

Francophone Historic Places Historical Context Thematic Framework



Canot du nord on
the Fraser River.
(www.dchp.ca);
Fort Victoria c.1860.
(City of Victoria);
Fort St. James
National Historic
Site. (pc.gc.ca);
Troupe de danse
traditionnelle Les
Cornouillers. ([www.
ffcb.ca](http://www.ffcb.ca))

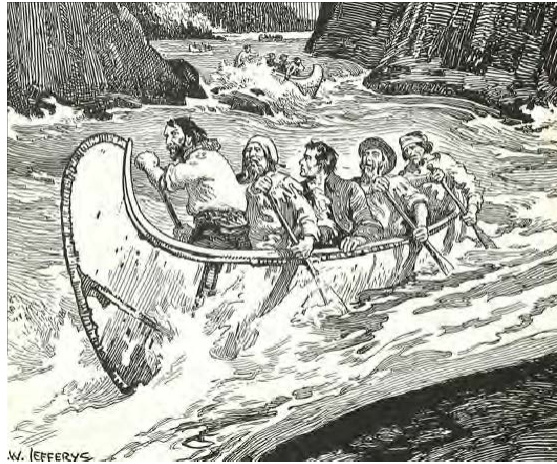


September 2019

Francophone Historic Places
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Simon Fraser et ses Voyageurs. (tourisme-cb.com)

Historical contexts:

- Identify and explain the major themes, factors and processes that have influenced the history of an area, community or culture
- Provide a framework to investigate and identify historic places

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Introduction

British Columbia is home to the fourth largest Francophone community in Canada, with approximately 70,000 Francophones with French as their first language. This includes places of origin such as France, Québec, many African countries, Belgium, Switzerland, and many others, along with 300,000 Francophiles for whom French is not their first language.¹

The Francophone community of B.C. is culturally diverse and is more or less evenly spread across the province. Both Francophone and French immersion school programs are extremely popular, yet another indicator of the vitality of the language and culture on the Canadian West Coast.²

This document is a historical context study of the experience of Francophones in British Columbia. The context study is written as a thematic framework, identifying six themes adapted from Parks Canada's National Historic Sites System Plan.³ Its overall purpose is to guide the evaluation of publicly-nominated Francophone historic places in the province by providing a succinct but comprehensive view of Francophone history that encompasses all potential Francophone

1 Francophone Affairs Program <https://www2.gov.bc.ca/gov/content?id=196E6B2663BA4D95853A2D21CDB90665>

2 La Fédération des Francophones de la Colombie-Britannique. *Annual report 2015-2016*.

3 The Parks Canada System Plan can be found at <http://www.pc.gc.ca/eng/docs/r/system-reseau/sites-lieux1.aspx>

historic places. While recognizing the diversity of Francophone histories in British Columbia, the themes seek to highlight significant aspects of Francophone experiences and contributions to the province, historically and in the present day.

The six themes identify major aspects of the historical, social and cultural experience of Francophones in B.C., and the major impact that Francophones have had in shaping the province. Each section begins with a theme statement and includes a series of related sub-themes. The themes are aimed at collecting information on experiences and stories related to Francophone history and historic places in B.C. with input from the community at three workshops, held in Vancouver, Victoria and Kelowna in the spring of 2018.

Concurrently, a nomination process was undertaken during which anyone could nominate a Francophone historic place for potential commemoration at the provincial level. The importance of those places not selected for provincial recognition is acknowledged through a publicly accessible interactive map.

While the primary purpose of the themes is to describe and contextualize Francophone history and the nominated historic places, they also seek to understand and integrate issues related to the province's Indigenous peoples, and how, within this context, these historic places reflect the Francophone identity in British Columbia today.

It is clear that Francophones played an important role in the creation of modern British Columbia, but the current state of historical understanding requires critical thinking about how we choose to evoke the memory of this period of "settler colonialism."⁴

Despite nearly fifty years of maritime and land-based fur trading with Europeans, First Nations peoples of the Northwest Coast had remained largely in control of their land. After the 1858 Fraser River gold rush, the mercantilist economics of the fur trade shifted to an industrialized resource-extracting economy based on mining, forestry, fishery, and canneries. These industries brought increased migration and European settlement to the province, causing Indigenous links to land to become radically transformed and Indigenous space increasingly regulated and litigated by the colonial system. During the 1860s and onward, harsh racializations and segregations were enacted in the painful transformation from Indigenous land to colonial order.⁵

This included the dispossession of Indigenous peoples and their removal from most of their traditional lands; their elimination through violence, cultural assimilation, legal or other means; the resettlement

4 Nicolas Kenny. Written communication, 07 January 2019.

5 Penelope Edmonds. *Unpacking Settler Colonialism's Urban Strategies*. 2010.

of the land by non-Indigenous people; and the establishment of a political, legal, economic, social, and cultural order that privileged some and excluded and exploited others.⁶

Despite the history of Francophones in British Columbia embodying in part the colonial settlement of B.C., their contributions to the province remain remarkable. Francophones and their descendants have contributed to the economic growth, intellectual pursuits and political and cultural development of British Columbia, influencing communities throughout the province and shaping the province as a whole.

The context document integrates the stories and voices of Francophones, producing an understanding of their contributions that may assist current and future generations to appreciate the community's diverse heritage from Francophone perspectives.

6 Nicolas Kenny, Written communication, 07 January 2019.

Some definitions used in the document:

Francophone:

People for whom French is their first language and who have linguistic rights recognized by the federal Official Languages Act of 1969.

Anglophone:

People for whom English is their first language.

Métis

People of mixed European and Indigenous ancestry, and one of the three recognized Aboriginal peoples in Canada under Section 35 of the Constitution Act, 1982.⁷ Francophone Métis are born of Indigenous women and Francophone Voyageur fathers.

“Métis” means a person who self-identifies as Métis, is distinct from other Aboriginal peoples, is of historic Métis Nation Ancestry and who is accepted by the Métis Nation.”⁸

Allophone:

A resident, usually an immigrant, who may speak French, but whose mother tongue or home language is neither French nor English.

Francophile:

- a. A person who speaks French but not as their first language.
- b. French speakers with English or another language as their mother tongue.
- c. A person who has a strong affinity towards any or all of the Francophone language, history, cultures or people.

⁷ www.thecanadianencyclopedia.ca/en/article/metis

⁸ <http://www.metisnation.ca/index.php/who-are-the-metis/citizenship>



Theme 1

Early Francophone Presence in British Columbia

This theme is about when, where and why Francophones and their descendants arrived in B.C., worked in the fur trade and settled forts and trading posts. It also acknowledges the way in which the long and complex Francophone history has often been absent in the written records.

Early explorations

The history of Francophones in British Columbia originates in the 1780s, when the first European explorers arrived in what was then known as New Caledonia, a fur-trading district that comprised the territory of the north-central portions of present-day British Columbia.

French Canadians, known as *Canadiens*, were a driving force everywhere in the Pacific Northwest. The Voyageurs, coureurs des bois and Métis were experts in travelling long distances by canoe and interacting with Indigenous people, playing a pivotal role in opening the territory and establishing trade. Their knowledge and experience as explorers and guides was sharpened over time by two centuries of living in New France.

The Métis emerged as a distinct people or nation in the historic Northwest during the 18th and 19th centuries as fur traders married Indigenous women. First Nations women were the link between cultures, providing companionship for the fur traders and aiding in their survival. They provided a link to, and understanding of, Indigenous culture, translated native languages, and were involved in resolving cultural issues.

After New France was ceded to Great Britain's control, there was a distinction between Francophone Métis born of Indigenous women and Francophone Voyageur fathers, and the Anglo-Métis descended from English or Scottish fathers.

In the mid-18th century, fishing was the primary resource industry in Canada. Fishermen from France returned dressed in furs acquired through exchange with the First Nations and the fur trade was born. Two companies dominated the fur trade: the North West Company and the Hudson's Bay Company.

While never making landfall on the lands that would become British Columbia, the voyage of Jean-François de Galaup, Comte de la Pérouse, the first French explorer to see the coast of B.C., near the

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Sternwheeler Quesnel at Fort George, 1910. (BCAR b-00307)



Fort Victoria, c.1860 (City of Victoria Archives)



Present-day interpretation at Fort Langley.



islands of today's Haida Gwaii, was significant for spurring the English and Spanish to attempt an agreement for exploration and commercial control.

In 1786, Pérouse led a world expedition aboard the ships *Astrolabe* and *Boussole*, a scientific mission that also sought to establish trade in otter furs with B.C.'s First Nations, later publishing the first book in French describing the British Columbia coast. He named, among others, B.C.'s Sartine Island, commemorating the French Minister of the Navy Gabriel de Sartine, Count of Albi.

In 1793, Alexander Mackenzie, the co-owner of the North West Company, along with six French Canadians, were the first Europeans to cross the Rocky Mountains to the shores of the Pacific Ocean and claim the territory on behalf of Canada.

In 1806, Simon Fraser employed 20 *coureurs des bois* and Métis to descend the Peace River inland, establishing the first forts in B.C. at Fort Fraser and Fort St. James. Surveyor, map-maker and explorer David Thompson, married to Métis Charlotte Small, was accompanied by documented teams of French-Canadian guides and Voyageurs on his expeditions. French Canadians accompanied Lewis and Clark on their expedition to Oregon.

While Alexander Mackenzie's expeditions had been primarily reconnaissance trips, as a partner in the fur-trading North West Company, Simon Fraser's assignment, in additions to exploring travel routes, was to build trading posts, establish trading relationships with First Nations and take possession of the country.

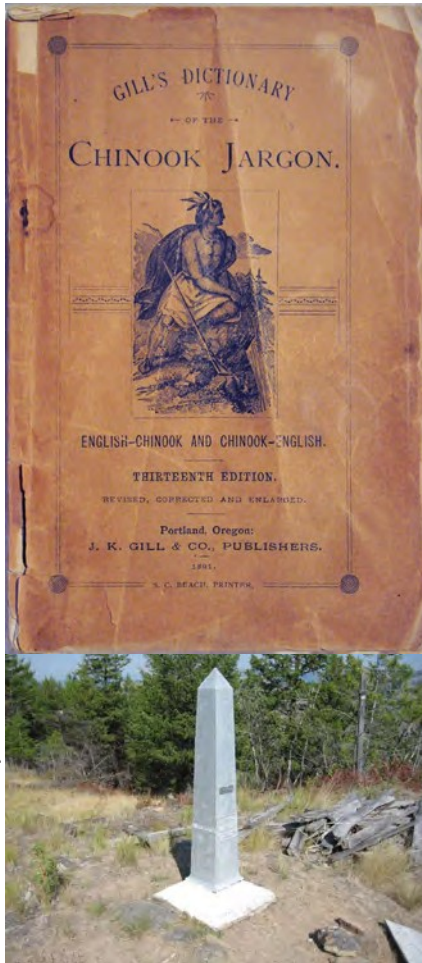
Interpretation of the writing of Mackenzie, Fraser, and other explorers potentially produce an inaccurate version of their contact with Indigenous peoples by demonstrating a bias that white newcomer culture is more important or superior to that above that of Indigenous peoples and produces a sense of racial hierarchy.

For example, the way in which Indigenous peoples are represented in Fraser's 1808 journals may reveal more about the attitude of a fur trade company keen to expand its operations in Indigenous territories in the Pacific Northwest than it does about the realities of contact with Indigenous peoples.¹

While Mackenzie was reliant on the skills, knowledge and assistance of Indigenous guides and chiefs, and First Nations showed signs of civility, they still posed a threat to Mackenzie and his crew.²

¹ Jawanda, Justine. *Simon Fraser "The Explorer" and the Problem of Contact History*. Centre for Scottish Studies at Simon Fraser University.

² Dunn, Sam. "Managing Multiple Narratives: Alexander Mackenzie at Nuxalk Territory, 1793." *BC Historical News*, Summer 1999.



French Canadians facilitated the overland expeditions to the Pacific Ocean between 1793 and 1812 that opened the region's large land base for Britain and the United States. They made up the majority of the employees in the fur trade in the early Pacific Northwest through their numbers and their persistence, a territory that at that time included present-day B.C., Washington, Oregon and parts of Montana, Idaho and Wyoming.³ They worked as boaters, hunters, guides, interpreters and as a liaison with First Nations.

Prior to contact with Europeans, the area now known as British Columbia had one of the densest and most linguistically diverse Indigenous populations in Canada. In the late 1770s and early 1780s, a smallpox epidemic swept through the Indigenous populations which had no immunity to the virus. The close confines of their winter homes provided an ideal situation for the virus to devastate entire communities, making it impossible to bury the dead according to traditional cultural practices, leading to mass burials.

While this period of early French Canadian exploration and relationship-building with First Nations resulted in many changes in the province, it was the Fraser River gold rush of 1858 that would refashion the course of Francophone history in B.C.

Prior to the gold rush, the majority European population in present-day B.C. was French-speaking and the fur trade was the main economic activity. In the 1850s, the Hudson's Bay Company started to diversify and gold prospectors, most of Anglo-Saxon descent and including many Americans, arrived by the thousands, accelerating economic change and forcing the Francophone population into the minority.

Establishment of forts and trading posts

The 1800s was the era of the development of forts and trading posts, their purpose being to protect territory and facilitate trade in furs and other goods. Numerous forts and trading posts were established around the province by the Hudson's Bay Company, which have evolved into B.C.'s communities of today.

Places such as Fort George, Fort Langley, Fort Kamloops and Fort Vancouver in the present-day state of Oregon were connected by the Hudson's Bay Company brigade trail which extended from Fort Vancouver in the south to Fort Alexandria in the north.

The skills of the French Canadians were utilized in the construction of these forts, such as at Fort Langley, built in 1827 to capture the lower Fraser River trade, and Fort Nanaimo on Vancouver Island, constructed between 1853 and 1855.

³ Jean Barman. *French Canadians, Furs and Indigenous Women in the Making of the Pacific Northwest*. 2017.

At Fort Langley, Francophones worked as carpenters, cooks, gatekeepers, fishermen, blacksmiths, chimney builders, sawyers, boat-builders, hunters and trappers.⁴ French-Canadian Étienne Pépin was made responsible for managing the Fort's farm. The French Canadians were indispensable in these endeavours.

Two French Canadian axemen, Jean-Baptiste Fortier and Léon Labine, are credited for the construction of the Bastion at Fort Nanaimo. Axe markings from their work are still evident in the structure.

While generally referred to as a fort, the Hudson's Bay Company established Nanaimo primarily to service their coal mining enterprise, and the Bastion was built to protect white settlers from possible attacks from the Snuneymuxw people.⁵ In January 1853, Governor James Douglas mandated the construction of the Bastion Fort to protect the interests of the company in Nanaimo from the Snuneymuxw people.⁶

Today, the Snuneymuxw First Nation is pursuing settlement with Canada for the loss of a 79-acre Indian Reserve along the waterfront near the Bastion.⁷

Fort Yale was a Hudson's Bay Company trading post, founded by French-Canadian Ovide Allard in 1848. Thompson's River Post became the City of Kamloops. Fort St. James was established in 1806 on the shores of Stuart Lake by Simon Fraser and the Francophone employees of the North West Company. Francophone traders married indigenous women and the local Carrier Indians participated in the Fort centennial celebrations in 1948. The fort remained operational until 1952 despite the decline in the fur trade.

As with other fur trade forts, First Nations played an important role at Fort St. James, a place that was home to the Dakelh First Nations since long before the arrival of Simon Fraser and the North West Company. Once the fort was established, Chief Kw'eh took on the role as fur trade chief, negotiating the new relationship between his people and the newcomers, continuing this role after 1821 when the Hudson's Bay Company took over operations there.

Chief Kw'eh's success as an intermediary and diplomat helped create peaceful relationships in the region and resulted in his identity as the key Indigenous leader of a wide territory. Today, First Nations residents at Fort St. James continue to practice their cultural traditions.

⁴ Jean Barman. *French Canadians, Furs and Indigenous Women in the Making of the Pacific Northwest*. 2017.

⁵ Jan Peterson. *A Place in Time: Nanaimo Chronicles*. 2008.

⁶ "Thursday 3 February 1853," Transcription of Joseph McKay's Journal. Quoted in Stevens, *More than just a City's History: Narratives of the Elimination of Indigenous Histories in the Settler Colonial Objectives of the Historian in Nanaimo, British Columbia*.

⁷ Snuneymuxw First Nation <https://www.snuneymuxw.ca/project/79-acre-claim>

Fort Hope served as a transfer point for goods brought up the Fraser River from Fort Langley to the pack trains for Kamloops, and from there to Alexandria for distribution by water to the posts of New Caledonia.

While B.C. rarely saw First Nations treaties enacted during the development of the fur trade forts, there were exceptions. At Fort Victoria, fourteen Douglas Treaties, also known as the Fort Victoria Treaties, were enacted between 1850 and 1854, and saw James Douglas of the Hudson's Bay Company extinguish Indigenous title to the lands between Sooke and Saanich.

Many French Canadians were involved in the construction of Fort Victoria beginning in 1843. There they gradually established themselves, and for a time, French was the dominant language in what would become B.C.'s capital city. The Fraser River gold rush and the creation of British Columbia as a colony in 1858 resulted in a significant decrease in the proportion of Francophones in the population, and in their rapid linguistic assimilation.⁸

Francophone fur traders and workers at the forts easily integrated into the culture of First Nations who were already there. Through this integration, a language known as Chinook, partly composed of French words, was developed as a contact language in a region of great linguistic diversity.⁹ Many residents of Vancouver spoke Chinook as their first language, while among the early Europeans to use it were traders, fur trappers, Voyageurs, coureurs des bois and Catholic missionaries.¹⁰

The 1846 boundary agreement

French Canadians in the Pacific Northwest played a key role in the 1846 boundary agreement between Canada and the United States. In the act that divided the region permanently along the 49th parallel, French Canadians contributed greatly to the outcome. Their importance as a stable work force to the success and profit of the Hudson's Bay Company compelled that enterprise to pressure the British government to negotiate with the United States for the retention of the territory that would become the province of British Columbia.¹¹

With First Nations culture establishing no formal boundaries, in some cases the creation of the border divided communities in two. For example, in B.C.'s East Kootenay region the Ktunaxa on the British Columbia side of the border became the ʔakisq̓nuk (Akisq̓nuk) First

⁸ www.thecanadianencyclopedia.ca/en/article/francophones-of-british-columbia

⁹ Maurice Guibord. *Francophones in B.C., A Long and Continuing History*. 2014.

¹⁰ Jim Holton. *Chinook Jargon: The Hidden Language of the Pacific Northwest*.

¹¹ Jean Barman. *French Canadians, Furs and Indigenous Women in the Making of the Pacific Northwest*. 2017.

¹² <https://www.thecanadianencyclopedia.ca/en/article/kootenay>

Nation, ʔakinkumʔasnuqʔit (Tobacco Plains Indian Band), ʔaqam (St. Mary's) and yaqan nuykiy (Lower Kootenay Band) while the two bands in the United States are the Confederated Salish Kootenai (near Elmo, Montana) and Kootenay Tribe of Idaho (at Bonner's Ferry).¹²

Francophones from other countries

Members of the Francophone population in B.C. come from all over the world, bringing with them diverse cultural and ethnic backgrounds. While some feel that more recent immigration has submerged the western Francophonie, which has contributed so much to the early and current development of the province, there is movement within the community to recognize a new Francophone nucleus.

The Francophone community in B.C. is becoming increasingly diverse, mirroring the colour and cultural differences of Canada as a whole, including people of various backgrounds beyond the familiar French, Belgian, Québécois or New Brunswick.¹³ Modern Francophones have emigrated from international Francophone communities and have settled across the province. These Francophone newcomers are from Europe, Africa, the Middle East, the Caribbean and Asia, from countries such as Switzerland, Haiti, Morocco, Senegal, Congo, Mauritius, Madagascar, Lebanon, Algeria, Senegal, Côte d'Ivoire and others.

While recognizing the evolution, growth and change of the francophone community, Francophones in B.C. continue to recognize and pay tribute to the first Francophone pioneers who braved difficult conditions in establishing themselves in the province.

The impact of multiculturalism

Multiculturalism has been identified as a fundamental Canadian value, and the francophonie as one of the most significant elements in Canadian multiculturalism. The federal Immigration and Refugee Protection Act of 2002 includes provisions to increase the number of French-speaking immigrants in Francophone minority communities.

In line with the wider view of multiculturalism in Canada, the promotion of Francophone immigration to B.C. is seen as a tool to revitalize and enrich the Francophone community in the province, culturally, economically and socially.¹⁴

Why they came

Francophones have travelled to B.C. over generations and for many different reasons. Beginning in 1793, they came for economic expansion and employment, exploration and potential adventures in a new world, _

¹² <https://www.thecanadianencyclopedia.ca/en/article/kootenay>

¹³ *The/la Source*. Volume 13, Issue 18, 2013.

¹⁴ Geneviève Lapointe. *From the Mill to the Hill*. 2007.

all concepts from the past that still apply to Francophone arrivals today. The earliest pioneers brought with them the spirit of the *coureurs des bois*, adventurers who easily integrated with and adapted to the lives of First Nations.

Increased population in eastern Canada led them on exploratory departures to the West for employment and resources. Recruitment efforts in the early 20th century sold a dream of good jobs and economic prosperity to Francophones in Eastern Canada, while the early tradition of bequeathing land to the first-born meant other offspring had to leave the paternal land and settle elsewhere. Some came to become proficient in English, in other cases they were required as French-speakers in new government agencies in the west.

The westward movement of Francophones from eastern Canada and Acadians from the maritime provinces allowed them to avoid injustice and discrimination, and to seek renewal and a new life on the west coast. Steady work in mills and factories with their families nearby, the opportunity for change and ensure a more prosperous future for their descendants were also factors in the early migration of Francophones to the west coast.

Modern Francophone newcomers have cited B.C.'s natural environment as a draw for them. The beauty of nature, landscapes, mild climate and the ability to be outdoors in wide open spaces are some of the reasons for their arrival.

According to census data collected by the Canadian government between 1951 and 2011, there was a continuing growth of British Columbians whose mother tongue or first official language was French. Between 2011 and 2016, the number rose from 62,190 to 64,325, but remained the same percentage of the population at 1.4%.¹⁵

From their origins as companions to the early explorers in the late 1700s, their critical relationships with Indigenous people, and up to today, the ongoing development of the Francophone community and the contribution of Francophones to the richness of B.C. can be surprising, an overlooked and often underestimated part of the history of the province.¹⁶

¹⁵ www12.statcan.gc.ca

¹⁶ Dr. Réal Roy. "Vivre en français en Colombie-Britannique: quelle place pour les anglophones?" 2017

Theme 2

Francophone Communities in B.C.

This theme addresses the cultural, religious, and political ties within Francophone communities –in all their diversity - and their relationships with First Nations and other ethnic and racial groups in British Columbia. It also describes the movement of Francophones within B.C., as many looked for new employment opportunities and places to establish their lives.

Francophone settlement patterns in B.C. followed the fur trade, the forest and sawmilling industries, the railway and farms in the Fraser Valley and the Okanagan. While Francophone communities naturally evolved from these places of economic development, they appear everywhere in the province, as enclaves within larger cities, and as individual Francophone parishes and communities.

Fur trading posts as new communities

The fur trading posts constructed by the Hudson's Bay Company commonly relied on their French-Canadian and French-speaking Métis employees for their operation, and naturally evolved into villages and towns.¹ Still the majority at that time, Francophones settled down in and around the forts, began to establish farms and ranches, and founded Catholic churches, schools, hospitals, courier services, hotels and inns, and developed local Francophone associations.

Fort Langley evolved from a company completely focused on the fur trade to become a business that sold agricultural products including potatoes, wheat and peas, salted meat and salmon, as well as increasingly varied manufactured goods. Fort Victoria, established in 1843 and home to a majority of French-speakers, would grow to become the provincial capital. Fort Yale became a boomtown during the 1858 gold rush. At its peak, it was the largest city north of San Francisco and west of Chicago. It was a busy river port and served as the headquarters during the construction of the Canadian Pacific Railway.

First Nations at the North West Company and Hudson's Bay Company forts were an important part of the complex economic, cultural and social environment. The men who worked there saw aspects of Indigenous life that later ethnographers could not have seen. Yet due to the limitation in communication between these men and First Nations, there is little recorded information about the intellectual life, attitudes, beliefs, the First Nations ways of life and how newcomers reacted in this new environment.

¹ Maurice Guibord. *Francophones in B.C., A Long and Continuing History*. 2014.

St. Ann's Academy, Victoria.



Mission of St. Joseph School and Cemetery, Williams Lake.



French hospital and Roman Catholic Church, Victoria. c.1866 (BCAR a-03419)



First Nations women often married Company men, including English, Francophones, Hawaiians and others, revealing and emphasizing the cultural differences between First Nations and the newcomers. European traders formed lasting, meaningful, long-term relations with First Nations communities through their Indigenous wives and "mixed-blood" children. First Nations women of high status provided a valuable tie between company and Indigenous traders.

Early missions

From the very first landing of European Christian explorers, the saving of First Nations by conversion to and teaching in Christianity was a matter of prime concern. As such, Roman Catholic missions were established across the province.

In the second half of the 19th century, Catholic missionaries reached the primarily Francophone posts and communities established by the fur trade. The Oblates of Mary Immaculate, a specific, male-only religious order that espoused missionary work and who affiliated themselves with a certain faith, were particularly active in British Columbia, arriving in the province in 1858 after spending eleven years in Oregon. Arriving with a Roman Catholic world view, the Oblates saw themselves as superior to indigenous people. By establishing missions throughout B.C., they laid the foundation for the growth of the Roman Catholic Church, establishing an agenda to convert B.C.'s Indigenous communities to the Roman Catholic faith. The presence of these Roman Catholic missionaries sent to the region made French the most widely spoken European language in the region until the late 1850s.

Some examples:

The first bishop of the Catholic diocese of Victoria was Monsignor Modeste Demers who, in 1842, accompanied a Hudson's Bay caravan from Victoria to Fort Vancouver in today's Washington State, then to Fort Stewart, Fort Fraser and Fort Babine in northern B.C., as well as Fort George (later the city of Prince George), Kamloops, and Fort Langley. His mission was to become acquainted with various Indigenous communities and learn their dialects.

The Congregation of the Sisters of St. Ann was founded in Quebec in 1850. The Sisters had an immense impact in B.C., particularly in Victoria, after their arrival in the province in 1858, four years before the city was incorporated. They came west at the invitation of Monsignor Demers to teach the children of the French Canadian fur traders and their aboriginal partners or wives. The congregation recently acknowledged the 160th anniversary of the arrival of the Sisters in B.C.

Post office and supply store
Deroche, 1914. (BCAR



Maillardville Catholic Church,
1909. (BCAR a-09226)



Several other Francophone orders of female religious workers came to work in B.C. Among them were the Sisters of Providence who came to the province in 1886, establishing St. Mary's Hospital in New Westminster.

The missions often became larger enterprises around agriculture and farming, evolving into communities and towns. One of the most well-known is the 1859 Immaculate Conception Mission, later the Okanagan Mission. At its location of Anse-au-Sable, the Oblate Brothers carried out various activities on the Mission site, raising cattle, growing barley, wheat and potatoes and cultivating a vineyard, orchard and vegetable garden, while Father Jean-Charles Pandosy, arriving from France to settle in the area, dedicated himself tirelessly to his tasks as a missionary and settler.

Developing parishes, villages, towns and cities

Francophones, both lay and religious, have helped establish numerous villages, towns and cities across British Columbia. Francophone communities developed around the Catholic parishes, turning to ranching or agriculture, and developing their own schools and hospitals governed by the Catholic clergy.

During the second half of the 19th century, small towns began to emerge. Kamloops was a typical example, with a priest, a newspaper, farmers, shops and inns, a carrier and a ferry. Between 1870 and 1890 there was an influx of many Francophone families to the community of Kamloops, who bought land, established ranches and developed livestock. In larger cities such as Vancouver and Victoria, Francophones established small businesses, inns and hotels and operated community services.

The recruitment of French-Canadian workers to the Fraser River Lumber Company in Maillardville in 1909 was the impetus for the establishment of the community, B.C.'s first parish at Maillardville, in present-day Coquitlam. The French-speaking population of Maillardville expanded rapidly, fed to a large extent by a stream of settlers from the Prairies.

In northwest B.C., the main Francophone community developed in today's Prince George, a community which evolved from the Hudson's Bay Company site of Fort George. A strong reminder of Francophone history and continued presence in the city occurs each year, as the *Cercle des Canadiens Français de Prince George* organizes cultural activities for the city's 1,300 Francophones.

Many of the first permanent European settlers in the Okanagan and Similkameen valleys were Francophones, the region's farming pioneers. Lumby, Kelowna and Vernon were all centres of Francophone settlement



and agriculture. In the west Kootenay region, in towns such as Nakusp and New Denver, Francophone settler families were involved in farming and sawmilling enterprises, their presence closely linked to the development of these small towns.

Communities on Vancouver Island, such as those in the Cowichan Valley, were comprised of Francophones. For example, brothers François-Xavier and Jean-Baptiste Vautrin, along with Jean-Baptiste Deloume, were important in the development of the Mill Bay area through the fur trade and as pioneers, agriculturalists and tradespeople.² Road names such as Voutrait and Deloume are markers of their residence.

In the city of Duncan, the Sisters of St. Ann purchased a 400-acre farm on which they first developed a boarding school for young First Nations girls. Notably, the first four families to settle in Duncan were Francophone. After sheep were introduced to the Cowichan Valley in the 1850s, the Sisters instructed First Nations women in the craft of knitting, resulting in the Cowichan indigenous knitting tradition, a combination of European textile techniques and Salish spinning and weaving methods.³

Beginning in the 1860s, the lower Fraser Valley had considerable Francophone settlement due to the suitability of its grasslands for stock-raising. Francophone communities developed at Harrison Mills, Durieu (now Hatzic Prairie), Deroche, Nicomen and Mission, which takes its name from the Catholic Mission Sainte Marie. There were several Francophone families operating dairy farms in today's Langley. The arrival of the railway in the 1800s saw a new influx of Francophones, some former employees of the Hudson's Bay Company, to work on the railroad or farm the land made accessible by the railway.

There are many other communities across B.C. that have been identified as key sites of Francophone culture, an indication of the widespread settlement and influence of the French-Canadian community in the province.

Some of them include Fraser Heights and Fairview in Vancouver, Abbotsford, Mesachie Lake, Kamloops, Merritt, Golden, Nanaimo, Ladysmith, Terrace, Kitimat, Prince Rupert, Fort St. James, Fort St. John, MacKenzie, Houston, Donald, Burnaby, Duncan, Rosedale, Chilliwack, Oliver, Williams Lake, Enderby, Nelson and Rossland.

Many existing place names across the province - Lac Le Jeune, Tête Jaune Cache, Quesnel and many others - are associated with the era of B.C.'s Francophone origins in the fur trade and subsequent settlement, recalling the Francophone presence in the province over the last two centuries.

² CILS radio broadcast transcript. *Mill Bay: Les Vautrin et les Deloumes*.

³ Ibid.

Francophones also occupied enclaves in the larger cities. In Vancouver, for example, between 1930 and 1980s, a sizable community of Francophones lived in the area around West 16th Avenue and Heather Street. The community was anchored by the Saint-Sacrement church and neighbouring school, as well as nearby Francophone associations and businesses

The establishment of towns and cities would have an impact on local First Nations as well. In the Victoria area, for example, the municipalities of Victoria, Oak Bay, Esquimalt, View Royal, Colwood and Metchosin are located within the traditional territory of peoples who collectively became known as the Songhees. They were originally a group of extended families that shared a common dialect called Lekwungen. With the building of Fort Victoria, most of the Songhees families consolidated in a village on the northwest shore of Victoria's Inner Harbour, an area that became part of a larger reserve beginning in the 1850s. Dislocated to a new reserve in Esquimalt in 1910, the Songhees nevertheless negotiated their right to fish, hunt and gather food on their traditional territories.⁴

The beginning of World War II brought about significant changes to some Francophone communities. In the previous decades, many communities remained relatively closed to exterior influences, and often the life revolved around the church, the school and the major employer. After the war, immigrants from Europe, other parts of Canada and elsewhere would bring increased use of English and create a less homogenous community.⁵

Relationships with First Nations

Throughout their history in the province, French Canadians have had significant relationships with First Nations. Canadian identity is founded not only on the relationship built of French/English compromises and cooperation, but rests in fact on a triangular foundation which includes, Canada's aboriginal peoples.⁶

The first Francophone pioneers arriving with the fur trade saw Indigenous people as equals and were accepted into First Nations communities, learning their languages in order to communicate, and were able to integrate with their culture, forming significant partnerships.

French-Canadian men began relationships with Indigenous women that involved the development of marital unions which gave rise to distinct family units. They innovated family life as an amalgam of Indigenous and non-Indigenous ways. These partnerships extended to practical

⁴ www.sfu.ca/brc/virtual_village/coast_salish/Songhees.html

⁵ Geneviève Lapointe. *From the Mill to the Hill*. 2007.

⁶ John Ralston Saul. *Reflections of a Siamese Twin: Canada at the End of the 20th Century*. 1997.



matters such as food preparation and collection, fishing and initiating the early agricultural settlements in the Pacific Northwest.⁷

Francophone Métis were born of Indigenous women and Francophone Voyageur fathers. Several Francophones are often cited as examples of these relationships. Jean-Baptiste Lolo, of French Iroquois descent, entered the fur trade in 1822 with the North West Company. Stationed at Fort St. James and other New Caledonia posts, he served as an interpreter and postmaster, but his real importance was as an unofficial liaison officer between the company and the Indigenous population in the region.

Oblate Father Andrien-Gabriel Morice arrived at Fort St. James in 1885, quickly mastering the Athapaskan language, that of the Dakelh, collected their oral traditions and created an alphabet to transcribe the sounds of their language. He published a dictionary, a grammar of the Dakelh language and a bi-monthly Dakelh newspaper.

At the same time, Father Morice is a symbol of the larger Catholic Church system, often seen by the Indigenous community as an institution whose mission was to adversely change First Nations' belief in tradition and culture.

Moricietown is a Wet'suwet'en village in central B.C., on the west side of the Bulkley River between Smithers and Terrace. For local First Nations, it is associated with Father Morice's use of fear tactics on Indigenous people to ensure conformity to Catholic orthodoxy and break ties with paganism.

Early in 1888, Father Morice was admonished by the church for calling the new village Moricietown. Far from heeding his bishop's rebukes, Morice continued to name lakes, mountains, and rivers after himself. First Nations themselves are now feeling that Morice bullied them into Catholicism. A Wet'suwet'en initiative is underway to revive the village's traditional name of Witset.⁸ This type of action moves away from a past lived under colonial and religious hegemony and illustrates how re-thinking B.C.'s place names establishes new realizations around reconciliation and the importance of naming in Indigenous culture.⁹

In an oral history interview, Constance Cox, a schoolteacher of part Tlingit and part English ancestry who lived and taught with the Gitksan First Nation in northwestern B.C., refers to the destruction of Indian culture brought about by priests such as Father Morice. But she also speaks about the languages of the Tsimshian, Gitksan and Carrier

⁷ Jean Barman. *French Canadians, Furs and Indigenous Women in the Making of the Pacific Northwest*. 2017.

⁸ <https://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/british-columbia/petition-to-change-b-c-village-of-moricietown-to-traditional-name-1.4262679>

⁹ www.ictinc.ca/blog/the-relationship-between-indigenous-peoples-and-place-names

Indians, the white settlers who learned the native languages and the importance of native art and totem pole carving.¹⁰

Catholic residential schools

The residential school system in B.C., often operated by French Roman Catholic missions, had an indescribable impact on B.C.'s First Nations communities and their legacy was one of the most difficult issues facing the church as the 20th century ended. Reconciliation and creating positive relationships with B.C.'s Indigenous peoples have been identified as an important part of Francophone awareness.

Operated at the time by the Oblates of Mary Immaculate, the St. Eugene Mission school near Cranbrook is one of the most well-known residential schools. It was the first comprehensive 'Indian Industrial and Residential' school to be built in the Canadian west. Operating under the government's assimilation policy, the Mission instructed 5,000 children from the Okanagan, Shuswap and Blackfoot Nations in addition to the area's Ktunaxa Nation.¹¹

The Sisters of St. Ann taught in four residential schools in B.C. that were operated by the Oblates of Mary Immaculate, until 1985, a period of over 100 years. The Sisters' formal mandate was to provide education for First Nations and Métis children, many of them the children of French-Canadian fur traders and their First Nations and Métis wives, but their role in supporting an oppressive regime of residential schools is acknowledged through a statement that reads:

*"Our priorities in working on the Indian Residential Schools Settlement Agreement were that suffering be acknowledged, justice be done through adequate compensation and that there be a way for us as religious women to both contribute to and enter into a process of healing and reconciliation with you."*¹²

Small-scale contemporary actions are part of this reconciliation and relationship-building. École André-Piolat celebrated Aboriginal Day 2018 by inaugurating a sculpture that recognizes that the school is located on ancestral territory of the Squamish Nation. The community of André-Piolat, like those of other schools of the *Conseil scolaire Francophone de la Colombie-Britannique*, wants to recognize its Indigenous roots in this spirit of reconciliation.

¹⁰ Constance Cox: Recollections. BC Archives Item AAAB0360, Imbert Orchard fonds. *Constance Cox Interview*.

¹¹ St. Eugene. <https://www.steugene.ca/en/about-us-culture-heritage/>

¹² <http://ssabc.ca/statement-on-behalf-of-congregations-of-women-religious-involved-in-the-indian-residential-schools-of-canada/>

Theme 3

Contributing to B.C.'s Economy

From their arrival in the early 19th century, Francophones and their descendants have worked hard and in a wide variety of ways to sustain their families and communities while contributing to B.C.'s economy. This includes the historical legacies of Francophones working in a new land, from their early association with the Hudson's Bay and North West companies, to modern commercial and professional pursuits, agriculture, forestry and mining, Francophone service industries, manufacturing, technology, business, language education, university research and others.

The province's early economy was based on the extraction of resources, including the fur trade, minerals, timber and fish, and technologies including sawmills and fish processing. By 1812, over 300 Francophones were engaged in fur trading and farming, the first to play key roles in the economic development of the province.

The economic contribution of Francophones to the richness of B.C. remains significant, even if it is often underestimated in the province. This contribution is not only historic but also very current, not limited to the obvious sector of culture, but extends to many intellectual and economic dimensions of the province.¹

The fur trade

At the beginning of the 19th century, French Canadians employed by the Hudson's Bay Company were *coureurs des bois* working mainly in the fur trade. When Simon Fraser founded Fort St. James for the North West Company in 1806, the fur trade was expanding rapidly in New Caledonia, and most of its employees were Francophones as well. In 1843, the HBC moved its main warehouse in Oregon to Fort Victoria, making Vancouver Island and the rest of New Caledonia a place of growing economic importance in the fur trade.

The fur trade often conjures up images of white European adventurers exploiting First Nations with unfair trade practices in the acquisition of valuable furs. First Nations exercised a large degree of control over trading relationships during the fur trade era.

Historian Wilson Duff notes that First Nations were not passive recipients of whatever the traders chose to offer, rather, they held out for goods that they wanted and drove hard bargains for items such as iron, copper, chisels, knives, pots, muskets and ammunition.²

¹ Dr. Réal Roy. "Vivre en français en Colombie-Britannique: quelle place pour les anglophones?" 2017.

² Fraser Basin Council. *Bridge between Nations: A History of First Nations in the Fraser River Basin*.



Landing a cargo of furs, Prince Rupert
1910. (BCAR C-08954)

Gold rushes, mining and infrastructure

The decline of the fur trade soon gave way to a new economic force, the Cariboo gold rush. Some 30,000 gold seekers flooded the Fraser River Basin from 1858 to 1870. This included a great number of Canadian and European Francophones, some of them employees of the Hudson's Bay Company.

The gold rush and the progressive establishment of cities attracted more and more Francophone pioneers who decided to become independent of the Hudson's Bay Company, settling on the outskirts of the forts and developing their own economic activities.³ The arrival of thousands of miners from California, across North America and Europe had significant consequences for the province's Francophones, who soon lost their status as the primary non-Indigenous linguistic group.

The gold rush had serious implications for First Nations. Mining, road building and town construction damaged salmon spawning areas and reduced water quality. These towns introduced social problems, including alcoholism and prostitution, to First Nations.⁴ The gold rush also facilitated the removal of First Nations onto small areas of reserve lands.

Despite this, First Nations were able to take advantage of economic opportunities provided by the gold rush, undertaking trade and transactions with newcomers and staking their own claims on the gravel gold bars. Indigenous nations from all around B.C., including St'at'imc, Tsilhqot'in, Haida, and Coast Salish were drawn to Barkerville by new economic activities.

³ www.thecanadianencyclopedia.ca/en/article/francophones-of-british-columbia

⁴ Fraser Basin Council. *Bridge Between Nations: A History of First Nations in the Fraser River Basin*.

Fraser Mills, 1924.
(Coquitlam archives C6.916)



At Yale and throughout the Fraser Canyon, First Nations and Chinese working in the gold rush formed a special relationship, both groups being outsiders from the dominant culture of Europeans, Francophones, Canadians and Americans.

When the rewards of prospecting became marginal, Francophones pursued other economic activities, such as trade and farming. Francophone place-names associated with mining claims, settlements or communities suggest that French-Canadian miners played a considerable role in the early mining industry. While the Francophone involvement in the Cariboo gold rush was short-lived, they were involved in other mining activities around the province.

In 1826, gold was discovered by Louis Christien and William Péon at Cherry Creek in the Cherryville Area. Luc Girouard, one of the mine's promoters, is credited with planting the first orchard in Vernon. The site of the Bluebell mine was purchased by the Canadian Metal Company in 1905, and the adjacent community, Riondel, was renamed for its president, Count Édouard Riondel. Joseph Bourgeois staked a mining claim near Rossland in 1880.

Choquette Bar was named for Alexandre “Buck” Choquette, who discovered gold on the Stikine River in 1898. French-Canadian Voyageurs Hector Tremblay and Joe Bisette left their group of prospectors from Kamloops during the Klondike gold rush and became the first settlers in Pouce Coupe Prairie.

The Lajoie Company - with a number of Francophone board members - was involved in mining activity and a hydro power application in the Bridge River Valley, a forerunner of today's Lajoie dam.

Any infrastructure project has implications for land and for First Nations. The 1948 LaJoie dam project caused cultural and environmental degradation of First Nations lands, and on the Bridge River salmon runs, once one of the river's largest and most important, among the area's fishery-dependent First Nations bands. It also inundated the upper Bridge River Valley, causing the loss of cultural resources and interrupting the traditional way of life.

Lumbering and sawmilling

At the time of the development of the lumber industry in B.C. in the late 19th and early 20th century, the lumber business in eastern Canada was beginning to decline. The completion of the Canadian Pacific Railway and the Crow's Nest Pass railway made access to west coast timber easier and opened new markets on the prairies.

As lumber capital moved to the west coast, it was accompanied by an influx of French Canadians, typical and famous lumberjacks. With

Francophone women fruit pickers in Kelowna, 1915. (Kelowna Museum Archives #2223)



their esprit de corps, friendly rivalry between groups, and high product output, the fallers, river drivers, millhands and other Francophone lumber workers were the backbone of the industry.

Francophone participation in B.C. lumbering was widespread across the province. Hand-loggers worked in the Sechelt Peninsula as early as the 1880s. The Genelle brothers opened the first lumber mill in Nakusp in 1892.⁵ Early Francophones working in the forest and sawmills were found in areas near Revelstoke, Rossland and Comaplix, and in the Lower Mainland at Moodyville, Hastings Mill and Granville.

While lumbering in the Kootenay region had begun as a way to supply the mining industry with building materials it soon grew as an industry in its own right, assisted by prominent Kootenay lumbermen. Almost every small mill town in the region - Fernie, Nelson, Waldo - and across the province as a whole, had a population of Francophone workers.

With the rapid growth of the pacific coast lumber industry in the first decade of the 20th century, there was a great demand for labour in logging and lumber manufacturing. Typical of the time, the Francophones worked alongside Japanese, Chinese and South Asian Canadians in the forests, sawmills and lumberyards.

An often-cited history is that of the lumbering industry at the Fraser River Lumber Company in Maillardville. In 1909, the Fraser River Lumber Company decided to recruit French-Canadian workers and their families, and their subsequent settlement became Maillardville, taking its name from its first Catholic curate, but often referred to as "Frenchtown."

At that time, most managers and foremen were Canadians of British or Scottish origin, and sometimes American, representing the gendered and racial hierarchies of the province. Most of the French Canadians were experienced and skilled mill workers recruited by the lumber companies to work in the sawmill industry, replacing unskilled Asian labourers. While the Japanese, Chinese and South Asian Canadian labourers faced exclusionary immigration laws when they tried to bring their families to B.C., French-Canadian men were encouraged to move to B.C. permanently with their families.⁶

This is reflected in the situation at Maillardville where the Chinese, Japanese and South Asian workers were meant to be displaced by French-Canadian recruitments from Quebec.

A legacy of the Maillardville Francophone working community is the strike of 1931. A reduction in wages during the Depression caused

⁵ K. Johnson. *Pioneer Days of Nakusp and the Arrow Lakes*. 1951.

⁶ Geneviève Lapointe. *From the Mill to the Hill*. 2007.

Hôtel Quilchena. (doug-laslake.com/history-quilchena/)



BX stagecoach at Yale 1868. (BCAR A-01559)



Mural depicting seasonal workers at the Centre culturel Francophone de l'Okanagan . (author photo)



the French Canadians working at the mill to successfully stand up for their rights and engage in union activities, even though the priests disapproved.

In resource communities such as Maillardville, women and men who did not work for the primary-resource company responded to the growing demand from the community for local services and businesses. Francophone women sometimes became domestic workers for the dominant Anglophone class.

Agriculture, ranching and viniculture

The tradition of ranching in the B.C. interior comes down to the efforts of Francophone families. In the late 1800s, many Francophone families were arriving in the interior towns of Kamloops, Merritt, Lumby and other communities to buy land, construct ranches and develop livestock, beginning the ranching tradition that still epitomizes this area today.

Joseph and Pierre Guichon, arriving from France, settled in the district in 1873, founding the Guichon Cattle Company at Quilchena, just north of Merritt. It became one of B.C.'s best known cattle ranches, and the Guichons significant figures on the British Columbian ranching frontier in the 19th century. The Lequime Ranch was owned by Eli Lequime, his son Bernard the owner of the sawmill and townsite of Kelowna. Blue Springs Ranch was developed by French Canadian Louis Morand, often called the founder of Lumby, arriving in 1885 and becoming postmaster of the White Valley and Lumby area. Pierre Bessette was a well-known Lumby farmer; most of the French-Canadian settlers at Lumby turned to farming.

Francophones are credited with the beginnings of both orcharding and the planting of grape vines for viniculture in the Okanagan and Similkameen valleys. Joseph Chrétien was a fruit grower and cattle rancher in Kelowna, while Father Pandosy's mission in that city turned to fruit production, beginning the agrarian vocation of the Okanagan Valley which became well-known for its orchards. The first vines in the province were planted for the purpose of making sacramental wine at Pandosy's Oblate mission, established in 1859 near the present-day site of the Summerhill Pyramid winery. French grape varieties successful in B.C. are at the heart of the wine industry.

Francophone contributions to the dairy industry include Agropur, Island Farm dairy products and Saputo which includes Dairyland and Armstrong dairy products.

Newcomer agricultural activities resulted in loss of land, loss of traditional agriculture, hunting and fishing grounds, and the issue of

Pierre Paris shoe store c. 1950. (VPL)



Sign for a Couche-Tard (night owl) store.



water rights for Indigenous communities. At the same time, Indigenous communities also participated fully in the horticulture and mixed farming sectors in the Okanagan Valley and in the commercial ranching economy in the Nicola Valley, both as workers on the local ranches and as owners of their own stock, following the seasonal round as they had since time immemorial.⁷

Accommodation and transportation

After leaving the Hudson's Bay Company, many Francophones worked in small businesses, inns and hotels, both in cities such as Vancouver and Victoria, and smaller rural communities, often associated with agriculture or ranching.

Rancher Pierre Bessette constructed the Ramshorn and Morand hotels in Lumby. The Quilchena Hotel opened in 1908, as with many early hotels in B.C., as an overnight stopover for stagecoaches. It was an era of prosperous times, with the anticipation of a railway and Nicola Lake a popular tourist destination. Still operating today, the 1912 Quilchena general store was originally built to supply stagecoach-related businesses with supplies.

In the 1880s, the Guichon family was also associated with the development of a hotel in New Westminster, and with a second hotel and adjacent ferry landing in Ladner that became known as Port Guichon.

Other Francophones worked in transportation during and after the gold rush era. One of these was Francis Barnard, who in 1862 founded what would long be B.C.'s main transportation company, starting by delivering mail and then moving goods, gold and people. The BX Express served the Fraser Canyon, Cariboo and Fraser-Fort George regions, connecting communities with Francophone roots such as Tête Jaune Cache and Fort George.

Jean Caux, known as Cataline, drove large pack train of mules and horses out of Yale, Ashcroft, Quesnel and Barkerville, and later the Bulkley Valley and the Hazeltons. He supplied the early settlers, prospectors and telegraph linesmen with much-needed supplies.

Seasonal agricultural work

Young Francophone farm workers have a historical tradition of pursuing seasonal agricultural work in the Okanagan, contributing greatly to the agricultural industry. Since 1980, fruit and grape picking and work on farms and in nurseries have attracted a wave of Francophone workers lured by the idea of discovering the west while earning needed money.

⁷ Sasges, Michael. *Colliers and Cowboys: Imagining the Industrialization of British Columbia's Nicola Valley*.

According to figures from the Centre culturel francophone de l'Okanagan, approximately 500 of them show up at its office each season for job search advice. Another estimated 500 Francophone workers are able to find regional employment on their own, adding to this number. A publication entitled *Information sur le travail agricole dans l'Okanagan-Simikameen and Kootenay* provides detailed information directed to Francophones regarding seasonal work in the Okanagan and Kootenay regions of B.C.

As well as farming their own lands, First Nations were involved alongside their Francophone counterparts as farm workers in the Okanagan. During the 1950s and 1960s, the British Columbia Fruit Growers' Association actively promoted the use of First Nations labour.

Entrepreneurial, business and professional success

An important economic event for Francophones in the province was the establishment of *la Caisse Populaire* in Maillardville in 1947 under the name of the Notre-Dame-de-Lourdes credit union. The success of this first Caisse in Maillardville prompted Francophones in Vancouver to open the *Caisse Saint-Sacrement* 1949, followed by the *Caisse populaire de Notre-Dame* in 1964 to serve Francophone inhabitants of the Alberni Valley. These institutions played an important role in helping Francophone newcomers to become established while maintaining social, cultural and community character.⁸

Francophone entrepreneurs have opened diverse businesses and contributed to the built environment and services across the province. Some examples: in Vancouver, Magloire Desrosiers, a plumber from Quebec who also operated a retail store outlet constructed the Desrosiers Block. Pierre Paris and Sons Ltd. was a shoe and boot manufacturing company founded in 1907 by Pierre Paris, a pre-eminent footwear manufacturer from France who produced logging, mining and industrial footwear. The Crédit Foncier Franco-Canadien Company of Montreal chose a prominent location for its western headquarters in 1913. The Fortin Building was an early Gastown rooming house, representative of the area's seasonal population in the early twentieth century. The hardware store RONA was established by two brothers from Quebec, while in 1956, the Lafarge cement company, originating in France, established its first cement plant in North America in Richmond B.C.

⁸ Lengyel, Catherine and Dominic Watson. *La Situation de la Langue Française en Colombie-Britannique*. Le Conseil de la langue française, 1983; "Your History: Maillardville and Money." Coquitlam Heritage Society in the *Tri-City News*, 2014. www.tricitynews.com/lifestyles/your-history-maillardville-and-money-1.1880709



Joseph Patenaude, from Quebec, is an example of a successful Kootenay entrepreneur based in Nelson in the first half of the 20th century, practicing optometry, operating a business as a watchmaker and jeweller contributing to the region's Roman Catholic community.

Two other entrepreneurial examples include Couche-Tard, or “night owl,” known in B.C. as Mac's Convenience Stores. This business numbers 55 outlets in B.C. and was formed by Alain Bouchard, who opened his first store in 1980 in Laval, Quebec. Cascades, a company that early on became focused on reusing, recovering and recycling as key practices benefitting the environment and society, has seven operations in B.C. In 1964, Bernard and Laurent Lemaire rehabilitated a disused Dominion Paper Company mill, launching a new business making paper from recycled fibres.

In universities and federal research organizations across the province, places such as the Herzberg research centres for Astronomy and Astrophysics in Penticton and Victoria, the Pacific Forestry Centre or the Institute for Marine Sciences, there are numerous Francophone professionals who have contributed not only to the creation of these institutions but continue to produce research work in many diverse disciplines.⁹

French speaking business operators can receive training in their own language in entrepreneurial management in all key sectors of the provincial economy, thanks to the *Société de développement économique de la Colombie-Britannique*. The society is a provincial Francophone organization that represents the interests of the economic sector of the British Columbia Francophone community.

Many local initiatives by Francophone pioneers have shaped the economic profile of the regions they lived in up until the present day, dominating industries such as lumbering, agriculture and ranching, while the rest of the population worked where there were opportunities, in mining, freight transportation, ferries, railways, mail, hotels and inns and a host of local activities.

Francophones continue to value the economic culture that their communities have brought to British Columbia, seeing themselves as a united community with a diversified economic network.

⁹ Dr. Réal Roy. “Vivre en français en Colombie-Britannique: quelle place pour les anglophones?” 2017.

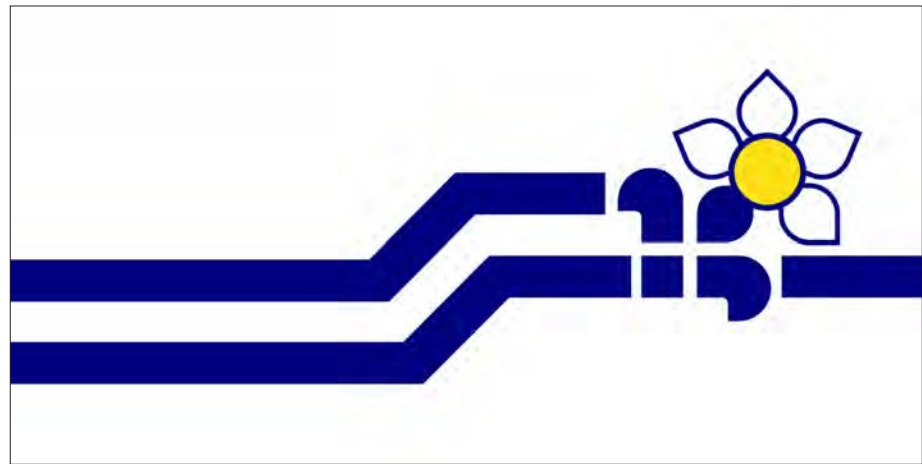
Theme 4

Francophones and Governance in B.C.

Francophones and their descendants have participated in B.C.'s political process, government institutions, the law and the military. They have been impacted by their association with government, discriminatory practices, use of the French language and the provision of services to the Francophone community.

Along with Indigenous peoples and Anglophones, Francophones are considered a founding people in Canada. Their presence has established French as one of two official languages and has been instrumental in building the government institutions of the country and British Columbia. The bicultural nature of Canada and English– French relations since the 1760s have shaped both the country and the province.

The official inclusion of B.C. in the Canadian confederation in 1871 is in large part due to the early Francophones in the province. Their economic, cultural and political significance in the fur trade and land settlement influenced the Hudson's Bay Company to urge the Canadian government to keep the territory that would become British Columbia, a key contributing factor to the inclusion of B.C. within Canada, and to its protection from United States ownership and occupation, resulting in an agreement to establishment the international border at the 49th parallel in 1846.¹



The Franco-Columbian flag, adopted in 1982.

¹ Jean Barman. *French Canadians, Furs and Indigenous Women in the Making of the Pacific Northwest*. 2017.



Yet, even though it is well known that Francophones have played an important role in the creation of modern British Columbia, as the two newcomer peoples to the province, both Francophones and Anglophones have been party to settler colonialism, the ongoing displacement of Indigenous peoples from their lands and resources through an influx of permanent settlers.

When British Columbia joined Canada in 1871, the province did not recognize Indigenous title so there was no need for treaties. However, the Province did accept the rights of Indigenous people as written in the Canadian Constitution and recognized the federal government's authority to make laws for Indigenous people and their lands.

The relationship between the Crown and Indigenous peoples of British Columbia is ever-evolving and has become an important focus of the Lieutenant Governor.

In 2016, in the presence of First Nations leaders, the Governor General, the Lieutenant Governor, the Premier and other dignitaries, His Royal Highness The Duke of Cambridge affixed the Ring of Reconciliation to British Columbia's Black Rod in a ceremony at Government House.²

Accommodating Francophones

"I think that language is at the core of the Canadian experience."³

In the past, communicating with employees in the provincial government has sometimes not been easy. Francophones are often unable to access government services in French because there may not be someone who is able to speak the language in every department.

For this reason, the B.C. government's Francophone Affairs Program is very important to the Francophone community for its recognition of their status and needs. The program, which is part of the Intergovernmental Affairs Secretariat, is mandated to improve access to French-language programs and services for Francophones, Francophiles and British Columbians living in the province, to encourage their continued and growing participation in strengthening the social, economic and cultural fabric of British Columbia.⁴

The program supports programs and services in both English and French through the 2013 *Canada – British Columbia Official Languages Agreement on French-Language Services* for approximately 70,000 Francophones and 300,000 Francophiles in B.C. to ensure the French-speaking community has access to the information it needs.

2 The Crown and Indigenous Peoples. <http://ltgov.bc.ca/the-crown-and-indigenous-peoples/>

3 Official Languages Commissioner Graham Fraser. *The Hill Times*, August 31, 2009.

4 British Columbia Francophone Affairs Program 2016 - 2017 Annual Report.

The Francophone Affairs Program supports organizations such as the Ministerial Conference on the Canadian Francophonie (MCCF) which hosts an annual meeting of ministers as well as having an intergovernmental network working year-long on the Francophonie file. It also supports Francophonie Day that is held at the B.C. legislature in Victoria each year.

These events and organizations are important because they help support Francophone culture and their place in the political institutions of the province. The Ministerial Conference explores issues related to the Canadian francophonie, providing direction for intergovernmental cooperation, and plays a unifying role in support of the country's francophonie.⁵ Francophonie Day celebrates French language and reflects the contributions made by French-speaking citizens to the social and economic life of the province.

Laws, acts, language and the constitution

Prior to the 1960s, although they were among the first arrivals in the territory of New Caledonia that would become B.C., Francophones had to rely on their own resources to build their supporting institutions around language, health, education, justice, economics and others, necessary for the development of public services that accommodated their own language and culture.

The creation of the *Fédération des francophones de la Colombie-Britannique* assisted in creating these supporting institutions. Its mission was, and is, to promote, represent and defend the rights and interests of Francophones in British Columbia, to preserve the linguistic and cultural heritage, and to contribute to the advancement of a welcoming and inclusive community.

The Constitution Act, 1867 contains just one section regarding linguistic matters, section 133. This section guarantees that both languages may be used in the Parliament of Canada, in its journals and records, and in court proceedings in any court established by the Parliament of Canada. The section also mandates that all Acts of the Parliament of Canada be printed and published in both languages.⁶

Following this, three other important events further accommodated the use of the French language in Canada and B.C.⁷ They include:

The adoption of the federal *Official Languages Act* in 1969, the federal statute that made English and French the official languages of Canada, and which requires all federal institutions to provide services in English or

⁵ www.cmfc-mccf.ca/about-us

⁶ The Constitution Act, 1867. www.uottawa.ca/clmc/constitution-act-1867

⁷ Dr. Réal Roy. "Vivre en français en Colombie-Britannique: quelle place pour les anglophones?" 2017.

French on request. It created the Office of the Commissioner of Official Languages, which oversees its implementation.

A modified *Official Languages Act*, adopted in 1988, echoes what the original states about the use of both official languages in government services and in federal institutions, but it also provides for the government's commitment to promoting linguistic duality in Canadian society and ensuring enforcement of the *Official Languages Act*.

The Canadian Constitution, adopted in 1982, included the right to an education for a linguistic minority in their own official language. For Francophones, section 23 of the *Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms* is important as the section of the Constitution of Canada that guarantees minority language educational rights to French-speaking communities outside Quebec.

A strong federalist, Pierre Trudeau (Prime Minister of Canada from 1968–1979 and 1980–1984), had fought to ensure linguistic rights in the constitution to promote national unity. Section 23 had its origins in a unanimous agreement between the provincial leaders and Trudeau reached in 1978 in St. Andrews, New Brunswick, in which children of citizens were entitled to receive schooling in their language.⁸

The creation of the *Conseil scolaire Francophone de la Colombie-Britannique* (CSF), School District 93, in November 1995, through a judgement by the Supreme Court of British Columbia that obligated the provincial government to establish the Francophone Education Authority by regulation. The first advisors responsible for setting up the CSF were appointed on December 14, 1995. The mandate of the CSF is to develop a community of learners inspired by innovative education, a shared, living Francophone culture, and the acquisition of essential life skills for the future, all in a Francophone environment. Only Francophones can demand linguistic rights in matters such as education.

Some in the Francophone community in B.C. have noted that these political relationships have not been, and are not always easy, but they are important for the ongoing enrichment of the province through the official recognition of the French language and its associated culture. Others feel that it is important to emphasize one of the two official languages before accommodating immigrant languages. Regardless, preserving the French language is imperative for B.C.'s communities to understand and accommodate each other.

Following the *Official Languages Act*, the federal government began to provide subsidies to the provinces to meet two objectives: education in the official minority language and sociocultural projects.

⁸ Hogg, Peter W. *Canada Act 1982 Annotated*. Toronto: The Carswell Company Limited, 1982.



Determined to equip itself with the tools necessary for development and self-sufficiency, the Francophone community in B.C. embarked on a process that would change its relationship with the federal government through a Canada-community agreement. Signed in 1996, the agreement allowed the community to determine and act on its own priorities in its commitment to the development of Francophones in the province regarding the approval of projects and activities to be financed.

Participation in government

The appointment and election of Francophones in B.C. helps to increase the representation and awareness of Francophone community and culture. Henri-Gustave Joly de Lotbinière, B.C. Lieutenant Governor from 1900 to 1906, was important in establishing the role of the office of Lieutenant Governor and enhancing the importance of the position. A commemorative plaque to Joly de Lotbinière is located at Government House in Victoria. Judith Guichon, rancher and organizer who married into the Guichon ranching family, served as the 29th Lieutenant Governor of B.C. from 2012 to 2018, perpetuating the Francophone legacy in economics and government.

A contemporary example of Francophone political success is Denise Savoie, a distinguished politician in the city of Victoria in the 2000s and a New Democratic Party (NDP) MP for Victoria elected in 2006. She acted as the NDP's Intergovernmental Affairs Critic, Post-Secondary Education Critic, Literacy Critic and Human Resources Deputy Critic, and was re-elected in the May 2, 2011 federal election.

Defending B.C. and Canada

Francophones in B.C. are engaged in the defense of the province and country and the maintenance of law and order, including participation in the Royal Canadian Mounted Police, municipal and regional police forces, and other defense organizations across the province. Many of B.C.'s soldiers were, and still are, Francophones engaged in federal military service.

One of these was Royal Canadian Naval officer Victor Brodeur, who was one of the first "group of six" officer cadets accepted into the Royal Canadian Navy and the first Francophone officer to reach the rank of Rear Admiral.⁹

The years prior to and after World War II saw the opening of military training centres on the west coast which attracted large numbers of Francophone recruits, many of whom eventually settling permanently in B.C. helping to develop the province's Francophone community.¹⁰ This has resulted in a strong Francophone connection to today's military,

9 CILS radio broadcast transcript. *Victor-Brodeur*.

10 www.officiallanguages.gc.ca

such as that at Canadian Forces Base Esquimalt at Naden, associated with the development of the Royal Canadian Navy training school.

Discrimination and assimilation

While some Francophones came westward to avoid persecution and injustice in eastern Canada, discrimination and attempted assimilation were also found in B.C., primarily through the denigration of French Canadians, Québécois and Francophones because of their language and religion.

Even though French Canadians were Canadian citizens and able to purchase land and vote in elections, they were also often working-class, poor, Roman Catholic and French-speaking, characteristics considered as inferior in the eyes of English-speaking Canadians of British Protestant descent.¹¹ While considered to be white employees when recruited to replace non-white, primarily Asian, workers, they were still considered to be lower in the working hierarchy than Anglo-Canadians.

Historically, political actions aimed to create language equality or a better school system for Francophones have often been disregarded by the legislature in Victoria. During the 1960s, the future seemed uncertain for Francophone minorities in B.C., as Premier W.A.C. Bennett generally ignored the existence and importance of the Francophone community in the province.

The Quebec provincial election in 1976, in which the separatist Parti Québécois came to power, generated feelings of anger towards Francophones in the British Columbia. This resulted in consequences for the Fédération des Francophones de la Colombie-Britannique in trying to achieve its educational mandate, primarily due to lack of government funding and the guarantee of minority language education to certain categories of Francophones.¹² The results of the 1980 referendum in Quebec on sovereignty-association also had mixed consequences for Francophone communities because an estimated 50% of Francophone voters in B.C. had supported the separatist option.¹³

At the same time, Francophones may have participated in some of these actions themselves. While many embrace the new multi-cultural definition of Francophone, others may still wish for the one unique Francophone culture, emphasizing a homogeneous linguistic and cultural minority status, as opposed to a multicultural mandate.¹⁴

International political groups and associations

B.C.'s Francophone community is part of la Francophonie, a term

11 Geneviève Lapointe. *From the Mill to the Hill*. 2007.

12 House of Commons Debates. Thursday, June 13, 1996.

13 www.thecanadianencyclopedia.ca/en/article/francophones-of-british-columbia

14 Geneviève Lapointe. *From the Mill to the Hill*. 2007.

that refers to the ensemble of people, organizations and governments world-wide that share the use of French daily and as an administrative language, teaching language or chosen language.

The term Francophonie appeared for the first time around 1880 when it was used to designate all people and countries speaking French. Written with a lowercase "f," francophonie denotes speakers of French, and Francophonie with a capital "F" represents the institutional mechanism organizing relations between Francophone countries.¹⁵ The definition also includes francophonie at several levels, such as a British Columbian, Canadian or International francophonie.

Internationally, B.C.'s Francophone community is affiliated with the formal *Organisation internationale de la Francophonie* through the membership of the Canadian government in this institution. This is an international affiliation representing countries and regions where French is a customary language, where a significant proportion of the population are Francophones, or where there is a notable affiliation with Francophone culture.

Today, associations and groups exist in B.C., Canada and internationally with the aim of bringing French-speaking communities to life. These organizations include professional associations, writers, academics, journalists, lawyers, non-governmental organizations and teachers of French.

¹⁵ Organisation Internationale de la Francophonie. www.francophonie.org/-Qu'est-ce-que-la-Francophonie



Francophone:

People for whom French is their first language.

Anglophone:

People for whom English is their first language.

Métis

People of mixed European and Indigenous ancestry, and one of the three recognized Aboriginal peoples in Canada under section 35 of the Constitution Act, 1982. Francophone Métis are born of Indigenous women and Francophone Voyageur fathers

Allophone:

A resident, usually an immigrant, who may speak French, but whose mother tongue or home language is neither French nor English.

Francophile:

- a. A person who speaks French but not as their first language.
- b. French speakers with English or another language as their mother tongue.
- c. A person who has a strong affinity towards any or all of the Francophone language, history, cultures or people.

Theme 5

Francophone History, Religion, Language and Community

The realm of language, community, history, culture and religion is one where Francophones and their descendants have had the greatest impact on B.C.'s social, cultural and community life.

Francophone participation in groups, institutions and organizations have enriched communities and assisted those in need throughout the province. Cultural and community associations that support the Francophone population throughout the province are very important to the Francophone community.

Defining the Francophone community in B.C.

This context study defines the Francophone community as one which is composed primarily of British Columbians who make an intensive and exclusive use of French, most often as a mother tongue. It also includes Francophiles and the growing number of anglophones, young and old, for whom French is a chosen language used extensively, but not necessarily the first language spoken at home.¹

Statistics Canada itself does not give a single definition of what a Francophone is because there is no consensus.²

According to some in the Francophone community, la Francophonie is a political, economic and cultural construction, not one thing but many things. There is a link with la francophonie throughout B.C., connected by an unseen "Francophone cultural fabric." The Francophone community is considered an open one, with one language, but composed of different cultures and many linguistic differences, such as accents, expressions and idioms - French from Québec, from France, from Belgium, from the Caribbean and elsewhere. The Francophone community includes the wide participation in Francophone community life throughout the province. Francophiles, allophones and French speakers with English or another language as their mother tongue are also considered to be part of the Francophone community.³

This same community sees that the history of Francophones in B.C. includes the stories of travelers, coureurs des bois, province and

¹ Dr. Réal Roy. "Vivre en français en Colombie-Britannique: quelle place pour les anglophones?" 2017.

² Jean-Pierre Corbeil, Assistant Director, Census of Population Program, Statistics Canada.

³ Input on identifying the Francophone community condensed from three community workshops.

community builders, Métis, missionaries and Francophones working in French in different fields. The Francophone community also includes the French language and Francophone cultures, and the survival of one's mother tongue. The French language and Francophone history, community and cultures are not defined by a particular location, but are foundational in the history of Canada and B.C.

The importance of Francophone historic places in B.C. lies in the fact that each place defines a specific historical, political, economic and cultural moment. Knowing these places is important to building a sense of belonging within the Francophone community, to trace their history and stories, and to give the next generation a chance to understand where they come from.

Defending and speaking the French language

“What is important is that you have 300,000 people speaking French, which makes French the second-most spoken language in B.C. after English.”⁴

From the arrival of the first Francophone fur traders and Voyageurs up until the 1858 Fraser River gold rush, French was the most widely spoken non-Indigenous language in the west. At that time, there were many French-Canadian workers in the province, with 60% of the inhabitants of Fort Victoria speaking French. The gold rush brought a wave of English-speaking emigrants from the United States and other parts of Canada, and the community of Fort Victoria, and the province as a whole, soon became predominantly English-speaking.

The loss of the French mother tongue - considered by some as assimilation - was seen as an inevitable and key phenomenon for Francophone communities in minority situations.⁵

With the passing of time and the rapid growth of the province, the Francophone minority tended to increasingly become absorbed by the majority Anglo-Canadian culture. Pressure from American cultural influences, the decline of the use of the French language, mixed marriages and the inclination to conceal French ancestry and French as a mother tongue all contributed to the trend of assimilation.

Similarly, assimilation around language was the goal of some of the Catholic missionaries working with Indigenous communities in B.C.

Education in French

For decades, Francophone schools, including child care and preschool, have been seen as critical for the survival of the French language and for the sharing of cultural heritage.

⁴ *The/la Source*. Volume 13, Issue 18, 2013.

⁵ Dr. Réal Roy. “Vivre en français en Colombie-Britannique: quelle place pour les anglophones?” 2017.

L'école l'anse au sable,
Kelowna.



L'école anne hebert,
Vancouver.



The first schools of the province, founded between 1848 and 1849, were mainly French-speaking and Catholic. At first, French religious schools were established for Indigenous, Métis and Francophone populations. At the request of educational authorities, these schools were also required to accommodate Anglophone children. Francophone priests and nuns established schools at various locations in the province, such as Kelowna, Mission, Williams Lake, Kamloops and Cranbrook.

One of the earliest and most well-known in western Canada, the Sisters of St. Ann school in Victoria was founded in 1858. It has been associated with the residential school system that disrupted First Nations across the province and is an ongoing reminder of the presence and influence of Francophones in the history of education in British Columbia. In 1910, the early Francophone community of Maillardville opened its first Catholic school, École Notre-Dame de Lourdes, serving the community's Francophone children.

A potential issue for French-language schools in B.C. as they relate to First Nations arises from the possession of traditional lands. It may be that some of the schools reside on the lands of former Roman Catholic missions and are associated with the education of First Nations by the Catholic Church. They may also have been acquired by encroachment onto reserve lands or were cut-off lands, the process by which portions of existing reserves were removed and subject to settlement or other uses.

The Francophone school system in B.C. were ultimately influenced by the *Royal Commission on Bilingualism and Biculturalism*, which had been established in 1963, and which studied the unequal ways in which Canada's English-speaking and French-speaking populations were treated by the federal government. A result of that commission was the *Official Languages Act* of 1969, which gave every person in the country the right to an education in the official language of their choice.

However, at that time in B.C., a French-language public education system did not yet exist. It was not until 1977 that the province granted Francophones the right to an education in French. Prior to 1977, Francophones in B.C. paid taxes that supported the system of English public schools, but also had to find ways to finance their own Catholic and Francophone schools. The principles governing French-language education are established in a program called the "Programme cadre de français."

In 1983, B.C.'s first homogeneous Francophone public school was opened, L'école Anne-Hébert in Vancouver.⁶

⁶

www.csf.bc.ca/csf-eng/history-of-the-csf/

Section 23 of the *Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms* guarantees minority language educational rights in all provinces in Canada. To support this, School District #93, the *Conseil scolaire Francophone de la Colombie-Britannique* (CSF) was created in 1995, through a Supreme Court decision, ensuring the rights to minority language education as stated in Section 23 of the *Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms* which guarantees the right to education in the language of the minority. For Section 23 rights holders the CSF, designed for students who have French as their first language, is their program of choice, offered in more than 40 schools throughout the province.

The CSF offers educational programs and services that promote the full development and cultural promotion of Francophone learners in the province. As an active partner in the development of British Columbia's Francophone community, the CSF has established more 40 schools educating almost 6,000 students.

The Supreme Court decision also recommended the expansion of French immersion programs. In B.C., these programs are very popular, resulting in a great demand for, and growth in, immersion programs, despite an overall decrease in public school registrations in general.⁷ In the last 10 years, the French immersion student population in the province has increased by about 30%.⁸

The CSF Aboriginal Education Enhancement Agreement seeks to improve and enhance the success of its Indigenous students and, through this, improve and enhance the success of all students. Some of its policies include promoting academic success, respecting the diversity of Indigenous cultures represented, facilitating anti-racism training to dispel stereotypes about Indigenous people, and honouring and acknowledging the people, traditional territory and history of the local Indigenous communities in each of the regions where its schools are located.⁹

In B.C. there are four French programs available from kindergarten to Grade 12 including Core French, Intensive French, French Immersion, including both early and late immersion, and the Francophone Program.¹⁰

Groups such as the volunteer-based Canadian Parents for French (CPF) operate under a mandate to ensure that children could become

⁷ BC Ministry of Education 2016.

⁸ news.gov.bc.ca/releases/2018EDUC0006-000108

⁹ Conseil scolaire francophone. Aboriginal Education Enhancement Agreement. 2009-2014.

¹⁰ www2.gov.bc.ca/gov/content/education-training/ways-to-learn/french-programs/learn-in-french/kindergarten-to-grade-12



St. Joseph's Hospital,
Victoria. (RBCM).



bilingual through public school education. The organization plays a major role in promoting bilingualism and access to French programs including French immersion.

There is a growing interest in French studies at the post-secondary level as well. In 2004, Simon Fraser University founded the Office of Francophone and Francophile Affairs through the signing of the *Canada-British Columbia Auxiliary Agreement for the Development of Postsecondary Education in French at Simon Fraser University, 2003-2004 to 2007-2008*.

The University of British Columbia has founded the *Centre de la Francophonie de UBC*, while the *Collège Éducacentre* operates as the only Francophone college in British Columbia.

In addition to cultural offerings, the Francophone community is also growing through education. At *L'Alliance Française de Vancouver*, there is a growing interest in French language and culture from B.C.'s Asian communities, especially from Chinese Canadian communities. Per session there are approximately 500 children of Chinese origin who learn French.¹¹

Francophone associations and institutions

Francophone associations of all kinds are considered to have a crucial role to play in keeping the Francophone culture alive. Traditionally, Francophones were connected to each other through economic institutions, churches, community and parishes. As the community grew they saw the need for the creation of new institutional structures to support and share their common interests.

The *Fédération des Francophones de la Colombie-Britannique* was created in 1945, at a time when the province's French-speaking community was establishing itself and needed the support of a wider community to assist with the promotion, representation, and defense of the rights and interests of Francophones in B.C., and the preservation of French linguistic and cultural heritage. Today, the *Fédération* continues to assist the community's interests in British Columbia as an umbrella organization for other Francophone associations in B.C. including the support of Francophone community centres and resources in Vancouver, Prince George, Nelson, Kelowna, Penticton, Victoria, Nanaimo and Kamloops.

After World War II, a principal organization for support, morale-building and retaining the use of the French language was the *Cercle des*

¹¹ "Francophone arts, culture and education expand to new audiences." the/ lasource.com/en/2015/03/09/francophone-arts-culture-and-education-expand-to-new-audiences/

St. Jean Baptiste, Victoria (www.rcd-victoria.org/parishes/st-baptiste)



St. Ann's church, Cowichan reserve, Cowichan Bay.



Canadiens Français. They appeared in many communities, including Vancouver, Victoria, New Westminster, Port Alberni, Prince George, Kelowna, Penticton, Duncan, Nanaimo, Kamloops, Nelson, Trail, Merritt, Terrace and many others.

Other associations include the *Alliance française* formed in the early 20th century, *Le Centre culturel Francophone de Vancouver* in 1975, the *Maison de la Francophonie* in 1989 and the *Société historique Francophone de la Colombie-Britannique* in 2009. The city of Victoria hosts the *Société Francophone de Victoria* and the *Association historique francophone de Victoria*. The *Assemblée francophone des retraité(e)s et aîné(e)s de la Colombie-Britannique* promotes healthy living for retirees and seniors and organizes events such as the 50+ B.C. Francophone Festival.

As the cultural and administrative hub of the Lower Mainland's Francophone community, *Maison de la francophonie* provides services to support the Francophone community.

Francophiles also participate in local Francophone community activities, and through organizations such as Canadian Parents for French, contribute to the promotion of French and the recognition of the Francophone community.

Religious places and hospitals

Francophones in B.C. have always been associated with the institutional power of the Roman Catholic religion. Roman Catholic missionaries were sent across B.C. to convert long-established Indigenous communities to Christianity, while the early Francophone communities were centred on the parish where priests were often key figures. The church had an impact on all aspects of Francophone life, including the support of women's domesticity. One of the first buildings constructed was usually a church, such as the Notre-Dame de Lourdes Church in Maillardville, one of the earliest buildings in the community. Churches have always played a unifying role for Francophone communities, such as Victoria's St. Jean Baptiste Parish in the aftermath of World War II.

Church architecture and design in B.C. has ranged from small wood-constructed buildings in rural areas, such as St. Anne's church in Cowichan Bay to St. Andrew's cathedral in Victoria.

Church reserves were originally established across the province by the Hudson's Bay Company on land purchased by the company from First Nations. Churches such as St. Andrew's Cathedral have an association with the Roman Catholic Church which was influential in sending missionaries to educate and convert First Nations and their children throughout the province to Christianity.

Cemeteries are also important places in Francophone history and culture, such as the Oblates of Mary Immaculate Cemetery in Mission, Quesnel Pioneer Cemetery, Ross Bay Cemetery in Victoria, and the cemetery that is part of St. Ann's Catholic Church that replaced the so-called stone Butter Church on the Cowichan Indian Reserve at Cowichan Bay.

The church and cemetery are associated with Father Peter Rondeault who arrived in early 1859, and with the Sisters of St. Ann Indian School for Girls which operated on a farm in the Cowichan Valley between 1864 and 1876. The church and cemetery served both the Indigenous community and newcomer settlers. The land on which the church and cemetery are located was purchased from the Crown but remains unceded First Nations territory. The original 21 students came from six different Quw'utsun First Nations groups in the area, including Kwa'mutsum, Qw'umiyiqum and Xwulqw'selu.

The Catholic church was also responsible for many of the province's hospitals. The original St. Paul's Hospital was founded in 1894, eight years after the incorporation of the City of Vancouver, by the Sisters of Providence who founded schools, hospitals and asylums all over North America. Others include the Royal Jubilee Hospital and Saint Joseph's Hospital, both in Victoria.

Bilingual tourism

Today, B.C.'s Francophone history and culture is being showcased through developments in Francophone heritage and cultural tourism. In recent years, the *Société de développement économique francophone de la Colombie-Britannique* has been working with the provincial government, the federal government and industry to strengthen bilingualism in British Columbia through its tourism activities.¹²

These include initiatives such as the Interior Francophone Tourist Circuit that encompasses Merritt, Kelowna, Vernon, Lumby, Kamloops, and Quilchena, and includes historic and important sites that are part of Francophone culture.

Some provincial historic sites offer interpretation of Francophone history in B.C., as well as interpretive materials in the French language. Historic Yale has connections to Francophone history as a Hudson's Bay Company post and Francis Barnard's BX Express transportation company, while Kilby, situated near Harrison Mills, is in the heart of early Francophone settlement in the lower Fraser Valley. Many of B.C.'s national historic sites, such as Fort Langley, celebrate and pay homage to Francophone pioneers, French Canadians and Francophone Métis.

¹² Tourisme Colombie-Britannique. tourisme-cb.com/



Theme 6 Embracing Francophone Cultures

Francophile: a person who has a strong affinity towards any or all of the French language, French history, French culture or French people.

Francophones and their descendants have expressed their sense of identity throughout the province through their contributions to the knowledge and cultural wealth of B.C., including artistic and cultural expressions, intellectual contributions to the humanities, and athletic achievement. B.C.'s Francophone community has its own theatre, festivals, dance traditions, musicians, cuisine, artists, artisans and events from all Francophone cultures that are a draw thousands of people, adding to the diversity and richness of life across the province.

Since the arrival of the pioneers, to 1969 and the adoption of the *Official Languages Act*, and until the present day, culture and the French language have been perceived as highly significant for the survival of Francophone identity, the expression of a community that does not want to dissolve or lose its roots.

Early celebration and recognition of B.C.'s Francophone culture began in Victoria in the mid-19th century, evolving into a network of social, recreational, religious and theatrical organizations in Victoria, Port Alberni, Duncan, Maillardville and Vancouver in the years between 1912 and 1945. Originally organized around the parish, Francophone cultural life was, and is, strongly linked to cultural identity and folk traditions, offering a variety of cultural activities and serving to connect Francophone communities wherever they exist.¹

Francophone cultural communities are scattered across British Columbia. Most large cities, such as Vancouver and Victoria, as well as other regions like Nanaimo, Kamloops and Kelowna have Francophone cultural and community centres that support Francophone artists and make Francophone culture accessible to the general public.

Part of the Francophone culture is considered to be warmth, openness, *joie de vivre*, and source of societal enrichment found in its language, festivals, songs, dances, traditional costumes and culinary traditions.

Cultural diversity is another celebrated part of Francophone life in British Columbia. Today, that cultural diversity is found in the 70,000 Francophones and 300,000 Francophiles hailing from every region of Canada, such as Quebec, New Brunswick and elsewhere, and from countries around the world - France and other parts of Europe, Africa,

1

www.thecanadianencyclopedia.ca/en/article/francophones-of-british-columbia



the Caribbean and many others. This mix of different Francophone cultures is important for creating a “cultural melting pot,” a way to share Francophone ideas and passions, and to connect with all multicultural peoples in Canada.

This diversity is found in the *Cap sur le Pacifique*, a Canada 150 celebration that took place on Granville Island. Presented by the Centre Culturel Francophone de Vancouver, the event included a wildly diverse array of acts drawing on the Asia-Pacific Francophone connection from places such as New Caledonia, Haiti, Quebec and Vietnam. Around the province, *la cabane à sucre*, or sugar shack tradition, can be found in communities as widespread as Golden, Nelson, Comox, Salmo, Powell River, Coquitlam, Vancouver and others.

Diversity is also found in the historical association between First Nations and Francophone communities, resulting in the unique culture of the Métis. Métis art was greatly influenced by both European and First Nations cultures, and Métis art has in turn influenced other First Nations groups. Their spirituality is influenced by both their mothers’ First Nations heritage and their fathers’ more European beliefs. Clothing design and beadwork was inspired by the dress of les Coureurs des Bois, as well as the First Nations clothing of the area.

Francophone media and publishing

A sign of the existence of a considerable body of Francophones in the early colony of British Columbia was the establishment of a French language newspaper in Victoria in 1858. The early *Le Courrier de la Nouvelle Calédonie* was established as just the fourth newspaper to begin publication in the province, thanks in part to the printing press brought from France by Francophone Bishop Demers in 1856.

Founded by fervent Francophone defender André Piolat, the newspaper *Le Soleil de Colombie* was the voice of the Francophone community in Vancouver and across the province between 1968 and 1998.

From 1998 until 2011, *L’Express du Pacifique*, “the French newspaper of British Columbia,” offered a bi-monthly publication with news stories and public service articles in French on political, cultural and social issues affecting B.C. It was affiliated with the *Association de la presse Francophone*, which brought together Canadian French-language newspapers outside Quebec.

Today, BC Global News offers the latest Francophone news in its on-line newspaper. CBC ICI Colombie-Britannique-Yukon has a news website in French, and the bilingual newspaper *The/La Source* continue to cover current events in B.C.’s Francophone community.



Radio broadcasting completely in French was a key development that helped Francophones in B.C. emerge from their cultural isolation. Radio-Canada's French regional services began in the province in 1976, but a key event in Francophone media was the creation in 1992 of the first and only Francophone community radio in the province, CILS FM 107.9, operating out of Victoria. The French-language community radio station is intended to "carry the voice" of Francophones and francophiles through innovative programming related to information, education, society, culture, entertainment and community development.

Located at l'école Victor Brodeur since 2017 the station is significant for the next generation of Francophones by introducing young people to the radio professions and sustaining direct contact among the young French speaking community. Its online availability ensures that Francophones and Francophiles across B.C. and abroad have access to its French language content.

Laurette Laplante-Agnew established the Laplante-Agnew Publishing House in Victoria in 1985, the purpose of which was to promote the publication of the works of Francophone writers.



Les Cornouillers, French-Canadian folk dance group. (facebook)

Music and the arts

There are several Francophone cultural associations and groups related to the arts in B.C. Some of these include:

- Vancouver-based Théâtre la Seizième which presents a regular series of innovative theatre productions in French for general audiences as well as for children.
- Visions Ouest Productions that has promoted Francophone cinema in British Columbia since 1993, with its *Rendez-vous du Cinéma Québécois et Francophone de Vancouver* held each year.
- French-Canadian dance is represented by Troupe de danse traditionnelle Les Cornouillers, originally introduced to a small group of French Canadians in B.C. and which has grown considerably



- over the years, with a repertoire of a folk style of dance
- The bilingual organization *Des arts dehors / Arts Outside* which promotes and presents Francophone dance in British Columbia
 - Cultural venues such as *Le Club Canadien-français* in Victoria and the *Place des Arts*, Coquitlam
 - Created in 1996, the *Conseil culturel et artistique Francophone de la Colombie-Britannique* is the official provincial advocate for Francophone arts and culture, bringing together B.C. Francophone and francophile artists and associations with a cultural and artistic mandate

Civic culture, celebrations and food

The Francophone community is known for its variety of festivals celebrating the French language and Francophone cultures, arts and cuisine. With the organization of festivals, Francophone culture “gets out on the street,”² opening itself up to other cultural communities present in B.C.

These include events like the annual *Festival du Bois*, which celebrates Maillardville’s French-Canadian heritage, but also raise awareness in the wider population about Francophone history and the journey of that community from its origins in B.C. to the present day.

Other events include maple syrup festivals in Nanaimo and Kelowna, winter festivals in Prince Rupert and Prince George, *Culture en fête* in Kamloops, the *Rendez-vous Victoria - la fête de la francophonie* in Victoria and the *Festival d’été francophone de Vancouver*, the Vancouver Francophone Summer Festival, all of which celebrate the Francophone culture that exists across the province.

While the Lower Mainland holds the concentration of Francophone cultural activities, Francophone arts and events exist across the province, through the great number of Francophone social and cultural organizations.³ In Kelowna and the Okanagan region, for example, there are many opportunities, particularly through the *Centre culturel Francophone de l’Okanagan*, for bilingual events where Francophone culture can be shared.

La fête de la francophonie in Victoria, through La Société francophone de Victoria, is held on Saint-Jean-Baptiste Day, Quebec National Day, celebrated by Francophones across Canada every June. *Les Rendez-vous de la Francophonie* is part of the events surrounding the *Journée Internationale de la Francophonie*, which is held annually on March 20 to celebrate the French language and Francophone cultures. Events are held around the world on this occasion.

² Comment from community workshop.

³ A list of some of the many Francophone societies and organizations across B.C. can be found on page 60.

Francophone Historic Places
Historical Context Thematic Framework

Maurice's Restaurant in West Vancouver.



Gai Paree supper club Burnby c. 1950s. (SHF CB 0200-3)



Church of St. Ann's at O'Keefe Ranch



It is annually held on March 20 to celebrate French language and Francophone cultures. Many events are organized internationally on this occasion.

Events such as Bastille Day in Vancouver and Victoria is associated with France's National Day, July 14, and is an occasion to celebrate the French culture, language and food.

Food and cooking are important parts of Francophone culture in B.C. Poutine and maple syrup, bread, tourtière, or a slice of maple sugar pie are all identified as part of French-Canadian cuisine. In addition to these vernacular foods, restaurants supplying fine French cuisine resonate with Francophones. Early French restaurants included the Gai Paree in Burnaby and Maurice's in West Vancouver. Today, places such as Restaurant le Crocodile and the Café Salade des Fruits at Maison de la Francophonie provide typical French dining experiences.



St. Ann's Academy, Victoria. (tourisme-cb.com)

Architecture and urban design

There are prominent buildings in B.C. that draw upon French or French Canadian design styles. In Victoria, the distinctive architecture of St. Ann's Academy reflects the strong influence of French-Canadian religious orders during the late 19th and early 20th century, a formative period in the history of B.C. The Empress Hotel is designed in the Château style, reflective of the Château Frontenac in Quebec City.

Further afield, churches and missions constructed across the province reflect the styles and features of early parish churches and chapels in Quebec.⁴ These include the Church of St. Ann's at the O'Keefe Ranch, and a number of log buildings associated with French-Canadian priests and later the Oblate Missions, such as those at the Mission of

⁴ Hal Kalman. A History of Canadian Architecture. 1994.

Immaculate Conception (Father Pandosy Mission) near Kelowna, St. Joseph's Mission near Williams Lake and St. Eugene's Mission near Cranbrook.

Natural features, parks and recreational sites across the province often carry Francophone names. Alouette Lake, Bonaparte River, Lake La Hache and Lac Le Jeune provincial parks, Parc Letourneur and Parc Maccaud in White Rock, Parc Le Bourdais in Quesnel and Mount La Pérouse in Haida Gwaii are some examples of the numerous Francophone place names associated with natural and cultural outdoor features that occur across B.C.

While honouring the Francophone presence in B.C., place names also represent the displacement of traditional First Nations names. Indigenous place names carry knowledge that has been passed from generation to generation, and they are considered the story maps that connect Indigenous people to place. This people and place connection remains strong despite assimilation and its impact on culture and community.

Sport

Francophone sporting events in B.C. often involve youth. A huge event for young people, *Les Jeux de la Francophonie canadienne* are held every four years, bringing together young Francophones from all over Canada. Not just about sports, the games are a gathering Canada's French speaking youth that encourages hundreds of young people to exercise their talents in one of three sectors, art, leadership and sport. The 2020 Canadian Francophonie Games will be held in Victoria, B.C. La Grande Traversée bicycle race is a national road-cycling relay for high school students.

Major sports teams in B.C. have many well-known francophone players. Early Vancouver Canucks of Francophone heritage include Jocelyn Guèvremont, Richard Brodeur, Paulin Bordeleau, André Boudrias and Rosaire Paiement, and more recently, players such as Alexandre Burrows, Kris Letang, Steve Bernier and Roberto Luongo.

In closing

For several hundred years, Francophones, in all their diverse communities, have had enormous influence in the development of British Columbia. Early and more recent immigrants established lives and homes across British Columbia, in small towns and urban areas, contributing to the economic growth of the province. Many have brought new and rich cultural understandings to B.C. While this history may embody the concept of settler colonialism and must be considered through that lens, the nominated historic places represent a diversity of stories, multiple histories, and varying points of view of Francophones and their contribution to making the province what it is today.

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Some Francophone Societies and Organizations

Alliance française de Vancouver

Alliance française de Victoria

Amicale des Anciens Combattants Français de Colombie Britannique
Assemblée Francophone des retraité(e)s et aîné(e)s de la Colombie-Britannique (AFRACB)

Association Provinciale des Professeurs d'Immersion et du Programme Francophone (APPIPC)

Association Culturelle Canado-Haïtienne de la Colombie-Britannique

Association des Francophones et francophiles du Nord-Ouest (AFFNO)

Association des juristes d'expression française de la Colombie-Britannique

Association Francophone de Campbell River (AFCR)

Association Francophone de Kamloops (AFK)

Association Francophone de Kootenays Ouest (AFKO)

Association Francophones de Nanaimo (AFN)

Association Francophone de Surrey (AFS)

Association Francophone et francophile de Ucluelet et Tofino (AFFUT)

Association historique Francophone de Victoria (AHFV)

Canadian Parents for French (CPF) Yukon and British Columbia chapter

Centre culturel Francophone de l'Okanagan (CCFO)

Centre culturel Francophone de Vancouver (Le centre)

Centre d'intégration pour immigrants (CII)

Cercle des Canadiens Français de Prince George (CCFPG)

Chambre de commerce Francophone de Vancouver (CCF Vancouver)

Club Bon Accueil de Powell River

Collège Éducacentre

Conseil culturel et artistique Francophone de la Colombie-Britannique (CCAFCB)

Conseil jeunesse Francophone de la Colombie-Britannique (CJFCB)

Conseil scolaire Francophone de la Colombie-Britannique (CSF)
Fédération des francophones de la Colombie-Britannique (FFCB)
Fédération des parents Francophones de Colombie-Britannique (FPFCB)
Fraser Valley Metis Association
Inform'Elles
La Boussole
Réseau-Femmes Colombie-Britannique
RésoSanté Colombie-Britannique
Scouts Francophones de la Colombie-Britannique
Office of Francophone and Francophile Affairs (OFFA), Simon Fraser University (SFU)
Société de développement économique de la Colombie-Britannique
Société Francophone de Maillardville (SFM)
Société Francophone de Victoria (SFV)
Société historique Francophone de la C.-B. (SHFCB)
Société radio communautaire Victoria, CILS FM 107,9
Syndicat des enseignantes et enseignants du programme Francophone de la Colombie-Britannique (SEPF)
Théâtre la Seizième
Troupe de danse traditionnelle Les Cornouillers
Victoria African & Caribbean Cultural Society (VACCS)
Visions Ouest Productions (VOP)