



Library podcast

A Panel on "Chief Seattle and the Town That Took His Name"

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[00:00:35] Welcome. Hi everybody. Thank you all for being here tonight. I'm such a Stesha Brandon I'm the Literature and Humanities Program Manager here at The Seattle Public Library and I want to begin tonight's program by acknowledging that we are on Duwamish land. We feel that it's especially important for us to honor that in light of tonight's event. I wanted to take a minute to thank our authors series sponsor Gary Kunis and thank the Seattle Times for generous promotional support of library programs. Thank you as well to our program partners Sasquatch books and Elliot Bay Book Company. Finally we are grateful to The Seattle Public Library Foundation private gifts to the foundation from thousands of donors helped the library provide free programs and services that touch the lives of everyone in our community so to library foundation donors here with us tonight. We say thank you very much for your support and in fact let's give them a round of applause applause now without further ado please help me welcome Gary Luke the publisher at Sasquatch books here to introduce tonight's panelists.

[00:01:49] Wow big crowd.

[00:01:51] So thank you for coming out to hear about David Verghese new book Chief Seattle and the town that took his name. We are going to have a conversation among a group of thoughtful people who are in different ways connected to this history. And I'm here to introduce them to you. Although if you've been reading the screen you probably know what I'm gonna say. Let's see if we can say it all together. So first David Buerge has been a teacher a writer and a historian. He has been pursuing and researching for several decades now. The history of the Native Americans and the white settlers of the Puget Sound region. David has had a close association with the Duwamish people over the years. He has earned a degree in History from the University of Washington and he served in the Peace Corps in Nepal. Cecile Hansen has been the elected chair of the DU Amish people since 1975. She is a descendant within the family of Chief Seattle and she has been instrumental in leading the campaign for many years for tribal recognition of the two Amish people with by the federal government. And I read that her battle cry is We are still here.

[00:03:14] Ms Hanson was a valuable source for David Berg. While he prepared the manuscript for this book Niall Thompson is a linguist and an anthropologist. Since 1973 he has been involved in recording and preserving the American Indian languages and knowledge of traditional cultures in the Pacific Northwest and in Western Canada. I heard him speak some should see I think just a moment ago and that would be a hard language to learn from scratch. Dr. Thompson provided important guidance to David Virgie regarding the Salish language during the as he as he wrote the book and David Brewster who will moderate is the founder of many Seattle institutions including the Seattle Weekly Town Hall and crosscut the online magazine. His current project is folio the Seattle Athenaeum which is a membership library located just a couple of blocks from here in the downtown YMCA. Incidentally David started at Sasquatch books and hired me. If our city didn't already have such a beautiful name I might take up a petition a petition to rename it. Brewster Bill. So please join me in welcoming this distinguished panel. As you know as a in my review I am giving you a Pendleton blanket because you are my friend

[00:05:17] Aren't you going to put it on David. We can turn the temperature down. Thank you. Thank you for listening to that moment. Lots of wonderful gift and it's a wonderful gift for the author. To have this large and enthusiastic audience. I wanted to in the spirit of tribute to point out that Sasquatch books has recently been acquired in a very happy marriage by Penguin Random House. And so Gary Luke is now a random penguin. And a stash it deserves great credit for being spearhead of the four year effort for Seattle to become a city of literature as as part of a UNESCO program. And maybe Donald Trump doesn't like UNESCO but UNESCO likes Seattle. Way to go

[00:06:24] So I thought we would start tonight. Uh. I'd ask David to read um a section from his book which helps to set the stage for understanding of Chief Seattle and also what the book is about.

[00:06:39] So David if you would read from Section 1 carefully noted there is no small thing to be the largest city in the world named after a Native American although Seattle was a person of considerable stature in his day. Very little is actually known about him is pre literate people do not show up in the historic record until the 17 nineties and their genealogical memory did not extend many generations beyond the earliest references to him and his people come from logs journals reports letters and accounts written by those who arrive to claim and exploit the land missionaries who played a crucial role in this conquest describe their native charges from a somewhat different perspective recording their languages and myths to more effectively convert them. The emphasis on all of these writings was on utility. It was only when ethnographers anthropologists and linguists interested in Native cultures and societies for their own sake made records of what Native people actually thought and said in their own languages that we began to realize how unique their world was.

[00:07:48] But by then it had been largely so swept away and David that the second part there which sets up the main questions of the book and I think this is good for us to think about in the course of our conversation and maybe we'll get some answers to which you see in go ahead we begin with questions who was Seattle into what kind of world was he born.

[00:08:15] What did he do. What sort of person was he. Why did settlers name their town after him. Is he a worthy opponent. Is the city bearing his name worthy of it the life he lived how he thought and what he hoped and worked for still have meaning today. I hope to answer these questions in the following pages thru of the modern city will serve as a proper chorus for the recitation of his deeds.

[00:08:45] Thank you very much. So one of the questions is who is Seattle. And I think one of the reasons why the book was so long in the oven is that that's very hard to determine. Um the record is not very detailed and um and it is just the shocking thing that this person uh who is an environmental saint. And of course the the the reason uh the name of our city uh is so little known and I hope tonight that we'll get closer to that. And uh obviously reading the book is um not only a valiant effort to get at that a highly ambiguous figure uh but tells you an awful lot about Seattle history and and about native history. So uh I'm doubly pleased that the book has come out. David wrote for me at Seattle Weekly for a number of years particularly about these these topics. And it may be I was the first to say you really ought to buy a book about cheap Seattle. Uh but um uh. And it's also very pleasing that it has come out uh. And how wonderful it is and that it's published by Sasquatch uh which I helped to get start there. So the happy night for me. So let's start if I might let you know on this first question about trying to get cheap Seattle and that is what is his name.

[00:10:30] That seems to be a rather large question although it sounds rather short.

[00:10:36] Is the name we know him by.

[00:10:38] Is CRF CRF and my way of thinking looking at the Coast Salish cultures that name is not his real name.

[00:10:52] That is his nickname. And there's several pieces of evidence that provide that answer.

[00:10:59] One is if he believed in his culture he's not going to allow his name to be used by everybody especially as the name of the city he would have felt would have known that if you tell people what your name is if you use it in casual conversation if people walk by and say How you doing Seattle that is going to bring on big problems because your spirit when you die will can continuously be called back from the land of so. One reason he might have allowed it is that wasn't his real name. So nicknames are were names that were given at different points in people's lives. Somebody could be called could be given a nickname because they borrowed a hammer from somebody and then kept using the excuse I forgot when the person asked Where's my hammer. And so that person would be called. I forgot. One of the features of the cultures was that women were usually married into other societies when a woman came from her village into a distant village her in-laws problem oftentimes didn't even know what her name was. So if somebody was from a BI Sultan she might just be called a wop or sky comb ish so the third factor on the nicknames is that if somebody has a traditional name which is owned by and passed on by a family then it's not going to be translatable or understandable in the modern languages because it come from many generations back. Languages change so Seattle or S.F. used to tell a Bourguiba that that meant good baby and obviously was a name from when he was a child and he was a good babe.

[00:13:15] But recently I found evidence that the name CRF and also be pronounced C Yash sounds about the same one as a glottal stop in the middle one has a Y.

[00:13:30] And so because they're interchangeable it could be that the Y was significant.

[00:13:38] And if you think about the significance of Old Man house in chief Seattle's life one translation of synapse is our house.

[00:13:53] And so it could be like the man who said I forgot there were some conversation or something that occasion him to be called our house.

[00:14:05] If Seattle was a nickname Do you have any idea what its actual name was.

[00:14:11] I don't I haven't seen anything that says that Dave and I have talked about that.

[00:14:19] And you in terms of guarding your name you only used it in ceremonial Isles where the family was there your family would know what your name was but you didn't.

[00:14:35] Certainly didn't want your enemies to know Cecile you're a descendant of Chief Seattle's brother. As I understand you know okay Chief Seattle of Chief Seattle. Okay. And you. Do you have a sense of how the name should be pronounced.

[00:14:55] And no because I don't speak the language. Yeah.

[00:15:00] It is it's amazing having been involved as many years as I have and to to realize that what you have shared with us. But um no I don't know. And that's OK. Well maybe we'll learn something soon. Yeah.

[00:15:17] Yeah. Go ahead.

[00:15:18] No I was gonna say that there was one more piece of evidence that it's a nickname that David has in his book and that was that in the early nineteen hundreds a linguist came in asked people well where does names you have come from.

[00:15:36] Were there earlier see in the tribe and nobody had ever even heard of one like microphone fellow.

[00:15:43] They said that nobody could remember any earlier Seattle's but it was a mother's tribe or it was a prestigious name you'd expect they would have known.

[00:15:53] So that to me is another bit of evidence that it was a nickname.

[00:15:59] Now I want to shift David to you and talking about Chief Seattle speech and this is something all of us know but there's probably a lot we don't know about the origins of the speech and that.

[00:16:13] So my first question is Where is that speech in print there is one copy of a microfilm of the Seattle Sunday Star October twenty ninth 1887. One copy that survived. There were I believe other people did have copies of it but only one that we know of survives to the present time is the most tenuous link at the top of that particular microfilm. Somebody has written one of the greatest speeches ever delivered by anybody. I don't know who wrote that. If we check the handwriting we might find out.

[00:16:51] But anyway Smith wrote the speech in 1887 and but he said he basically reconstructed it from notes that he had taken during the actual delivery of the speech which was on January 12th 1854 I believe on the waterfront of Seattle. He said he. He dashed parts of that speech into his diary that he had at the time in pencil. Later he referred to that and Smith Smith being Henry's minute who was nearly several.

[00:17:27] He was a doctor. He later was a reservation doctor at two later. He was also a very wealthy man. He bought lots of land then later sold it to a railroad company that built the second railroad from Seattle and Smith's Cove. Smith's Cove is named after him a small island at the mouth of this Hamish River is named after him and he was a writer he wrote many things in the newspaper and he wrote in a typical ultra florid Victorian style. And his sentences put Faulkner to shame. They just go on and on and on about collapse under the weight of the adjectives.

[00:18:03] So the Seattle speech is very unique. It's easily the best thing he ever wrote. So to me that's a sign that he was dealing with really interesting material. But the time in which Smith wrote the speech there was an astonishing parallel with what was happening in Seattle in 1887 from what was happening in 1854 in 1855.

[00:18:27] First of all ghosts figure heavily in the speech. And that's because it was given by Seattle in January when the wrote of the land of the dead was open and ghost or. Yeah. Ghost came to kidnap human souls for company. Also the native people were facing a catalyst a catastrophe of unparalleled magnitude with the Treaties of basically being divested of the lands that they had occupied for thousands and thousands of years at the hands of this invading power. In 1887 the city of Seattle was undergoing a social revolution of its own. In many cases just as dire threat and even to be more violent than the Yakama war was. So Smith found resonance in that he was also aware because he married an Irish Catholic girl that the Celts celebrated the Feast of show on around Halloween time and the same thing happened in the Celtic lands as happened among the native people. The ghosts were out roaming the land of the living to find human souls. So these parallels show up. But the thing that struck me most of all is what Smith does with Seattle's speech. And then he turns it into a valedictory. And he has saddled Seattle's say things like oh my people don't have long to live. You know we'll soon just be a myth to the white man.

[00:19:46] Well when Seattle gave his address to Isaac Stevens who was his audience that those he would never have said anything like that. He his people were quite vigorous. Seattle did everything he could to make sure that his people participated in the prosperity the Americans promised to bring. He wanted them to intermarry with the whites and many whites intermarried with them. He had a vision of a hybrid racial community as his people had always had. When you have a powerful and potentially violent incoming group enter your area you intermarry with them. It's a sexual politics. And then they follow the etiquette of family and kin relationships mitigates the violence or you develop a workable relationship. So Seattle wanted to do that with the Americans I now know other Indian chief. Worked as diligently or as with such vision as Seattle which is why the city has the theme that it has but so is Smith turns in Henry Smith turns into a more a morning prophet. So I was looking at this speech and I think you know if you're going to write a biography of Seattle you're gonna have to say something about the speech that nobody else has said before. And it struck me that what Seattle was saying was okay.

[00:21:04] First of all when Isaac Stevens says yea I come to represent the Great White Father in Washington who wants to be your father and will protect you. Seattle says no that's that's not why you're here. And the president has no need for the friendship since he represents such a numerous people for a group so small as ours. No that's not why it is. And also we don't really share many similarities for example religiously. Your God obviously cares more for your people than mine and your dad. Don't hang around when they die. And most of you have left the graves of your ancestors. Miles and miles away when they die they go to some place beyond the stars you don't even know where they go.

[00:21:43] We know where our dead go. They stay here. And so heat in this contrapuntal way he develops this theme which is that OK we are still numerous in this land you are very few we may you know we have been risen our numbers have declined but since we've been here for so long there are many dead there are as many or more dead than you will ever have in this land. And as you stay here and you grow and you die you will confront the Indian dead. And so at the very basically what it's a plea for is you need to treat my people with kindness and justice because you're going to end up here. You're going to deal with the Indian dead and the dead are not altogether powerless. And so it's a very interesting point that Seattle makes. Smith repeats that but it's downplayed because of the. He takes the words we may be brothers after all and turns them from a plea for justice and compassion 2. Well you know. Yeah well we're obviously leaving this scene and you may too. And that's what Smith heard and that's what he felt resonance at in 1887 when a whole new group of entrepreneurs middle class people were coming in and pushing the old pioneers aside and they suddenly felt very much like the Indians they had themselves dispossessed. So there's all these things going on in the speech. But what I what I.

[00:23:21] David let me let me ask this. There's a lot of doubt about how authentic the speech is. Well and there are various versions of it. And I was reading in your book how you know the famous line death.

[00:23:36] Did I say which comes from a Roman author. Yeah.

[00:23:40] And is it's pretty clearly added afterword. And in other versions of the speech. And so so we almost get back into like the Bible in which you know what did Jesus actually say. And there are these things there and like many of these sort of mythical figures in which you can read a lot into that. And Henry Schmitz is probably the first one in doing that. Yes. There's no other witness of the speech right.

[00:24:05] No that's not true. Yeah. Michaels Michael Simmons in March of that year 1854. There have been murders in Seattle and he comes to the town and they sent a posse out to Whidbey Island to apprehend the murderers. And he says at that point Seattle gave a great speech. Now we don't know what that speech was because Simmons didn't write it down. That may also have been the case because Henry Smith was there to but Smith says that it happened when Isaac Stevens visited the town. And Smith is pretty accurate about things so I don't think there's any reason to doubt him. What's interesting to be a.

[00:24:46] I want to move on from the speech there. We're going to run out of time. And uh. But one of the things you were talking about there is the chief's vision of a multiracial society. And Cecile is. Does that square with your sense of your history and that that that really was one of the abiding and noble visions that your people had in it and that the chief had of of a multiracial white and native society working together intermarriage and all of that. Does that square.

[00:25:25] I think so too. I think it's uh it's a it's a speech that I admire today and I quote it every once in a while. I find speaking because look at here it is all these years later and it's still alive.

[00:25:41] So what is what is a favorite line that you like to quote.

[00:25:49] Well let me see. It's a difficult question. I think the essence of all of it which says a statement that he's speaking and they didn't speak his language but somehow they got it together to convey how he was feeling what was going on. And that's what I get from it.

[00:26:10] And Niall going back to that question about the belief in a in a harmonious multiracial society at that time does that square with your sense of native life at that time and Salish life. You're also an anthropologist and so you would look into things like that.

[00:26:29] Or is this an unusual view that maybe only Chief Seattle had well at that time when you had a convergence of two groups of people if it's two different tribes if there's conflict or you're wanting to get things done then one way that they joined together was by having a marriage and so the one group would propose that their son would be looking for a wife. The other group would counter Well we've got one available if you've got enough wealth to be able to buy her.

[00:27:07] And so marriage was the way to do that it also granted people of from the outside a to get into the workforce.

[00:27:22] I think David was mentioning that so if if you've got it you're like William Renton you've got a mill you're happy if people are marrying into the Indian communities and people on the other side then it afforded them a way to think that they would be able to be upwardly mobile by marrying in because they would then share with that other family.

[00:27:47] Know how was this vision of a multiracial society reciprocated on the white side and who were some of the pioneers here who who responded to that.

[00:28:00] David you know initially because the Americans were very few. They had to be on their best behavior. And so when the people welcomed them which they did in every case where you know whites first interacted with native people starting with the Columbus you always have this remarkable scene where the Indians as Who are these people who came from the heavens. But in any case in an area of Seattle Seattle wanted to seal the deal with Maynard by giving Maynard his granddaughter Elizabeth the settlers called Betsy his brother or half brother Curley did the same thing by offering his daughter Susan to Henry wrestler when he came in.

[00:28:41] Now both the wrestler and Maynard accepted both were also previously married.

[00:28:47] They were they had not gotten their divorces yet and but they were quite happy as so many military officers were in northwest to cohabit with native people because it was a way to develop a relationship with very powerful native groups and they outnumber the whites 100 to 1 even in the eighteen fifties. So for about a year and a half there was it was a very steep learning curve that the settlers had to encounter and the native people also dealing with these unusual types that came in from the east. But they had no other option frankly. And so they did and many of the you know histories are written by those who are literate and have an axe to grind. I suppose you could say and in any case there was a large number of white males who were not married.

[00:29:37] They were mostly transient workers they had come up from the goldfields in California and they were quite happy to marry native women and many did and many of these marriages lasted. They produced descendants and the families still survive today. So of young American males we're quite happy to intermarry and that had been the case as the eighteen forties when middle class whites came in with their notions of racial superiority. They looked down on that very much. And so these people who had Mary were known as Guam and the like but for about a year and a half it worked because there really was no other option. So it's interesting that during the Indian war the only way Seattle the town survived was because the Indians operated the mill all the white males were busy drilling for the militia. So the native people had to keep the mill running which they did. Sara Yes Larry when she moved in and said we prefer native customers because they're the only ones paying cash.

[00:30:33] So these were not poor people. These were wealthy people who really wanted to participate in the new economy the Americans were creating. And the reservation system forced them out to isolated areas far away from the Centers of commerce and that as much as anything was what

riled so many native people. You're forcing us away from our chances of participating with you in this effort. But it worked for a while.

[00:31:01] And one of the artifact of that time is the city's name yeah it's it's it's a poignant story of a missed opportunity and there are some other instances in American history. And I had always thought that David Denny was a particularly sensitive person to the possibilities of racial harmony. That was not right.

[00:31:27] I think initially he may have been but then he became rich. And you know there's all these stories that have things that happened in Seattle and they're retold differently later on. So for example the first church service in Seattle was said to have been held in Henry yes there is cook shack. Well it wasn't it was held in Arthur Denny's cabin. So it was held by a Catholic bishop another Catholic priest and native people that the father the mayors who is a bishop the marriage was going up to what became British Columbia and stopped in Seattle and held the first sermon there first. It wasn't a mass but it was a church service and Arthur and his cabin were later the idea of Baptists and Methodists from the Midwest you know holding truck with a Catholic bishop and celebrating a Catholic prayer service in a settlers cabin at the time. It was a lovely thing. But as more settlers came in and more professionals came in it was displace to yesteryear's cook shack which was a very well I was a much less electric place. Yes. Or didn't come didn't even show up until two months after this the first church service was in August and yes or didn't show up until October. So it's a bit impossible but nevertheless the story was retold like that. Things like this happen all the time. So what David.

[00:32:46] Eddie let let me ask you about another interesting aspect of Chief Seattle and that is that he was a real estate promoter.

[00:32:55] Yeah. He would he I use the old Spanish term impresario and he Seattle made sure stuff got done. The very first industry on Elliott Bay was a fishery in 1850 and it was a Robert Fay who was a commissioned merchant from San Francisco who came up with the idea. I'm going to Beryl salmon and send it back to San Francisco. They'll eat anything you give him and so he came up and he met Seattle in Olympia Seattle and the Amish people were living in Olympia at the time because that's where the Americans showed up and Seattle had made a decision I'm going to get these people and bring them up to my country and we're going to develop something up there that's going to make money for both of us so he got faith to come up and Seattle had 700 Native people fishing on Elliott Bay.

[00:33:41] They had a Swedish Cooper making barrels and they sent it down to Olympia and transcript of in San Francisco. Well the salmon rotted. So Faye and Faye decided well I'm going to settle and we'd be. So Seattle went back to Olympia to find a replacement. That was David Maynard. So all this had happened just at the initial point of settlement. And the first industry was Seattle and Robert Fay creating a fishery I know he had. It lasted about a year and a half and it employed hundreds of people. That was the first before there was tech before there was coal lumber.

[00:34:17] There was the fishery that was the first it's interesting to think of the origins of the city and land speculation.

[00:34:25] Yes. And seems to be holding up. He wasn't a land speculator because the Americans were the land speculators Seattle was willing to give away land if people would settle there and then they would marry into his people. The

[00:34:36] Idea of commoditization land was totally foreign to the native culture. It just wouldn't have made any sense to them. The idea that Americans were dividing these things up with imaginary lines and then selling them and forbidding Indians from even trespassing on them as they described it was phenomenal. It was just simply incomprehensible. That was another issue that caused violence in the Yakima war. But Seattle wasn't a land promoter. He was he was a contractor a labor contractor. He provided the muscle but also the expertise. You know if you want to catch fish the people who know how to catch fish are us if you want to cut timber we know how to do it. We're not going to build you log cabins. We're going to build frame houses. We know how to split lumber. And so using this knowledge and this labor base Seattle what is a very attractive figure to early American settlers.

[00:35:32] This is a question I put this way is that how come a white guy like you is writing this book and another way to look at that is how did you do the research. What kind of help did you have. I know Cecile was very helpful that way. And what are the what is the resistance from native sources to non-native writers. And as I understand the Suquamish which plays an important role in this we're not cooperative in helping you on the book. So talk a little bit about.

[00:36:05] Yeah I'm the position you were in the seal protest this but she asked me gosh when was it. Seventy five. I think you know. Well would you. I had already had a manuscript in the works about the prehistory of King County and she said well we'd like to work for the dole. HAMISH I didn't even know the Duwamish existed at the time. I just knew that they were a past presence. And so I said well sure. And so I became what I described as a student of the damage. And it was a seal's constant support her enthusiasm and just her charisma that enabled me to do this. And gave me the confidence to write this I was asked to write and David said he may have been the first he may have been. Why don't you write a biography of the Atlantic are you kidding. Only a crazy person would want to do that. There are no original sources to draw from.

[00:37:01] You're asking me to write like a biography of Jesus or King Arthur. I mean I don't have a whole lifetime to give away to this. And anyway we don't even know if you know there's these little monographs have been written about. What am I going to find.

[00:37:14] And it was Elizabeth Wales and Dan Levant of mid-range publishers and Dan Levant got me I said you could write this. I said I want to write this. I've got work to do. Interesting work. And he said No no no seriously drop a chapter and we'll send it to New York. And I'm telling you they're gonna buy it anyway.

[00:37:32] What are you earning now. And so I said well and I was making about sixteen thousand dollars a year writing features for The Weekly and teaching part time. You guys add another zero to that. I said Are you kidding. He said No no no. I'm telling you we can do this. And so I wrote it for I took a couple of months off and wrote a first chapter and we sent it to New York. And nothing happened. As one critic said this is a very quiet book isn't it. I guess they wanted more blood and semen in it but in any case. So it was like well great. But Dan was white. I got another big fat zero for all this effort. I was hoping I'd get a laugh there but in any case. So I but then I thought you know just my usual passive aggressive thing I'm going to show them I'm actually going to do this because it's hopeless anyway. But only if it doesn't interfere with working as long as it's fun. So I acted pretty quickly I realized why I didn't have any competition.

[00:38:31] And like you say well why does another white man show up throughout a history well first of all I was encouraged by Cecile to research and write things about the Duwamish which I was happy to do but the other thing there wasn't anything. I mean this is this is the namesake of the city and there's nothing significant about them. Even Greenslade Anderson wrote a juvenile biography of him in the 1940s and he's talked about by a lot of people in short monographs have been written about him but nobody took the time to study him. Well if you take 20 years to study and it's amazing what you can dig up. But most of these things were in French. Fortunately my wife reads and translates French so these were just extraordinary letters written by the first missionaries here talked about Seattle his baptism and other aspects and so you keep picking up stuff like that and pretty soon patterns emerge and you realized this is a very different guy than people think.

[00:39:31] And so that kept the enthusiasm up and we are I I want to end this part and we'll soon be taking your questions in just a minute or two to look at what David calls in the book The Seattle's the city's original sin which is the way the city and the federal government and so forth treated the Amish. And Chief Seattle called for justice and kindness and understanding and in return lost the rights to the river lost the rights to the land. And when he died there was I think you'd say in the book no notice no no no newspaper recorded in 1866.

[00:40:22] Yeah I mean 70 80. Yeah. Nobody even bothered to record it.

[00:40:25] And Cecile has labored for many years to try to get recognition for the Amish and all the benefits that would come with that. It's a it's a very moving story. Some of your questions we'll get into that but it brings it up into the present time. But I thought I would ask David in the conclusion of this part to read a bit from his book where he answers that question that is has the city lived up to the challenge that the chief put to us Go ahead.

[00:40:59] It is an ongoing shameful thing. Just take a digress. But I was going to ask if either Mayor Murray or Mayor elect Durkin was here tonight or anybody of their staff which I doubt which I would think is shameful. But in any case let me read this. I would like

[00:41:17] Cecile would you mind telling Oh yes I was elected in nineteen seventy five minding my own business raising my children and the reason I got into it My brother was efficient in the Diwan

Mish River and being cited by the state fisheries and this one particular time he showed up and he said after you come down he said you know you need to get involved.

[00:41:45] And I said Well what do I gotta do. He's old go to a few meetings.

[00:41:49] Well a few meetings happened that I got elected the following year and and I didn't know anything about. I knew who I was. I know I was a native.

[00:42:01] And I said well I start working with the former chair and we start working on the the fisheries problem.

[00:42:09] And because what happened was that they said we couldn't fish in the de Wyoming's river. And my brother was that was his. That's what he did for a living. And so what happened was is that even though we signed a treaty in 1855 we were supposed to receive the fishing and hunting rights and that's where I said oh my gosh we need that. By that time then they were they created the venue to go prove that you might be native and to prove who you are.

[00:42:45] We got involved in that for years and years and years.

[00:42:49] But it all started because of fishing and oh the mayors. Yeah. Well anyway I got sidetracked because I love talking about losing our right to fish. I buy buy fish. Well for the market.

[00:43:07] Well it's still you know we're almost in a mayor's race.

[00:43:11] So go ahead Ray. They struggled to get acknowledge I always thought to myself I get these thoughts if I go before the mayor's office.

[00:43:21] He could he could send a resolution to all this work that we've done for 30 years that we get the mayor to support us. I've tried to meet with every mayor in this city and never got an invitation to just to ask that question can you pass a resolution with your people to support the Dooms tribe. And so I've never had that opportunity to do that.

[00:43:46] Studiously avoided her as they avoided every aspect of let me read what I wrote what I wrote here.

[00:43:54] Having grown rich on Duwamish land the city has consistently made sure that not one square inch of it would be reserved for the people who nurtured and protected settlers in their hours of greatest need. That is the city's original sin Seattle's request that his people be treated with justice and kindness falls on deaf ears. The hands of friendship offered by the Dawn mission is met with blank stares and double talk. Seattle is indeed a worthy opponent for the city but the city is a city worthy of its upon him. CHIEF SEATTLE'S trust in the American sense of justice was willed and his claim upon our better nature has yet to be vindicated. At the very end the life of Seattle the living man means more than the words of his ghost. Only now have we begun to appreciate his vision and

understand that our city draws its greatest strength from the energy character and dreams of all its residents living loving and working together in the house of his name. He lived with that hope and died still believing in it. If we believe that life and hope are greater than death honoring his deeds and answering his quest and attending to his vision will be the proof

[00:45:18] So this Cecile might be a good question for you to start with. To what extent do today's dual Amish embrace. Chief Seattle's vision of intermarriage with others like being half native.

[00:45:34] Bye bye. I'm fine that's fine with me because because although my eye.

[00:45:43] For whatever reason I married a native man from the coast Quaalude and it was a kind of adventure because I never lived on a reservation. So I moved to the coast. That was an adventure getting to know those people. Although I must tell you they did not accept me because they thought I was a white woman but I didn't marry them. I married my husband so I got along fine with everybody. Even though they thought it was a white woman.

[00:46:09] But what what about others in the in the DIY Amish people do they share that vision still today. You obviously do. Mm hmm.

[00:46:19] Yes I think so. Yes.

[00:46:22] So here's the next question which also Cecile would have something to say about this and what do you think of the statue in Five Points that is in telecom place erected in honor of Chief Seattle fourth and Danny.

[00:46:40] Well I I think that's a marvelous statue and but the thing that really irritates me today and I it's on the on the.

[00:46:52] It says Suquamish but whereas the Duwamish they've taken the dome we show off that on the bottom and that is not right. You're not honoring the chief by taking Duwamish off that statue. So I want a night. I was wondering about this just recently. Who do we talk to you better put you better put Duwamish there because that should be there. It should be there.

[00:47:17] And I just accept a date.

[00:47:24] David you could explain the double heritage of chief's yellow weight his mother and his father and the Treaty of Pointe Elliot.

[00:47:32] Seattle is described as the chief of the DU Hamish and Suquamish and allied tribes. He was born amongst the damage Amish on White River. He had kin ties with the Suquamish. The Duwamish accepted him a good part of them as their leader. And just before the treaty the Suquamish did do so he was the he was the head chief of both groups. But on the treaty appoint

Elliott He is described as the chief of the Duma's first then the Suquamish and allied tribes so that was left off the statue.

[00:48:06] Actually what they had was better than what they were gonna put down they said it was the chief of them this squalid which had no significance or whatever but confusion has never stopped people from you know saying what they want here's an interesting question.

[00:48:22] Does the city of Seattle pay a royalty for use of Seattle's name and image. I would be one rich woman. On behalf of the tribe because we we really need to have

[00:48:37] Operating moneys for that for us. We really do because where I was told that I don't exist. Come on please. We exist.

[00:48:49] We're here. Our people are here.

[00:48:51] We're not sitting on a reservation but our people are here reason why there's no reservation is because of the active efforts of the people of Seattle in the early days to make sure they did not get one. The federal government was ready to they actually set up a sub agency at West Seattle in the middle eighteen fifties. They were planning in the eighteen sixties to develop a dual much reservation but the male young and the male whites of Seattle sent a petition back to Washington D.C. say no we don't want to do that. We take good care of our Indians.

[00:49:26] And the reason why they did it was because they didn't want any plan taken out of the public domain because land was what they were making their money on and they had discovered coal and Renton were shipping timber out and they didn't want any interference in land speculation. So on three separate incidents the city of Seattle as a corporate group made sure that no effort to get the Suquamish the Duwamish a reservation would survive. As a result they became a landless tribe. As a result of that when the bold decision was passed landless tribes were not considered able to have the benefits of the treaties. So it was purely by quite chicanery and greed that we're confronting the situation we are today.

[00:50:11] So and no maybe this would be a good one for you to wrestle with what can we do as white people to help tribes be federally recognized.

[00:50:22] I worked for about 10 15 years with the still Wickham tribe that faced a similar fate as the dwarf mission in Snohomish and just the other day I was working on a project and looked on the internet about something about Indian hunting and there's a Web site say the Washington Department of Fish and Game and what they claim they're doing is trying to educate people about the treaty. And so they go out of their way to say well there's some neighboring tribes that can finish and hunt in Washington the Nez Perce and somebody else and then they go through and list the different treaties and they put down which tribe signed the treaties so efforts revive revisionist history because there is no damage.

[00:51:17] There's no Snohomish there's no still Wickham. All the tribes who signed the treaty but weren't given a reservation at that time and are not tribes now recognized by the federal government.

[00:51:30] It's like they don't appear on the list.

[00:51:33] And if it's your state of Washington that is keeping these people from are from being able to have what they deserve from signing the treaty then I think we need to talk to people in the state government.

[00:51:52] The. And like Cecile says.

[00:51:55] You can talk about City of Seattle Silicon. At one point were acknowledged to be a tribe by Booth Gardner and Pierce County but that doesn't seem to mean anything anymore.

[00:52:07] There was this sad moment as Clinton was just being replaced by George W. Bush.

[00:52:18] He the last day of his being in office he recognized the Duwamish tribe.

[00:52:28] Yeah and we're in the last few days later with Bush in power. It was overturned.

[00:52:33] Yeah yeah. So I I I don't mean to offend all of the Bush supporters in this room but

[00:52:41] Yeah you have to have to watch out about that. OK David here's here's a question. Where is the money for your book going. Does it. How does any or all of it go to the dual tribe.

[00:53:03] Well I gave him a blank.

[00:53:06] I gave him a blank. The folks that do average sell obviously I won't earn a penny from this book. I didn't get a nice advance. I don't want to pay medical bills.

[00:53:18] So you know I don't think I don't expect it would be great but I don't think so.

[00:53:29] All the money that's being made.

[00:53:30] Well it's going to the various institutions. So that's where it goes. Now David I'm going to coach you a little bit on being an author on book tour

[00:53:47] Especially with all of these people out here about ready to buy your book.

[00:53:50] Well you know the reason I the reason I wrote the book was so to get the story out and hopefully to give a being if you remember Margaret Thatcher thought she would open up a shop called Rent a spine for diplomats and I would like to open up a shop of rent a spine for the Seattle mayoralty. Could you actually. I mean the reason why they don't is because they're terrified of

offending the recognized tribes who also are not particularly happy about it so the damage become recognized because then the federal pie is one more slice take it out it really gets a little less but I don't think that's any worthy excuse. And so the reason why I wrote the book was not to make money it was basically to tell a story about Seattle I mean it's 160 years after the guy died. You'd think it would be time to actually learn about who he was but also to rectify. I've worked for 40 years for the damage. I mean if anybody deserves to be recognized it's the Duwamish. I mean they were the first signatories of the treaty appoint Elliot

[00:54:57] I'll go where I can and talk to whoever I can to see that this book sells that people read it that there's this understanding spreads. That's the point of the book.

[00:55:09] I would say I was once privileged to have a conversation with Mike Kinsley who was peddling his his new book and at the end I said Mike what is the chief takeaway you want people to get from your book.

[00:55:27] He said I want them to take away two copies.

[00:55:33] Now that's the spirit. Yeah. I suppose

[00:55:40] So. I want to ask the three of you this question which is alluded to in this but I would put it this way.

[00:55:48] What is a thing that Seattle and Seattle citizens could do today that would properly honor Chief Seattle and his vision and all that all that we owe to him. What would be a proper thing to do now.

[00:56:08] Let's let's stipulate that recognition of the Amish tribe is certainly at the top of that list. But but that's the it's not the easy answer because it's been very hard to do. But that's. But let's let's push a little beyond that.

[00:56:23] And who would like to go first. Go ahead.

[00:56:27] One thing I've always thought of the Amish had many burial sites in King County and some of them have been totally obliterated within the city of Seattle.

[00:56:40] I would like some monument placed on the sites of those cemeteries because they figure so strongly in Seattle speech but also is a people's contact with the land. And the idea of life and death and land is so important. And I would like to see I think movements to get those erected would be a really valuable thing.

[00:57:03] Also just calling for Seattle schools to really involve a do Amish more in there. Well I should say history but also environmental education units. I think the more the people know about people who have lived here for about ten thousand years who have lived through the apocalypse who

have a lot to teach us I think that would be something that we all as a community should do as Cicero. But

[00:57:35] I think if the public or the people that live in Seattle would just advocate or send a word to the Bureau of Indian Affairs our status is on appeal right now. And we've been waiting about four years.

[00:57:50] And if that if the outcry that this tribe needs to be acknowledged was said by the people live in Seattle that would be marvelous. And then I can quit and finish and publish my book

[00:58:10] Now can you top that.

[00:58:12] No.

[00:58:15] I guess back many years ago in late 1990s I guess I used to meet with Willard Bill when he was a dean at North Seattle Community College and I started teaching anthropology there and Walden and I had always talked about what ways could the Indian ness of Seattle be best presented to the city of Seattle. And Willard had been what he was chairman of the Amish tribe for a long time and then he became a member of the Michael shoot.

[00:58:56] Was that how it worked okay.

[00:59:00] Well yeah. He was seeking the college stuff for his children.

[00:59:06] So I think that you know that just another important thing is that do Amish don't qualify as Indians to be able to get any federal assistance for going to college. But if you're a federally recognized tribe suddenly you get assistance.

[00:59:20] So it's not a matter it goes far beyond the fish. So anyway the one thing he and I were talking about was what a shame it was that the end of the Indian landscape of Seattle is not presented in terms of you know here.

[00:59:39] Let's take Balla Ballard area by the locks here we had a longhouse was in this area the cemetery was in this area you can go to the place and look out where the lookout was stationed back after the whites first came the Indians from Southeast Alaska decided they were going to come down using their firearms that they got and raid the area down here taking women and children as slaves killing men taking valuables and taking it back up to their homes in their war canoes and two of the things that the Indians down here did were one to move a lot of the villagers back away from the coastline so they weren't visible anymore. The second thing they did was to have different places where they positioned a century to look out on the water to see if the war canoes were coming or in the case in Tacoma they actually had a location up on a hill where they would light a fire to tell people that the war canoes were coming.

[01:00:50] So you also had a ceremonial location by the locks you had where different satellite houses were there a number of places in Seattle where there are visible stories that can be tied together through a series of panels or something.

[01:01:13] And as long as they were done with historical accuracy that seemed to be something that would allow people to say oh now I see where they were what they did how things were tied together instead of just hearing there was an Indian here once and yet Pioneer Square of the Alliance for Pioneer Square has done that.

[01:01:38] They put out paneling and have maps so that you can actually see where the villages were located and the ceremonial centers and so it's begun. But that wasn't one village of maybe 40 so much to do so that would be another great plus.

[01:01:57] One one comment here says the Pioneer Square mural of the chief should be preserved in an art museum.

[01:02:07] I'm not I'm not aware of a mural in Pioneer Square.

[01:02:11] Is the person who wrote this say where that is or incorporated in the present structures.

[01:02:23] I mean you shouldn't have to go all the way to Tacoma incorporated in the building thank you very much for bringing that to our attention. Yes do you want to come in so I can repeat it for the

[01:02:42] Thank you very much. This is a very good audience. These are very good questions we're learning things from you.

[01:02:49] So I salute you and I ask you to salute our panel. Thank you all for coming.

[01:03:07] Thank you so much to our panelists David Brewster. Now Thompson Cecelia Hanson and David Berti thank you all for coming out tonight. And thanks to our panelists.

[01:03:18] This podcast was presented by the Seattle Public Library and Foundation and made possible by your contributions to the Seattle Public Library Foundation. Thanks for listening.