

ENTWINED HISTORIES:

The Creation of the Maisie Hurley Collection of Native Art

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IN THE EARLY 1980s, the North Vancouver Museum and Archives (NVMA) was given a significant collection of First Nations art, previously owned by Maisie Hurley – a well-known Vancouver-area political activist and founder of the *Native Voice* newspaper. Maisie Hurley, who was non-Native, is also distinguished as being the first woman to be admitted to the Native Brotherhood of British Columbia – a First Nations political organization focused on Aboriginal rights and title, particularly as they pertain to fishing (Fuller and Inglis 2000).

As her parents were well-known local collectors of “Indian relics,” Maisie could be characterized as a second-generation collector. However, the creation of her collection and her intentions for its eventual disposition differed considerably from those of her parents, reflecting a shifting dynamic in Native–newcomer interactions in British Columbia between the years 1900 and 1960. Maisie’s collection reflects her role as gift recipient rather than the predilections of an individual collector. Some items were presented during her travels or at public events, while others arrived in the post at her offices in the Standard Building in downtown Vancouver.

Recognizing the significance of the diverse cultural objects gifted to her by First Nations people from across the continent, Maisie intended to make her collection accessible through a museum that she hoped would eventually be established on the Capilano Reserve in North Vancouver. To facilitate this dream, she became a founding member of an informal group (consisting largely of non-Native patrons of First Nations art) that referred to itself interchangeably as the “Capilano Indian Museum Foundation” and the “Citizens’ Committee – Museum

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of North Vancouver” (1962, NVMA accession file documentation [hereafter NVMA] 986.19).

The group was comprised of friends and associates who shared Maisie’s aspirations for a museum within which to showcase her collection of Native art. They first met in her Denman Street apartment on 5 February 1962, shortly after the death of Maisie’s husband, Vancouver criminal lawyer Tom Hurley, who died on Christmas day 1961 (Arnett 1962, 1; *Native Voice* 1964a, 8). Her actions suggest she was taking steps towards putting her own affairs in order. In a handwritten memo from the first meeting, Maisie notes an arrangement to sell her collection to other members of the group as the first action towards establishing the proposed Native museum (1962, NVMA 986.19.)

Thus, her collection became known as the Hurley Rogers Collection after it was purchased in 1962 by her friend, Irene Rogers of North Vancouver (with some assistance from William Angus, a former City of North Vancouver mayor). In 2009, the North Vancouver Museum and Archives Commission officially renamed it the Maisie Hurley Collection since it was created in reference to Maisie Hurley and her advocacy work on behalf of Native peoples.

For many years Irene Rogers (whose family owned Rogers Sugar) stored the artefacts in a warehouse, while waiting for the proposed “Indian Museum” to materialize on the Capilano Reserve (NVMA 986.19). The idea for the Capilano Indian Museum appears to have originated among Maisie Hurley and her friends and been given shape in discussions with members of the Squamish Nation; however, it was stillborn for want of funding and the fact that local First Nations were focused on furthering their interests under the provisions of the 1965 Indian Claims Commission (Tennant 1982, 39).

In 1972, the City of North Vancouver established the North Shore Museum and Archives. The following year, Irene Rogers informed representatives of the city, and Percy Paull – who was then manager of the Squamish Indian Band and a member of the North Shore Museum’s governing committee – of her intention to donate the collection to the NVMA once it had the proper facilities to house it. She also transferred documentation about the collection to city representatives. This decision was highly instrumental in assisting the NVMA to obtain improved museum facilities. Anne MacDonald, a former president of the North Vancouver Arts Council, wrote: “When seeking federal government capital funds, we found that the national museums agreed to assist us because we met their criteria of ‘having a collection of National significance which needed a home’” (1979, NVMA 986.19).

During this period, letters were written by John Kyte, the provincial museums advisor, and Michael Ames, director of the UBC Museum of Anthropology, detailing the historical significance of objects in the collection and offering advice and assistance when the time came to unpack them (1979, NVMA 986.19). It took several more years, however, before the collection was deemed a “cultural property” by the Government of Canada and ownership transferred to the NVMA. This occurred after the death of Irene Rogers, when the collection was gifted to the NVMA by her estate and that of former North Vancouver mayor William Angus (who, during probate, was deemed to own one-twentieth of the collection).

The Maisie Hurley Collection was not exhibited by the NVMA for more than two decades, although images of all its contents were accessible through two online databases – the website of the NVMA and the “Keys to History” website produced by the McCord Museum. The collection is currently housed at the NVMA’s Community History Centre, a secure, environmentally controlled facility located in Lynn Valley.

In 2010, a small visible storage exhibit was installed adjacent to the museum’s first collaborative exhibit with the Squamish Nation – *Skwxwú7mesh Úxwumixw*/The Squamish Community: Our People and Places – in the NVMA’s museum in the Presentation House Arts Centre. This exhibit features archival images from the NVMA collection selected by Squamish elders, while the visible storage display focuses on Maisie Hurley and her collection, including several Squamish pieces. Plans are now under way to bring more of the collections to the public through a temporary exhibition that will be developed in partnership with the Squamish Nation – one of the communities best represented by gifts within the collection and through a series of pastel portraits drawn by Maisie Hurley herself. The Entwined Histories exhibit will open in January 2011 at Presentation House in North Vancouver.

This article provides a brief biographical sketch of Maisie Hurley and discusses the formation of her significant collection of First Nations art. Many of the objects in the collection reflect both the high esteem afforded her by the Native community and the high status of the gift givers themselves. Family members note that Hurley recognized that the gifts she received were in recognition of her actions as an advocate and that they carried with them the responsibility to ensure their preservation. She envisioned the “collection” playing an important role in cultural education and in the revitalization of Native artistic traditions (Moirra Movanna [Maisie’s granddaughter], personal communication, 2009).

Maisie Hurley had many Native friends throughout her life, some of whom she met during her childhood, others whom she came to know later in life through her travels and work advocating for the Native Brotherhood of British Columbia and the *Native Voice* newspaper. She numbered many high-status Native people among her closest friends. These included: *Xats'alanexw* (Chief August Jack Khatsahlano), his wife *Swenámya* (Mary Anne Khatsahlano), his half-brother *Syxwált'n* (Dominic Charlie), *Khot-La-Cha* (Chief Simon Baker), and Chief Mathias Joe (Bell 2010), all of the local Squamish community. Her grandchildren recall accompanying her on visits to the Capilano Reserve in West Vancouver, one noting:

I went with Nana to Potlatches over on the North Shore under the Lions Gate Bridge and ate delicious smoked salmon. I always remember how the men would play with the children, me included. Some of these men stand out in my memory ... I will remember always Dominic Charlie; he was always very happy and very friendly to me. (Movanna 2008)

Whereas Maisie's parents, the Campbell-Johnstons, collected under a salvage paradigm guided by a romanticized belief in the trope of the vanishing Indian, the objects in Maisie's collection often represented reciprocal relationships. They were not just gifts of friendship but gifts that recognized specific acts of advocacy or future action. They included several Squamish ceremonial objects.

Today, we might wonder why her friends would "gift" what could be regarded as family or corporate property to a non-Native woman. Annette Weiner (1992, 64) suggests that "an individual's role in social life is fragmentary unless attached to something of permanence." She argues that these types of possessions are inalienable and, thus, ultimately return to their originators. The transfer of these objects might then be understood as political action – a way of formally affirming the relationship between Maisie and her First Nations friends as opposed to the commodification of the objects in question. Maisie advocated for Native rights through editorials in her newspaper, through legal work with her husband, and through directly discussing Native issues with political leaders such as Prime Minister Diefenbaker (Moirá Movanna, personal communication, 2009). She was a powerful ally at a time when Aboriginal peoples had fewer liberties than they do today. By taking temporary ownership of such items, she was also protecting them from potential seizure by Indian agents and other colonizing authorities (Cole 1985, 250-52).

Art historian Charlotte Townsend-Gault has demonstrated that Northwest Coast material culture is embedded within the social relations of Native and non-Native British Columbians – that there is a very strong social justice aspect to these relations, particularly those involving contemporary political negotiations. She likewise argues that objects are not separate from social relations but, rather, that they function as symbols of cultural autonomy and resistance (Townsend-Gault 1997). In this instance, the social function (or perhaps obligations) embodied in these “gifts” was indeed recognized by the recipient, who, her descendents insist, wanted to return them through the vehicle of a First Nations museum.

FAMILY HISTORY: THE CAMPBELL-JOHNSTONS

She was proud of her aristocratic background, but in many ways her life was a rebellion against convention. (*Native Voice* 1964a, 1)

Maisie Amy Campbell-Johnston was born on 27 November 1887 to Ronald C. Campbell-Johnston and his wife “Merry” Amy Ellen Chadwick Campbell-Johnston in Swansea, Wales. She was a direct descendent of Lord William Campbell, the son of the fourth Duke of Argyll. During her lifetime the title “Duke of Argyll” was held by her first cousin who regarded her fondly as his “savage little cousin in the backwoods of America” (Nagle 1964, 14; Kiernan 1964, 7).

Her family held strong political views, among them an intense opposition to the British occupation of Scotland. In the preface to his book, *Story of the Totem*, her father wrote: “Any large-hearted Gaul ... has himself seen the beloved country of his own revered forebears, and his own historic clan, perhaps, put up to public auction, and thus today possessed by the ‘*dimmeasach sassunnach*’ (hateful strangers) being forced to emigrate to distant strange places” (Campbell-Johnston 1924, 7).

True to her roots, Maisie Hurley was also an advocate for home rule in Scotland – even publishing an appeal for support in the *Native Voice* in 1954: “I have greetings from some of the Home Rulers of Scotland to the Home Rulers of the Indian Tribes asking them for our support in the just cause of these Old Country folk” (Hurley 1954a, 2). This was an interesting – even ironic – plea since her family tree was replete with persons who represented the British Crown in many colonies during the height of British expansion and who had the power to affect the daily lives of the indigenous peoples in those areas (see Rutnam 1928).

In a letter to Irene Rogers, dated 22 June 1962, Maisie Hurley provided the following family history:

This is the history of Sir Alexander Johnston, my great-grandfather. He was Chief Justice of Ceylon, afterwards President of the Council of Ceylon and owner of the Heart of Montrose, being the grandson of the fifth Lord Napier. He married Lady Louisa Campbell, daughter of Lord William Campbell, son of the fourth Duke of Argyll. Lord William, my great-great grandfather, being the last Royalist Governor of South Carolina [in 1775], and in [1766] first Governor of Nova Scotia. Through the marriage of the Campbells and the Johnstons, my name Campbell-Johnston was derived.

Around 1811, Sir Alexander Johnston returned to England and on the command of the King, founded the Colonial Privy Council and was given full power to re-organize affairs in Ceylon. Among the reforms he gave the natives in India, 300 million, the right to sit on juries.

My grandfather, Sir Alexander's son, Alexander Robert Campbell-Johnston was Her Majesty, Queen Victoria's Ambassador to China (1840) was made plenipotentiary in absence of [the] Governor; declared war for Great Britain (opium war); founded and built Hong Kong. During his life he had inherited land from all over the Empire. Around 1870 acquired a large estate in California. Died in 1885 at Los Angeles. Grandmother, my father and the rest of the family built the Church of the Angels (Church of England), in Pasadena, California, as a memorial. (Hurley 1962c)

The Campbell-Johnstons moved from Madras (Chennai) to Canada when Maisie was three years old. Her father established an assay and consultation office in Vancouver and worked as a geologist and mining engineer (Scholefield and Howay 1914; *Native Voice* 1948, 6; Armytage-Moore 1949, 1). Ronald Campbell Campbell-Johnston and Amy Ellen Chadwick Campbell-Johnston soon came to be considered "noted persons" in British Columbia, and their travels (and interests) were frequently mentioned in local newspapers.

Much has been written about the influence that Maisie's famous friends and acquaintances had upon her life, but, according to granddaughter Moira Movanna: "She was very much her parent's daughter. Knowledge of, and respect for, Native people and their culture was gained mainly through her mother, but also her father. The advocacy practised by both parents was carried on in her own life" (personal com-

munication, 2009). Her love of the outdoors was also learned from her mother Amy, who accompanied her husband on numerous expeditions into wilderness areas in Canada and abroad (Cox 1953, 3).

The Campbell-Johnstons had diverse interests. Amy was an amateur ethnologist who spent considerable time learning about the Native cultures she encountered and collecting oral traditions while her husband investigated ore deposits across northern British Columbia. She was said to be “the first white woman who ever set foot upon certain parts of the Ground Hog and Kootenay districts.” And she was regarded as “well posted on the history of the Indians and the legends of these tribes” (Scholefield and Howay 1914). She and her husband both wrote about their encounters with Native peoples. His mining report on the Ground Hog contained several photographs of the Gitksan guides and packers who accompanied Campbell-Johnston (Sterritt et al. 1998, 233). In 1924, Ronald published several legends under the title *Story of the Totem*.

While staying alone in a Native village on the Skeena River in 1911, Amy received the name *Marchil-lat-quor* from a chief of the village (Winsby 1937). The name, translated as “Mystic Dancer,” reflects Amy Campbell-Johnston’s interest in spiritualism and mysticism. Perhaps indicative of this, her writings on Native culture are highly romanticized and bring to mind such works as the nostalgic photography of Edward S. Curtis (see Lyman 1982) and publications like Marius Barbeau’s *The Downfall of Temlaham* (1928). This romantic streak is also evident in Amy’s other works, particularly her poetry and art. One of her portraits, “An Indian Lady Left to Die in the Groundhog Country of the Skeena River,” was published in a special memorial issue of the *Native Voice* (1964c, 2) accompanied by the following verse:

‘Tis the end of the trail.
 The Traveller is old.
 Her body is frail, and
 The evening grows cold.
 The well trodden track
 She leaves with a sigh.
 To sit down and rest
 On a boulder near by.
 Thus ends this life,
 When aged and frail,
 And too old for work,
 ‘Tis the end of the trail.

During their northern travels, the couple, who were members of the Art, Historical and Scientific Association of Vancouver, collected First Nations materials from the Skeena River area. They were also pivotal in transporting several totem poles south for the newly established Stanley Park (Moira Movanna, personal communication, 2009). Their intentions were, during a period of great upheaval, to preserve these cultural items for Native peoples throughout the province. In the Weekly Report for a Vancouver newspaper Ronald Campbell-Johnston wrote: “Indian relics on this coast, when not carefully preserved, are fast disappearing, and sent abroad; also being altogether and ruthlessly destroyed through the agency of the missionaries, in order to force these tribes to forget their old ceremonies” (n.d., Museum of Vancouver accession file documentation [hereafter MOV] 229.29). There was, in some sense, an urgency to their collecting since representatives of larger American museums, such as the American Museum of Natural History, the Field Museum, and the Smithsonian Institution, were engaged in a race to acquire comprehensive collections during this period and, indeed, had been doing so for several decades (Hinsley 1981; Cole 1985; Stocking Jr. 1985; Jonaitis 1988, 1999; Clifford 1991).

The Campbell-Johnstons were more deeply concerned with preserving the material aspects of Native cultures than they were with advocating for the rights of the people who produced the “relics” they collected, although they did on occasion write letters on behalf of their Gitksan friends (Sterritt et al. 1998, 233–34). Instead, they found other outlets for their social activism. A brief biography of Ronald Campbell-Johnston describes him as liberal in his politics, while noting that he “takes a deep interest in enactments yet is not a worker of party ranks” (Scholefield and Howay 1914). Amy was involved in the suffrage movement along with Mary Ellen Smith – the province’s first woman MLA (*Vancouver Province* 1948). In 1912, she published an article in the Woman’s Forum section of the *Vancouver Province* entitled “A Few Practical Facts: Reasons for the Woman Suffrage Agitation – Where Woman’s Influence Is Needed.”

Given their celebrity, it could be argued that their collections functioned as “souvenirs,” providing tangible symbols of the authenticity of their role as explorers of, and visitors to, remote places (Stewart 1993). By donating the objects they collected to the Vancouver Art, Historical and Scientific Association the Campbell-Johnstons gained wider acclaim for their personal accomplishments. Although most of these objects were not made for sale, they were transformed through their purchase from

private household objects into commodities of exchange and then into public symbols of emerging Canadian nationalism.

PERSONAL HISTORY

In 1905, Maisie's family travelled to the Nicola Valley where her father was investigating coal deposits. They later settled in the community of Aspen Grove, near the town of Merritt (*Native Voice* 1964a, 1). During this period Maisie became friends with Lena Voght, a local Nlaka'pamux girl of mixed heritage who was descended from one of the town's founding families (Nagle 1964; Sterling 1997; Joe 1999; Dertien 2008). The two shared a love of the outdoors and horses. As a teen, Maisie spent much of her time with Native children, which is not surprising as there were no other white settlers at Aspen Grove (*Native Voice* 1964a, 1; MacDonald 1996b, 10).

When she was nineteen, Maisie tried unsuccessfully to elope and was sent to a private girls school in England to complete her education (Grauer 2009; *Native Voice* 1964a, 8). On returning to Vancouver, she married real estate agent John Reginald Rowallane Armytage-Moore in 1909, only to leave him for lumberjack and part-time boxer Martin Joseph Murphy five years later. Through the next four years, Maisie and Martin lived in a number of lumber camps in Oregon and Washington, where Maisie managed a stable of boxers and promoted matches in the camps (Nagle 1964, 16). Martin was involved with the International Workers of the World, and Maisie, too, became involved with the cause of improving working conditions for wage labourers (Monroe 2005; Scholefield and Howay 1914). However, after participating in a dangerous union riot on Armistice Day in 1918, which ended with several men being arrested and later removed from jail and lynched, the couple returned to Canada with their five children. They settled in East Vancouver, and Maisie's relationship with Murphy ended soon after (Moirá Movanna, personal communication, 2009).

Once re-established in Vancouver, Maisie's "desire to address the problems of the underprivileged, poor, and marginalised members of society coincided with her ongoing interest in native peoples and fostered a realisation that 'their cause' should become 'her cause,' whether it was land claims, hunting and fishing rights, health, or education" (Fuller and Inglis 2000, 1). It has been observed that she was "not so much an activist as a patron. She did what she did out of a sense of noblesse oblige, speaking for the cause because of a personal sense of justice" (Lamb 1981).



Figure 1: Tom and Maisie Hurley were arrested in 1949 for passing food through the windows to a bootlegger padlocked in his home by police. Tom later cut the padlock, leading to the couple's arrest by Vancouver police. *Vancouver Sun* photo.

While working to re-establish the Vancouver Athletic Club during the 1920s, Maisie met a well-known and widely respected criminal lawyer, Tom Hurley. In the 1930s, she became his secretary. As a criminal lawyer, Hurley advocated equal justice for First Nations and other disenfranchised people. He was an early pioneer of legal aid, defending many of his clients without charge (Moira Movanna, personal communication, 2009). Maisie, taking an active interest in Tom's work (see Figure 1), also "became active in law, often appearing in court herself in what her husband affectionately called 'bootleg' law. Between them, they handled scores of cases, more often than not at their own expense. It wasn't unusual for Maisie to have a serious charge reduced or fine imposed (and pay the fine herself)" (MacDonald 1996b,10).

She and Tom lived together and shared his legal offices until 1951 (Thomas Berger, former Supreme Court judge, personal communication, 2009), when, following the death of Armytage-Moore, they married in a Roman Catholic ceremony. A recently restored family photograph



Figure 2: The wedding of Tom and Maisie Hurley, witnessed by their grandchildren (left) and August Jack Khatsahlano (back). The celebration was hosted by Mildred Valley Thornton. Courtesy of Moira Movanna (standing behind the wedding cake).

commemorating the marriage of the couple shows them being blessed by August Jack Khatsahlano – possibly with eagle down (see Figure 2). August Jack’s presence at this small gathering speaks to the close friendship between the couple and the Squamish leader.

FOUNDING THE *NATIVE VOICE*

In 1944, Maisie Hurley was named an associate life member of the Native Brotherhood of British Columbia. She was the first woman admitted to this political organization. Two years later, with a personal investment of \$150, she started the *Native Voice* newspaper – a publication for and about First Nations peoples (Nagle 1964, 16). It was the first Native newspaper in Canada and one of the earliest in North America. Columbia University once described it as “the most unique publication in the world” (*Native Voice* 1964, 8). Just before her death Maisie reflected: “It was my idea that Indians should have a voice. Now there are dozens of Indian papers, but when I started there was only one other – in the States” (Nagle 1964a, 14).

According to a later account by one of Hurley’s descendents, the *Native Voice* “would present issues that no other newspaper or (later) TV channel would touch. Articles came from across North America. People read it across North America. The *Native Voice* was not a money making newspaper. She put her own money into it to support its survival because she believed strongly in the need for it. It was the only newspaper people had for a long time across North America. It was appreciated” (Movanna 2008, n.p.).

Although the *Native Voice* is often described as a “Native newspaper,” it was in many ways a medium for Native-newcomer relations. Maisie and Tom, both of whom were non-Natives, were the topics of many articles and features (see *Native Voice* 1953, 1). Many Native reporters (some of them artists, politicians, and activists) contributed to its pages over the years, but articles were also written by non-Native supporters (such as local artist Mildred Valley Thornton, anthropologist Hugh Dempsey, and Thomas Berger, a young lawyer who later became a Supreme Court judge and leader of the provincial New Democratic Party).

In the 1940s, Maisie wrote about discriminatory practices in the administration of schools and penitentiaries and about the need to extend healthcare services to Native people. She also campaigned to have Native people admitted to law schools within Canada and for Native people in British Columbia to receive provincial voting rights (Tong 1996, 16). In the 1950s, she petitioned Prime Minister Diefenbaker to extend the federal franchise to Native peoples and wrote critiques of Bill 267, which would have enabled “reservations to be sold piecemeal to non-Indians and thus be broken up” (*Native Voice* 1950, 4).

In the 1960s, Maisie’s articles in the *Native Voice*, and a feature for the *Vancouver Sun*’s weekend magazine, drew attention to the Native land

claims issue. Here, in an article entitled “Maisie Says BC Still Belongs to the Indians,” she quoted her friend and protégé Tom Berger to bolster her argument that the terms of the Royal Proclamation of 1763 had not been met within British Columbia and that, therefore, Aboriginal title had not been legally extinguished. Berger credits Maisie for first understanding the significance of the Royal Proclamation with regard to defending Aboriginal rights and title:

When I graduated from law school and met the Hurleys [when Berger was twenty-three and Tom Hurley was in his seventies], you must remember that no one in law school spoke of the rights of Native peoples, Aboriginal peoples ... Maisie introduced me to the whole topic. She would often get Tom to defend Indians who were charged with crimes, serious crimes, and I remember we would be down in her apartment on Denman street, and it had artefacts all over the place and she would talk about Aboriginal title. I mean she really did, and she would say Aboriginal title has never been extinguished in British Columbia, and the thesis of her proposition would become central to British Columbia law and politics over time. But it was just an elderly lady declaiming, so to speak, in her own apartment to her husband – who’d heard it before – and this young lawyer. But I do remember Tom saying, after one of these speeches that she made, “You know Tom, Maisie’s got a point.” He said, “After World War II, its not as if the people of Germany no longer had title to their property.” It got me to thinking, anyway. (Thomas Berger, personal communication, 2009)

After Tom Hurley died on Christmas Day 1961, Maisie made Tom Berger his heir apparent. According to one newspaper account:

Maisie – now dressing in black – brought her charges to Mr. Berger’s office, slammed her cane across the desk and asked him to take their cases. He did, and without charge. And the world turned. In a landmark case in 1968 Mr. Berger championed the Nishga cause and took it to the Supreme Court of Canada. What had been an idea was becoming legal reality. He went on to become not simply a national authority on aboriginal rights, but an international figure quoted in New Zealand, Australia and Scandinavia. (Lamb 1981)

Maisie’s health began to decline after the death of her husband. She suffered several strokes over the next few years before dying at Lions Gate Hospital in North Vancouver on 3 October 1964. That same year,

she noted of the *Native Voice*: “It’s making money now. They can never say it’s a white woman’s paper now. It is purely an Indian paper. I’m just sitting here oiling the machinery” (Nagle 1964, 16).

Reporting on the requiem high mass held in her honour, the *Vancouver Times* noted:

Chief Simon Baker expressed the sorrow of the Indians. “We do not appear in tribal robes,” he said, “but in our hearts we put everything to one side and mourn for Maisie.” “We have lost a leader, we have lost a dear friend ...” Pall bearers were Isaac Schulman, Tom Berger, Dugald McAlpine, Tom Conaghy, George North, editor of the *Native Voice*, and Guy Williams, President of the Native Brotherhood. Honorary pallbearers included Percy Paul, Tim Moody, Simon Baker, Gus Gottfriedson of Kamloops; James Sewid, Alert Bay; Richard Malloway, Chilliwack; Bob Clifton of Comox; Henry McKay of Bella Bella and Ted Neel of Vancouver. Among the chiefs were 93-year-old Chief Khatsahlano and Chief Mathias Joe. Also attending was Gertrude Guerin, president of the North American Brotherhood and Sisterhood and only woman vice-president of the American Brotherhood. (McDevitt 1964, 7)

A tribute issue of the *Native Voice* (1964a, 1) noted that, in her later years, Maisie “often hoisted a pack on her back and headed for the hills, where she found rest and solitude in the beauties of nature she never tired of describing. She prospected with Chief August Jack Khatsahlano and always dreamed of finding the mother lode.” Guy Williams, a former president of the Native Brotherhood of British Columbia, remembered Maisie as being

truly dedicated to the cause and plight of the Indian people – their welfare, their education. She treated them all alike, even the down and outers on skid road, for there were many young men and women all the way from the Atlantic to the Pacific. She offered her advice, found employment for many, appearing in court, bailing them out – two dollars, a five or a 10 dollar bill, even tens and train tickets home from her own purse ... She obtained free legal help for them from her many lawyer friends. “My Indian friends and people are good people,” she would say. (Williams 1964, 2)

THE MAISIE HURLEY COLLECTION

I remember the portraits because she hung those in her office ... There were two offices, and in the middle was a space for the secretary, and any visitors to sit down, and she ran the *Native Voice* out of one office and Tom ran a criminal law practice on the other side. She had the portraits of the chiefs all over her office and then out into the main office. (Thomas Berger, personal communication, 2009)

Maisie Hurley acquired a diverse collection of Native art, representing First Nations communities from California to Alaska, the Subarctic, the Plains, and the Eastern Woodlands. Included within the collection are: a Tsuu T'ina (Sarcee) dress with beadwork, Alaskan Eskimo duck bolas, Aleut basketry, Assiniboine moccasins, a quillwork Anishinabe (Ojibway) woman's collar, Hupa basketry from California, and Potawatami prints by artist William Crumbo. Her Northwest Coast collections include: a tray and sisuitl carving by Kwakwaka'wakw chief Sam Henderson, a raven rattle, Nuxalk *Harw-Harw* (Man-Eating Bird) and *S7ayulk* (Thunder masks), and Nuuchahnulth basketry. Some of the older pieces in her collection, such as two Tsimshian killer whale effigies (NVMA 986.19.92 a, b) and three examples of finely woven Aleut basketry (NVMA 986.19.71, 986.19.72, and 986.19.175) may have been acquired by Maisie's parents, who, between 1911 and 1917, donated more than eighty First Nations objects to the Vancouver Museum, including a set of Tsimshian regalia and a kerfed cedar storage box for storing it (MOV 229.29).

Today, the Maisie Hurley Collection contains 194 objects, but interviews with friends and family recall other pieces that do not appear to have been acquired by her friend Irene Rogers for the Capilano Indian Museum Foundation. An inventory created by Hurley at the time of sale provides provenance for approximately one-third of the collection. Even the more detailed descriptions are relatively terse: "Old Squamish Blanket (made of dog and goat hair)" and "ceremonial Squamish mask carved by August Jack, Chief Khatsahlano"; others are either cursory ("several odd baskets") or non-existent (1962, NVMA 986.19).

In 2009, I reviewed the Hurley collection to identify the Coast Salish pieces – several of which, in Maisie's 1962 inventory, had been attributed to the Squamish community, and then I arranged for elders from the *Ta na wa xwmt'wn ta a imats*/Your Grandchildren's Upbringing Squamish Language Elders Advisory Group to visit the collection. They were able to identify the work of several community members, specifically

basket makers and carvers, as well as the subject of one pastel portrait. Dr. Susan Rowley and Dr. Jennifer Kramer of the UBC Museum of Anthropology were also consulted about the Arctic/Subarctic and Nuxalk materials, respectively, and were able to enhance our knowledge regarding several pieces.

Many items were also compared to those in other ethnographic collections. This was done through research tools such as the UBC Museum of Anthropology's reciprocal research network (in development) and the online databases of museums such as the Royal British Columbia Museum, the Canadian Museum of Civilization, the American Museum of Natural History, the Burke Museum, and the Peabody Museum. The purpose of this was to resolve inconsistencies in provenance found in previous appraisals of the collection.

Maisie received several significant gifts from local Squamish leaders, including a *Swéwkw'elb* (Mountain goat wool blanket, NVMA 986.19.118), a Raven mask attributed to Tommy Moses (NVMA 986.19.19), two large cedar-bark mats (NVMA 986.19.95 and NVMA 986.19.124), and several coiled cedar-root baskets and trays. The collection contains two *sxwayxwii* masks and a small *sxwayxwii* figure representing the First Man at Gibson's Landing (NVMA 986.19.83). These were carved by *Xats'alanexw* (Chief August Jack Khatsahlano), whom family members recall visiting Maisie in her apartment, where he would sit silently on the couch "for what seemed like hours" (Movanna 2008). Their friendship was a close one.

Today some community members may regard the gift of two *sxwayxwii* masks as inappropriate, especially since one of them appears to have been danced (see below). The masks have recently been reviewed by elders from *Ta na wa xwniwn ta a imats*, representatives from the nation's education department, and a dancer from the community. They suggested to museum staff that one of the masks could be exhibited, along with a small *sxwayxwii* figure, to provide an opportunity for younger community members to learn about the protocols surrounding them. For example, small *sxwayxwii* figures, such as the one depicting the First Man at Gibson's Landing (NVMA 986.19.83), were created to announce when his family had given a young man a mask (this tradition is not currently practised in the community).

Sxwayxwii are used for cleansing ceremonies by members of Coast Salish communities and are inherited from parents or transferred through marriages. Not every family has the prerogative to dance the masks, but non-mask families may hire dancers for special occasions

(such as naming ceremonies, marriages, or memorials). For several decades *sxwayxwii* have been removed from public view in Canada (Fortney 2009, 135), although photographs of these masks appear in older publications (Suttles 1982, 1987).

Prior to the 1960s, copies of *sxwayxwii* masks were sometimes made for sale – to demonstrate traditional Coast Salish carving styles or as private commissions. The UBC Museum of Anthropology and the Museum of Vancouver both contain such masks – the former an unpainted work commissioned from another local community (Museum of Anthropology accession file 569), the latter a number of examples belonging to, and possibly made by, August Jack Khatsahlano (see Foster 1944). Feelings about the display of such objects vary from community to community. However, families, as opposed to communities, speak to the appropriate care of these belongings since the prerogatives reside with specific families rather than with the community as a whole. The NVMA has *sxwayxwii* material from only one individual and so follows the advice it is given from the community's appointed liaisons, one of whom is a descendent of August Jack and a member of a *sxwayxwii* family.

Another significant Squamish item in the collection is a *Swéwkw'elh* (chief's blanket) that Maisie noted was made of mountain goat and dog hair (NVMA 986.19). The Salish dog, whose hair was used for weaving, has been extinct since the mid-1800s (Gustafson 1980, 81). The NVMA recently had the *Swéwkw'elh* examined by several local weaving experts. Conservator Terry Loychuk sent fibre samples to the University of Victoria's Advanced Imaging Lab for analysis. According to Nancy Kirkpatrick (2010, 4), "preliminary results show[ed] the main fibre to be mountain goat hair," although the blanket also contains some plant fibre and hair from an undetermined mammal. In April 2010, testing confirmed that the undetermined mammal hair was, in fact, dog hair.

The *Swéwkw'elh* has great meaning for the Squamish community, and a new weaving was recently commissioned from Squamish weaver *Kwetsí met* (Keith Nahanee). This was completed in March 2010. From his relative, *Sesemiya* (Tracy Williams), the NVMA acquired a cedar-bark apron, headpiece, and necking. These pieces are intended to be displayed with the blanket as a complete costume. One of the pieces, a headdress, was part of a set of cedar-bark regalia made for the opening ceremonies of the 2010 Olympics and was worn by a younger family member. The NVMA now actively acquires contemporary Squamish pieces to complement older items in the Maisie Hurley Collection and in recognition of its strengthening relationship with the Squamish Nation.

The *Swéwkw'elb* from the Maisie Hurley Collection will soon be conserved through funding provided under the Aboriginal Heritage component of the Department of Canadian Heritage's Museums Assistance Program. It will be displayed with the new blanket in the exhibit, *Entwined Histories*, opening January 2011. Damara Jacobs of the Squamish Nation will be my co-curator for this project.

An artist herself, Maisie drew several portraits of her friend *Xats'alanexw*, August Jack Khatsahlano, and one of them is now in the NVMA (986.19.101), while another is in the Royal British Columbia Museum (17524). The NVMA's collection also contains pastel portraits of other Squamish people drawn by Maisie Hurley, including several of August Jack's family members. Only four of the thirteen portraits in the NVMA are identified through the artist's inscription. The portraits that Maisie drew prior to her marriage to Tom Hurley are signed Maisie Armytage-Moore.

While reviewing the collection I recognized that a portrait of August Jack was identical to a photographic image held by the NVMA and the City of Vancouver Archives. This led me to explore whether other portraits in the collection had been inspired by archival photographs. By comparing the portraits to the digital collections in the City of Vancouver Archives, the British Columbia Archives, and archived editions of the *Native Voice*, I was eventually able to identify the subjects of all but three of the portraits. Squamish community members depicted in the NVMA portraits include: Jericho Charlie (986.19.102); *Swenámya*, Mary Anne Khatsahlano (986.19.103); *Qwa-halia*, Madeleine Deighton (986.19.104); *Yam-schloot*, Mary of Senákw (986.19.111); *Tow-hu-quam-kee*, Jack of Senákw (986.19.112); Chief Jimmy Jimmy (986.19.113); and *Lay-hu-lette*, Mary Agnes Capilano (986.19.194). Other identified portraits in the NVMA collection feature Bill Miner – the Gentleman Bandit (986.19.107), and *Tlamosh*, Mr. Joseph Joe of the Anderson Lake Reserve (986.19.98).

Although family members recall Maisie drawing from life when Native friends visited her apartment, all of the portraits in the NVMA collections appear to have been copied from archival photographs as the subjects are featured in identical poses and costumes to those shown in the older images.

In June 2009, the elders of the Squamish Language Authority were able to assist in identifying *Chuchawlut*, Mary Anne August, as the subject of one of three remaining unidentified portraits (NVMA 986.19.110). They also recognized several Squamish baskets in the NVMA

collection as the work of *Chuchawlut*. The Squamish gifts in the Maisie Hurley Collection frequently relate to the subjects of her portraits, reinforcing the close relationship between the activist and local First Nations.

Maisie Hurley's portraits are nostalgic. Contemporary backgrounds featured in the source photographs are erased, thus emphasizing the person depicted as opposed to her or his surroundings. A portrait of Mary Anne Khatsahlano (NVMA 986.19.103), for example, was based on a 1943 photograph showing August Jack and Mary Anne standing beside one of Charles Scott's oil paintings (City of Vancouver Archives, Port P658). In Maisie's portrait, the entire background has been removed. The same photograph appears on the January 1948 cover of the *Native Voice*: Mary Anne Khatsahlano is featured in the same pose, holding her drum, but her image is artfully superimposed over a forest scene.

The Maisie Hurley Collection also contains a number of pieces from the Northwest Territories, Alaska, northern British Columbia, and Alberta. Many of these are from Dene (Athapaskan) communities – Dene (Chipewyan), Dene-thah (Slavey), Wet'suwet'en, and Carrier, and they feature highly decorative beadwork or quillwork. Others are from northern Northwest Coast communities of Tsimshian, Gitksan, and Haida.

In 1949, as a representative of the Native Brotherhood and the *Native Voice*, Hurley travelled extensively among First Nations communities in northern British Columbia to inform them of their newly awarded provincial voting rights. She visited First Nations reserves at Fort St. James, Burns Lake, Hazelton, Kispiox, Kitsequecla (Skeena Crossing), Kitwanga, and Stoney Creek. Although her trip was political, in her "Northern Report" Maisie commented: "the finest beaded buckskin work is done on the [Stoney Creek] reserve and on the Fort St. James Reserve" (Armytage-Moore 1949, 4).

At Kispiox she encountered Native people who had been friends of her late father, Ronald Campbell-Johnston (Armytage-Moore 1949, 1). During her visit to Kitsequecla she was "named" by Chief Arthur McDames (Cox 1949, 2). Of this gift, she wrote:

These dear people have honoured me greatly and I hope I will be worthy of it. They gave me the senior name in the House – Order of [Gitksan] – meaning "the Gambler or the Man who took a Chance." The tribe of the Finback whale, the Crest of the Eagle. This tribe originated from the beginning of the world, the oldest tribe of an ancient origin, clan of the [*Laxsgiik*] – relationship stronger than blood

relationship. My name is “Chief Queen of the Moon” (Armytage-Moore 1949, 3).

On Dominion Day 1951 Maisie was made “a member of the [Squamish] Tribe” and named (as her mother had been) *Maithla* (the Dancer) (*Native Voice* 1951, 5). Maisie was honoured again at Kitsequecla in 1956 when she was given the Gitksan name *Men-glug-um-kee-pikee*, which has been translated as “the Eagle that Flies Low and Spreads his wings over his people to protect them” (*Native Voice* 1964b, 3; Kiernan 1964). To denote her membership in the Eagle Clan, Maisie received a wooden spoon with a carved eagle’s head (NVMA 986.19.188) from the Gitksan in 1949 (Cox 1949, 2).

Maisie also travelled to northern British Columbia with her husband Tom Hurley in 1954, when he was defending two Native men on a charge of manslaughter (a case that was later dismissed) (Hurley 1954b, 5-8). She may have acquired many of the Dene objects in her collection during these two northern trips, although some may have been acquired by her friend, artist Mildred Valley Thornton, who travelled Alberta in 1949 (Thornton 1949).

The Maisie Hurley Collection also contains several Native baskets from communities visited by Maisie or her parents. Three are from Californian tribes (NVMA 986.19.63, 986.19.74, and 986.19.77) and were likely acquired when Maisie travelled to California as a girl to visit her Aunt Fleda’s ranch near Pasadena – the area where her paternal grandparents had settled in the 1880s (*Pasadena Star News* 1998).

CONCLUSION

Maisie Hurley spent much of her life advocating for the rights of Aboriginal peoples within the province of British Columbia and beyond through her work with the *Native Voice* and in the courts of law as the secretary of a criminal lawyer. Her advocacy work supplemented the work being undertaken by BC First Nations themselves, who began organizing in the late nineteenth century – first through protest actions and later through Native political organizations.

Paul Tennant (1982, 27) notes that these political organizations began gathering strength at the turn of the twentieth century with the emergence of the Nishga Land Committee, followed in 1909 by the Indian Rights Association (which quickly transformed into the Interior Tribes of British Columbia). In 1916, two predominantly Salish political

organizations – the Indian Tribes of British Columbia and the Interior Tribes of British Columbia merged to create the Allied Indian Tribes of British Columbia. Of the former organization Tennant notes: “non-Indian advisors played a continuing role, although the Reverend Peter Kelly (Haida) and Andrew Paull (Squamish) became the acknowledged leaders as president and secretary, respectively” (28). Resolving land claims was the paramount issue for these early political organizations as Aboriginal rights and title to much of British Columbia had not yet been extinguished through treaties (as was originally mandated by the British North America Act).

As the official newspaper of the Native Brotherhood, the *Native Voice* provided a forum for discussion of a wide array of issues relating to Aboriginal rights and title in the province and beyond. Early issues of the newspaper petitioned for enfranchisement for BC First Nations. Since First Nations were wards of the state, and not citizens, they were not able to vote in federal or provincial elections and could not run for government offices. In 1949, BC First Nations were allowed to vote in provincial elections for the first time (*Native Voice* 1949, 2) – two years after the vote had been awarded to Chinese Canadians (Carlson 1997). First Nations peoples could not vote in federal elections until 1960 without first relinquishing their status as Indians.

Maisie Hurley’s dealings with First Nations differed from those of her parents, who sought to preserve the material aspects of Native cultures as opposed to actively defending their Aboriginal rights and title. They believed in the inevitability of cultural loss, while their daughter worked towards cultural revitalization. Sometimes she did this in the role of patron, encouraging emerging artists such as Ellen Neel and lobbying in the *Native Voice* for the revitalization of traditional art (Neel 1949; Thornton 1950). A sense of philanthropy underlay these actions, which have also been described as arising out of a sense of noblesse oblige (Lamb 1981). Similar motives have been assigned to Reverend George Raley, principal of the Coqueleetza Residential School in Chilliwack, whose collection is now in the UBC Museum of Anthropology. Historian Paige Raibmon (1996, 92) notes:

Raley felt that the commercialization of Aboriginal art and handicrafts could help “place [the Indian] in a position to compete with skilled labour” and thus, alleviate some of the socio-economic problems faced by Native communities. He argued that these problems resulted from the White man’s “thoughtless zeal” and arrogant overconfidence in “that condition we call civilization.” Consequently, he believed it was

the White man's responsibility to "put the Indian upon his feet and give him a fair start to life."

Maisie came from a position of privilege, but her involvement in Native politics had real and far-reaching effects. In the early years, the *Native Voice* provided a platform not only for her opinions but also for those of the First Nations who contributed to and read the paper. It circulated thoughts and ideas outside of local communities and, by doing so, aided Native politicians and their supporters.

In many ways, the Maisie Hurley Collection (like its counterpart the *Native Voice*) is a chronicle of Native and non-Native interaction in the mid-twentieth century. It speaks to the entwined histories of its original owner and the many Native communities that she encountered throughout her lifetime – first as the child of a mining engineer and later as a Native advocate and editor of the *Native Voice*. This collection is unique since it speaks to the reciprocal relationships that existed between Maisie Hurley and local First Nations and, possibly, to earlier encounters between her parents and the northern communities that they visited. Maisie Hurley attempted to honour her obligations to the gift givers by establishing a Native museum on the Capilano Reserve – the sale of her collection was undertaken to facilitate this dream. Ultimately, this dream was ahead of its time and the collection became part of a civic rather than an Aboriginal story. However, Maisie's actions did ensure that, as public rather than private, her collection was accessible to First Nations.

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MAISIE HURLEY COLLECTION



Miniature *sxwayxwii* figure depicting the First Man at Gibson's Landing, carved by August Jack Khatsahlano, on exhibit at the NVMA since January 2010 with permission of the Squamish Nation. Courtesy of the North Vancouver Museum and Archives, catalogue number 1986.019.083.



Inuit leather overshoes with very fine gathering, and seal skin inserts, soles, and heel patches. These were worn over kamiks as extra waterproofing, possibly Greenlandic in origin. Courtesy of the North Vancouver Museum and Archives, catalogue number 1986.019.024.



Coiled cedar root basket, with wild cherry bark imbricated design, attributed to Melina Moody (who married into Squamish from Sechelt). Courtesy of the North Vancouver Museum and Archives, catalogue number 1986.019.165.



A pair of Tsimshian killer whale effigies, similar in style to a monumental crest figure photographed by Louis Shortridge in 1919. Courtesy of the North Vancouver Museum and Archives, catalogue number 1986.019.092.



Anishinabe woman's ceremonial collar made of buckskin with octopus bag details, metal ornaments, and porcupine quill wrapped fringes. Courtesy of the North Vancouver Museum and Archives, catalogue number 1986.019.007.



Detail of a Dene-thah firebag. Courtesy of the North Vancouver Museum and Archives, catalogue number 1986.019.015.



Cree-style moccasins with pointed toes and embroidered floral motifs. Courtesy of the North Vancouver Museum and Archives, catalogue number 1986.019.027.



Kamiks with hand sewn gathers. Courtesy of the North Vancouver Museum and Archives, catalogue number 1986.019.004 a-b.



Niitsitapi (Blackfoot) child's war shirt made from a girl's dress, two awl cases, and a man's breast piece. Courtesy of the North Vancouver Museum and Archives, catalogue number 1986.019.011.



Tsuu T'ina (Sarcee) leggings with geometric beadwork motifs. Courtesy of the North Vancouver Museum and Archives, catalogue number 1986.019.013 a-b.



Independent curator David Bellman, Squamish weaver Keith Nahanee, and independent curator Meirion Cynog-Evans examine Squamish *Swéwkw'elh* / Chiefs blanket (1986.019.118) made of mountain goat and dog hair blended with other fibres in need of conservation. Courtesy of the North Vancouver Museum and Archives.



Keith Nahanee in his weaving studio with newly commissioned blanket inspired by the Squamish *Swéwkw'elh* in the Maisie Hurley Collection. Courtesy of the North Vancouver Museum and Archives.