majority of cannery work within thirty years (O'Bannon 1982). According to McKervill, the reality of cannery workers' labour was merely a refined form of slavery (McKervill 1967); Chinese contractors would come to a price agreement with the canneries based on an estimated number of cases and would then hire workers for as cheap as possible. Often times, these contractors returned to China at the end of the summer season and took the summer wages with them (McKervill 1967). To the canneries and Chinese contractors, the populations of Chinese cannery workers were there to be exploited and treated as chattels.

Chinese men were part of Steveston's fishing industry in other ways as well. One well-known example is Lam Ling of the Hong Wo store, which was in operation from 1895 to 1971. Hong Wo, which means "peace together", was a store where one could purchase anything from a can of soda to fishing gear (Baker 1968). In the newspaper article by Jean Baker for *Richmond Archives*, she details the life of Lam Ling, a Chinese migrant who first moved to Victoria in the late 19th century. He was a businessman and entrepreneur: he taught himself to bake bread and peddled them door-to-door when he first arrived in Steveston as a teen in the late 19th century (Baker 1968). In addition to the Hong Wo store, Lam Ling also owned farmland where he grew vegetables and fruits for wholesale, and his farms were the largest producers of cucumbers for dill pickles on the Canadian West Coast: Lam Ling Holdings owned approximately fifteen acres of land and thirty greenhouses (Baker 1968). Lam Ling defined himself as an integral part of Steveston's community, becoming a contractor for two canneries in the area (Friends of the Richmond Archives 2023). When the Hong Wo store closed in 1971, the Steveston Historical Society tried to declare it a heritage site but ultimately failed, and the building was demolished in 1977 because of its deterioration and the risk of catching fire was too

high (Friends of the Richmond Archives 2023). This result, coupled with the fact that Steveston was only a place for seasonal work, not permanent residence (Lam 1988), meant that Steveston has lost a lot of its Chinese history and signs of their impact in Steveston.

Nowadays, the only knowledge of the Chinese who toiled in the canneries is lost in the memories of a few remaining Chinese of that time period (Lam 1988). This is why projects such as my own counter-tour are so important to build exposure for this largely forgotten history.

5.2. Website Walkthrough



Figure 14. Screenshot of my digital counter-tour

As shown in the figure above, my counter-tour focused on the histories of Chinese cannery workers in Steveston. A counter-tour, as the term suggests, provides an alternative and usually critical perspective on history. In this project, I wanted the stories of my people to be more accessible compared to the history shared at the Cannery. An important theme of my counter-tour was expanding on Porto's (2007) concept of reframing by representing the *Iron Chink* to be more site-specific through showing the contrast between the information provided by western archival institutions

such as the GoGCNHS and the City of Richmond Archives and the history found in literature about Chinese presence in Steveston.

The fishing industry is an area where Chinese workers are underrepresented; exhibitions of early Chinese migrants, that I have observed, discuss their work on the Canadian Pacific Railway and struggles with colonial policies such as the head tax and the exclusion act. For example, the GoGCNHS has exhibits on the herring reduction plant, development of fishing on the West Coast, and histories of canneries on the West Coast ('Exhibits - Gulf of Georgia Cannery National Historic Site | Steveston BC', n.d.). Exhibits such as the ones at the GoGCNHS praise certain businessmen and individuals, such as Lam Ling, for persevering through the difficulties and gaining great success, but there is of yet little discussion of the immense Chinese presence and influence in Steveston and the racist treatment they experienced (McKervill 1967; Lam 1988). Because of the lack of discussion and preservation, the history of Chinese in Steveston only live on in the memories of a few remaining members of the population (Lam 1988).





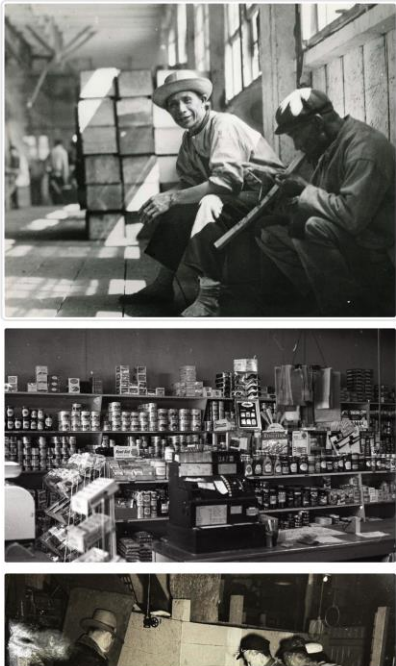
	
	<p>TOP ROW, LEFT: Date: 2013 (City of Richmond Archives) Title: Lam Ling (City of Richmond Archives)</p> <p>TOP ROW, RIGHT: Date: ca. 1991 (City of Richmond Archives) Content: Property owned by the Hong Wo Company is outlined in red in this cutout from the 1936 Waterworks Atlas. Buildings in the image include the pickle factory, greenhouses, bunkhouses and the store at the lower left. (City of Richmond Archives)</p>
	<p>BOTTOM ROW: Date: ca. 1987 (City of Richmond Archives) Content: Stock on the shelves at the Hong Wo Store. At its peak the store employed as many as 9 clerks. (City of Richmond Archives)</p>
	<p>NAME: Ancient Chinese Store part of local Steveston history forgotten with the passage of time</p> <p>STORIES: Hong Wo, meaning "Peace Together", was a general store in Steveston that opened in 1895, owned by Lam Ling—it sold everything from soft drinks to fishing gear. Lam Ling first came to Canada as a teen² in the late 19th century, where he worked in Victoria before moving to Steveston¹. I would characterise Lam Ling as a real businessman and hustler: prior to opening his store, he taught himself how to bake bread and sold them door-to-door¹. According to his daughter, Jessie Lam, he only ever took two holidays in his life: to look for seeds in California¹.</p> <p>In addition to the Hong Wo store, he also owned farmland where he grew vegetables and fruits for wholesale, and his farms were the largest producers of cucumbers for dill pickles on the Canadian West Coast¹. Lam Lion Holdings owned approximately fifteen acres of land and thirty greenhouses¹. Because of</p>

Figure 15. Example of metadata properties.



SOURCE INFORMATION:
Date: ca. 1913
Photographer: Todd F. Dundas
Source name: Two Chinese men at Imperial Cannery in Steveston (Vancouver Public Library)
Source content: One man lighting a pipe 'Just a whiff' [opium?] (Vancouver Public Library)

NAME:
Smiling Chinese workers despite facing racism in canneries

STORIES:
Chinese men like these were hired under the *China Contract*, which was a major hiring method used between salmon canneries and Chinese contractors¹. According to Katherine Lam, the *China Contract* was a way to hire people at substantially lower wages². Despite the man on the left smiling, Chinese employees were violent and rioted a lot, complaining about the difficulties of certain types of work¹.

Chinese first started working in canneries in the 1870s because they would work in conditions and for wages that were rejected by white workers; in thirty years, they dominated almost every aspect of cannery work⁴. Despite canneries' dependence on Chinese butchers, there was a lot of racist sentiments towards them that ranged from protest and threats of violence⁴. It is these feelings that leads to the naming of the "Iron Chink", which many cannery owners were attracted to because it would free them from the aforementioned dependence⁴ on Chinese workers and decreased the canneries' costs as well.

The China crews for each cannery lived in residences called "China Houses", which housed between 150-200 people in a large shed-like building³. These men were treated like "units of energy" to be used in production lines³ because of their extraordinary speed and expertise working in the cannery⁵.

1. Stacey, Duncan. 1981. "The China Contract". *The Fisherman*, December 11, 1981.
2. Lam, Katherine. 1988. "The Chinese presence in Steveston." In *Reflections: A Tribute to Steveston's Silver Jubilee*, edited by M.D. Shrieves. Silver Jubilee Book Committee, Brenda Balfour, Josten/National School Services, 1981.
3. McKervill, Hugh W. 1967. *The Salmon People: The Story of Canada's West Coast Salmon Fishing Industry*. Sidney: Gray's Publishing Ltd.
4. O'Bannon, Patrick W. "Technological Change in the Pacific Coast Canned Salmon Industry, 1900-1925: A Case Study," *Agricultural History* 56, no. 1 (1982): 151-66. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/3742306>.
5. Debeck, Ned. 1973. "Memories Series." Transcript by Ned Debeck. January 10, 1973.

Figure 16. Example of metadata properties that do not relate to the image.

In each collection of photos, there are two main properties that have been included: *name* and *content*. The name borrows from the one provided by the archive but builds on it using the stories and histories detailed in the content section. The alternate name of the photo is meant to evoke an initial feeling of surprise, which motivates visitors to continue reading the content portion and understand why the names are so different.

The two sections are easily differentiated by a horizontal line separating them in my counter-tour. By providing visitors with the two sets of information, it will be clear how many untold histories have not been publicised by western institutions. My counter-tour aimed to be critical of the lack of multiple stories in this area of BC's history.

The content does not always directly relate to the individuals or items in the photo(s) seen alongside the content; rather, the photos act as launching pads upon which the content is structured and organised. I chose these photos because they represented the themes that I wanted to touch on in my counter-tour. For example, the first image in Figure 11 on the left-hand side is of two Chinese men who worked at Imperial Cannery. Because of this, the content on that page focuses on a general history of Chinese cannery workers: the period when they started, the working conditions, and

how they found their jobs. On this page, I wanted to highlight the differences in content between the information given by the Vancouver Public Library archives and the histories that I found in the archival material. In Figure 10, I provide a summary of the timeline of Lam Ling, the founder of the Hong Wo general store because his presence in Steveston is an important part of its history.

5.3. Archival Research

In the following section, I outline my experience with the GoGCNHS and City of Richmond archives. I begin with a recount of my experience working with Heidi Rampfl from the GoGCNHS. I then detail my experience with Dovel from the City of Richmond Archives and how it contrasted with my outreach to other Chinese museums along the West Coast.

5.3.1. The Gulf of Georgia Cannery National Historic Site

When I reached out to the Collections and Exhibits Manager Heidi Rampfl, I already had a working relationship with her, which made it easier for me to request access to the archives. She was very willing to create a large collection of resources that I could use. The materials that I had access to during this project were a variety of digital resources that ranged from theses to newspaper clippings. In contrast to this ease with working with the cannery, another experience I want to outline is when I reached out to the Chinese Historical Society of America (CHSA) for access to their archives; they had many resources and photos about fishing that I felt fit into my website very seamlessly, but when I reached out to them detailing my counter-tour project and the fact that it was to be completed for a class, they responded with a price tag. Many collections require payments to be made for owning or licensing items, making it difficult for scholars such as myself to share these untold stories. For example, CBC requires people to pay for licenses or copies of archived content, but can only provide copies for personal use if a family member or the requesting individual appears in the archive ('How Do I Order or License Archived Material?' 2024). Having a paywall stopped me from accessing materials about my people's history along the West Coast made me thankful for the Cannery and their willingness to support me during the development of this project.

5.3.2. The City of Richmond Archives

The City of Richmond (CoR) had a larger collection for me to work with, so I made sure to prepare a list of items and reference files from their website that I wanted to take a closer look at when I visited their collections at the CoR library. Dovel, the archivist at CoR, was helpful throughout my visit. She prepared more than I requested, which allowed me to broaden my research and include topics that I would have overlooked, such as the technological advancements in canneries.

This was only my second time looking at physical objects in a collection, and the first time I was asked to wear gloves to avoid staining a photograph with the oils from my skin! I had the opportunity to read old newspaper clippings, interview transcripts, and many book chapters about the fishing industry. It was a very surreal moment to be in the room and reading so much about a history that I didn't know about until TWWCH. CoR archives come from a variety of sources, such as the Vancouver Public Library, the BC Packers' Association, and archives of various newspaper publications. There were lots of resources about Chinese Canadians in fishing and cannery, and it was disheartening but motivating to see all of it shelved in the library. I want to find more opportunities to share these stories and experiences with a wider audience.

5.4. Website Development

The development and hosting of my website is done completely on Cargo, a site builder created for the needs of "creative professionals" ('Cargo', n.d.). Cargo is simple to use and learn and has an inclination for design and visual. I chose Cargo over other website builders such as WordPress or Wix because of its refreshed style and how easy it is to handle content such as images. Having previously worked with Cargo, their seamless experience and easy-to-read documentation made it an easy choice to proceed with for the website. When the time came to pick a template for my counter-tour, I knew I wanted something that emphasised and placed photos at the forefront, which is how I chose my current site design. The gallery on the left-hand (see Fig. 3, 4, and 5) acts as a visual navigator between the different pages, and it provides good context for visitors as they are reading the introduction. The images are displayed in a single column in this stage of the website, but as I continue to add more pages and sources, it will take on the appearance of a multi-grid gallery.

The site's identity is kept to a minimal palette, using white and black as my only colours. A set of simple colours allows the viewer to be drawn to the images and additionally creates a very accessible design. I have also added alternate text to the images so that individuals who use screen readers are also able to experience the counter-tour. It was very important to me to ensure that the website is accessible to everyone. As I consider the future of the project and plan to start conversations with the cannery for a collaboration, I want to be certain that the website meets all accessibility criteria.

With this counter-tour, I want to shed light on other areas where the Chinese have had an active role in building early infrastructures and economies: while building Richmond and Steveston pale in comparison to building Canada, these achievements are still to be acknowledged. With the few exhibits that exist about Chinese cannery workers, Steveston has lost much of the Chinese presence that was once so integral to its development, and these memories live on only in the minds of a few remaining residents (Lam 1988) and those who worked alongside them, like Rosemary Georgeson.

Chapter 6. Conclusion

In this chapter, I conclude my thesis by and connecting the two case studies explored in Chapters Four and Five back to my research questions:

1. How do the acts of re-presenting that are central to *The Water We Call Home* inform my personal engagement with Chinese Canadian history through an object in the collection of the GoGCNHS? How has the concept of re-presenting in TWWCH influenced the practices of GoGCNHS going forward?
2. How can reframing—both of exhibitions that are traveling between locations, and of objects already within the collection (reframing-in-context) — support decolonial transformations in the practices of the GoGCNHS into the future?

To reiterate, reframing is the concept brought forth by Porto (2007) that argues for the necessity of reworking exhibits when installing them in new locations because exhibits should be specific to and fit within the socio-political histories and nuances of the place it is being displayed at. For TWWCH, one aspect of this that I detail in the thesis was creating the Scrapbook to showcase the many ways in which Indigenous peoples struggled and continue to struggle with colonial fishing policies. In Chapter Five, I expanded on the lens of reframing and explored reframing-*in-context* with my digital counter-tour of the “Iron Chink” fish processing machine, where I shared histories of Chinese labourers in the fishing industry that have been largely invisibilized. A second lens through which I write about TWWCH, re-presenting (Georgeson and Hallenbeck 2018), is understood through this project as the act of reconnecting Indigenous peoples to each other and the lands on which they were displaced as a result of complex colonial policies and violence.

In this chapter, I will further discuss the two cases studies through analyzing the interviews that I conducted with Kit Grauer, Elizabeth Batista, and Heidi Rampfl from the GoGNHS and the curatorial team—Rosemary Georgeson, Kate Hennessy, and Jessica Hallenbeck. Kit Grauer is the elected chair of the Gulf of Georgia Cannery Society, and she has been in her role since 2008. When she was at UBC and developing museum education programs, she had reconnected with a friend who was on the board at the Society and convinced her to join because she had museum experience (Grauer 2024).

Kit joined the Society because she wanted to give back to her community, but she was always interested in Indigenous issues since her undergraduate degree at UBC, as she recounts during our interview:

“I've always been, I would say, interested in First Nations issues from the time that I did my undergraduate at UBC, as a matter of fact. I did off reserve status interviews with people through the economics faculty. And so I got to know quite a few people in the early 70s and 80s, and it made me quite outraged at the fact that I would be interviewing first status women who were from Ireland, and then I would interview a woman who had no status but could give me the name of her relatives who were still status because she had married white. And so I guess that started the kind of realization of what a terrible job we might've done in our relationships with our friends and colleagues. So on Galiano, I had met Kate before, was very impressed with what she was doing in a number of realms, and so was very excited about what was going on with *The Water We Call Home*.” (Grauer 2024)

In her role, Kit largely does tasks related to governance, such as helping staff put exhibits or programs together. More recently, however, Kit has been more involved in the exhibit side of things as well.

Elizabeth Batista, Executive Director for the Gulf of Georgia Cannery Society, has been in her role since August of 2022, but was made permanent in September of 2023. Prior to her current role, she held a variety of positions since April of 2015, such as Treasurer and Chair (Batista 2024). Elizabeth was motivated to dedicate her time and efforts to the society because of a personal mandate:

“I always like to volunteer in the community, and I was trying to find something that was close to home, but that meant a lot to me...I connected with Bob Kiesman, who is the current Chair of the Steveston Harbor Authority...I was ready to volunteer in the Steveston Harbor Authority, and I think fate led me here because he said, ‘You know what? I hear that the Cannery Society Board is looking for board members.’ So the universe was positioned in such a way that it said, ‘No, this is the direction you should go in.’ And typically when I do my volunteer work...I'd usually give organizations one year of intensely of my time, and then move on to find different opportunities...since April 2015, I felt like, ‘No, I need to be here longer, I need to stay connected to my community, and I see that there's a lot of work to do.’ So, that's how it happened.” (Batista 2024)

As Executive Director, Elizabeth oversees all the content that is being developed by staff at the Cannery and enables relationships between institution and community members that may have a large role in content development (Batista 2024). She enables

staff to develop exhibits that they are proud of by removing as many obstacles as she can.

Heidi Rampfl is the Collections and Exhibits Manager, and she is responsible for maintaining and caring for the artefact, archival, and library collections at the Cannery while also maintaining and installing new exhibits (Rampfl 2024b). Heidi played a large role in the installation of TWWCH.

The curatorial team, made up of Rosemary Georgeson, Jessica Hallenbeck, and Kate Hennessy are at the heart of TWWCH. As detailed in Chapter One, Rosemary is a Coast Salish and Sahtu Dene storyteller, writer, and filmmaker who has spent her life to reconnecting with her Coast Salish ancestry and family ('Biographies', n.d.). Jessica is a Dutch, Russian, Irish, and Hungarian critical intersectional feminist geographer and filmmaker engaging in decolonial methodologies to "re-presence connections to and with the water" ('Biographies', n.d.; Hallenbeck 2019). Kate Hennessy is the director of the Making Culture Lab at Simon Fraser University, a settler of Irish and German descent who was born and raised on Galiano Island, and an Associate Professor at the School of Interactive Art and Technology at Simon Fraser University.

From my interviews with these knowledgeable individuals, my analysis of transcripts showed the emergence of three main themes: Indigenous self-determination, collaborative curation between the community and institution, and sharing the intangible through the tangible. Indigenous self-determination will be explored in relation to the engagement and partnership section of the CMA's response to the TRC's Calls to Action, discussing how the curatorial team's work with the Cannery supported Indigenous self-determination during the installation process of TWWCH. Part of the support comes during the collaborative curation that occurred, and I discuss both the possibilities and challenges of a collaborative relationship between the community and institution. The last theme, sharing the intangible through the tangible, discusses a shift in museum professionals' priorities from sharing objects to using these objects to share stories from the community. Re-presencing TWWCH for the Cannery has created the opportunity for both parties to learn from each other, evident in the ways that Cannery staff supported the project. The third theme that emerged from the interviews, using objects to share stories, is closely tied to the concept of reframing—between locations and within the collection—because of the heavy emphasis on story in both TWWCH and my counter-tour of the "Iron Chink" as a method to share a narrative not frequently told

throughout history. As I detail in Section 6.2, the Cannery is very focused on centering untold stories when they install exhibitions, and TWWCH is one achievement in their long journey.

6.1. Engagement and Partnership

In Chapter 2, I provided a summary of the CMA's response to the TRC's Calls to Action 67 to 70. The portion that I will focus on more heavily is about engagement and partnership. I will attempt to draw connections between what the CMA propose for community engagement and how it manifests in the installation of the TWWCH at the Cannery. Kit Grauer, the Chair of the Gulf of Georgia Cannery Society, approached Rosemary and Kate when TWWCH was being shown at the Yellowhouse Art Centre and asked if they were interested in exhibiting it at the Cannery because professionals at the cannery "felt that it was time that we started really focusing on the fact that here was a site that was a site of tremendous misinterpretation of stories and that it would be really wonderful to be able to bring [TWWCH] to that site where the voices who hadn't been represented in their own words, had a chance to represent what was going on" (Grauer 2024). The work between the Cannery and the curatorial team to install TWWCH at the Cannery is an act of re-presencing Indigenous stories in the cannery's history of fishing and canning on the coast. For example, during my interview, Rosemary recounts a history of Indigenous discrimination in canneries:

"We couldn't fish farm. My father who had offers from BC Packers to build them a new packer. He packed for Nelson Brothers, Western Fish, Tulloch-Western, Norpac Fisheries, and a few of the other smaller camps. He ran the camp up in Buttes. His life was on this fucking water here and Canadian Fish, he couldn't fish for them because of our skin color... Christie Lee Charles shared a story with us about her mother and grandmother going there to apply for a job. And they asked, where are you from? They said, "Musqueam." "Go. No, we aren't hiring." They come back the next day and tell them they're Hawaiian and they got a job." (Georgeson, Hallenbeck, and Hennessy 2024)

This memory of Rosemary's is a clear display of racial discrimination that her family and other Indigenous peoples faced when trying to find employment with Canadian Fish Company (Canfisco). The opportunity granted by Kit to bring TWWCH to the Cannery, a place that represents a history of discrimination against Indigenous peoples and to have stories from the Advisory Circle shared in their own voices is a

strong example of the Indigenous self-determination discussed in the CMA's response and the Cannery's deep interest in interpreting these histories for the public.

Indeed, engagement between museums and Indigenous peoples needs to consider the needs and interests of the Indigenous community first. Collaborating with Rosemary and the curatorial team has expanded Elizabeth's understanding of reconciliation:

"[TWWCH] has reset expectations on the speed in which we can move toward reconciliation. And that's the biggest part. While I had read and talked to people, and essentially understood that you can't just snap your finger and expect a First Nation to provide all of their cultural knowledge without preparing a safe space, without taking time to get to know them, and to build that relationship first." (Batista 2024)

The speed of reconciliation cannot move at a speed dictated by the institution, rather, collaborations must prioritize Indigenous partner leadership. It took centuries to reach the current stage of reconciliation, and it will take the same amount of time, if not longer, for Canada to actualize decolonization. For Elizabeth, this manifested when Rosemary asked her to tell her about her family: Elizabeth realized that "...you cannot assume you know everything and you can't assume that the typical North American way of preparing for a meeting and meeting a new person is the right way to do that with Indigenous cultures." "...I've had many Indigenous friends and their families who I know, but never in this context, never of moving forward with reconciliation... So I'm honored, and I continue to keep my heart and mind open and learn" (Batista 2024).

In TWWCH, the partnership between the community and institution manifested in several different ways. One of the ways the cannery practiced Indigenous-led engagement when collaborating on the installation of the exhibit was collaborating with Rosemary and the curatorial team to decide which items from the cannery's collections would be on display, such as fishing nets, tea kettles, and fishing hooks. This was a crucial step as it created space for Rosemary to have control over preparing an exhibit representing her family's stories and experiences. The following section delves deeper into the collaborative relationship between the Cannery and the curatorial team, and the possibilities and challenges that arose from it.

6.1.1. Collaborative Curation between Community and Institution

As explored above, partnerships between Indigenous peoples and museums needs to first respect the needs and interests of the Indigenous community first. The initial act of having Rosemary choose items from the collections was an act of respect from the Cannery. This extended into the second manifestation of collaborative curation: the preparations for opening day in June 2022, where performances by Tsatsu Stalqayu (Coastal Wolf Pack) were presented. The date for the soft opening was planned to coincide with the “Welcoming the Sun: A Celebration for National Indigenous People’s Day”, an Indigenous event that is hosted by the GoGCNHS that invites the Tsatsu Stalqayu to perform annually. As a traditional Salish song and dance group that represents various Coast Salish communities (‘We Are Coast Salish – Tsatsu Stalqayu’, n.d.), their aim is to give the audience a sense of belonging to the lands of the Coast Salish people. The inclusion of Tsatsu Stalqayu is meaningful because it is bringing back Coast Salish traditions to a location where Indigenous peoples experienced many acts of oppression, such as letters rejecting Indigenous fisherman from working at Sunnyside Cannery that were included in the Scrapbook and the story Rosemary shared earlier. To re-present Coast Salish tradition at a cannery, where Indigenous women like Rosemary’s relatives were separated from each other, is a significant act for the GoGCNHS and TWWCH.

The curatorial team and the cannery also collaborated with Rosemary on the educational document and the scrapbook, as discussed in Chapter Four. The Advisory Circle was consulted during the installation at the Cannery and day-to-day decisions were made between them and the curatorial team. Indigenous-led engagement also manifested in the first stage of TWWCH; the curation for the Yellowhouse Art Centre was deeply collaborative and the Advisory Circle played a central and ongoing role in the films, soundscapes, and events such as the wrapping of the tree that were all documented in the first show of TWWCH.

One collaborative method for writing that I observed: during the creation of the panel texts: rather than placing responsibility on Rosemary to write and edit, Kate or Jessica would listen to Rosemary as she articulated her thoughts and transcribe them. After the transcription, the team would work together and offer edits on the transcription, but Rosemary would give the final approval to ensure that her narrative and ideas were correctly expressed.

However, during these planning meetings with Cannery staff, Jessica and Kate voiced their frustrations at the lack of conversations around the topic of compensating Rosemary for her time and knowledge; there were days when the curatorial team had very long meetings with the Cannery staff, yet there were never discussions about paying Rosemary for all the work she had done. The CMA report cautions museums to be aware that Indigenous community members will likely shoulder the labour involved in relationship building, so their time and effort must be recognized and compensated by the museum (Danyluk and MacKenzie 2022). Instead of one-off honorariums, the report argues for trading “honorariums in favour of creating positions for Indigenous experts” (Danyluk and MacKenzie 2022, 68). By formalizing their roles within the museum, it allows for professionalized recognition of Indigenous knowledge. Jessica shared the following about her experience regarding Rosemary’s compensation:

“I think that I felt a level of frustration in terms of continuing to bring up this question of Rosemary’s compensation. Kate is a professor at Simon Fraser University, I’m a postdoc. Rose is an independent artist. And, as much as we tried to have conversations with the museum about compensating Rosemary for her time, those seemed to go nowhere. And for me, it’s an unacceptable context for collaboration to unfold. And Rose has continued to be paid through what remains of a research grant that I received for the first exhibition, but certainly not enough...institutions need to realize that they have to compensate people for their time...creating a space is wonderful, but also supporting that person to curate and fill that space is the second half of that story” (Georgeson, Hallenbeck, and Hennessy 2024).

The curatorial team notes that as the exhibition has unfolded in terms of programming and new initiatives related to TWWCH, compensation for Rosemary’s time has been prioritized and budgeted for and appreciated as a recognition of Rosemary’s contribution and labour.

To tie this back to the CMA report, museum-Indigenous relationships are important to foster, but museums must reflect on who benefits from the relationship and the knowledge gathering, as well as where the knowledge will go in the future. One such future project is the creation of school programs, with permission from Rosemary. Elizabeth shared her thoughts on this during our interview:

“...it’ll focus on school programs, which we received permission from Rosemary. And in fact, Tatyana who is in the office right beside me, she is looking at some of that content. While it is very heavy for adults, there may be some components that we can use in children’s programs. I’m not trying to hide it from a child, but we may not have the capacity to deliver the very

emotionally charged stories from there. But it is a very good example of how the life cycle of the salmon is so important to Indigenous culture and should be to ours.” (Batista 2024)

Here, the Cannery is motivated to continue sharing the stories from TWWCH with the younger generation, reflecting their desires to build on the importance of the knowledge from TWWCH and integrate it into their catalogue of education programs. Heidi shares many of the same sentiments, grateful for the connection the Cannery now has with Rosemary and hopeful for future collaborations where Rosemary can work with the Cannery to share the stories that have previously not be spotlighted:

“Some of us were, I was helping with the net and you, and Kate were on ladders, and I was on a ladder, and we were doing different things and hanging different things. And Rosemary, she was filling the net needle, and she was just there, and she was chatting in the space, and it was great just to listen to her. Every time I see her, she's got another story that she tells and it's always just like, I could listen to her forever. So it's just been great to have this connection, and I do hope we can keep working with Rosemary if she's willing, if she's interested going forward. I think she could bring some really awesome stories and perspectives to other exhibits and stuff that we do too” (Rampfl 2024b).

Elizabeth and Heidi's memories about their collaborations are indicative of the Cannery's motivations to continue collaborating with community in the future to share untold stories, the third theme of my interviews and the topic of the following section.

6.2. Sharing the Intangible through the Tangible

Something that was discussed across all the interviews was the focus and importance of telling untold stories as they relate to objects in the museum. Elizabeth shares her motivations about centering stories in exhibits and how that has stayed consistent throughout her time with the Cannery:

“My vision hasn't changed. My vision was to center on the stories of people. And it was that when I was on the board. It hasn't changed. I wasn't as passionate about developing programs around a piece of machinery or a collection of artefacts, unless it tied into telling stories that were not known, were not widely known...[The cannery's] vision will continue to have exhibits that tell the untold stories...focused on people...the people in this region...that worked in the cannery...the people that were here before the cannery existed.” (Batista 2024)

To build on this, Heidi has noticed a shift in the Cannery's focus on what is important to be sharing in the exhibitions they house:

“...our focus has shifted in terms of the significance that we place on pieces and what makes them important kind of idea. And our focus really today is on the stories. So I think we're more concerned about, or the goal is to be able to share as many stories about fishing on the West coast as possible from as many different voices and backgrounds as possible” (Rampfl 2024b).

As the collections and exhibits manager, Heidi engages frequently with people when they donate items to the cannery. Because the cannery already houses two large collections, Heidi has begun asking the donor about the story behind the donated item as a way of streamlining the cannery's selection process, so it only displays and stores items that have a real significance: not just a historical one, but a significance that is personal to the community. In the quote above, the Cannery can be seen making a shift to not only focus on stories but focus on a variety of stories from different histories and communities that built fishing on the West Coast. Heidi also recounts a current project at the Cannery that is focused on making the items and stories in the collections more accessible:

“...we have an online database software that we use, and I've been working with a company that provides it so that we can add more of our collections. We had a grant for doing oral histories, so we originally purchased it for sharing our oral history collection, but one of the reasons I selected the software in the first place is because it has capacity to do all types of collections...it would fulfill that goal of making things [in storage] more accessible...so not that it would be quite as good as being able to share it in person with people, but having it available so that people can search and see a photograph of the object...that's not an uncommon thing. A lot of museums have online databases now.” (Rampfl 2024b).

With this project, there is a clear move from the Cannery to collect and share the community's stories, as well as building a platform where people can view the artefacts and stories that would have normally been kept in storage. Heidi hopes to evolve the platform to a point where people can leave their own stories in the comment section associated with an artefact. Kit shares her thoughts about the topic as well:

“I think one of the things that has shifted [in terms of reconciliation] is that... All museums, I think originally you're about the stuff, right? And now I think the movement has happened too. We're about the stories. We're not about the stuff anymore. The stuff's just a way to get into the stories.” (Grauer 2024)

From these discussions, a connection can be drawn to the concept of reframing that has been so present throughout my thesis. To make community stories easily accessible and to center exhibitions around people's stories is to introduce reframing-in-

context into the museum: by allowing people to share their own stories, an object will have multiple histories and meanings attached to it that provide a more complete picture of its history. In TWWCH's exhibit, the borrowing of the artefacts from the collections shows "how embedded those stories are in that institution" (Georgeson, Hallenbeck, and Hennessy 2024). Additionally, the Scrapbook is a secondary act of reframing and embedding TWWCH by connecting the wider colonial issues faced by Indigenous peoples to the stories of the Advisory Circle.

My counter-tour of the Iron Chink is another example of reframing-*in-context* because I presented a history of the machine that is rooted in Chinese labour workers' presence in canneries and the West Coast fishing industry. This history is a large part of the Iron Chink's background but was not accessibly shared. My counter-tour brings those histories back into the forefront and embeds the Iron Chink into *all* the site-specific politics of the Cannery and the fishing industry at large.

When centering the stories of people who were here before the Cannery, bringing Indigenous voices into the forefront is a large part of that. TWWCH was required to be presented in both English and French because the Cannery is a Parks Canada location, but there was unfortunately no budget for translating into the language of Rosemary's family, displaying "the colonizing tendencies of language, specifically the English language...[that] threatens many Indigenous languages with extinction" (Blue Swadener and Mutua 2008, 31). This is an important issue that should be discussed at the policy level, but in my interview with Heidi Rampfl, we recalled and reflected on the conversations we had about French translations during the writing of the panel texts, and she shared the following thoughts:

"So [French translations] is a little bit, that's something we couldn't get away from yet, right? Because we're a Parks Canada site and having the exhibit at a Parks Canada site, we are required to provide text in French, both official languages for Canada. In a way, it is meant to be inclusive for all Canadians...Is it inclusive for all Canadians? No, because not everyone speaks French. So many people in BC don't even speak French at all, never mind English. English is not people's first language either, right? So yeah, I know we had some chats, [they] were more to do with the opening and when we were still planning that, the idea of potentially having [the panel texts] translated in English, French, but also Hunkumminum...a lot still comes down to funding as well...But I don't think that's a reason to not still investigate and look into that kind of thing." (Rampfl 2024b)

Here, we can see that museum professionals, such as Heidi, are thinking about the implications of stating that the official languages of Canada represent inclusivity for all Canadians, when much of the population does not speak French or speaks English as a second language. As Heidi pointed out, many of the limitations that museums face when wanting to introduce other languages into their translations are due to funding; there needs to be structural change in the ways the Federal Government prioritize languages in exhibits created by and about Indigenous peoples. Language plays a large role in how individuals can interact with museums, but also how exhibitions are represented; the colonial tendencies of the English language can negatively influence the storytelling aspect that is so crucial to decolonial museum practice (Blue Swadener and Mutua 2008).

6.3. Final Remarks

In this thesis, I have explored the impact of reframing and re-presenting as influential factors in decolonial museum practices through the analysis of two similar, yet vastly different case studies: *TWWCH* and *The Iron Chink: Re-framing a Piece of Cannery History*. The previous two sections detail the three main ways through which reframing and re-presenting has impacted how the Cannery staff will move forward with their work: engagement and partnership, collaborative curation between community and institution, and reframing through story. My thesis contributes to existing scholarship by further developing the concept of reframing to include the action of reframing items within their institutional contexts to include a broader scope of their history.

At the time of writing this chapter, I have co-founded *Asian-Indigenous Relations* (AIR) alongside Ty Bryant, a member of We Wai Kai First Nation and master's student in Sociology and Anthropology at SFU; this is a graduate-run-organization that focuses on sharing multimodal pieces and resources about the interconnected histories of Asian and Indigenous populations in Vancouver, and the plethora of complexities and differences that are entangled within. Currently, we are run by a core team that consists of members of various Asian diaspora and Indigenous nations with guidance from an affiliate team that is also largely Asian diaspora or members of various Indigenous Nations ('Behind the Project – Asian Indigenous Relations', n.d.).

AIR represents the culmination of my research interests: a combination of Indigenous and Chinese representation in areas where they have been largely ignored

in history. My work on *TWWCH* and the reframing of the Iron Chink also reflect this. It is my hope that my thesis will also positively contribute to the work of *TWWCH*; by acting as a witness to and documenting the installation at the GoGCNHS, I have been able to reflect on my learnings here and will share them back to the curatorial team and the Cannery before submission. I want to ensure that I have represented them and their teachings in a way that they approve of.

The act of reframing exhibitions, reframing historical items *in context*, and *re-presencing* Indigenous people on their displaced lands are movements that I am deeply passionate about, and I plan to continue advocating and working in this area, whether that is through my work at *Asian-Indigenous Relations* or as a museum professional. Either way, I will work towards a future where marginalized peoples can be uplifted to tell their own stories and their own truths.

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Appendix A. The Scrapbook



La couverture de cet album présente une photo de moi avec un flétan de 106 livres pêché au bout de Millbank Sound. C'est l'histoire d'une époque où on était encore lié à l'eau, aux poissons et à la famille. L'eau faisait partie de notre être. Les épreuves auxquelles on faisait face, imposées par tous les niveaux du gouvernement, des réglementations fédérales sur les peuples autochtones à l'industrie de la pêche, ont tenté de séparer les peuples autochtones des poissons : notre source de nourriture, notre économie et notre mode de vie.

Cet album raconte un peu de l'histoire de la séparation imposée entre nous et nos eaux. Les bulletins d'information de « Native Voice » et de « Native Alliance of Red Power (NARP) » et les événements dans les nouvelles montrent tous une longue histoire de résistance aux politiques coloniales de pêche.

— Rosemary Georgeson
Ancienne pêcheuse & co-commissaire de « The Water We Call Home »

001

“On the cover of this scrapbook is a picture of me with a 106 pound halibut caught at the top end of Millbank Sound. This is a story of a time when we were still connected to water, fish, and family. Water was every part of our being. The hardships and disconnections we faced that were imposed from all levels of government, from federal regulations of Indigenous people to the fishing industry attempted to separate the Indigenous peoples from the fish: our food source, economy, and way of being.

This scrapbook is sharing a glimpse into the history of the imposed disconnection to our waters and our way of life on the water. The Native Voice Newsletter, the Native Alliance of Red Power (NARP) Newsletter, and events in the news today all show a long history of Indigenous resistance to imposed colonial fishing policies.”

— Rosemary Georgeson
Former fisherman & co-curator of *The Water We Call Home*

002

L'eau que nous appelons la maison

Les liens des femmes autochtones avec le poisson, l'eau et la famille autour de la mer des Salish.

Entre 2020 et 2022, un cercle consultatif de six matriarches autochtones s'est réuni sur l'île Galiano pour rétablir les liens avec le poisson, l'eau et la famille autour de la mer des Salish. Ce travail a été vu par un large groupe de familles, d'amis et de personnes vivant et travaillant sur Galiano et documenté en vidéo, son et photographie. Ce projet a été transporté de l'autre côté de l'eau à Steveston pour partager ces histoires personnelles de perte, de résistance et de reconnexion, et l'importance de conserver ces histoires face aux politiques de pêche coloniales qui continuent de séparer les peuples autochtones du poisson et de la pêche.

Le projet et l'exposition sont la continuation d'une vie de recherche par l'artiste Salish du littoral / Sahtu Dene Rosemary Georgeson et émergent de sa collaboration d'une décennie avec le Dr Jessica Hallenbeck. Ce travail a permis de retrouver l'identité des grands-mères ancestrales de Rosemary Georgeson et de renouer avec leurs descendants.

Des œuvres sonores, vidéo et photographiques de Richard Wilson, Rosemary Georgeson et Kali Spitzer, ainsi que des photos d'archives et des bulletins d'information, honorent les histoires de connexion à travers l'eau, les poissons et la famille.

Cette installation est organisée par Rosemary Georgeson, Kate Hennessy et Jessica Hallenbeck.

Avec le soutien du Conseil des Arts du Canada | Conseil de recherche en sciences humaines | Conseil des arts de la Colombie-Britannique | Institut de recherche communautaire de l'Université Simon Fraser + Conseil de réconciliation autochtone | Conseil culturel des Premiers Peuples | Décoloniser l'eau | Accès à la société d'éducation aux médias | Centre d'art de Yellowhouse | Patrimoine C.-B. | Fiducie des îles Gulf

003

THE WATER WE CALL HOME

The Water We Call Home

Indigenous women's connections to fish, water, and family around the Salish Sea.

Between 2020-2022, an advisory circle of six Indigenous matriarchs gathered on Galiano Island to re-present connections to fish, water, and family around the Salish Sea. This work was witnessed by an extended group of family, friends, and people living and working on Galiano and documented in video, sound, and photography. This project has been brought across the water to Steveston to share these personal stories of loss, resistance, and reconnection, and the importance of holding onto those stories in the face of colonial fishing policies that continue to separate Indigenous peoples from fish and fishing.

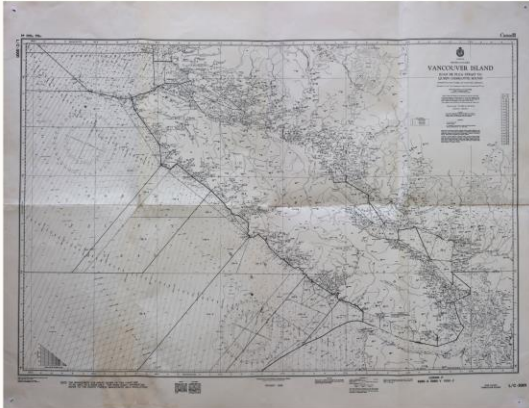
The project and exhibition are the continuation of a lifetime of research by Coast Salish / Sahtu Dene artist Rosemary Georgeson and emerges from her decade-long collaboration with Dr. Jessica Hallenbeck. This work has led to the recovery of the identities of Rosemary Georgeson's ancestral grandmothers and reconnection with their descendants.

Works in sound, video, and photography by Richard Wilson, Rosemary Georgeson, and Kali Spitzer, along with archival photos and newsletters, honour the stories of connection through water, fish, and family.

This installation is curated by Rosemary Georgeson, Kate Hennessy, and Jessica Hallenbeck.

Supported by the Canada Council for the Arts | Social Science and Humanities Research Council | BC Arts Council | Simon Fraser University Community Engaged Research Institute + Aboriginal Reconciliation Council | First Peoples Cultural Council | Decolonizing Water | Access to Media Education Society | Yellowhouse Art Centre | Heritage BC | Gulf Islands Trust

004



"When the government was taking control of the fishing on this coast they broke it down into areas. We were the Southern Area, top end of Vancouver Island up until around Milbank Sound was Central, beyond that up to the Alaska border was northern, and the outside of Vancouver Island was Western. Inside of each of these areas they broke it down into smaller areas. We would know when fisheries put out an announcement for an opening, they would give out an area—A1, A2, stuff like that, and we would know where to be.

The area would sometimes open up all the way over to Galiano, Salamanca Point. Sometimes they would only open a postage-stamp sized area and hundreds of boats would swarm in.

There are similarities with reserve maps. These areas were for everybody but they created a lot of battle. They would open up areas and say that First Nations Fisherman could fish here because they need an advantage – a bigger area--and then once their opening was done, they would open a postage stamp for the white fishers, and this created conflict. It created animosity between us and them.

In the late 70s, fisheries would wait and hide inside Porlier Pass, and so with their radars they could tell when someone drifted over the line. You couldn't always help with with the tide, especially outside of Porlier Pass. Gordon [Georgeson] was always outside of Surrey Courthouse, or my dad to the courthouse, on Thursday afternoon. We had to come to Surrey to court. This was part of another round of the fishing wars.

The government has always created conflict between different cultures out on the water. That chart signifies some of the division that was created". - Rosemary Georgeson

005

"Quand le gouvernement prenait le contrôle de la pêche sur cette côte, il l'a divisée en régions. On était la région sud, la partie nord de l'île de Vancouver jusqu'à Milbank Sound était la région centrale, au-delà de celle-là jusqu'à la frontière d'Alaska était la région nord et l'extérieur de l'île de Vancouver était la région de l'ouest. Le gouvernement a divisé chacune de ces régions en régions plus petites. On savait quand les pêcheries annonçaient des régions ouvertes, elles nous donnaient une région, comme A1 ou A2, et on savait où il faut être. La région était quelquefois ouverte jusqu'à Galiano, Salamanca Point. Quelquefois, elles ouvraient seulement une région de taille aussi petite qu'un timbre-poste et des centaines de bateaux y affluaient.

C'était comparable aux cartes de réserves. Les régions étaient pour tout le monde, mais elles ont créé tant de conflits. Le gouvernement ouvrait des régions et disait que les pêcheurs autochtones pouvaient y pêcher parce qu'ils avaient besoin d'un avantage - une région plus grande - et au moment où cette ouverture est finie, il ouvrait une région de taille aussi petite qu'un timbre-poste pour les pêcheurs blancs, ce qui a créé de conflit. Il a créé de l'animosité entre nous et eux.

À la fin des années 70, les pêcheries attendaient et cachaient à Porlier Pass pour qu'elles puissent utiliser leur radar pour voir quand quelqu'un franchissait une frontière entre deux régions. On ne pouvait pas toujours contrôler la marée, spécialement hors de Porlier Pass. Gordon [Georgeson] ou mon père était toujours au tribunal à Surrey les jeudis après-midis. Ils venaient à Surrey pour aller au tribunal. C'était un autre côté de la guerre de pêche.

Le gouvernement a toujours créé des conflits entre les différentes cultures sur l'eau. Ce graphique signifie une partie de la division qu'il a créée." - Rosemary Georgeson

006



The M.V. Georgeson Bay,
Prince Rupert, est. late 1950s.
*Le M.V. Georgeson Bay,
Prince Rupert, fin des années
1950.*

007

THE WATER WE CALL HOME

"My first home. I learned to walk on this boat. That doorway on the side, Dad's bunk was just on the other side of it. That bunk -- Phillip Case was born there, January 25th, 1960. Dad took a lot of women off island to the hospital on Saltspring who were in labour in this boat. He would go into Xwe'malxkwu territory, he would go to Church House on this boat, but he didn't know who his family there were.

He packed for Western Fish, Tulloch, and then it became Tulloch Western, then it became NorPac. He used to move the camps up into Butes. That's where Dad was when I was born. They got caught in a storm when mum was 8 1/2 months pregnant with me. Mum went into labour just after Dad had left to tow his camp up to Butes. He was up in Campbell River. In those days everyone had a call time on the radio. Those old VHF radios--it went all up and down the coast. The company, Old Man Moir, broke into the call time to tell Dad, and everyone from Rupert down the coast, that he had a daughter" - Rosemary Georgeson

Source: Fisherman Publishing Society Collection, University of British Columbia

« C'est ma première maison. J'ai appris à marcher sur ce bateau. La couchette de papa était juste de l'autre côté de cette porte sur le côté. Phillip Case est né dans cette couchette, le 25 janvier 1960. Papa a emmené de nombreuses femmes qui accouchaient à l'hôpital de Saltspring dans ce bateau. Il allait sur le territoire Xwe'malxkwu, il allait à Church House sur ce bateau, mais il ne savait pas qui était sa famille là-bas.

Il a été emballeur pour Western Fish et pour Tulloch, qui est ensuite devenue Tulloch-Western, puis NorPac. Il avait l'habitude de déplacer les campements jusqu'à Butes. C'est là qu'était papa quand je suis née. Ils ont été pris dans une tempête alors que ma mère était enceinte de 8 mois et demi. Maman est entrée en travail juste après que papa soit parti remorquer son campement à Butes. Il était à Campbell River. À l'époque, tout le monde avait un temps d'antenne à la radio. De vieilles radios VHF étaient utilisées tout le long de la côte. L'entreprise, Old Man Moir, s'est emparée des ondes pour annoncer à papa, et à tout le monde sur la côte depuis Rupert, qu'il avait une fille. » - Rosemary Georgeson

Source : Collection de la Fisherman Publishing Society, Université de la Colombie-Britannique

008



Rosemary Georgeson, halibut caught on a handline.
Milbanke Sound, August 1978.
Photograph by Stuart Georgeson.

*Rosemary Georgeson, flétan pêché à la palangrotte.
Déroit de Milbanke, août 1978.
Photo : Stuart Georgeson.*



Teresa (Tracy) Georgeson (Top), spring salmon, 1995.
Photograph by Gordon Georgeson.

*Teresa (Tracy) Georgeson (Haut), saumon chinook, 1995.
Photo : Gordon Georgeson.*

Robin Mina Buss (Left), spring salmon, 2022.
Staƿaw or Fraser River out front Wellington Point above Canoe Pass, June 2022.
Photograph by Robin Buss.

*Robin Mina Buss (Gauche), saumon chinook, 2022.
Staƿaw ou le fleuve Fraser devant la pointe Wellington, en amont de Canoe Pass,
juin 2022.
Photo : Robin Buss.*



Native Alliance for Red Power

1967 – 2006

The *Native Alliance for Red Power (NARP)* was created in 1967 by a group of Indigenous women in Vancouver, BC¹. Originally created to address the issue of Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Children², it quickly grew to a platform where Indigenous peoples across Canada could oppose experiences of racism, sexism, and colonialism.

NARP had cross-border influence, becoming the official distributor of the *Black Panther Newsletter*².

¹<https://mgouldhawke.wordpress.com/2020/10/05/native-alliance-for-red-power-eight-point-program-1969/>
²<https://www.transnationallyindigenous.com/timeline/native-alliance-for-red-power-narp-formed/>

No. 7 (Feb, 1988)

MAY 1st DISCUSSION PAPER

A MARXIST APPROACH
 TO THE LIBERATION
 OF OUR PEOPLE

NATIVE STUDY GROUP

P.O. BOX 35663
 STATION "B",
 VANCOUVER, B. C.
 V6M 4G9

NARP Eight Point Program

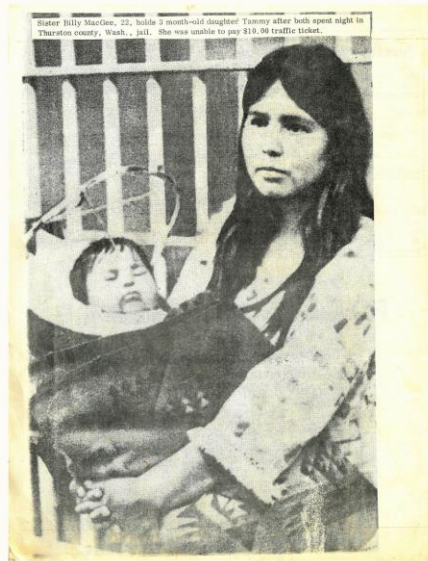
1. We will not be free until we are able to determine our destiny. Therefore, we want power to determine the destiny of our reservations and communities. Gaining power in our reservations and communities, and power over our lives will entail the abolishment of the "Indian Act," and the destruction of the colonial office (Indian Affairs Branch).
2. This racist government has robbed, cheated and brutalized us, and is responsible for the deaths of untold numbers of our people. We feel under no obligation to support this government in the form of taxation. Therefore, we want an end to the collection of money from us in the form of taxes.
3. The history of Canada was written by the oppressors, the invaders of this land. Their lies are perpetuated in the educational system of today. By failing to expose the true history of this decadent Canadian society, the schools facilitate our continued oppression. Therefore, we want an education that teaches us our true history and exposes the racist values of this society.
4. In this country, Indian and Metis represent 5% of the population, yet we constitute approximately 60% of the inmates in prisons and jails. Therefore, we want an immediate end to the unjust arrests and harassment of our people by the racist police.
5. When brought before the courts of this country, the redman cannot hope to get a fair hearing from white judges, jurors and court officials. Therefore, we want natives to be tried by a jury of people chosen from native communities or people of their racial heritage. Also, we want freedom for those of our brothers and sisters now being unjustly held in the prisons of this country.
6. The treaties pertaining to fishing, hunting, trapping and property rights and special privileges have been broken by this government. In some cases, our people did not engage in treaties with the government and have not been compensated for their loss of land. Therefore, for those of our people who have not made treaties, we want fair compensation. Also, we want the government to honour the statutes, as laid down in these treaties, as being supreme and not to be infringed upon by any legislation whatsoever.
7. The large industrial companies and corporations that have raped the natural resources of this country are responsible, along with their government, for the extermination of the resources upon which we depend for food, clothing and shelter. Therefore, we want an immediate end to this exploitation and compensation from these thieves. We want the government to give foreign aid to the areas comprising the Indian Nation, so that we can start desperately needed programs concerning housing, agricultural and industrial co-operatives. We want to develop our remaining resources in the interests of the redman, not in the interests of the white corporate elite.
8. The white power structure has used every possible method to destroy our spirit, and the will to resist. They have divided us into status and non-status, American and Canadian, Metis and Indian. We are fully aware of their "divide and rule," tactic, and its effect on our people.

RED POWER IS THE SPIRIT TO RESIST
 RED POWER IS PRIDE IN WHAT WE ARE
 RED POWER IS LOVE FOR OUR PEOPLE
 RED POWER IS OUR COMING TOGETHER TO FIGHT FOR LIBERATION
 RED POWER IS NOW!

Vol. 3 (February, 1970)

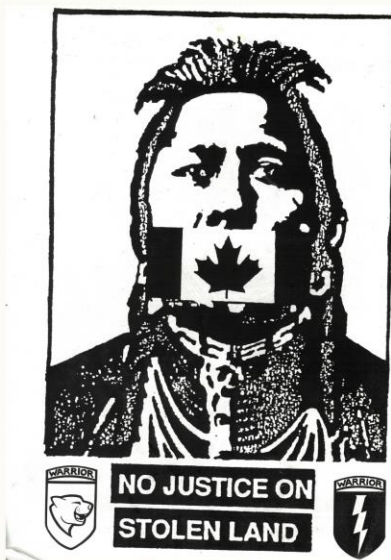


Vol. 1 (September, 1968)



Vol. 5 (February, 1970)

017



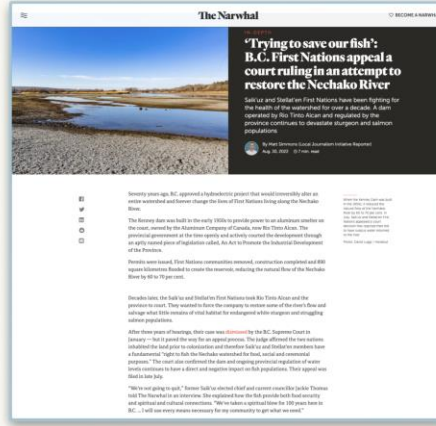
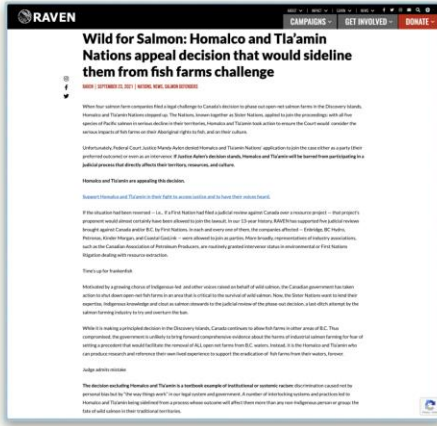
Spring/Summer (2006)



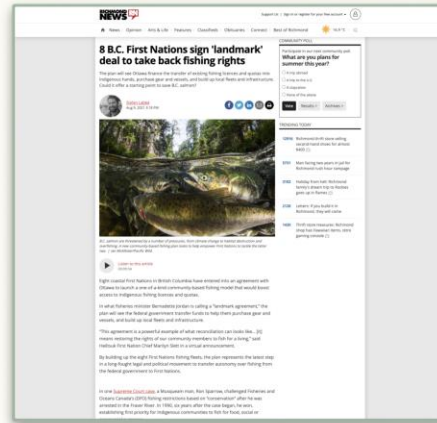
June/July, 1969

018

Online Reporting (2018–Present)



019



020



Credits

Archival research: Cynthia Cui with Rosemary Georgeson,
Jessica Hallenbeck, and Kate Hennessy
Graphic Design: Cynthia Cui
French Translation: Catherine Cui

Special Thanks to:

Gerry Ambers
NARP (Native Alliance for Red Power) Newsletter
Art Gallery of Greater Victoria
Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council
Gulf of Georgia Cannery National Historic Site

Appendix B. GoGCNHS Educational Document

Title of the Exhibition: The Water We Call Home: Indigenous Women's Connections to Water, Fish, and Family Around the Salish Sea

Topic: Stories of Indigenous women's enduring connections to fish, water, and family around the Salish Sea and histories of resistance against imposed colonial fishing policies.

Key Audience: Museum visitors, BC population, Indigenous community members

Key Audience Characteristics: Interest in learning more about Canadian history, fishing relations, and Indigenous histories along the West Coast and Salish Sea; interest in collaborative museum exhibition curation

Goal

Demonstrate the Society's commitment to reconciliation by providing a space for Indigenous communities to share their stories in their own voice.

Objectives:

1. **Learning:** To share how colonial fishing policies have impacted Indigenous people's connections to fish, water, and family and how these have in turn been resisted.
2. **Emotional:** To inspire feelings of empathy, indignation for Indigenous experiences resulting from colonial practices
3. **Behavioural:** To Increase visitors' interest in learning more about Indigenous fishing history, especially in relation to Indigenous women's ongoing connections to fish, water and family

Voice: stories shared by Indigenous people and others directly associated with the project

Tone: Respectful

Big Idea (theme): Disconnection, reconnection, and resistance tied to colonial fishing policies.

Introduction: The project and resulting exhibition are the continuation of a lifetime of research by Coast Salish / Sahtu Dene artist Rosemary Georgeson and emerges from her decade-long collaboration with Dr. Jessica Hallenbeck. The exhibit is co-curated by Georgeson, Hallenbeck, and

Kate Hennessy, features a series of films about the gatherings of an advisory circle of six Indigenous matriarchs, as well as new works in photography, video, and sound by Kali Spitzer, Richard Wilson, and Georgeson. It was originally displayed at the Yellow House Art Centre on Galiano Island from July 23-August 21, 2022, and has been brought across the water to continue sharing the stories of resistance against colonial fishing policies and reconnection with fish, family and water along the Salish Sea.

Sub-themes:

1. Role of Indigenous women in coastal fishing industry
2. Ongoing Indigenous resistance to colonial fishing policies
3. Collaborative methods of video and photography for co-presentation of Indigenous stories and histories

Conclusion: The project that this exhibition represents has helped to bring Indigenous families together again and recognizes their enduring connections through family, fish, and water. Through this work, Indigenous families who were separated because of colonial policies, have reconnected again.

The films and photographs invite visitors to the exhibition to witness this ongoing process.

Means of Expression:

- Main title panel, hung outside front of alcove space. **Text introduces the installation and wider, long-term project.**
- Large TV playing a series of short documentaries about Indigenous women's enduring connections through family, fish, and water. Label panels share the titles and descriptions.
- Audio soundscapes sharing the voices of Indigenous women and project team members as they reconnect and "re-presence" Galiano Island and reflect on their shared histories and contemporary experiences. **Two sets of headphones are available for visitors to put on and listen to the audio. Label panel shares titles and brief content description of audio clips.**
- Photographic panel showing the fishing boat The Georgeson Bay, which belonged to Rosemary Georgeson's family. **Accompanying photo caption/ label includes a quote from Rosemary expressing the importance of this boat to her and her family.**
- A reproduction of a Fishing Areas Chart from the 1980s that shows how the Salish Sea was divided by the Department of Fisheries and Oceans into small areas connected to Indigenous fishing licences that greatly restricted when and where fishing could take place. ***Larger label/ story panel to go with this chart pending.**

- Photographic panels featuring generations of Indigenous women with fish they have caught in the Salish Sea, all printed with specific photo captions.
- Photographs of Indigenous matriarchs and family, and project participants by the artist Kali Spitzer – some printed and hung from gillnet, others displayed in digital slide show on smaller TV. Label panel on front of blue tv stand shares more information about these images.
- Exhibition scrapbook/guide showcasing archival documentation of Indigenous resistance to colonial fishing policies over the years. Guide will also contain aspects of the exhibition (photos of Indigenous women with fish, The Georgeson Bay boat, fishing chart) to provide a more holistic perspective that visitors can read through.
- An installation of SPAM cans that relate to the story shared by Penelakut Elder Auggie Sylvester about Indian Agents giving boxes of SPAM to families when they were not allowed to fish for food. SPAM was the government's replacement for our food source, the food source that we had for thousands of years. An unknown "food source" that we were given to keep us off the water and away from the "Salmon".
- Tablet in corner providing access to the project website with further information about the activities and participants.

Additional Visual Elements:

- Fishing nets
- Fishing lanterns and floats
- Old fishing hooks and lures
- Framed photograph of Sophie, the family matriarch
- Fish Flashers
- Tobacco cans / boxes
- A kitchen table and chairs, teapot, teacups, and tablecloth, inviting visitors to sit down together and listen to the stories being shared

Specific Design Element Notes: This exhibition was designed to showcase a long-term collaborative project that began with archival research to find Rosemary Georgeson's maternal grandmothers. It eventually reconnected family members who had been disconnected from each other. The video documentaries, photographs of the production process, and photographic portraits all present our collaborative process of bringing these stories together on Galiano Island for the project participants and for the museum public. Our hope is that this installation speaks to Indigenous women who have been part of the water and the fishing industry here on the Coast.

Visitor Experience:

- Introspective
- Informative
- Eye-opening
- Educational

Additions:

Heritage Interpreters are encouraged to choose at least one element or aspect of the installation to highlight to visitors if asked to describe the installation beyond the main points outlined above on page 1 of this document. You might, for example, highlight the display of SPAM boxes and related story shared on the "Boxes of SPAM" text panel. Or you might choose to highlight one specific short documentary style films playing on the large TV screen that you have watched and found particularly interesting .

Appendix C. The Iron Chink: Re-framing a Piece of Cannery History



SOURCE INFORMATION:

Date: ca. 1913

Photographer: Todd F. Dundas

Source name: Two Chinese men at Imperial Cannery in Steveston (Vancouver Public Library)

Source content: One man lighting a pipe 'Just a whiff' [opium?] (Vancouver Public Library)

NAME:

Smiling Chinese workers despite facing racism in canneries

STORIES:

Chinese men like these were hired under the *China Contract*, which was a major hiring method used between salmon canneries and Chinese contractors¹. According to Katherine Lam, the *China Contract* was a way to hire people at substantially lower wages². Despite the man on the left smiling, Chinese employees were violent and rioted a lot, complaining about the difficulties of certain types of work¹.

Chinese first started working in canneries in the 1870s because they would work in conditions and for wages that were rejected by white workers; in thirty years, they dominated almost every aspect of cannery work⁴. Despite canneries' dependence on Chinese butchers, there was a lot of racist sentiments towards them that ranged from protest and threats of violence⁴. It is these feelings that leads to the naming of the "Iron Chink", which many cannery owners were attracted to because it would free them from the aforementioned dependence⁴ on Chinese workers and decreased the canneries' costs as well.

The China crews for each cannery lived in residences called "China Houses", which housed between 150–200 people in a large shed-like building³. These men were treated like "units of energy" to be used in production lines³ because of their extraordinary speed and expertise working in the cannery⁵.

1. Stacey, Duncan. 1981. "The China Contract". *The Fisherman*, December 11, 1981.

2. Lam, Katherine. 1988. "The Chinese presence in Steveston." In *Reflections: A Tribute to Steveston's Silver Jubilee*, edited by M.D. Shrives. Silver Jubilee Book Committee, Brenda Balfour, Josten/National School Services, 1981.

3. McKeivill, Hugh W. 1967. *The Salmon People: The Story of Canada's West Coast Salmon Fishing Industry*. Sidney: Gray's Publishing Ltd.

4. O'Bannon, Patrick W. "Technological Change in the Pacific Coast Canned Salmon Industry, 1900-1925: A Case Study." *Agricultural History* 56, no. 1 (1982): 151-66. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/3742306>.

5. Debeck, Ned. 1973. "Memories Series." Transcript by Ned Debeck. January 10, 1973.



Chinese Shore Workers

A short history of Chinese cannery employees on BC's Coast

Completed as part of my directed readings with Hannah Turner in her INFO 301 class, this website explores the largely forgotten histories of Chinese cannery workers on British Columbia's West Coast in its early years.

Through the use of photographs and narrative, I aim to tell the "other" histories of machinery such as the Iron Butcher (historically known as the Iron Chink), in addition to the working conditions within canneries for Chinese workers. I feel a strong connection to this topic because of my heritage; in all my years growing up on the West Coast, I have seen very little exhibits or histories about the large Chinese presence in canneries. Many exhibitions or historical collections of early Chinese migrants chronicle their participation in the Gold Rush and the building of the Railway, but rarely or never in industries such as fishing, mining, or lumber.

I explore this topic in relation to *The Water We Call Home*, an exhibition currently on display at the Gulf of Georgia Cannery National Historic Site in Steveston that shares the stories of female indigenous fishermen and their re-connection to water and fish. This counter-tour acts as an initial step towards developing my personal connection to You may visit the website [here](#) to learn more and view the scrapbook I designed.

CREDITS

I extend my heartfelt thanks to Dovellet at the City of Richmond Archives and Heidi at the Gulf of Georgia National Historic Site for their help in my archival research and allowing me to access my people's histories in Canada.



SOURCE INFORMATION:

Date: ca. 1950s

Part of: British Columbia Packers Limited fonds (*City of Richmond Archives*)

Source content: Chinese men operating a salmon heading machine in a salmon cannery. (*City of Richmond Archives*)

NAME:

Chinese workers forced to operate machines that pushed their countrymen out of canneries and into unemployment.

CONTENT:

Before the Chinese were responsible for operating machines such as this one and the "Iron Chink" created by Edmund A. Smith in 1903¹, they were the ones responsible for almost every aspect of cannery work. This was because they were more often willing to work for lower wages and worst conditions than what was asked for by the whites². An area where they excelled was butchering, where skilled workers could clean almost 2,000 fish in a ten-hour work day². Clean salmon was also necessary for the machines to run, making butchering the most important obstacle and bottleneck in the canneries. Because of this, the more skilled Chinese butchers were in high demand, making up to fifty dollars a month, which was twice of the average worker¹.

Despite their high demand, Chinese cannery workers were often exploited. Contractors would often return to China at the end of the summer², leaving the cannery crews with no wages for their summer's work. Coupled with the Japanese working population, both of which were welcomed into Canada to work—and be exploited—, these two became the targets of an anti-Asiatic movement in BC², which sometimes erupted into violence and is a blemish on this province's history.

Because of their high wages, cannery owners began to seek out ways to release them from their dependence on Chinese butchers. Individuals and companies started to develop machines that could produce the same results as the hand butchers without taking up too much space, and it isn't until the "Iron Chink" of Edmund A. Smith that canneries are able to adopt fish-cleaning machines fully¹. Smith's machine was the only one that met both of the aforementioned requirements and within five years of its appearance, it replaced all other competitors¹. The Iron Chink was attractive to both cannery owners and Chinese contractors; the former no longer had to rely on Chinese butchers, lowering their labour costs, and the latter were able to put together cheaper cannery crews because only unskilled workers were necessary to operate the machines¹.

Of course, the name "Iron Chink" was a racist and derogatory term that reflected the general sentiments towards Chinese at that time; their presence in canneries were usually met with protest and sometimes



TOP ROW, LEFT:

Date: 2013 (*City of Richmond Archives*)

Title: Lam Ling (*City of Richmond Archives*)

TOP ROW, RIGHT:

Date: ca. 1991 (*City of Richmond Archives*)

Content: Property owned by the Hong Wo Company is outlined in red in this cutout from the 1936 Waterworks Atlas. Buildings in the image include the pickle factory, greenhouses, bunkhouses and the store at the lower left. (*City of Richmond Archives*)

BOTTOM ROW:

Date: ca. 1987 (*City of Richmond Archives*)

Content: Stock on the shelves at the Hong Wo Store. At its peak the store employed as many as 9 clerks. (*City of Richmond Archives*)

NAME:

Ancient Chinese Store part of local Steveston history forgotten with the passage of time

STORIES:

Hong Wo, meaning "Peace Together", was a general store in Steveston that opened in 1895, owned by Lam Ling¹—it sold everything from soft drinks to fishing gear. Lam Ling first came to Canada as a teen² in the late 19th century, where he worked in Victoria before moving to Steveston¹. I would characterise Lam Ling as a real businessman and hustler: prior to opening his store, he taught himself how to bake bread and sold them door-to-door¹. According to his daughter, Jessie Lam, he only ever took two holidays in his life: to look for seeds in California¹.

In addition to the Hong Wo store, he also owned farmland where he grew vegetables and fruits for wholesale, and his farms were the largest producers of cucumbers for dill pickles on the Canadian West Coast¹. Lam Ling Holdings owned approximately fifteen acres of land and thirty greenhouses¹. Because of the large amount of cucumbers his farms produced, Lam Ling also designed a machine for sorting these crops¹. He really defined himself as an integral part of Steveston's community, becoming a contractor for two canneries, connecting them to Chinese workers².

When Hong Wo closed in 1971, the Steveston Historical Society tried to declare it a heritage site but ultimately failed, and the building was demolished in 1977 because of its deterioration and risk of catching fire². This result, coupled with the fact that Steveston was only a place for seasonal work, not permanent residence³, means that the area has lost a lot of its Chinese history and signs of their impact in Steveston. Nowadays, the only knowledge of the Chinese who tolled in the canneries is lost in the memories of a few