Time Traveller Summer 2014  
Local First Nations Settlements

Stó:lō means “river” to the Coast Salish, the First Nations people inhabiting the northwest Pacific coast from the Strait of Georgia to southwest Washington State. Along the north side of the Lower Fraser River, where New Westminster is located, long before Simon Fraser’s 1808 voyage and the Royal Engineers arrival in 1859, the Salish people lived on both sides of the river.

First Nations man in canoe paddling by New Westminster, ca. 1866.  
IHP0618

The Fraser was a bountiful source of salmon and other fish. The surrounding land was also abundant with other resources, such as cranberries, which local First Nations people picked in the area of Qayqayt, a village from which the local band has taken its name.

Qayqayt or “resting place” was one of two main settlements and later became known as Brownsville and South Westminster. Today it is known as the Bridgeview area of Surrey. The other settlement, Skaiametl, on the north side of the Fraser, was where the Royal Engineers would establish their camp, now included in the Glenbrooke South neighbourhood. The creek that ran through the glen was known as Stólelō to the First Nations people living there.
However, when Fort Langley opened in 1827, many of the aboriginal people living in these locations moved up the river in order to trade at the fort. When Colonel Moody established his camp at Skaiametl in 1859, he found only a man named Simlannok (Tsimele’nux) and his relatives. According to Chartres Brew, who served as Gold Commissioner and Chief Constable in the Colonial government, Simlannok was compelled to move from this area. In compensation he received land, (about half an acre, according to Brew) on the south side of the Fraser near where the Colonial government had established a Revenue Station near Qayqayt. This forced resettlement would become the kernel from which the colonial government would create a reserve for First Nations people living near the city of New Westminster.