

Culturally Competent Stewardship in Non-Indigenous Museums

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Abstract

The lack of engagement by museums with Indigenous Nations for stewardship purposes, as reported in a 2020 Canadian Museum Association survey, prompts a case study of stewardship of Indigenous cultural material at a small non-Indigenous museum. Inadequate policies and practices for the Indigenous cultural material there are found to threaten the belongings with dissociation, hinder authentic representation, and perpetuate visitor ignorance. Stewardship reform is recommended. The *United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples* and the calls to action of the *Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada* are prominent in the growing body of mainly Indigenous literature that offers insight into what constitutes culturally competent stewardship. Analysis of this literature has resulted in a set of principles for stewardship of Indigenous cultural material. Suggested stewardship reforms emphasize the acknowledgement of the authority of Indigenous Nations to govern their cultural material and the mandate for museums to collaborate with Indigenous Nations to co-manage Indigenous cultural materials in museum custody.

Keywords: Indigenous; stewardship; museums; belongings; collections policy

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Table of Contents

Declaration of Committee	ii
Abstract.....	iii
Dedication.....	iv
Acknowledgements.....	v
Table of Contents.....	vi
List of Figures	viii
Chapter 1. Stewardship of Indigenous Cultural Heritage in Non-Indigenous Museums	1
1.1. Museums and Indigenous Peoples	1
1.2. Museums and Indigenous Cultural Material	4
1.3. Focus on BC	8
1.4. Motivation to Reform Stewardship of IAB.....	10
1.5. Resources for Stewardship Reform	11
1.6. Methods	12
1.7. Terminology	13
Chapter 2. Case study.....	15
2.1. Situating the RMHS	15
2.1.1. The City of Richmond.....	15
2.1.2. Traditional Territory	16
2.1.3. Indigenous History of Richmond.....	18
2.1.4. History of the RMHS.....	23
2.1.5. Indigenous archaeology collections.....	30
2.2. Stewardship review.....	31
2.2.1. Documentation	31
2.2.2. Representation of Indigenous history in Richmond	46
2.2.3. Engagement	48
2.3. Results of stewardship review.....	49
Chapter 3. Culturally competent stewardship	52
3.1. Literature Survey.....	52
3.1.1. The Task Force Report on Museums and First Peoples	53
3.1.2. The Final Report of the Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples	54
3.1.3. Canadian Museums Association Ethics Guidelines.....	54
3.1.4. United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples	55
3.1.5. Union of BC Indian Chiefs Heritage Toolkit	56
3.1.6. The Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada.....	56
3.1.7. Rod Naknakim Declaration.....	57
3.1.8. International Council on Museums Code of Ethics	58

3.1.9.	Repatriation Symposium Findings	58
3.1.10.	First Peoples' Cultural Council Policy Paper	59
3.1.11.	Indigenous Repatriation Handbook	59
3.1.12.	RBCM Engagement Report.....	59
3.2.	Interpretation of the literature	60
3.2.1.	Theme 1: Museums must recognize Indigenous authority	60
3.2.2.	Theme 2: Museums must engage with Indigenous Nations	66
3.2.3.	Theme 3: Museums must welcome Indigenous Nations	70
3.2.4.	Theme 4: Museums must embrace repatriation	77
3.2.5.	Theme 5: Museums must respect protocols	83
3.3.	Summary.....	86
Chapter 4.	Stewardship reform	88
4.1.	Reforming RMHS stewardship of ICM	88
	Principle 1	89
	Principle 2	91
	Principle 3	92
	Principle 4	93
	Principle 5	94
	Principle 6	95
	Principle 7	96
	Principle 8	97
	Principle 9	98
	Principle 10	99
	Principle 11	100
	Principle 12	101
	Principle 13	101
	Principle 14	102
	Principle 15	103
	Principle 16	104
	Principle 17	105
4.2.	Summary.....	105
Chapter 5.	ICM Stewardship Resolutions.....	108
References	111

List of Figures

Figure 2-1	The RMHS Organizational Chart.....	28
Figure 2-2	Scan of 1989 Leonard Ham note returned with Deed of Gift	33
Figure 2-3	The location of Borden grid areas in Richmond.....	38
Figure 2-4	Hammer stone record with accession and Borden numbers	39
Figure 2-5	Archaeological record with Borden number only	40
Figure 2-6	Archaeological record with accession number only.....	41
Figure 2-7	Archaeological record without Borden number or photograph, and with inadequate description and incorrect provenance.....	44

Chapter 1.

Stewardship of Indigenous Cultural Heritage in Non-Indigenous Museums

1.1. Museums and Indigenous Peoples

I am a non-Indigenous, Canadian-born child of immigrant parents. I grew up in small towns around British Columbia (BC). I studied linguistics at a university in Alberta, where I was privileged to work with the generous elders of the Alexis Nakoda Nation to help develop an orthography system for their language. I gained great respect for the world views of Indigenous people. I began my museum career at the Glenbow Museum in Calgary, Alberta, in 1996. At the time, despite working closely with the Alexis people, I knew little of the role that museums had played in the colonial objective in Canada to assimilate Indigenous people here. I was unaware that, through most of the twentieth century, many museums in Canada reinforced Western European values, positioning Indigenous Peoples and their cultural material as exotic and inferior and justifying assimilation programs of the federal government to society at large (Conaty 2015, Phillips 2011).

Museums have traditionally been thought of as places where a Nation's history is presented in neutral, objective terms. Yet, as history that had formerly been silenced was revealed, it became evident that Canada's museums had told only part of the story [Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada (TRCC) 2015b:132].

Museums have been complicit in the colonial objective of the dominant society of Canada. Through my years at Glenbow working in repatriation and through this research, I have learned about the damages this has caused to Indigenous Peoples. They have lost family members, languages, social structures, cultural practices, heritage, homeland, and security (Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples [RCAP] 1996a, 1996b, TRCC 2015a, 2015b).

The extent of the damage continues to grow as graves associated with residential schools are revealed, and cultural biases are exposed in our banks, hospitals, and probably beyond (Shingler 2020, Sterritt 2020, Voce et al. 2021). Museums need to repair the damage we have done, change what we do, and change how we do it if we are to help build a better value system and recover what is left of our reputations (Phillips 2011).

Before I arrived at Glenbow in 1996, the museum had already participated in what Ruth Phillips characterizes in *Museum Pieces: Toward the Indigenization of Canadian Museums* (2011) as one of the more significant chapters in the transformation of the museum and Indigenous relations in Canada. The exhibit, *Spirit Sings: Artistic Traditions of Canada's First Peoples*, mounted for the Cultural Olympiad of the 1988 Winter Olympics, was organized by Glenbow. In celebration of Canada's cultural heritage, the exhibit brought Indigenous cultural material from museums and collections around the world to Calgary. At the time, the main sponsor of the exhibit, Shell Oil Canada, was the subject of protests by the Lubicon Lake Cree Nation regarding the exploration for natural resources on their claimed territory in the northwest of the province. The Lubicon Lake Cree took the opportunity of a world stage to protest and encourage museums around the world not to participate in the exhibit, given Canada's abuses of Indigenous rights (Phillips 2011).

The museum later received a request by Mohawk representatives to have a sacred mask removed from the exhibit. Rather than comply, Glenbow fought the injunction in court and won the right to exhibit the mask. Although the museum did pull the mask before travelling the exhibit to the next venue, the Glenbow was widely criticized for not including Indigenous Peoples in developing a large exhibit about them (Phillips 2011). Museums across Canada at the time were already realizing that exhibits involving Indigenous cultures required the participation of Indigenous Nations. The voices of Indigenous people were surging with national repatriation legislation, the North America Graves Protection and Repatriation Act, under development in the United States, and

with efforts at the United Nations (UN) to build recognition for the particular human rights of Indigenous Peoples, the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UNDRIP) (Conaty 2015). The federal government of Canada at the time commissioned the Canadian Museums Association (CMA) and the Assembly of First Nations (AFN) to work together to complete an assessment of the issues of Indigenous Peoples and museums and to recommend changes (Conaty 2015, Phillips 2011). The final report of this commission, the *Task Force Report on Museums and First Peoples* (TFR), was published shortly after that by the two organizations, determining that “There is agreement that increased involvement of First Peoples in museum work is essential in order to improve the representation and interpretation of First Peoples’ histories and cultures in museums” (AFN&CMA 1994:4).

In 1996, the Royal Commission on Aboriginal People (RCAP) released its five-volume final report advising reform in all aspects of Indigenous relations in Canada and at every level of government to address the grievances of Indigenous Peoples (RCAP 1996a, 1996b). The Glenbow Museum, led by Dr. Gerald Conaty, Dr. Robert Janes, and elders of the Blackfoot Confederacy, had already begun reforming their approach to Indigenous cultural material (Conaty 2008). In the eleven years I worked at the Glenbow in support of the repatriation process there, I learned the significance of the Spirit Sings protests for museums and Indigenous Nations across Canada. I was privileged to participate in reconciliation steps taken by the museum with elders from the Blackfoot Confederacy. I learned from those elders and young Indigenous interns about the significance of territory, language, ceremonies, and cultural practices and the trauma of residential schools. I was also grateful to learn from Indigenous visitors to the collections and moved to witness their connection to the belongings held on the museum shelves. Still naïve, I thought all museums were going through the same or similar experiences.

In 2007, I moved to BC, where I worked for a while in the collections of three different non-Indigenous local history museums. I eventually settled at the

Richmond Museum and Heritage Services (RMHS) in Richmond, BC, in 2012. By this time, Canada's Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC) was investigating and exposing the effects of the residential school system in Canada. The TRC generated a list of 94 Calls to Action to address the legacies of those schools in Canadian society. UNDRIP had been passed at the UN, affirming the inherent rights of Indigenous Peoples around the world to all aspects of their heritage and sovereignty. By 2012, the largest of the three museums I worked in had just begun to engage with the Indigenous Nations whose belongings they held, and the two smaller ones had yet to start.

1.2. Museums and Indigenous Cultural Material

Museums include a wide variety of organizations around the world, and the definition of a museum is currently in debate (Marshall 2021). The International Council on Museums (ICOM) provides the following definition:

A museum is a non-profit, permanent institution in the service of society and its development, open to the public, which acquires, conserves, researches, communicates and exhibits the tangible and intangible heritage of humanity and its environment for the purposes of education, study and enjoyment [ICOM 2017: 47].

Non-Indigenous museums are museums that are governed by non-Indigenous organizations. Around the world, these museums hold Indigenous cultural heritage. Indigenous cultural heritage is made up of tangible and intangible heritage. Intangible heritage includes such material as songs, stories, dances, and traditional practices that are often documented in museums. Tangible heritage, what I am calling Indigenous cultural material (ICM), includes archaeological belongings, human remains, sacred and ceremonial items, and ethnographic belongings. This study is focused specifically on Indigenous archaeological belongings (IAB) and related materials and documents. I will use IAB throughout the following discussions to refer to this subset of ICM. This research was sparked by my curiosity about a small collection of IAB in the Richmond Museum and a desire to figure out the best way to care for them.

While IAB are like ethnographic belongings in that they inherently carry the heritage of the ancestors who made them, they are also unique as legal evidence for the occupational heritage of individual Nations, tying them to their territory (Hogg and Welch 2020). Careful stewardship of this ICM is particularly required.

Museums are responsible for stewarding all collections, including the IAB that they hold. Stewardship is defined by museum standards organizations as the act of legally, ethically, and respectfully collecting, documenting, interpreting, preserving, and providing access to cultural heritage which is held in trust for the benefit of the public (American Alliance of Museums 2021, CMA 2006, ICOM 2017, Museums Association 2015). A museum's collections policy, procedures, and practices determine how a collection is stewarded. ICM stewardship for this study refers specifically to the stewardship of IAB, as it is determined by specific policies, procedures, and practices.

Museums, and the Indigenous Nations whose belongings they hold, are coming to terms with shifting perspectives on the purpose of ICM stewardship. Stewardship, in general, may be for the benefit of the public, but as it relates to ICM, it is, more importantly, for the benefit of Indigenous Nations. Museums are learning that engagement and collaboration are fundamental to the authentic interpretation and presentation of Indigenous collections in museums (Gordon-Walker 2018, Phillips 2011). The CMA Ethics Guidelines advise:

Information about certain culturally sensitive objects may not be readily available. It is the responsibility of museums to actively seek it out from knowledgeable members of the appropriate cultural groups before using the object in any way [CMA 2006:11].

Some museums are transferring management of ICM back to the Nations along with the repatriated belongings (Collison and Levell 2018, Conaty 2008). Indigenous Nations are taking on curatorial roles to ensure that their histories are told from their perspectives in exhibits and programs (Collison and Levell 2018, Sparrow et al. 2018). Some museums are working in close collaboration with local Indigenous Nations for the purpose of stewardship (Carr-Locke and

Nicholas 2017). Through these processes, museums and Indigenous Nations are building stronger relationships and gaining mutual understanding and benefit (Bolton 2008, Conaty 2008, 2015, Onciul 2015).

As significant as these efforts are, museums have been slow to reform stewardship practices. Despite the findings of three national commissions, which all revealed the harm inflicted on Indigenous Peoples by museums, and despite the efforts of individuals in museums across Canada to address those harms, there is work still to do in all aspects of museum activities. Notably, engagement with Indigenous Nations in collections-related work lags compared to exhibits and programs. A recent survey by the CMA indicates that of the 304 museums that responded (which includes 13 Indigenous-run organizations), a range from 23 to 75 percent reported engaging with Indigenous Nations for activities such as exhibits, events, educational programs, and publications (CMA 2020a). This compares to a range from 6 to 21 percent from the same group that engages with Indigenous Nations for collections activities such as accessioning, deaccessioning, repatriation, conservation, interpretation, and curation¹. In both cases, the numbers are likely even lower, given that they include Indigenous-run organizations where engagement is inherent. The survey also indicates that 90 percent of the non-Indigenous respondents have no policy for managing Indigenous materials, including repatriation policies. The indication is that stewardship policies and procedures in Canadian museums have not improved significantly since the publication of the reports of the TFR, RCAP, and TRC. Repatriation clauses have been included in some collections policies, and some museums have taken repatriation steps using deaccessioning policies (Bell 2009). However, there has been no mandate to negotiate stewardship policy and practice for the ICM that is in the care of museums and, as the CMA survey shows, a large majority of museums still do not have repatriation policies in

¹ The ranges for both results depend on the specific activity. For example, only 19/304 museums engage for accession or deaccession activities while 229/304 museums engage for exhibits (CMA 2020a).

place. Most museums have yet to fully engage with and include Indigenous Nations in the stewardship of their heritage.

Small museums, those with ten or fewer employees or volunteers, make up 69 percent of the respondents to the CMA survey (CMA 2020a). Museums with annual budgets of less than 500,000 dollars make up 62 percent of the more than 2,600 museums in Canada (CMA 2016). This means that small museums comprise a large portion of the institutions presenting the heritage of Canada to visitors. They are the institutions providing resources to local teachers, educational programs to students, and exhibits and programs for adults that all inform their audience on the heritage of the local area. Visitors build an understanding of the local heritage based on what is presented, how it is presented, and what is not presented. Large multi-disciplinary museums in Canada are carefully monitored by internal policies, governing boards, critical reviews, and academic research. Much of this work is mandatory in large museums. Small museums, without the same level of monitoring, may fall short of evolving museum standards. It is just as important to ensure that small museums present authentic content that is based on culturally competent stewardship as it is for the larger institutions.

Most small museums in BC were initiated by non-Indigenous volunteers, sometimes from pioneer families, with a traditional approach to museum work and a desire to tell the stories of their ancestors. As a result, the expertise of small museums often focuses more on local pioneer and world history, and less on the Indigenous heritage of the territories they serve (Reimers 2007). As the 2020 CMA survey shows, not all small museums engage with Indigenous Nations. Those that do engage may follow the pattern indicated by the survey, which is to engage more for the public-facing aspects of museum work, and less for behind-the-scenes stewardship work.

The RMHS, where I am currently employed as Assistant Curator of Collections, represents a typical small, non-Indigenous, local history museum in

BC, with just such a history and practice of engagement. This thesis will examine the history and ICM stewardship practices at the RMHS as an example of what may be policy, procedures, and practices in other small non-Indigenous museums in BC. The RMHS provides a case study for this thesis which focuses on the need for engaged stewardship of IAB in these museums in BC².

1.3. Focus on BC

The focus of this thesis is on museums in BC which face a unique set of challenges in Canada that the history and legislation of this province have created for IAB. In BC, ownership of IAB is complicated. IAB, excavated from the land, are tied to modern Indigenous Nations whose ancestors traditionally occupied that land, the descendant Nations. Traditional territories in BC are overlapping and not clearly defined by agreements such as the historical treaties that were established between the new country of Canada and Indigenous Nations in the late nineteenth and early twentieth century (Harris 2002, Tennant 1990). Of the more than 200 Nations who were the original inhabitants of BC, only a few Nations have settled agreements defining their traditional territory. Disputes over the validity of some of these agreements extend from colonial times (BC Assembly of First Nations 2021, Harris 2002, Ray 1999). Fourteen Douglas treaties with mainly Vancouver Island Nations were established in colonial times (Harris 2002). Treaty 8, one of Canada's historical treaties, was established in 1899 and covers a large swath of the northern parts of the provinces of Saskatchewan, Alberta, and BC, extending northeast into the Northwest Territories. In BC, eight Nations are signatories to Treaty 8 (Treaty 8 Tribal Association 2015). Modern treaties, settlements, and comprehensive agreements have been negotiated and signed beginning in 2000 with the Nisga'a Final Agreement. Since 2000, there have been eight settlements, treaties, or final agreements with First Nations finalized in BC (BC Treaty Commission 2021 c).

² Since 2018, when I began work on this thesis, RMHS has revised collections policy and procedures documents to address ICM and repatriation. The new policy will be proposed to Richmond's City Council for approval in 2022.

By these numbers, most of the province remains unceded and technically still Indigenous land (BC Treaty Commission 2021a). Where treaties have been established in modern times, as with the Tsawwassen First Nation, the Nation maintains exclusive rights within small parts of their territory (the settlement lands) and shares rights within the larger area (the traditional territory) with other Nations and/or the provincial and federal governments. The Nations remain clear, however, in their concern for cultural resources within their traditional territories as highlighted in Chapter 14 on Culture and Heritage in the *Tsawwassen First Nation Final Agreement* (Government of Canada 2010). This non-exclusive co-ownership of the land from which most of the IAB in museum collections have been retrieved is unique to BC among Canadian provinces.

A further complication to ownership of IAB in BC stems from the division of power in Canada which leaves the provinces responsible for legislation related to heritage. BC's Heritage Conservation Act (HCA) protects IAB that are dated before 1846 (Province of BC 2019a). However, the HCA does not acknowledge Indigenous ownership of archaeological belongings.

As implemented, the HCA does not protect heritage or rights to heritage) primarily for the benefit of the community or Aboriginal people that values it but instead places the interests of archaeologists and the public at large above those of First Nations [Klassen 2008:11].

IAB are protected and managed by the province of BC's Archaeology Branch of the Ministry of Forests, Lands, Natural Resource Operations and Rural Development (Archaeology Branch). The Archaeology Branch maintains a registry of archaeological sites in the province, many of which exist on territory that may have been traditionally inhabited by, and therefore claimed by, multiple Nations.

The combination of a lack of clearly defined territory and the claim of ownership by the province of IAB found on these territories presents a challenge

to culturally competent stewardship. It demands careful, respectful, and engaged stewardship of any IAB held in museums (Province of BC 2018a, 2019b).

1.4. Motivation to Reform Stewardship of IAB

The work of this thesis is inspired by the final report of the TRC (TRCC 2015a, 2015b) which makes compliance among Canadian Museums with UNDRIP the focus of Call to Action 67.

67. We call upon the federal government to provide funding to the Canadian Museums Association to undertake, in collaboration with Aboriginal peoples, a national review of museum policies and best practices to determine the level of compliance with the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples and to make recommendations [TRCC 2015a:8].

The federal government has made the necessary funding available, and the CMA has established a Reconciliation Council and a Reconciliation Program (CMA 2019). The Reconciliation Program has completed the survey of Canadian museums, referred to in section 1.2 above, to gauge the compliance of museums with UNDRIP, and to learn what the obstacles are to reconciling museum policies and practices with UNDRIP. The program is continuing with outreach and engagement to provide context to the survey results and to "...seek guidance from Elders and Cultural Knowledge Keepers, interview museum leaders, organize talking circles and roundtables, and learn from retired museum professionals" (CMA 2020b:35). The final report of the CMA's Reconciliation Program was expected in the fall of 2021 but has been delayed due to the worldwide pandemic that started in early 2020 and has slowed the consultation process. Once it is complete the report will include recommendations and a set of tools to support reconciliation work in museums (Filion 2021).

Both the federal government of Canada and the provincial government of BC have recently enacted legislation that will bring the principles of UNDRIP into force in BC and Canada. Nationally, the federal government has passed *Bill C-15: An Act respecting the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous*

Peoples (Canada's UNDRIP) (Government of Canada 2021a). For museums in BC, Canada's UNDRIP may bring about a mandate to show reconciliation work to obtain grant funds from national organizations.

In BC, the provincial government has passed *Bill 41 – 2019: Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples Act* (Declaration Act) into law (Province of BC 2019b). With this law, the province commits to UNDRIP as the framework for their reconciliation process (Province of BC 2019c). The Declaration Act will bring about changes to BC's laws as it brings them into harmony with UNDRIP over time. The BC Heritage Conservation Act, which governs museums and archaeology practices in this province, will be revised along with legislation related to local governments (BC Local Government Act, 2015) and non-profit organizations such as museum boards and societies (BC Societies Act, 2015). The new legislation will eventually require museums and the organizations that support them to align their policies and practices with UNDRIP.

1.5. Resources for Stewardship Reform

Given the impending need for reform of the policies and practices that shape ICM stewardship, the goal of this thesis is to provide resources that will help non-Indigenous museums to work toward stewardship reform. Reformed stewardship should be culturally competent, which means it is guided by the values and interests of the Indigenous Nations whose ancestral belongings these museums hold. Guidance from those Nations can be related to curation, access, interpretation, conservation, loans, repatriation, accessioning, deaccessioning, and any other aspects of stewardship. The premise of this thesis is that engagement with Indigenous Nations and access to their expertise is key to developing accurate, authentic, and culturally competent stewardship of Indigenous collections. Culturally competent stewardship will, in turn, inform the interpretation of IAB and result in a better-informed visitor and a strengthened relationship between the museum and the Nations whose archaeological belongings they hold.

Engagement requires preparation. Museums need to be informed of, and prepare for, the potential concerns of Indigenous Nations before beginning engagement. Many Indigenous Nations operate with small administrative budgets and do not have the resources of time, personnel, or funds to educate museums on engagement protocols (Collison et al. 2019). There is already a respectable body of literature that for some time has been capturing the perspectives of Indigenous Nations and practitioners regarding the stewardship of their belongings. The need to move the engagement process forward given the lagging uptake of museums, particularly small museums, on engagement for stewardship purposes, calls for a review of this literature and an aggregation of the advice found there. This thesis intends to accomplish that aggregation. It is anticipated that museums may use the guidance compiled here to begin a process to engage local Indigenous Nations and to align stewardship policy and practice with the values and preferences of the Nations whose IAB they hold.

1.6. Methods

In the following chapters, I present a case study of the small non-Indigenous museum where I work, along with a literature review on Indigenous perspectives of ICM stewardship. I will apply what is learned in the literature review to the policy, procedures, and practices at the museum with suggestions for reform. I expect that many of the problems found in the stewardship of IAB at my museum, although legacy problems, will be resolvable with those reforms. I expect that many of the reforms proposed here will apply to similar museums with similar holdings in BC.

In the next chapter, I begin with some background and description of the RMHS, situating it as a small, non-Indigenous, local-history museum, mainly focused on the history of the City of Richmond. Problems with the stewardship of IAB at the RMHS and the effects of those problems are reviewed. In chapter three, I conduct a review of literature by Indigenous scholars, experts, and practitioners in cultural heritage management, reports from Indigenous

contributions at engagement events on stewardship, museum ethics documents, and the reports of the TFR, RCAP, TRC, and UNDRIP, all of which engaged with Indigenous people in their development. The abundant advice from this literature review is aggregated and then condensed into a set of proposed principles for culturally competent stewardship of ICM. In chapter four, the collections policy, and procedures at the RMHS are assessed against these principles. Significant reforms that address shortcomings at the RMHS are recommended. In chapter five, I consider the results of the review of the RMHS and the implications for reform of ICM stewardship for the RMHS and similar BC museums.

1.7. Terminology

The following notes further clarify the language choices and definitions used in this thesis.

Indigenous Nation, community, people

The World Health Organization defines an Indigenous community as a group of people

...that live within, or are attached to, geographically distinct traditional habitats or ancestral territories, and who identify themselves as being part of a distinct cultural group, descended from groups present in the area before modern states were created and current borders defined. They generally maintain cultural and social identities, and social, economic, cultural and political institutions, separate from the mainstream or dominant society or culture [World Health Organization 2010:np].

In Canada, Indigenous Peoples are the First Nations, Inuit and Metis Peoples who are the descendants of those who originally inhabited North America. Language around Indigenous Peoples has undergone significant revision since Canada established itself in 1867. The phrase *Aboriginal Peoples* was often used to refer to Indigenous Peoples after 1985, especially regarding the constitutional rights of Indigenous Peoples. *First Nations* replaced *Indian* as the accepted term in the Canadian vocabulary in the 1970s. However, *Indian* is a

legal term and remains in use in that realm. Some Indigenous Nations retain the word *Indian* as part of their identity, (e.g., Musqueam Indian Band) while others prefer First Nation or Nation (Kesler 2020, UBC Indigenous Studies 2009).

Throughout this work I will refer to the specific Nations as they refer to themselves, or to Indigenous communities in general as *Indigenous Nations* or *Nations*, emphasizing the sovereign nature of these communities. Some of the documents cited here were written at a time when more archaic terms were the norm and will be cited as written.

Belongings

Belongings is a term coined by Musqueam Indian Band members in the process of developing the exhibit *čəsnaʔəm: the city before the city* in collaboration with the Museum of Anthropology and the Museum of Vancouver. It refers to what museums traditionally call archaeological artifacts, archaeological collections, or archaeological objects. These are also sometimes referred to in archaeology as heritage resources. The intent of using the word *belongings* to refer to these items here is to acknowledge that they are not just objects, artifacts, and resources. They connect modern people whose ancestors once held or used them to the places where they were found, and to an obligation to steward them (Wilson 2016). Jordan Wilson explains:

Ultimately, our use of the term belongings has multiple intentions: it is a political expression, but aligns with our ways of knowing; it pertains to both the historic and the contemporary; and it connects the intangible with the tangible. It is meant to communicate to the museum visitor our ongoing connection to the past, to the places within our territory, and to belongings held in museum collections. Most importantly, it is meant to convey that our ancestors continue to have a strong connection to these belongings, and that Musqueam community members today feel a deep sense of responsibility for these belongings [Wilson 2016:np].

This bond between belongings and an Indigenous Nation represents a relationship that is unique among history museum collections. The use of this word underscores the need for their unique treatment.

Chapter 2.

Case study

2.1. Situating the RMHS

The RMHS, a municipal museum in the City of Richmond, BC, Canada, and my place of employment, provides the case study for this thesis. I chose the RMHS as an example because it meets the definition of a small museum described in chapter one, with a full-time permanent collections staff of two and a collection of just over 22,000 objects. Like other small museums, the RMHS holds belongings from local Indigenous archaeological sites yet does not actively engage with any Indigenous Nation in the stewardship of those belongings. I am familiar with the organization, and I believe that, like me, the staff and museum board members have a desire to address the calls to action. As a non-Indigenous descendant of immigrants to Canada, I acknowledge the privilege of being part of the dominant culture. I feel an obligation to examine the harms resulting from our stewardship of IAB at the RMHS and to investigate a path to correcting those harms. In the first part of this chapter, I will introduce the RMHS and provide an overview of the Indigenous heritage of the area. In the second part, I will review some of the issues I see in our stewardship of IAB at the RMHS.

2.1.1. The City of Richmond

The City of Richmond sits on fertile delta land, encompassing 17 islands at the mouth of the Fraser River on the west coast of Canada in the Province of BC. Most of the City occupies the two largest islands, Lulu Island and Sea Island. Richmond was first incorporated as the Corporation of the Township of Richmond in 1879 by early settlers in the region. In 1990, Richmond was officially designated as a City by the Province of BC (City of Richmond 2020). The municipality's roots were initially in agriculture, followed by industrial fishing and canning. Agriculture continues to occupy a significant part of the landscape in

Richmond, with 39 percent of the land base reserved by the province for agriculture and an additional 43 percent currently used for agriculture outside of that reserve (City of Richmond 2020). The dykes, ditches, and roads created for agriculture in the early part of the twentieth century enabled the eventual suburbanization of areas of Richmond starting in the 1950s (Cook 2002, City of Richmond 2009). The 2010 Winter Olympics brought the construction of the Canada Line (rapid transit from Vancouver) and the Richmond Olympic Oval, a venue site. Today, Richmond's urban and suburban areas remain concentrated in the western half of Lulu Island. Development plans centre mainly around the densification of those areas to accommodate projected population growth (City of Richmond 2009). The City is proud of the diversity of its population and has undertaken planning to ensure the inclusion of everyone in the services they provide. The City's *Cultural Harmony Plan 2019-2029* notes the vibrancy and enrichment of diversity and acknowledges the challenges it represents for communication, understanding, and marginalization (City of Richmond 2019). With this plan, the City commits to working with

...Community Associations and Societies, key stakeholders and citizens to facilitate intercultural understanding among Richmond's diverse communities, reduce barriers faced by different segments of the city's population, and develop programs and services that are inclusive and relevant so that all Richmond residents can participate in all aspects of community life [City of Richmond 2019:iii].

The first strategy of the plan is to build intercultural connections. For Indigenous Nations, this involves reviewing and responding to the Calls to Action of the TRC to increase "...awareness of the history of Indigenous Peoples, including the history and legacy of the residential school system" (City of Richmond 2019:33). The RMHS is one of several organizations in the City's toolbox that can help ensure awareness of that history and legacy.

2.1.2. Traditional Territory

IAB tie ancestors to their descendants in modern Indigenous Nations, and those modern Nations, in turn, retain ties to the land where their ancestors lived.

Richmond was home to the ancestors of multiple Indigenous Nations long before the arrival of early settlers. Modern Indigenous Nations have interests and rights associated with their traditional occupation and use of these lands. They are key stakeholders in the stewardship of archaeological belongings found in their traditional territories (Bell 2009).

Like most of BC, the territory that makes up Richmond was never ceded by the original occupants in treaty or agreement with the colonial government, the provincial government, or the federal government. Nonetheless, each of these governments has profited from Indigenous territory in one way or another, as have local governments and settler populations who now make Richmond home. Following considerable protest, advocacy, and litigation, especially from 1970 onward, Indigenous Peoples in BC have secured support for their rights from the Supreme Court of Canada (Harris 2002). In 1982, rights to the resources of their traditional lands were acknowledged and protected as Aboriginal rights in sections 35 and 25, respectively, of Canada's *Constitution Act, 1982* (Government of Canada 1982).

The *Constitution Act* includes protections for the rights of the Aboriginal peoples (Indian, Inuit, and Métis) of Canada. Section 35 of the *Constitution Act* recognizes and affirms Aboriginal rights, which are rights related to the historical occupancy and use of the land by Aboriginal peoples [Government of Canada 2021b:np].

The BC Treaty Commission (BCTC) was established in 1992 by the BC provincial government, the government of Canada, and the First Nations Summit, to begin negotiating treaties with Indigenous Nations across the province (BCTC 2021a). Many Nations have registered their traditional territories on the BCTC website in statements of intent which include maps and descriptions of the traditional territory of their Nations before colonization and settlement. Based on these statements, the BC provincial government and the Canadian federal government have begun to engage in negotiations with Indigenous Nations to establish an agreement that will determine their relationships going forward.

The original inhabitants of Richmond are suggested here based on claims to traditional territory found on the BCTC negotiations update website (BCTC 2021b) and in territorial declarations on Nation websites. However, interests in the heritage of Richmond are likely broader than the declared claims suggest. According to the SOI maps on the BCTC website, the area of the Fraser River Delta where the City of Richmond is located is on the traditional territory of multiple Indigenous Nations. These include Musqueam Indian Band, Stó:lō Tribal Council (which includes Cheam First Nation, Chawathil First Nation, Shxw'ōwhámél First Nation, Kwantlen First Nation, Kwaw'Kwaw'Apilt, Soowahlie First Nation, Sq'èwlets First Nation, Seabird Island First Nation), Hul'qumi'num Treaty Group (which includes Cowichan Tribes, Halalt First Nation, Lyackson First Nation, Ts'uubaasatx Nation and Penelakut Tribe), Tsleil-Waututh Nation and Tsawwassen First Nation (BCTC 2021 b). To date, the Tsawwassen First Nation is the only Nation to have completed the modern treaty negotiations process and signed a comprehensive agreement with the Governments of BC and Canada. Tsawwassen First Nation's traditional territory includes all of Richmond south of Sea Island. While the settlement lands do not include Richmond, Tsawwassen First Nation maintains an interest in IAB found in their traditional territory (Government of Canada 2010). Kwantlen First Nation claims traditional territory in Richmond (Kwantlen First Nation 2008). As a member of the Stó:lō Tribal Council, Kwantlen First Nation is not participating in the provincial treaty process. However, the Nation independently pursues land governance and revenue sharing agreements with the province (Province of BC 2014).

2.1.3. Indigenous History of Richmond

The story of the islands' original inhabitants is not a well-published subject. History books and ethnographic studies provide general information on cultural practices but minimal information that specifically explores the Indigenous Nations that inhabited the islands, their villages and camps, and their names for the landscape, fauna, and flora that sustained them. The main history

book of Richmond, *Child of the Fraser*, was commissioned for Richmond's centennial in 1979. In the first chapter, *First Peoples of the River*, author Lesley Ross details life as it was before contact, grouping all Nations who inhabited the islands together as Coast Salish. The author describes details of pre-contact daily life and cultural practices supposedly of all Coast Salish Nations in the region based on ethnographic research available at the time (Ross 1979). Regarding Richmond, Ross provides the following perspective on the Indigenous settlement of the islands:

Although it is generally thought that no bands of the Coast Salish tribe had permanent settlements on the islands, the Musqueam have long had proprietary claim to the area. An informant of the band has confirmed that there were year-long dwellings on the islands, but they were scattered and may have been moved from year to year. Wilson Duff reports that there were villages near Steveston and on Sea Island. More common to the islands, however, were the temporary dwellings constructed to house the fishermen during the summer months of fishing and berrying. Woven cedar bark mats lashed to poles characterised the summer dwellings whereas the yearlong houses required the sturdier, weather-resistant construction of split logs. The islands did not bear large coniferous trees for homes but, across the river, the land abounded in tall cedars which were felled and floated across the water [Ross 1979:15].

Ross briefly captures the first encounters of Indigenous Nations with early explorers in the region in the second chapter of the book. The remaining seven chapters trace the decades of post-contact events and growth of the City on the lower Fraser River Delta, with very little mention of Indigenous Nations or people.

Ross' hint at an impermanent Indigenous population in Richmond, followed by the omission of Indigenous history in the recounting of the rest of the history of Richmond, is representative of the interpretation of Indigenous history and heritage in history books at the time. It may leave readers with the impression that Indigenous people only ever held tenuous ties to the islands and disappeared from Richmond upon colonial settlement, relinquishing any connections to the islands. As the first full history of the municipality, and the book that would be the main resource for future curators and educators looking

to interpret the stories of Richmond, the book, like many of its era, leaves much of the Indigenous story out. While the book is valuable for acknowledging a thriving Indigenous heritage on the Fraser River before contact with European traders, it does not thoroughly acknowledge the key and enduring role the islands specifically had and have still in the sustenance of Indigenous culture and heritage. In this first comprehensive history of Richmond, Ross treats Indigenous heritage as part of an interesting but ephemeral past.

Archaeologist Leonard Ham's unpublished *Archaeological Heritage Resource Overview of Richmond, BC*, provides greater understanding and evidence of how the islands of Richmond, specifically, developed and were inhabited by Indigenous Peoples (Ham 1987). Ham suggests the islands of the Fraser River Delta began to form along with the lower Fraser River sometime after the end of the last ice age, approximately 11,000 years ago. Ham estimates that the islands had not changed significantly from 3-4,000 years ago when sea levels and climate conditions on the west coast of BC stabilized. That is when Ham proposes Indigenous people began to inhabit the islands. Ham describes the territorial rights practices and settlement of the delta islands by Halkomelem speaking Coast Salish people.

There is some local popular belief ... that the delta 'supported no villages of the local Indians'. Nothing could be further from the truth. The native people of the Fraser River delta, including all of Richmond, were Coast Salish Indians who spoke Halkomelem ... The Coast Salish were once the largest group of Indians north of California, and the numbers of Halkomelem speakers were second only to the Coast Salish groups of the lower Columbia River [Ham 1987: 5].

He cites observations by early explorers of large permanent house clusters and describes the natural terrain of sloughs as transportation routes with protected fishing and campsites along their banks. The islands' original inhabitants collected natural grasses, roots, barks, and berries in the fields, in the bogs, and along the ridges. The islands provided valuable resources for the original inhabitants with seasonal fishing and hunting. Ham estimates a

population of 1,000 to 2,000 in winter and ten times as many people during fishing seasons. Ham's report sets the context for later archaeological research. The archaeological material he collected and then repositied at the RMHS is evidence of the occupation and use of the islands before colonial settlement.

Indigenous Nations with traditional ties to territory in Richmond have documented those ties in their own ways. For example, Musqueam Indian Band has made some of their claim documents public. In June of 1984, Musqueam Indian Band prepared their *Musqueam Comprehensive Land Claim: Preliminary Report on Musqueam Land use and Occupancy*, a more detailed supplement to their 1973 original land claim, which was denied at the time by the federal government (Musqueam Indian Band 1984). The newer document provides evidence for Musqueam Indian Band's continuous existence in their claimed territory since before European contact, reviewing archaeological, ethnographic, and linguistic research. In addition, the Musqueam use of their traditional territory, including the Fraser River Delta islands, is described, citing ethnographic research, archaeological research, oral histories, and archival documents.

This document reveals that before contact, the Musqueam traded and shared territory with other Nations from further up the Fraser River and along the shores of the Salish Sea. It picks up where the Ross history left off, noting that members continued to fish, hunt, and gather resources for commercial, personal, medicinal, cultural, and spiritual purposes throughout their claimed territory. For example, in Richmond, Musqueam Indian Band members worked at the fisheries and gathered berries and medicinal plants for canning and traditional healing. The delta islands, for Musqueam, clearly remain important for culture and heritage, despite the loss of access and the encroachment of urbanization in the territory. The document indicates that Musqueam territory continues to provide resources to the people of the Musqueam Nation and is the basis for much of Musqueam cultural and spiritual life today (Musqueam Indian Band 1984).

Indigenous involvement in large projects in Richmond demonstrates the interest and connection of multiple Nations to Richmond. The Environmental Assessment Office of BC reviews large project proposals (roads, bridges, pipelines etc.) to ensure that the proponents address environmental concerns. Included in the assessments is an Aboriginal Consultation. The assessment reports are published online and include details of the consultation with the Nations, including their relationship to the area and their detailed reviews of project proposals and responses. The *George Massey Tunnel Replacement Project* (Province of BC 2017) is one such project, as is the *Vancouver Airport Fuel Delivery Project* from 2012 (Province of BC 2012). The 2012 project proposed the construction of a marine terminal and fuel port on the south shore of Lulu Island along with a pipeline through Richmond from there, northwest to the airport. The report shows that multiple Indigenous Nations have long-held connections to the islands and the local fishing grounds. Eleven Nations, including those with official claims on the BCTC, are identified as having strong interests in the area that the project could impact, and three additional Nations are identified with interests not as likely to be impacted.

In consultations, the Nations indicated concerns about the effects of construction, shipping traffic, and a potential spill on fisheries, estuaries, birds and animals, bog lands, and a large village site in the area named Tl'uqtinus (or Tl'ektines). Tl'uqtinus was noted on charts as a Cowichan village by explorations of the Fraser River as early as 1827. At one time, the village supported multiple longhouses occupied for all but the winter season. It provided a trading centre for Nations from Vancouver Island and a base for salmon fishing and resource gathering. Families from Nations at Point Grey, Burrard Inlet, and further south on the Fraser River Delta also fished nearby, gathered berries, or hunted waterfowl, among other seasonal activities on Lulu Island (Province of BC 2012). In expressing concern about the impact on aquatic birds in the area, the Cowichan Nation Alliance (CNA) notes that "The CNA membership traditionally harvested these birds and would like to do so in the future" (CNA 2011:1). This report and the Nations' concerns regarding the impacts of this project show the

rich diversity of Indigenous heritage in Richmond and the strong connection of the islands, still, to multiple Indigenous Nations.

In 2016, Graeme Wood wrote *The First People of 'Richmond'*, published in the local Richmond newspaper (Wood 2016). The article was timed to celebrate National Aboriginal Day that year, now National Indigenous Peoples Day. It provides a brief overview of the pre-contact, historic, and modern Indigenous heritage of the islands. Wood summarizes Ham's 1987 report and considers the devastation to Indigenous Peoples caused by introduced diseases, removal of villages, and desecration of burial grounds during non-Indigenous settlement. He consults with a Musqueam councillor, Morgan Guerin, who states, "The Musqueam are part of your history...If you come to live here, you need to know the history of this land, and it doesn't start 150 years ago. Our oral history predates the land of Richmond" (Wood 2016:np). Wood's article is the most publicly accessible description of Indigenous heritage in Richmond, aside from the Ross book, because it is accessible in the archives of *Richmond News* online and is easily found.

2.1.4. History of the RMHS

The RMHS was established, like many museums across BC, during a boom in new museums that occurred in the 1950s and 1960s. During this era, colonial, provincial, federal, and municipal centennials were celebrated with funding that encouraged communities around the province to document their histories (Reimers 2007). These celebrations and the funds that came with them resulted in a significant increase in the number of new local history museums established throughout the province (Moore 2017).

According to correspondence and minutes in the Richmond Historical and Museum Advisory Committee fonds at the City of Richmond Archives (CRA), in 1960, the Township of Richmond made inquiries to the Curator at the Vancouver Museum requesting the transfer of historical collections related to Richmond. They were specifically interested in two portraits of the first Reeve of Richmond

and his wife, Mr. and Mrs. Hugh Boyd. The Curator in Vancouver denied the request, citing a requirement that Richmond needed to be able to provide a fireproof building to house them. At the request of the municipality's Chief Administrative Officer, Richmond formally created the Richmond Historical and Museum Advisory Committee. In 1961, the municipal council passed by-law number 1817, *Historical and Museum Advisory Committee By-Law*. The inaugural meeting of the new Committee took place on January 24, 1961 (CRA 1968).

Based on by-law 1817, this advisory committee comprised up to ten members appointed by the municipal council, along with the Reeve (or mayor) and a municipal council member. The committee hired a custodian (or curator) and a secretary (or administrator) to execute their duties. The original duties were to advise the City on heritage, collections, historic dates, and significant people. They were also charged to acquire, borrow, document, and manage collections on behalf of the City and create exhibits at sites around the City. They did not have permanent exhibit or collections storage spaces and stored many collections in the members' homes. Eventually, this committee was able to borrow storage space from the public library. In 1967, the Richmond Arts Centre, a Canadian centennial building, opened with a small exhibit space for the museum. From the early days of this local history museum, the terms of by-law 1817 confirmed that the City was always the owner of the collections (CRA 1968,1976).

Throughout the 1960s and into the 1970s, the Historical and Museum Advisory Committee, the library, and the administrator of the Richmond Arts Centre collected on behalf of the City, doing their best to document local history. Items of furniture, a phonograph, a lantern slide projector, a bedspread, horse collars, newspapers, telephone directories and theatre programs were among the earliest acquisitions gathered in a back room at the Richmond Public Library. After much deliberation, the Vancouver Museum eventually transferred copies and then the original portraits of Mr. and Mrs. Hugh Boyd to the City of

Richmond. They remained in the archival collections until 1979 when they were moved to the museum collections. The heritage of early pioneer families in the area was the focus of these collectors, along with oral histories (CRA 1968).

By 1974, the Museum and Historical Advisory Committee members felt a need to create an associated society that would enable them to apply for grants, enlist community volunteers, and take on projects such as the upcoming municipal centennial in 1979 (CRA 1994, CRA 1976). Urgent memos were sent to Richmond municipal council requesting an amendment to by-law 1817 that would acknowledge the society as a separate entity and ensure the role of society members on the municipal committee. By-law 3177, an amendment to 1817, was passed by the Richmond municipal council on October 27, 1975. By December of 1976, the Richmond Museum and Historical Society was registered under the Societies Act of BC (CRA 1976).

The various 1979 centennial projects included yet another new Richmond Arts Centre with slightly more space for the museum exhibits and a small collections storage room. Soon afterwards, in 1980, the Museum Society took on the management of a local heritage house and farm, London Heritage Farm. They moved their offices and focus to the farm, while the Richmond Museum and Archives continued to be operated by the municipality from the new Richmond Arts Centre (CRA 1994). According to long-time Museum Society member and local historian Ron Hyde, in the 1990s, the Museum Society changed its name to become the London Heritage Farm Historical Society. That enabled the Richmond Museum to use the name to create a dedicated society (personal communication 2021).

In 1983, the municipality created a professional Curator position to care for the collections, create exhibits and develop educational programs (Jorden 1983). The archives held by the museum were separated into an independent archive which eventually became the City of Richmond Archives, part of the City records department. Leslie Moore, the new museum Curator, encountered a

legacy of undocumented collections and worked to organize and address it where possible with mass cataloguing projects (personal communication 2021). In 1984, Richmond's Museum and Historical Advisory Committee lost its heritage obligations to a new City Heritage Advisory Committee and then Commission, leaving museum advisement to the Museum Advisory Committee (CRA 1994). The Richmond Museum and Historical Society continued to work out of London Heritage Farm while the municipal collections continued to grow alongside those of other local history societies: the Steveston Historical Society, Britannia Shipyard Historical Society, and Sea Island Historical Society. The Richmond Museum staff gathered evidence of changing populations, industries, and landscapes in Richmond. The collections took in large donations from the remains of local schools, local businesses, fishery industries, agriculture, public transport, and marine supply industries. As the City began extensive suburb development, the City Planning department adopted a policy that made the Richmond collections the repository for archaeology collections gathered by assessment projects (CRA 1997, Richmond Review 1988). A new off-site storage warehouse was acquired. A new and larger museum space was created in 1992 within the Richmond Cultural Centre complex at 7700 Minoru gate (Leslie Moore personal communication 2021). Eventually, in 1999, the museum established a non-profit society of its own, the Richmond Museum Society, so that the museum could apply for grants and raise funds (City of Richmond 2018).

As government funding for museums shrank to all-time lows across the country in the 1990s (CMA 2017), local historical societies in Richmond eventually struggled to meet the demands of caring for the collections they had gathered. By the 2010s, one local historical society in Richmond considered donating its collections to the City (City of Richmond 2013a). The collections of this volunteer society were carefully managed, but the work to maintain museum standards is time-consuming and costly. The City wanted to ensure the best possible management of potentially in-coming collections from this and other collecting societies, so they began to work with the RMHS to develop a City-wide collections policy. This policy was intended to standardize and professionalize

stewardship policy and practices in the City and provide a guide for best practices to local historical societies that were still collecting.

The City adopted the policy and procedures in 2013 when the council approved the *City Wide Artefact Collections Policy 8710* and *Administrative Procedure 8710.01* (collections policy) (City of Richmond 2013b)³. This collections policy still governs stewardship at the RMHS. It is loosely based on an earlier Richmond Museum collections policy but was developed with standards and the collections of local history societies in mind. At the time, the authors and I, having proofread it, admittedly did not think of the IAB in the collections. In the document submitted for council approval, the preamble lists collaborators - a list that does not include consultation or collaboration with local Indigenous Nations (City of Richmond 2013a).

Today, the RMHS manages all municipally-owned museum collections in the City of Richmond. Collections are stored at several off-site warehouses and exhibited at ten municipal heritage sites, museums, and community spaces, including City Hall. The Curator of Collections is responsible for executing the collections policy and establishing specific collections procedures. The City also employs a permanent full-time Assistant Curator, my position, and various temporary part-time and full-time auxiliary (or temporary) staff who all assist the Curator in carrying out much of the work to care for and document the collections. While the policy is well defined, RMHS has yet to finalize formal procedures to go with those policies.

As a municipally-owned collection, collections staff at the RMHS report to the City's Manager of Museums and Heritage Services, who reports to the Director of the Arts, Culture and Heritage department. The Director of Arts,

³ The City of Richmond does not publish its official policies, but the committee or council meeting minutes where the policies have been proposed and approved are published. These documents contain the preamble for the policy and the content of the policy itself. After approval by Richmond City Council, policies are numbered and formatted. This thesis will refer to both the published, un-numbered proposal document with the preamble (2013a) and to the final, numbered, but unpublished copy (2013b), with permission of the City of Richmond.

Culture and Heritage, in turn, reports to the General Manager of the division of Community Services. The General Manager reports to the City's Chief Administrative Officer, who reports to City Council. Revisions to the City Wide Artefact Collections Policy and Procedures must be approved by the Parks Recreation and Community Services Committee of the City Council. This committee is composed entirely of City Councillors and approves projects, activities, policies and procedures for the City's Parks, Recreation and Community departments. Museum and Heritage Services facilities and activities are included in the Community Services department. The organizational chart in Figure 2-1 below is adapted from a larger chart on the City of Richmond website that includes the Art Gallery, Arts Centre and other Arts, Culture and Heritage division departments. Figure 2-1 illustrates the governance structure of the RMHS specifically.

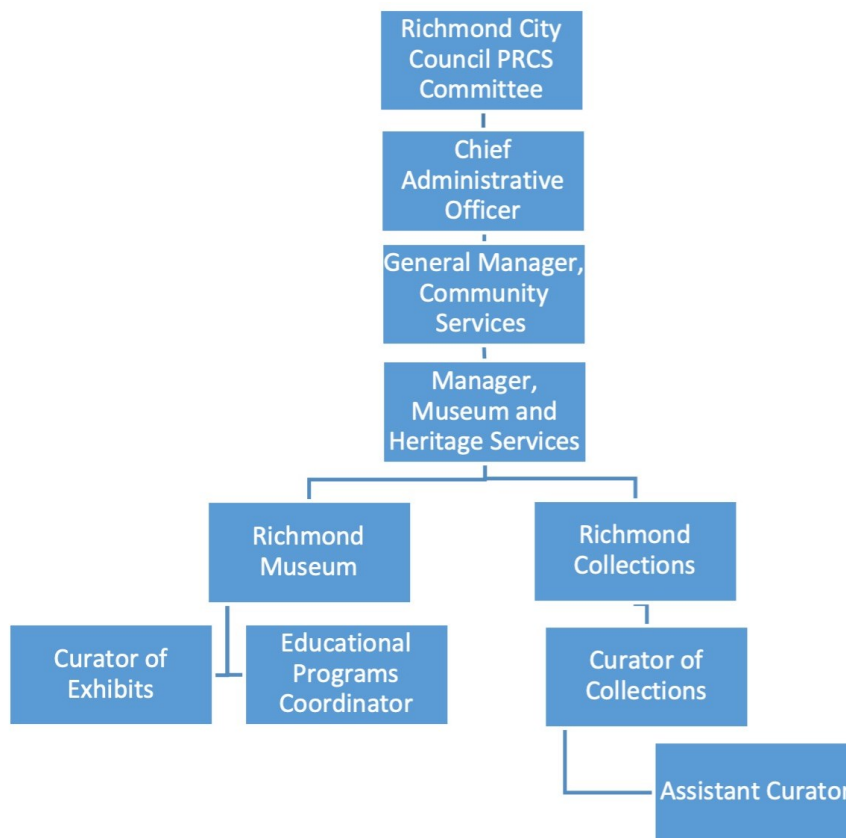


Figure 2-1 The RMHS Organizational Chart

The RMHS has utilized a database system to document and maintain the collections records since the early 2000s. All paper records at the RMHS were digitized in 2003 and 2004 into the first data system, which consisted of a well-designed set of linked spreadsheets (Connie Baxter personal communication 2021). Archaeology collections that had not yet been documented were added to the database during this digitization process. This database eventually became unstable and too large for the memory systems of the computer running it. It did not always save new or updated data, so sometimes data was re-entered, resulting in duplicate records. In addition, the system was difficult to access for researchers as it was stored on one computer and backed-up weekly by a memory card to the City's shared servers. Although there were many images of collection items, the process to link these images to their records was complicated. Many of the links were eventually broken as folder systems were updated on the City servers. In addition, the system could not store large amounts of information in fields that needed space, and it did not have fields for referencing external documents with relevant information (Rebecca Forrest personal communication 2021). In 2012, with the growing collections and City-run heritage sites, the RMHS began procuring a new collections management system (CMS) (City of Richmond 2012).

In 2015, the RMHS transferred collections data to the new CMS. The CMS introduced new bibliography and reference fields and a robust image management system. In addition, new functions were added that improved the accession, documentation, and tracking of collections. This CMS, still in use today, is flexible, adjustable, and accessible for users with an internet connection. This broad accessibility of the collection records through the CMS makes it a valuable resource for curators and programmers at the RMHS who need to research the history and connection of collection items to Richmond's history. Richmond's CMS is intended to include documentation for every item in the collection. Therefore, CMS records should provide reference to supporting documents that are stored separately in files or that are not stored at the RMHS, such as items located in the City archives.

2.1.5. Indigenous archaeology collections

Of the more than 21,000 objects in the care of the RMHS, just over 700 are archaeological belongings. Most of these are non-Indigenous, from sites like the Britannia Shipyards Historic Site, which document cannery housing around the turn of the twentieth century. There are approximately 150 records for items that can be classified as Indigenous archaeological belongings from pre-1846 sites. Of the 150 belongings, approximately 130 can be confirmed as coming from sites around Richmond. These belongings may be associated with the ancestors of one or more of the Indigenous Nations whose traditional territory includes Richmond.

In 1986, at the instigation of the Museum Curator, archaeologist Leonard C. Ham was hired by the City to conduct an archaeological overview of the City. The City was growing rapidly and permitting and building new subdivisions across the islands (Cook 2002). The purpose of the archaeological overview was to enlighten the Museum and Heritage Advisory Committee so that they could advise the City planning department on potential areas where heritage resources might be encountered (Lesley Moore personal communication 2021). To ensure developers protected archaeological sites, the City planning department needed to know which areas to protect. Ham's report provided a map and a model of existing and potential sites. He identified thirteen new pre-contact sites in Richmond, nine of which still existed at the time of the report. Ham also researched belongings already in the RMHS collections, interviewing donors to tie the belongings to geographic areas. He concluded that many potential sites had previously been destroyed by dykes, ditches, roads, farms, and the early practice of midden mining (Ham 1987). Ham recommended the protection of five sites and was especially interested in one site because it was still partially intact. Ham made recommendations for further research and interpretation of that site. Those investigations resulted in belongings repositied at the RMHS and with the Royal BC Museum or the University of British Columbia (UBC) Laboratory of Archaeology (Ham 1991, Pegg and Wada 2004).

2.2. Stewardship review

Museums have two main roles, which are to “...look after the world’s cultural property and interpret it to the public” (Lewis 2004:). The work is not that simple as each of these two roles brings with it a need for careful management and the guidance of policies and procedures wherever possible. There is a lack of formal procedures for collections stewardship at the RMHS. The collections policy provides administrative guidance, but specific procedures have not been developed or officially adopted yet. Therefore, the following section provides an overview of our stewardship practices at the RMHS as they are represented in the IAB in our holdings. I consider the documentation of belongings, interpretation of Indigenous history in Richmond, and engagement with the Nations for stewardship policy and procedures development. I will show that our management of IAB at the RMHS has been inadequate. The state of our stewardship makes it difficult for programmers and curators who rely on documentation in the records to understand the basic significance of IAB and to confidently engage with Indigenous Nations to propose exhibits or programs that meaningfully represent Indigenous history. Consequently, our visitors do not learn the Indigenous history of Richmond from the City’s museums and heritage sites.

2.2.1. Documentation

The Canadian Conservation Institute (CCI) advises museums across Canada and worldwide on matters of preventative collections care. They provide a list of the top ten *Agents of Deterioration*, which are factors that can cause damage to collections. Museums are expected to protect collections from these factors, including physical forces, theft, fire, flood, pests, pollutants, light, incorrect temperature and humidity, and dissociation. CCI provides advice to museums on recognizing the signs of these agents, preventing their effects on collections, and documenting and treating any damage (CCI 2017). The tenth agent of deterioration, dissociation, results from a natural tendency for systems

to break down when they are not adequately maintained or followed. In their article published on the CCI website, Waller and Cato write that this "...results in loss of objects, or object-related data, or the ability to retrieve or associate objects and data" (2012:np). This loss compromises the value of the objects for research, reference, and cultural purposes.

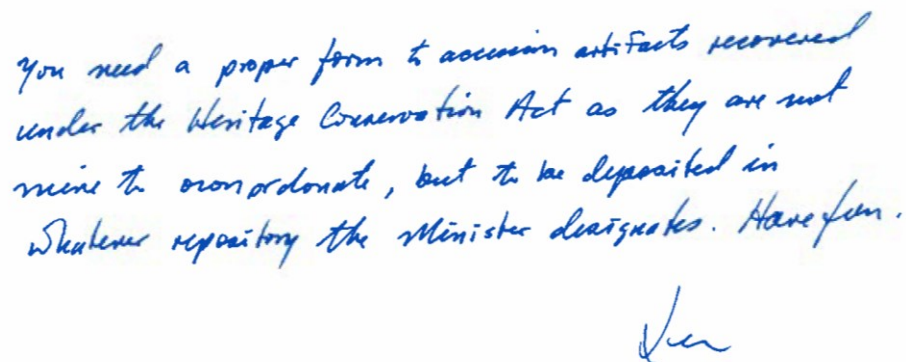
According to Waller and Cato, dissociation can be caused by misplacement of objects, removal of identifying tags, and illegible, ambiguous, ephemeral, and erroneous documentation. Dissociation also results when cultural material is handled in a culturally inappropriate way. This can cause many complications and a loss of value to the community of origin for that material. Dissociation can also be caused by a failure of collections workers to maintain professional standards that are intended to secure collections against dissociation. Ensuring ownership by the museum, accurate cataloguing, stable data systems, proper object identification, and tracking are all key to ensuring that collections are not lost. Loss can be internal through misplacement within the collections or external to borrowers, theft, or confiscation. Objects that have lost their connection to value-enhancing data, the documentation that provides their context and significance, through any of these means, have been dissociated (Waller and Cato 2012).

Ownership

The RMHS confirms the legal transfer of ownership of collections by a Deed of Gift, an agreement signed by both the Curator of Collections and the donor. The agreement requires the donor to affirm their ownership of the items for donation and includes donation terms. Without a Deed of Gift signed by both parties, the RMHS, as the City's designate, does not have the right to interpret, publish or even generally hold those items. The lack of a signed agreement occurs when donors abandon items on the museum doorstep and don't leave enough contact information. These are called orphaned collections. It also occurs when donors do not sign and return their agreement. Orphaned items are usually managed following the BC and local government unclaimed property laws.

Agreements that have not been returned are pursued by museum staff. When the donors are not comfortable with the donation terms, the items are returned.

When Richmond was first establishing official procedures for archaeological collections in 1989, the Curator outlined the reposition arrangement in a bullet point of a memo to the Heritage Planner for the City of Richmond: “The Richmond Museum is usually designated as the repository for found materials until such time as Musqueam have their own cultural centre or museum to care for the material” (CRA 1997: memo from City of Richmond Curator Leslie Moore to planner Alex Jamieson June 9, 1989). This implies an in-trust approach towards the belongings, where belongings would be held but not owned by the City, in care for the descendant Nation. However, this was never actually the practice at the RMHS. In 1987 when the archaeologist Leonard Ham repositioned belongings with the RMHS, he was issued a Deed of Gift to transfer ownership to the then Township of Richmond. Upon returning the unsigned document, Ham noted that the belongings were not his to donate. Ham states: “You need a proper form to accession artifacts recovered under the Heritage Conservation Act as they are not mine to own or donate, but to be deposited in whatever repository the Minister designates...” (see Figure 2-2 below).



You need a proper form to accession artifacts recovered under the Heritage Conservation Act as they are not mine to own or donate, but to be deposited in whatever repository the Minister designates. Have fun.

Figure 2-2 Scan of 1989 Leonard Ham note returned with Deed of Gift
RMHS document scan used with permission.

As an archaeologist, Ham did not see repositing of archaeological material as a transfer of ownership but more as a deposit to be held in trust. Aside from

long-term loan agreements, which are used solely for items borrowed for exhibit purposes, the RMHS has never had an in-trust agreement document or process. Although substantially altered since 1989 when Ham declined to sign, the Deed of Gift still requires donors to assign all rights to title, ownership, and interest, irrevocably and unconditionally.

The RMHS has never officially been a designated repository for belongings, according to BC's Archaeology Branch of the Ministry of Forests, Lands, Natural Resource Operations and Rural Development (the Archaeology Branch). Although the Archaeology Branch does not publish specific regulations around repositories, there is an unofficial set of criteria that institutions must meet to be considered a designated repository. These criteria are published in the *First Nations Heritage Planning Toolkit* (Union of B.C. Indian Chiefs 2013) and have been provided upon request by the Archaeology Branch. There is a requirement that staff be trained in archaeological curation and that the institutions "...emphasize stewardship rather than ownership" (Archaeology Branch email 2018).

The reposition of belongings at the RMHS may indicate the lack of oversight by the BC Archaeology branch at the time. It also may indicate good communication and relationship between Ham, local Indigenous Nations, and the Curator, who was familiar with archaeological curation. Aside from the procedural memo noted above, there is no documentation in the archival records or in the reference files on why or how it was decided that the RMHS should act as the repository for the archaeological overview project and later research in the area. The Richmond Heritage Advisory Committee commissioned the initial overview at the request of the Curator, and it is possible that the reposition of belongings was part of that first contract. Since 1987, subsequent curators have not been involved in the archaeological assessment process except to accept recovered belongings. The RMHS has not documented pursuing Ham's unsigned Deed of Gift from 1989, revising that Deed of Gift, or attempting to move those belongings to a designated repository. The belongings remain at the RMHS, where they are

not legally owned by the City and are not governed by any kind of reposition, in-trust, or stewardship agreement. According to Waller and Cato (2012), the uncertainty around ownership, or the rights of the museum to possess and manage collections, puts them at risk of dissociation through confiscation by authorities or descendant communities.

Cataloguing at the RMHS

Beginning in the early 1970s, museums in Canada began to computerize records into what was initially called the National Inventory Program and later renamed Canadian Heritage Information Network (CHIN) (Sledge and Comstock 1986). A nationwide system was launched in 1982, and since then, CHIN, an agency of the federal government of Canada, has provided guidance on data standards for Canadian museums. By the time I started my museum career at the Glenbow Museum in 1996, the federal government was divesting itself of that system, and the museum, like many others in Canada, had begun the process to acquire and create its own digital CMS. Most museums, including the RMHS, made efforts to follow CHIN's national data standards in their cataloguing systems, or on paper. As the RMHS began to digitize the records of its collection into its first custom-built database system in the early 2000s, data standards were generally carried over, but without strict procedural guidelines, some fields were adapted to meet the needs of the museum. The national inventory at CHIN still exists as Artefacts Canada and is valuable for nationwide research, but museums now generally maintain their own CMS. CHIN continues to provide detailed field-level data standards guidance for Canadian museums through its humanities and natural sciences data dictionaries that can be found within the *CHIN Guide to Museum Standards* (Government of Canada 2019).

At the RMHS, following museum standards, the practice is to enter descriptive details, context, and the significance of each belonging into its related record in the CMS. This information makes it possible to confirm the identity of potentially unidentified objects and to track their location in storage along with any other relevant information. Most of the belongings at the RMHS were

catalogued at the end of two large digitization projects that were completed in 2005. These records were added into the database system from basic inventories rather than from the archaeologist's report to make the most of budget and time. Unfortunately, belongings from Indigenous sites in Richmond, collected nearly two decades earlier as a part of Leonard Ham's project, became mixed in with material from other archaeological projects related to non-Indigenous sites. In the rush to include all the collections in the digitization projects, incomplete and erroneous records were entered, and standards for documentation were not consistently followed. All collections data, erroneous and otherwise, was eventually transferred from the original RMHS database system to the new CMS acquired in 2015. Aside from adding photographs of some of the collection, the records have not been altered significantly in the new system. The result is that the records now do not capture the history or significance of the belongings. They contain very basic information that includes inconsistent numbering, inaccurate provenance information, and insufficient descriptive details.

Object numbering

Museums use a unique object identification number for acquired objects. They are usually referred to as accession numbers. Accessioning is an important part of the registration process of museums, whereby ownership of an item is legally transferred to the museum and documented (Simmons 2018, Ladkin 2004). During this process, numbers are permanently applied to objects to link them to their legal and informational documentation in the collections records system. A common system of numbering in museums, and the one used at the RMHS, is a three-part, or tripartite, numbering system with three sets of numbers separated by a decimal (e.g., 021.1.1). The *CHIN Humanities Data Dictionary* calls these compound numbers; each part, from left to right and separated by a decimal, represents the year of accession, the number for a particular group of items accessioned together, and the unique number for an object in that set

(Government of Canada 2013). The example accession number 021.1.1 thus represents the first item in the first group of objects donated in 2021.

Archaeology object or belonging identification in most of Canada is based on the Borden numbering system. Borden numbers in BC are obtained from the Archaeology Branch and physically applied by the archaeologist, usually before repositing of the belongings. Belonging numbers include the archaeological site identification number followed by the item number. The archaeological site identification number is a set of four letters that alternate between upper and lower case, followed by a dash and a number (e.g., DhRs-1). These are determined based on the Borden numbering system. This system uses the four letters to denote the quadrant of a larger geographic grid within which a site is located. The number that follows the dash indicates the next available site number within that quadrant, according to the regulator (Government of Canada 2013). In BC the regulator is the Archaeology Branch and Richmond sits within the Borden grid quadrants of DhRt, DhRs, DhRr, DgRr, DgRs and DgRt seen in Figure 2-3.

Once the site number is registered by the archaeologist with the provincial Archaeology Branch, all reports and documents associated with the site are filed by that number. Individual belonging numbers are determined by the archaeologist based on their inventory of what is collected at the site. Numbers start at one and go up from there and are usually noted following a colon (e.g., DhRs-36:1). Belonging numbers combined with the site numbers in this way represent a unique number for each belonging.

Accession numbers carry legal, ownership and reference information. They are essential to collection records where ownership has been transferred. Borden numbers, on the other hand, carry geographic and cultural information based on traditional territories. In BC, Borden numbers provide a reference for further research at the provincial Archaeology Branch. For that reason, assigned Borden numbers must remain in the record for all belongings. Accession

numbers are important for belongings that have been privately donated. At the RMHS, both Borden and accession number systems are used to identify belongings in the CMS with priority given to accession numbers for identification.

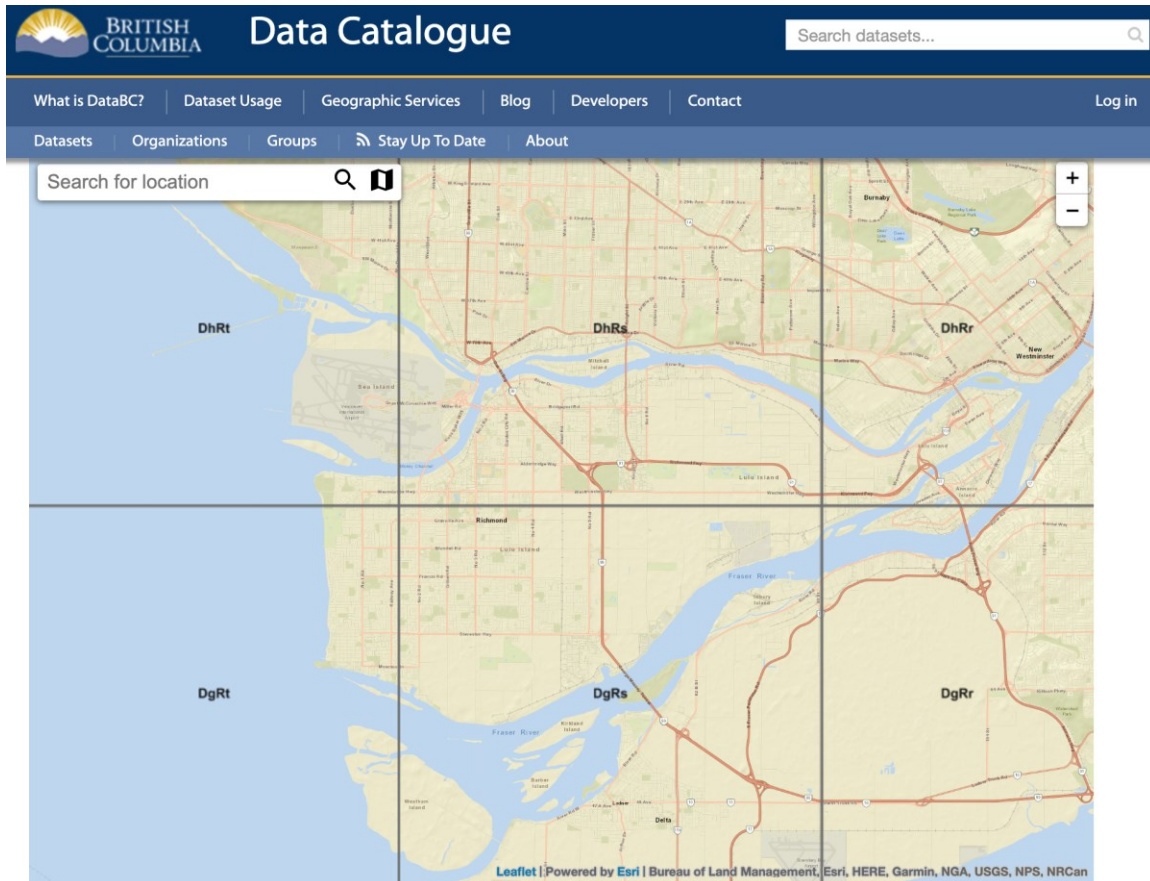


Figure 2-3 The location of Borden grid areas in Richmond

Captured from the BC Archaeology Branch website and licensed under BC's Open Government License

Over the years, the use of these numbers has not been consistent. Borden numbers in these records can be found in one or more of three fields, including the Object ID field, Other Number and Provenance field. Accession numbers have been assigned to belongings when they were donated by private collectors. In the process of the archaeological overview project, Ham identified and obtained Borden site numbers for belongings with previous accession numbers in the collections (Ham 1987). These site numbers, and sometimes the specific belonging number, have been included in the Other Number field of the records. An example of this use of both types of numbers is seen in the Admin

tab of the record for the hammer stone 974.3.4 captured in Figure 2-4⁴. In the record for 974.3.4, the Borden site number DhRs-x:27 is also included in the Provenance field on the Description tab of the record.

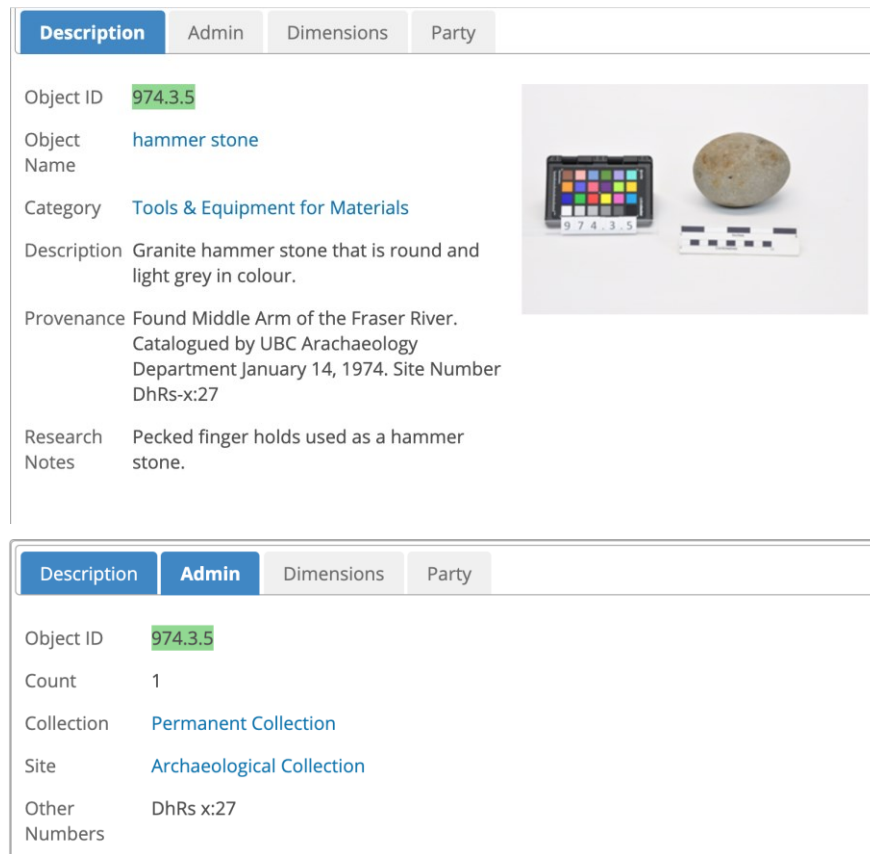


Figure 2-4 Hammer stone record with accession and Borden numbers
RMHS screen capture used with permission.

Some of the records at the RMHS include the Borden number as the unique object identification number, entered in the Object ID field. The archaeological record for dgrt6:4920 for a ceramic fragment, captured in Figure 2-5, is an example of this use of the Borden number. This record also includes the Borden site and belonging number in the Other Number field on the Admin tab, but as seen in Figure 2-5, there is no data in the Provenance field.

⁴ The record views captured from the CMS at RMHS in Figures 2-4, 2-5, 2-6 and 2-7, show data tabs from left to right. Each tab features a set of potential fields. The fields displayed in each tab are those with data. Fields that contain no data are not displayed.

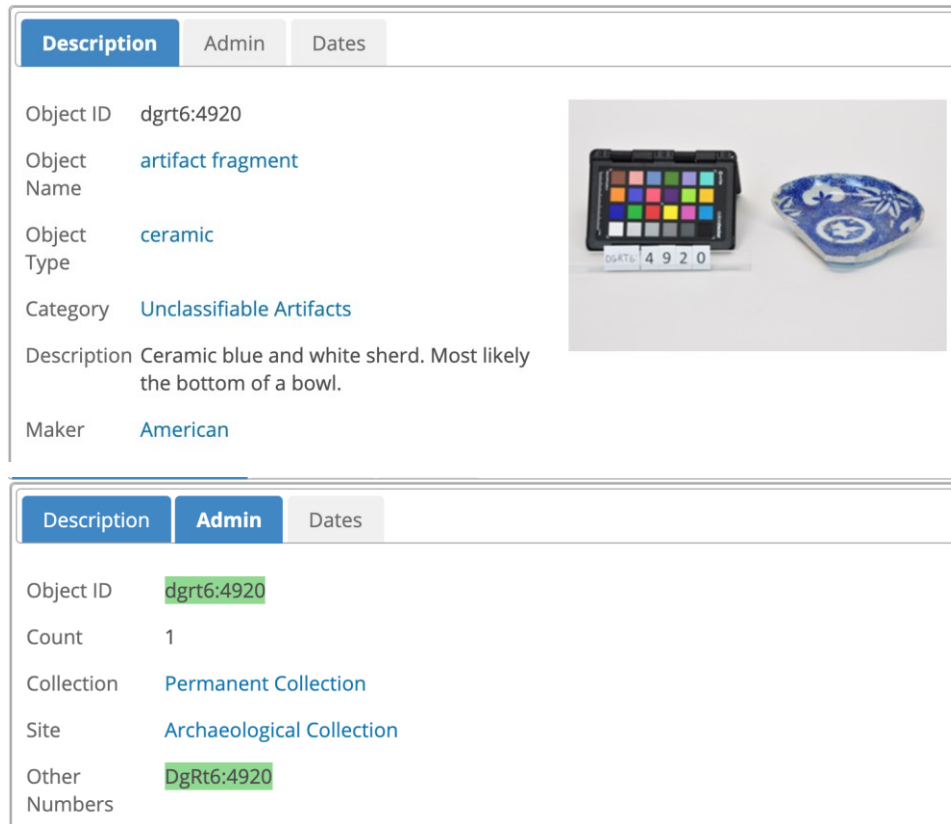


Figure 2-5 Archaeological record with Borden number only
 RMHS screen capture used with permission.

Accession numbers have also been assigned to belongings without reference to the Borden site number in the record, as we see in Figure 2-6. This record for 994.10.1, a quartzite bifacial pebble tool, was catalogued without reference to the Borden site. The Borden number is not captured in the Other Number field on the Admin tab of the record. It is not in the Provenance field which would appear on the Description tab if there was data present. The Borden site number is not in the record anywhere. By not including the Borden number in this record, this belonging, and others like it have been effectively separated from their relevance to Richmond and from their significance to descendant communities. Researchers looking at this item will not have access to the records on file for the site where this was found at the Archaeology Branch.

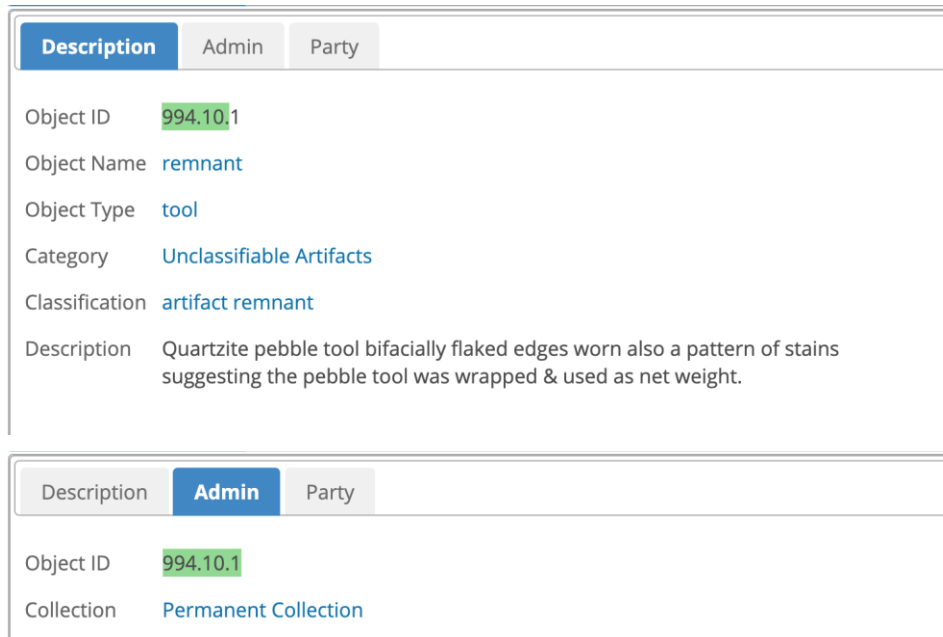


Figure 2-6 Archaeological record with accession number only
 RMHS screen capture used with permission.

The inconsistency of numbering in the archaeology records at the RMHS is problematic. It has given rise to issues like the record in Figure 2-6 where belongings are separated from their relevance and significance. The RMHS gives priority to accession numbers as identifying numbers which are important for archaeology collections where ownership has apparently been transferred, as in Figures 2-4 and 2-6 above. However, more important is maintaining the connection to the information that is included in the Borden site and individual belonging number. Donors or repositors can always be recovered on the Party tab in the CMS and legal transfer of ownership is tracked in the system in a separate accessioning module. It will take considerable time and effort to re-associate records like the one for the pebble tool in Figure 2-6 above with its Borden site number, leaving the pebble tool dissociated from its relevance and significance until that work is done.

Provenance

Provenance is a common field in museum collection records. This field is different from the Provenience fields of archaeology, which provide the specific

details of from where a belonging was recovered. As with the accession numbers and Borden site numbers, the distinction here is one of ownership (for museums) versus geo-location (for archaeology). According to the *CHIN Humanities Data Dictionary*, the Provenance field provides the history of ownership of collection items (Government of Canada 2013). It is key to confirming the legal status of items accessioned into the collections. The field was introduced to the data dictionary to enable tracking of reported ownership so that museums do not accept possibly illicit items. At the RMHS provenance data is entered into the CMS as free text, without mandatory formatting. It hasn't always been recorded, but when it has, it usually includes additional, sometimes anecdotal, details about the origin, cultural context, history of use and significance to Richmond. For the RMHS, the Provenance field provides the data that contextualizes the item in Richmond and documents its maker(s) and user(s). Curators, exhibit developers, programmers, and researchers use this field extensively to learn about the collections and donors of Richmond. The Provenance field is also where data regarding how belongings came to be repositied would be recorded in the CMS.

The RMHS has added scant information and sometimes incorrect information in the provenance field of the records for belongings. All information for most belongings was added to the database in mass data entry projects in 2005, 18 years after the reposition of most of the archaeological belongings that Ham recovered. During data entry, provenance information was copied for all belongings and the same information was included for all records added at that time. This resulted in incorrect provenance information being added to those records for belongings not actually from the same site. Excavation unit numbers or surface collection details, without reference to the site number, are sometimes the only data in the provenance field of archaeological records. The data added in the provenance field for belongings is lacking, inaccurate, or misleading and does not provide researchers with insight into their context or significance. This leaves these belongings at risk of dissociation.

Descriptive Details

The *CHIN Humanities Data Dictionary* advises that data included in the description field is intended to capture physical details about an object that supplements or expands the information captured in indexed fields like colour and material (Government of Canada 2013). These days, description is often used as a redundant field to differentiate similar items and provide a sense of the item, especially when there is no photograph. Although photographs are on the rise, museum collections are rarely fully photographed. I have relied on the differentiating descriptive details in this field to determine object identity when a number has been lost or is illegible and when there are multiple similar items.

Descriptions of belongings that have been entered into the records at the RMHS from an inventory conducted during the mass digitization projects are brief and without qualification. Standardized object names such as 'point' or 'soil sample' are used for multiple objects without further qualifying details, as seen in Figure 2-7 where the meaning of 'Sandy Midden' is not clear. Very little qualifying data exists in any of the archaeology records for the measurement, material, and colour fields, and the same is true of the date field. This lack of descriptive details does makes it difficult to differentiate one object from another. Photographic images can help with identification, but there are few images in the records for belongings. Without those details, reconciling objects to their records relies entirely on the object identification numbers, in this case, the Borden site and belonging numbers, applied to each object. This reconciliation is further hampered when the numbers are not properly applied to the belongings, are never applied, and/or are not captured in the records as with the record in Figure 2-7 above. Re-associating incorrectly numbered or un-numbered belongings with their appropriate information is difficult without more detailed descriptive data. A lack of details in the description field puts belongings like those in Figure 2-7 at risk of dissociation.

Description	Admin
Object ID	005.27.154
Description	Soil Sample: Sandy Midden
Provenance	Primarily collected from Britannia Heritage Shipyard site excavation in the late 1980s and mid 1990s.

Description	Admin
Object ID	005.27.154
Count	0
Collection	Permanent Collection
Site	Archaeological Collection

Figure 2-7 Archaeological record without Borden number or photograph, and with inadequate description and incorrect provenance

RMHS screen capture used with permission.

Supporting documentation

The destructive nature of excavation requires archaeologists to carefully document their process and findings, much like a scientist might document experiments in a laboratory. This documentation makes the results available to future researchers. It also helps in the understanding and interpretation of belongings by descendant communities and by museums. Archaeologists usually deposit supporting documentation along with excavated belongings to ensure that their work can be used for further research. Documentation that is repositied along with belongings is key to maintaining the connection of belongings with the research that brought about their excavation in the first place, and with what was learned by their excavation. The CCI advises that appropriate archival preservation practices be applied to these documents.

In addition to objects and samples, an integral part of any archaeological collection is the records that accompany it. These can include labels, field notes, drawings, maps, correspondence, catalogue records, conservation records, photographs, slides, radiographs, digital images, analysis reports, video tapes, audio

tapes and CDs. These records are of vital importance to the integrity of the collection [Newton and Cook 2018:np].

At the RMHS, supporting documentation received with repositied belongings is stored separately from the belongings. The archaeologists' reports are filed by the City planning department in the City of Richmond Archives, which is separate from the RMHS. There the records are cared for according to archival practices and made accessible for researchers. Copies of archaeologists' reports have also been provided to the RMHS, where they have been filed in reference files or shelved in office libraries. Additional information such as provincial Archaeology Branch site inventory forms, test results, and archaeologist notes regarding the archaeology collections have been filed in curatorial subject research files on Archaeology and in the RMHS donor files.

The RMHS did not, however, cross-reference these vital documents in the records for the related belongings that were repositied. The value-enhancing data that safeguard the collections from loss and emphasize the importance of preserving them is not captured. Without that cross-reference, museum staff and researchers have no access to the context, history, and significance of the belongings. Most of the issues of poor documentation described above are resolvable using the content of the supporting documentation to confirm and clarify object identity, provenance, and significance. Unfortunately, the significance of the archeology collection is not fully recognized in the records at the RMHS, resulting in a loss of value that leaves them at risk of dissociation by deaccession or misplacement.

Reference material

Exhibits, public programs, and publications, including social media and website publishing, are the main methods museums have for informing their visitors about the heritage of their area. Curators and programmers pursue many resources in building their understanding of a subject matter and developing the public presentation of that matter. Accurate and authentic collections documentation is key to this process as it informs curators and programmers and

helps them, in turn, to speak with better understanding to the communities of origin when collaborating to build presentations that are culturally appropriate and that successfully inform visitors. Curators and programmers would benefit in these efforts from references and supporting documentation in the collection records for IAB. The reference material summarized in section 2.1.3 is relevant but is not cited in the bibliography fields of the CMS records for the belongings. Once again, the documentation at the RMHS is less than adequate, leaving the belongings at risk of dissociation.

2.2.2. Representation of Indigenous history in Richmond

The second main role of museums, to interpret the cultural property in their holdings to their audiences, is fulfilled at the RMHS in exhibits, programs, and publications across the museums and historic sites of Richmond. I will focus here on the exhibits and programs. In the 1980s and 1990s, the RMHS presented Indigenous heritage in Richmond through exhibits and programs that included guided walking tours and guest speakers. The RMHS offered programs like *Archaeology in Action*, a multi-day summer camp for kids where they could

“Visit an archaeological dig site, participate in [their] own dig, watch an archaeologist make stone tools and map the geological history of Richmond. Discover different cultures through objects in the museum and learn about Richmond’s early people – the Coast Salish Indians” [Richmond Review 1985:2].

That program ran for ten years from 1985 through 1995. In 1984, Richmond Museum staff also developed an exhibit on the use of native plants in the region by Indigenous peoples, later installed at the Richmond Nature Park, which inspired programs and walking tours there (Richmond Review 1984). Another exhibit, developed by members of the Musqueam Indian Band at UBC’s Museum of Anthropology, opened the museum’s new gallery in the winter of 1992-1993. *Proud to be Musqueam* captured 90 years of photographs featuring Musqueam members and families in the Fraser River Delta area through the years (Richmond Review 1992). One walking tour included a presentation on the

origin of place names at Garry Point Park in Steveston, where an Indigenous village once existed (Richmond Review 1994). Guest speaker presentations included the telling of legends by an Indigenous person (Richmond Review 1991) and an archaeologist's presentation on archaeology in Richmond (Richmond Review 1987).

A permanent exhibit, tentatively titled *Prehistoric Richmond* and presenting Coast Salish heritage in Richmond, was proposed by the Richmond Museum Curator. It was intended to be the opening exhibit in 1987 at the new Richmond Cultural Centre. The exhibit was to explore Richmond's geological history, and ecological communities along with Coast Salish culture, native plants, Indigenous settlements, and archaeological evidence in Richmond. Financial support for the exhibit was not forthcoming, and efforts to fund a later version titled *Richmond's First People* continued in 1990. A draft flyer included in a request for support in 1990 includes an opportunity to indicate, "Yes, I feel the Richmond Museum needs a permanent archaeology exhibit portraying Richmond's very unique history" (CRA 1994:np). Despite these efforts, the permanent exhibit was not developed.

In 2004, Richmond hired a permanent School Programs Coordinator for the RMHS (Connie Baxter personal communication 2021). In 2005, a member of Musqueam gave a presentation on the significance of sites in Richmond to the Musqueam People (Richmond Review 2005). This presentation highlighted the lack of resources for teachers in Richmond. It led the Educational Programs Coordinator to develop a Museum Kit focused on the Musqueam in collaboration with the Richmond School District and Musqueam Indian Band. The Museum Kit program provides themed kits to Richmond school teachers complete with lesson plans, resources, and artefacts to enhance classroom learning. The *Musqueam x^wməθk^wəy^əm: People of the River Grass* kit was developed over the course of two years and launched in 2007. It remains a popular kit in the Museum's inventory of Museum Kits (Richmond Museum 2009).

Although the Museum Kit and the collaborative process to create it was successful, the RMHS has not pursued exhibit projects with the Indigenous Nations whose families considered Richmond their home. Since the 1990s, very few exhibits that explore Indigenous heritage have been presented in Richmond. The exhibit history reveals that, from 1990 to 2021, the RMHS created 205 exhibits or display cases (Richmond Museum 2016 and personal knowledge). Of those exhibits, four featured Indigenous heritage from other parts of the province and were created by other museums; two featured the natural history of Richmond and may have included some discussion of the original inhabitants. Of the 205 exhibits in 31 years, six exhibits presented Indigenous heritage in general, which amounted to less than three percent. The two exhibits that featured specifically Richmond's natural heritage may have included the Indigenous heritage of the area. These constitute less than one percent of exhibits where the RMHS has featured Indigenous heritage in Richmond in the last 31 years.

2.2.3. Engagement

The IAB in the collections at the RMHS represent primary evidence of the relationship that has existed since time immemorial between modern Indigenous Nations and the heritage sites of their ancestors on the islands that now make up the City of Richmond. These belongings also represent an integral part of the story of the region that should be more broadly known. That part of the Richmond story was not on the minds of the authors of the RMHS *City Wide Artefact Collections Policy 8710* and *Procedures 8710.01* (City of Richmond 2013b). In the staff report to Richmond City Council's Parks, Recreation and Cultural Services Committee that accompanies the version of this policy originally proposed, the imminent concern of the authors was the possibility that the City would be receiving a significant influx of collections from local historical societies. They note that one of the City's partner societies "...has expressed their intention to transfer their collection to the City of Richmond" (City of Richmond 2013a:2). They express concern that other partner societies who "...are managing

collections with scarce resources...” (City of Richmond 2013a:2) may opt to do the same. As stated in the report, the intention of the collections policy is to ensure that the City’s collections are managed in a consistent way and to “...provide an example for the associated community groups to better manage their collections” (City of Richmond 2013a:3).

In the development process, the authors of the *City Wide Artefact Collections Policy and Procedure* did consult with “partner societies” (City of Richmond 2013a:2) from around Richmond. Specifically, the partner societies consulted were Britannia Heritage Shipyard Society, London Heritage Farm Society, Steveston Historical Society and Richmond Museum Society. These societies are all oriented around the historical, non-Indigenous, heritage of Richmond. In the end, IAB and the related Indigenous Nations were not considered or included in the development of this policy. The collections policy and procedures documents were developed to establish a standard as an example for other collecting organizations in Richmond. The policy is now eight years old.

2.3. Results of stewardship review

This brief look at IAB stewardship in Richmond reveals tenuous ownership, inadequate documentation, near dissociation, the absence of Indigenous representation in the RMHS interpretation of the Richmond, and the absence of engagement with Indigenous Nations. This situation demands reforms to stewardship policy and procedures at RMHS that will address the needs of IAB specifically.

An overview of the history of the RMHS and the City of Richmond, which governs the organization, shows that the RMHS, like many small non-Indigenous museums in BC, began as a volunteer-run organization focused mainly on the settler history of Richmond and on gathering those collections for the City of Richmond. Since its beginnings in 1961, the RMHS has gained staff, collections,

and technology. It now is responsible for all City-owned collections, including local archaeological belongings. Professional museum standards of stewardship mandate the careful, consistent, and accurate documentation of all museum holdings, including IAB, so that they are not put at risk of dissociation. For IAB, this means ensuring that important details are included in the records, such as the Borden site numbers for belongings. It means consistently using those numbers to identify belongings, to the point of creating redundancy by adding similar data to more than one field. It also means capturing the significance and context of belongings by including references to documentation repositied with them and to reference information that provides context.

At the RMHS, documentation of IAB is deficient. Tenuous ownership, inconsistent numbering, obtuse descriptive details, and insufficient contextual information in the records prevail. The result is a risk of dissociation through confiscation or inadvertent disposal due to loss of context and/or the inability to reconcile belongings with their significance. The disconnection of IAB from their context collaterally disconnects descendant Nations from their heritage in Richmond. Without those connections, the value of the IAB for museum interpreters, Indigenous Nations, and eventually the residents of Richmond is lost. The Indigenous cultural heritage of this area of the Fraser River Delta is as rich as the land is fertile, but it is not properly interpreted by the RMHS partly because the stewardship of belongings is inadequate.

Indigenous events, lifeways, and histories are barely evident in the interpretation of Richmond, which conveys the message to the public that there is no significant Indigenous heritage in Richmond. The education of Richmond residents on Indigenous history is considered in a recent informal poll by Richmond's local newspaper *Richmond News*. The poll asks readers how they have learned about residential schools in Canada and provides options for answers. Almost eleven percent of the 455 respondents indicated they had not learned about the schools. The media (37.14%) and at school (26.15%) were the next most reported responses (Richmond News 2021). Neither the RMHS nor

any of the City's museums or heritage sites was offered as an option. The RMHS is not considered an alternative for public education on Indigenous heritage by the local newspaper. It is not meeting that need. Instead, the RMHS is avoiding Indigenous heritage, which is damaging to their reputation, diminishes the value of the cultural heritage of Indigenous Nations in the public consciousness, and denies those Nations their right to preserve that heritage. Indigenous Nations are left without support from the RMHS to build public recognition and respect.

The exclusion of Indigenous Nations and lack of consideration for the IAB in the collections in the development of the RMHS collections policy is a violation of UNDRIP Article 11(1), which affirms the right of Indigenous Peoples to maintain, protect, develop, and steward, their cultural material (UNDRIP 2007). As the province of BC and the federal government of Canada move to adopt UNDRIP into law, legislation will be revised to ensure the Indigenous rights affirmed in the declaration are preserved. That legislation will affect local governments and institutions across the province and the country. For museums, including the RMHS, this means that acknowledgement, collaboration, and ensuring the inclusion of Indigenous Nations will become a fundamental part of our work in the stewardship of IAB.

As the City of Richmond commits to addressing the recommendations of the TRC and ensuring that Richmond residents are aware of the legacy of the residential school system, the RMHS can make a significant contribution to that goal by engaging Indigenous Nations in the stewardship of their heritage. Culturally competent stewardship will be mandatory if we intend to fulfill any role in Richmond's *Cultural Harmony Plan* (City of Richmond 2019). The next step for the RMHS in the professionalization of stewardship is to acknowledge the IAB in our care and reform our stewardship policy and practices.

Chapter 3.

Culturally competent stewardship

My experience of stewardship at the Glenbow Museum and the advice from the *Task Force Report on Museums and First Nations* (AFN&CMA 1994) suggest that engagement with Indigenous Nations is key to culturally competent stewardship. A small body of literature written by and with Indigenous scholars and practitioners has addressed the stewardship requirements of Indigenous cultural heritage in general since the publication of the TFR. To gain a better understanding of what culturally competent stewardship is from the perspective of Indigenous practitioners and scholars, I endeavour here to review that literature. In the first part of this chapter, I provide an overview of the literature on the stewardship of Indigenous cultural heritage. In the second part of the chapter, I distill advice that can be applied to IAB from those documents into 17 principles for culturally competent stewardship of ICM. These principles fall into several themes, showing how the literature supports each principle within these themes.

3.1. Literature Survey

The documents selected for review in this section were mainly produced by, in consultation with, or in collaboration with, Indigenous Peoples. There are remarkable and informative publications across Canada from Indigenous organizations and collaborative councils that capture ways of improving stewardship in museums, such as *Yukon First Nations Heritage Values and Resource Management: Perspectives from Four Yukon First Nations*, *Report on Parks Canada's Indigenous Engagement Sessions* and, *Indigenous Collections Symposium Proceedings, Next Steps Report* from Ontario (Carcross/Tagish First Nation et al. 2016, Holland 2017, Indigenous Heritage Circle 2019)⁵. In the

⁵ A recent publication by ICOM's International Committee for University Museums and Collections (UMAC) on restitution and return of Indigenous material was published too late to be included but it aligns well with the results here (UMAC 2021).

interest of a more local understanding of Indigenous perspectives, the focus here is on documents specific to BC, museum ethics, and international legal instruments. These documents show the long history of this topic around the world, in Canada, and within the province⁶. The 12 documents consulted for this work include three Canadian national commission reports, the international declaration of Indigenous rights by the United Nations, guidance documents from the Union of BC Indian Chiefs (UBCIC) and the First Peoples' Cultural Council of BC (FPCC), two reports from engagement at the Royal BC Museum (RBCM), and repatriation guidelines from the RBCM. Two museum ethics documents were also consulted. Both were written in consultation with Indigenous representatives, and together they provide the main ethical direction to the RMHS.

3.1.1. The Task Force Report on Museums and First Peoples

The *Task Force Report on Museums and First Peoples* (TFR) was established in 1989 by the Assembly of First Nations and the Canadian Museums Association following protests at the 1988 Cultural Olympiad in Calgary, Alberta, by the Lubicon Lake Cree First Nation (RCAP 1986a). The protests brought Canada's museums and Indigenous Nations issues to a world stage. The Task Force was intended to "...provide a forum for ongoing discussions and to develop appropriate guidelines..." for museums regarding Indigenous cultural material (AFN&CMA 1994:1). *Turning the Page: Forging New Partnerships Between Museums and First Peoples*, as the final report is subtitled, was submitted in 1991 and published in 1994. Its primary and enduring advice is that museums should establish partnerships with Indigenous Peoples, ensure full involvement of Indigenous Peoples in decisions on treatment, use, presentation, documentation, or disposition of their cultural heritage, and take steps to accommodate repatriation. It recommends a significant shift in standard

⁶ Multiple Indigenous museums across BC such as the Haida Gwaii Museum, U'Mista Cultural Centre, and Secwepemc Museum and Heritage Park, are stewarding their own heritage. The scope of this thesis was narrowed to a literature review to learn from the abundant advice already available for non-Indigenous museums. A collaborative study of stewardship policies and practices in Indigenous museums would provide valuable supplementary perspective on the results here.

museum practices, as they were at the time, towards a more collaborative approach to cultural representation (Bolton 2008). The TFR was and is still respected by Indigenous scholars (Aird et al. 2019, Collison et al. 2019, RBCM 2019).

3.1.2. The Final Report of the Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples

The Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples was established in 1991 following the Kanesatake Resistance. This armed protest arose when the local government in the province of Quebec approved the expansion of a golf course onto traditional lands that included a burial ground (RCAP 1996a). The uprisings and protests of Indigenous Nations across Canada over similar issues led to the commission's establishment. The commission travelled across Canada over the course of five years, researching the history, consulting Indigenous Peoples, and gathering statements on Indigenous concerns. The commission's final report includes five volumes that capture the history of damage inflicted on Indigenous Peoples by Canada's colonial legacy, along with their perspectives, concerns, and interests for the future. The report recommends building a new relationship between non-Indigenous and Indigenous Nations to repair that damage (RCAP 1996b). In *Volume 3 Gathering Strength*, the commission addresses arts and heritage. It makes recommendations for addressing the issues of Indigenous Peoples, specifically with regards to museums, recommending that institutions stewarding Indigenous cultural heritage should involve Indigenous Peoples in stewardship decisions (RCAP 1996b).

3.1.3. Canadian Museums Association Ethics Guidelines

The Canadian Museums Association (CMA) was established in 1947 following a poor report card in 1932 by the President of the British Museums Association on conditions in Canadian museums (CMA 2008). In 1989 the CMA undertook ground-breaking work with the AFN to complete the TFR (summarized

in 3.1.1 above), which remains an essential authority on stewardship of Indigenous cultural heritage in museums. The mission of the organization today is to "...champion, support, connect and elevate the museum sector" (CMA 2020b:3). The CMA established a Reconciliation Council and Program in 2019 in response to Canada's TRC Call to Action 67 (CMA 2019). The Reconciliation Council and Program are charged with collaboratively determining the compliance of museums in Canada with UNDRIP and with making recommendations and developing resources to improve compliance.

The *CMA Ethics Guidelines* were collaboratively revised and written in 1999 by an Advisory Committee established by the CMA and included representatives from Indigenous Nations. The Guidelines are the main reference for ethical practice in most museums across Canada. They offer a museum or institutional perspective on stewardship that acknowledges that some collections are held in trust and that culturally sensitive objects have special requirements (CMA 2006). Requirements for Indigenous collections are captured in statements about culturally sensitive material, human remains, originating communities and cultural groups. The guidelines emphasize the need to respect culturally sensitive collections and the values and beliefs of the communities from which they come.

3.1.4. United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples

The *United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples* (UN 2008) was initiated when a 1981 report to the United Nations by the Special Rapporteur on Indigenous Peoples, José R. Martínez Cobo, showed that Indigenous Peoples around the world were faced with discrimination, oppression, marginalization, and exploitation (Hanson 2009). The UN established a working group based on the Cobo report in 1982, and over the course of 25 years, Indigenous representatives, and representatives from countries around the world negotiated the language and terms of the 46 Articles that make up the document (UN 2015). In 2007 UNDRIP was adopted by a majority of member states of the United Nations (144). Canada, along with Australia, New Zealand, and the United

States, initially objected to the declaration, citing concerns about the loss of control of natural resources and the right to self-determination. All four countries have now endorsed UNDRIP, Canada as recently as 2015.

UNDRIP is embraced by Indigenous Nations in Canada (Coates and Holroyd 2014), the BC provincial government, and the federal government of Canada. In 2015, the TRC cited UNDRIP in Call to Action 67 as the policy and practice standard to which museums should aspire (TRCC 2015a). In 2019, the province of BC adopted UNDRIP into law as *Bill 41 – The Declaration Act* (Province of BC 2019b). UNDRIP has also been incorporated in full into Canadian Law as *Bill C-15: An act respecting the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples* (Government of Canada 2021a). Both governments are working now to align their systems with the policy directives of the declaration. Articles 11, 12, 13, 15 and 31 mandate that Indigenous Peoples' rights to govern their culture, heritage, and identity must be respected (UN 2008:11-14, 22-23).

3.1.5. Union of BC Indian Chiefs Heritage Toolkit

The *First Nations Heritage Planning Toolkit* (Heritage Toolkit) (UBCIC 2013) was developed to help Indigenous Nations to manage their heritage. The Heritage Toolkit reviews the heritage legislation and process in BC. It recommends policy elements and procedures to Indigenous Nations for developing their heritage policy. This document provides insight into the values and preferences of Indigenous Nations that are relevant to stewardship. It emphasizes that Indigenous Nations have the right to determine what happens with their cultural heritage.

3.1.6. The Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada

The Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada (TRC) was initiated by the 2006 Indian Residential School Settlement Agreement, a class action suit against the Government of Canada (TRCC 2015a, 2015b). From 2006 to 2015,

the TRC travelled across Canada researching and documenting the history of residential schools, taking statements, and capturing the experiences of residential school survivors, their families, and communities. It produced six volumes documenting the experiences of survivors of residential schools and family members and the harmful effects they had on Indigenous Peoples in Canada. The final report includes 94 Calls to Action generated by the commission to guide reconciliation work in all areas of society, including museums and heritage work (TRCC 2015a). The commission sees the education of Canadians on the history and legacy of residential schools as key to preventing future ignorance and racism. It places some of the onus of education "...not only schools and post-secondary institutions but also dialogue forums and public history institutions such as museums and archives." (TRCC 2015b:117). Call to Action 67 is specifically directed at museum policy and practices, requesting a review of Canadian museums by CMA and recommendations to ensure adherence to UNDRIP (TRCC 2015a).

3.1.7. Rod Naknakim Declaration

Rod Naknakim was a well-respected treaty negotiator for the Laich-Kwil-Tach Treaty Organization and a Wei Wai Kai Nation member. In 2016, he gave a keynote address to BC museum professionals at a plenary session of the BC Museums Association's (BCMA) annual conference. His presentation applied the principles of UNDRIP and the TRC to museums in four succinct pieces of advice. The strength of the presentation moved the BCMA to create the *Rod Naknakim Declaration* (RND). The declaration states that museums must acknowledge that Indigenous Nations are the owners of their cultural heritage, that partnering with Indigenous nations will help decolonization, that respect for and openness to Indigenous heritage will benefit visitors, and that the cost of repatriation is not the responsibility of the Nations (BCMA 2017).

3.1.8. International Council on Museums Code of Ethics

The International Council on Museums (ICOM) was established following the demise of the League of Nations and the establishment of the United Nations in 1946. It is dedicated to refining and educating museums on ethical standards for museums (Daifuku 1998). The *ICOM Code of Ethics for Museums* includes eight principles that cover the roles and obligations of museums (ICOM 2017). The ethics code was written in collaboration with professionals from large museums around the world. It emphasizes that museums must respect the human dignity of the contemporary communities and communities of origin (which include Indigenous Nations).

3.1.9. Repatriation Symposium Findings

The TFR clarified in 1994 that museums needed to engage with Indigenous Nations. The Royal BC Museum in Victoria, BC (RBCM) began this journey in earnest in 2017, two years after the TRC and 23 years after the TFR. By keeping their engagement and results open to the public, museums in BC can learn from their process. In March 2017, the RBCM and the First People's Cultural Council (FPCC) co-hosted a three-day symposium with participants from Nations around BC. The subject of the symposium was Indigenous Perspectives on Repatriations.

The CEO of RBCM summarized the results of that symposium in a brief report titled *Key Findings of the Indigenous Perspectives on Repatriation Symposium* (Repatriation Symposium) (RBCM 2017). The report outlines museums' obligations and considerations that they must make regarding repatriation, based on the presentations of symposium participants. Twenty-seven obligations and considerations are listed in point form in five sections: context, funding, capacity building, process, and access. The report captures participants' concerns in this Repatriation Symposium, which emphasizes the importance of repatriation for stewardship and a mutually respectful and trusting relationship between institutions and Nations, for repatriation.

3.1.10. First Peoples' Cultural Council Policy Paper

Recognizing and Including Indigenous Cultural Heritage in BC is a position paper written by Karen Aird, Gretchen Fox, and Angie Bain for the First Peoples' Cultural Council "...to address the immediate need to revitalize, manage, and protect Indigenous cultural heritage in meaningful and substantive ways" (Aird et al. 2019:5). The authors assert that Indigenous Nations must lead the work of managing, sharing, and revitalizing their heritage.

3.1.11. Indigenous Repatriation Handbook

The *Indigenous Repatriation Handbook* (the Repatriation Handbook) was written for the Royal BC Museum following the *Indigenous Perspectives on Repatriation Symposium* held in Kelowna in 2017. It is intended as a resource for "...communities and museums that are in the beginning stage of planning for repatriation in BC and at national and international levels" (Collison et al. 2019:1). The Repatriation Handbook acknowledges that repatriation is not necessarily the preference for all Indigenous Nations (Collison et al. 2019).

3.1.12. RBCM Engagement Report

Indigenous Voices: A Report on Indigenous Community Engagement on the Modernization for the Royal BC Museum (Indigenous Voices) is the final report of an engagement process (RBCM 2019). The Indigenous Collections and Repatriation department initiated the engagement at RBCM following an announcement of modernization plans for the museum in the 2019 provincial speech from the throne (RBCM 2019). The goal of the engagement was to learn ways of modernizing that would address the concerns of Indigenous Nations in BC. The engagement was held in two-weekend sessions in September 2019 that included representatives from 40 Indigenous Nations across BC. Representatives were toured through the museum, archives, and collections storage areas, and their comments and critiques were recorded. The results were a set of comprehensive recommendations from the representatives

regarding concerns about respect for traditional laws, rights, and treaties. They emphasized the need for respect of cultural requirements and protocols. They expressed concern that Indigenous Peoples are not presented as living peoples in exhibits but rather as relics of pre-colonial times.

3.2. Interpretation of the literature

The documents here offer broad advice regarding all Indigenous cultural heritage that can be interpreted or applied to stewardship of belongings in museums like RMHS. To condense the advice from the literature, I gathered the stewardship-related recommendations from each document and grouped similar recommendations to generate 17 principles for culturally competent stewardship of ICM. These principles fell naturally into five themes. These are presented below as statements of what museums must do to ensure culturally competent stewardship of ICM. They are⁷:

1. Museums must recognize Indigenous authority.
2. Museums must engage with Indigenous Nations.
3. Museums must welcome Indigenous Nations.
4. Museums must embrace repatriation.
5. Museums must respect Indigenous protocols.

3.2.1. Theme 1: Museums must recognize Indigenous authority

The literature reviewed here is adamant that Indigenous Nations have the right to guide the stewardship of their ICM. Four principles for culturally competent stewardship support this theme.

⁷ Please note that these discussions, as noted in Chapter 1, focus on the part of Indigenous cultural material that is Indigenous archaeological belongings (IAB).

Principle 1: Culturally competent ICM Stewardship acknowledges Indigenous Peoples' authority over their ICM and ensures that belongings are cared for, documented, and displayed according to the values of each Indigenous Nation.

Most museums in Canada, large or small, hold some IAB in their collections. Many of those collections, especially in small non-Indigenous museums, have not been connected to or seen by the communities of origin. Even where collections were acquired by legitimate means, museums must notify communities, where they are known, of their archaeological belongings in the collections and be prepared to respect and follow the stewardship directives of those communities.

Indigenous authority over ICM is first suggested by the TFR, which declares that “First Peoples and museums must accept the philosophy of co-management and co-responsibility as the ethical basis for principles and procedures pertaining to collections related to aboriginal cultures contained in museums” (AFN&CMA 1994:7).

Article 11.1 of UNDRIP, which declares the rights of Indigenous people to maintain, protect and develop their cultural heritage, is supported broadly by the literature. In their Heritage Toolkit, the Union of BC Indian Chiefs advises Indigenous Nations developing their heritage policy that it should emphasize that:

[The Indigenous Nation] maintains the responsibility to care for and manage all [their] heritage sites and heritage objects. At all times, [their] heritage sites and heritage objects must be treated with respect. Management must reflect [their] traditional laws and values and must be conducted in consideration of [their] future generations [UBCIC 2013:92].

Call to Action 14 (iv) of the *Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada* asserts that “The preservation, revitalization, and strengthening of Aboriginal languages and cultures are best managed by Aboriginal people and communities” (TRCC 2015a:2).

The RND advises museums in its first statement that they must “...acknowledge the ownership of First Nations artifacts and ancestral remains, resides with Indigenous Peoples” (BCMA 2017:np). The authors of the FPCC’s position paper on Indigenous Peoples’ cultural heritage in BC declare that “Canada and the provinces and territories need to acknowledge Indigenous ownership of their cultural heritage which includes the right to steward/manage that heritage” (Aird et al. 2019:32). Participants in the Indigenous Voices engagement at RBCM assert that “It must be understood and embedded into Museum policies and practice that Indigenous people are the sole authority over the cultural items stored and displayed at the Museum” (RBCM 2019:14)

Principle 2: Culturally competent ICM Stewardship is ethical, based on impartial, professional, and humanitarian principles.

Museums are charged with the care of collections for the public benefit. This public trust mandates that museums “...adopt and publish a written collections policy that addresses the acquisition, care and use of the collections” (ICOM 2004:7). The standard for every Canadian museum with a collections policy is to include a statement about ethical practice. Most policies cite the museum standards organizations, CMA in Canada, and ICOM, internationally. These ethical standards are worth re-emphasizing in a stewardship policy. The ICOM Code of Ethics for Museums advises that “Museums are responsible to initiate dialogue for the return of cultural property to communities of origin, based on impartial, professional and humanitarian principles” (ICOM 2017:33 emphasis added). The CMA does not make overt statements about behaviour towards Indigenous Peoples but does clarify that:

Ethics are based upon the underlying values of honesty, fairness, respect, excellence and accountability which the larger community applies to the rational evaluation of moral issues. The application of these values has changed considerably over time, and museum ethics must reflect an ongoing dialogue between the museum community and the society it serves [CMA 2006:3].

The society that museums serve includes Indigenous Nations who should be included in the dialogue of what is ethical.

The RCAP firmly recommends that “Museums and cultural institutions adopt ethical guidelines governing all aspects of collection, disposition, display, and interpretation of artifacts related to Aboriginal culture and heritage...” (RCAP 1996b:560).

Principle 3: Culturally competent ICM Stewardship policies and practices respect Indigenous perspectives.

In the past, the perspectives of Indigenous Nations have been ignored by museums in favour of the supposedly objective research of non-Indigenous anthropologists, archaeologists, and historians (Iseke-Barnes 2005). Most of these accounts have been generic, applied more broadly than they should be, and as a result, are often inauthentic. In a discussion of the educational resource material available to mainstream teachers regarding Indigenous heritage in general, Judy Iseke-Barnes writes that “...it is important to remember that stereotypes, considered either positive or negative, are common in materials about Indigenous Peoples...and reduce Indigenous Peoples to a few characteristics which are generalized to an entire population” (2005:161).

Anthropological and archaeological research can also provide more details than culturally acceptable or safe, describing practices that are not meant for public knowledge and are not respectful of cultural protocols. The participants in the Indigenous Voices engagement note that there are details of how and when to exhibit belongings that are seasonal and ceremonial in nature (RBCM 2019:18). These are curatorial decisions that should be made by the Indigenous Nations and respected by museums.

Historical accounts have also treated Indigenous Nations as extinct or invisible while the living cultures of modern Indigenous Nations thrive (Roy 2010). Modern Indigenous Nations are well informed of their heritage, who they are, and what knowledge should be protected. Respecting their perspectives on how to

steward their ICM will ensure that they are represented as they wish them to be and in a culturally safe and appropriate manner for them.

The CMA *Ethics Guidelines* discuss work with “culturally sensitive objects”, noting that this work should respect the wishes of the originating community.

Presentations, research and museum-sponsored archaeological field trips should be accomplished in a manner acceptable to the originating community. In specific cases, it may be appropriate to restrict access to certain objects, to honour the protocols and ceremonies of that community regarding storage, treatment, handling, and display, or to facilitate special access as appropriate [CMA 2006:11].

The ICOM *Code of Ethics for Museums* recognizes that in working with contemporary communities (interpreted to mean Indigenous Nations here), museums must be respectful of their wishes.

Where museum activities involve a contemporary community or its heritage, acquisitions should only be made based on informed and mutual consent without exploitation of the owner or informants. Respect for the wishes of the community involved should be paramount [ICOM 2017:34].

Participants in the Repatriation Symposium state that museums need to “...recognize that First Nations must represent themselves; they cannot be represented either domestically or internationally, by any third party” (RBCM 2017:2). This is emphasized by the participants in the Indigenous Voices engagement, who assert that “It needs to be the Nations who decide how they are represented in the museum, it is nothing about us without us” (RBCM 2019:14).

Principle 4: Culturally competent ICM Stewardship maintains site privacy and respects the restrictions of traditional knowledge when it is advised.

Site privacy ensures that known IAB sites are protected from looting (Province of BC 2018b). Museums are obliged to keep detailed location information protected and only provide that information to legitimate researchers.

Given the acknowledged rights of Indigenous Nations over their cultural heritage, which includes IAB, researchers should be referred to the Nation who will authorize or decline research requests according to their values and criteria. The museum does not have the right to determine who does or does not access IAB and must ensure its security.

Cultural safety is also a serious concern of Indigenous Nations regarding their members. For Indigenous Nations, certain parts of the stories associated with their archaeological belongings may require cultural privacy protection. Unless this information has been repositied along with belongings, museums must learn what must be protected. Traditional knowledge is passed on following specific protocols unique to each Nation. The *CMA Ethics Guidelines* mandate protection of that traditional knowledge: “While culturally sensitive objects are in the custody of museums, those institutions must make an effort to learn the protocols for culturally sensitive objects and ensure appropriate care” (CMA 2006:11). Indigenous participants in the Indigenous Voices engagement expressed concerns about cultural safety and the need to ensure that museum staff are familiar with community protocols to prevent harm. They advise the museum to “Work with Indigenous Nations regarding the cultural safety teachings regarding ancestral remains, and our children that visit the Museum, as there are strict teachings regarding the protection of children” and to “... work with individual families and Nations regarding the care, storage, conservation and display of the cultural items” (BCMA 2019:18). Museums that hold IAB in trust for Indigenous Nations are obligated to ensure they learn cultural safety precautions for each Nation and maintain them. This principle assures Indigenous Nations that the parts of their heritage that are traditionally not shared publicly will be protected by the museum and remain that way. This requires good relations, understanding, and trust from both parties and guidance from the relevant Indigenous Nations.

3.2.2. Theme 2: Museums must engage with Indigenous Nations

These principles address the importance of ensuring that Indigenous Nations are included in, and can exert authority over, stewardship of their cultural heritage.

Principle 5: Culturally competent ICM Stewardship relies on mutually respectful relationship building with Indigenous Nations, engagement, and communication that begins at the Nation-to-Nation level.

To address stewardship of IAB, museums must engage and communicate with the related Indigenous Nations, as noted in the first four principles above. There is a protocol to communicate with Indigenous Nations. Following that protocol makes the good intentions of both parties clear and builds a mutually respectful relationship. The participants in the Repatriation Symposium advise that “A Nation-to-Nation relationship is vital to all primary communications” (RBCM 2017:3). Although museums are not Nations, this principle intends that communication should be initiated by the museum's governing body, which shows that the relationship is supported at all levels of the institution.

The TFR supports the need for new relationships between museums and Indigenous Peoples in its principles and recommendations.

In order to accurately reflect within museums the fundamental and unique contribution of First Peoples to Canada, as well as the spiritual and social values of their diverse contemporary cultures, it is necessary to develop new relationships with museums based on progressive principles and policy [AFN&CMA 1994:7].

Throughout its volumes, RCAP recommends building a new relationship between non-Indigenous and Indigenous Nations to repair the damage that Canada's colonial legacy has inflicted.

To free ourselves of this legacy...we need channels of communication between cultures, so that Aboriginal people can communicate in authentic ways who they are and how their cultural traditions continue to be significant for themselves and for society as a whole [RCAP 1996b:548].

The *Indigenous Repatriation Handbook* advises museums to learn about local Indigenous Nations and build relationships. “One of the first steps in repatriating to Indigenous Peoples in BC is to know more about us. Reaching out to the Indigenous Nations, looking at their official websites and reading their recommended resources are good steps” (Collison et al. 2019:61).

The *Rod Naknakim Declaration* calls for partnering with Indigenous owners of cultural heritage and clarifies that “...this new relationship must result in a space in which there is greater respect and effect for Indigenous Peoples, and a more authentic experience for museum-goers...” (BCMA 2017:np).

Participants in the Repatriation Symposium emphasize the importance of relationships based on trust, honesty, and respect as valuable for repatriation. Collaboration itself is not the goal. “Collaborative policies are important, [but] they cannot stand in place of a co-operative relationship built on honesty, trust and respect” (RBCM 2017:2).

Principle 6: Culturally competent ICM Stewardship makes decisions and develops policies and practices in collaboration with Indigenous Nations.

Since museums' early days, they have held the decision-making authority over belongings in their collections. Collaborating with originating communities on stewardship policy, practice, and decision making, will require museums with IAB in their collections to shift that authority to Indigenous Peoples. This shift is broadly supported in the literature. RCAP in 1996 recommended, “...involving Aboriginal people in drafting, endorsing, and implementing...ethical guidelines governing all aspects of collection, disposition, display and interpretation of artifacts related to Aboriginal culture and heritage...” (RCAP 1996b:560).

UNDRIP requires states, and therefore the museums and institutions, to develop policies in conjunction with Indigenous Peoples. Of note for museums is the need for effective policies: for the redress of “...cultural, intellectual, religious and spiritual property taken without their free, prior and informed consent or in violation of their laws, traditions and customs” (UNDRIP 2007:12); to enable

“...access and/or repatriation of ceremonial objects and human remains in their possession...” (UNDRIP 2007:12) and; “...to combat prejudice and eliminate discrimination and to promote tolerance, understanding and good relations among Indigenous Peoples and all other segments of society” (UNDRIP 2007: 14).

Throughout the TRC, the Calls to Action call for collaboration with Indigenous Nations and organizations to reform policies in every aspect of society, including museums. Call to Action calls for a collaborative review of Canadian museums and the development of a process to ensure compliance among museums with UNDRIP (TRCC 2015a).

Principle 7: Culturally competent ICM Stewardship collaborates with Indigenous Nations on research and confirms their free, prior, and informed consent to projects regarding their ICM.

The TFR advises that “First Peoples and museums must accept the philosophy of co-management and co-responsibility as the ethical basis for principles and procedures pertaining to collections related to aboriginal cultures contained in museums” (TFR 1994:7)

Article 31 of UNDRIP protects the right of Indigenous Peoples to

...control, protect and develop their cultural heritage, traditional knowledge and traditional cultural expressions, as well as the manifestations of their sciences, technologies and cultures, including human and genetic resources, seeds, medicines, knowledge of the properties of fauna and flora, oral traditions, literatures, designs, sports and traditional games and visual and performing arts. They also have the right to maintain, control, protect and develop their intellectual property over such cultural heritage, traditional knowledge, and traditional cultural expressions [UNDRIP 2007:22-23].

The Province of BC and the Canadian federal government have both officially implemented UNDRIP into law (Government of Canada 2021a, Province of BC 2019 a). Except for national museums where the federal government has jurisdiction, provincial laws govern museums in BC. Although rare in small

museums, researchers occasionally ask to conduct research in museum collections. Museum staff may also conduct research for exhibit and program purposes. New legislation at both levels of government can be expected to require Museums in BC to confirm the free, prior, and informed consent of an Indigenous Nation to any activities related to the IAB of that community.

Free, prior, and informed consent (FPIC) is a right of Indigenous Peoples, affirmed in UNDRIP and several other international legal instruments. It is a standard that is embedded in the universal right to self-determination. The Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) of the United Nations provides a manual for project proponents on how to ensure FPIC (FAO 2016). The basic principles can be applied to stewardship. The FAO defines FPIC as:

FPIC is a specific right that pertains to Indigenous Peoples and is recognized in the UNDRIP. It allows them to give or withhold consent to a project that may affect them or their territories. Once they have given their consent, they can withdraw it at any stage. Furthermore, FPIC enables them to negotiate the conditions under which the project will be designed, implemented, monitored and evaluated [FAO 2016:13].

The key elements of FPIC, free, prior, and informed, are summarized as follows:

The first three elements (free, prior and informed) qualify and set the conditions of consent as a decision-making process. In short, consent should be sought before any project, plan or action takes place (prior), it should be independently decided upon (free) and based on accurate, timely and sufficient information provided in a culturally appropriate way (informed) for it to be considered a valid result or outcome of a collective decision-making process [FAO 2016:15].

The FAO also stresses that consent may not necessarily be a 'yes'. It can be a 'yes' with conditions or a 'no', and it is not binding. Indigenous Nations must be given time to make decisions by their traditional decision-making processes and the right to change that decision or negotiate new conditions. They should not be intimidated or motivated by project proponents to decide one way or

another. FPIC requires project proponents to learn about, build a relationship with, and respect for Indigenous Nations and their customs and traditions. It is a process that benefits both the Indigenous Nation and the project proponent more than a means to an end. For proponents, FPIC leads to a decreased risk of conflicts, more trusting relationships, a better understanding of the concerns they will encounter, and improved chances for future projects. For Indigenous Peoples, FPIC ensures their concerns are addressed, informs them about projects, hands over control of projects that affect them, and respects their fundamental right to self-determination (FAO 2016).

3.2.3. Theme 3: Museums must welcome Indigenous Nations

The long history of museums and Indigenous Peoples' relationship has excluded participation in stewardship, interpretation, and presentation of their heritage. A result is that Indigenous Peoples do not always feel respected or welcome in museums. The principles in Theme 3 address removing barriers that have prevented Indigenous Nations from participating in stewardship of their heritage and specifically of their belongings.

Principle 8: Culturally competent ICM Stewardship acknowledges the traditional territory on which the institution operates in policies, documentation, and all publications.

The first comment by participants in the Indigenous Voices engagement at the RBCM is on the need for proper land acknowledgement of local Indigenous Nations. They advise that “Territorial acknowledgement should be reflected through all aspects of the museum” (RBCM 2019:14). This acknowledgement sends a message of respect and welcomes the Indigenous Peoples whose ancestors occupied the territory before settlement and whose communities still hold ties to the territory.

Territorial acknowledgement is not just important for the host Nation but also for any visiting Indigenous Nations. It supports the need to know whose territory they are standing on and enables them to follow proper protocol. The

authors of the Repatriation Handbook advise that “Indigenous protocols generally require that when someone from one Indigenous Nation travels into the territory of another Nation, the people meet to conduct business (i.e., land acknowledgements from the visiting Nation; a welcome from the host Nation) and for cultural exchange” (Collison et al. 2019:22). Nations visiting from far away may be grateful that the museum clarifies the known original occupants of their territory. Local urban Indigenous people may also find this territorial acknowledgement a sign that Indigenous heritage, whether theirs or of others, is valued by the museum.

Lynn Gehl, from Algonquin territory, writes that:

Acknowledging traditional Indigenous territories means valuing that we are indeed Nations in concrete and real ways. It must mean valuing the stories Creator has, and we have, inscribed in our land and waterscapes as both marking our territory and as the beginning of our governance structures [Gehl 2017:np].

In other words, authentic and sincere acknowledgement requires an understanding of the territory’s heritage, history, and meaning for the Nation. Gehl also notes that acknowledgement is more than just the statement. It should be reflected in a mutually respectful, cooperative relationship. Every Indigenous Nation’s relationship to their territory is distinct, so acknowledgement should be determined in collaboration with each Nation. The Indigenous Voices participants recommend that the museum “Work with local Indigenous Nations to determine appropriate inclusion and acknowledgement and embed acknowledgement in all museum policy documents and activities” (RBCM 2019:13).

Principle 9: Culturally competent ICM Stewardship combats prejudice by ensuring that all staff learn about and respect Indigenous knowledge, traditional laws, cultural safety, values, protocols, and language.

Among the historical wrongs that museums have perpetrated are cultural erasure, the telling of history that omits Indigenous heritage, and cultural misrepresentation, the telling of Indigenous heritage that is inaccurate (Johnson 2016). The Task Force Report notes that “Over the years museum exhibitions

have usually been based on the assumption that Aboriginal peoples were extinct or on the verge of vanishing” (TFR 1994:7). The result of these practices is that the non-Indigenous public learns from museums that Indigenous Peoples did not occupy territory, that explorers discovered their land, or that they are culturally inferior because they do not follow western European cultural practices (TFR 1994). The list of misrepresentations of Indigenous Peoples in museums is lengthy and did not end with the work of the Task Force.

Most non-Indigenous Canadian adults receive an informal education, courtesy of popular culture and mainstream media, in which stereotypes and misrepresentations of Indigenous Peoples abound. Even when news media bring public attention to major issues affecting Indigenous Peoples, what is most often missing from this education is critical understanding of how contemporary events and issues articulate with centuries of harm caused by attempts to control, civilise, and assimilate ‘the Indian’ [Johnson 2016:131].

Article 15 of UNDRIP declares:

Indigenous Peoples have the right to the dignity and diversity of their cultures, traditions, histories and aspirations which shall be appropriately reflected in education and public information.

States shall take effective measures, in consultation and cooperation with the Indigenous Peoples concerned, to combat prejudice and eliminate discrimination and to promote tolerance, understanding and good relations among Indigenous Peoples and all other segments of society [UNDRIP 2007:14].

In this case, the state referred to is Canada, specifically, the federal, provincial, and local governments and the organizations and entities, such as museums, that they operate. Article 15 expresses concerns about ensuring the dignity and public understanding of Indigenous Peoples. As informal public education institutions, museums play an important role in ensuring that Indigenous Nations are respected and appreciated for their cultural distinctness by the public. “Museums, although they have troubled histories with Indigenous Peoples, hold possibilities for creating spaces for dialogue, relationship building, and the critical education and learning needed to realize alternative ways of being together in the world” (Johnson 2016:131). The TFR advises that

museums must collaborate to provide public education that acknowledges Indigenous Nations, their history, and their heritage:

First Peoples and museums must recognize a commonality of interest in the research, documentation, presentation, promotion and education of various publics, including museum professionals and academics, in the richness, variety and validity of Aboriginal heritage, history and culture [AFN&CMA 1994:7].

To do this, museum staff themselves must be educated on the Indigenous heritage of the area within their mandate. Participants in the Indigenous Voices engagement advise that there should be

...training and orientation for all staff in cultural safety to address issues of racism and discrimination experienced by visitors to the Museum, to improve cultural competencies and cultural acumen of staff working with Indigenous people and communities in a broad range of areas such as cultural protocol, spiritual and cultural significance of collection items [RBCM 2019:21].

This principle suggests that museums invite Indigenous Nations, whose cultural material they hold in their collections, to educate the staff on their heritage, history, values, protocols, and traditional laws. In anti-racism writing, education and awareness are highlighted as "...information necessary to maintain even a basic conciliatory relationship with Indigenous peoples, let alone awareness of Indigenous perspectives and ongoing issues" (Yellowhead Institute 2020:7). A well-informed staff will engender greater respect for the Nations and the importance of their belongings to them. With a better understanding of, and closer relationship with, the Nations staff will be more inclined to value, welcome, defend, and accommodate Indigenous Peoples in the museum. Museum staff with understanding and familiarity with the Nations will be less likely to perpetuate stereotypes and inaccuracies in the documentation and are more likely to guard the cultural safety of those nations more carefully. The staff will set this example for the public whom they informally educate.

Authentic public representation of IAB must also be balanced with care for the cultural safety and protocol of the Nations involved. Part of the learning from

Indigenous Nations must include an understanding of these concerns. Participants in the Indigenous Voices engagement advise that “The Museum needs to work with individual families and Nations regarding the care, storage, conservation and display of the cultural items” (RBCM 2019:18). They express concerns about the cultural safety of children visiting the museum and ancestral remains and note that “Cultural protocol is different for all of us, we need to be careful about this topic; Each family is different, community to community - it’s different” (RBCM 2019:18). As an example of concerns about cultural protocol, the participants noted that:

Handling and display of sacred items is important. For us, the rattle is sacred, it is calling our ancestors to witness, or the order of masks is significant, and some beaks on masks should be open and some should be shut, some masks should be only shown in the winter and some should be in a box [RBCM 2019:18].

These are things that museums will only be able to safeguard by learning from Indigenous Nations themselves.

Principle 10: Culturally competent ICM Stewardship provides training opportunities to and hires Indigenous Nation members for stewardship work.

As noted above, Indigenous Nations have the right to represent themselves, but much of their ICM is held in non-Indigenous museums. For this reason, Indigenous Nations must participate in the stewardship of their belongings. To ensure there are Indigenous people with museum training, museums must contribute to that training by providing opportunities. Most of the literature reviewed here points out the need for stewardship training in Indigenous Nations. RCAP recommends that museums offer training opportunities to Indigenous Nation members with guidelines that include “...ensuring that Aboriginal people and communities have effective access to cultural education and training opportunities available through museums and cultural institutions” (RCAP 1996b:561). The authors of the First Peoples’ Cultural Council policy paper recommend training support and grant programs for

Indigenous people (Aird et al. 2019). The participants in the Indigenous Voices engagement suggest co-ops, internships, and mentoring opportunities (RBCM 2019). Call to Action 67 of the TRC is a general call for increased representation of Indigenous people in all Canadian labour market sectors, including museums. “We call upon the federal government to develop with Aboriginal groups a joint strategy to eliminate educational and employment gaps between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal Canadians” (TRCC 2015a:1-2).

Most small, non-Indigenous museums do not have large staff but rely on interns and summer positions hired through a grant program administered by the Canadian Museums Association. These positions for university students provide experience and training for interested students and help accomplish many projects that these museums might not otherwise complete. They introduce students to the museum environment and often lead to long-term positions. These types of positions would benefit Indigenous students interested in museum work. They should be promoted to local Indigenous Nations.

Principle 11: Culturally competent ICM Stewardship ensures that visitors learn authentic information about ICM.

Inaccurate information shapes misunderstanding that leads to actions that cause harm. Museums have misrepresented Indigenous Nations in multiple ways, due in part to the biased perspectives of the dominant society that established most museums in the first place. This misrepresentation has contributed to a lack of understanding of and empathy for Indigenous people among non-Indigenous people (Bolton 2008). It has also helped to ostracize Indigenous people in contemporary society and to impede Nations from asserting sovereignty and revitalizing their cultures and traditions (RCAP 1996a, 1996b). Museums must address inaccuracies and omissions to ensure that visitors learn authentic information. The authors of Canada’s Truth and Reconciliation Commission final report note that “Through their exhibits, education outreach, and research programs, all museums are well-positioned to contribute to education for reconciliation” (TRCC 2015b:137).

The ICOM *Code of Ethics* notes that “Information presented in displays must be well-founded, accurate and respectful of beliefs and interests of represented groups” (ICOM 2017:25). The RCAP asserts that “we need channels of communication between cultures, so that Aboriginal people can communicate in authentic ways who they are and how their cultural traditions continue to be significant for themselves and for society as a whole” (1996:548).

Documentation, part of the stewardship process, supplies information for interpretation in museum displays and programs. That information must therefore be authentic, in that it is that is genuine, based on facts that are verified by or acceptable to the affected Indigenous Nations. The participants in the Indigenous Voices engagement at RBCM offer several recommendations to achieve more authentic representation. They advise museums to privilege Indigenous knowledge and language. “Privileging Indigenous languages is critical to accurately articulate the significance of cultural collections and items stored, to Indigenous people, their rights, cultures, and identities” (RBCM 2019:16). The Indigenous Voices participants also call for the use of individual Indigenous language names and stories to ensure the accuracy of information. Indigenous languages carry the Indigenous worldview. “It is not enough to just know the item, the language and knowledge provide context and understanding” (RBCM 2019:16). Learning and using Indigenous language terms for belongings in the collection will improve the museum’s understanding of the Nation’s perspective, ensuring a more multivocal and authentic representation of ICM.

The Indigenous Voices participants suggest including the acquisition history of belongings in museum display labels. “The Museum has a responsibility to include the history of how the cultural items were acquired and the role of the Museum, in the galleries. In the era of Truth and Reconciliation, the truth must be told” (RBCM 2019:22). This information makes information about belongings more accessible to Indigenous visitors. It is not always flattering information for the museum, given that many small non-Indigenous

museums hold collections with very little or no provenance. However, this approach is truthful, demonstrating that the museum is willing to be transparent.

Indigenous Nations must be involved in all aspects of museum work regarding their cultural heritage and, most relevant here, in the stewardship of their archaeological belongings. Indigenous technologies, methods, and preferences for storage and conservation, handling protocols, and cultural safety should be documented in the collection records. These directives should be adhered to where and when it is preferable to the Nation.

3.2.4. Theme 4: Museums must embrace repatriation

Repatriation is the return of ICM to Indigenous Nations. Indigenous Nations across the province of BC and Canada have lost belongings to museums and private collectors through various means that at the time may have seemed legitimate to the collectors. In retrospect, these exchanges are often characterized by duress on the part of the Indigenous participants, where the option not to sell or donate belongings was seldom there. Throughout most of the twentieth century, IAB was gathered by archaeologists and collectors and eventually repositied in museums, without regard to the wishes of the Nations. Meanwhile, the Nations suffered poverty, the loss of traditional territory, the loss of language and culture, and even the loss of life for generations at residential schools (TRCC 2015b). Even the most ethical collectors benefitted from the disadvantage of the members of these Nations, where many lived in such despair that they sometimes expected their traditions would disappear one day. "The old Indians say that in a few years, there won't be any more Sun Dance. The Peigans and the Stoney Indians don't have a Sun Dance anymore, and the same thing will happen to us ten years, maybe twenty. In time, the old way of life will all be forgotten" (Pete Standing Alone in *Circle of the Sun*, Low 1960:at 26:15).

The participants in the Repatriation Symposium made it clear that museums must "...understand that all collections are important to First Nations in

some way, be it for determining family history, language revitalization, cultural renewal, community building or youth education" (RBCM 2017:2). All IAB collected by museums from archaeological research or private donors has potential for repatriation. The symposium participants are clear that it is not just culturally sensitive material and ancestors that are important to Indigenous Nations. As the authors of the Heritage Toolkit note, "In addition to human remains, all artifacts removed from your heritage sites represent potential repatriation issues" (UBCIC 2013:45). Repatriation of IAB to Indigenous Nations creates the opportunity for those Nations to rebuild lost or endangered cultural practices, histories, stories, and language. It enables Indigenous Nations to exercise their authority over their cultural heritage fully. The principles below recognize that ICM stewardship must include repatriation.

Principle 12: Culturally competent ICM Stewardship acknowledges that museums hold ICM in trust for the community of origin.

Museums must recognize that they do not morally own the ICM in their holdings. Although the museum possesses the belongings, they are only held on a temporary basis, pending the decisions of the descendant Nations. As Article 11 of UNDRIP states, "Indigenous Peoples have the right to...maintain, protect, and develop the past, present and future manifestations of their cultures, such as archaeological and historical sites, artefacts, designs..." (UNDRIP 2007:11-12). Consultation and collaboration on stewardship are mandatory so long as belongings are in the care of Museums. As the participants in the Repatriation Symposium state, "Only the relevant First Nation and /or hereditary owners can determine appropriate handling, storage, and interpretation" (RBCM 2017:3). Museums do not have the moral or ethical rights to steward IAB without seeking direction from the Nation. The Heritage Toolkit authors advise Indigenous Nations to include a curation statement in their heritage policy. The suggested template for a curation statement is: "Any artifacts removed from a [First Nation Name] heritage site must be curated at a location agreed to by the [First Nation Name]. All curation will be on an 'in-trust' basis until such time as the [First Nation Name] is prepared to take over care" (UBCIC 2013:101).

Attendees at the Repatriation Symposium heard that "Some First Nations may prefer to have easy access to detailed information about cultural artifacts within museum collections rather than undertake full repatriation" (RBCM 2017:3). Presenters further advised that for those Nations that are not ready to take on full care of their belongings yet, museums should provide easy, barrier-free, cost-free, and prompt access to the relevant Nations. In any case, where a Nation's ICM remains in a museum, the values of that Nation must be respected regarding decisions and determinations about storage, display, interpretation, conservation, and replication (Collison et al. 2019, RBCM 2017, RBCM 2019).

Museums are advised to proactively approach Indigenous Nations with information about the ICM in their holdings. Indigenous Nations must be made aware of their archaeological belongings in museums. This is seen as a first step in the process of repatriation. The TFR advises that museums should collaborate with Indigenous Nations

...to develop a workable process to provide full disclosure of existing information relating to Aboriginal collections. Such information will include the scope of the collection, the kinds of objects included, and the geographical location, cultural affiliation, means and period of acquisition [TFR 1994:8].

RCAP advises museums to create "...inventories of relevant holdings and [make] such inventories freely accessible to Aboriginal people..." (RCAP 1996b:561). The commission notes that without these inventories, Indigenous people "...cannot easily gain access to these materials or, in some cases, even get information about them" (RCAP 1996b:554). The need for museums to inventory and disclose their holdings to the relevant Indigenous Nations is reiterated by the authors of the Repatriation Handbook, who advise that it is especially important for the research of Indigenous Nations to have records available. They also suggest that "Updating the museum records with Indigenous Peoples' feedback is also necessary" (Collison et al. 2019:64).

Principle 13: Culturally competent ICM Stewardship includes policies that address repatriation without conditions.

It has been emphasized here that museums hold ICM in trust for Indigenous Nations. Museums then should expect that those Nations will eventually want to claim their right to manage their ICM. As museums build relationships with Indigenous Nations, it will become clear that repatriation is a valuable process for the Nations and the museums. The authors of the Repatriation Handbook note, “Repatriation can be so rewarding for institutions, and although it is time-consuming and absorbs many human and financial resources, the benefits are far-reaching and go beyond doing the right thing” (Collison et al. 2019:61). In describing some of their experiences of repatriation in Haida Gwaii the authors note:

When we work closely together with museums, the playing field is levelled. Museum policies and practices no longer override Haida beliefs and practices, and museum staff begin to understand us on Haida terms, not just their terms. Approaching Yahguudangang [respect] with the goal of mutual respect, cooperation and trust has led to some museums joining us in wanting to see our Ancestors and heritage come home rather than these institutions having to repatriate them back to us. Yahguudangang has also resulted in some valued, ongoing relationships with museums and their staff [Collison et al. 2019:71].

Museums benefit from repatriation in many ways, including building these lasting relationships, improving cultural understanding, and improving the capacity to collaborate in a more truthful and balanced informal education of visitors. The authors of the Repatriation Handbook also suggest that repatriation brings healing for non-Indigenous museums:

As demonstrated above, the healing is not only ours. Yahguudangang provides opportunity for Western museums to become voluntary agents of change, rather than the physical evidence of Canada’s genocide against Indigenous Peoples. When museums support our repatriation efforts, it helps museum staff address or heal from the shame of colonialism many carry. The bigger shame, then, becomes not working toward repatriation. Working with mainstream museums to repair some of our shared

history has brought two worlds together, and is in fact creating a new world [Collison et al. 2019:72].

Canada has no national legislation, unlike the USA, where NAGPRA mandates that museums return human remains, burial objects, and sacred objects. Alberta is the only province in Canada with repatriation legislation (Bell 2009, Dekker 2018). To realize the benefits of repatriation, Museums in Canada, and BC, need to develop a policy clarifying openness to repatriation. Any related standard process, such as where to direct a request, should be provided. Specific details of the repatriation process should be determined in collaboration with the individual Nations making repatriation requests (Collison et al. 2019).

The literature supports a repatriation policy in museums. ICOM advises that museums should have policies on removing objects from permanent collections by repatriation or other means (ICOM 2017). The TFR advocates for the adoption of repatriation guidelines that mandate the return of human remains, sacred objects, ceremonial objects, and "...any other objects of cultural patrimony..." based on "...moral and ethical grounds and with full involvement of the appropriate First Nations as equal partners" (TFR 1994:9). The RCAP recommends that museums need guidelines developed with Indigenous people that include "...repatriating, on request, objects that are sacred or integral to the history and continuity of particular Nations and communities" (RCAP 1996b:561). Repatriation policies are expected along with regular updates by the authors of the Repatriation Handbook: "It is important to update policies and procedures regarding Indigenous collections and repatriation on a regular basis" (Collison et al. 2019:63).

Other documents, such as UNDRIP, emphasize that any 'mechanisms' for repatriation must be developed together with Indigenous Nations. Article 12 declares that Indigenous Peoples have the right to manage, protect, use, and control their ceremonial objects and human remains. Therefore "States shall seek to enable the access and/or repatriation of ceremonial objects and human remains in their possession through fair, transparent and effective mechanisms

developed in conjunction with Indigenous Peoples concerned" (UNDRIP 2007:12). The Repatriation Handbook suggests discussing all aspects of the repatriation process with the Nation to get guidance on everything from care and handling, ceremonial, and space requirements to numbers of people participating in a repatriation event, accessibility, and parking needs (Collison et al. 2019).

The contemporary Indigenous literature reviewed here emphasizes the need for repatriation policy to be unconditional and uncomplicated. Attendees at the Repatriation Symposium stipulate that "Objects should be repatriated on an unconditional basis" (RBCM 2017:3). The authors of the Repatriation Handbook advise ensuring that repatriation can be done with the least amount of bureaucracy possible (Collison et al. 2019). Conditions sometimes imposed by museums on repatriation include ensuring that the Nations accepting the collections can maintain proper care.

Principle 14: Culturally competent ICM Stewardship is proactive regarding repatriation and addresses requests immediately, especially for human remains.

The *ICOM Code of Ethics for Museums* advises that:

Requests for removal from public display of human remains or material of sacred significance from the originating communities must be addressed expeditiously with respect and sensitivity. Requests for the return of such material should be addressed similarly. Museum policies should clearly define the process for responding to such requests [ICOM 2017:25]

The *CMA Ethics Guidelines* advise that "Every request for restitution, repatriation or return must be given immediate and serious consideration, and treated with respect and sensitivity" (CMA 2006:9). RCAP recommends "...repatriating, on request, objects that are sacred or integral to the history and continuity of particular Nations and communities" (RCAPb:561).

To respond promptly to repatriation requests, museums need to prepare. The TFR recommends that museums should collaborate with Indigenous Peoples to

develop a workable process to provide full disclosure of existing information relating to Aboriginal collections. Such information will include the scope of the collection, the kinds of objects included, and the geographical location, cultural affiliation, means and period of acquisition [TFRR 1994:8].

The Repatriation Handbook notes that gathering this information takes time, but museums need to ensure that belongings held in the museum's collections are cared for respectfully, that inventories are complete, and that documentation is compiled ahead of time for sharing (Collison et al. 2019).

3.2.5. Theme 5: Museums must respect protocols

These principles relate to the practical ways of working with individual Indigenous Nations and with their ICM.

Principle 15: Culturally competent ICM Stewardship ensures that ICM is accessible for communities of origin.

Not all Indigenous Nations are ready to pursue repatriation yet. Preparing their own space for storage, education, and exhibition takes time and money. Some Nations have set up centres and have successful repatriation work ongoing; for example, the Council of the Haida Nation (Richard 2017), U'mista Cultural Centre (2015), Stó:lō Research & Resource Management Centre (Schaepe 2005, Schaepe and Joe 2006). Some Nations must prioritize infrastructure, housing, health, and education before considering heritage. "Aboriginal people have so many urgent day-to-day needs that establishing a community-controlled museum, although important and desirable, is often not the top priority" (RCAP 1996b:556). Whether pursuing repatriation or planning to pursue it, these Indigenous Nations must have access to their ICM that is "...free of charge – even the perception of cost is a significant barrier to access..." (RBCM 2017:3).

Participants in the Repatriation Symposium request greater digitization of and digital access to collections: "First Nations welcome digital access to collections..." (RBCM 2017:3). Every Nation will have its preferences on this, and

it is important to work with each Nation to determine how they would prefer to receive or access digital records. Participants in the Repatriation Symposium note that:

It should be as easy as possible for First Nations to identify the location of their collections through a digital database. Some First Nations support the Reciprocal Research Network as an appropriate platform, others would like to develop their own database, very few support a consolidated inventory housed at a single museum institution [RMBC 2017:3].

The Reciprocal Research Network (RRN) is an online database co-developed by the Musqueam Indian Band, U'mista Cultural Society, Stó:lō Nation/Tribal Council and the UBC Museum of Anthropology. It includes records of collections in partner museums worldwide and is accessible to Nations, individuals, and museums for both adding information and doing research (Neil-Binion 2015).

Some Nations may prefer that their collections be transferred to a repository of their choosing, where they can consolidate collections and have greater control over access, as an interim measure to repatriation. The authors of the Heritage Toolkit advise that Nations may choose to enter into protocol agreements with these repositories to ensure their ICM is cared for in culturally appropriate ways and to assert the Nation's authority over their ICM (UBCIC 2013:92). Museums should consult the communities of origin to determine how to make IAB accessible to them.

Principle 16: Culturally competent ICM Stewardship respects that the Nations themselves will determine cooperation and collaboration with neighbouring Indigenous Nations.

Often ICM in museums is not well enough described to determine which Nation may be the best to approach. Similarly, belongings which are connected to geographical locations might be subject to repatriation requests by multiple Nations with overlapping claims to that territory. The Task Force report clarifies that "In the event of disputes between individuals, between an individual and the

community or between communities, the onus should be on the First Peoples to resolve the dispute according to customary practice” (AFN&CMA 1994:9). This approach is supported throughout the literature.

The Heritage Toolkit stipulates that Indigenous Nations should determine how they will cooperate or collaborate with neighbouring Indigenous Nations and what the process is (UBCIC 2013:93). The Repatriation Handbook authors discuss the issue of overlapping territory and advise Indigenous Nations to consult with other Nations or communities that might also have competing claims to resolve any potential conflict. “This is a very important consideration for a community and/or Nation’s repatriation process, and for a museum’s ability to repatriate to the “right” community or Nation without conflict or error” (Collison et al. 2019:21). Museums should ensure that all potential recipient Nations are made aware of belongings for possible repatriation and ask for agreement between those Nations and advice as to where the belongings should go.

Principle 17: Culturally competent ICM Stewardship provides an appropriate space for community visits to collections.

Ensuring physical access to belongings requires planning and organization. The Repatriation Handbook provides practical suggestions to museums, such as being prepared to accommodate elders who may need sitting space or use mobility devices. The authors also reiterate the need to be prepared for ceremonial requirements and the emotional toll that a visit may take. “Creating ceremonial space is also a consideration. Providing a place for smudging, food-burning, feasting, singing, and dancing is a must. In tight museum spaces, it is important to think outside the box.” (Collison et al. 2019:65). Participants in the Indigenous Voices engagement call for creating “...a welcoming and culturally safe space for the viewing of the collections in storage, a space that includes room for ceremony, spiritual practice, and reflection” (RBCM 2019:18). Museums need to consider these requirements and communicate with the visiting Indigenous parties to confirm their needs.

3.3. Summary

This exploration of the values of Indigenous scholars, experts, and practitioners regarding stewardship of their cultural material provides an extensive list of values and preferences. Five stewardship themes with relevant principles that result from those values and preferences indicate that culturally competent ICM stewardship policy, procedures, and practices require acknowledgement and respect for each Indigenous Nations' authority over their archaeological belongings. This will require a significant shift in the perspective of many museums regarding ICM, which, until now, has been treated as the property of the museum. Once this acknowledgement of ownership and authority by Indigenous Nations is made, engagement with Indigenous Nations will ensure that culturally competent ICM stewardship is implemented. At the outset of this research, my expectation was that engagement would be key to addressing stewardship of ICM. That was only partially correct. Before engagement can happen, there must be acknowledgement.

After acknowledgement and engagement, museums can begin the process to work with Nations to collaboratively build stewardship policies, procedures and practices that address the preferences and values of each Nation. These are complex and involve concerns about bias, disrespect, cultural safety, relationship building, collaboration on policy, FPIC for IAB use, land acknowledgements, respect for protocols of the Nation, the inclusion of Nation members in museum positions, authentic representation, prompt response to repatriation, repatriation without conditions, interim care of IAB, access to IAB, overlapping requests and territory, and ceremonial space. Acknowledgement and engagement will help find solutions to these concerns and any that arise in the process. Culturally competent stewardship is a complex notion that can only be determined in collaboration with the Nation whose belongings are stewarded.

Museums have known since before the TFR in 1994 that holding IAB brought with it the responsibility to engage communities to address stewardship

policies and practices. The advice from the literature consulted here confirms that and adds that acknowledgement of Indigenous moral ownership of, and therefore authority to manage, their ICM must be made before museums can engage. The literature reviewed here provides insight into the values and interests of Indigenous nations regarding the stewardship of ICM. The 17 principles of culturally competent ICM stewardship generated from these works highlight concerns that apply to IAB and will need to be addressed in the reform of stewardship policies and procedures of museums in BC.

Chapter 4.

Stewardship reform

The introduction to the RMHS in chapter two and the review of stewardship there highlights issues and potential risks of the current policy and practices. The literature consulted in chapter three has been distilled to a set of principles for ICM stewardship, guided mainly by Indigenous perspectives. The principles present a vision of what constitutes culturally competent stewardship. In this chapter, I revisit the stewardship policy and practices at the RMHS related to the IAB held there. I assess areas of adherence to the principles developed in chapter four and areas that need better alignment. In the latter case, I suggest ways to apply the principles to reform the collections policy.

4.1. Reforming RMHS stewardship of ICM

Like many museums established by volunteer historical societies around the various centennials in the 1960s and 1970s, the RMHS has come a long way towards professionalizing stewardship of the collections. The formal adoption of a collections policy to guide and standardize collections work has been a part of that process. The next stage in the process is to ensure that the policy and practices are culturally competent and that they adhere to the standards of UNDRIP. The expectation is that this alignment will help to prevent the dissociation that threatens some of the belongings, as seen in section 2.2. Most of my colleagues at the RMHS may personally agree with and uphold the principles of culturally competent stewardship in their daily work. However, so long as the collections policy does not specifically require the stewardship of ICM to meet specific standards, the RMHS staff remain free to decide their own practices. Inconsistencies of stewardship occur from individual to individual, as positions change hands over time (Simmons 2018). This is seen in section 2.2, where documentation of IAB at the RMHS is inaccurate, unreliable, and inconsistent. The collections policy at the RMHS needs to set standards for ICM

stewardship that are tied to systems, procedures, and practices that support those standards.

The principles generated from the literature in chapter three comprise a summary of the work and collaborations of respected Indigenous scholars and experts in ICM that are relevant to the stewardship of IAB in BC. An assessment of the RMHS collections policy finds that elements of the policy offer a viable approach for stewardship of IAB. For example, the Corporate Collection is managed differently because it is a sensitive collection (City of Richmond 2013b:2). A similar approach might be applied to IAB. There are also problematic policy elements that actively work in opposition to the principles for culturally competent stewardship of ICM. The lack of a process for accepting collections on an in-trust basis and the demand for transfer of ownership for belongings repositated at the RMHS are examples. Important elements, like a repatriation policy, are missing in the policy. The perspectives captured in the principles above provide a place to begin stewardship analysis and reform for museums like the RMHS. In this section, the collections policy at the RMHS is assessed against each of the 17 principles for culturally competent stewardship of ICM that were generated in chapter three. Areas of policy reform are identified, and to address these areas, recommendations are provided on how we at the RMHS may want to reform the stewardship of ICM, specifically of IAB in the collections policy.

Principle 1

Culturally competent ICM Stewardship acknowledges Indigenous Peoples' authority over their ICM and ensures that belongings are cared for, documented, and displayed according to the values of each Indigenous Nation.

Ownership of collections was seen in section 2.2.1 above to be uncertain for belongings at the RMHS, leaving them at risk of dissociation through confiscation. The RMHS collections policy does not acknowledge Indigenous authority over any of the IAB it holds in its collections. All collections at RMHS

are treated as the property of the City of Richmond, "...accepted only when clear title of ownership is transferred" (City of Richmond 2013:2). If the RMHS acknowledges the rights and authority of Indigenous Nations to manage their cultural material, they can also recognize that technically IAB are not the property of the City of Richmond but are held in trust for the Nations. This approach to stewardship clarifies ownership and ensures that if belongings are confiscated, the Nations will decide their future. The RMHS may want to define this unique type of relationship to IAB in the collections policy.

Stewarding IAB by the values of the related Indigenous community will require engagement for that purpose. Although the RMHS has engaged with Musqueam Indian Band to present programs and exhibits, they have not yet taken steps to engage with any Nations for stewardship purposes, and the *City-Wide Artefact Collections Policy 8710* and *Procedures 8710.01* do not mandate engagement (City of Richmond 2013b). The uniqueness of ICM and the acknowledged authority of Indigenous Nations over their archaeological belongings may require a specific section of the collections policy that is dedicated to ICM stewardship. Such an ICM section of the collections policy might offer options to enable Nations to direct stewardship. This might be in the form of a separate stewardship agreement with the RMHS, ensuring that the Nation ultimately determines the care provided for their belongings. Or the Nation may prefer to transfer IAB to a more centralized location for the Nation at an institution of their choice. The Nation may also prefer to begin a repatriation process to move the IAB into their own care. In this ICM section of the collections policy, the RMHS might commit to engaging with each Indigenous Nation whose belongings are held in the collections to ensure that their choice is understood and that a process to develop a stewardship agreement, transfer IAB, or repatriate is determined collaboratively.

Principle 2

Culturally competent ICM Stewardship is ethical, based on impartial, professional, and humanitarian principles.

The RMHS collections policy does invoke ethical and professional standards. The policy declares that the process of collections acquisition conforms to international, national, and provincial legislation and regulations that relate to trade in illicit material, endangered species, and Canadian cultural property. It affirms that stewardship practices will abide by professional standards set by the CMA, ICOM and the BCMA. The RMHS policy warns of and prohibits conflict of interest situations for employees. These are all standard ethical matters for a collections policy (CMA 2006, ICOM 2017, Lewis 2004, Simmons 2018).

UNDRIP is now embedded verbatim in provincial legislation of BC as *Bill 41, The Declaration Act* (Province of BC 2019b). The Act sets humanitarian standards for Indigenous Peoples generally and specifically as they relate to their cultural heritage, including their belongings. The RMHS needs to include the new BC legislation in the list of various legislation they will abide by, in the collections policy and in any stewardship agreement with Indigenous Nations. Acknowledging and complying with the terms of UNDRIP in the form of the new provincial legislation further ensures impartial, respectful, and humanitarian treatment of those Nations and their ICM.

At the RMHS, the collections policy indirectly commits to impartial and ethical treatment of those they interact with because it is mandated in the ICOM *Code of Ethics for Museums* which is cited in the collections policy. ICOM specifically requires the impartial and ethical treatment of donors, lenders, and communities of origin (2017). Aside from the implied adherence to ICOM, the RMHS does not make an overt statement of their own in the collections policy at the RMHS that they will be impartial, professional, and humanitarian in interactions with all Indigenous Nations.

The City of Richmond does have a *Respectful Workplace* policy that describes expected standards of conduct for all employees. It maintains that a City employee is

...responsible for conducting herself/himself within the spirit and intent of this Policy as well as contributing towards a safe, welcoming, and inclusive work environment free from Bullying and Harassment, Discrimination, and Sexual Harassment [City of Richmond 2015:4].

It is assumed that collections staff at the RMHS will act according to City policy. Still, they may want to refer to the *Respectful Workplace* policy in the ethics section of the collections policy. Explicitly committing to respectfully working with all parties to stewardship affirms the importance of impartial, professional, and humanitarian principles at the RMHS.

Principle 3

Culturally competent ICM Stewardship policies and practices respect Indigenous perspectives.

Respecting Indigenous perspectives on stewardship requires that a museum must first learn the details of those perspectives. This is one of the most vital parts of building culturally competent stewardship policies, procedures, and practices. The collections policy at the RMHS currently does not mandate engagement with Indigenous Nations to ascertain their perspectives on the IAB in the collections. As the RMHS reforms their policy, it may choose, in the section dedicated to ICM, to compel engagement with each Indigenous Nation with IAB in the collection, to assess collections, document perspectives, and determine how stewardship for their belongings is best carried out. Each Nation will have unique perspectives, preferences, and values for stewardship of their archaeological belongings. Whether a Nation chooses to repatriate their archaeological belongings immediately, transfer them to a different repository, or set up an interim stewardship agreement with the RMHS, the RMHS may want to acknowledge the Nation as the authority on their cultural heritage. Engagement

that results in any of these situations offers an opportunity for the RMHS to learn about the perspectives of each Nation and for the Nation to teach the RMHS about their heritage.

Principle 4

Culturally competent ICM Stewardship maintains site privacy and respects the restrictions of traditional knowledge when it is advised.

Until now, the locations of sites related to belongings in the records at the RMHS have been well preserved. Most archaeology records have minimal information, and specific site locations are not part of that information except as coded in the Borden site numbers. Furthermore, the records of belongings have not been made accessible on the Museum's publicly accessible collections website. However, this is only because the RMHS has not yet completed thorough documentation of the belongings and because staff decided not to publish records for the belongings when the public collections website was being launched in 2016. This is not a policy, nor is it covered in any written procedure. It is the kind of decision that, left to individual staff, might go in a different direction without proper policy and procedural guidance. The RMHS may want to clarify in the collections policy and procedures that the exact locations of IAB sites are not public and that publication of records for IAB will only be with the prior authorization of the descendant Nation.

The RMHS collections policy states that the City collections do not accept objects with conditions from donors (City of Richmond 2013b:3). The conditions donors may wish to impose include how and where an item is displayed. Many donors expect that museums will exhibit objects immediately, and often it is not possible to do this given the work of documentation and then exhibit development. This is a common policy in museums and is recommended by the CMA *Ethics Guidelines*. The policy is intended to prevent museums from agreeing to conditions that "...cannot be met in a timely manner and will impose unwieldy restrictions in future" (CMA 2006:7). In the section on working with

culturally sensitive objects, however, the CMA notes that “In specific cases, it may be appropriate to restrict access to certain objects, to honour the protocols and ceremonies of that community regarding storage, treatment, handling and display, or to facilitate special access as appropriate” (CMA 2006:11).

The RMHS may want to adjust the policy to acknowledge that IAB may have special requirements from the community of origin and that the RMHS will work with the relevant community to ensure that those conditions are met. Conditions might include restrictions to access (which will be considered again in Principle 14 below), storage methods, and organization in storage. Stewardship agreements provide a means of formalizing and committing to those conditions. Conditions determined in a stewardship agreement with a Nation can then be flagged in the records for their belongings. This will ensure that staff are aware of and adhere to those conditions.

The current RMHS collections policy does include a clause regarding the permanent collections that allows for “...restrictions of use for each artefact, which determines the acceptable methods of display and treatment for each piece.” (City of Richmond 2013b:2). The implication here is that these restrictions, imposed by the RMHS based on concerns for the preservation of an object, are not unwieldy, so restrictions of access and use would not be unwieldy by the same token. Therefore, the RMHS might apply the same resources to ensure that restrictions on IAB use are maintained.

Principle 5

Culturally competent ICM Stewardship relies on mutually respectful relationship building with Indigenous Nations, engagement, and communication that begins at the Nation-to-Nation level.

Stewardship of ICM and the development of the current collections policy at the RMHS has, until now, been completed without inclusion, consultation, engagement, or collaboration with Indigenous Nations. To align stewardship with UNDRIP, the RMHS will be expected to change this. This City approved policy

may mandate engagement for the development of policies, the assessment of belongings, the determination of stewardship agreements, the documentation of IAB, and the interpretation of IAB.

As the RMHS prepares to engage for the first time with an Indigenous Nation, communications with the highest level of City representative, the Mayor and Council will be important. This shows good faith, a commitment to engaged policy development throughout the organization, and the Mayor and Council's support of the results. As the governing body for the RMHS, the City is ultimately responsible for the collections and adherence to UNDRIP. It has the authority to negotiate a memorandum of understanding or agreement with the Nations to set the tone for the relationship, designate participants, and provide protocol direction for the engagement process. The reformed RMHS collections policy can clarify that the establishment of an agreement between the Nation and the City is the standard protocol for beginning engagement with Indigenous Nations.

Principle 6

Culturally competent ICM Stewardship makes decisions and develops policies and practices in collaboration with Indigenous Nations.

The lack of engagement with Indigenous Nations for stewardship at the RMHS, discussed in section 2.2.3 above, has yielded inadequate documentation of IAB. The documentation issues contribute to a lack of representation by the RMHS of Indigenous history in Richmond. They may be indicative of the lack of expertise on IAB at the RMHS. Engagement and collaboration with Indigenous Nations on the stewardship policies and practices for their belongings will help build a staff that is better informed on Indigenous history and perspectives. It will place appropriate value on the significance of IAB for Indigenous Nations, clear up many of those documentation issues, and prevent future ones.

In addition to collaborating with Indigenous Nations to develop and review collections policy at the RMHS, the RMHS policy may require that the

development of collections stewardship agreements also be completed in a collaborative process. When Nations choose to entrust their belongings to the RMHS rather than to repatriate them, the RMHS may commit to collaboratively developing a stewardship agreement that clarifies the Nation's authority and how they choose to exercise it. Stewardship agreements will set up a mechanism, such as a request referral process, to ensure that the descendant Nation always makes decisions regarding IAB.

Principle 7

Culturally competent ICM Stewardship collaborates with Indigenous Nations on research and confirms their free, prior, and informed consent to projects regarding their ICM.

The free, prior, and informed consent or FPIC of Indigenous Nations whose IAB the museum cares for is not yet required by the RMHS collections policy. Because the policy does not address ICM, IAB, descendant Nations, or culturally sensitive collections, it also does not consider FPIC. FPIC is the standard for ensuring Indigenous rights to self-determination are maintained. It will eventually be required of the RMHS and museums in general, as UNDRIP is incorporated into Canadian laws.

For the RMHS, this means that before initiating any projects involving IAB, and throughout the projects, they will need to ensure that an FPIC process has been followed to obtain the consent of the related Indigenous Nation or Nations to proceed. The ICM section of the RMHS collections policy can require all staff to ensure they have the free, prior, and informed consent of the relevant Indigenous Nation before pursuing projects and during the execution of projects. The policy will clarify what is meant by FPIC and what the procedures are for maintaining it. Staff training in FPIC will ensure that it is understood and supported.

Principle 8

Culturally competent ICM Stewardship acknowledges the traditional territory on which the institution operates in policies, documentation, and all publications.

The RMHS collections policy does not currently acknowledge the traditional territory of the original occupants. Richmond is located on the traditional territory of a long list of Nations (see section 2.1.2 above) who have relied on these islands on the Fraser River Delta for survival from time immemorial. The City of Richmond purposely does not make land acknowledgements for reasons related to two land disputes currently in the courts between the City and Musqueam Indian Band and between the City and Hul'qumi'num Treaty Group (Hernandez 2021, Todd 2021, Wood 2021). Whether or not the acknowledgement of traditional territory by the RMHS in its collections policy would affect these cases is beyond the scope here. However, it is interesting to note that in the neighbouring City of Surrey, the Museum of Surrey, a municipally governed museum, publicly acknowledges traditional territory prominently on its website. In contrast, their council does not always make the same acknowledgement (City of Surrey 2021, Todd 2021).

Museums have a role in the reconciliation process, and appropriate land acknowledgement is a gesture that some Nations feel shows respect and helps drive reconciliation efforts forward (Hernandez 2021, Keptwo 2021, Todd 2021). Some Nations, however, see it as empty protocol, especially when equivalently respectful actions do not accompany it. As Lynn Gehl notes, "Publicly acknowledging Indigenous territory at events has become commonplace, but it must be about more than protocol and a nice sentiment" (Gehl 2017: np).

The decision to make a territorial acknowledgement and the nature of that acknowledgement will need to be determined in collaboration with the Nations listed above in the early stages of relationship building. Each Nation will have its perspective on territorial acknowledgements and its preference regarding the form an acknowledgement should take if one is made. The City of Richmond and

the RMHS may address this question early in communications with the Nations and commit to including the results in the collections policy as a reminder that the diversity of Richmond includes the heritage of Indigenous Nations. They were established here for thousands of years before Richmond became a City, from time immemorial.

Principle 9

Culturally competent ICM Stewardship combats prejudice by ensuring that all staff learn about and respect Indigenous knowledge, traditional laws, cultural safety, values, protocols, and language.

The City of Richmond currently presents an annual Diversity Symposium that "...aims to equip participants with the knowledge, skills, and tools to build diverse, equitable, and inclusive communities" (City of Richmond 2021:np). The symposium regularly features an element of Indigenous cultural education from Indigenous people. As valuable as this training is for improving the attitudes of City employees working with a diverse public, it is not sufficient to ensure that the RMHS staff working with IAB have a better understanding of the Indigenous Nations whose ancestors originally inhabited the area. The Indigenous Nations themselves can only provide that kind of training.

As the relationship between the RMHS and the Indigenous Nations improves, understanding of Indigenous perspectives on IAB will improve. Initially, however, the collections procedures may affirm that collections staff will participate in a training event on Indigenous cultural heritage practices delivered by the individual Nations. The RMHS should be prepared to pay an appropriate fee for the training. This training can be followed up with annual training to ensure new staff and volunteers benefit from the education. Alternatively, or additionally, a requirement for this training may be included in stewardship agreements with Indigenous Nations. Training of this nature will ensure respect for traditional laws, cultural safety, protocols, values, and language. It will also go

a long way to ensuring that staff at the RMHS have a better understanding of IAB and the unique stewardship requirements it may have.

Principle 10

Culturally competent ICM Stewardship provides training opportunities to and hires Indigenous Nation members for stewardship work.

As the literature here shows, plenty of Indigenous experts are highly educated in the stewardship of ICM. Small museums like the RMHS cannot teach Indigenous Nations how to care for their belongings. The opposite is true. Museums have a lot to learn. However, like many small museums, the RMHS regularly hires a summer collections technician and the occasional intern with the assistance of federal grant programs. These positions, directed at university students studying in, or already graduated from related fields, offer an introduction to general museum collections work. They are entry-level positions that provide experience and training in basic collections work. Many of the students pursue studies and careers in the museum field. In my experience, the RMHS has not yet hired an Indigenous person to work in the collections at the RMHS. Directing these opportunities to Indigenous candidates will ensure that the Nations get access to training in basic museum practices. The collections workspaces will become more familiar, comfortable, and welcoming for the individuals hired. It will also connect the RMHS staff with members of the Nations who are interested in stewardship work. Presently the postings for these positions are circulated to the BCMA and local university co-op programs.

In the section of the RMHS collections policy dedicated to ICM, the RMHS can commit to ensuring that all collections positions are circulated to the administrative offices of Indigenous Nations with territorial claims that include Richmond. Part of the procedures associated with this commitment can include the engagement with the Nations to encourage applications and ensure interested members are aware and can apply.

Principle 11

Culturally competent ICM Stewardship ensures that visitors learn authentic information about ICM.

The history of Indigenous heritage in Richmond has been briefly outlined in chapter two above, showing that it is rich and largely under-represented in the exhibits at the RMHS. Although the belongings at the RMHS represent a part of the vibrant culture of the original inhabitants of the islands of the Fraser River Delta, their documentation does not offer insight into that Indigenous heritage. The RMHS collections policy does not require engagement with Indigenous Nations for stewardship of IAB, and engagement has not been the practice until now. To address current documentation issues and ensure that the records for belongings are accurate and authentic from the perspectives of descendant Nations, the RMHS may want to engage those Nations in a provenance research project. Hiring members of Indigenous Nations to help document IAB in the collections will re-build the ties between those Nations and the belongings of their ancestors. This relationship will improve the accuracy of the information in the records and ensure that what is made accessible to the public aligns with the values and preferences of the Nation. Accurate, authentic, and appropriately accessible information will form the foundation of the informal public education process. This information will inform curators as they collaborate with the Nations to present Indigenous heritage to the public.

Aside from, and in addition to, a provenance research project, the RMHS may want to ensure that the collections policy mandates engagement and collaboration with Indigenous Nations in all documentation and interpretation of their belongings. Stewardship agreements with individual Indigenous Nations will include a similar mandate to collaborate and engage before and during any documentation or interpretation of a Nation's archaeological belongings. Authentic information will ultimately be provided to visitors through collaboration and engagement, and sensitive information will be protected at the RMHS.

Principle 12

Culturally competent ICM Stewardship acknowledges that ICM is held by museums in trust for the community of origin.

The collections policy at the RMHS recognizes "...that the collection is not vested solely in the City of Richmond and its Museum and Heritage Sites Societies but, more implicitly, held in trust for future generations" (City of Richmond 2013b:4). However, the policy also states that donations and bequests are only accepted when a clear title of ownership is transferred (City of Richmond 2013b:3). Archaeologists who reposit collections do not own the collections and cannot transfer ownership. Article 11.1 of UNDRIP declares that descendant Nations themselves have moral ownership of their ICM (UNDRIP 2008). If collections are held in trust for the descendant Nations, transfer of ownership should not be expected. As seen in the discussion of ownership in section 2.2.1 above, the policy at the RMHS does not allow for an in-trust arrangement for the care of the belongings held in the collections.

This principle emphasizes the nature of stewardship as a trust arrangement. Affirming the stewardship role of the museum is key to respecting the authority of Indigenous Nations over their heritage. The RMHS may want to state in the collections policy that their role is that of steward of the IAB, which is held in trust for the Indigenous Nations whose ancestors created that heritage. Until the Nations choose to repatriate their belongings, stewardship agreements with the Nations will need to clarify the status of belongings as under the care of the RMHS, not owned by the City of Richmond.

Principle 13

Culturally competent ICM Stewardship includes policies that address repatriation without conditions.

The collections policy at the RMHS does not mention repatriation. The literature confirms that repatriation is the most appropriate way for Indigenous Nations to reclaim authority over their material culture. Museums have been

developing repatriation policies since before the *Task Force Report on Museums and First Peoples* recommended repatriation in 1994 (AFN&CMA). Indigenous Nations have navigated bureaucratic rules and regulations that have drawn out the process (Bell 2009, Bernstein 2021, Jessiman 2011). The lack of a policy does not prevent the process of repatriation through deaccession (Bell 2009). Still, a repatriation policy, developed in collaboration with the Nations and reviewed and revised regularly, will address and resolve any potential issues that may present barriers or delays to requests.

With the full participation of the Nations whose belongings are held in the collections, the RMHS can develop a repatriation policy. In developing this policy, questions of process, criteria, protocols, and costs will need to be addressed and will vary from Nation to Nation. Because the details of repatriation will vary, the policy should clarify that those details will be defined together once a repatriation request has been initiated. There may be the opportunity to create replicas where appropriate to be used with Nation permission, advice, and participation. The *Indigenous Repatriation Handbook* provides a checklist of considerations to be made in the repatriation process (Collison et al. 2019).

Principle 14

Culturally competent ICM Stewardship is proactive regarding repatriation and addresses requests immediately, especially for human remains.

A swift response to repatriation requests is key for Indigenous Nations with concerns about the welfare and whereabouts of their ICM. In the repatriation section of a new collections policy and procedures, the RMHS can require that all IAB in the museum collections be inventoried and documented as accurately as possible in preparation for collections inquiries and potential repatriation requests. This will require that belongings be re-associated with the documentation received with them. Numbering will need to include Borden site numbers, where they exist, and belongings will need clear identification with photographs. Each Nation will have its preference for access to the collection

records, and RMHS will need to be prepared to work with the Nations to accommodate those preferences.

According to RMHS collections policy, human remains are not collected, but "...exceptions may be considered if circumstances are mutually agreed upon by the donor and Richmond prior to acquisition" (City of Richmond 2013b:3). However, donors of human remains can instead be advised to contact Indigenous Nations. Exceptions to depositing human remains into the care of the RMHS can only be at the request of the descendant community, to be held in trust for them and not accessioned. In a statement in the section of the collections policy dedicated to ICM stewardship, the RMHS can clarify that it will provide intermediary care of human remains at the request of and as directed by Indigenous Nations. Otherwise, human remains in the collection will be acknowledged as candidates for repatriation, and the Nations will be made aware immediately of their existence. Lesley Moore, the museum Curator in Richmond at the time, notes, "As Curator, I discovered human remains in the collection storage area in the 1980s. Through personal contacts, the remains were returned to Musqueam and interred" (Lesley Moore personal communication 2021). This was the standard practice Moore, and her fellow students learned in a fifth-year Ethnology course at UBC, taught by Wilson Duff. (Lesley Moore personal communication 2021).

Principle 15

Culturally competent ICM Stewardship ensures that ICM is accessible for communities of origin.

While museums hold ICM, accessibility is key to implementing the authority of the Nations over their heritage. The RMHS collections policy does not cover access to IAB. However, access to the reference library collection is addressed. According to the policy, the reference library can be accessed, but the museum costs for providing access may be charged (City of Richmond 2013b:6). The reference library is a small collection of publications focused on

Richmond history, collecting, museum standards, and general history, all of which can be found elsewhere in libraries or bookstores. Although it is not likely that Indigenous Nations will want access to the publications, the literature is clear that even the perception that there will be charges for access presents a barrier to Indigenous Nations. They must prioritize finances for infrastructure, education, and the health of their members, among other pressing demands (RCAP 1996b:556). In my experience at the RMHS, there has never been a request for access to the IAB collections. In practice, any requests for access to other parts of the collections, mostly from donors, have been welcomed and accommodated without charge. RMHS may want to remove any mention of costs for access to any collections from the RMHS collections policy and express clearly that access to belongings is welcome.

Accessibility can be provided to the Nations physically through visits of Nation members to the RMHS storage. Access can also be delivered digitally through online access to database records or by uploading files to a location determined by the Nation. The literature emphasizes that access must be sensitive to concerns about cultural protocols where not all IAB should be made accessible to everyone. Cultural protocols may require restrictions on access, either by the public or by members of the Nation itself. As noted in Principle 4 above, permission for access to IAB would be at each Nation's discretion. Each Nation will have preferences for how to access the collections and manage access to the collections. RMHS may want to engage with each Nation to determine the best access for them and the best way to manage that access while they hold the belongings. The results of this engagement can be included in the details of a stewardship agreement with each Nation.

Principle 16

Culturally competent ICM Stewardship respects that the Nations themselves will determine cooperation and collaboration with neighbouring Indigenous Nations.

Richmond exists in territory claimed by more than six different Nations and territory that once provided resources to multiple Indigenous Nations in the Fraser River watershed, out to and including the Salish Sea. The RMHS collections policy does not acknowledge the various traditional territories, and it is not clear from the records which belongings are from which descendant Nation. The overlapping territory of these Nations is likely to mirror overlapping repatriation requests for belongings held in the RMHS collections. The RMHS does not have the knowledge or authority to decide the validity of any one claim over another. These are matters that the Nations themselves must determine. The RMHS can capture this in a section of the collections policy related to repatriation. Overlapping repatriation claims will be resolved by the claimants, and the RMHS will await notification of mutual agreement on the resolution before proceeding with repatriation.

Principle 17

Culturally competent ICM Stewardship provides an appropriate space for community visits to collections.

The physical access to IAB provided for in the policy reforms from Principle 15 will require space to review belongings. This includes tables and chairs, a room, or considerations for elders and potentially wheelchair access. The lack of an access policy means there is no plan for accommodating visiting Nations. The RMHS will want to plan to have a space available for initial visits by the Nations. Preferences on the function and materials required by the space can be determined in collaboration with each Nation. These details can be included in the stewardship agreement with those Indigenous Nations whose belongings are held by the RMHS.

4.2. Summary

An assessment of the collections policy and procedures at the RMHS concerning the 17 principles of culturally competent stewardship of ICM

developed in the previous chapter finds that most of the principles are not upheld. The results indicate that a shift in perspective is necessary to adjust the RMHS policies, procedures, and practices to be culturally competent. The RMHS can begin by shifting from treating the IAB like all other objects in the collection to accepting and acknowledging that Indigenous Nations are the moral owners of their belongings and that ICM is held in trust for the descendant Nations. Engagement logically follows from acknowledging ownership and will guide decisions regarding repatriation, transfer, or stewardship agreements. Involvement of Indigenous Nations in stewardship may resolve some of the documentation errors seen in chapter two, clarify the significance of belongings, and re-establish the link between the Nations, their ICM, and their traditional territory. Engagement will also ensure that the values and preferences of individual Nations, which will not always be the same as their neighbours, are understood and respected. Not all Nations want to repatriate their archaeological belongings, and not all Nations want digital access in the same way. Engaging with individual Nations to navigate all options allows stewardship to adjust appropriately.

A structure emerges in this chapter for reform to collections policy at the RMHS that includes adding a section to the *City Wide Artefact Collections Policy and Administrative Procedures* that acknowledges traditional territory, the unique nature of ICM, its ownership by the Nations, the management prerogative of the Nations, and the commitment of the RMHS to engagement for stewardship. Included subsections within this ICM policy will address repatriation of IAB, stewardship agreements for IAB, and agreements to transfer IAB to another institution. Repatriation policy and transfer agreements policies will affirm that the elements and details of those procedures will be determined in collaboration with individual Nations. Similarly, the stewardship agreement policy will affirm that agreements are developed with each Nation whose belongings are held by the museum. Stewardship agreements will include a training plan for the RMHS staff, a mandate to recruit Nation members for projects at the RMHS involving their archaeological belongings, and for documentation, handling, storage,

conservation, and protocol details. This will ensure cultural safety for the belongings and the Nation. Stewardship agreements will also include procedures for an approval process for the use of IAB for research, public presentation, and educational programs. Part of these procedures will require that FPIC is ensured. Engagement at every step of this policy reform will be imperative, bringing with it mutual understanding and respect. These reforms to the collections policy and the addition of repatriation, transfer, and stewardship agreements will guide a healthy, authentic, and culturally competent relationship between the RMHS and the Nations.

Chapter 5.

ICM Stewardship Resolutions

I began this thesis in search of a definition for culturally competent stewardship that small non-Indigenous museums could use. My experience of ceremonial loans, repatriation, and reconciliation between the Glenbow Museum and the Blackfoot Nation in Alberta led me to question the lack of engagement with Indigenous Nations in the museum collections where I worked in BC. The CMA survey showing the lack of museum engagement with Indigenous Nations confirmed that museums everywhere are not yet engaging with the Nations specifically for stewardship of their cultural heritage. I chose to focus on small non-Indigenous museums because they represent the majority of museums in the country and province and are not as closely monitored as the large provincial and National museums. Small non-Indigenous museums have an important role as informal public education organizations and are mandated to ensure that they provide inclusive and authentic information to their public. Ensuring culturally competent stewardship facilitates the fulfillment of this mandate.

Further refining my focus on the province of BC, as a case study, I examined the stewardship of a small collection of IAB at the RMHS, the museum where I work in Richmond, BC. This examination showed that stewardship of these belongings at the RMHS put them at risk of dissociation. Stewardship of IAB was found to be in dire need of reform. I undertook a literature review to understand the elements of culturally competent ICM stewardship, expecting to learn that engagement with Indigenous Nations would guide museums and provide solutions.

The literature reviewed here provided a wealth of insight into the perspective of Indigenous Nations regarding the stewardship of their ICM. Engagement proved to be an important mandate, but the acknowledgement of Indigenous ownership and the right to govern the stewardship of their ICM held in

non-Indigenous museums was seen as a bigger and more important principle of culturally competent stewardship. Acknowledging ownership leads museums to engage with Indigenous Nations for documentation, presentation, repatriation, and stewardship of the ICM they hold. It returns authority to the rightful owners, engaging and reconnecting them with their ICM and the territory of their ancestors.

The principles of ICM stewardship generated from the literature here were applied to the policy, procedures, and practices of the RMHS as they relate specifically to the stewardship of IAB there. A viable policy approach emerged. The keys to the stewardship policy were seen to be the development of the policy in consultation with Indigenous Nations and a flexible policy structure that addresses the diverse and distinct values and preferences of each Indigenous Nation concerned. Policies that embrace repatriation, as requested, and provide for stewardship agreements, where requested, will clarify for Indigenous Nations the role of the museum regarding the ICM in its holdings. Stewardship agreements that support Indigenous participation in the stewardship processes and education of museum staff on cultural safety ensure that museums gain understanding and respect for the Nations and that the information documented in the records is accurate and authentic. With the support of carefully stewarded museum collections, Indigenous Nations will be understood as an important part of any community's social fabric, history, and heritage.

This work has provided an example of the application of culturally competent stewardship principles to the collections policies and practices for a set of Indigenous archaeological belongings at a small non-Indigenous museum in BC. The focus was on literature applicable to museums in BC. I believe the basis of this work in Indigenous perspectives makes the basic themes and principles relevant to stewardship in other small non-Indigenous museums in BC. But the focus here is narrow, addressing a small part of the museum sector and a small part of the Indigenous cultural heritage held in museums. The applicability of these principles to other types of ICM - ethnographic belongings

and non-tangible heritage - the songs, stories, and traditions of Indigenous Nations - remains a topic for future inquiry.

Similarly, the application of these principles to small non-Indigenous museums in other areas of Canada may reveal a need to expand the literature to include documents and engagement results from local Indigenous scholars, practitioners, and advisors. Indeed, this research has underscored the need for museums to listen to the perspectives of Indigenous Nations at the local level. This was the formal message delivered by the Task Force Report on Museums and First Peoples in 1984 and reiterated by the Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples in 1986, by the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada in 2015, and by the various BC, documents examined here. The need to consult with the moral owners of ICM, the descendant Nations, has been a consistent message.

Thinking back to my days working in the Glenbow Museum, I remember a group of high school students from the Nakoda Nation who were visiting the belongings of their ancestors. The students moved drawer by drawer and cupboard by cupboard through beaded moccasins, shirts, gauntlets, etc. I watched as the students studied the patterns, recognizing the beadwork of their great-aunties, grandmothers, and great-great-grandmothers. I felt privileged to witness the connection of these young people to their heritage, and I knew that our museum could never fully understand the meaning and value of those belongings to the members of their descendant Nation. Our current colonial museum systems can't capture that perspective. Museums can, however, restore the connection of Indigenous Nations to their ICM, where it has been lost, by beginning with acknowledgement and engagement and by building culturally competent stewardship.

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