

Thank you Elder Darryl Brass for the prayer blessing.

Thank you Nicole, I am grateful for your introductions and am honoured to be here.

Oki 大家好我係馬鳳齡 Hello everyone. My name is Fung Ling Feimo.

I would like to take this opportunity to acknowledge the traditional territories of the Blackfoot and the people of the Treaty 7 region in Southern Alberta.

I acknowledge that I am a settler on these lands and am grateful to have a home here.

I also wish to acknowledge the kindness that the First Nations have shown to the early Chinese settlers. Thank you for having us here.

the utility box artwork, the Harry Hays Building.

I curated and produced the utility box artwork

working with four different artists

Just one block west, a utility box I shared with seth cardinal dodginghorse

seth named his piece, Truth BEFORE Reconciliation.

He talked about the siege at Fort Calgary led by his ancestor, Chief Bullhead. About the pass system.

Through the artwork, seth was able to invite Chief Bullhead and his wife back to the bank of the Bow River, in today's Chinatown.

To me, it was a small step towards learning the truth BEFORE reconciliation.

a small step towards reconnecting with the First Peoples.

share with you a couple of stories from Southern Alberta and BC about the history of the Chinese and the First Peoples.

The railway was started in 1881 and it was finished in 1885.

Some early Chinese settlers arrived even well before the railway construction project, during the first BC gold rush.

biggest wave would have been in the 1880s when they built the CPR transcontinental railway

both First Nations and the Chinese worked on the railway together.

They were all promised passage home that didn't happen

When the railway was completed, workers were abandoned in remote areas where unknown numbers died.

Elder Norman Running Rabbit of Siksika Nation heard stories about many young Chinese teen workers building the tracks for the CPR.

Chinese people were starving and dying at a young age during that period.

Siksika people came across sick and dead Chinese bodies along the side of the railroad.

The sick ones were brought back to Siksika.

Norman added, "When the railroad went through the Reserve, and when it was completed; the Chinese started arriving and wanted to stay and live on Nation land."

Norm said they got along, 'cause shared many same values, beliefs.

Believe that respecting older generations is very important.

Respect for elders and ancestors.

Also share values of generosity

Shared early history building the railroad

Mutual trust and respecting elders played a vital part, how First Nations and Chinese people got along.

Some Chinese people were being initiated into 'Prairie Chicken Society', a prestigious society.

Norman said the First Nations never discriminated others.

"Instead, they shopped more at the Chinese stores."

The Siksika and Chinese got along in Cluny.

When mutual trusts were established well between them
given their similar values

life became simple.

A **ration** of \$8.00 a month was distributed to each Nation member

Norman recalled that the Chinese merchants would allow Siksika customers to take what they need

on credit – sometimes by just writing down on a pad what they took and paid the bill later.

When they got to know each other 'just help yourself you know where it is'

"the Chinese hunted and fished a lot on the reserve".

They didn't have to worry about getting fishing and hunting licenses.

"If the Chinese were questioned they would say they were gifts from Siksika."

natural understanding and a natural bond between First Nations and Chinese.

In Small Towns Surrounding Siksika Nation

Norman knew the Chinese people who lived in the **nearby towns** surrounding Siksika Nation.

Places like Vulcan, Bassano, and Gleichen.

Hong Louie worked as a cook for the farmers in Cluny, and later established a general store.

There were only two Chinese families in Cluny at the time, Hong Louie and the Quong family.

Quong owned a store. Charlie Quong offered work to Norman's dad and brother

They were both carpenters, they had work to renovate the store
Norman's dad also drove to deliver food supplies.

In addition, They had the liberty of helping themselves to the store." Norman's dad would tell Charlie Quong 'I took this much'

Only line of work for the Chinese: grocery stores, farms, laundries and restaurants.

"Because of race, you cannot do anything else or work with other people except the Chinese" Ben Yee

The exception being between the First Nations and the Chinese. Their mutual respect and trust allowed them to work together socialize as neighbours.

(the team also interviewed the Chinese family that Norman talked about) From the Hong Louie descendants

Hong Louie set up shop in Cluny and spoke the Blackfoot language. Married Nellie, a woman from BC who was of mixed Chinese and Chinook ancestry, they had nine children.

Given the gov't's commitment to maintaining racial balance, created laws against interracial marriage

But only for some races.

resulted in *a declining, aging population*.

The Chinese were not legally permitted to marry outside their race. Before the Immigration reforms of 1967, there were only a handful of Chinese families who lived in Chinatown, with wives

With the Head Tax and later the Chinese Exclusion Act, single Chinese females became almost non-existent in Canada.

some Chinese men married Indigenous women.

Henry, one of the nine children of Hong Louie, claimed he had Treaty Rights, though his card has never been found.

Henry was very proud of his **blended roots**.

He would not have been considered Indigenous, by the government, otherwise he would have been in the residential schools.

There were separate schools in the area, one for the Siksika Nation and one in Cluny for everyone else

A Catholic mission on the Reserve housed and taught the Blackfoot children.

Despite being schooled separately, the Hong children developed many close friendships with their Blackfoot neighbours.

Chinese children mingled with the Siksika children and played together.

Norman said, "They treated us so good the Chinese fed us. Some of the Chinese children had bikes and Aboriginal children had horses. So we traded bikes and horses."

Siksika Nation was very generous and welcomed the Chinese.

They learned the Blackfoot language and were invited to fish and hunt on Nation land.

And the Blackfoot people also worked off the Reserve integral part of the Cluny community.

The two communities supported one another.

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Here's another story from the Lower Mainland, in BC.

Elder Larry Grant and his three siblings were excluded from attending residential school.

Because the govt deemed he was a Chinese citizen even though he was born near the Fraser River, in BC to a Musqueam mother, and Chinese immigrant father.

Their father was Hong Tim Hing, a Chinese migrant who came to Vancouver in 1920.

Hong Tim Hing settled on the Reserve.

He worked and lived at his father's Chinese market farm located at Musqueam Indian Reserve No. 2. This farm was situated on leased land that belonged to Seymour Grant.

Hong later married Agnes Grant through an arranged marriage, something that was common in both cultures at the time.

they would have four children, but the Indian Act prevented them from legally living together.

Even while Hong laboured at the farm on the Reserve, he was living in a bunkhouse with other Chinese workers.

Hardly saw his children

Unable to share a home, Agnes mostly lived among her own people on the Musqueam Territory.

Later Hong Tim Hing lived in Chinatown, same situation

Grant children lived with their mother on the Musqueam reserve. They were raised with the help of their grandfather and the wider community.

During his childhood, the Canadian government forced him and his three siblings to eventually move away

from their Musqueam home to live with their father and paternal relatives in Vancouver's Chinatown.

Govt also stripped away their Status under the Indian Act because their father was not Aboriginal.

Which actually spared them from Residential Schools.

At the time, Larry Grant as a child didn't understand why his cousins could attend residential school but he was excluded.

He would ask his mother 'why'.

The cousin's fathers were from various parts of Europe, and all the cousins attended residential school.

By contrast, Larry was raised on the Reserve

was taught life skills like building a home, building a boat, carving a canoe, hunting and fishing.

When the cousins eventually returned home, they lacked that knowledge.

And the lasting impact of residential schools affected them well into their adult life.

The Indian Act forced the Grant family to live apart

the family was divided between Chinatown and the Musqueam Reserve. The children were shuffled between those two places.

Though he was considered Chinese by the Canadian govt, Larry was culturally Musqueam.

Since his retirement, Larry Grant has been a Musqueam Elder, He is also an Elder-In-Residence at the UBC First Nations House of

Learning, and an Adjunct Professor in UBC's First Nations and Endangered Languages Program

Through the interconnected histories of Chinese and First Nations communities

We saw how reciprocal relationships were formed,

How they were supporting one another.

the cooperation between Chinese and First Nations in early Alberta and B.C. history.

We can become so much stronger and healthier.

Let's Reinvigorate the ties

develop the kinship between Indigenous and the Chinese and others.

We need to Relearn the Truth. for our Reconciliation journey.

Thank you, for listening.