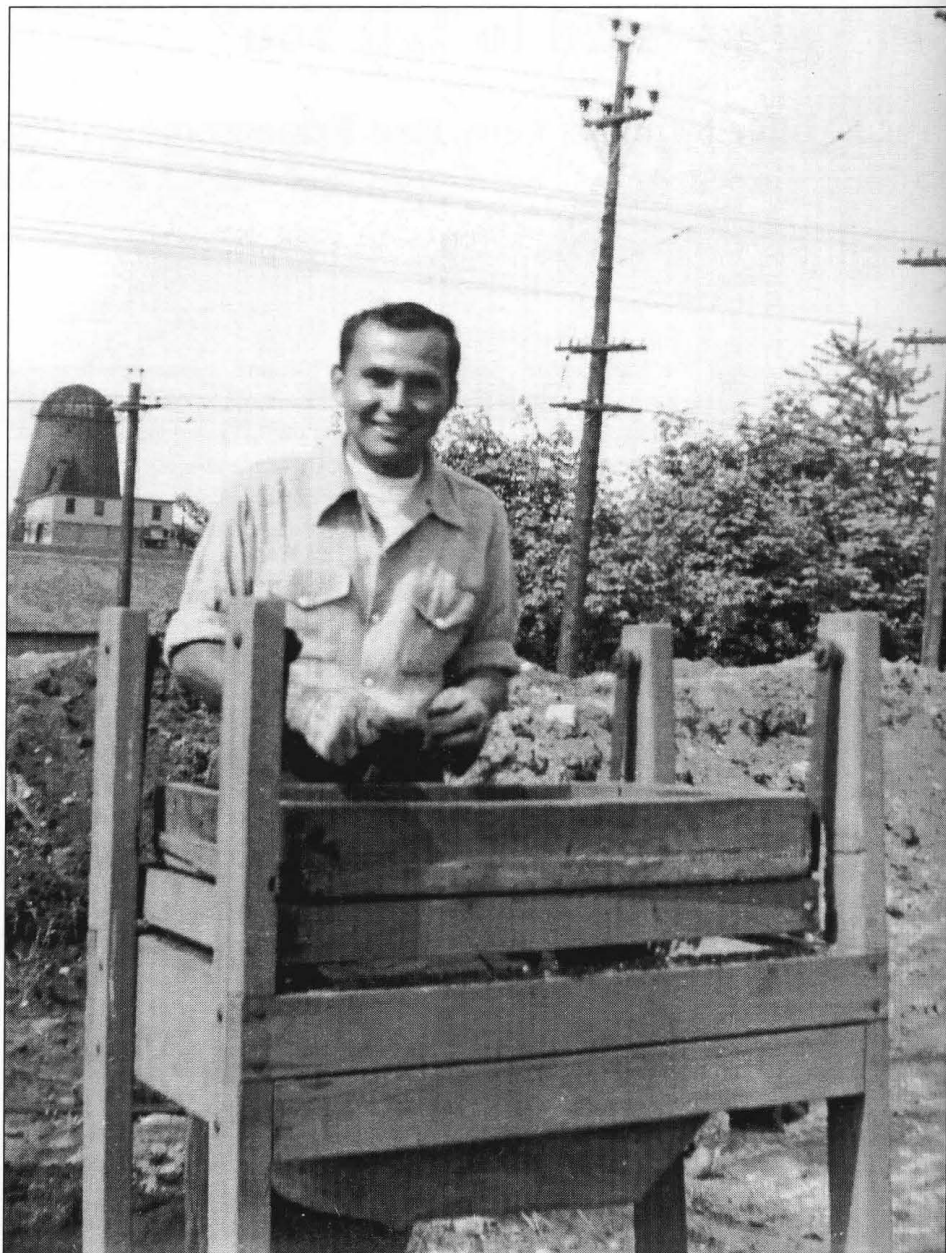


Andrew C. Charles

July 21, 1931 - August 23, 2007



Andrew C. Charles at the Marpole site, 1955. Photo courtesy of the Laboratory of Archaeology at the University of British Columbia.

Respected Musqueam Indian Band elder Andrew C. Charles passed away after a lengthy illness on August 23, 2007. His life was dedicated to his community and to the maintenance of aboriginal rights and title. Andrew's parents were Andrew and Christine Charles. As a young boy he was sent by the government to the infamous Port Alberni residential school. He returned to Musqueam, worked at various jobs and in 1951 was elected to the band council as a member of the youngest ever elected chief and council in Canada.

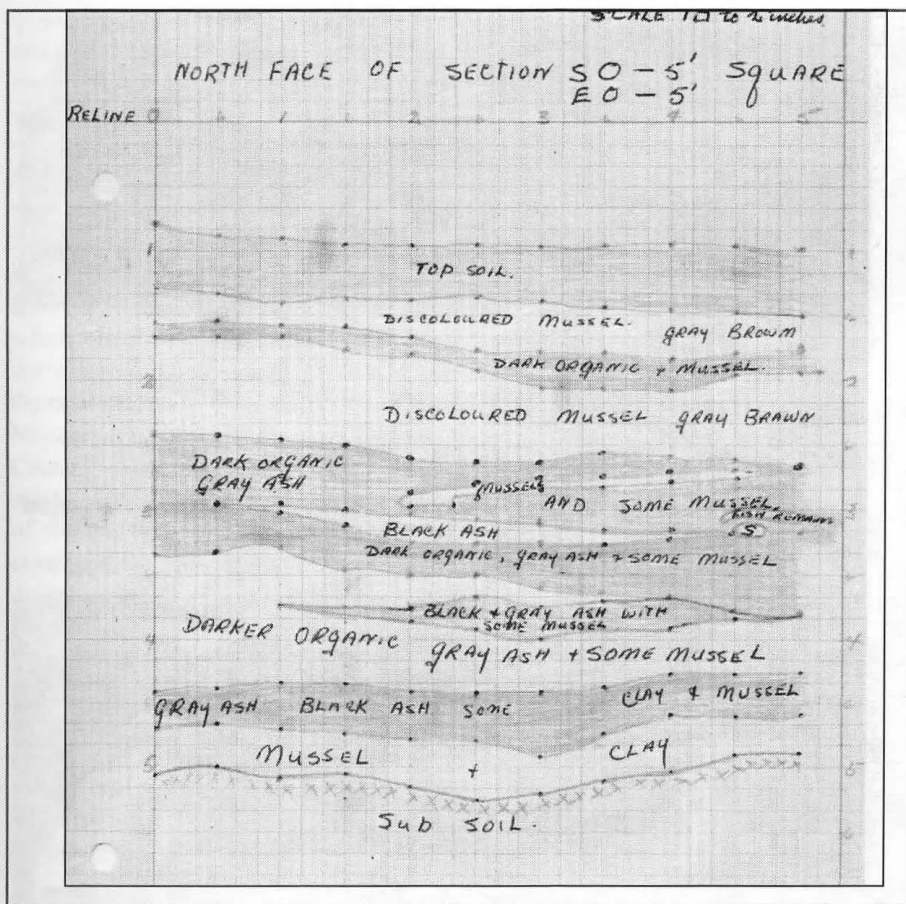
For most of his life, Andrew worked for the band administration taking on

many different roles over the years. He was one of the witnesses in *Guerin v. the Queen*, the landmark Supreme Court case upholding the Crown's fiduciary responsibility to aboriginal people. Andrew remembered clearly the voting day in 1957 when people were promised money in time to buy Christmas presents. While the voters may have held the pen, the Indian agent actually moved it to mark the ballot. Andrew was not shy in recounting these events to outsiders to educate us and lest we forget.

Andrew's first experience of archaeology came with Charles Borden's early

excavations at Musqueam in the early 1950s. While there is no evidence that Andrew took part in these excavations he must have witnessed the crews, including members of his own family, digging on his family's land at DhRt-2 and within the Charles or Charlie House.

In 1955 Borden hired Andrew to work at the Marpole site. Later that summer, while employed at the St. Mungo Cannery, Andrew discovered the St. Mungo site (DgRr-2). After work, or on his days off, he excavated with the help of several relatives and friends on five days between August 5th and 18th. They



Wall profile of Andrew Charles' excavation unit at St. Mungo. Drawn by Andrew Charles. Original at the Laboratory of Archaeology at the University of British Columbia.

recovered 32 artifacts (DgRr-2:1-32) from a 5' X 5' unit excavated to a depth of 63" (Charles 1955). In recognition of the importance of this find, Borden later decided to name the Charles phase (now more frequently referred to as the Charles culture) after Andrew. Borden wrote:

In the preceding discussion of cultural manifestations in the lower Fraser Strait of Georgia region dating between 5500 and 3000+ B.P., it has become evident that a series of components, some of them initially defined as local "phases," e.g. Eayem, St. Mungo, and Mayne, share a significant number of positive and negative traits which distinguish them from earlier and later cultural manifestations in this region. It seems desirable, therefore, to group these local components and "phases" together into one regional phase and to replace the local "phase" terms by the single designation "Charles phase", which would henceforth apply to all presently known components as well as to other comparable components yet to be discovered in this region and falling

within the indicated temporal interval. The suggested designation is in recognition of Andrew Charles, an Indian youth from Musqueam, who not only discovered the St. Mungo site, but who also conducted the first systematic test excavations there. The results of this preliminary work (field notes and artifacts) which he donated to the Laboratory of Archaeology, University of British Columbia, prompted subsequent investigations at both St. Mungo and the nearby Glenrose site. Among the results of these investigations was the definition of the "St. Mungo phase," which it now seems advisable to incorporate in the proposed more comprehensive "Charles phase." (1975:96-7)

While Andrew never again participated in an excavation, he maintained an avid interest in archaeology and in the stories told by archaeologists. He drew no distinction between the pre- and post-contact history of Musqueam, viewing archaeology merely as one tool to help illuminate the past. He visited Borden at his excavations at DhRt-3 and DhRt-4, on

Musqueam traditional territory.

Andrew maintained a great respect for Charles Borden. In 2005 when the ASBC celebrated what would have been Borden's 100th birthday, I invited Andrew to the evening. He welcomed the gathering and spoke warmly of his regard for Dr. Borden and the knowledge Borden and his students had brought to the surface and helped salvage for Musqueam.

Andrew was a regular at Musqueam 101, a non-credit course offered by Musqueam and UBC, where archaeological guest speakers have included Michael Blake, Len Ham, and Andrew Martindale among others. I first met Andrew in 2002 when I accompanied Mike Blake to 101. Later I became one of the co-coordinators for this program. Every Wednesday Andrew would greet me "Sue, how do you do and how is your shoe?" He loved jokes and obscure points of English grammar and he insisted on precision in the use of language. He was also adamant that people should use the term *aboriginal* given its derivation from the Latin *ab origine* meaning "from the beginning".

In his last few years, Andrew received the honour of being selected by the BC Assembly of First Nations as one of their elders on the National Assembly of First Nations Elders' Council.

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