



CULTURAL GUIDE

Honouring Our Children In Care



'Mimkwamlis (Village Island) taken in the early 1900's – photographer unknown.



MISSION

This document is intended to serve as acknowledgement and collaboration with regards to upholding “The United Nations Convention on Indigenous Peoples Rights” and “The United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child”.

It is important for all the parties to understand that this work is not only locally recognized as best practice but also internationally recognized as the rights of all Indigenous Peoples and Children.



CULTURAL GUIDE

Honouring Our Children In Care

Mamalilikulla First Nation vision is to serve our community with Maya'x̱la (respect), fairness, transparency and accountability, promoting equality, prosperity and well-being while engaging and supporting our people; honoring our past, present and future generations and creating opportunity for a strong, self-sufficient sovereign Mamalilikulla Nation.

“ ***It is our goal to ensure the safety and well-being of all Mamalilikulla children. You are our future and we want you to know that you are not alone.*** ”

As Mamalilikulla, we acknowledge that some of our children, youth and families are involved with the Ministry of Children and Family Development or Aboriginal Delegated Agencies across Canada and in the United States. It is our priority to support them and ensure that our children and youth know who they are and where they come from. And as equally important, it is critical for us to know where our children are residing in order to connect them with family and our culture.

Working in partnership with MCFD or appropriate delegated agency in the planning for our children is necessary to ensure that the child's cultural identity

is respected and preserved. Culture is an Aboriginal child's inherent foundation to life, which will impact their understanding of their traditional language, spirituality, and rich heritage.

The cultural plan for our children in care provides a guide for those involved in planning for the child, and represents a commitment to ensuring that each Aboriginal child in the care of the Director is connected to his or her culture. This commitment is made in accordance with the guiding principles, service delivery principles and best interests of child sections of the Child Family and Community Service Act.

Cultural plans are one part of an overall effort to mitigate the devastating effects of lost identity and isolation experienced by our children raised outside their community and culture. Respectfully developed and implemented cultural plans will assist children to develop a positive self-image, a healthy self-esteem, and a strong cultural, linguistic and spiritual identity.

This guide clearly describes how the child's social worker, Mamalilikulla representative, caregiver, family and community will share in the responsibility of developing and preserving the child's cultural identity and connection with his or her siblings, extended family and community. Below are some general guidelines in how we would like to work together in the best interest of our children.

GUIDELINES

1. The Cultural Safety Agreement should be viewed as a living document that will change and grow over time in order to meet the changing developmental needs of the child.
2. Each person who is involved in developing and facilitating the plan must be willing to follow through on his/her commitments in order to benefit the cultural growth of the child.
3. Ideally the child, child's parent, child's social worker, Mamalilikulla representative, family member and/or elder and the child's caregiver should be involved in creating the plan.
4. When working with a child that is eligible to be registered with 2 Nations, the non-registered Nation should be invited to the table. It is important to acknowledge and honor the other side of the family and Nation from where the child's family comes.
5. Caregivers and First Nations communities should have opportunities to establish a relationship prior to finalizing the Cultural Safety Agreement. A Cultural Safety Agreement meeting will be set to bring the parties together. This will enable all persons involved to discuss the contents of the Cultural Agreement and provide opportunity to ask questions.
6. Caregivers need to be prepared to ensure that the child is able to travel to his or her traditional territory. The parties need to explore and agree on how travel costs will be covered.
7. When making the Cultural Safety Agreement, parties must provide as much detail as possible. Avoid the use of general statements such as "when possible", "when convenient" or "as deemed appropriate".
8. Time frames need to be specific, for example "photos of the child will be sent to the grandparents four times per year" (beginning of school, Christmas, birthday, summer) or "child will visit his grandparents four times per year" (spring, summer, winter and fall).
9. Each person who has made a commitment in the cultural plan should sign the agreement.
10. The Cultural Safety Agreement should be reviewed by all parties at least once a year and the expected time for review needs to be stated in the Cultural Safety Agreement. Be sure to identify who will be responsible for initiating the annual review.
11. The parties to the Cultural Safety Agreement must agree to maintain the child's confidentiality.
12. Because there may be disagreements amongst the parties about the Cultural Safety Agreement, a Conflict Resolution process should be agreed upon by all parties. The Conflict Resolution process stated in the Protocol Agreement between Mamalilikulla First Nation and MCFD may be used for this purpose.
13. Children over age 12 (or younger if they are developmentally capable) should be invited to participate in the development of the Cultural Safety Agreement and he or she should sign the agreement.
14. A family genogram/tree will be created to support the child's knowledge of family ties and attached for reference.
15. No person involved in the plan will agree to responsibilities that they are not comfortable with.
16. Every person's culture needs to be respected, upheld and acknowledged.
17. The parties will work together to ensure the child and his/her caregiver(s) are supported to carry out their responsibilities.
18. If a child must be moved from one foster home placement to another, a new Cultural Safety Agreement will be reviewed with the parties and the new caregiver.
19. Each child and caregiver will be given a life book to assist in the documenting the child's life events and will include a special section page of cultural events.



THE STORY OF US

IDENTITY

Mamalilikulla means “The-People-Of-Malilikala”. Mamalilikulla is part of the Kwakwaka’wakw People (pronounced: KWOK-wok-ya-wokw), which means Kwak’wala speaking peoples. There are eighteen member nations (some of which amalgamated) that make up the Kwakwaka’wakw Nation whose territory reaches from northern Vancouver Island southeast to the middle of the island, and includes smaller islands and inlets of Smith Sound, Queen Charlotte Strait and Johnstone Strait. Please remember we are the Kwakwaka’wakw, people who speak Kwak’wala, but who live in different places and have different names for our separate groups.

Mamalilikulla is represented within the Kwakiutl District Council (KDC) along with 7 other member First Nations. KDC is a not for profit organization incorporated in 1982 and offers a variety of health services for all member bands to access. For more information you can visit their website at <http://www.kdchealth.com>

Mamalilikulla is also part of The Nanwakolas Council. Nanwakolas, which in Kwak’wala means “a place we go to find agreement”, advocates for the recognition, protection and promotion of its member First Nations’ Aboriginal rights and interests in land and marine resource planning and management discussions with the provincial and federal governments, as well as with industry and stakeholder groups. Nanwakolas and its member First Nations seek to reach agreements that address the issues raised, and opportunities identified by its member First Nations; thereby, maintaining their cultural connection with their traditional territories, enhancing the ecological integrity of their traditional territories and promoting their human well-being. For more information you can visit their website at <http://www.nanwakolas.com>

ORIGIN STORY

The Creator was going from one place to another changing and transforming the world into the shape we see today. He was at a place called Snake-Receptacle when he saw a man sitting on a rock. That’s what the Yu’tɪnux believe; the Mamalilikala say that the man was swimming along Archer Place. The Creator watched this man and realized that he was feeling around as if he were searching for something. He was blind. So, the Creator spoke to him and asked what he was doing. The man replied he was starving and was searching for something to eat.

So the Creator said, “Dive into the deep water and stay under as long as you can.” And when the man did this, the Creator chanted, “Mali, Mali, Mali.” When the man came to the surface, the Creator called out, asking him if he could see. “No,” said the man sadly. “Well dive again and stay under just as long as you possibly can!” said the Creator. And when the man dove deeply, the Creator chanted again, “Mali, Mali, Mali.” But, the blind man did not really stay under water for very long. And when he came to the surface, he told the Creator that he still couldn’t see. But in fact he could see. The Creator’s cure had worked, but the Creator did not know this.

“Well, we will have to try it one more time,” said the Creator. So the man dove a third time while the Creator chanted, “Mali, Mali, Mali.” And the man dove so deep and stayed so long that he could even see the monsters in the darkest depths. And when he came to the surface, the Creator asked if he could see our world. The man replied that he thought he could start to see a little light even though he was able to see very, very well indeed. So the Creator told him to dive one more time, and chanted Mali loudly while the man was submerged. And, as soon as the man came to the surface, Creator called out to him, “Your name will be Malilikala.”

So, Malilikala built a house at the place called Two-Headed. He was the first of the Mamalilikala.

Adapted from Boas and hunt Kwakiutl Texts, 1905-6.

GOVERNANCE

Mamalilikulla currently uses a custom electoral system – which means that the band members vote to elect a chief and counsellors to represent their Nation. This occurs every 2 years.

Section 11 Band Membership

- Aboriginal Affairs and Northern Development Canada manages the band’s membership list.
- An individual becomes a band member when they are registered and are added to the band list. To be registered you can contact the Mamalilikulla Band directly for assistance.
- There are approximately 400 members in the Mamalilikulla First Nation.

Mamalilikulla also employs a band administrator, book keeper, communications coordinator, fisheries manager as well as contracts others to support the work the Nation is actively participating in which is often through project based funding. For a list of all employees and chief and council, please visit the website at mamalilikulla.ca



MEMBER NATIONS

Below is a list of our fellow Kwakwaka’wakw Nations. As First Nation people, you will often hear the term “who are you, where do you come from”. This is the way our people identify family and connect us back to our roots.

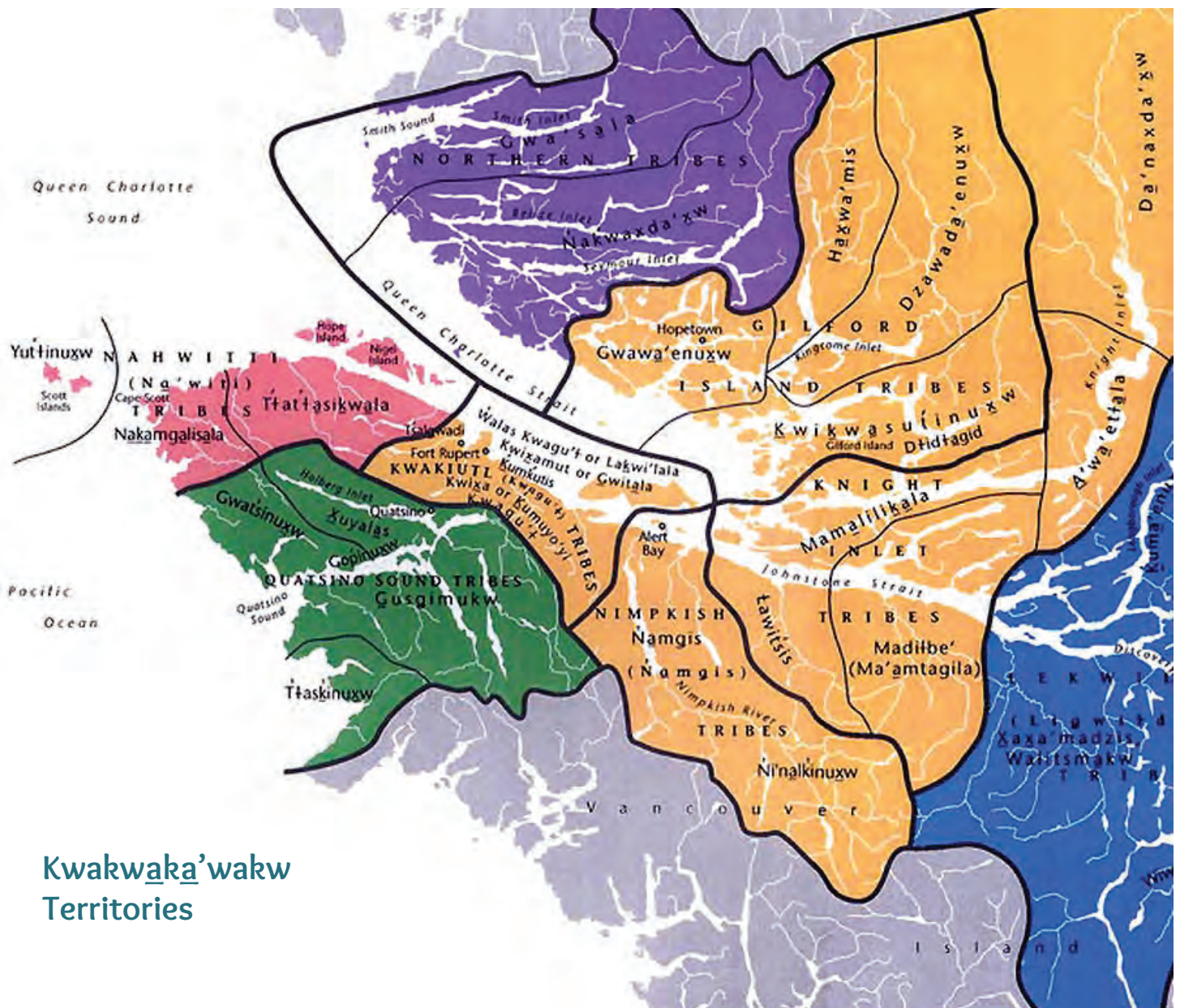
NATION	LOCATION	TRADITIONAL TERRITORY
Da’naxda’xw/Awaetlala First Nation	New Vancouver	Knight Inlet & Dzawadi
Dzawada’enuxw First Nation	Kingcome Inlet	Kingcome River
Gwa’Sala-’Nakwaxda’xw Nations	Port Hardy	Smiths Inlet, Blunden Harbour, Takus, Ba’as
Gwawa’enuxw First Nation	Hopetown	Hegams
K’omoks First Nation	Comox	Comox
Kwakiutl First Nation	Fort Rupert, Port Hardy	T’saxis
Kwiahkah First Nation		Matse’no & T’saya’akw
Kwilkwasut’inuxw Haxwa’mis Tribe	Gilford Island	Gway’asdams
Ma’amtakila		Etsekin
Namgis	Alert Bay	Yal’is
Quatsino First Nation (Gusgimukw & Gwat’sinuxw)	Coal Harbour	Winter Harbour, Old Quatsino, Quattishe
Tlatlasikwala First Nation	Hope Island	Xwamdasbe’
Tlowitsis	Turner Island	Kalugwis
We Wai Kai First Nation	Campbell River	Cape Mudge, Tsakwalutan
Wei Wai Kum First Nation	Campbell River	Campbell River

TERRITORY

Mamalilikulla First Nation’s territory is located on the west side of Village Island in the Johnstone Strait region off the north east coast of Vancouver Island between Alert Bay and Knight Inlet. It also encompasses Compton Island and has a small village on Gilford Island. The main winter village is called ’Mimkwamlis, and is located on Mahmalilikullah Indian Reserve No. 1 (Village Island) on Eliot Passage. It was allocated in 1886. Village Island encompasses 175.20 hectors of land. The name means “village with rocks and islands out front”,

or as translated by famous chief and carver Mungo Martin, “group of little islands” and by Franz Boas as “round things [islands] in front at beach” or by other Nation members as “round things in front”.

Below is a map that depicts all the Kwakwaka’wakw Nations but some have disappeared as the groups either died out or amalgamated with other groups. It is important to note that some of these villages have been abandoned for years.



Kwakwaka’wakw Territories



The Mamalilikulla thrived by means of fishing, hunting, berry picking, and cedar bark weaving. Clam, crab, fish and all forms of seafood were available in abundance. We lived individually but as one big family, helping and supporting our neighbors. We hunted, gathered, and caught food that was shared amongst the village. It is traditionally our way to ensure our elders are fed and well taken care of. That our children are safe as well as learning the ways of our people so they too can carry on tradition and develop tools to provide for their family. Our village of 'Mimkwamlis, was in fact our main winter village and in traditional times we used various other sites to hunt for game and gather food. During the spring and until the fall, we moved around continuously to harvest traditional plants and fish and game.

In recent time the village of 'Mimkwamlis, was abandoned, for the most part, because it was isolated and unserviced, making it almost impossible to stay and live there. The last people to inhabit the village left in the mid 1960's. It has been noted by many Mamalilikulla members that most children, youth and young adults have never been on the lands at Village Island. This is something that we are diligently working to change. There is something to be said about standing on the traditional territory of your ancestors.

In our language there is a word, *Awin'ak'ola* "Ah-weet-nah-gyola", which means, "I am one with the land, the sea and the air". This signifies our holistic connection to the animals or beings of the

land, of the sea and of the air and implies also the supernatural or mystic beings. When we create art, we create these creatures with attributes of human beings believing that all have the ability to transform at their will, from human to animal form. For this reason when we draw, carve or create images we do so mindful of this ability. For example, when we draw killer whales we do so giving them eyebrows and nostrils even though we recognize that there is not a need for these human attributes. Killer whales have a blowhole but by depicting them in the way that we do, we recognize their ability to transform at their will.

Many of these creatures/beings find their way into the stories of our people. In our origin stories, these various beings transformed during the time of the great flood. When the waters receded, they transformed back into their human form, set down on earth, and moved from these sacred places to establish their villages in other locations. Many of our names are derived from these beginning times and so we are often named in honor of our transformed animal ancestors.

In recent years, the Nation has developed a unique ecotourism business, Adventures Village Island, which operates in tandem with the Nation's guardian watchman program that is part of the Ha-ma-yas Stewardship Network. Mamalilikulla's goal is to employ more of their people as guardian watchman and to develop the land for both tourism, and accessibility for our own people to come home and visit their territory.

TRADITIONS

Below are only examples of practices that were traditional to our people. These practices are carried out by the most traditional families. In every instance these ceremonies are conducted in the fashion of the particular family who's children undergo these practices. From one family to another the ceremonies might be quite noticeably different.

Pre-Birth

In traditional times perspective parents who wanted children, planned for those children to come in to the world as either male or female. Ceremonies were followed to determine the sex of the incoming child. For example, if a male child was desired male implements might be placed under the bed of the couple. In the case where a female child was desired, female implements might be placed there.

Birth

A grandmother or trusted midwife generally cares for the placenta of the newborn child. He/she will pray over it and sometimes bury it at the foot of a great majestic cedar tree. All the time asking the creator for guidance and praying for traits that will assist the child through out their future life.

Early Life

When a child was observed to have specific innate qualities or talents these things were encouraged. Where parents wished specific occupations for a young child, they often took the umbilical cord of the child and placed it with a trusted person who possessed great ability in the occupation desired. This surrogate/mentor wore the umbilical cord while practicing their occupation. For example, this cord might be worn on the wrist of a carver as they carved, if the desired occupation was for the child to become a carver. Another example might be if a parent desired their child to possess great weaving ability, the umbilical cord would be placed with a person who showed great ability as a weaver. In another situation, if a parent desired their child to possess great singing ability the umbilical cord might be worn by a great composer or if the child's parents wanted a drummer the umbilical cord might be placed inside a drum. The same might be true if the desire was for a great dancer, hunter, storyteller,

fisherman, etc. All of these examples varied according to what was desired by the parents of the child in the greatest interest of a successful life for that child.

Hihugwila "Hee-tloo-gwee-lah"

10 month ceremony of life. This is a celebration for the life of a child. It was done and afforded an opportunity to give thanks to the creator for allowing the child to stay now, permanently with the family. Often children, for whatever reason did not make this 10 month milestone and so it was with gratitude that this ceremony is conducted.

At this time often the child was given its first haircut and the hair was sent to the creator in offering by fire. Hair in the instance of First Nations people was considered to carry the

vary essence of that person. Hair was not touched in traditional times with out the expressed permission of the person whose hair you wanted to touch.

Xa'ap'a "Xah-ah-pee"

Cradling Ceremony. In this instance, the child is elevated in a cradle above the heads of big house singers. This takes place in the big house, and this child is rocked by his/her noble family members and specific long, cylindrical rattles are shaken to calm the resident house spirits and to open communications to the creator. In this ceremony the purpose is to introduce the child to the community and validates the child's high standing.

Ixantsila "Eh-can-seelah" or A'ixansla "Ah-ee-cans-lah"

Coming of age Ceremony for women. Young women are taken for the duration of their first menstrual cycle. They are isolated, and removed from public scrutiny. In their time away, they are educated by

“
...if a parent desired their child
to possess great singing ability
the umbilical cord might be
worn by a great composer...”

selected, reputable elder women on what it means to become a respected woman. They are taught their responsibilities of what is deemed appropriate conduct as they journey toward becoming a wife, a mother and eventually a grandmother and a respected member of their community. At this time, childrearing practices are taught. For example, how to care for the child and to give it all that is necessary to ensure a long and healthy life. Family practices are passed on, and advice is given to the young woman so she knows how to deal with married life and motherhood.

Coming of Age Ceremony for a Man

A boy child is taken from public, isolated and made strong and taught how to purify his body. He is taught to put away childish things and instructed on how to be a good hunter/provider, protector, father and leader in his community.

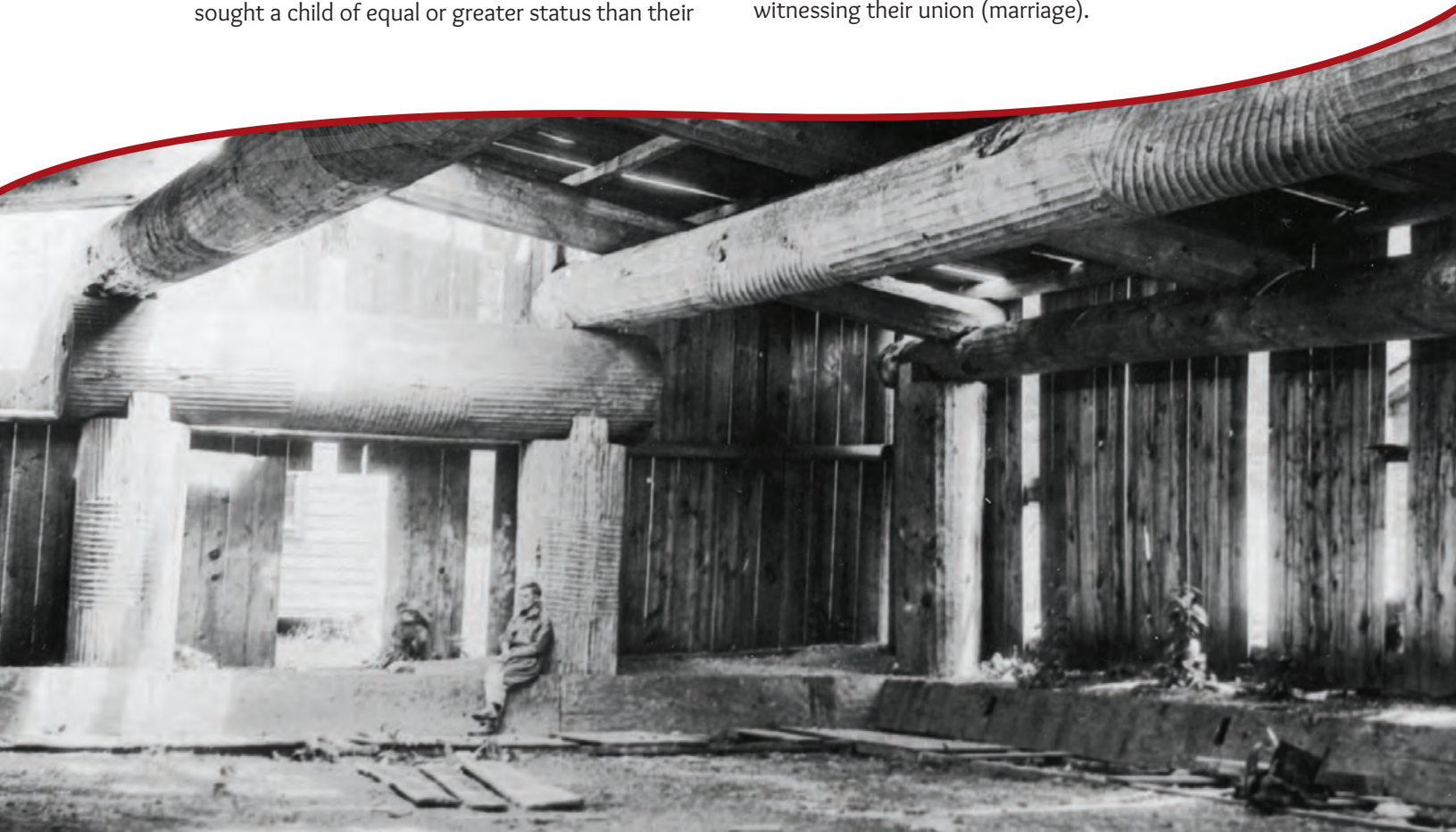
Marriage

Marriages were traditionally arranged. Generally, the knowledgeable grandparents made a choice of an appropriate mate for their grandchild. They sought a child of equal or greater status than their

grandchild. In most cases the matched couple was of equal status. Sometimes, a higher ranking woman would be sought after by lower ranked man. In this instance, the family was considered to be of the higher rank. The ensuing position of the couple was the appropriate rank and right of any children born of this union. Names, privileges and prerogatives were given to be the property of those children as they grew into adulthood.

Journey into Marriage - Kadzit'la "Cah-dzee-tlah" (meaning to walk into the house)

A ceremony in which a perspective grooms family paid an initial amount of money or gifts to secure an arrangement to marry a high ranking daughter. Sometime later, possibly a year, once the brides family had an opportunity to consider the advantage of this marriage and was able to double the value of the money or gift, and it was decided that the arrangement was appropriate, the brides family made arrangements to pay back the initial pillow (initial gift) of the bride. This repayment was distributed by the groom to the community as payment for witnessing their union (marriage).



When it was decided that the marriage would proceed, the groom's family then travelled to the village of the perspective bride and initially engaged in either mock warfare, or physical challenges in order to win over the bride. Successive male members of the groom's community attempted to accomplish difficult feats until someone was successful and the bride's family granted their permission.

The groom's family also brought with them great wealth to distribute to the masses of the bride's community to witness the marriage to their daughter. Names, dances, songs and property were exchanged to validate the union. Traditionally, unless other arrangements were agreed upon, the bride then left her own community to live in the community of the groom.

Each time the couple had a new child, both families would name the child from their ancestral pool of names - in this way it is possible to determine connections from the time of origin. These names are ancient and connect the owners to their first ancestors.

Naming Ceremony

As with many of the aforementioned practices, names were given to validate the position of any child in any community. Children were given names from both sides of their family to connect them to their communities of origin. At any passage of

right, names were given in succession to indicate their new responsibilities and their new positions in the community. Children would then remember their old names and when the time came for them to have children, those names were passed on to their own descendents. These names as mentioned before are very ancient names and reflect often the

“ **Children are named to claim them to their respective communities and to acknowledge their place and their importance.**

personalities of the child. When naming children, often the observations through their lifetime would have bearing on the ancestral names they are awarded. On the other hand, sometimes a child was named because the parents or grandparents were reminded of an ancestor either by the child's actions or daily behaviors.

Children are named to claim them to their respective communities and to acknowledge their place and their importance. All children are valued and therefore, claimed in their naming.





Death

Ceremonies around death were numerous and varied. In traditional times, death meant that the community came to a stand still. Celebrations of any kind were prohibited. All was to remain in silence until, on the fourth day, when the physical body of the deceased was sent home. In our traditional beliefs, people do not die but they go home.

We are taught as children that when death occurs on our communities it is our responsibility and a respectful practice is to go to the family who experiences the loss, to lift them up.

We are taught that people in grief and mourning do not pay particular attention to eating or resting. So, we never go empty handed; we must always take food for the consumption by the mourners.

In our traditional practice, there was a ceremony called Xalp'alsala "Kul-puls-lah". In this ceremony, the

hair was shorn in recognition of the life of the deceased. In the case of women, it is permissible to cut your hair in honor of both your male or female relatives at any time that you wanted to show respect. In the case of a male, men only traditionally cut their hair in honor of their female relatives. For

example, mother, grandmother, aunt, daughter, wife, niece, and granddaughter. This

ceremony in traditional times, also often involved the raking of your face; hence, the name Xalp'asala "Kul-puls-lah", as Xalbayu "Kul-by-yoo" is a raking implement or a tool to rake. Self-inflicted wounds to the face indicated to the rest of the community, that you were in a time of great loss. Banging of the head was also often practiced.

In times of loss and grief, the mourners would suspend their attendance at all ceremonies. The name of the deceased now when spoken had

“ *In our traditional beliefs, people do not die but they go home.* ”

the suffix Wake' "Wih-tleh" added to the end of the deceased's name. Therefore, a name such as T'lakwagila "Dlah-kwa-gyee-lah" became T'lakwagilawale' "Dlah-kwa-gyee-lah-wih-tleh", this meant, to all who heard it, knew that this person has lived, and has now gone home. The original name of the deceased, at a later date would be passed on to their descendant. Often the passing of the name happens before death. Many, and in fact most of our elders live for a duration of their lives, nameless, having already passed on their names to their children or descendants. Often those elders are known by terms of endearment such as a grandmother or grandfather name. Examples might be, Gana, Dada or Anitda.

It is important to note that pregnant women do not attend funerals but in certain circumstances it may be allowed by the family. In these instances, the pregnant woman would cover her tummy with a blanket or apron, protecting her unborn child from spirits. This is also the instance for young children. They are not to attend the funeral but are welcome at the lunch where family and friends gather and share a meal. Young children were treated as very special and sacred in communities, and so, historically, when children went out at night, they would put ash from the stove on their nose to protect them from bad spirits.

“ Young children were treated as very special and sacred in communities, and so, historically, when children went out at night, they would put ash from the stove on their nose to protect them from bad spirits.





MAMALILIKULLA
FIRST NATION

1441-B 16th Avenue, Campbell River, BC V9W 2E4

Phone: 250-287-2955 | Fax: 250-287-4655 | Toll Free: 1-888-287-2955 | Email: viband@telus.net

www.mamalilikulla.ca