



# ACKNOWLEDGING THE TERRITORY AND PEOPLE

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*Today the area between Victoria and Cambie, roughly encompassing the DTES and Grandview-Woodlands, has the highest proportion of Indigenous people in the city, home to Coast Salish Musqueam, Tsleil-waututh, and Skw̓x̓ wú7mesh (Squamish) people.*



2013 MARKS 100 YEARS OF DISPLACEMENT  
AND DISPOSSESSION OF KITSLANO  
COMMUNITY

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For the first decades of Vancouver's colonial history, from roughly 1870 - 1900, Indigenous people lived on and off reserves throughout the city. One urban reserve was the Kitsilano Reserve (Senákw) located under the south side of present day Burrard bridge. By 1903 it was estimated that twenty-some families lived on the reserve.



## STANDING ON OUR GROUND

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❖ In the previous decades the colonial state had forced Indigenous people from the Musqueam, Squamish and Tsleil-Waututh territories onto small reserves throughout the Lower Mainland. But by the early 20th century the colonial powers wanted to expropriate even those small bases of land -- including the Kitsilano Reserve, to put to “better and more productive use” to the land than an small Indigenous homeland.



## KNOWLEDGE IS POWER

- ❖ The small population of the Kitsilano reserve unanimously opposed all efforts to displace them. However, within a decade the population was forcibly removed in 1913 by the provincial government.
- ❖ In 1913 -- exactly one hundred years ago from this year -- the heads of the families living on the reserve were pressured to sign their own displacement contract in return for petty compensation under threats and intimidation from the provincial government and Attorney General W.J Bowser.



## HISTORY IS A STORYTELLER AND IT DEPENDS ON THE TELLER'S LOCATION

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❖ Khelsilem Rivers had a great grandfather who was 21 years old when he was displaced from Senákw. Today Rivers is a local Squamish community organizer who focuses on decolonization and Indigenous language revitalization, and he tells the story of displacement vividly: "We had a community that had been for generations living over in the Kitsilano area, over there close to the planetarium and present day Vanier Park. And in 1911 there were eleven families living there, government authorities came in and they told those eleven families: 'We're going to give you some cash. You have to get on this barge and we're going to ship you out and we're buying the land from you. And if you don't leave, we're going to forcibly move you, or kill you.'"

FALSE CREEK PEOPLE BEING MOVED TO A  
BARGE 1913





A decorative scrollwork border in a light gray color frames the entire page. The border features intricate floral and vine patterns, with larger, more complex designs at the top and bottom centers, and smaller, simpler designs at the corners and along the sides. The background is a solid dark gray.

## COLONIAL POSITION

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- ❖ With the eviction of Kitsilano reserve, Attorney General, Bowser proclaimed that the “eyesore to the citizens of Vancouver for many years and hindrance to the development of the city” was finally gone.
- ❖ Significantly, he added that the dispossession marked “one of the best real estate transactions ever carried out in the province.”

# REFERENCES & CREDIT

❖ All of the information on the Kitslano Reserve was researched and compiled by rabble (July 2013) at this link:

❖ <http://rabble.ca/blogs/bloggers/mainlander/2013/07/city-perpetual-displacement-100-years-destruction-kitsilano-reserv>