

## History of Ladner and the Tsawwassen First Nation

Historical dates underlined come from TFN website: <http://tsawwassenfirstnation.com/general-info/tfn-history-and-timeline/>

7000 BC - According to archeologists, human beings occupied the southwest coast of B.C.

1791 - Spanish and English explorers arrive in the vicinity of Tsawwassen.

1808 - The Simon Fraser expedition arrives at the mouth of the Fraser River.

Like many First Nations, after the arrival of Europeans our ancestors were devastated by epidemics of smallpox. Historians estimate that between 80 and 90 per cent of the Coast Salish were killed by the disease, decimating some Tsawwassen villages.

1858 - The Colony of British Columbia becomes official. Tsawwassen lands were pre-empted; settler families were given huge tracts of land. British subjects could receive 160 acres at a time while aboriginal reserves were given land at about 10 acres per person

1859 - 30, 000 gold rush miners arrive at the Lower Fraser River including William and Thomas Ladner

Ladner

1868- William Ladner returns to Delta and pre-empts 480 acres west of Chiluckthan Slough.

Two years later Thomas Ladner joins him and pre-empts 480 acres east of Chiluckthan Slough.

1870 - B.C. unilaterally denies existence of aboriginal title, claiming aboriginal people are too primitive to understand the concept of land ownership.

1871 - Our Colonial reserve is formally established.

1874 - Our reserve was expanded to 490 acres, still a postage stamp sized piece of land compared to our traditional territory.

1879 – Ladner’s Landing became part of the Delta municipality with only a few hundred residents. Ladner was a small farming and fishing center. Growth changed rapidly when the CPR arrived in Vancouver in 1886

1880 - The Indian Act is amended to outlaw cultural and religious ceremonies such as the potlatch - the major social, economic and political institution of the coastal peoples.

1887 - Premier William Smithe said, “When the white man first came among you, you were little better than wild beasts of the field.” Little wonder that this kind of racism was soon translated into narrow policies that plunged the province into a century of darkness for the Tsawwassen and other First Nations.

1889 - The federal system of permits is introduced to govern commercial fishing. Indians are effectively excluded from commercial fishing.

1890 - About 40,000 acres of land surrounding us had been developed by our non-aboriginal neighbors. Land was pre-empted mostly for \$1-\$2 an acre. Ladner was developing into a hotbed of agriculture with around 120 farms. It serviced markets throughout the lower mainland and transported products by roadways, railway, and steamer

Early 1900s - By the turn of the century, salmon canneries had arrived. They lined the shores of the South Arm and for a while Ladner’s 14 canneries were the most important canning center in the region. Within a few years, however, Steveston’s more advantageous setting took hold and Ladner’s canning industry dwindled. Still, it had attracted Chinese and Aboriginal workers as well as smaller communities of Japanese, Norwegians, Finns, Greeks, Basques and Croatians, many of whom account for Delta’s current ethnic diversity. About 2100 people now live in Ladner (<http://www.hellobc.com/british-columbia/about-bc.aspx>)

1914 - Tsawwassen Chief Harry Joe submitted a petition to the McKenna McBride Commission then reviewing the province’s reserves. The Chief argued eloquently that the Tsawwassen

people did not want to be forced into exile on a tiny reserve. His words went unheeded by the politicians of the day and, over time, aboriginal fishing and other rights were legislated away.

1920 - Compulsory attendance of Indian children in schools is introduced. For several decades, aboriginal children have been bussed to Ladner Elementary and Delta Secondary. Just in the last few years, a number of children go to Cliff Drive in Tsawwassen

1923 - Ottawa permits Indians to acquire commercial fishing licenses.

1927 - Ottawa prohibits Indians from organizing to discuss land claims.

1929 – China town in Ladner burns down and most Chinese residents leave other than Chung Chuck and the Lowe family (Johnny's and Stirs)

1931 - The Native Brotherhood of B.C. is formed. Secret, underground discussions are launched to keep the Indian land question alive.

Despite these negative impacts, we have struggled to participate in Canadian society and its economy. Some of our members fought in World War I and World War II.

1951 - Parliament repeals the provisions of the Indian Act that outlawed the potlatch and prohibited "land claims" activity.

1958 - The BC Ferry Terminal construction is started. During causeway construction the B.C. government tore down our Longhouse. The terminal and causeway were expanded in 1973, in 1976 and again in 1991. The provincial government of the day did not bother to meaningfully consult with the Tsawwassen people. Today, more than 2.6 million cars and trucks drive the causeway every year.

1959 – George Massey Tunnel is built. Very quickly Delta grew from a population of around 10,000 to 70,000. Today 85,000 cars and trucks use the tunnel each day.

1960 - Aboriginal people on reserves are granted the right to vote in federal elections. The phase-out of Indian residential schools begins. The last residential school in Canada closes in 1996

1968 - Construction on the Roberts Bank Super port began. By 1983 it had become a 113-hectare island, with a B.C. Rail line running along the causeway. Operating around the clock, the facility handles 24 trains each day. Light and sound pollution - excessive noise and vibration - is a constant nuisance to the Tsawwassen people.

1973 – Creation of the ALR or Agricultural Land Reserve. Provincial government restricts development on farmland due to the effect of urban sprawl, BC was losing 4 – 6 thousand acres of fertile farmland each year. Less than 2% of BC has fertile soil.

1982 – Provincial Government expropriates 5000 acres in Delta to become part of the Roberts Super port Back-up Lands. Most of the land was leased back to farmers but only in 5 year leases, giving farmers little incentive to invest and protect their farmland.

1990 Supreme Court Case versus Sparrow - In the foundational *Sparrow* ruling, the Supreme Court ruled that First Nations have an Aboriginal right, as defined in the Constitution, to fish for food, social and ceremonial purposes and that right takes priority over all others, after conservation.

1992 - B.C., Canada and the First Nations Summit establish the B.C. Treaty Commission to oversee treaty negotiations. In 1993 - The Tsawwassen First Nation enters a formal treaty-making process.

1994 - 1996 we built Tsatsu Shores, a condominium development, as an economic-development initiative.

1995 - We began construction of a new Longhouse on our reserve. Completed in 1997, the structure is used to practice and protect our culture and traditions. Activities inside include

“namings,” memorials, winter dancing and feasts unique to Coast Salish peoples. Prior to this, it had been almost 50 years our community had been without a Longhouse and we had to practice our culture ‘underground’. Construction was completed two years later.

1998 - Tsawwassen successfully negotiates ‘Roberts Bank Back-up Lands Agreement,’ successfully preserving crown land for negotiations.

2009 - On April 3, 2009, the Tsawwassen First Nation implements its Final Agreement, and becomes self-governing

2015 - Truth and Reconciliation Commission report provides action plans for governments, community groups and churches dealing with the legacy of residential schools

2016 - 2017 Two new malls are completed on the TFN along with new industrial and residential development zones. A new 10 lane bridge is planned for the replacement of the tunnel