



New Pathways to Gold

Fraser River War Symposium Exceeds Expectations

September 2007
eNewsletter



Lytton Mayor Chris O'Connor welcomes symposium attendees.

Over 120 people attended a groundbreaking symposium on the Fraser River War in Lytton this weekend, co-sponsored by the New Pathways To Gold Society and the Lytton First Nation.

"We're delighted with the response - it exceeded all expectations," said Lytton First Nation Chief and NPTGS co-chair Byron Spinks. "We were presented with a new perspective on our shared history which will help us build a new partnership."

Attendees included academics, First Nations, community activists, government officials, business people, educators, musicians, historic re-enactors, elected officials and others. They experienced a comprehensive program presenting fresh perspectives on contemporary problems seen through the lens of our shared history. A spirit of openness and reconciliation prevailed at a symposium that dealt with difficult and painful truths as well as the courage of First Nations leaders like N'laka'pamux Chief David Spintlum.

Chief Spintlum's tireless diplomacy kept the 1858 war with miners from escalating. He helped end the threat of American troops crossing the border to intervene, which would have jeopardized the formation of BC.

"Let's use this moment to move ahead and build the partnership that Chief Spintlum saw between his people and the newcomers," said Dr. Dan Marshall, NPTGS Universities Caucus chair. "It's happening now."

Marshall, principal symposium organizer, was one of 11 presenters putting the Fraser River War in perspective and illustrated how the tumultuous events of 1858 are still playing out in contemporary BC.

The audience included attendees from a half dozen First Nations from the Cariboo, Harrison Lake, Fraser Canyon and Shuswap. They were joined by mayors from Logan Lake and Clinton, as well as other locally elected officials.

"This event shows the power of truthful storytelling," said Lytton Mayor Chris O'Connor, NPTGS co-chair. "We have to build on all the energy and ideas generated here and start building the partnership the First Nations have wanted for 150 years."

The event generated considerable media interest, with *The Province* newspaper running a full-page article on the symposium in its Sunday edition.



Dr. Dan Marshall and Chief Byron Spinks shake hands at the Chief David Spintlum Memorial in Lytton, BC.



Dr. Marianne Ignace and Chief Ron Ignace share stories and memories of Secwepemc encounters with Europeans during the 19th century.



Dr. Dan Marshall talks about the gold rush and Fraser River War of 1858.

Entertainers Enliven Living History



There's nothing like music and dance to help bring history to life, and the Fraser River War Symposium was blessed with both. The duo of [Rika Ruebsaat and Jon Bartlett](#) gave participants a flavour of the songs that were made up and sung by non-native goldseekers during the Fraser River and Cariboo Gold Rushes. You can hear them regularly on [CBC Radio's "North by Northwest."](#) Jon is the editor of [Phillip J. Thomas' book, *Songs of the Pacific Northwest*](#).

The symposium banquet was capped off by a performance by the award-winning Siska Dancers. This colourful troupe performs at powwows and community celebrations. Made up of members of the Siska Indian Band, their pride in their heritage and culture shows in their dancing, singing and hand-made regalia.



Symposium attendees geared up for a rafting expedition on the Fraser.

Symposium Feedback—Give Us An Earful!



We want to know what you thought about the Fraser River War Symposium. What did you find useful or not so useful? What would you have done differently or liked more of? Would you like to see a similar symposium staged on an annual basis? We'd also like to hear your ideas of how NPTGS can move forward in partnership with you and your community to commemorate [BC150](#) in 2008. Send your feedback to Don Hauka at ddclauka@shaw.ca.

The Fraser River War Symposium Presenters



Rick Blacklaws
Langara College



Dr. Keith Carlson
University of Saskatchewan



Dr. Doug Harris, Law School
University of British Columbia



Dr. Cole Harris
Professor Emeritus
University of British Columbia



Dr. Marianne Ignace
Simon Fraser University



Chief Ron Ignace
Secwepemc First Nation



Brenda Ireland, MA
First Light Initiatives



Ken Favrholt
Thompson Rivers University



Sonny McHalsie
Sto:lo First Nation



Dr. Daniel Marshall
University of Victoria



Dr. Paulette Regan
University of Victoria

The New Pathways To Gold Society is a community-based organization dedicated to continued reconciliation with First Nations, investment in BC heritage and economic development for [BC150](#) in 2008, and beyond.

For more information on the New Pathways To Gold Society, please contact Don Hauka, Communications and Creative Director, at 604-524-1884 or ddclauka@shaw.ca.