

Timeline: Cheslatta Carrier Nation and "Southside" Community

(Updated to March 3 2021 by Mike Robertson)

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- 5000BC Archaeological evidence confirms 7000 years of human occupation in the Cheslatta Territory
- 1763 British Royal Proclamation reserved undefined North American land for Aboriginal people.
- 1770 est "Grandmother Cheslatta" born
- 1774 Juan Perez Hernandez claimed the Northwestern coast of North America for Spain.
- 1791 Spanish explorer Esteban Jose Martinez traded copper sheets to Nootka Sound Chief Maquinna for sawn timber.
- 1793 Alexander Mackenzie became the first white man to travel through Carrier and Sekani territories while looking for fur-trading areas for the North West Company.
- 1805-1807 - Simon Fraser established four trading posts in Carrier and Sekani territories: Fort McLeod, Fort George, Fort St. James and Fort Fraser. Until the Hudson Bay Company and North West Company joined together in 1821, Fort St. James was the centre of government and commerce in British Columbia (then called New Caledonia). It claims to be the oldest established white settlement on the B.C. Mainland
- 1807 February 10th Simon Fraser wrote a letter to express what he witnessed in Stella (Stellaquo). *"Almost all Natlians are gone over to Steela.. to grand feast to burn and exhume a couple of chiefs that died of late. When they return from there they will go to the mountains to kill Caribou."*
- 1828 Chief Kwah captured James Douglas at Ft. St. James, whom he held until his release was negotiated. The incident lead to conflict among different Carrier Nations. Douglas went on to become the first governor of the united colony of British Columbia.
- Europeans named this area New Hanover, then New Caledonia & was part of Oregon Territory until 1846
- 1838 The first Smallpox epidemic decimates Cheslatta villages at Eutsuk and Tetachuck
- 1840 "Grandmother Cheslatta" buried at Belgachek #5
- 1842 Father Demers, the first Oblate (O.M.I.) missionary arrived in New Caledonia.
- 1846 P.O.C. (official point of contact with Europeans)
- 1849 Vancouver Island became a British Colony
- 1858 The British Columbia mainland became a British colony. Pennefather Commission recommended complete assimilation of Indians.
- 1860 Gold discovered in the Cariboo
Hazelton and Bella Coola trading centers established (date unknown)
Provincial wide Smallpox epidemic including Cheslatta and Uncha devastates the population.
- 1864 Catholic Church designated at Belgachek #5 by Father Lejac. Church cemeteries established.
The Collins Overland Telegraph company began construction of a telegraph line that would extend north from Washington State to the Bering Strait (Alaska).
- 1866 The greater colony of British Columbia was established by joining the mainland and Vancouver Island. The population of the colony was then comprised of 63 000 Indians and 400 whites.
- 1866 Hazelton town established when the Collins Overland Telegraph went through. Hazelton was the original gateway and staging area for the Omineca Gold Rush of 1869-73

- 1867est Chief Louie born
- 1871 BC enters Canadian Confederation
BC Population: 23,000 Aboriginal 10,586 non-aboriginal
- 1876 Father Lejac first census counts 54 Cheslatta members. First census.
George Dawson conducted geological survey for railroad
Indian Act created
- 1884 Last spike Transcontinental Railroad in BC
The Potlatch was outlawed. Indian agent had to be present at any Indian gathering.
- 1885 Father Adrian Morice arrives in Ft. St. James
- 1887 Father Morice explores the Circle Lakes and Cheslatta
- 1889 Thomas Peters born. Father of Alexis, Johnny, Cecilia, Justine (Williams), Christine, Abel, Frank, Mary (Quaw), Stephen, Dixson, Anne, Simon. Husband of Rose Louie.
- 1896 Gold discovered in the Yukon
- 1897 Rose (Peters) Louie born at St. Mary's Lake (Cheslatta River). Married Thomas Peters
- 1905 Michell Charlie born at Tetachuk
First permanent non-native settlers move to Ootsa Lake
Father Nicholas Coccola came to Fort St. James.
- 1909 The first sternwheeler steamboat landed at South Fort George and the first sawmill was built.
- 1910 Frank C. Swannell conducts first land surveys at Cheslatta Lake
Bella Coola to Ootsa Lake railroad proposed
- 1911 Ferry service begins operation on Francois Lake
- 1912 First Moose harvested at Cheslatta
- 1914 Grand Trunk Pacific Railroad complete. Last spike at Fort Fraser
- 1914-18 Influenza epidemic at Cheslatta Lake
- 1912-1915(?) Hospital established at Hospital Point near Southbank
Fort Fraser Trading Post closes
- 1915 "St. Mathews" Catholic Church built at Belgachek. (Some priests called it Sacred Heart)
Allied Tribes of B.C. formed to pursue a legal case on Aboriginal rights
- 1916 Cheslatta I.R.'s established by Royal Commission
- 1920's Salmon Canneries established at Bella Coola
- 1922 Lejac Residential School opens
"Francois Lake Ferry" launched
- 1930(?) Cheslatta owned trading post established Belgachek
- 1936(?) McKenna/McBride commission takes back Cheslatta I.R.'s
- 1936 Measles epidemic at Cheslatta
- 1938 Tweedsmuir Park created
- 1940 Mennonite colony established at "Cheslatta" approx. 15 miles north of Cheslatta Lake
- 1944 Private Abel Peters lands on Juno Beach – June 6
- 1949 "Jacob Henkel" ferry launched
- 1951 Kenney Dam construction starts
Chief Louie dies April 19. Approx. 84 years old.
- 1952 Cheslatta Dam completed, floods Cheslatta Lake April 8
Cheslatta people forcefully evicted from their homelands April 21
Cheslatta Villages burnt down by Alcan contractors July
Kenney Dam completed. Upper Nechako River stops running. Oct 8
- 1953 Many Cheslatta buy new lands using their own money.
- 1955 Cheslatta (I.R. 9) cemetery washes away from Alcan's Spillway discharges

- 1961 Status Indian given the right to vote
- 1964 Cheslatta Indian Reserve #1 Parcels 1-11 created by DIA. 12 years after eviction
- 1960's Single phase power installed on the Southside
- 1973 General phone service installed on the Southside
- 1976 "*Omineca Princess*" launched
- 1979 Lejac Residential School closes
East Ootsa logging camp built. Commercial logging commences in the South Ootsa
Alcan starts selling surplus power to BC Hydro
- 1980 Southside highways paved (some)
Judge Thomas Berger imposes "injunction" flows at the Skins Spillway
- 1981 Chief Albert George elected
- 1983 Running water and sewer service installed in Cheslatta houses
- 1983 Cheslatta Band office built on Uncha Lake Road
- 1984 Cheslatta sues Canada over "breach of fiduciary obligation" 1952 eviction
- 1991 Cheslatta Re-development Project begins
- 1992 "*After the Flood*" produced by CBC Journal. Broadcasted coast to coast.
Cheslatta cemeteries flood
- 1993 Cheslatta Specific claim settlement with Canada
Bishop Hubert O'Grady consecrates Cheslatta Lake as an official cemetery. Elijah Harper and most Carrier Chiefs attend. 150 attend at Belgatchek #5. July 6.
- 1994 CCN enters BC Treaty process
- 1995 "*No Surrender*" released. Many members attend premier at Vogue Theatre in Vancouver
Cheslatta vs BC re; Huckleberry Mines court case
Cheslatta Protection Corridor established
Kemano II Project cancelled by BC government ending a 16 year battle
- 1996 Cheslatta awarded Nechako Reservoir underwater logging licenses
CCN purchases New Band office at Southbank. (Old Southbank Bank school)
- 1997 Southbank School Renovation. Move CCN offices
Conduct heli-logging at Cheslatta Lake. Mountain Pine Beetle.
CCN members agree to suspend Treaty discussions
Corrina Leween hired as CCN Band Manager
Alcan and BC settle out of court. The sign 1997 BC/Alcan Settlement Agreement
- 1998 CCN sues Alcan, Canada and BC over Infringement of Aboriginal Right To Fish
- 1999 CCN and Carrier Lumber form partnership
CCN and Ulkatcho declare joint "State of Emergency" re: Mountain Pine Beetle
- 2000 Cheslatta Signs Memorandum of Understanding with Alcan
CCN/Carrier Lumber/Ootsa Resources form Cheslatta Forest Products Ltd.
- 2001 Cheslatta Forest Products opens at Ootsa Lake
CCN explores partnership on Kenney Dam Release Facility (Nechako Power Corp)
- 2002 Cheslatta Community Forest awarded
Keefe's Landing Road upgraded and paved from junction to Cheslatta Forest Products.
- 2003 Southside Health and Wellness Center opens
- 2004 Three Nations Water project opens
"*Francois Forrester*" commences service. Francois Lake Ferry
CCN/Alcan/Skin Tyee/Neetahibuhn sign Land Stewardship Agreement
Avian Flu outbreak
- 2005 BC agrees to construct Kenney Dam Release Facility (April), then pulls back 3 weeks later.

- 2006 Massive Snow Storm. Nearly 4 feet snow falls in 36 hours. Power out 9 days.
- 2007 Largest Cheslatta flood on record 2007. Cemeteries under 8 feet of water
Rio Tinto buys Aluminum Company of Canada. Becomes Rio Tinto Alcan
- 2008
- 2009 Ootsanee Fire
- 2010 Cheslatta Carrier Nation Dictionary released
Binta Fire 100,000 acres burn
“Finding Our Way” documentary released
- 2011 Cemeteries Flood – October
Sign Land Transfer Agreement at Alcan Powerhouse in Kemano
- 2012 Alcan returns 11,800 of land back to Cheslatta Nation
“Return Of Spirits” ceremony at Cheslatta Lake
Abel Peters dies age 90
Cheslatta and Alcan commence negotiations on “New Day” agreement
- 2013 Grandmother Cheslatta exhumed
Chelaslie Fire 340,000 acres burn
- 2014 Cheslatta invites BC to commence negotiations on a Reconciliation Agreement
CCN gets Canada Fund grant and purchases Danskin Store property
- 2015 Second largest Cheslatta flood on record. Cemeteries flood.
CCN purchases Danskin Garage
- 2017 Premier Christy Clark meets Cheslatta at Skatchola #7
- 2019 CCN signs CCN/BC Reconciliation Agreement. March 28 at Victoria
CCN takes over contract to operate the Skins Lake Spillway
- 2020 CCN signs “New Day” Agreement with Rio Tinto Alcan. Feb 27 at Grassy Plains
Worldwide COVID-19 Pandemic declared by World Health Organization March 11

Sources: Cheslatta Archives, Stellat’en Nation, “Burns Lake and District” by Pat Turkki, 1973.