

Sinixt/Arrow Lakes Band Press Release  
September 25 1990  
Yvonne Swan, Coordinator [signed]

We, the Sinixt Arrow Lakes Band, believed and documented as extinct by the provincial Government of British Columbia in 1956, have been embroiled in an effort to secure the remains of six ancestral bodies and related articles excavated and removed from the Sinixt/Arrow Lakes burial ground at Vallican, B.C. In 1981.

On September 25, 1990, the Hereditary Chief of the Sinixt/Arrow Lakes Band, Francis Romero, arrived at the Royal British Columbia Museum at Victoria, B.C. from the occupation camp at the Vallican burial ground with a caravan of Sinixt descendants and other support factions to retrieve the remains of the ancestors from the Royal British Columbia Museum.

In an exchange of documents following a 2:00 meeting the Royal British Columbia Museum director, Bill Barkley, gave a transfer of title document from the museum relinquishing the remains and related articles to Francis Romero in acknowledgement of Mr. Romero as Hereditary Chief. This transferal was the birth of a nation as it was acknowledgement the Sinixt people are not and have never been extinct. Mr. Bill Barkley, Director of the Royal British Columbia museum offered the transfer of title document.

Chief Francis Romero gave Mr. Barkley a counter-document which included letters of support from related Bands from Canada and the United States and non-native organizations which was the culmination of a two-year communication process

and effort to have the remains returned to the Sinixt/Arrow Lakes Band.

A meeting will be convened Friday September 28, 1990 at 10:00am at the En'owkin Centre at 257 Brunswick St., Penticton, B.C. which will include elders and descendants to finalize arrangements for the reburial ceremony takes place, the remains lay in state at the Sinixt burial ground at Vallican.

Sinixt/Arrow Lakes people acknowledge the conflict and struggle at Oka, Quebec as a parallel to their own as, the spark which began the Oka conflict was over the proposed developement of a burial site—a struggle we have have been facing and expect to face as the B.C. Heritage Trust has made known their plans to develop a recreation and information centre on the Sinixt burial ground at Vallican. Sinixt descendants have been occupying the burial ground since August 20, 1989 in an effort to stop those development plans by the B.C. Heritage Trust and to protect the burial ground from other developments and disturbance by pothunters.

This is a great day for indigenous people across Canada as a presedence has been set in the development of policies by the Royal British Columbia Museum to return some 800 remains they have in their custody. The Sinixt/Arrow Lakes are now offering solidarity and technical assistance to any and all natives who are in the process of procuring and protecting ancestral remains.