Notice of the Final Oral Examination  
for the Degree of Master of Arts  
of  

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BA (University of Victoria, 2011)  

“Cultural Forests of the Southern Nuu-chah-nulth: Historical Ecology and Salvage Archaeology on Vancouver Island’s West Coast”  

Department of Anthropology  

Wednesday, April 27, 2016  
1:00PM  
Cornett Building  
Room A319  

Supervisory Committee:  
Dr. Peter Stahl, Department of Anthropology, University of Victoria (Co-Supervisor)  
Dr. Quentin Mackie, Department of Anthropology, UVic (Co-Supervisor)  

External Examiner:  
Dr. Nancy Turner, School of Environmental Studies, UVic  

Chair of Oral Examination:  
Dr. Christopher Nelson, Department of Biochemistry and microbiology, UVic  

Dr. David Capson, Dean, Faculty of Graduate Studies
Abstract
Cedar, represented by Western Redcedar (thuja plicata) and Yellow cedar (Chamaecyparis nootkatensis) was known as the “Tree of Life” to the Nuu-chah-nulth on Vancouver Island’s west coast, and most other groups of the Pacific Northwest. This thesis investigates the Culturally Modified Trees (CMTs), or more specifically Tapered Bark Strips (TBS), created through the extraction of cedar bark removed for all manner of material goods. CMTs are now the most common archaeological site type within British Columbia. Current regional chronologies have inherent biases that make interpretations difficult. The chronologies created through Archaeological Impact Assessments (AIA) only span the contact period and the highest frequency of use corresponds more with indigenous population collapse rather than peak.
This thesis details the survey of 16 recent old growth cedar clearcuts which found extensive unrecorded CMT features through the southern Nuu-chah-nulth study region that had been logged. Half of all TBS scars in exposed stumps were found embedded within healed trees, otherwise invisible to archaeologists. Comparing all AIA report dates (surveyed prior to logging activity) with all post-impact assessments surveys it was found the latter contain a greater and older distribution of scarring events which corresponding to high First Nations populations before the contact period. The study also compares CMT chronologies with local histories, investigates the antiquity of Northwest Coast CMTs and the indigenous management of cedar trees to maximize bark harvests. The findings of this research hint at an expanded extent of anthropogenic forests in the Northwest Coast, the inadequate CRM recording and heritage protections of CMTs, and what it all means for Aboriginal Land Rights in British Columbia.