

Unveiling Ceremony – Penelakut Panels Fernwood – May 17th



Visitors from Penelakut people at the unveiling ceremony - Fernwood - May 17th



Nancy Wigen sharing her stories growing up on North Beach Road

We are the Penelakut People

Lhimulh, tu Pune'luxutth' Mustimuhw We are the Penelakut People

Spune'luxutth

Hwumelhtsu

Hwth'isutsun

Piq'unup

Salt Spring Island

Xetthequm

Galliano Island

Pune'luxutth' 'uwuwu o' skwthe's 'ul. Tu shtunni'iw's tst ni thi swe's tumuhw.

Penelakut is not just an island - our territory is vast.

Shawni'Wyo Jill Harris

Tu tl'elhum qa' nilh shelh'tu Hwulmuhw Mustimuhw kws nuhwulh'a'lhs, hwu'ulmun shwxte's, shwuhwets' 'u tu skwukwuthe 'ula'ulh 'u tu sunihwulhs.

The water was our highway where our people traveled, back and forth between the islands in our canoes.

Xwixwiyulnat Margaret James



Mary Rice, paddling with her daughter and granddaughter. Photo: David MacKenzie



Mask by Nanulucanahw Glen Edwards

Tu Edwards S'ts'lnhutsumat ni pe' t'hwaa'h ni 'utl' Stie'lan - Booth Bay, I Shiya'hwat - Ganges Harbour. Eelhtun sh't'es souq'ip, tsukwul'ulqum' 'u tu poots'li'q'ulum' tu nts'a' suxul'inet ni'ukwtheys'thuts, hwi'hwayum 'u tu s'axwa' ni Vancouver.

Stie'lan

The Edwards families used to dig clams at Stie'lan - Booth Bay, and at Shiya'hwat - Ganges Harbour. They would follow each other on boats and camp for a week at each site, then sell the clams in Vancouver.

Xwalapoye Florence Edwards

S'yuhaye'mun

Lucy Peatson of Penelakut was one of many Indigenous women who married Salt Spring settlers. She lived at Fernwood with her husband, Henry Sampson, on land he gained through preemption, a colonial system which permitted settlers to clear the land and then buy it at a low price. Descendants of Lucy and Henry's many children continue to live on Salt Spring. Charlie and Ken Sampson remember their father Chester speaking Hul'q'umi'num with Penelakut relatives.



Lucy Peatson 1846 - 1907 from The Family of Sampson Photo: Ken Peatson, 2014

Tus tu skwins kwunus nem 'utl' Tl'elhum tuqnuhw tsun st'e' o' niin hunumut. Tu Sulhween tst nilh shtunni' iws. Shhw's hakwush'us tu skthe', tuinulh Tl'elhum. I' tst o' I' 'utu na'. I' tst hwulh o' I, shiwh' tst se' yath.

Every time I come to Salt Spring I feel like I'm home. Our ancestors lived here, travelled through here and utilized the area. We were here, we're here now and we always will be.

Tsumiqunum Kenneth B. Thomas

Nem'ulh tsun nem kwamuthelum 'u nu sulsilu, ni hwu nemuthelum'ul' kwthu q'iq'uthelum ni 'utu qulumewt-hws skwep' kwulh. Ni 'uwuwu niin xwum tatulut tu swe 'tst sqwal. Wulh tus' u tu tth'ukwulshse' sil'anum I tsun hwun ta'lut tu syuwen tst.

I was going to be raised by my grandparents but instead I was incarcerated at the residential school. So I didn't get the opportunity to learn our language. Now at around seventy years old I'm still learning our culture.

Myrus Johns



The Kuper Island Industrial School, ca. 1947. Photo: Secretary General of the Department

I tsun smeth'un kwunus eenthu. I tsun smeth'un tu shtunni' iws nu S'ts'lnhutsumat. Ni tst th'namut I' kwus hwi'hway'luqnalum, ni st'ul'uhw. Nilh kwulh I tsun o' I' tun'a kweyul.

I am proud to be who I am. I am proud of where my family comes from and I'm proud of my heritage. We have survived and all their efforts have failed, because I am here today.

Delmar Johnnie

The Kuper Island Industrial School on nearby Penelakut Island operated from 1889 to 1975. Generations of children were denied their families and their culture. Survivors speak of severe punishment for speaking their language, extensive physical and sexual abuse, constant humiliation and language extirpation. They were addressed by number rather than by name. In 2019 the National Centre for Truth and Reconciliation named 150 children who died at the school, and as of 2021 Penelakut Tribe reported over 160 unmarked graves on the site.



Penelakut Island Elementary School. Photo: Local News Service

S'aa'lh sule'uhw tsw'e' e'ut tuqnuhwus qux I' hwu tus 'utl' l'nhimulh swe' tst yusuleluhwrhut kwunet I' shhwunumstuhw, I' hulistuhw tu shqwalun I' tu syu'wen. I' tst ni tsul'uthut. 'Tse' l'nhimulh.

Our Elders have been through so much, and now it's up to our generation to keep it going, to revive the language and the culture. And we're doing it. We are.

Quw'hemuluc'People Charlie



Land-based learning in the Penelakut Experiential Education Program. Photo: Dawn Young-Thompson

Welcome to Tl'elhum

Shwuiinus I' tu Tl'elhum Welcome to Tl'elhum

Tl'elhum, sne's tuinuh kwus tl'elhum shq'elu. 'U ch kwunum, qaqt kw qa kwus luts'luts' tu qa, ni tse' pe' tleelhum. Nih kwthu Sulhween tst 'ulh hunutus tu i Tl'elhum.

Tl'elhum, it means salt spring, after a little spring near here that was sometimes salty. If you get a drink of water when the tide is too high, it's going to be salty. So our old people called this place Tl'elhum.

Thilum Gene August Sylvester

Tu Pune'luxutth Mustimuhw hwun'a' I 'u tu 'i'upnets sil'anum. Tu Sulhween tst teyqu mukw 'untsu, tu i 'na Tl'elhum skwthe shni's. Eelhtun a'luxutus tu s'a'xwa, stseelhtun I' shaxuns. Ni thuluqtus tu tumuhw I tl'elhum q'a 'u kwthu sht'unuxuns siiyeyu's.

The Penelakut People have been here for thousands of years. Our ancestors moved around and Salt Spring is one of the areas where they lived. They harvested clams, fish and herbs for medicinal purposes, sharing the lands and waters with our neighbouring relations.

Penelakut Sulxwe'en (Elders)

Tu ts'lh Hwulmuhw tst ni tsi Lelum ni 'u tu tuyt tun'a skwthe, ni 'u tu puq' tsuwmun. Tu ts'lh Hwulmuhw tst shni's tun' i 'u tu inulhxwte' Fernwood I' t'ahw tu i S'yuhuye'mun - Walker Hook. Nih shni tst 'u tu sil'anum. I' tst o' hwun' I' huythum 'u tu sxw'em tst.

Our people had longhouses up the north end of this island, at P'q'unup, meaning "white beaches". Our people lived right here along Fernwood and down to S'yuhuye'mun - Walker Hook. We stayed here all year round. We're still here, telling our story.

Thilum Gene August Sylvester



The longhouses along the northern shores of Salt Spring would have looked similar to this house at Penelakut circa the 1920s. Photo: Museum of Vancouver collection, P1-19-01

Tu Tumuhw xulh stunug's tun' i 'u tu qw'a wum qa, shqaqul st'a'tlo, I' tu sta'lo, mukw stem 'u sht'ewun kwus lhuqw'. Tu selts' tumuhw ni tshuw' nus kwu tst 'uyyet tu qa: Tu 'uhwiin st'l'iqulh, tu Sulhween tst nuwun talum 'uy'uyumut s-hekwmat' tst ni 'u tu tumuhw. Nih shtuni's kw tst sni'nuw mukw stem ni hulistuhw'ut, I xeelu, I' tu Mustimuhw.

The land is fed by the streams, ponds and rivers, everything you can think of that has moisture. The earth benefits from how we treat the water. As little children, our Elders gave us beautiful memories on the land. And from those came a respect and a value for all living things, including humans.

Thiyas Florence James

Mukw shni' tst, o' niis iqw, nih o' shnistum's kwus punutum's. Ni tst kwulh 'aam' ukw Slemstum I' s-a'lh stum kwulh.

Wherever we lived, if we lost someone, that's where we buried them, and we ask that people show honour and respect.

Kwawuy'ul'usnet Marquet, James



Washim Coia Modeste



Penelakut Elders and their supporters arriving at S'yuhuyemun, 4km south of Fernwood Hook. Photo: Paul Kelly

S'yuhuye'men - Walker Hook

In 2003 Penelakut Elders and Salt Spring Islanders joined together in a fight to protect an ancient burial ground at Walker Hook, threatened when a land-based fish hatchery applied for a provincial permit to discharge effluent into this registered archaeological site. The permit was granted and during construction of the discharge system, the remains of at least thirteen individuals were disturbed. Penelakut Tribe and other groups appealed to the Environmental Appeal Board, on the grounds of inadequate consultation with First Nations and that the approval unjustly infringed upon their constitutionally-protected right to protect their dead from desecration. The appeal failed, but strong links were forged between the Penelakut and Salt Spring communities that continue to this day.

Donna Martin was a central force in bringing awareness and solidarity to this issue. The Donna Martin Legacy Fund was established by her family to honour her vision and commitment. These panels are supported in part by that fund.

