

BACKGROUND INFORMATION: FIRST NATIONS OF BRITISH COLUMBIA



Haida Poles, Ramp to Great Hall, Museum of Anthropology. Photo: Goh Iromoto.

MOA AND FIRST NATIONS PEOPLES

The Museum of Anthropology is best known for its collections from the **indigenous** peoples of British Columbia. In this area where they have lived for at least ten thousand years, they developed a complex social and ceremonial life, as well as artistic traditions that others around the world have come to appreciate and respect. **(Note: terms in bold are explained further in the “Glossary of Terms related to School Programs” and “Glossary of Terms related to First Nations Issues” sections of this package.)**

FIRST NATIONS YESTERDAY AND TODAY

Today, there are more than 196,075 **First Nations** people living in British Columbia. Many live in communities situated in ancestral territories; others live in urban areas. Small parcels of land designated as **Reserves** were created during the establishment of the British Colonies in 1849 and 1858, and their union with Canada in 1871.

The creation of Reserves by presiding governments was, and continues to be, a very controversial issue, as are other restrictive measures imposed on First Nations peoples by the **Indian Act** of 1868 – only some of which have since been repealed in recent years. Today, First Nations seek to have more control over their traditional lands through the **B.C. Treaty Process** and other legal debates across Canada. In recent years, after centuries of having little or no voice in public affairs, First Nations peoples are now making their concerns an important part of Canadian discourse.

NATIONS AND TERRITORIES

Of the eleven major **aboriginal** language groups in Canada, eight are found in the province of British Columbia. Within these groups are twenty-nine distinct **First Nations** languages. However, there are many more differences in dialect and in cultural practice than such simple categories might imply.

Early European settlers and government officials used language differences to distinguish Native peoples they encountered. As a result, the names by which we often recognize First Nations bands and nations were imposed upon them by outsiders, rather than assumed by the people themselves. In recent years, First Nations peoples have been increasingly restoring their own tribal and territorial names to themselves and their lands, correcting misnomers bestowed upon them many years ago.

As an example of this, the term “Kwakiutl” is the correct name for people in the Kwakiutl Band at Fort Rupert, but for many years this term was incorrectly applied to all communities in the area who shared the same language (called “Kwakwala”). Today, according to their preference, the term “Kwakwaka’wakw” is used to refer to the several Kwakwala-speaking groups in Northern B.C., and the term “Kwakiutl” is used only to refer to people who are descended from Fort Rupert.

Note: Wherever possible, in this text and throughout the galleries, the terms preferred by First Nations themselves are used to denote distinct language groups and cultures. In some cases, however, changes are occurring faster than we at MOA can keep up with them, so we are constantly updating our maps and references. Let us know if you can contribute to our efforts!

ECONOMY

The Northwest Coast (NWC) offers an environment rich with the resources of land and sea – specifically, cedar and salmon. Knowledge of such preservation techniques as drying smoking, and freezing allowed abundant seasonal surpluses to be saved for use throughout the year. The unique social and artistic achievements of many Northwest Coast peoples might be attributed to the easy availability of resources. Many First Nations people continue to harvest natural resources, moving from their permanent homes to long-used temporary camps for the harvesting season. In the past, permanent homes were large communal dwellings (often called **longhouses** or **bighouses**) located in villages that faced a river or the sea. Many modern communities have since been established on these same sites.

From these home territories, First Nations peoples engaged in local inter-nation trade, a commerce that was further stimulated in the late 18th century by the arrival of European traders. These settlers introduced new manufactured items in exchange for food, fur, or special commodities such as argillite or **abalone**.

This initial stimulus of the economy was slowed, however, by the devastating effects of European diseases to Native populations (specifically smallpox, which came in several waves, and finally spread up the coast and into the BC interior from Victoria in 1861). By 1929, the Native population had plummeted to less than one-quarter of its original size. Slowly these numbers have re-stabilized, and in recent decades have increased to their present levels.

SOCIAL STRUCTURES

Northwest Coast communities are complex, ranked societies, with strong emphasis on **clan**, lineage, or **family** groupings. Social positions and rights to use particular ancestral **crests** were and continue to be, carefully defined and maintained, especially by northern groups. The tradition of marking social position, derived through ancestry, by decorating objects of daily and ceremonial use with conventionalized images remains an important part of NWC First Nations cultures. MOA's collections include many examples of baskets, bent-boxes, **poles**, masks, ceremonial objects, and **regalia**.

Feasts and **potlatches** (see below) also remain important aspects of contemporary NWC First Nations societies. As did their ancestors, individuals and families use these occasions to reaffirm kinship ties and social ranking through the public presentation and transfer of **hereditary rights** and **privileges** such as land, property, songs, names, stories, and dances. Other ceremonies express human obligation to greater spiritual powers.

THE POTLATCH

Potlatches served – and continue to serve – important social, ceremonial, and economic functions within many Northwest Coast First Nations (please note that Lower Fraser Region First Nations organize themselves differently; they do not maintain this system. The description which follows applies primarily to the Kwakwaka'wakw potlatch). Potlatches are held to commemorate important events in the lives of individuals, families, and communities. The transfer of family property and **privileges** connected with events such as births, marriages, and deaths must be witnessed properly. In NWC cultures, not only objects and property, but names, songs, dances, and their associated stories are owned by families. The right to use them has to be recognized by the community as a whole.

When someone holds a potlatch, guests are invited to be witnesses. The witnesses are given gifts to validate the host and the host's family claims. Traditionally, potlatches lasted for weeks, even months; nowadays they are usually held over a weekend. Potlatches or feasts might be conducted at the time of a pole-raising, or when novice dancers are being initiated into various societies. These events provide a way of confirming status, and serve as a method of record-keeping in cultures which traditionally did not have a written language.

In 1884, potlatches were made illegal and anyone caught participating in one could serve 2-6 months in prison and possibly be forced to surrender their potlatch regalia (including masks, blankets, bentwood boxes, etc.). The Canadian government outlawed potlatches due to lack of understanding about its central cultural and economic significance to NWC peoples, and also due to pressure from missionaries who wanted to convert Native peoples to Christianity. It wasn't until 1951 that First Nations peoples were once again legally allowed to conduct and participate in these ceremonies.

TECHNOLOGY AND ARTISTRY

NWC peoples' highly-developed fishing technologies have long been matched by their skill in woodworking, painting, basketry, and weaving. Today, these arts and technologies have taken on new roles in a wider context, as objects of fine art and statements of cultural identity recognizable throughout the world. First Nations artists' sculptural and decorative arts are becoming as highly valued by museums, galleries, and collectors, as they are by First Nations themselves. They also represent the continuing vitality of First Nations communities and organizations.

TOTEM POLES

All full-size poles on the Northwest Coast are carved from red cedar trees because of the desirable qualities of this wood: it is easy to carve, it doesn't warp, it grows tall and straight, it is highly insect and disease resistant, and it smells good! Yellow cedar is also used, but generally for smaller carvings, or to form laminated blocks from which larger sculptures may be carved. Bill Reid's "The Raven and the First Men" sculpture began this way, as a huge block of wood composed of 106 planks of laminated yellow cedar!

Totem poles were and are erected for different reasons, and as different kinds of freestanding or architectural forms. **House posts** are carved posts supporting the main beams of a house; **house frontal poles** stand against the front of the house and usually contain an opening used as a doorway. **Mortuary poles** are erected in honour of a person who has died, and **memorial poles** are raised to commemorate important occasions or events in the lives of families and communities. Sculpted **welcome figures** stand on village beaches to welcome guests arriving by canoe. Two such contemporary figures (one by Joe David, the other by Susan Point) now stand outside the museum.

UNDERSTANDING TOTEM POLES

Poles are erected by families as declarations of their ancestral heritage, and most poles display figures from the histories of the families who own them. This heritage is represented by human, animal, and composite life forms borrowed from nature and then transformed into art according to the family's wishes, and the artist's talents.

Some of these natural forms – notably frog, beaver, raven, wolf, bear, eagle, and human – can be easily recognized and are associated with particular families and clans.

To recognize them, however, is not to “read” a pole, as poles usually do not tell a complete story. Some of the cultural meanings of older forms have been recorded by researchers; others are known only to the people for whom and by whom they were created.

As is true of all great art, totem poles and other First Nations sculptures can be enjoyed without knowledge of cultural context, yet a full appreciation of these works comes only through understanding of the rich social, political and cultural environments within which they were made, and out of which they come.

TOTEM POLES TODAY

Since the 1950’s, there has been a renewal of interest in First Nations carving, with totem poles once again being erected in villages and elsewhere. New generations of carvers are recreating and reinterpreting the traditional art forms. Outside the Museum are a number of outstanding poles carved by such contemporary First Nations artists as Susan Point, (Musqueam), Norman Tait (Nisga’a), Mungo Martin (Kwakwaka’wakw), Bill Reid (Haida), Jim Hart (Haida), Walter Harris (Gitxsan), and Doug Cranmer (Kwakwaka’wakw).

One well-known example of the artistic link between First Nations and contemporary Western cultures is Haida artist Bill Reid’s carving, “The Raven and the First Men.” This massive sculpture, located in the Rotunda, tells one version of a Haida origin story in which Raven discovers a giant clamshell on the beach at Rose Spit, on Haida Gwaii, out of which emerge (with varying degrees of curiosity) the first Haida humans. It was unveiled in 1980 by HRH Prince Charles, and celebrated by a potlatch.

xʷə́niwən ce:p kʷθəθ nə́wəyət, “REMEMBER YOUR TEACHINGS”

In 2011, the Musqueam people named the welcome plaza outside the Museum *xʷə́niwən ce:p kʷθəθ nə́wəyət*, which means “Remember your teachings” in Hənquminim, the Musqueam language. Two art works at the entrance to the Museum acknowledge the ancient history of Musqueam on this land. They are “Transformation” by Joe Becker and “Salish Footprint” by Susan Point.

ANCESTOR FIGURE BY SUSAN POINT

This figure stands over 8 m. tall (25 feet), and is situated near the entrance to the Museum, at the top of the stairs. It is particularly appropriate that this piece by Musqueam artist Susan Point rests here, since the Museum is built on traditional Musqueam land (known to have been used as a lookout site for some 10,000 years), which is still used by the Musqueam community today.

The figure itself holds a fisher, which has the ability to carry both positive and negative powers. The figure’s head is decorated with celestial images, and the u-shaped channel above it would have been used to secure one end of a roof beam. The image at the base of the figure welcomes people from around the world. The houseposts are located outside, on the path to the west of the Museum leading to the Haida Houses.

Terms and descriptions compiled by Jennifer Webb, Communications Manager, MOA, 1999.

GLOSSARY OF TERMS RELATED TO SCHOOL PROGRAMS

Aboriginal peoples are citizens of a large number of distinctly different and well-defined cultures and societies, once the sole occupants of the continents of North and South America. The following is a guide to various terms associated with aboriginal people. It must be noted that individual preferences may vary and should be respected when known. In Canada, this term applies to status and **non-status Indians**, Inuvialuit, Inuit and Métis (as defined in the Constitution Act of 1982). It is also used in other parts of the world to refer to the first inhabitants in a given area.

Anthropology

Anthropology is a form of study which aims at describing, understanding and explaining the customs, beliefs, languages, institutions and lifeways of peoples of the world. Owing to the amount of information collected and the wide variety of methods and techniques used in anthropological research, many specialty sub-disciplines have developed within anthropology. Some of these sub-disciplines are physical anthropology, archaeology, linguistic anthropology, ethnology (which is also called social or cultural anthropology), theoretical anthropology, and applied anthropology.

Abalone

An edible shellfish whose shell is lined with mother-of-pearl.

Bighouse

This term is most commonly used amongst the Kwakwaka'wakw to refer to the large cedar houses found in First Nations communities on the Northwest Coast of British Columbia. In the past, these large timber and plank houses accommodated an extended family. Bighouses continue to be built today as places for ceremonial and community events.

Clan

A social group based on actual or mythical unilineal descent from a common ancestor. Most clans stress mutual obligations and duties. In some cultures, clan descent can be traced in one line only, male or female, in others, descendency is continued from both the male and female lines. A clan includes several **family** groups. A clan is distinguished from a lineage in that a clan merely claims common ancestry; a lineage can be traced to a common progenitor. A clan may have several lineages.

Crests

Crests are images from the animal, human and spirit worlds representing the history, and lineage of a family or an individual. They also represent distinctive **clans** within some cultural groups. Although crest images are commonly seen on poles, button blankets, bentwood boxes, jewelry, contemporary clothing, and other objects, their meanings and uses are specific to the individual and family histories within a particular culture on the Northwest Coast.

Family

Term commonly used amongst First Nations to describe their immediate family, **clan** affiliation, or lineage. See also House.

First Nations

Term used in Canada to refer to the different **indigenous** groups (except for **Inuit** and Inuvialuit) that existed in North America before the arrival of European explorers. First Nations can refer to an individual who is **aboriginal**; a single band; a cultural group; or to aboriginal people in general.

First Nations person or peoples

Although some apply this terms to all aboriginal people of Canada (Indians, Inuit, Inuvialuit, and Metis), many aboriginal people prefer to be recognized for the specific band or First Nation to which they belong. Others like to be identified according to tribal or cultural grouping.

Fisher

Weasel-like carnivore of eastern North America, related to the marten.

Frontal pole

Refers to a pole that has been placed in the centre of the front of a **bighouse**. Sometimes, an entranceway is part of the overall design of the pole. The **crest** images on these poles display the identity, histories, and social status of the **family** belonging to that bighouse.

Hereditary

Derived from ancestors; inherited; passing by inheritance from an ancestor to an heir.

House

Refers to the central social unit in many British Columbia **First Nations**, such as the Gitksan and Wet'suwet'en. In the past, members of a House would live under one roof in a **bighouse**. The House controls its own territories for use by its members for food, trade, and ceremonial purposes according to a land tenure system. The relationship between House members is still maintained today within and outside their territories through traditional, ceremonial and daily activities.

Houseposts

Houseposts are the poles carrying the crest images belonging to the heads of a House. This term also refers to the poles that are part of the structure of a bighouse.

Indian

This term, first used by Europeans to identify aboriginal people of South, Central, and North America, is believed to have originated with Christopher Columbus, who thought he had reached India when in fact he had arrived in the Caribbean. The term persisted and has been used indiscriminately to refer to all aboriginal peoples on these continents except for the Inuit of the Canadian Arctic, Greenland and Alaska. In Canada, the legal definition of an Indian is contained in the **Indian Act**, legislation that was first passed in 1876.

To many people, the term "Indian" is pejorative. The following terms – native people, **native**, **aboriginal** people or **First Nations** – have come into common use instead. There is no single term that is universally acceptable to identify the first people of Canada. However, do not substitute aboriginal for Indian when it is part of a title, for example, the Department of Indian and Northern Affairs, the Indian Act, or part of a band's name. Indian is sometimes used to distinguish status Indians as defined by the **Indian Act** from other aboriginal groups, such as the **Métis** and **Inuit**.

In Canada, many First Nations people use terms from their own languages to identify themselves. For example, Nuuchahnulth has replaced Nootka. Musqueam is the preferred name for the Coast Salish people on whose ancestral land UBC is located. Kwakwaka'wakw, meaning "Kwakwaka-speaking people," has replaced Kwakiutl, which is the name of a group of people on northern Vancouver and the central mainland coast. When referring to **aboriginal** people, it is best to refer to them by the name of their Nation or cultural group, such as Musqueam, Haida, Nuuchahnulth, Kwakwaka'wakw, etc.

Indigenous peoples

Term used by the United Nations to refer to the first inhabitants of a given place.

Inuit and Inuvialuit

In Canada, Inuk (singular) or Inuit (plural) is the preferred term for the **indigenous** people of the Eastern Arctic, and Inuvialuk (singular) or Inuvialuit (plural) for those of the Western Arctic. The term “Eskimo” is still used in the United States to apply to the Unipiat, Yup’ik and Alutiq peoples living in the State of Alaska, but its common usage has been discouraged by the Inuit and Inuvialuit, as it is generally considered to derive from a derogatory Algonkian word meaning “eaters of raw meat.”

Kinship

In **anthropology** and sociology, this term denotes the specific and complex relationship by blood or marriage between persons. It is also a system of rules based on such relationships governing descent, inheritance, marriage, and sometimes residence. There is great divergence in the manner of reckoning descent and relationship amongst **First Nations**. In many societies the concept of kinship extends beyond family ties, which vary in breadth and inclusiveness.

Longhouse

Refers to the large plank houses inhabited by the extended families of **First Nations** groups of the Lower Mainland, South and Southeast Coast of Vancouver Island. In the past, additions were commonly made to these structures to accommodate growing families. Today, longhouses or smokehouses are still in use. Built for specific families or communal use, they are important gathering places for ceremonial and community events. This term is also used by First Nations to refer to the **bighouses** of First Nations from the Central to the Northern Coast.

Memorial pole

Pole raised to honour an important family member who has passed away. Figures displayed on a memorial pole are directly related to the personal and **family** histories of that individual. Today, instead of raising memorial poles, some **First Nations** groups honour their deceased family members through the preparation and installation of headstones and associated ceremonies. Memorial poles are still raised to commemorate individuals, families and community histories.

Metis

Term originally used to refer to the descendants of the early 18th and 19th century French or Scottish fur traders and **aboriginal** women in the mid-west. Today, Metis can also refer to people of mixed ancestry not associated with a specific **First Nation**.

Mortuary Pole

Carved to display **crests** of the deceased, mortuary poles have a large cavity cut into the upper end. To allow maximum space for the cavity, the log of the mortuary pole is inverted, providing greater width at the top. In earlier times, the remains of the deceased were placed in a small box and deposited into the cavity of the mortuary pole. A cedar board, shaped to resemble a large chest with lid and base, covered the open cavity at the front. Additional planks covered the top, with rocks placed on them for security.

Native

Native is a term used to describe an **aboriginal** person. It is not as accurate as some of the other terms. See **Aboriginal** and **First Nations** person.

Potlatch

Potlatch, from the Chinook word Paht'latsh, is a family gathering of great importance where ancestors and recently deceased family members are honoured; family wealth in the forms of hereditary names, **privileges**, songs, and dances are passed on; marriages witnessed; debts repaid; family powers strengthened; and family status enhanced. Potlatches are carried out in accordance to the laws and protocols of the culture of the host family. Although this form of cultural and family event is common to most Northwest Coast First Nations, each culture and family have their own specific ways of giving potlatches. Invited guests to **potlatches** have the responsibility to witness and remember all that takes place. For this obligation, guests are feasted and given gifts according to their social status, and their relationships and contributions to the host families.

Privileges

A special right or power conferred on or possessed by one or more individuals through inheritance.

Regalia

Regalia is the ceremonial dress of specific **First Nations** individuals, groups or families that show who they are, from what **family** or culture they have descended. The types of dress and the decorative motifs on the regalia are the elements that distinguish each cultural group, and the individual families within it.

Traditional territory

The geographic area identified by a **First Nation** to be the area of land which they and/or their ancestors traditionally occupied or used.

Welcome figure

Single, larger than life carved human figures that often stand near the beach in Northwest Coast communities to welcome visitors arriving by sea.

GLOSSARY OF TERMS RELATED TO FIRST NATIONS ISSUES

Aboriginal rights

On December 11, 1997, the Supreme Court of Canada through its decision on the **Delgamuukw** case affirmed the continuing existence of **aboriginal** title and rights. Aboriginal rights arise from the prior occupation of land, but they also arise from the prior social organization and distinctive cultures of aboriginal peoples on that land. Treaty negotiations will translate aboriginal rights into contemporary terms.

Aboriginal title

This is a sub-category of aboriginal rights dealing solely with land claims. The **Delgamuukw** decision defined **aboriginal** title to be a right in land. Individual aboriginal persons cannot hold aboriginal title. It is a collective right to land held by all members of an aboriginal nation. Lands held pursuant to aboriginal title cannot be used in a manner that is irreconcilable with the nature of the attachment to the land that forms the basis of the group's claim.

Agreement in principle (AIP)

This is the document produced in the fourth phase of the **six-stage treaty process** in British Columbia. The AIP outlines the major points of agreement between the parties regarding provisions that will form the basis of the **treaty**. The AIP is not binding on the parties, and changes may occur in negotiating the final agreement.

Band

A group of people that holds **reserve land**, or has funds held for it by the federal government, or has been declared a band by the Governor-in-council. It is the local unit of administration defined in the **Indian Act** that represents many people who traditionally have lived as extended families. The structure of band membership does not always coincide with the cultural and linguistic groupings of native people.

Band council

This is the elected local government that functions as a small native municipality with the authority to manage funds, to pass by-laws and to administer a variety of health and social services for its band membership. In B.C., some band councils are involved with treaty negotiations with B.C. and Canada for new settlements for their aboriginal rights to their land and resources. *See also Six-step treaty process, Indian Act, and Reserve.*

British Columbia Treaty Commission

This is an independent body of five commissioners appointed by Canada, B.C. and the First Nations Summit to oversee and facilitate the **six-stage treaty process** for negotiating **treaties** in British Columbia.

Comprehensive land claim

Land claims are dealt with by a process established by the federal government to enable **Indians**, **Inuit** and **Métis** to obtain full recognition of their rights under treaties or as the original inhabitants of lands that have not been dealt with by treaty or other legal means. At the core of the process is negotiation between individual native groups and the federal government and in some cases the provincial and territorial governments and other third parties. The process is formally based on legal concepts such as land title, aboriginal rights and treaties, and is intended to make economic and social adjustments between two different societies.

Delgamuukw

This is a court case originally filed in 1984 with the British Columbia Supreme Court by Gisday Wa and Delgamuukw on behalf of their Houses and all other Gitksan and Wet'suwet'en Houses and Hereditary Chiefs. The case was filed to force the province to recognize the existing Gitksan and Wet'suwet'en title to the traditional territories. On December 11, 1997, the Supreme Court of Canada ruled that Aboriginal title and rights still exist, and that the laws of evidence be adapted so that the aboriginal perspective on their practices, customs and traditions on their relationship with the land are given due weight by the courts.

Indian Act

The Indian Act was first passed in 1876. Together with its subsequent revisions, it has been the primary federal legislative vehicle for the administration of "Indians and Indian lands." This act was originally designed to restrict residency on **reserves**, and to provide for voluntary relinquishment of Indian **status** for **aboriginal** people. The act allowed for the Department of Indian Affairs to impose a "chief and council" structure that mirrored the municipal style of local government that has limited authorities with respect to the provincial and federal governments. The act gives sweeping powers of regulation over reserves and bands to the federal minister of Indian Affairs and his officials. Today, comprehensive land claims and treaty negotiations are underway with many First Nations groups to establish new settlements for aboriginal rights.

Land Claims

See Comprehensive land claims and Specific land claims.

Non-Status Indian

This denotes an **aboriginal** person who for one reason or another either does not meet the criteria for registration, or has chosen not to register, or has voluntarily relinquished their Indian status as defined by the **Indian Act**. Since the passage of Bill C-31 in 1985, aboriginal women who lost their status upon marriage to non-native husbands are able to regain their Indian status.

Reserves or Reserve Land

The earliest Indian Reserves in Canada appear to have been established on seigneurial holdings by Catholic missionary orders and private persons in New France. Later, reserves were set aside by treaty and various forms of crown grant in the British Maritime colonies, Lower Canada and Upper Canada. After Confederation, reserves were formed either under the numbered treaties or by special arrangement with individual bands. Section 2 of the **Indian Act** defines a reserve as a tract of land that has been set apart by the federal government "for the use and benefit of an Indian band." The legal title to Indian reserve land is vested in the federal government until new arrangements negotiated and ratified through **comprehensive land claims** and modern **treaties** replace current crown ownership of First Nations lands.

Residential Schools

Residential schools were instituted by Canadian Government in the late 19th Century. Aboriginal children and teens were forced to attend these segregated schools for extended periods of time, sometimes for months or years, without returning home. Initially, these schools were administered by churches and then later by provincial governments. The last school closed in 1996 in Saskatchewan and in B.C. the last school closed in 1986 in Mission.

Self-government

At the time of contact, all **First Nations** were self-governing. In modern usage, it means the internal regulation of a First Nation by its own people.

Six-stage treaty process

The process established in B.C. by which **First Nations** negotiate their rights of lands and resources with the Federal and Provincial governments. The six stages are:

1. Statement of intent of a First Nations submitted to the British Columbia Treaty Commission.
2. Establishment of the readiness of all parties.
3. Negotiation of a framework agreement.
4. Negotiation of an agreement-in-principle.
5. Negotiation of a final agreement.
6. Implementation of final agreement.

Specific land claim

A claim to land or compensation by an **aboriginal** person or group on the basis of a breach of a specific obligation under a treaty, other agreement, or the **Indian Act**.

Status Indian

A person defined as an Indian under the **Indian Act**.

Treaty

This is an agreement between government and a **First Nation** that defines the rights of **aboriginal** peoples with respect to lands and resources over a specified area, and may also define the self-government authority of a First Nation. Treaties are final agreements that have been ratified by all parties.

Tribal Council

A tribal council is a self-defined political entity or affiliation that represents **aboriginal** people or a group of bands.

The above definitions were compiled and edited by Jill Baird, Curator of Education, and Rosa Ho, Curator of Art and Public Programs, from the following sources:

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<http://www.aaf.gov.bc.ca/aaf/pubs/glossary.htm>

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Delgamuukw v. British Columbia, Supreme Court of Canada Decision, December 11, 1997.