

# Some of the Traditional Territories of the Lekwungen

The City of Victoria and adjoining territory has been occupied by Aboriginal people for over 400 years. The Songhees and Esquimalt First Nations people are a part of the Coast Salish ethnic group and descendants of the following family groups: Kakyaakan, Teechamitsa, Whyomilth, Kosampsom, Swenwhung, Chilcowitch and Chekonein. Their ancestors lived in large cedar houses, in extended family groups that were self-governing. All household groups claimed specific living areas and areas where they could hunt, fish, and collect plants.

They occupied the area from Albert Head to Cordova Bay to the San Juan Islands. The language spoken was a dialect known as the Lekwungen. Listed below are just a few of the many locations that are of particular importance to the Songhees and Esquimalt people.

## 1. Albert Head

*Tleepet.* This was traditional Songhees land. The Stsanges people lived by the lagoon here, near the western end of Songhees territory. It was a well known fishing area.

## 2. Esquimalt Harbour

*Whyomilth.* This area of West side of Esquimalt Harbour was occupied by the Whyomilth family group. The East side of the harbour was claimed by the Kosampson people, who were to become the present Esquimalt people.

## 3. Portage Inlet

A. Craigflower Creek on the portage inlet was known as *Pulkwut-sang*, "the place of Ghost." At one time large number of Coho Salmon ran up the Gorge.

B. The Craigflower Schoolhouse was established in 1854 and was used as a one-room school for settlers' children until 1911. Before this time it was part of the Kosampson people's land. In an archeological dig concluded in 1994, two dog skeletons were found, one was probably the type from which the fur was used to weave blankets, and the other large type was used for hunting. This is at the corner of Gorge Road and Admirals Road.

## 4. The Gorge

*Camossung.* The Gorge was once known as *Camossung*, named after a girl who was turned into stone at the Gorge Falls. This is where the name for Camosun College comes from. The Kosampson People used this site. There is a shell midden site over 4000 years old located under the south side of the Tillicum Bridge, at Kinsmen Park off of Tillicum Road.

## 5. West-side Victoria Harbour

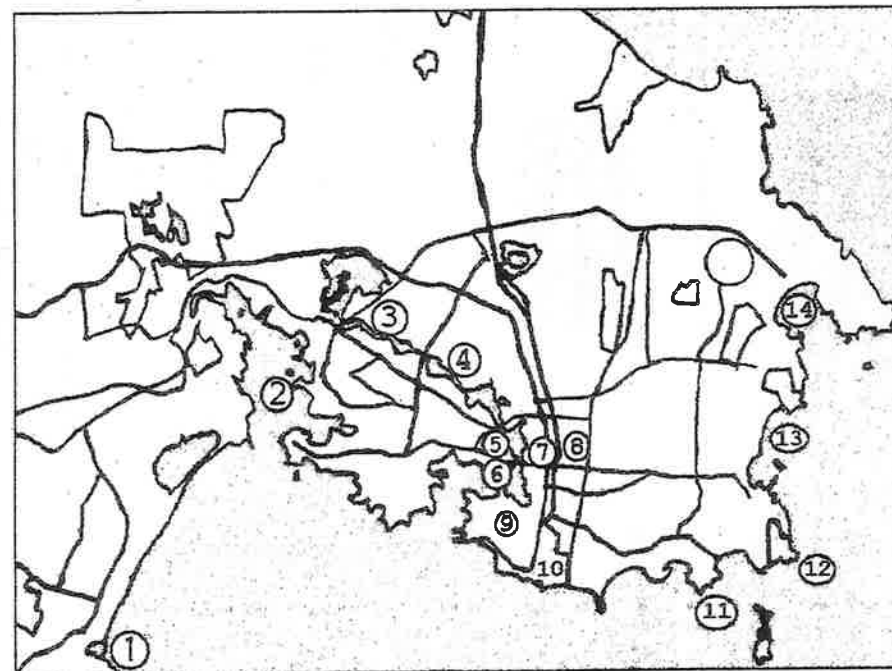
In 1844, the Songhees people built their village along the west shore of the Inner Harbour. This became a reserve in 1853 and the main Songhees village when they moved in 1911. The present day Ocean Point resort was built on the location of the house owned by Cheetlam George. Songhees long houses once covered the shoreline from Songhees Point to the north side of what is now the Johnson Street Bridge.

## 6. Songhees Point

*Pallastsis.* Pallastsis is the Songhees name for this point of rock at the entrance to Victoria Harbour. Pallastsis means "place of cradle." This is located where the Commonwealth pole now stands. This was a sacred place for the Songhees people. When their children learned to walk, they would place their cradles along this point to ensure their children a long life.

## 7. Fort Victoria

*Fort Camosun.* Fort Victoria, first known as Fort Camosun, was founded in 1843 by Sir James Douglas. The Songhees people contributed their labour to the building of the Fort. The Fort was located where Bastion Square is today. This is located off Wharf Street.



## 8. Downtown Victoria

*Kuo-sing-el-as.* This Songhees name means place of strong fiber, a reference to the Pacific Willow. The inner bark was used to make fishing lines, which were attached with stone net weights.

## 9. James Bay

*Whosaykum* "clay" or "muddy place" The Songhees people camped near the present St. Ann's Academy while collecting camas bulbs on Beacon Hill and crabs from the bay, which is now filled in. The Empress Hotel sits on what used to be part of the bay.

## 10. Beacon Hill

*Meegan*, "warmed by the sun" This is "where people sat to have their bellies warmed by the sun." This is also where people play a field hockey-like game called qoqwalls. Camas bulbs, a starchy food much like potatoes, were collected on Beacon Hill. The point below the hill was used as a defensive village site. The people that lived here buried their dead in cairns. The restored cairns can still be seen on the hillside. These date back through the past 1,000 years. Housepost marking found here date as recently as 300 years old. This is off Circle Drive in Beacon Hill Park.

## 11. Harling Point

*Sahsima* "harpoon" The name recognizes a special event in Lekwungen peoples' history. The transformer Haylas performed an act of creation, turning a seal harpooner into stone. This is also the location where part of two ancient continents, Wrangellia and Leech River terrain, collided. You can see where they met: on one side is pale green chert rock and on the other is dark basalt. Located on the end of Crescent Road off of King George Terrace.

## 12. Gonzales Point

*Kukeeluk.* The name meaning "place of war," is from a village on this point. It is believed that the hill was a look-out point for the Chilcowitch people who live on McNeil Bay. The waters were so swift here that people passing in canoes were not allowed to speak. From Anderson Hill, one can see much of Haro Strait, the neighbouring islands and nearby points. The bay was called Chikawich, meaning "big hips," because it is shaped like a large posterior. Anderson hill can be found on Island Road off of Newport Avenue.

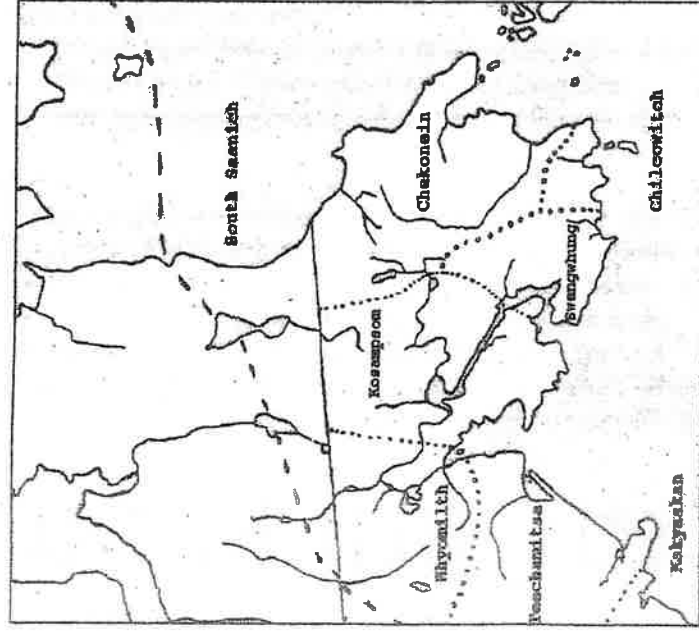
## 13. Willows Beach

*Sitchamalth.* The name refers to drift logs and trees that lodge themselves in the sand. It is the site of a former village occupied by a people of the same name. parts of this site dated back 2, 700 years. From the beach, one can see the Discovery Islands and Chatham Island or *Tlchless* meaning simply, "island." This island belonged to the Skingeenis People before Victoria was founded and they returned to their territory at the height of the small pox epidemic in 1862. Willows Beach can be found on Dalhousie Street off of Beach Drive.

## 14. Cadboro Bay

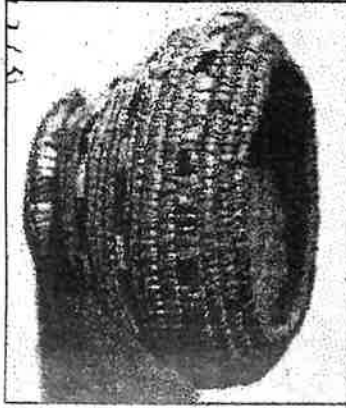
*Sungayka* "snowpatches." The site of the present day Royal Victoria Yacht Club is a former village site. The small peninsula next to it was an Aboriginal fort. At the north end was another village (now Gyro Park), where during low tide people would play qoqwalls on the sandy beach. this is the village of *Chee-al-thuc*, known as King Freezy. King Freezy was a prominent chief named for his curly hair. Cadboro Bay was the principal village for the Chekonein people before they moved over to Songhees Point with the other family groups. This is at the end of Sinclair Street, off Cadboro Bay Road.

## The Lekwungen Family Groups Traditional Territories



Traditional foods in this area included many types salmon: sockeye, spring, coho, chum and pink. Other common foods were clams, crab, oysters, eel, seal, octopus, heron eggs, seaweed, whale, duck, elk, deer, pheasant, berries, crabapples, cherries, camas roots and many kinds of herbs. The herbs were a source of nutrients and were also used for medicinal purposes.

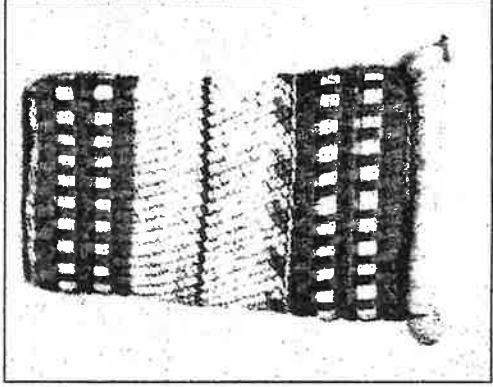
but are no longer for everyday use. made today by many natives artists, cedar were used to weave such things as baskets and capes. These are still brushes. The roots and bark of the bailers, baskets, head pieces, hats, totem poles, spindle whorls and paint were able to make many things such as clothing, capes, blankets, towels, diapers, canoes, paddles, canoe



# Red and Yellow Cedar

Cedar is a part of the Cyprus family of trees. It grows well in damp and shady forests. Cedar has a soft, light and straight grain which makes it easy to carve and work with. The cedar tree was and still is sacred to the

Lekwungen peoples. From the cedar tree our ancestors



Haylas and his companions Raven and Mink came across two men harpooning seals off of Harling Point. One harpooner got upset because they were scaring away a seal he was hunting. Haylas turned him into stone just as he was to throw his harpoon, and made him boss over the seals.

You can still see the harpooner in the form of a large boulder on the beach at Harling Point.

## Legend of Harling Point

She refused many things, but duck, herring, coho and oyster she accepted and that is why these were plentiful on the Gorge waterway. Because she was greedy, Haylas told her she would look after the food resources for her people and turned her into stone. He also turned her grandfather into stone.

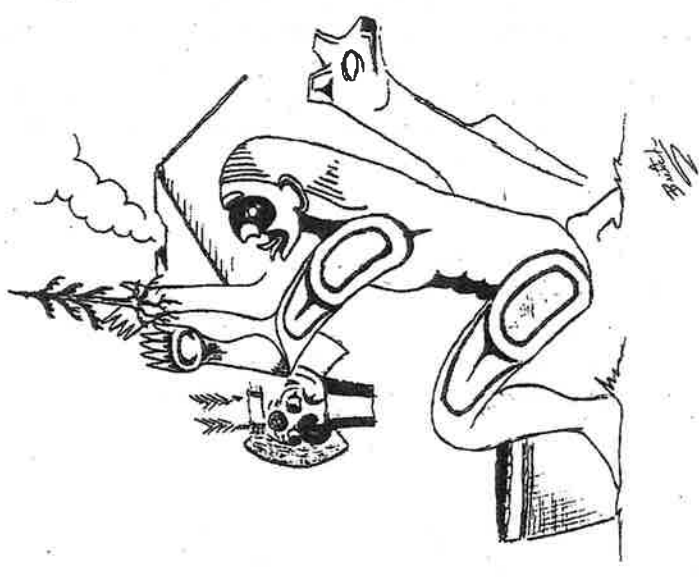
Haylas asked her if she liked sturgeon, and when she answered, "No," he threw the sturgeon to the Fraser River. That is why there are sturgeon there and not here. He asked her if she liked cranberries and when she answered, "No," he threw them into the Shawinigan Lake. That is why there are cranberries there now.

They found a young girl and her grandfather. She was crying, so Haylas asked her why. She answered, "My Father is angry with me, and will not give me anything to eat."

After the flood, the Transformer Haylas was travelling with Raven and Mink teaching the people how things were to be done.

## Legend of Camosun

## Lekwungen People



## The Traditional Territory of the Songhees and Esquimalt People



Songhees First Nation



Esquimalt First Nation

Butch Dick, Lekwungen/Songhees Band

"Thank you, Cedar" (cover):

Butch Dick, Lekwungen/Songhees Band

Maltwood Museum

Victoria Native Friendship Centre

Grant Keddy, Royal B. C. Museum

Special Thanks:

Te'mexw Treaty Association

Cultural Services

Victoria Heritage Society

Songhees Band

Sponsors:

Cheryl Bryce, Lekwungen/Songhees Band

Jenny Godwin, Te'mexw Treaty Assoc.

Layout:

Cheryl Bryce, Lekwungen/Songhees Band

Brenda Sam, Penelakut Band

Special thanks...

and

Credits

Researchers: